



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



Organization Information

Organization Name *

Inspira STEAM Academy



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



Inspira STEAM Academy

Mission Inspira STEAM Academy will cultivate globally-minded scholars through a rigorous Spanish language acquisition program focused on STEAM instructional programming.

Vision At Inspira STEAM Academy, we are committed to fostering a transformative educational journey for our diverse community of learners.

Misión Inspira STEAM Academy cultivará estudiantes con mentalidad global a través de un riguroso programa de adquisición del idioma español centrado en la programación instructiva de STEAM.

Visión En Inspira STEAM Academy, estamos comprometidos a fomentar un viaje educativo transformador para nuestra diversa comunidad de estudiantes.

The proposed community for Inspira STEAM Academy is located in the Eastern part of Las Cruces, locally known as the "East Mesa." This includes the area in which Sonoma Elementary, Desert Hills Elementary, Jornada Elementary, and Loma Heights Elementary are currently located. Inspira will provide a much-needed educational choice for families on the rapidly growing east side of the city, an area that currently lacks school choice alternatives for school enrollment.

While data is not provided for each individual school, Las Cruces Public Schools has 15.5% of its student population identified as English Language Learners (ELLs). The LCPS page also reports providing special education services to approximately 5,400 students. This translates to approximately 3,679 students, given the total student enrollment of 23,771. Per recent data, 68.2% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. (U.S. News & World Report, n.d.).

- Sonoma Elementary, with a student population of 748, demonstrates a math proficiency of 40% and a reading proficiency of 51%. Its minority enrollment stands at 79%.
- Desert Hills Elementary serves 559 students. This school reports 34% math proficiency and 56% reading proficiency. Its minority enrollment is 72%.
- Jornada Elementary has 490 students. Their proficiency rates are 28% in math and 41% in reading. A significant 88% of its students are from minority backgrounds.
- Loma Heights Elementary has 505 students. This school shows proficiency rates of 21% in math and 30% in reading. It has the highest minority enrollment at 90%.

These statistics highlight the need to address the academic achievement deficiencies of the student demographic majority in the proposed community. Such deficiencies require focused attention and tailored educational strategies to ensure that their unique needs are met effectively. In light of this, Inspira's educational philosophy and mission have been designed to cater to these students. Inspira STEAM Academy offers a much-needed educational option in Las Cruces with its innovative bilingual and STEAM-focused instructional model, which is not currently available in the area and is specifically designed to meet the diverse needs of the local demographic, particularly given the city's significant Hispanic population and the growing demand for STEAM-literate individuals.

The Bilingual model aims to develop proficiency in both languages, emphasizing high levels of fluency in the target language while also maintaining and enhancing native language skills. Initially, instruction will predominantly be in Spanish to establish a strong foundation. As students gain proficiency, the balance will gradually shift to include more content in English until reaching a 50/50 balance. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) subject matter will be taught in Spanish through inquiry-based lessons. Incorporating cultural and contextual relevance to all the lessons will ensure engagement and comprehension. Inquiry-based learning will involve hands-on activities, experiments, and real-world problem-solving tasks, encouraging students to engage deeply with the material. At Inspira, students will be prompted to reflect on their learning processes and findings, allowing them to refine their questions and approaches based on new insights and feedback.

These teaching methods aim to meet the needs of all students, particularly those who are at risk of being underserved. We specifically target second language learners and neurodivergent students, while also addressing the four learning modalities: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile.

While the NMPED requires a minimum of 1140 total instructional hours per year, with up to 60 hours of those allotted for professional development, Inspira STEAM Academy provides 1354 total instructional hours with 136 hours allocated for professional development. This additional time also allows for re-teaching, deeper exploration, and individualized support. This additional training enhances their expertise, ensuring they are well-



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prepared to support and inspire our students on their unique learning journeys, projects, fostering their creativity and critical thinking skills. Additionally, the program places a strong emphasis on Spanish language acquisition, ensuring that students excel academically while also developing valuable language skills in a supportive environment.

The founding team of Inspira STEAM Academy is a well-rounded group of individuals who believe in students' education and their potential. With leadership skills, investments in education, and deep ties to bilingualism and STEAM, we are confident we can contribute learning our experience to the new generation, supporting our community here in Las Cruces, NM.

Mrs. Julia Rivera-Tapia, Lead Founder and proposed Executive Director, was born in Chicago, spent her early years in Aguascalientes, Mexico, and grew up in New Mexico during her teenage years. Mrs. Rivera-Tapia obtained a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Education with an endorsement in Bilingual Education and Spanish from the University of New Mexico (UNM). She received a Master in Arts (MA) focused on Educational Leadership and Administration from Columbia University. She is working on her Doctoral Degree from Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership, expected to graduate in 2027.

Mrs. Rivera-Tapia is the lead of the Equity Council at J. Paul Taylor Academy. She is a member of the Hispanic Educational Advisory Council (HEAC) and was previously a Cambiando Fellow with Excellent Schools New Mexico. She received the *Change Maker Award* from the National Alliance of Charter Schools for her strong advocacy with students and the community. Mrs. Rivera-Tapia is also a collaborator in the book *Cultura and Educational Leadership: Praxis and Perspective*.

Mrs. Rivera-Tapia has been involved in education in New Mexico for over 20 years, dedicating her career to creating equitable learning experiences for all students. With over thirteen years of experience teaching kindergarten and first grade in both traditional public and charter bilingual schools, she has developed a strong commitment to serving diverse student populations. Her leadership journey includes roles as an assistant principal and head director, where she has consistently advocated for innovative change, interdisciplinary approaches to education, and equity for all students. As a passionate leader and educator, Mrs. Rivera-Tapia is devoted to making meaningful progress and supporting inclusive, dynamic learning environments.

Ms. Jessica Castro-Buelna, Co-Lead Founder, was born and raised in Bernalillo, New Mexico. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education with a bilingual endorsement from Western New Mexico University and her Master of Arts in Elementary Education and Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Western New Mexico University. She has taught in bilingual schools for the past seven years. Her experiences include being a part of the prestigious International Baccalaureate (IB) school, where she learned how to combine holistic education, global relevance, and academic excellence.

Ms. Castro-Buelna has been a kindergarten teacher, Student Assistance Team (SAT) lead, and teacher mentor at J. Paul Taylor Academy (JPTA) in Las Cruces, New Mexico. She has taught in an inclusion classroom, incorporating bilingual education, and is a New Mexico Public Education Department Teacher Liaison. She has been a testing coordinator, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) facilitator, Technology Leader, and is currently part of the Equity Council, Professional Development Committee, Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), Technology Committee, and Sunshine Committee. She is currently a fellow of the Advocacy Fellowship through New Mexico Teach Plus, encompassing the importance of student attendance. Ms. Castro-Buelna is devoted to providing our new generation of students with a multifaceted education, leading them to be successful in the future. She is currently the Secretary of the Governing Board for New America High School Las Cruces.

Mrs. Christina Gonzales, Founder, was born in El Paso, Texas, and raised in Las Cruces, New Mexico. She obtained her Bachelor of Business Administration, specializing in human resources and training, from New Mexico State University (NMSU). She obtained her Master's in Applied Behavior Analysis from Ball State University. She is a dual licensed educator in Pre-K-12 special education and certified in elementary education. She has been an educator for the last five years in special education.

Mrs. Gonzales has a diverse background, including birth through three early intervention, and is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Mrs. Gonzales was a cofounder of Sensory Kids of New Mexico, a non-profit organization serving families of children with autism and behavioral needs. Mrs. Gonzales received the Educator of the Year award from Public Charter Schools of New Mexico (PCSNM).

Mrs. Gonzales been a Special Education Coordinator, member of the Equity Council, Professional Development Committee, Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), and Sunshine Committee. She also serves as a Region 9 mentor teacher for NMPED.



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She is a fierce advocate for all students, providing them with equity and support when needed. Mrs. Gonzales demonstrates her passion and devotion for Inspira STEAM Academy, ensuring an equitable education for all students. She wants to see the students succeed with a strong foundation within the early years in bilingualism as well as STEAM, to make them well-rounded students. She is excited to build a strong relationship with the school's community, providing them with family events and parent trainings for support.

Mrs. Patricia Watkins, Founder, was born and raised in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Mrs. Watkins obtained her Associate's Degree in Automotive, Diesel, Industrial, and Power Generation from the Universal Technical Institute. She is currently attending Northern New Mexico College to complete her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education.

As a mother of three children with Autism, Mrs. Watkins searched for the best schools for her children. She is a powerful advocate for charter schools because of their ability to provide support for her children. The smaller class sizes and the ability for teachers to understand her children were essential in her choice of schools. Mrs. Watkins has participated in the Parent Ambassador Program through Public Charter Schools of New Mexico (PCSNM), showing advocacy for students and finding support for all families. She authored an article featured in PCSNM January Newsletter.

Mrs. Watkins is a member of the Equity Council, Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), Technology Committee, and Sunshine Committee. She is part of the Region 9 teacher mentee program.

What drives Mrs. Watkins to be a founder of Inspira STEAM Academy is to create an environment that Las Cruces does not have. The ability to support our bilingual culture appropriately and watch our students flourish for what they know, regardless of what language they speak. Being able to observe children explore their world through a STEAM perspective and supporting them along the way. Mrs. Watkins wants to make a difference in children's lives and believes that doing so through Inspira STEAM Academy will allow her to help make the change in the best way possible.

Mr. Enrique Avalos, Founder, was born in El Paso, Texas. He has had the privilege of moving around the country while growing up. He has been in New Mexico since 2009, when he started attending college at New Mexico State University. He graduated with a Master of Arts in Education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and his Bachelor of Science in Education, Secondary Education—Social Studies. He currently holds Texas Educator Certifications in English Language Arts and Reading/Social Studies Grades (4-8), Social Studies Grades (7-12), and English as a Second Language Supplemental Grades (4-12).

Mr. Avalos decided to join Inspira STEAM Academy because of the urgent need for high-quality, bilingual instruction in Las Cruces. He states, "Many places say they have bilingual programs, but it's definitely not done with fidelity and has started to lack a bit of heart as well."

Mrs. Vanessa Alegria, Founder, was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. She later moved to Las Cruces, New Mexico, where she graduated from New Mexico State University. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Graphic Design.

Mrs. Alegria obtained her Health Assistant License, Substitute License, Educational Assistant License, and her First Aid and CPR Certification. She has worked as a STARS coordinator and registrar for New America High School. She has served as a member of the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), Equity Council (EC), and an Assistant Soccer Coach.

Mrs. Alegria is fueled by being able to provide students in the Las Cruces community access to a bilingual, engaging, hands-on learning environment that nurtures their potential and inspires them to become lifelong learners. As a parent, it is important for her to be able to provide these kinds of opportunities to future students.



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

**Mission**

Inspira STEAM Academy will cultivate globally-minded scholars through rigorous Spanish language acquisition focused on STEAM instructional programming.

Misión

Inspira STEAM Academy cultivará estudiantes con mentalidad global a través de un riguroso programa de adquisición del idioma español centrado en la programación instructiva de STEAM.

How Inspira STEAM Academy Will Achieve Its Mission

Inspira STEAM Academy is dedicated to fulfilling its mission by integrating bilingual education, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math), an interdisciplinary approach, and inquiry-based learning. We aim to create a comprehensive, innovative, and engaging educational environment where every aspect of the curriculum is designed to promote cognitive development, spark creativity, and equip students with the bilingual and STEAM skills necessary for thriving in a complex, interconnected world.

Beginning in kindergarten and first grade, Inspira will incorporate Spanish education for 80% of the day. The other 20% of the day will be utilized to solidify English concepts and to ensure children understand more complex vocabulary. Teachers will design learning experiences that facilitate the integration of STEAM through a hands-on approach and bilingual immersion. Students will learn the technical language of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics in English, and they will demonstrate proficiency and confidence when showcasing projects in Spanish.

The percentage of English instruction will increase as the years progress. In second grade, students will receive 70% of their instruction in Spanish and 30% in English. In third grade, we will increase the instruction provided in English to 40% to ensure students have the vocabulary to support their comprehension on standardized tests. By 4th and 5th grade, children will be in a 50/50 model to equally support both languages.

The bilingual model focused on STEAM will help Inspira STEAM Academy achieve its mission by developing proficiency in both languages, emphasizing high levels of fluency in the target language while also maintaining and enhancing native language skills. STEAM subject matter will be taught in Spanish through project-based lessons, incorporating cultural and contextual relevance to ensure engagement and comprehension. The inquiry-based learning will involve hands-on activities, experiments, and real-world problem-solving tasks, encouraging students to engage deeply with the material.

Inspira STEAM Academy will offer an enriched academic calendar that exceeds state requirements by 67 instructional hours. Our teachers benefit from 203 hours of professional development, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively teach in this specialized program. This extensive training enhances their expertise, ensuring they are well-prepared to support and inspire our students on their unique learning journeys. The extended schedule provides students with ample opportunities to engage in innovative STEAM projects, fostering their creativity and critical thinking skills.

Additionally, the program places a strong emphasis on Spanish language acquisition, ensuring that students excel academically while also developing valuable language skills in a supportive environment. Teachers will utilize standards and benchmarks as a pacing guide and will incorporate community partners in each 6-8 week unit to provide students with resources to support our curriculum. Students will showcase projects every 6-8 weeks to parents, students, and community members, further solidifying their knowledge in each unit. Students will participate in hands-on activities that provide opportunities for them to speak and explain scientific methods in Spanish through scaffolded sentence stems until they are able to speak fluently on their own.

The culmination of the units will have rubrics that will assess their proficiency and growth through summative assessments, which will be filed in their digital portfolios that will accompany them throughout their academic career at Inspira.

Importance of the Mission to Our Proposed Community

The proposed community for Inspira STEAM Academy is located in the Eastern part of Las Cruces, locally known as the "East Mesa." This includes the area in which Sonoma Elementary, Desert Hills Elementary, Jornada Elementary, and Loma Heights Elementary are currently located. Inspira will provide a much-needed educational choice for families on the rapidly growing east side of the city, an area that currently lacks school choice alternatives for school enrollment.

While data is not provided for each individual school, Las Cruces Public Schools has 15.5% of its student population identified as English Language Learners (ELLs). The LCPS page also reports providing special education services to approximately 5,400 students. This translates to approximately 3,679 students, given the total student enrollment of 23,771. Per recent data, 68.2% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. (U.S. News & World Report, n.d.).



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These statistics highlight the need to address the academic achievement deficiencies of the student demographic majority in the proposed community. Such deficiencies require focused attention and tailored educational strategies to ensure that their unique needs are met effectively. In light of this, Inspira's educational philosophy and mission have been designed to cater to these students. Inspira STEAM Academy offers a much-needed educational option in Las Cruces with its innovative bilingual and STEAM-focused instructional model, which is not currently available in the area and is specifically designed to meet the diverse needs of the local demographic, particularly given the city's significant Hispanic population and the growing demand for STEAM-literate individuals.

The importance of Inspira STEAM Academy not only lies in the East Mesa of Las Cruces, but also in the greater area that Las Cruces serves. The proposed community is rooted in its proximity to the expansive border towns of El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, metropolitan area as well as its proximity to Spaceport America, White Sands Missile Range, and NASA. Inspira's school mission is deeply embedded within this community's region, surrounded by rich history, culture, and scientific commitment to innovation.

It emphasizes the importance of providing equal access to educational opportunities and resources in both English and the native languages of our students. By incorporating robust language instruction and supportive measures, we empower students not only to excel academically but also to thrive socially within a bilingual environment. This approach nurtures a deep appreciation for diverse cultures, encouraging students to embrace and respect linguistic and cultural diversity as integral components of their identity and community. The unique location near the Mexico border provides an incredible opportunity to preserve and revitalize the Spanish language, which has slowly been lost near border communities. (Wikipedia contributors, 2025).

Our STEAM curriculum will be bolstered by partnerships with prominent institutions that reside in our vicinity. For example, Las Cruces is home to the Spaceport America office and acts as the headquarters for Virgin Galactic. Additionally, we are near New Mexico State University, Doña Ana Community College, White Sands Missile Range, and NASA. These well-respected entities will serve not only as local resources but also as critical partners in fostering our educational mission (Visit Las Cruces, n.d.). New Mexico State University will support Inspira STEAM through their Community Outreach programs, such as MC2, NMC3, and the Arts Department. These partnerships are critical to the achievement of our mission and will cultivate positive relations within the community and provide continued opportunities for bilingual and STEAM programming and enrichment.

Innovation

Inspira STEAM Academy is dedicated to fulfilling our mission by integrating bilingual education, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), an interdisciplinary approach, and inquiry-based learning. We aim to create a comprehensive, innovative, and engaging educational environment where every aspect of the curriculum is designed to promote cognitive development, spark creativity, and equip students with the skills necessary for thriving in a complex, interconnected world.

Our approach is innovative through its 80/20 (80% Spanish/20% English) Spanish immersion model in Kindergarten and first grade, which then incrementally shifts to a 50/50 balance by 4th and 5th grade to ensure full bilingual proficiency while building English vocabulary for standardized tests. The integration of STEAM subject matter taught in Spanish through project-based lessons and inquiry-based learning offers a unique educational experience. This integration of bilingualism and STEAM curriculum is unique and is a model that is not currently offered in any elementary school within the proposed community or in the state of New Mexico.

The students of Inspira STEAM Academy will demonstrate proficiency and confidence when showcasing projects in Spanish, which can be assessed through performance rubrics and presentations. The progressive increase in English instruction from 20% to 50% across grade levels provides clear benchmarks for language acquisition. Students will showcase projects every 6-8 weeks to parents, peers, and community members, serving as tangible demonstrations of learning and concept solidification. Our emphasis on students speaking and explaining scientific methods in Spanish through scaffolded sentence stems allows for observable progress in oral language fluency. The initial baseline data on student performance in math (21%-40%) and reading (30%-56%) provides clear targets for measuring improvement in academic outcomes over time as a direct result of our tailored educational strategies.



What Mission Success Will Look Like

Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to laying the groundwork for a school that offers a cutting-edge, inclusive, and forward-thinking education and nurtures students to become proficient in STEAM disciplines in the Spanish language while cultivating them into well-rounded, conscientious citizens. Our vision for success encompasses the holistic development of all students, preparing them to navigate and contribute positively to an ever-evolving world.

Mission success will be evident when students are not only academically excelling (as measured by improved scores from the initial baselines as well as overall proficiency scores in math and reading) but are also thriving socially within a bilingual environment. Success means students will deeply appreciate diverse cultures, embrace linguistic and cultural diversity, and feel empowered by their identity. We will see students confidently applying the technical language of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics, demonstrating proficiency in both English and Spanish when engaging in complex STEAM projects and discussions. Students will be inquisitive, active learners, comfortable asking questions and refining their approaches based on new insights.

Ultimately, mission success will manifest in graduates who are bilingual, biliterate, and culturally competent, equipped with the critical thinking, problem-solving, and creative skills fostered by STEAM and inquiry-based learning. They will be prepared for future academic and career pathways, especially in high-demand STEM fields, and will contribute positively to their communities as responsible, engaged global citizens.

Section A References

Visit Las Cruces. (n.d.). *Home*. <https://www.visitlascruces.com/> (<https://www.visitlascruces.com/>)

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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".*



Vision: At Inspira STEAM Academy, we are committed to fostering a transformative educational journey for our diverse community of learners.

Visión: En Inspira STEAM Academy, estamos comprometidos a fomentar un viaje educativo transformador para nuestra diversa comunidad de estudiantes.

The Team's Reasoning and Purpose

Inspira STEAM Academy aims to provide quality bilingual education for children and families in Las Cruces. Currently, there are no elementary schools in the community focused on STEAM. By teaching Spanish through STEAM, we are preparing children to become competitive citizens in their quest for higher education or in vocational fields. Having concrete language acquisition and fluency in Spanish and English to describe science, technology, engineering, art, and math will better prepare all students for their future. Our community will also be better equipped with citizens who can problem solve, think critically, and contribute to the progress of our scientific community. Having these skills, students will be able to access information across our neighboring communities and Spanish-speaking countries across the world.

Our Commitment to Providing a Public Education Platform for Our Proposed Community

To provide better academic outcomes, Inspira STEAM Academy will serve the community by providing a place where children will learn about STEAM education in a second language. This will help our community have citizens who will be familiar with the mathematics, science, engineering, art, and technology areas. With the proximity to Mexico and 59.4% of the city's residents identifying as Latino or Hispanic (Data USA, 2023) and approximately 33.1% of residents speaking another language at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023), our students will have the competitive edge to continue learning about STEAM at their own pace when they leave our academy.

The existing public school community often struggles to provide highly specialized, bilingual immersion programs that cater to specific academic interests. Therefore, another elementary charter school is not merely an addition, but a vital expansion of choice. Our team is deeply committed to the charter school movement, recognizing its power to foster innovation and respond directly to community desires that may not be fully met by traditional district offerings. We believe firmly in the charter school model as a path for providing high-quality, specialized education.

Community Interactions to Provide Students with Better Academic Outcomes

Our team intends to interact with our community by providing learning opportunities for their children to learn Spanish through STEAM. These enriched experiences are designed to directly translate into measurable improvements in student performance on state assessments in science and mathematics, as well as enhanced English language proficiency for our bilingual learners, moving beyond the current baseline scores to foster academic excellence. We will invite our future partners to interact with the students in their educational experiences. New Mexico State University, Doña Ana Community College, White Sands Missile Range, Challenger Learning Center of Las Cruces (LCPS), Spaceport America, and NASA are not only destinations that the children will know about, but they will be organizations that will be a part of their daily interactions while they are students at Inspira STEAM Academy.

Through our established partnership with NMSU, our teachers will engage in professional development tailored to their programs. NMSU MC2 staff members have committed to visiting Inspira to provide in-depth training on essential skills such as number structuring, inquiry-based instruction, dynamic and responsive teaching, and one-on-one interventions. MC2 leadership has commented that they believe Inspira STEAM Academy will provide students with a great opportunity to learn about STEM subjects, and they are excited to partner with us.

The NMSU STEM program will offer additional opportunities, including classroom outreach, field trips to the university, and support for our after-school program. Inspira will also collaborate with various departments at the university, particularly in the bilingual, education, and engineering departments, to promote opportunities for student teachers to complete their practice and transition into teaching roles at Inspira.

The NMSU Art Department will play an essential role in the development and implementation of our STEAM units. At NMSU, the Art department provides quarterly hands-on opportunities for students to engage with the university. They also maintain valuable resources and host guest teachers who can collaborate with our educators at Inspira to enhance the integration of the art component within STEAM.

Our partnership with White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) will include having guest engineers at Inspira who will provide enrichment and career exploration. We will also work with WSMR in their program Strong BANDS (Balance, Activity, Nutrition, Determination, and Strength), which promotes healthy and active lifestyles. Students at Inspira will travel to WSMR to observe the museum and learn how to preserve the artifacts and history of the unique part of the Army and New Mexico.



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The Challenger Learning Center of Las Cruces (LCPS) offers students the opportunity to solve real-world problems through hands-on experiences. They employ role-playing strategies and space simulations that bring classroom lessons to life, fostering interest in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics). The center is dedicated to supporting the educational mission of the Space Shuttle Challenger's final flights, encouraging exploration and learning. The Challenger Center provides a variety of science enrichment activities, including camps, science nights, classroom activities, Space Fest, and teacher support.

In collaboration with NASA, the center incorporates literature components, allowing an astronaut to read to students from the International Space Station. NASA also offers Inspira students the *Kids Club Picture Show*. Students can view photographs taken of various content areas throughout NASA explorations. This initiative enables students to ask astronauts questions, enhancing their understanding of space and the space station, and connecting all elements of STEAM.

Inspira STEAM Academy will also collaborate with Spaceport America in their STEM Education. This program directly links with our inquiry-based approach through their outreach programs. Students will be able to learn about rocket engineering and the Spaceport America features.

Serving our Proposed Community in Unique and Innovative Ways

Our program will be innovative by incorporating bilingual education and STEAM - interdisciplinary and inquiry-based learning. By combining these instructional approaches, we will have students learn at a level of excellence. Interdisciplinary approaches are an authentic way of learning. At Inspira, students will be able to adequately resolve relevant issues that influence their world by learning and growing through a variety of perspectives where they can engage all facets of their learning, particularly relevant to the unique environmental and technological challenges and opportunities present in the Las Cruces region.

Section A References Continued

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Data USA. (2023). Las Cruces, NM. Retrieved May 14, 2025, from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/las-cruces-nm/> (<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/las-cruces-nm/>)

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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;



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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



Uniqueness, Innovation, and Significant Contribution

Inspira STEAM Academy will uniquely contribute to the local New Mexico public education landscape by offering families a public school option that integrates an 80/20 Bilingual Education program with Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM), an interdisciplinary approach (IA), and inquiry-based teaching (IBT). This holistic combination fills a critical void, as no other elementary school in the Las Cruces community currently focuses on STEAM. Our integrated approach will not only enhance academic outcomes but also foster a deeper, more relevant learning experience for students, specifically preparing them for the growing demand for bilingual professionals in STEAM fields.

Bilingual Education

"National studies show bilingual and multicultural education programs are beneficial for all students, including non-minority students. Specifically for English learners, developmentally appropriate instruction in the student's home language teaches students the value of their culture and improves academic outcomes. The move toward culturally responsive teaching has been seen as a way to better serve minority students by acknowledging and addressing inequities built into various aspects of education, such as curriculum design, classroom discipline, and student-teacher relationships." (New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee, 2021, p. 5).

Uniqueness and Innovation

Research consistently demonstrates that bilingual education significantly improves cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills, and executive functioning (Pritchard & Fischetti, 2013). Our students will gain a broader understanding of cultures, fostering global awareness and inclusivity. This cognitive advantage often translates to higher scores on standardized tests and greater success in higher education, as bilingual individuals typically show better performance on executive function tasks from early childhood through adulthood (Chung-Fat-Yim et al., 2019). Beyond academics, bilingualism fosters social-emotional learning, positively influencing attention and conflict management even in infants as young as seven months (Marian & Shook, 2012). Our program empowers students from dominant Spanish-speaking homes to maintain their mother language and culture, uniting communities through language and cultural understanding. Crucially, this early Spanish language proficiency will also lay the groundwork for understanding complex scientific and technical vocabulary in Spanish, which is essential for many growing STEAM careers and international collaboration.

STEAM Education - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics

"To develop a complete mind: Study the science of art; Study the art of science. Learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else." — Leonardo Da Vinci" (Space Foundation, 2022).

STEAM Instructional Programming

STEAM education is a holistic, interdisciplinary approach that combines these disciplines to foster creative problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking (Space Foundation, 2022). Our STEAM approach integrates various subjects into a cohesive learning experience, directly mirroring how adults solve complex problems daily. This interdisciplinary learning encourages students to learn in an interconnected way, supported by project-based learning and hands-on activities that apply theoretical knowledge to real-time challenges.

Students will gain knowledge in both languages by learning in an integrated way and will have a combination of language, science, mathematics, and technology in interdisciplinary units. This method promotes a holistic understanding by considering issues from multiple disciplines. Learning in this manner will foster communication and teamwork among teachers and students. Students will have fun while gaining solutions for real-world issues that require interdisciplinary approaches. It will be relevant for students to understand that different subjects frequently intersect.

The interdisciplinary approach of STEAM programming also incorporates the Arts into STEAM, unleashing students' creativity and innovation, utilizing both hemispheres of the brain – the right for creativity and the left for logic and problem-solving. Research shows this "STEAM first order effect advantage" significantly improves learning opportunities for emerging bilingual students (Hughes et al., 2022). Our daily focus on critical thinking and problem-solving will equip students for careers that don't even exist yet. Our students will be equipped with the skills to join multiple fields in and out of higher education settings, with the added advantage of technical Spanish vocabulary that is increasingly sought after in various STEM professions globally and domestically.

Interdisciplinary Approach

Interdisciplinary approaches enrich how students learn by fostering collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and preparing students to solve complex, interconnected problems. This method develops knowledge, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and a love for learning. It also helps students recognize biases, think critically, tolerate ambiguity, and appreciate ethical concerns (Carleton College, n.d.).



Uniqueness and Innovation

Students will gain knowledge in both languages by learning in an integrated way. They will have a combination of language, science, math, and technology in interdisciplinary units. This method promotes a holistic understanding by considering issues from multiple disciplines. Learning in this manner will foster communication and teamwork among teachers and students. Students will have fun while gaining solutions for real-world issues that require interdisciplinary approaches. It will be relevant for students to understand that different subjects frequently intersect.

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL)

IBL is an instructional strategy that brings teaching and learning into alignment with the student and the skills needed for future success (Marks, 2013). Studies have been conducted on the benefits of applying IBL in the classroom. Guido (2017) identifies seven benefits of IBL, arguing that it: (a) reinforces curriculum content, (b) warms up the brain for learning, (c) promotes a deeper understanding of the content, (d) helps make learning rewarding, (e) builds initiative and self-direction, (f) works in almost any classroom, and (g) offers differentiated instruction (Miller & Edmonds, 2020).

Uniqueness and Innovation

Inquiry-based learning encourages curiosity and independent thinking. It is student-led thinking, where the focus shifts from teacher instruction to student-led exploration and inquiry. Student-centered learning promotes critical thinking, analysis, questioning, and research. This skill helps students develop a deeper understanding of the subjects and how to approach and solve problems. By actively engaging students in their learning process, they take ownership and have better retention of the subjects they are passionate about learning. Students will construct their learning based on their previous knowledge rather than having education conveyed to them. Inquiry-based learning empowers students to become independent learners who will search and evaluate information that they receive. Inspira students will be adaptable learners who will be able to navigate the complexities of a fast-evolving world.

Compelling Community Need and Demand for Inspira STEAM Academy

The applicant team is confident there is a compelling need and demand for Inspira STEAM Academy's educational program in the Las Cruces area, based on multiple layers of evidence:

Unmet Demand for Specialized Programs

There are currently no elementary schools in the community focused on STEAM. This presents a significant unmet need for an educational model that integrates these critical disciplines.

Addressing Documented Achievement Gaps

The current academic performance in the proposed area, with students scoring 21%-40% in Math and 30%-56% in reading, highlights a profound need for innovative and effective instructional strategies. Inspira's integrated bilingual STEAM, interdisciplinary, and inquiry-based approach is specifically designed to target these deficits and improve academic outcomes for this population.

Meeting the Needs of Underserved Populations

Our program directly responds to the needs of the 72%-90% minority student population. The New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee (2021) explicitly calls for culturally responsive and home-language instruction for English learners, underscoring the critical alignment of our bilingual approach with state-identified needs for this demographic.

Community Desire for Educational Choice

Historically, significant urban renewal led to families moving to the rapidly growing northeast side of the city. This area currently lacks school choice alternatives for school enrollment, creating a strong demand for new, innovative educational options like Inspira.

Alignment with Regional Economic and Workforce Development and Bilingual STEM Demand

Las Cruces is strategically located near major STEAM-focused institutions such as Spaceport America, New Mexico State University, White Sands Missile Range, and NASA. This vibrant ecosystem signals a strong and growing regional and national demand for skilled individuals in STEAM fields. Moreover, there is an increasing recognition of the need for bilingual professionals in STEM/STEAM. Employers highly value individuals who can navigate linguistic and cultural barriers, and the ability to access and communicate scientific and technical information in



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Spanish is becoming a significant asset. By cultivating early Spanish language proficiency alongside a deep understanding of STEAM concepts, Inspira directly addresses the future workforce needs and economic development of the region, making our program uniquely desirable for families seeking to equip their students for competitive, high-demand careers.

The evidence for this demand is based on reliable research demonstrating the effectiveness of bilingual and STEAM education for diverse student populations, effective practices from successful models, and the demonstrated need within the specific demographics of the proposed geographic area, coupled with a current lack of similar specialized educational choices.

Section A References Continued

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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.);**
- 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**



Goal 1 related to the School's Mission/Student Performance

Promote Proficiency in Spanish and STEAM Integration

Objective: By the end of the school year, students will demonstrate mastery in Spanish-English communication skills appropriate to their developmental stage in line with New Mexico's World Languages Standards (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2018) and the STEAM Standards (Benchmarks NM.S.1-5).

Action Plan: Inspira STEAM Academy will design and implement a curriculum that integrates Spanish language instruction with STEAM projects, such as bilingual, science, technology, engineering, art, and math experiments. We will integrate during and after-school enrichment programs and language labs to support Spanish language acquisition and STEAM skills development. Students will be assessed using Avant STAMP (Assessed from the end of October to mid-March and from February 1st to May 31st), the statewide Spanish language proficiency assessment. The assessment is for students who have not yet reached proficiency in Spanish (Intermediate-High level on STAMP).

Students will also have short cycle assessments using Istation (assessed at the Beginning of the Year (BOY), Middle of the Year (MOY), and End of the Year (EOY). Istation can also be tested on demand for students who require more data or may need to retest due to external factors. This will be one indicator of present levels and provide specific interventions for students in Spanish and English Language Arts and Math. The reading Assessment Domain of Istation will tailor each test to the abilities of the individual student while monitoring the five critical reading skill domains of:

- Phonemic awareness
- Alphabet knowledge and skills
- Connected text fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

The WIDA Screener (administered during the first 40 days) will be used for the initial identification of English Language Learners (ELs) and to monitor their progress throughout the year. The scores will be used to identify ELs, to monitor progress, and to plan differentiated instruction.

To evaluate student progress in STEAM, teachers will refer back to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and New Mexico 6 Specific Standards. We will also use short-cycle assessment (every 6-8 weeks) by asking summative questions, using performance-based assessments, evaluating students' application of knowledge and understanding of standards, and using STEAM Module Project Rubrics. Digital portfolios will house all culminating projects and will serve as evidence for their Bilingual State Seal in the future. Please reference B(1)a chart for more information on instructional programming.



B(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Instructional Programming

Mission: Inspira STEAM Academy will cultivate globally-minded scholars through rigorous Spanish language acquisition focused on STEAM instructional programming.		
Subject Area K-5th	Measure/Metric for the *2026-2027 school year.	Standard Reference
Language proficiency in Spanish	All kinder through fifth grade will be at or above proficiency in reading writing, listening, and speaking at the end of term	Spanish Language Arts Standards WIDA Spanish Language Development AVANT Stamp Istation
Language proficiency in English	All third to fifth grade will be at or above proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking at the end of term for NM-MSSA	State Standards for English Language Arts Istation
Proficiency in the Sciences	At or above the level of the application and understanding the scientific concepts.	Next Generation Science Standards
Proficiency in Social Studies	At or above the level of knowledge of geography, civics, and historical events.	NM Social Studies Standards
Proficiency in Math	At or above the level of mastery of mathematical skills and problem-solving skills	NM Mathematics Instructional Scope

*Students will perform at or above grade level and increase by 2.5% in the subsequent years in all subjects until reaching mastery.

Outcome Measures: Students' Spanish language proficiency will improve as measured by standardized assessments and classroom observations. STEAM projects will showcase students' ability to apply Spanish language skills in practical contexts, with evidence of increased problem-solving abilities and creative thinking. These goals aim to create a rigorous and excellent learning environment while promoting global perspectives, language acquisition, and STEAM competencies.

Goal 2 related to School's Mission/Student Performance

Enhance Inquiry-Based Learning to Foster Global Awareness

Objective: By the end of the academic year, students will demonstrate improved global awareness and critical thinking skills through inquiry-based learning, aligned with New Mexico's Social Studies Standards (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2022. Benchmarks K-5). 100% of the K-5 teachers will implement inquiry-based learning through inquiry-based approaches as measured by observations, lesson plans, walkthroughs, and feedback coaching.

Action Plan: Implement inquiry-based learning units that require students to research and present on global issues, integrating multiple perspectives and disciplines (at the end of 6-8 weeks). Conduct regular professional development workshops, ten days at the beginning of the year, four hours monthly, and seven extra days throughout the year (including teacher-parent conferences) for teachers focused on effective



inquiry-based teaching strategies. Utilize formative assessments to evaluate students' progress in questioning, researching, and synthesizing global information.

Outcome Measures: Student presentations and projects will reflect a deeper understanding of global issues and diverse cultures. Teacher assessments will indicate an increase in students' ability to ask critical questions and engage in independent research.

Inspira STEAM Academy aims to significantly improve academic outcomes for its targeted student population by implementing a series of strategic measures that address the specific needs of students, particularly those from low-income, minority, and rural backgrounds, as highlighted in the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit. By focusing on personalized, bilingual education, dedicated support staff, and strong community and parent involvement, this school will provide an enriched environment that surpasses the current academic achievements observed in schools serving the same demographic.

This school will be more effective in academic achievement than the schools currently serving the targeted student population by providing a small, supportive, bilingual environment with dedicated ancillary staff, strong communication with parents, and a culturally responsive curriculum. These strategic approaches will address the specific needs of at-risk and minority students, as outlined in the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit, ensuring equitable access to quality education and better academic outcomes for all students.

Inspira STEAM Academy will prioritize small class sizes, allowing for more individualized attention and tailored instruction. Smaller class sizes are proven to improve student outcomes, especially for students who need extra support. Research consistently shows that reduced class sizes can improve student engagement, increase teacher-student interaction, and result in higher academic performance, particularly in early grades (American Federation of Teachers, n.d.).

Inspira STEAM Academy will employ a strong team of bilingual educators who are trained to support students whose first language is not English. This will address the linguistic needs of the student population, improving literacy and overall academic achievement. Studies have shown that students who receive instruction in their native language while acquiring English tend to perform better academically. This approach is especially important for minority students, as highlighted by the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit, which called for increased access to bilingual education and language support for New Mexico's at-risk students.

Inspira STEAM Academy will employ additional staff, such as intervention specialists, tutors, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals, to provide targeted support to students who require extra help in subjects like math, reading, and writing. Providing additional academic support ensures that all students, including those with learning disabilities or language barriers, receive the necessary tools to succeed. This is in direct response to the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit, which emphasized the need for more equitable resources for students with special needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Inspira STEAM Academy will prioritize frequent and transparent communication with parents. Regular updates will be provided through parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, and written reports. Active parental involvement is a key factor in student success. According to research, when parents are involved in their students' education, students perform better academically, have higher self-esteem, and exhibit improved behavior. This is particularly important in underserved communities, as emphasized by the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit, which called for greater parent involvement in the education of marginalized students.

The school will specifically target the achievement gap for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, minority students, and those with special needs. By providing equitable access to resources, differentiated instruction, and culturally relevant teaching practices, the school will offer a more effective educational experience than the current schools serving these students.

Governing Board Oversight: The Governing Board will receive a comprehensive monthly report from the Executive Director. This report will feature detailed data disaggregated by grade level, specific subjects, and tailored interventions designed for students facing challenges or excelling beyond expectations. The board will also receive reports disaggregated to particular groups, including economically disadvantaged students, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and racial/ethnic groups. Following the presentation of this report, the Board will be allotted time to engage in discussions and pose clarifying questions, ensuring a thorough understanding of the progress and needs of all students.

Section B References



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Applicant Evidence :



B(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...

Uploaded on **6/1/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**

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.**
- 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**



Curriculum and Research-based Evidence

The Inspira STEAM Academy curriculum is intentionally designed to be research-based, developmentally appropriate, and supportive of bilingual education, while integrating STEAM concepts and fostering an inquiry-based approach. This comprehensive model provides an innovative and engaging educational environment that collectively enhances cognitive abilities, fosters creativity, and prepares students for a complex, interconnected world, laying the foundation for a cutting-edge, inclusive, and future-ready education.

Research-Based Evidence for Core Curricular Components

Bilingual Education

The 80/20 (80% Spanish/20% English) Spanish immersion model in Kindergarten and first grade, which then incrementally shifts to a 50/50 balance by 4th and 5th grade to ensure full bilingual proficiency while building English vocabulary for standardized tests. National studies consistently show the cognitive, academic, and cultural benefits of bilingual education for all students, including non-minority students. Specifically for English learners, instruction in their home language improves academic outcomes and teaches the value of their culture (New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee, 2021, p. 5). Research by Pritchard & Fischetti (2013) demonstrates that bilingual education enhances cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills, and executive functioning. Bilingual students often excel in multitasking and cognitive task-switching, leading to higher scores on standardized tests and greater success in higher education due to broad vocabulary and improved language skills. Chung-Fat-Yim et al. (2019) note that bilinguals generally outperform monolinguals on executive function tasks from early childhood through older adulthood. Furthermore, bilingualism positively influences attention and conflict management in infants as young as seven months (Marian & Shook, 2012), supporting social-emotional learning from an early age.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics)

STEAM education is a holistic, interdisciplinary approach that fosters creative problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking by harnessing the natural symbiosis between these disciplines (Space Foundation, 2022). This approach integrates various subjects into cohesive learning experiences, mirroring real-world problem-solving. By incorporating Arts into STEM, we engage both hemispheres of the brain, fostering creativity alongside logical innovation. Hughes et al. (2022) highlight that integrating arts in STEAM offers significant learning opportunities for emerging bilingual students, increasing equity in learning among emergent bilingual and English fluent learners of science. This prepares students with critical thinking and problem-solving skills for future careers, many of which do not yet exist.

Interdisciplinary Approach (IA)

Interdisciplinary approaches enrich learning by fostering collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and preparing students to solve complex, interconnected global problems. This method develops knowledge, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and a love for learning, while also helping students recognize biases, think critically, tolerate ambiguity, and appreciate ethical concerns (Carleton College, n.d.). Learning in this integrated manner promotes holistic understanding and fosters communication and teamwork.

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL)

IBL is an instructional strategy that aligns teaching and learning with the skills needed for future success (Marks, 2013). Studies by Guido (2017), as cited in Miller & Edmonds (2020), identify seven benefits of IBL: reinforcing curriculum content, warming up the brain for learning, promoting deeper understanding, making learning rewarding, building initiative and self-direction, working in almost any classroom, and offering differentiated instruction. IBL encourages curiosity, independent thinking, and student-led exploration, shifting the focus from teacher instruction to student-driven inquiry. This active engagement fosters critical thinking, analysis, and research skills, leading to deeper understanding and better retention.

Equity of Curriculum for all Underserved Populations

Inspira STEAM Academy is deeply committed to ensuring equity for all underserved populations, particularly those from low-income, minority, and rural backgrounds, as highlighted in the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit.

Inspira STEAM Academy has chosen Benchmark Adelante for Spanish language acquisition. This curriculum includes texts written by Latinx authors and illustrators that reflect the lived experiences, values, and cultural backgrounds of Spanish-speaking communities across the Americas. It features stories, folktales, and informational texts rooted in diverse Hispanic cultures, promoting cultural pride and connection.

Benchmark Advance was chosen for English Language Arts and demonstrates cultural relevance through its intentional design of diverse, inclusive, and authentic educational materials that reflect the identities and experiences of all students.

Both Spanish and English Language arts curricula interconnect science and social studies, embedded in the stories or related lessons.



Bridges in Mathematics encourages educators to connect mathematical concepts to real-world situations that are relevant to students' lives. By designing lessons that incorporate students' cultural backgrounds and experiences, the program helps students see the value and applicability of mathematics in their communities.

Our curriculum and school design incorporate several strategic measures to achieve this:

Inclusive Classroom Model

Each grade level (Kindergarten to 5th grade) will operate as an inclusive classroom, fostering a cohesive and focused learning environment. Kindergarten and First Grade will benefit from a full-time Educational Assistant (EA) supporting teachers to enhance student learning and engagement.

Tailored Special Education Services

Our special education services will utilize a flexible approach with both push-in and pull-out models. This ensures special education professionals collaborate with classroom teachers for in-class support when appropriate and provide targeted, individualized instruction outside the classroom when necessary, meeting the unique needs of all students.

Student-Centered, Culturally Responsive Curriculum

We empower students as inquirers, creating an open space for them to share their culture, language, and community. We commit to equitable learning by refraining from prescribing specific units, instead, inviting students to participate in the creation of their learning experiences. This cultivates a safe and respectful environment where every individual can take pride in their identity, regardless of background, religion, language, or beliefs.

Personalized Bilingual Education

Our 80/20 bilingual education model, beginning in kindergarten and first grade, directly addresses the linguistic needs of English learners and minority students. Studies confirm that instruction in a student's native language improves literacy and overall academic achievement, a crucial component for at-risk students emphasized by the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit.

Small Class Sizes

Prioritizing small class sizes allows for more individualized attention and tailored instruction to improve student outcomes, especially for those needing extra support. Research consistently shows that reduced class sizes enhance student engagement, teacher-student interaction, and academic performance, particularly in early grades.

Dedicated Staff

We will employ staff, such as special education teachers and Education Assistants, to provide targeted support in subjects like math, reading, and writing. This ensures all students, including those with learning disabilities or language barriers, receive the necessary tools to succeed, directly responding to the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit's call for equitable resources.

Strong Parent and Community Involvement

We prioritize frequent and transparent communication with parents through regular updates, conferences, and reports. Active parental involvement is a key factor in student success, leading to better academic performance, higher self-esteem, and improved behavior, especially important in underserved communities, as emphasized by the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit.

Targeting the Achievement Gap

Our curriculum and instructional strategies are specifically designed to target the achievement gap for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, minority students, and those with special needs, providing equitable access to resources, differentiated instruction, and culturally relevant teaching practices.

Curriculum Alignment with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and New Mexico Content Standards

The proposed curriculum at Inspira STEAM Academy is fundamentally designed to align with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and New Mexico Content Standards across all subject areas.

Overall Alignment

Our chosen high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) – Benchmark Adelante (for Spanish/Bilingual Language Arts) and Bridges Math – are explicitly designed to align with state standards. We also leverage Inspire Science, which is built around the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), widely adopted or aligned by states, including New Mexico's specific science standards.



Explicit Standard References

Spanish Language Arts

Curriculum aligns with New Mexico's World Languages Standards (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2018) and WIDA Spanish Language Development Standards.

English Language Arts

Curriculum aligns with New Mexico's State Standards for English Language Arts and WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Science

Curriculum aligns with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and New Mexico's specific Science Standards (Benchmarks NM.S.1-5), as explicitly stated in Goal 1.

Social Studies

Curriculum aligns with New Mexico's Social Studies Standards (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2022. Benchmarks K-5), as explicitly stated in Goal 2.

Mathematics

Curriculum aligns with the NM Mathematics Instructional Scope. It aligns with NM Common Core Standards.

Integration in Unit Design

The *Mi Comunidad y Yo* sample unit demonstrates this alignment through interdisciplinary activities across multiple grade levels. Please reference C(1)a and C(1)b attached.



C(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - *Mi Comunidad y yo*

Mi Comunidad y Yo

Las comunidades se construyen a través de la cooperación y las responsabilidades compartidas

class	Spanish Language Arts	Math	Social Studies	Science	Arts	Social Emotional
kinder	Nuestros miembros de la comunidad? ELD-LA.K. Inform Expressive Language Expectation: ELD-LA.K Narrate Expressive	¿Cómo construimos nuestras casas usando figuras? K.G.A.1	¿Responsabilidades de los miembros de nuestra comunidad? ELD-SS.K Inform Expressive	¿Cómo representamos nuestros hogares a través de modelos? K-2-ETS1-1 Language Expectation: ELD-SC.K. Explain Interpretive	Representando nuestra comunidad utilizando pinturas. Anchor Standard 1	Identificando las emociones de nuestros miembros en la comunidad. K-4 Benchmark 2-1
primero	¿Cómo nos divertimos en el patio de recreo? ELD-LA.1 Narrate Interpretive	¿Cómo utilizar diferentes métodos para medir el patio de recreo? 1.MD.A.2 ELD-MA.1. Inform Expressive	La historia de cómo comenzaron los patios de recreo? ELD-SS.1. Inform Expressive	¿Cómo funcionan las máquinas en el patio de recreo? ELD-SC.1. Inform Expressive K-2ETS1-1 ELD-SC.1. Inform Interpretive	Podemos crear un modelo 3D de el patio de recreo. Anchor Standard #5	¿Cómo podemos tomar buenas decisiones cuando jugamos con nuestros amigos? K-4 Benchmark 2.1-2-2



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segundo	Las diferencias en los parques. ELD-LA.2-3. Narrate Interpretive	Utilizando gráficas para mostrar diferentes medidas de los parques. 2.MD.A.4 ELD-MA.2-3. Explain Expressive	¿Cómo utilizamos los mapas para las direcciones? ELD-SS.2-3. Argue Expressive	¿Cómo conducimos en los ecosistemas de los parques? 2-LS2-1 ELD-SC.2-3. Explain Interpretive	Nosotros cantaremos canciones sobre los parques. Anchor Standard # 8	¿Cómo controlamos nuestras emociones cuando trabajamos en equipo? K-4 B benchmark 2 1-2-1
tercero	Indagaciones sobre los jardines y sus plantas. ELD-LA.2-3. Narrate Interpretive	¿Cómo se multiplican las plantas en los jardines? 3.OA.A.3 2.MD.A.4 ELD-MA.2-3. Explain Expressive	¿Cómo impactan los precios de las frutas y vegetales a la comunidad? 3.18 ELD-SS.2-3. Argue Expressive	Construir el jardín de la comunidad. 3-LS-1 2-LS2-1 ELD-SC.2-3. Explain Interpretive	Creación del mapa de nuestro jardín. Anchor standard # 2	Nosotros podemos compartir nuestros recursos. K-4 Benchmark 1 3-4-3
cuarto	Cuáles son los ecosistemas del mundo. ELD-LA.4-5. Narrate Interpretive	¿Cómo utilizamos área y perímetro para determinar el cambio en los ecosistemas? 4.MD.A.3 ELD-MA.4-5. Explain Interpretive	La historia de los cambios que han transcurrido a través del tiempo. ELD-SS.4-5.Explain.Interpre tive	Investigaciones sobre los cambios que ocurren en los ecosistemas. 3-LS4-3 ELD-SC.4-5. Explain Interpretive	Crearemos imágenes de los organismos que observamos en los ecosistemas? Anchor Standard # 6	Podemos resolver nuestros problemas en equipo. K-4 Benchmark 1 3-4-2-3
quinto	¿Cómo implementamos medidas para organizar un centro	¿Cómo se puede financiar un plan para la estructura de un centro	La causa y el efecto del pasado y el presente utilizando tablas cronológicas.	¿Cómo experimentamos la calidad de la tierra, el agua, el aire y el	Crearemos una réplica tridimensional del centro comunitario.	Nosotros usamos nuestro liderazgo para tomar decisiones.

	comunitario? ELD-LA.4-5. Narrate Interpretive	comunitario? 5.OA.A.1 ELD-MA.4-5. Explain Interpretive		sol? 5-ESS2-1		
			ELD-SS.4-5. Explain Interpretive		Anchor Standard # 5 Anchor Standard # 11	5-8 Benchmark 1 5-6-1



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C(1)b. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Multigrade alignment document

Projected unit: Mi comunidad y yo			
	Kindergarten	3rd Grade	5th Grade
7:30-7:45	Students in kindergarten will come in and have breakfast and focus on a morning circle meeting in Spanish and English to build relationships. They will begin with singing los días de la semana, los meses del año and buenos días. The educator will then talk about their unit on <i>Mi Comunidad y yo</i> . In Spanish they will have boards or posters with labels such as <i>mother, father, mama, papa</i> , etc. The educators will continuously reference the Spanish and English labels.	Students will continue multilingual greetings; introduce a <i>Word of the Day</i> in Spanish, such as <i>comunidad, vecinos, amigos</i> and with a translation to English. At this time, the students will use a "soft start" with independent reading of bilingual picture books for students who arrive early.	Students in fifth grade will have their breakfast while reflecting and discussing how respect and responsibility are very important. This creates a sense of responsibility on all students and takes ownership of those decisions being made. It also allows students to feel safe in their discussions.
7:45-9:15	The kindergarten students will move on to read <i>La Casa de Lia</i> and will discuss in Spanish who lives in our neighborhood. Students will learn key vocabulary such as <i>casa, escuela, familia</i> . Students will be creating a drawing of a paper house to reinforce the new words they have learned. While working on this the students will be working on their fonetica from Benchmark Adelante.	<i>Literature & Writing utilizing Benchmark Advance</i> : Read a longer Spanish text or dual-language book about neighborhoods and civic life to connect to our unit. The teacher will go over the vocabulary words. They will read the book <i>Growing Plants</i> . Students will make a connection with the project of the garden and what the plants will need. In journals, students compose simple letters in Spanish to a classmate with the sentence stem: "En nuestro jardín crecen..."). They will practice new	The fifth-grade students will move on to work reading adapted news articles in Spanish to find cultural events. Students will be working on their research project comparing their community to another community.



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Projected unit: Mi comunidad y yo			
		<p>grammar structures: past tense verbs to recount a community event (fiesta). Within this conversation, the teacher will interconnect STEAM: which will include: students research a local environmental issue such as littering, water use, or a topic approved by the teacher and will write a short report in Spanish. Students will be expected to use drawing diagrams or posters to illustrate data to include math skills. This integrates writing with social studies and science.</p> <p>SEL: emphasize students' role in community change (empowerment).</p>	
9:15-9:30	For an active break, the students will play a game of charades to talk about the community members in the community. This will be in Spanish. They will use words such as, comunidad, chef, constructor, doctor, enfermero/a, etc. At this point we will talk about how we are doing today. Some may answer bien, mal, mas o menos, feliz, contento, triste, enojado.	Energizer: Simon Says in Spanish ("Simón dice..."), reinforcing commands and body parts vocabulary.	Team-building challenge: design a "human machine" (each student is a "part" of a community engine) in the gym, promoting cooperation and communication.
9:30-10:00	Small groups will be divided by their level and will receive targeted support. Struggling readers review Spanish letter sounds or basic math concepts with manipulatives, while others do extension puzzles. Each group's activities remain tied to the community theme (e.g. counting neighborhood objects).	One group works on reading fluency utilizing HQIM Benchmark Adelante Spanish leveled readers with community-themed content, another on math facts using multiplication flashcards involving community items, for example "3 mesas (tables) x 4 bancos (stools)".	One group works on advanced Spanish grammar or vocabulary while other students will work on math review on decimals or graphing using community examples.
10:00-11:30	Utilizing the Bridges curriculum the students	Utilizing the Bridges curriculum students move	Utilizing the Bridges curriculum students will



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Projected unit: Mi comunidad y yo

	<p>will begin their math lesson at the number corner. Teachers will also be using interdisciplinary approach to connect community contexts for math. In this lesson the students will count objects like chairs, books, stuffed animals to represent our neighbors. The students will solve simple addition and subtraction stories like "3 niños en el parque y 2 llegan más, ¿cuántos en total?" During the lesson, students will explore shapes by building block houses and identifying squares/rectangles in the school building. .</p>	<p>on to practice multiplication /division word problems about community projects. They will be calculating supplies needed to paint. In Geometry students will measure angles by designing the layout of a classroom or playground (right angles in corners, etc.). Data: Students will conduct a class survey (favorite local game, pet, food) and create a bar graph or pictograph.</p> <p>Students will explain reasoning in English/Spanish ("Multipliqué 4 x 3 porque hay 4 filas de 3 sillas") to practice academic language. Include collaborative stations: one "building site" where students use rulers to measure (engineering mindset) and discuss findings, another "art station" drawing coordinate grids of the school map.</p>	<p>analyze a class survey or real data set for example energy usage in school, local election polls. Calculate percentages and mean; display results in charts. In Geometry students will create scaled blueprints for a proposed community center, using ratio and scale factors.</p> <p>Students will present math findings to peers ("El diez por ciento de nuestra clase..."), reinforcing academic language in math.</p> <p>In teams students will work on their project to tackle a design problem like building a bridge model with specific length and weight requirements using materials like popsicle sticks which is an engineering task that requires measurement and collaboration.</p>
11:30-12:00	Students will then attend lunch.	Students will then attend lunch.	Students will then attend lunch.
12:00-12:15	For an active break the students will be able to run in the playground. The students will play a round of simon dice.	Outdoor game: "Relay Race de la Comunidad" – teams pass a baton labeled with community objects such as <i>house school</i> and name them aloud.	Brain break with a culturally relevant dance or jump-rope rhyme in Spanish/English.
12:15-1:15	The students will work on <i>Mi comunidad</i> focus: We will be reviewing vocabulary of our neighborhood (maestr@, doctor/a, granjero). The teacher will read aloud a bilingual picture book about community helpers. To connect with social studies the students will work on drawing a simple map of the neighborhood. In	Students will continue to work on <i>Mi comunidad</i> : Expanding the world/civic understanding. Students will study local government or famous local figures for example a town founder. Students simulate a mini-government: elect a "mayor" of the class who helps solve a classroom issue which will	Students will work on learning about how local government works and community decision-making. They will simulate a town hall meeting on a school issue. While investigating the schools and towns sustainability with recycling and renewable energy project.



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Projected unit: Mi comunidad y yo

	science the students will observe and chart today's weather (soleado, nubloso, ventoso) and discuss appropriate clothing connecting the environment to community life.	help teach democracy and responsibility. This will interconnect with STEAM by exploring ecosystems in the community. A classroom "habitat" project which may be a terrarium will teach the students life-cycle. Students will design a garden layout that attracts pollinators. Students discuss their research using academic language frames like "In my chart, I show..." or "en mi grafica yo muestro". SEL: students will practice community service – organize a donation drive or classroom clean-up to reinforce empathy.	Student will design a "green community" proposal using a poster or model with Spanish labels such as planta solar (solar plant). Students will integrate technology by creating a short video or slide show to present their plans. Students will use formal persuasive language in their proposal "Debemos... / We should...". SEL: Students will emphasize teamwork and public speaking: groups practice respectful feedback on each other's ideas.
1:15-2:15	PE: Play a ball game where students say a Spanish/English color or shape before throwing (integration of vocabulary). These activities allow ELLs to express ideas creatively while developing fine/gross motor skills. Music: Sing bilingual songs about family or community for example. "De Colores", or a simple Spanish counting song as a dance game).	PE: For body movement students will exercise their bodies incorporating math skills in Spanish or English. Music: Write simple chants or raps about neighborhood safety mixing both languages. "Art gives ELLs a place to explore and discover ... safe, productive, and successful, even with little language"	PE: Students will work on relay games to encourage decisionmaking with their peers. Music: Study and perform a piece of music from a local culture or community event. Leading with STEAM, arts-rich lessons at this age have been shown to significantly boost learning, especially for bilingual learners
2:00-2:15	Students will have guided play time such as hopscotch or brain break time.	Recess: teachers engage with students in play, practicing Spanish encouraging phrases ("¡Corre más rápido! / Run faster!").	Recess/free play. Teachers may prompt English/Spanish vocabulary during games ("Touch the rojo cone!") as informal learning.
2:15-3:00	Read an English the story <i>We Live Together</i> to connect to our theme. Students discuss the	Read a chapter of a novel set in a community "Matilda" visiting town). Discussion/Writing: In	Read a realistic fiction or historical account about community service or multicultural

Projected unit: Mi comunidad y yo

	story in pairs, practicing simple phrases: "In my community, I see..." with teacher modeling. Then draw-and-write: "This is my family and community," using sentence starters for example: "I live with ___ in ___." Teachers scaffold with picture cards and sentence frames. SEL closure: Circle time to share one thing they learned about a friend's community or family. Emphasize listening respectfully and empathy ("Your community sounds fun; I want to visit!").	pairs, students discuss plot in English, then write a few sentences predicting an outcome or giving advice to a character. The focus on narrative and expository frames. SEL: Teacher will finish the day with an "appreciation circle". Students will compliment a classmate on something they did today (listened carefully, helped clean up), reinforcing the value of community respect and support.	families. Throughout this work the students will craft a persuasive essay in English on a community issue (e.g. building a park, conserving water), incorporating data or quotes. Provide outlines and peer-edit opportunities SEL Conclusion: The student Circle-up to set a class community goal for the week (e.g. kindness project, recycling contest), reinforcing that they are active contributors to their community.
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For example:

Science

Students examining ecosystems and cycles of change, exploring local infrastructure (water sources for irrigation), and creating garden beds, all align with NGSS and NM Science Standards related to life science, earth science, and engineering design.

Mathematics

Analyzing demographic data, calculating measurements for garden beds, working with geometric figures, graphing data points, and later calculating percentages and creating scaled blueprints, directly align with NM Mathematics Instructional Scope in areas like measurement, geometry, data analysis, and ratio/scale.



Social Studies

Learning about community helpers, mapping neighborhoods, simulating local government, and investigating community sustainability all align with NM Social Studies Standards related to civics, geography, and community.

Language Arts (Spanish & English)

Engaging with bilingual texts, learning new vocabulary, composing simple letters, writing reports, presenting findings using academic language frames, and crafting persuasive essays, all align with NM World Language Standards, WIDA standards, and NM ELA standards for reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Curriculum Alignment with Inspira STEAM Academy's Mission

The proposed curriculum is intrinsically aligned with Inspira STEAM Academy's mission: "Inspira STEAM Academy will cultivate globally-minded scholars through rigorous Spanish language acquisition focused on STEAM instructional programming."

Rigor and Excellence

The selection of high-quality instructional materials (Benchmark Adelante, Bridges Math, Inspire Science) and the focus on "depth over breadth and performance over testing knowledge" demonstrate a commitment to academic rigor. The expectation for students to perform at or above grade level and increase by 2.5% annually (as stated in Goal 1) sets a clear metric for excellence.

Inquiry-Based Practices

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) is a foundational pedagogical approach. The curriculum actively promotes student-led exploration, questioning, research, and critical thinking (as detailed in the IBL section). The *Mi Comunidad y Yo* unit exemplifies this through activities like students researching local environmental issues, designing solutions, and creating proposals.

Spanish Language Acquisition

The 80/20 Bilingual Education program is central to the curriculum, ensuring dedicated time and integrated learning for Spanish language acquisition. The curriculum explicitly develops students' ability to understand both the Spanish language and STEAM vocabulary in Spanish. Examples from the "Day in the Life of a Kindergarten Student" show consistent Spanish immersion in greetings, morning messages, story time, small group work, and daily activities.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics)

STEAM integration is a core pillar. The *Mi comunidad y Yo* unit's detailed breakdown clearly demonstrates how Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics are interwoven into a cohesive, interdisciplinary learning experience. Students actively engage in hands-on projects, design challenges, data analysis, and artistic expressions directly tied to the unit's theme.

Cultivating Globally-Minded Scholars

The *Mi Comunidad y Yo* unit's themes extend to understanding broader community and global issues. Goal 2, "Enhance Inquiry-Based Learning to Foster Global Awareness," directly supports this by implementing inquiry-based learning units on global issues, fostering diverse perspectives and critical thinking about the interconnected world.

Timeline and Plan for Proposed Curriculum

The development of Inspira STEAM Academy's comprehensive curriculum will follow a structured, multi-phase timeline and plan, guided by experienced educators to ensure rigor, coherence, and effective implementation.

Curriculum Development Timeline & Plan

Phase 1:

Pre-Opening (Summer 2026 - July/August)

Scope and Sequence Finalization (July 2026)

The academic leadership team, in collaboration with lead teachers, will finalize the comprehensive K-5 scope and sequence for all core subjects (Bilingual ELA/Spanish Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Arts integration within STEAM). This will ensure vertical and horizontal alignment across grades and themes, for example, the six to eight-week thematic units like *Mi comunidad y Yo*.



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Unit Plan Development (July-August 2026)

For the initial academic year (2026-2027)

Detailed unit plans for all subjects and grades will be developed. Each unit plan will include:

- Essential questions and learning objectives aligned to NM CCSS and Content Standards.
- Key vocabulary (bilingual).
- Integrated STEAM concepts and inquiry opportunities.
- Outline of project-based learning activities.
- Formative and summative assessment strategies.
- Differentiation strategies for diverse learners.

Initial Project Plans and Rubrics (July-August 2026)

Core project plans and their corresponding rubrics for Year 1 units will be drafted to guide performance-based assessments.

HQIM Training & Customization (July 2026)

Teachers will receive intensive training during the initial 10 days at the beginning of the year the selected High-Quality Instructional Materials (Benchmark Adelante, Bridges in Mathematics, and Inspire Science) vetted by the NMPED and The Center for Education Market Dynamics (Schwartz, 2023). Time will be allocated for teachers to begin customizing these resources to align with specific unit plans and the school's unique bilingual STEAM approach.

Phase 2:

Year 1 Implementation & Ongoing Refinement (July 2026 - May 2027)

Daily Lesson Plan Development (Ongoing, Weekly/Bi-Weekly)

Teachers will develop detailed daily lesson plans based on the established unit plans, adapting to student needs and incorporating real-time feedback.

Regular Professional Development (Monthly, 4 hours; Plus 7 additional days). Monthly professional development sessions will serve as a crucial platform for

- Cross-collaboration among grade levels and subject areas.
- Discussion and refinement of how standards and benchmarks are being met.
- Sharing of effective practices and addressing challenges.
- Dedicated time for curriculum review and adjustments.

Formative and Summative Assessment Implementation

Summative assessments every 6-8 weeks and project-based assessments will be regularly utilized to monitor student progress and inform instructional adjustments.

Feedback Collection & Iteration

Formal and informal feedback will be systematically collected from teachers, students, and administrators regarding curriculum effectiveness, engagement, and alignment. This feedback will inform continuous improvement.

Phase 3:

Annual Review and Multi-Year Development (Starting Summer 2027 and ongoing)

Annual Curriculum Review Cycle

At the end of each academic year, the academic leadership team and teachers will conduct a comprehensive review of the entire K-5 curriculum.

This review will evaluate:



- Alignment with mission and standards.
- Effectiveness based on student outcome data.
- Teacher feedback on usability and impact.
- Opportunities for enhancement and updating.

Revision and Enhancement

Curriculum documents (scope and sequence, unit plans, project plans, rubrics, assessments) will be revised and enhanced based on the annual review findings.

Ongoing Professional Learning

Professional development will continue to deepen teachers' understanding and implementation of the curriculum, addressing emerging best practices and student needs.

This timeline ensures that the curriculum is systematically developed, continuously reviewed, and iteratively improved to meet the evolving needs of Inspira STEAM Academy students.

Section C References

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Applicant Evidence :

	
C(1)b. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...	C(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...

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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:

- 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



Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to ensuring equity for all our students by refraining from prescribing specific units and instead inviting students to participate in the creation of their learning experiences. This will be a place where every individual can take pride in their identity, regardless of background, religion, language, or beliefs. We will cultivate a safe and respectful environment for these valuable learning experiences to take place.

Addressing the goals of the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (NMSA §22-231)

The Inspira STEAM Academy curriculum directly addresses the goals of the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (NMSA §22-231) by providing students with opportunities to expand their conceptual and linguistic abilities, teaching them to appreciate the value of different languages and cultures, and meeting state academic content standards.

Providing students with opportunities to expand their conceptual and linguistic abilities and potential in a successful and positive manner

Our 80/20 dual immersion model is designed to provide students with the opportunity to become bilingual and biliterate by 5th grade. This foundational approach offers students and their families the tools to expand their conceptual understanding and linguistic abilities in both Spanish and English.

A bilingual curriculum ensures that students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, including those from Spanish-speaking and Indigenous communities, can access education in their native language while simultaneously developing proficiency in English. This dual-language approach helps bridge language barriers and fosters a more inclusive learning environment.

STEAM education is integrated into our bilingual framework, allowing students to learn complex subjects like science and technology in their home language, Spanish, and English. This approach ensures that language barriers do not impede students' understanding of these critical fields, thereby promoting equal educational opportunities.

Inquiry-based teaching, when implemented in a bilingual context, encourages students to explore and ask questions in a supportive learning environment, helping them develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in both languages. This fosters a deeper understanding of the content and enhances academic performance.

We anticipate students will demonstrate slow but steady academic growth in the first couple of years, catching up and surpassing their monolingual peers by the time they reach third grade and beyond, demonstrating the positive impact of this comprehensive approach.

Teaching students to appreciate the value and beauty of different languages and cultures

The early immersion in two languages through our 80/20 model will help children appreciate and be proud of the two languages they represent.

Our curriculum explicitly fosters culturally responsive teaching, which values students' cultural backgrounds and integrates them into the learning process. This deepens appreciation for linguistic and cultural diversity.

Meeting state academic content standards and benchmarks in all subject areas

As detailed in our curriculum section, the school has chosen High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) such as Benchmark Adelante (for Spanish/Bilingual Language Arts), Bridges Math, and Inspire Science (built around NGSS, aligned with NM Science Standards). These HQIMs are designed to meet state academic content standards and benchmarks.

Our integrated approach ensures that students meet standards in all subject areas by leveraging the cognitive benefits of bilingualism and the interdisciplinary nature of STEAM and inquiry-based learning.

Addressing the goals of the Indian Education Act (NMSA §22-23A-1)

Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to addressing the goals of the Indian Education Act (NMSA §22-23A-1) by ensuring equitable and culturally relevant learning environments, providing for the study and implementation of effective educational systems for Native American students, and encouraging parental involvement.

Ensuring equitable and culturally relevant learning environments and culturally relevant instructional materials for Native American students:



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Our bilingual curriculum includes space for Indigenous languages and helps meet the act's goal of supporting Native American students' cultural and linguistic heritage. By offering an environment at Inspira that invites and honors education in Indigenous languages, the curriculum validates and strengthens students' cultural identity while enhancing their academic success.

The indigenous tribes of the Las Cruces area, known today as the Piro, Manso, and Tiwa tribes, trace their ancestry to the Pueblos of Paso del Norte and the original inhabitants of the Mesilla Valley. This includes the Warm Springs and Chiricahua Apache, Mescalero Apache, Jumanó, Manso, Piro, Suma, Tapaxkolmeh, Jocomé, Tigua (Tiwa), and Tortugas people. Recognizing and celebrating the resolutions of local tribes is essential for ensuring that the Native American community feels honored (Visit Las Cruces, n.d.).

Integrating Indigenous perspectives and traditional knowledge into STEAM subjects aligns with the goals of the Indian Education Act. For instance, incorporating Indigenous science, technology, and environmental knowledge into the STEAM curriculum can offer culturally relevant and meaningful learning experiences for Native American students.

Inquiry-based teaching incorporates Indigenous ways of knowing and learning, supports the goals of the act by validating Indigenous perspectives and teaching methods. This approach enables Native American students to engage with content that is culturally relevant and meaningful, fostering their academic and personal growth.

Organizations such as NACA in Albuquerque will provide valuable curriculum and language support for students who wish to reconnect with their heritage.

Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, also known as the Tigua Pueblo, is a federally recognized tribe and sovereign nation. It features a cultural center and museum that preserves and celebrates its heritage (Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, n.d.). This Pueblo, located about an hour away from Las Cruces, can serve as a learning hub for Inspira students.

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:

- This educational approach, which includes culturally relevant content and language support, will positively impact the success of Native American students and help close achievement gaps.
- The explicit focus on supporting cultural identity through language and culturally relevant curriculum contributes to a holistic educational experience that is known to improve engagement and academic outcomes for Native American students.

Encouraging and fostering parental involvement in the education of their children:

- Building strong relationships with local tribes provides Inspira with valuable resources to honor and incorporate these traditions into the school environment. Our proximity to Tortugas Pueblo offers a unique opportunity to invite community members to collaborate with us and to participate in their festivities when invited.
- We will invite parents to the school to share aspects of their cultural heritage. Parents will be encouraged to actively engage with Inspira by participating, volunteering, and learning alongside their children.
- Additionally, adult education classes will be available for parents and caregivers to enhance their technology knowledge, further their education, or study languages, encouraging active and sustained involvement.

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:

- Inspira STEAM Academy will be involved in initiatives and will be aware of recent legislative changes designed to honor our students and their families. These changes will be reflected in our handbooks. On March 19th, 2025, Senate Bill 163 was passed, allowing public school students who are enrolled in or eligible for federally recognized Indian nations, tribes, and pueblos to wear tribal regalia at graduation ceremonies and public school events. Schools are prohibited from restricting the wearing of tribally significant footwear or other culturally important items beneath graduation gowns. Tribal regalia includes traditional dress and recognized objects of religious or cultural significance, such as tribal symbols, jewelry, beading, and feathers.

Regarding School Discipline Policies

- No student may face discipline, discrimination, or disparate treatment based on race, religion, or culture.



- Protective hairstyles and cultural or religious headdresses are explicitly safeguarded, including braids, locs, twists, hijabs, head wraps, and other similar expressions.
- Inspira will ensure that our discipline policies prohibit racialized aggression and provide a mechanism for reporting such incidents through a statewide hotline. We will comply with non-discrimination policies and not only allow, but encourage students to wear tribal regalia at public school events.

Addressing the purpose of the Hispanic Education Act (NMSA §22-23B-2)

Inspira STEAM Academy's curriculum and practices are aligned with the purpose of the Hispanic Education Act (NMSA §22-23B-2) by providing educational systems that enhance the success of Hispanic students, encourage parental involvement, and improve overall educational opportunities.

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:

- A bilingual curriculum supports Hispanic students by affirming their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which can significantly enhance their engagement and academic achievement. As the NACA founders state, "To preserve one's language is to preserve one's culture." By providing instruction in both Spanish and English, the curriculum helps students maintain their cultural roots while succeeding in a predominantly English-speaking educational environment.
- STEAM education provides Hispanic students with unique opportunities to excel in high-demand fields by incorporating bilingual learning in the curriculum. Emphasizing STEAM fields in both English and Spanish helps prepare Hispanic students for future careers in these areas, aligning with the goals of the Hispanic Education Act.
- Our approach fosters a classroom environment that values Hispanic students' perspectives and encourages active participation. Inquiry-based learning connects new knowledge with students' cultural experiences, improving their engagement and success.

Encouraging and fostering parental involvement in the education of their children:

- Parents will be invited and encouraged to become active members of Inspira by participating, volunteering, and learning alongside their children.
- We will also offer adult education classes for parents and caretakers to increase their knowledge in technology, advance their education, or study a language. This initiative seeks to retain the native Spanish of New Mexico while honoring new immigrant families.

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:

- The Inspira Executive Director is an active Advisory member on HEAC (Hispanic Education Advisory Council). This ongoing involvement ensures the school remains current with the latest legislative changes and best practices for supporting Hispanic students.
- On March 20th, 2025, the New Mexico Senate approved a bill (HB 487) aimed at safeguarding and promoting the heritage Spanish language in New Mexico while broadening the responsibilities and powers of the state's Hispanic Education Advisory Council. HB 487 modifies the objectives of the Hispanic Education Act to encompass the safeguarding and promotion of New Mexico's cultural Spanish language. Heritage Spanish pertains to the Spanish language that is handed down through generations within families and communities, especially among individuals raised in a mostly English-speaking environment, yet who maintain a cultural or family link to Spanish. New Mexico boasts a distinctive variant of Spanish, known as Traditional New Mexican, which has existed for over 400 years. Various elements pose risks to the continuation of Traditional New Mexican, and HB 487 may help slow down the decline of this distinctive dialect. The Hispanic Education Act was enacted in 2010. The initial aim of the act was to safeguard educational opportunities for Hispanic students in the state and to establish the Hispanic Education Advisory Council. Inspira's program directly supports these goals.
- The proximity to El Paso, Texas, and Mexico will enhance our students' language learning opportunities, preparing them for a bilingual workforce.
- With a strong background in STEAM, students will have a higher graduation rate and are more likely to pursue post-secondary education and complete their studies in high-demand fields (Ghazzawi et al., 2022).



Initiate and organize an equity council composed of multiple school stakeholders with the intent to create more equitable learning opportunities for marginalized students:

- The Inspira Executive Director is currently the lead of the Equity Council at her local school. She will continue to organize and ensure that an Equity Council is established at Inspira. This council will be as diverse as the governing board, representing the needs, wants, and dreams of all our students. The council will include multiple stakeholders with the goal of creating more equitable learning opportunities for our marginalized communities.

Addressing the purpose of the Black Education Act (HB 43)

Inspira STEAM Academy is dedicated to addressing the purpose of the Black Education Act (HB 43) through the development and implementation of anti-racism policies, culturally relevant curricula, and opportunities for identity exploration.

Developing and including anti-racism policies:

- Inspira will ensure that our discipline policies prohibit racialized aggression and provide a mechanism for reporting such incidents through a statewide hotline.
- We will comply with non-discrimination policies and not only allow, but encourage students to wear tribal regalia and other culturally important items at public school events (as permitted by Senate Bill 163).

Developing curricula and instructional materials that recognize and teach black culture and anti-racism. Implementing anti-racism training for teachers and staff:

- All teachers at Inspira will participate in culturally responsive learning. The staff will read Dr. Sharroky Hollie's book, Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning, and will also attend professional development sessions focused on anti-racism and cultural sensitivity. This knowledge will enhance their effectiveness in teaching all subjects to diverse learner
- Another valuable resource available will be the "Black Studies as the Study of the World" curriculum, developed by the Black Education Research Center (BERC) at Teachers College, Columbia University. This PK-12 interdisciplinary curriculum is designed for New York City public schools, aiming to enrich student learning by exploring the history and contemporary landscapes of America, Africa, and the world through a Black Studies perspective. Although the curriculum was written based on New York standards, it can be adapted for any state to incorporate Black culture and anti-racism.
- The Executive Director is currently in discussions with New Mexico State University with the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity's Black Programs to engage and develop outreach initiatives for elementary schools. The Black Programs connects students of African-American, Black, Caribbean, and African descent, focusing on developing leadership and advocacy, and sharing awareness of Black culture and excellence. We hope that this collaboration will lead to the creation of programs inviting elementary and middle schools to either visit the NMSU campus or engage academically, socially, and civically with younger students' campuses.

Opportunities to explore one's identity and societal systems that may impact their identity and future.

- Our curriculum, particularly through inquiry-based teaching, promotes a student-centered approach, helping to address educational inequities. By encouraging students to explore topics that reflect their own experiences and interests, this method can help Black students find relevance in their learning, which is essential for their academic success and identity exploration.
- Additionally, the curriculum will address disparities by offering equitable access to high-quality resources and opportunities in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics). Including diverse role models and culturally relevant content within STEAM subjects can inspire and engage Black students, supporting their academic success and fostering positive identity development.

D(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - HB43 Black Education Act Policy



HB 43: Black Education Act Policy
SAMPLE POLICY

Training Plan

In accordance with House Bill (HB) 43 statutory language, each year all Inspira STEAM Academy personnel will be required to successfully complete one in-person antiracism, racial awareness, and sensitivity training or professional development. This training will address race, racism, racialized aggression, and demonstrate how to create and foster an equitable with, culturally responsive learning environment for students.

Title of training

Cultural Awareness and Diversity by POMS Risk Control and Insurance

The training will cover:

- Unconscious bias
- Impact of stereotypes
- Impact of evolving demographics
- Racial disproportionality
- Understanding racial bias
- Cultural competence
- Culturally responsive teaching
- Assessing cultural competence
- Strategies for developing cultural competence

Time frame to facilitate:

Inspira STEAM Academy personnel within the 2026-2027 school year

Confirmation that all Inspira STEAM Academy personnel

- Verification of enrollment from each teacher, and a certificate of completion to be kept in their employment file.

Policy Language



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The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and Governing Board reject all forms of racism as destructive to the School's mission, vision, values, and goals. The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and Governing Board are committed to the following principles:

- Establishing and sustaining a school community that shares the collective responsibility to confront, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism.
- Embracing the racial diversity within our School while actively eliminating practices that perpetuate the racial disparities among our students so that students can benefit equally.
- Acknowledging that racism is often compounded by other forms of discrimination, including, but not limited to, those protective classes.

Definitions

- **Racism:** a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.
- **Anti-racism:** the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.
- **Individual racism:** pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race. This includes both privately held beliefs, conscious and unconscious, and external behaviors and actions towards others.
- **Systemic racism:** encompasses the history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions and society. It refers to the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that perpetuate a system of inequity that is detrimental to communities of color.
- **Racist and race-based misconduct:** actions, on and off school grounds, including but not limited to inappropriate racial comments, intended slurs, jokes, pictures, objects, threats, physical assaults, intimidation, unequal application of policies, and unequal or biased grading. This encompasses offensiveness and misconduct that does not reach the level of racism, and misconduct that is sufficiently severe and pervasive that it rises to the level of racial harassment or discrimination.

Purpose

This policy is to create processes that identify any form of racism, counter its effects and work to eliminate racist practices from the School. This policy ensures the understanding that racial misconduct is unacceptable and prohibited. The School is actively working to end inequities among racial groups through its personal practices. The Council holds itself and all faculty, support staff, and participants accountable for building a school-wide culture of respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion, which is free of racism.



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Anti-Racism Policy Directives

These directives are designed to dismantle the individual and systemic racism that exists in society. The Governing Board directs the Executive Director and Staff, and leads the School in the following actions:

Communication: Inspira STEAM Academy will post an Anti-Racism Vision statement that highlights the school's commitment to building an Anti-Racist School that includes a clear goal.

- An ongoing school site committee in the school regarding anti-racism efforts and accountability will be a subset of the School's Equity Council that includes students, staff, administration, families, and community members.
- This policy will be included in the student handbook provided to families.
- The School will identify key benchmarks that demonstrate growth in each area outlined in this policy and develop a plan with clear and measurable accountability standards and procedures that can be assessed and reported transparently to the public.
- The Governing Council will develop a system that surveys staff, student and family sentiment related to racial inclusion as a tool to evaluate the success of this policy.

Leadership and Administration: The Board shall direct the Executive Director and Equity Council Membership to address systemic racism as follows:

- Direct the School's **Equity Council** to review current curricula and create new curricula and authentic sequencing cognizant of the School's Anti-racism commitments.
- Direct the school instructional leaders to create equal access and equitable support for students interested in or qualified for advanced coursework.
- Identify the needed financial and human resources to achieve the goals of the Council's Anti-Racism policy and designate a cross-functional staff person to serve as a member of the School's Equity Council.
- To embed within existing employee discipline processes, the capacity to address racist and race-based misconduct, holding members of the school community accountable.

Curriculum and Instruction: As noted under Leadership and Administration, the Governing Board and School shall implement an anti-racist curriculum and provide educational resources for students at every grade level.

Curriculum and instructional materials for all grades shall be relevant and represent the racial diversity of the student population and include a range of perspectives and



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experiences, particularly those of historically underrepresented groups of color, in a way that is age-appropriate.

- All curriculum materials shall be examined for racial bias by the School's Equity Council.
- Staff shall incorporate these programs and activities beyond specific dedicated months and days.

Training and Professional Development: All Governing Board and School staff shall be trained in this anti-racism policy.

- All School staff shall be trained in a School-approved program about anti-racism and about how racism produces inequitable practices and outcomes in education. Anti-racism training shall be revisited annually for all staff.

Policy Enforcement: To ensure consistency in student discipline, the school shall collect and report data on all disciplinary actions. The School shall review data regularly, with the goal of reducing racial discipline disparities and reducing the severity of corrective action by race.

When it is determined that a student, teacher, or staff member has committed a racist act, the person will be provided the opportunity to learn about the impact of her/his actions on others through such practices as restorative practices, mediation, or other explicit policies or training resources.

The School shall ensure there are various, including anonymous, means for students and staff to report racism and other forms of discrimination.

D(1)b. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - ARAO Portal



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D(1)b. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - ARAO Portal



Obscenity/Profanity/Vulgarity: Inappropriate language/attire and/or ethnic/racially aggressive slurs -- offensive materials on personal/school items -- Gestures - including gang signs	Possible Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative Practices to build community and respond to the behaviors • Using dialogue, self-examination, coming to understand and making things right • Contact Parent/Guardian • Behavior contract with focus on respect agreement • Expulsion in consideration of compliance with state and federal IDEA requirements
Hate violence (Grades K-5): Racially aggressive behaviors, harassment, teasing, threats, intimidation, or bullying, including but not limited to a physical or mental disability, gender, nationality, race, religion or sexual orientation	Possible Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every effort will be made to respond appropriately and consistently • Notify parents • Work with parents and the child on conflict resolution when appropriate • New Mexico State Law in all public schools prohibits any of these activities and are subject to severe discipline up



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	to and including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Detention ○ Suspension ○ Expulsion ○ Immediate removal
Bullying: Including, but not limited to, racially aggressive behaviors, bullying committed by means of an electronic, verbal, written or physical act directed specifically toward a pupil or school personnel	Possible Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restorative Practices to build community and respond to the behaviors ● Using dialogue, self-examination, coming to understand and making things right ● Restorative Practices to build community and respond to the behaviors ● We will guide the students so that they are confident to ask for help; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students will learn how and when to ask for a restorative circle. ○ Students will learn to communicate how they are affected by given situations using affective statements and restorative questions. ○ Students will learn how to use restorative questions to support conflict resolution and other types of communication ○ Students will learn to identify who is affected by misbehaviors, and how to resolve the conflict ○ Students will contribute to developing appropriate ideas for how to make things right when harms have occurred. ● Contact Parent/Guardian ● Behavior contract with focus on respect agreement ● Expulsion in consideration of compliance with state and federal IDEA requirements
Vandalism, graffiti, defacing school property or property of others: including but not limited to books, computers, electronic files, databases and e-mail	Possible Interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent /Guardian contact ● Campus beautification ● Behavior contract with focus on respect agreement ● Community Service in the garden

In Summary

Integrating a bilingual curriculum, STEAM education, and inquiry-based teaching into Inspira STEAM Academy aligns with and supports the goals of New Mexico's Bilingual Multicultural Education Act, Indian Education Act, Hispanic Education Act, and Black Education Act. These approaches collectively promote inclusivity, preserve cultural heritage, address educational disparities, and ensure that all students, regardless of their linguistic or cultural background, have equal opportunities to succeed academically and personally.

Section D References

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Applicant Evidence :

	
D(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...	D(1)b. - Reference Inspira STEAM...

Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia
Rivera-Tapia

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Rivera-Tapia

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**



Creating an Equitable Learning Opportunities through the Equity Council

Inspira STEAM Academy will create an effective and equitable system of support that involves feedback from students, staff, parents, governing board members, and the broader community. To create equitable learning opportunities for marginalized students, planning will involve a multifaceted approach that addresses root causes, promotes equity-focused leadership, and incorporates culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum and pedagogy. This framework aligns with the principles highlighted in the New Mexico Yazzie Martinez lawsuit, which emphasized the need for equitable educational opportunities, particularly for underserved and minority students. Here is how Inspira STEAM Academy will implement such a system:

Root-Cause Analysis

Inspira will conduct a thorough analysis of academic performance data, attendance records, and will particularly focus on students from marginalized backgrounds. Inspira will use data to pinpoint root causes of underperformance or disparities, such as inadequate language support, transportation issues, insufficient access to advanced STEAM opportunities, absent parents, or cultural disconnection in the curriculum.

Community and Family Engagement:

Inspira will engage with students, families, and community members through surveys, focus groups, and interviews to understand their perspectives on the barriers and challenges faced in the educational system. Inspira will strive to improve the educational experience that many of our families have.

Feedback Integration:

"Equity Councils may choose to use the simple Advisement process to guide their work in producing and delivering advisements based on current district/charter policies, programs, and procedures, as well as the results of the Martinez and Yazzie Readiness Assessment." (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2022)

Inspira will use the data gathered by the community to inform and adjust policies and practices, ensuring they address the real needs and concerns of the community. This information will begin to guide the equity council advisement package to work on for the academic year. An advisement package is a comprehensive collection of ideas and needs gathered during community meetings. This document serves as a vital resource, preserving the community's input and priorities for the long term. By maintaining a clear record of issues and suggestions, the package enables continuity in the work of the equity council. When members rotate or leave, newcomers can seamlessly access this valuable document, ensuring that progress is sustained and that the efforts to address school needs continue without interruption. Please see the sample template of opportunities that may be addressed during an Equity Council monthly meeting.

Historically Defined Indian Impacted School District

Inspira STEAM Academy is not located in a historically defined Indian impacted school district. We are committed to providing Native American students with the support needed to be successful in school. In Las Cruces, New Mexico, approximately 1.4% of the population identifies as American Indian or Alaska Native alone.

A detailed plan for the implementation of a culturally and linguistically responsive framework.

Inspira STEAM Academy's culturally and linguistically responsive framework is central to its mission of providing equitable education for all students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds. This framework permeates all aspects of the school.

Curriculum Design:

- Inspira will develop a curriculum that reflects the diverse cultural backgrounds of students, integrating multicultural perspectives into STEAM subjects and ensuring that bilingual resources are available and effective. This will include incorporating elements that allow students to explore and share their culture, language, and community.
- We are committed to ensuring equity for all our students by refraining from prescribing specific units and instead inviting students to participate in the creation of their learning experiences. This will be a place where every individual can take pride in their identity, regardless of background, religion, language, or beliefs. We will cultivate a safe and respectful environment for these valuable learning experiences to take place.



- Inspira will ensure that bilingual education is robust, providing appropriate language support to help students achieve academic success in both their native language and English. Our 80/20 dual immersion model, Benchmark Adelante/Advance, and Bridges in Mathematics, ensures that students have consistent exposure and instruction in both languages. The "Black Studies as the Study of the World" curriculum, studies perspective, directly addresses the Black Education Act.

Pedagogical Strategies

- Inspira will implement differentiated instructional strategies that cater to diverse learning needs and linguistic abilities, providing tailored support for English Language Learners (ELLs) and other students who require additional help.
- We will also use teaching practices that recognize and value students' cultural and linguistic identities, incorporating their experiences into classroom activities and discussions.
- Inquiry-based teaching encourages students to explore and ask questions in a supportive learning environment, fostering a deeper understanding of content and enhancing academic performance. This is particularly effective in engaging students from diverse backgrounds by allowing them to connect new knowledge with their cultural experiences.
- STEAM education is integrated into a bilingual framework, allowing students to learn complex subjects like science and technology in their native language and English, ensuring language barriers do not impede understanding.
- Inspira STEAM Academy will be more effective in terms of academic achievement than the schools currently serving the targeted student population by providing a small, supportive, bilingual environment with dedicated staff, strong communication with parents, and a culturally responsive curriculum. These strategic approaches will address the specific needs of at-risk and minority students, as outlined in the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit, ensuring equitable access to quality education and better academic outcomes for all students.
- Incorporating bilingual, STEAM, an interdisciplinary approach, and inquiry-based learning provides a comprehensive, innovative, and engaging educational environment. These methods collectively enhance cognitive abilities, foster creativity, and prepare students for a complex, interconnected world, setting the foundation for a school that offers a cutting-edge, inclusive, and future-ready education.

Equity-Focused Leadership and Continuous Improvement

Leadership Commitment

Inspira will ensure that school leaders and staff are trained in cultural competency, implicit bias, and equitable practices to foster an inclusive school environment. All teachers at Inspira will participate in culturally responsive learning. The staff will read Dr. Sharroky Hollie's book, *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning*, and will also attend professional development sessions. This knowledge will enhance their effectiveness in teaching all subjects.

Continuous Improvement

Inspira will establish mechanisms for continuously evaluating programs and practices, using data to assess their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. Inspira will also implement feedback loops where students, families, and staff can regularly provide input on the effectiveness of initiatives and suggest improvements. We will conduct a 10-day professional development for teachers, focusing on the effective implementation of the curriculum. Additionally, there will be embedded professional development days where we will review and practice the strategies we are employing. The Executive Director will actively coach the teachers, providing in-person feedback and modeling effective practices upon opening. The Dean of Students will support this beginning in year three. Administrators will utilize *Leverage Leadership* and *Teach Like a Champion* strategies to ensure a unified approach among all staff members.

Resource Allocation

Inspira will allocate resources strategically to address gaps in educational supports, ensuring that students who need additional help, including bilingual and STEAM resources, receive adequate support. Each grade level, from Kindergarten to 5th grade, will operate as an inclusive classroom, allowing for a cohesive and focused learning environment. In Kindergarten and First Grade, we will provide dedicated support with a full-time Educational Assistant (EA) who will work alongside teachers to enhance student learning and engagement. If and when additional staff is needed to support the needs of the students, funds will be allocated to ensure additional staff members are available. Our special education services will be implemented with a flexible approach, utilizing both push-in and pull-out models tailored to the unique needs of our students. This means that special education professionals will collaborate with classroom teachers to support students within their regular classrooms when appropriate, as well as provide targeted, individualized instruction outside the classroom when necessary. This approach ensures that all students receive the support they need to thrive academically and socially.



By addressing these components, a school can create a supportive and equitable learning environment that aligns with the principles established by the NM Yazzi-Martinez lawsuit. This approach ensures that all students, regardless of their background or language proficiency, have access to high-quality education and opportunities to succeed in both bilingual and STEAM disciplines.

Attracting and Retaining Quality and Diverse Teachers

Inspira STEAM Academy recognizes that attracting and retaining high-quality and diverse teachers is critical for the success of its multicultural student population. Our plan focuses on comprehensive recruitment, robust support systems, and a commitment to competitive compensation.

Attracting Diverse Candidates:

University Partnerships

Inspira will initiate and strengthen partnerships with New Mexico State University (NMSU), Highlands New Mexico University (HNMU), Western New Mexico University (WNMU), University of New Mexico (UNM), Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU), and University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). Our primary focus will be on recruiting prospective teachers enrolled in their multicultural and bilingual education programs who also possess a strong background or interest in the sciences.

Targeted Recruitment Events

We will organize and participate in recruitment events specifically designed to attract diverse candidates from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds, particularly those with expertise in science and proficiency in the Spanish language, directly addressing the needs of New Mexico's multicultural student population.

Retaining Quality Teachers

Mentorship Program

To support our new hires and ensure their successful integration and growth, we will assign them a dedicated mentor. This mentor will be an experienced teacher who can provide guidance, share best practices, and offer consistent support.

Grade-Level Expertise

We will ensure that each grade level has at least one experienced teacher. This intentional placement provides a natural mentorship structure within teams, fostering collaboration and informal learning among colleagues.

Culturally Responsive Professional Development

All teachers at Inspira will participate in culturally responsive learning. The staff will read Dr. Sharroky Hollie's book, *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning*, and will also attend professional development sessions. This knowledge will enhance their effectiveness in teaching all subjects to diverse learners, which is key to retention.

Continuous Coaching and Feedback

The Executive Director will offer live feedback and model lessons for new and veteran teachers with the support of the Dean of Students (beginning in year three). This ongoing, in-person coaching ensures continuous professional growth and refinement of teaching practices.

Supportive School Culture

We aim to cultivate a culture that values diversity and inclusivity, where teachers feel safe, respected, and supported as they develop their skills. By creating a supportive environment for learning and coaching, we will enable teachers to grow and engage in self-reflection.

Competitive Compensation and Benefits

Inspira will provide competitive compensation and benefits packages to encourage teachers to continue their employment. This includes reviewing salary scales regularly and offering comprehensive benefits to attract and retain top talent in New Mexico's educational landscape.

Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Equity Council Advisement Package



NEW MEXICO - NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION 2025
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Equity Council Advisement Package
SAMPLE TEMPLATE
OF POSSIBLE TOPICS THAT CAN/WILL BE ADDRESSED

Idea	Action	Lead	Target Date
Absence	Policy needs to be sent out, signed, and returned. Possibly to have the EC be the committee to follow up on absences.		
Special Education	Following the training Special Education training to parents Survey to be sent out by next year.		
School supply list	Not having triples on the list. For the families that don't have the means to buy them.		
BIPOC	CLR for the teachers. Have the students present to each other about being cultural awareness. Learning and using the correct language. A cultural fair - have presenters come and speak. Tecnolochicas.org Julia reached out to Mrs. Kimberly York, she will get a date scheduled for MS to have a presentation.		
Food	Share food from the garden with the community		
Thanksgiving Baskets	Have the students make baskets for families who need them.		
Cultural Fair	Have a week of food around the world. Have the students choose a leader.		

Section D References Continued

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Applicant Evidence :

D(2)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...

Uploaded on **6/1/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**



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. Inspira STEAM Academy is a kindergarten through 5th-grade Elementary school.

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.
6. Narrative Only



Inspira STEAM Academy's Teaching and Instructional Philosophy

The teaching and instructional philosophy at Inspira STEAM Academy is grounded in Constructivism. This theory believes that students are proactive learners rather than mere receptacles for information. Students draw upon their own experiences to create understanding from their newly acquired knowledge. This philosophy is centered around children, emphasizing their interpretation and experiences during activities.

"Constructivist conceptions of learning have their historical roots in the work of Dewey (1929), Bruner (1961), Vygotsky (1962), and Piaget (1980). Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy, and Perry (1992) and von Glasersfeld (1995)" (Bada, 2015). They have proposed various implications of constructivist theory for instructional designers, highlighting that learning outcomes should focus on the process of constructing knowledge and that learning objectives should stem from genuine tasks with specific goals. Similarly, von Glasersfeld (1995) contends that learning is not merely a stimulus-response phenomenon but rather involves self-regulation and the development of conceptual frameworks through reflection and abstraction." Inspira's proposed model beautifully interlocks with the constructivist philosophies in the following way:

Bilingual Education Program (80/20 Model)

The 80/20 bilingual education model refers to a structured language immersion approach where students receive 80% of their instruction in one language (Spanish) and 20% in English. The goal is to develop proficiency in both languages, with an emphasis on achieving high levels of fluency in the target language while maintaining and enhancing English language skills. Initially, instruction will be predominantly in Spanish to build a strong STEAM foundation. Gradually, as students become more proficient, the balance will shift slightly to include more content in English while still prioritizing Spanish. The subject matter is taught through Spanish, with cultural and contextual relevance to ensure engagement and comprehension. Key concepts are reinforced in both languages to solidify understanding and retention. Regular assessments are conducted to monitor language acquisition and academic progress. Personalized support and differentiated instruction are provided to address individual needs and ensure that students are not lagging behind in either language.

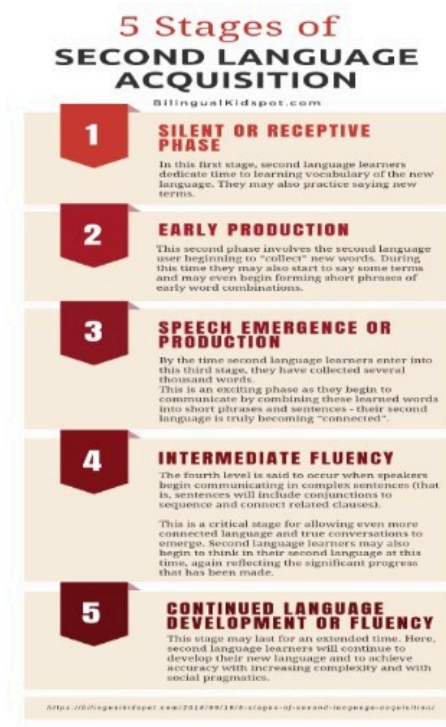
The second language acquisition process is generally broken down into five stages. It may take anywhere from 5 to 7 years to gain fluency in the acquisition of a second language. The first stage is the Pre-Production stage, also known as the silent period. During this time, the student is listening and understanding but is not producing many words. At this stage, there is a high reliance on visuals and gestures. The second stage is the Early Production stage, where students begin to use short sentences and short phrases. The third stage is Speech Emergent, when students start to produce complex sentences and engage in conversations. The fourth stage is Intermediate Fluency, when students begin to handle more complex language. The fifth stage is Advanced Fluency, when the students have a near-proficiency level of speaking and can navigate social and academic situations with ease. It is at this level that students will be able to confidently present technical language related to the STEAM fields.

Reference F(1)a - 5 Stages of Second Language Acquisition



F(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - 5 Stages of Second Language Acquisition

5 Stages of Second Language Acquisition



Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL)

This pedagogical approach centers around students exploring questions, problems, or scenarios that interest them. It emphasizes active learning and critical thinking as students seek out information, formulate questions, and draw conclusions based on evidence. Constructivism ensures that learning experiences are designed around students' interests and questions. Educators will act as facilitators, guiding students through the process of inquiry and helping them develop research and problem-solving skills. Lessons will involve hands-on activities, experiments, and real-world problem-solving tasks that encourage students to engage deeply with the material. At Inspira, students will be encouraged to reflect on their learning process and findings, iterating their questions and approaches based on new insights and feedback.

STEAM Education

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. This approach integrates these disciplines into a cohesive learning model that promotes creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Lessons and projects are designed to integrate multiple STEAM fields, allowing students to see the connections between disciplines and apply their knowledge in practical ways. Inspira will focus on interdisciplinary projects that will last 6 to 8 weeks, and there may be umbrella units that last all year, moving beyond simply teaching each subject in isolation. At Inspira, emphasis will be placed on real-world problems and scenarios, encouraging students to use their STEAM skills to address challenges and innovate solutions. Students will collaborate in teams to solve problems, promoting collaboration and communication skills alongside technical expertise.

Integration of Love and Logic Principles

Love and Logic, developed by Charles Fay and Foster Cline, emphasizes combining love and empathy with logical consequences to foster responsible behavior and critical thinking in students. The philosophy advocates for a balanced approach where educators show warmth and care while setting clear, consistent boundaries and allowing students to experience the natural consequences of their choices.



Primary Instructional Methods to Ensure Equity Aligned to the Philosophy

The primary instructional methods implemented at Inspira STEAM Academy are designed to ensure equity for all students and are deeply aligned with our constructivist philosophy:

Bilingual Education Program (80/20 Model):

Ensuring Equity

The 80/20 model directly addresses the linguistic diversity of students, providing equal access to education in both Spanish and English. This is particularly crucial for English Language Learners (ELLs) and Spanish-speaking students, ensuring they can access rigorous content while developing English proficiency. This approach prevents language from being a barrier to academic success. Personalized support and differentiated instruction are provided to address individual needs and ensure that students are not lagging behind in either language.

Alignment to Philosophy

The philosophy of Inspira emphasizes equal access to educational opportunities and resources in both languages. By providing robust language instruction and support, students are empowered to succeed academically and socially in a bilingual context. This model fosters an appreciation of diverse cultures, encouraging students to embrace and respect linguistic and cultural diversity.

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL)

Ensuring Equity

Inquiry-based learning fosters independence and self-directed learning, empowering students to take ownership of their educational journey. By connecting learning to students' interests and real-world issues, this approach enhances engagement and motivation, leading to a deeper understanding of the material. It allows for differentiation by interest and readiness, making learning accessible and meaningful for a diverse student population. It empowers all voices by valuing student questions and experiences.

Alignment to Philosophy

Inquiry-based learning fosters independence and self-directed learning, empowering students to take ownership of their educational journey. By connecting learning to students' interests and real-world issues, this approach enhances engagement and motivation, leading to a deeper understanding of the material. Constructivism ensures that learning experiences are designed around students' interests and questions. Educators will act as facilitators, guiding students through the process of inquiry and helping them develop research and problem-solving skills. Lessons will involve hands-on activities, experiments, and real-world problem-solving tasks that encourage students to engage deeply with the material. At Inspira, students will be encouraged to reflect on their learning process and findings, iterating their questions and approaches based on new insights and feedback.

STEAM Education

Ensuring Equity

By focusing on interdisciplinary projects and real-world problems, STEAM education provides multiple entry points for diverse learners. It caters to different learning styles (visual, kinesthetic, auditory) and promotes collaboration, allowing students with varied strengths to contribute. Arts education is highly expressive, and students at each grade level will engage in interconnected activities. In the lower grades, students will focus on songs, dances, and paintings that reflect their perceptions of their community. In the higher grades, the emphasis will shift to in-depth drawings that capture observations or develop plans for three-dimensional structures.

Alignment to Philosophy

STEAM education supports a holistic approach to learning by integrating various disciplines and fostering a comprehensive understanding of how they interrelate. By incorporating the arts into STEAM subjects, STEAM education nurtures creativity and encourages innovative thinking, essential skills for future success.

Integration of *Love and Logic* Principles

Ensuring Equity

Implementing *Love and Logic* principles in bilingual education involves creating a supportive and respectful learning environment where students feel valued in both languages. Educators model positive behavior and provide consistent feedback, encouraging students to take



responsibility for their learning in both languages. This consistent, empathetic approach creates a safe and predictable environment essential for all students, particularly those who may have experienced inconsistent home structures, fostering self-regulation and respect.

Alignment to Philosophy

In an inquiry-based context, *Love and Logic* principles help maintain a structured yet flexible environment where students are guided to explore and solve problems independently while understanding the importance of their choices and actions. For STEAM, *Love and Logic* reinforces the value of persistence, collaboration, and creative problem-solving. Educators support students through challenges and celebrate their successes, fostering a positive attitude toward experimentation and innovation. We will have parent nights where we will share the *Love and Logic* methods so that we are using the same key phrase *Love and Logic* utilizes at school and home.

Research-based Instructional Methods

The instructional methods at Inspira STEAM Academy are deeply rooted in established educational research. The teaching and instructional philosophy at Inspira STEAM Academy is grounded in Constructivism. This theory believes that students are proactive learners rather than mere receptacles for information. Students draw upon their own experiences to create understanding from their newly acquired knowledge. This philosophy is centered around children, emphasizing their interpretation and experiences during activities.

Bilingual Education Program (80/20 Model)

In *The Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All*, Virginia P. Collier and Wayne P. Thomas report: “....current federal legislation is the assumption (based not on research, but on political expediency) that ELLs should be on grade level in English in three years. In every study conducted, we have consistently found that it takes six to eight years for ELLs to reach grade level in L2, and only one-way and two-way enrichment dual language programs have closed the gap in this length of time. No other program has closed more than half of the achievement gap in the long term. This means that while ELLs are working on closing the gap by making more than one year’s progress in their L2 with every year of school, they should be tested on grade level in their L1. Requiring grade-level curricular testing in students’ L1 provides an important measure that students are keeping up with cognitively challenging grade-level work while closing the gap in English. Once ELLs learners have reached full parity with native-English speakers, a curricular test in English should yield just as valid and reliable a score as it does for native-English speakers. But, while ELLs learners are still closing the gap, a test score in English will underestimate their true achievement.” (Berkeley Unified School District, 2011, p. 5)

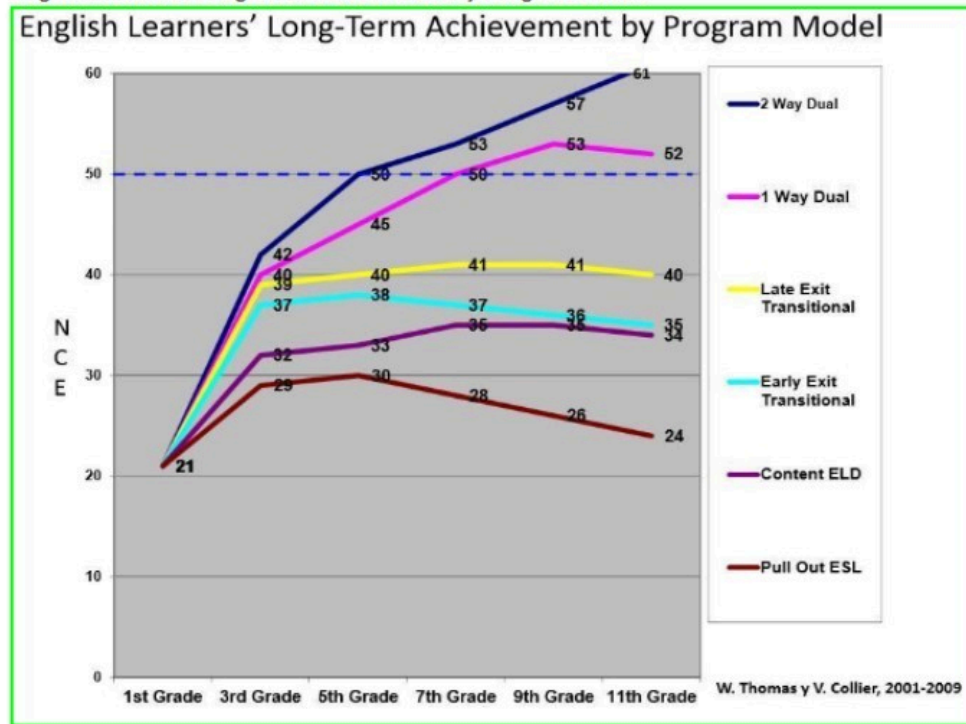
The Infographic attached by Virginia P. Collier and Wayne P. Thomas demonstrates the growth of academics by Program Model. The two-way Dual Education model by far surpasses other language models that are offered in the United States.

Reference F(1)b. - English Learners' Long-Term Achievement by Program Model



F(1)b. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - English Learners' Long-Term Achievement by Program Model

English Learners' Long-Term Achievement by Program Model



Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL)

IBL is widely supported by educational research for its effectiveness in promoting deeper understanding and critical thinking skills. It is consistent with constructivist principles by encouraging active student construction of knowledge.

STEAM Education

The interdisciplinary nature of STEAM is supported by research indicating that integrated learning contexts lead to deeper understanding and better application of knowledge than isolated subject instruction. It also aligns with the cognitive benefits observed in students engaged in hands-on, problem-based learning.

"Love and Logic" Principles

"Love and Logic," developed by Charles Fay and Foster Cline, is a widely recognized and researched approach in education and parenting, supported by numerous studies on its effectiveness in fostering responsibility, self-discipline, and positive behavior in children.

Reference F(1)c. - PBWorks Traditional and Constructivist Classroom Comparisons



F(1)c. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - PBWorks Traditional and Constructivist Classroom Comparisons

PBWorks Traditional and Constructivist Classroom Comparisons

Teaching & Learning Resources. (n.d.)

Modified by Inspira STEAM Academy

Traditional Classroom	Constructivist Classroom at Inspira
Curriculum begins with the parts of the whole. Emphasizes basic skills.	Curriculum emphasizes big concepts, beginning with the whole and expanding to include the parts.
Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued.	Pursuit of student questions and interests is valued.
Materials are primarily textbooks and workbooks.	Materials include primary sources of material and manipulative materials.
Learning is based on repetition.	Learning is interactive, building on what the student already knows.
Teachers disseminate information to students; students are recipients of knowledge.	Teachers have a dialogue with students, helping students construct their own knowledge.
Teacher's role is directive, rooted in authority.	Teacher's role is interactive, rooted in negotiation.
Assessment is through testing, correct answers.	Assessment includes student works, observations, and points of view, as well as tests. Process is as important as product.
Knowledge is seen as inert.	Knowledge is seen as dynamic, ever-changing with our experiences.
Students work primarily alone.	Students work primarily in groups.

Comparison to Traditional Classrooms:

The table "PBWorks Traditional and Constructivist Classroom Comparisons" (Modified by Inspira STEAM Academy) highlights key differences, aligning Inspira's approach with research-backed constructivist principles that favor interactive learning, student-driven inquiry, group work, and dynamic knowledge construction over rote memorization and passive reception. This implicitly draws on research that demonstrates the limitations of purely traditional models for fostering deeper learning.

Educational Philosophy and Instructional Methods that Support and Align to the Mission and Curriculum

The educational philosophy of Constructivism and the core instructional methods (Bilingual Education, Inquiry-Based Learning, STEAM Education, and "Love and Logic") at Inspira STEAM Academy are meticulously designed to support and align with the school's mission and curriculum.

Mission Alignment

Our mission is "Inspira STEAM Academy will cultivate globally-minded scholars through a rigorous Spanish language acquisition program focused on STEAM instructional programming."

Rigor and Excellence

The constructivist philosophy encourages students to build deep conceptual understanding rather than surface-level memorization, leading to true mastery. Our chosen methods, especially STEAM and IBL, demand critical thinking, problem-solving, and application of knowledge,



embodying academic rigor and striving for excellence.

Globally-Minded Scholars

The 80/20 bilingual model inherently fosters global-mindedness by developing proficiency in another language and culture. Inquiry-based learning, particularly when exploring real-world problems (like the "Mi Comunidad" unit), naturally leads to understanding diverse perspectives and global issues.

Inquiry-Based Practices

This is a direct reflection of a core mission component. Our constructivist approach ensures that inquiry is not just a method but the central way students engage with learning, encouraging questions, exploration, and self-directed discovery.

Spanish Language Acquisition

The 80/20 bilingual model is the primary instructional method for achieving Spanish language acquisition, a direct mission goal. It ensures consistent immersion and explicit language development.

STEAM

STEAM education, an interdisciplinary approach, is a foundational instructional method that directly aligns with the mission's emphasis on science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

Curriculum Alignment

Curriculum Emphasis on Big Concepts

The constructivist philosophy moves away from isolated facts towards understanding big concepts and interconnectedness. This directly aligns with our curriculum's use of 6 to 8 week interdisciplinary units and "umbrella units" that move beyond isolated subjects, fostering a holistic understanding of how disciplines interrelate.

Interdisciplinary Projects, for example, *Mi Comunidad*, is a sample unit illustrating this alignment

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics

Each component of the unit explicitly outlines how students will engage with these disciplines, demonstrating the integrated nature of our STEAM curriculum. For example, students design garden beds (Engineering), analyze demographic data (Mathematics), develop digital maps (Technology), and create art pieces (Arts), all within a scientific study of local environments.

Student-Centered Learning

The unit's focus on "connecting abstract concepts to their lived experiences and fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their home, school, and community" is a direct application of constructivist principles and inquiry-based learning, making the curriculum relevant and engaging.

Bilingual Instruction

The entire unit is presented with Spanish language integration, from vocabulary to discussions and projects, reinforcing the bilingual nature of the curriculum.

Philosophical Alignment of Methods

Bilingualism and Constructivism

The emphasis on constructing understanding in two languages (Spanish and English) supports the constructivist idea that learners actively build knowledge. The 80/20 model ensures depth in both linguistic frameworks.

IBL and Constructivism

IBL is a direct application of constructivism. It empowers students to construct their own knowledge through exploration, problem-solving, and reflection with the teacher as a facilitator, not a mere dispenser of facts.

STEAM and Constructivism:

STEAM's focus on hands-on, project-based learning, and real-world problems aligns with the constructivist view that learning is active and builds on prior experiences. It allows students to construct solutions and understanding through experimentation and application.



***Love and Logic* and Constructivism**

Love and Logic reinforces the constructivist idea of self-regulation and taking ownership of learning. By allowing students to experience logical consequences, they construct their understanding of responsible behavior and problem-solving, a key aspect of active learning.

How the Proposed Instructional Methods will Best Support the Population Served

The proposed instructional methods of an 80/20 Bilingual Education model, Inquiry-Based Learning, STEAM Education, and the integration of *Love and Logic* principles are specifically designed to best support Inspira STEAM Academy's target population: a multicultural student body, including a significant number of English Language Learners (ELs), economically disadvantaged students, and those from minority backgrounds, within the context of New Mexico's diverse communities.

Bilingual Education Program (80/20 Model)

Support for ELs and Spanish-Speaking Students

This model provides immediate linguistic access for students whose native language is Spanish, ensuring they can engage with content from day one without falling behind academically while simultaneously developing strong English proficiency. This dual-language approach helps bridge language barriers and fosters a more inclusive learning environment.

Cognitive Benefits for All

Research indicates that dual-language education leads to significant cognitive benefits (e.g., increased cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills) for all students, including native English speakers, preparing them for a globally interconnected world. This addresses equity by providing a high-quality, enriched academic experience regardless of background.

Cultural Affirmation

By valuing and developing Spanish, the school affirms the cultural heritage of a significant portion of New Mexico's population, fostering pride and a sense of belonging, which is crucial for engagement and retention. Data indicates that 59.4% of residents in Las Cruces identify as Latino or Hispanic (Data USA, 2023), and 33.1% of residents reported speaking another language at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL):

Engaging Diverse Learners

IBL allows students to explore questions and problems that are personally relevant, making learning more engaging and accessible for students from diverse backgrounds and learning styles. This approach shifts from passive reception to active exploration, which can be particularly beneficial for students who may not thrive in traditional, lecture-based environments.

Fostering Critical Thinking

It empowers students to ask questions, research, and construct their own understanding, developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for future success, regardless of their starting point.

Culturally Responsive

When integrated with culturally relevant topics like *Mi Comunidad*, IBL encourages students to bring their own experiences and perspectives into the learning process, validating their identities and making education more meaningful.

STEAM Education

Hands-on and Relevant

The interdisciplinary, hands-on, and project-based nature of STEAM learning transforms education into an engaging and fun adventure. Through exciting experiments, creative challenges, and playful exploration, students dive into real-world problems that feel like puzzles waiting to be solved. By connecting learning to their lives and communities, this approach sparks curiosity and joy, making even the most abstract concepts come alive in ways that resonate with every learner.

Developing 21st-Century Skills

It equips students with highly sought-after skills in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics, directly preparing them for post-secondary education and high-demand careers, which is crucial for upward mobility in historically underserved communities.



Culturally Integrated

By incorporating the arts and allowing for culturally specific projects such as local infrastructure and community art, STEAM can be tailored to be deeply culturally responsive, inspiring students from all backgrounds.

Integration of *Love and Logic* Principles

Positive Classroom Climate for All

This philosophy fosters a supportive and respectful learning environment that emphasizes empathy and consistent boundaries. This stability and predictability are especially beneficial for students who may come from challenging home environments, providing a secure space for learning and emotional development.

Fostering Responsibility and Self-Regulation

By teaching students to take ownership of their choices and understand logical consequences, *Love and Logic* builds crucial self-discipline and problem-solving skills. This empowers students to be resilient and self-reliant, vital traits for academic and life success.

Strong Home-School Connection

Parent nights focused on *Love and Logic* ensure consistency between school and home, reinforcing positive behaviors and shared expectations, which is a powerful support for students from all backgrounds.

In summary, this comprehensive instructional philosophy integrates an 80/20 bilingual education model with inquiry-based learning and STEAM principles, all while incorporating the empathetic and consistent approach outlined in *Love and Logic*. This holistic approach ensures that students develop bilingual proficiency, critical thinking skills, and creativity, preparing them for a dynamic and interconnected world.

Section F References

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



Applicant Evidence :

		
F(1)b. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...	F(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...	F(1)c. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...
Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia	Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia	Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

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



Yearly Calendar and Daily Schedule

Inspira STEAM Academy is dedicated to supporting the children and families of Las Cruces by aligning its calendar with that of the Las Cruces Public Schools. This thoughtful coordination ensures that families experience a seamless transition between school and home, making it easier for parents to arrange care for their children during school breaks and days off.

Additionally, Inspira STEAM Academy offers an enriched academic calendar that exceeds state requirements for instructional hours by 138 hours. Our teachers are provided with an additional 76 hours of professional development, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach in this specialized program. This extensive training enhances their expertise, ensuring they are well-prepared to support and inspire our students in their unique learning journey.

This extended schedule provides students with ample opportunities to engage in innovative STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) projects, fostering their creativity and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the program places a strong emphasis on Spanish language acquisition, ensuring that students not only excel academically but also develop valuable language skills in a supportive environment.



Yearly Calendar (2026-2027)

- Reference F(2)a - Yearly Calendar/Calendar Description



F(2)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Yearly Calendar

Inspira STEAM Academy						
2026 - 2027 School Calendar						
July 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
August 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
September 2026						
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27	28	29	30			
October 2026						
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
November 2026						
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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29	30					
December 2026						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
January 2027						
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29	30	31				
February 2027						
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29	30					
March 2027						
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April 2027						
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May 2027						
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June 2027						
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NEW MEXICO - NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION 2025
New Mexico Public Education Department



	First Day of School		Professional Development Day (no school for students)
	No School for Students and Staff (April 23/26, inclement weather) weather day		5th Grade Graduation
	End of quarter		Student/Parent/Teacher Conferences
	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten & new student		ACCESS for ELLs & ALTERNATE ACCESS for ELLs
	Gifted Screening: Assessment to be administered in 2 year		Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ)
	Measures of Student Success & Achievement (MSSA/IMSSA)		Avant STAMP
	NM Assessment of Science Readiness (5th grade) *Assessment will be administered in the 5th year of operation.		Dyslexia Screening
	National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) *4-5 Assessment will be administered in the 4th year of operation.		Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)

INSPIRA STEAM ACADEMY Calendar Description		
Staff/Students	174 days <i>Instructional Days</i>	1,218 <i>Instructional hours</i>
Staff/admin only	17 days <i>Professional Development</i>	136 <i>Professional Development hours</i>
Total	192 Days	1,354 Hours
Instructional Hours by Quarter		
Quarter 1	47 days	329 hours
Quarter 2	42 days	294 hours
Quarter 3	44 days	308 hours
Quarter 4	41 days	287 hours

Annual Start Date and End Date:

- **First Day of School:** July 27, 2026
- **Last Day of School:** May 19, 2027
- **Teacher End Date:** May 19, 2027

Professional Development Day (no school for students):

- July 13-24, 2026
- August 27, 2026
- August 28, 2026 (Parent-Teacher Conference)
- January 4-5, 2027
- February 11, 2027
- February 12, 2027 (Parent-Teacher Conference)
- March 29, 2027

Total Professional Development Days: 17 days

Total Professional Development Hours: 136 hours

School-Wide Assessment Periods:



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



New Mexico Required Statewide Student Assessment

<p align="center">New Mexico Required Statewide Student Assessment for 2024-2025 New Mexico Public Education Department, 2024</p> <p align="center">Inspira STEAM Academy will adjust dates when the calendar for the 2025-2026 school year is released.</p>			
Assessment	Description	Grades	Dates
ACCESS for ELLs & ALTERNATE ACCESS for ELLs	ACCESS for ELLs is a suite of assessments used to measure English language proficiency, administered to all students identified as English language learners (ELs). It is administered annually to monitor English learners' progress in acquiring academic English. Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is administered to ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities when the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicated this being an appropriate assignment.	K-12	Jan. 14- March 7, 2025
Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ)	The Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ) is completed by parents to provide important contextual information about student's early experiences prior to kindergarten.	K	Oct. 1–Dec. 20,
Avant STAMP	All students enrolled in a state-funded Spanish bilingual multicultural education program who have not already tested and achieved Spanish language proficiency are required to complete the Avant STAMP assessment once per year to measure growth towards Spanish language proficiency. Additionally, the Avant STAMP and specific coursework requirements are one option for a student to earn the State Seal of Bilingualism and Biliteracy (SSBB)	K-12	Oct. 21-March 14, 2025
NM Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR)	The ASR measures science proficiency aligned to the New Mexico STEM Ready! Science Standards. The assessment is required annually.	5, 8 and 11.	March 10-May 2, 2025
Dyslexia Screening	Screening for dyslexia is required for students in first grade. The screeners flag possible characteristics of dyslexia, but do not diagnose students with dyslexia. Screener information is available here and managed by the Literacy Bureau.	1st	By the 40th day of school and within two weeks of initial NM enrollment
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)	DLM assessments maximizes access to the general education curriculum for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and ensures that all students with disabilities are included in assessment and accountability. The student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) must indicate placement in alternate assessments for math, ELA and science rather than SAT, MSSA, and ASR.	3–12	Sept. 9, 2024–Feb. 21, 2025
Measures of Student Success & Achievement (MSSA)* & Interim MSSA (iMSSA)	The MSSA is the summative assessment in math, English language arts, and Spanish language arts, aligned to the New Mexico Common Core Standards and Common Core Español Standards for SLA. The assessment measures a student's grade level proficiency and progress toward college and/or career readiness. The iMSSA is a "mini-summative" designed interim assessment that measures progress toward grade level standards.	3-8 Assessment will be administered in the 3rd year of operation.	March 17–May 2, 2025 (Schools wanting preliminary reports would need to complete testing by April 10.)
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. NAEP results serve as a common metric for all states and selected urban districts. Main NAEP administration is targeted to pre-identified schools serving grades 4 and 8 every other year. Additionally, the NAEP supports the administration of other international and longitudinal studies.	4-8 Assessment will be administered in the 4th year of operation.	late winter early spring.



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English Learner Screening/Identification	The Kindergarten WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) and WIDA Screener to identify English language learners (ELLs). The required use of the screener is dependent on parent responses on the Language Usage Survey. WIDA screening and policy is managed by the Language and Culture Bureau.	1-12	When the kids start school in Kindergarten or in first grade if they were not assessed.
Gifted Screening	All New Mexico students are required to be screened for gifted by the end of the third grade. Each LEA should establish procedures for this universal screening process.	2nd and above if they were not tested.	by 3rd grade
WIDA Screener for Kindergarten & WIDA Screener	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten is an individually administered paper-and-pencil test that helps educators identify students as English learners (ELs). It is typically given to students one time when they enter your school or district as they start Kindergarten or first grade.	1-12	Within 30 days of the start of school OR within two weeks of initial NM enrollment

* Adapted from the New Mexico Public Department Assessment Schedule 2024-2025

- Reference F(2)b - New Mexico Required Statewide Assessment

WIDA Screener for Kindergarten & new students:

August 17-21, 2026 (Within 30 days of the start of school OR within two weeks of initial NM enrollment)

Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ):

October 21-23, 2026

Avant STAMP (Spanish language proficiency):

December 7-11, 2026, and May 1-5, 2027

Dyslexia Screening (1st grade):

August 24-25, 2026 (By the 40th day of school and within two weeks of initial NM enrollment)

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM):

February 8-10, 2027

ACCESS for ELLs & ALTERNATE ACCESS for ELLs:

January 25-29, 2027

NM Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR - 5th grade):

(Assessment will be administered in the 5th year of operation.)

Measures of Student Success & Achievement (MSSA) & Interim MSSA (iMSSA):

(Assessment will be administered in the 3rd year of operation.)

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP - 4th & 8th grade):

(Assessment will be administered in the 4th year of operation.)

Gifted Screening (2nd grade and above if not tested):

(Assessment will be administered in the 2nd year of operation.)

School Days, Holidays, and Partial Days:

Instructional Days: 174 days

Holidays/No School for Students and Staff:

- September 7, 2026 (Labor Day)
- October 5-12, 2026 (Fall Break)
- November 3, 2026 (Election Day)
- November 11, 2026 (Veteran's Day)
- November 23-27, 2026 (Thanksgiving Break)
- December 21-31, 2026 (Winter Break)



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- January 1, 2027 (New Year's Day)
- January 18, 2027 (MLK Day)
- February 15, 2027 (President's Day)
- March 15-19, 2027 (Spring Break)
- March 26, 2027 (Good Friday)
- April 23, 2027 (Inclement Weather Day)
- April 26, 2027 (Inclement Weather Day)

*The first Wednesday of the month will be a professional development day, and the students will be in attendance to engage in a STEAM Enrichment community learning day.

Teacher Parent Conferences:

Student/Parent/Teacher Conferences: August 28, 2026 and February 12, 2027

Daily Schedule



Staff Hours of Operation Student Hours: 7:30 am to 3:00 pm Staff Hours: 7:00 am to 3:30 pm Yearly Instructional Hours 1,354 (1218 is allocated direct student instruction, 136 professional development for staff)			
Monday through Friday		Staff PD 1st Wednesday of the month	
Activity	Time	Activity	Time
Breakfast	7:30-7:45	Professional Development Day <u>7:00am to 11:00am</u>	
SLA	7:45-9:15		
Kinesthetic Learning Time	9:15-9:30		
Interventions	9:30-10:00		
Math	10:00-11:30		
Lunch	11:30-12:00	Lunch	11:00-11:30
Kinesthetic Learning Time	12:00-12:15	Social studies	11:30-12:30
Social studies	12:15-1:15	Specials	12:30-1:30
Specials	1:15-2:15	Kinesthetic Learning Time	2:00-2:15
ELA	2:15-3:00	ELA	2:15-3:00

All classes will be taught in 6-8 week interdisciplinary STEAM units



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<p align="center">Students Hours of Operation Student Hours: 7:30 am to 3:00 pm Staff Hours: 7:00 am to 3:30 pm Yearly Instructional Hours 1,354 (1218 is allocated direct student instruction, 136 professional development for staff)</p>			
Monday through Friday		Students Educational Day: 1st Wednesday of the month	
Activity	Time	Activity	Time
Breakfast	7:30-7:45	Breakfast	7:30-7:45
SLA	7:45-9:15	STEAM Enrichment Day 7:45-11:30	
Kinesthetic Learning Time	9:15-9:30		
Interventions	9:30-10:00		
Math	10:00-11:30		
Lunch	11:30-12:00	Lunch	11:30-12:00
Kinesthetic Learning Time	12:00-12:15	Social studies	12:00-12:30
Social studies	12:15-1:15	Specials	12:30-1:30
Specials	1:15-2:15	Kinesthetic Learning	2:00-2:15
ELA	2:15-3:00	ELA	2:15-3:00

All classes will be taught in 6-8 week interdisciplinary STEAM units

- Reference F(2)c - Daily Schedule Hours of Operation:

Student Hours: 7:30 am to 3:00 pm

Staff Hours: 7:00 am to 3:30 pm

Yearly Instructional Hours: 1,218

Monday through Friday (Typical Day):

Breakfast: 7:30 - 7:45 am

SLA (Spanish Language Arts): 7:45 - 9:15 am

Kinesthetic Learning Time: 9:15 - 9:30 am

Interventions: 9:30 - 10:00 am

Math: 10:00 - 11:30 am

Lunch: 11:30 - 12:00 pm

Kinesthetic Learning Time: 12:00 - 12:15 pm

Social Studies: 12:15 - 1:15 pm

Specials: 1:15 - 2:15 pm

ELA (English Language Arts): 2:15 - 3:00 pm

Differences in the Daily Schedule for Full and Partial Days (Professional Development Day):

1st Wednesday of the month (Professional Development Day for Staff / No school for students):

Professional Development: 7:00 am - 11:00 am (for staff)

Lunch: 11:00 am - 11:30 am

Social Studies (Staff Planning/Collaboration): 11:30 am - 12:30 pm



Specials (Staff Planning/Collaboration): 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Kinesthetic Learning Time (Staff Planning/Collaboration): 2:00 pm - 2:15 pm

ELA (Staff Planning/Collaboration): 2:15 pm - 3:00 pm

(Note: The daily schedule for students on these days is implied to be zero instructional time, while staff engage in PD and planning.)

Meet all minimum hour (total instructional time) requirements laid out in NMSA 22-2-8.1

Student's Yearly Instructional Hours: 1,218 hours

Inspira STEAM Academy exceeds the minimum instructional requirements laid out in NMSA 22-2-8.1. Reference F(2)d. - NMPED-Inspira hours



F(2)d. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - NMPED-Inspira hours

	NMPED / Las Cruces Public School Calendar	Inspira STEAM Academy
Staff Professional Development	60	136
Direct Instruction	1080	1,218
Total Instructional hours	1140	1354

How the calendar and schedule support the proposed school's educational program

The calendar and daily schedule are thoughtfully structured to support Inspira STEAM Academy's distinctive educational model. Our extended learning time and ongoing professional development reflect our deep commitment to fostering a strong school culture, promoting continuous growth, and delivering a high-quality bilingual education within a school of excellence.

Additional Learning Time

While the NMPED requires a minimum of 1140 total instructional hours per year with up to 60 hours of those allotted for professional development, Inspira STEAM Academy provides 1354 total instructional hours, with 136 hours allocated for professional development.

This extended time allows for deeper dives into interdisciplinary units, hands-on activities, and project-based learning. Students will gain ample opportunities to engage in innovative STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) projects, fostering their creativity and critical thinking skills.

Bilingual Immersion

The schedule dedicates significant time to Spanish Language Arts (SLA) early in the day (7:45 - 9:15 am) and reinforces English Language Arts (ELA) at the end of the day (2:15 - 3:00 pm). This structure supports the 80/20 dual immersion model, ensuring consistent exposure and development in both languages. The program places a strong emphasis on Spanish language acquisition, ensuring that students not only excel academically but also develop valuable language skills in a supportive environment.

Integrated STEAM Units

The statement "All classes will be taught in 6-8 week interdisciplinary STEAM units" confirms how the daily schedule's subject blocks (SLA, Math, Social Studies, ELA, Specials) will be interwoven to facilitate thematic, project-based learning. The "Mi Comunidad" example mentioned in previous sections illustrates how these subjects integrate under a common STEAM lens.

Teacher Professional Development:

While NMPED elementary schools provide 60 total staff professional development hours per year, Inspira STEAM Academy will provide 136 staff professional development hours. This amount of professional development is critical for equipping teachers with the necessary skills and



knowledge to effectively teach in this specialized program. These hours allow for cross-collaboration, curriculum review, training on culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, and ensuring high-quality instruction within the STEAM and bilingual framework.

Describe how the calendar and schedule are optimal for achieving high outcomes for the anticipated student population

The calendar and schedule are optimized for achieving high outcomes for Inspira STEAM Academy's anticipated student population, which includes a multicultural student body, English Language Learners, and those from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds:

Instructional Time

While the NMPED requires a minimum of 1140 total instructional hours per year with up to 60 hours of those allotted for professional development, Inspira STEAM Academy provides 1354 total instructional hours with 136 hours allocated for professional development.

These added hours provide time for students to grasp complex concepts, especially crucial for English Language Learners (ELLs) who benefit from sustained exposure to academic language in both Spanish and English. This extended time also allows for re-teaching, deeper exploration, and individualized support.

F (2) . - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Calendar hours

Consistent Structure

The consistent daily schedule (Monday through Friday) provides predictability and routine, which is beneficial for all students, particularly those who thrive with clear expectations and structure.

Integrated Learning

The interdisciplinary STEAM units, facilitated by the schedule, promote deeper understanding and retention by connecting abstract concepts to real-world applications. This approach makes learning more relevant and engaging for a diverse student population, including those who may learn best through hands-on activities.

Targeted Interventions

The dedicated Interventions block (9:30 - 10:00 am) allows for individualized or small-group support in specific areas, ensuring that students who need additional help receive it promptly, helping to close achievement gaps.

Teacher Preparedness

The extensive professional development provided will ensure teachers are well-versed in the school's unique bilingual STEAM approach, culturally responsive teaching, and effective strategies for supporting diverse learners, leading to higher instructional quality and ultimately, improved student outcomes.

Balance of Academics and Well-being

Designated Kinesthetic Learning Time is integrated into the daily schedule, recognizing the importance of physical well-being for cognitive function and overall student success. Kinesthetic learning provides an opportunity for multimodal instruction, shown to improve comprehension, enhance retention, and increase engagement. Kinesthetic learning may also stimulate creativity and enhance social skills.

Describe the extended learning time programs to improve academic success of students and professional learning of teachers

Although Inspira STEAM Academy does not participate in state-funded K-5 Plus or Extended Learning Programs, we will incorporate robust additional learning time for students and professional development time for teachers. Refer to F(2)a Yearly Calendar Daily Schedule

Additional Learning Time for Students

Increased Instructional Hours

While the NMPED requires a minimum of 1140 total instructional hours per year, with up to 60 hours of those allotted for professional development, Inspira STEAM Academy provides 1354 total instructional hours with 136 hours allocated for professional development. These added hours provide time for students to grasp complex concepts, especially crucial for English Language Learners (ELLs) who benefit from sustained exposure to academic language in both Spanish and English. This extended time also allows for re-teaching, deeper exploration, and individualized support.



STEAM Project Engagement

The extended schedule allows for ample opportunities to engage in innovative STEAM projects, which often require more time for planning, execution, and reflection than traditional lessons. These projects naturally extend learning beyond the typical school day by fostering curiosity and deeper engagement.

Spanish Language Acquisition

The extended hours provide more time dedicated to Spanish language acquisition, including immersion, vocabulary building, and practice, accelerating proficiency.

Additional Professional Development time for Teachers

Dedicated Professional Development Days

While the NMPED requires a minimum of 1140 total instructional hours per year, with up to 60 hours of those allotted for professional development, Inspira STEAM Academy provides 1354 total instructional hours with 136 hours allocated for professional development. These hours allow for cross-collaboration, curriculum review, training on culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, and ensuring high-quality instruction within the STEAM and bilingual framework.

Content and Pedagogical Training

This extensive training equips teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach in this specialized bilingual STEAM program. This includes training on the selected High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIMs) and culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy.

Collaborative Planning

Professional development days will be used for cross-collaboration, curriculum review, and planning of interdisciplinary STEAM units.

Ongoing Coaching and Feedback

The Executive Director will actively coach the teachers, providing in-person feedback and modeling effective practices, along with the support of the Dean of Students in year three. School administrators will utilize *Leverage Leadership* and *Teach Like a Champion* strategies to ensure a unified approach among all staff members.

This commitment to extended instructional hours and extensive professional development implies significant financial outlays for teacher salaries, benefits, and professional development resources. The statement indicates that these aspects of the calendar and schedule *will be supported by the proposed budget* found in the Financial Framework section of the application.

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 Be supported by the proposed budget found in the Financial Framework section of the application.

Inspira STEAM Academy will not be participating in the state-funded K-5 Plus or Extended Learning Program.

Describe how the proposed calendar supports and values the community it intends to serve

The proposed calendar at Inspira STEAM Academy is designed to genuinely support and value the Las Cruces community:

Alignment with Local Public Schools

Inspira STEAM Academy is dedicated to supporting the students and families of Las Cruces by aligning its calendar with that of the Las Cruces Public Schools. This thoughtful coordination ensures that families experience a seamless transition between school and home, making it easier for parents to arrange care for their students during school breaks and days off. This minimizes childcare burdens and logistical challenges for parents, especially those with students in different school systems or those working.

Commitment to Bilingualism

The emphasis on Spanish language acquisition through the extended schedule demonstrates a deep respect for the linguistic heritage of the Las Cruces community, which has a rich Spanish-speaking population. This values the existing cultural assets of families.

Enhanced Educational Opportunities

By offering an enriched academic calendar that exceeds state requirements and provides extensive STEAM opportunities, the school demonstrates its commitment to providing a high-quality, innovative education to the community's students. This directly addresses the



community's desire for strong academic outcomes and future readiness.

Teacher Support





The substantial investment in teacher professional development ensures that the educators serving the community are highly skilled, prepared, and capable of meeting the unique needs of a multicultural student population. This values both the teachers and, by extension, the students they serve.

Accessibility of Assessments

The detailed inclusion of various assessment periods allows parents and the community to be aware of and potentially participate in understanding student progress, fostering transparency.

Distributing the school calendars well in advance plays a vital role in ensuring that every student participates fully during testing periods. By providing this information ahead of time, parents can effectively plan and schedule appointments, thereby reducing the chances of their children missing valuable classroom instruction. This proactive approach fosters a supportive environment for both students and families, ultimately contributing to a more successful academic experience.

Applicant Evidence :

			
F(2)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...	F(2)d. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...	F(2)c. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...	F(2)b. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...
Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia	Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia	Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia	Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

Q12.

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

• A complete response must

- 1. Identify the anticipated student population, including:
 - a. Demographic information based on the local community population
 - b. Educational proficiency based upon enrollment at the school
 - c. Attendance and truancy trends
 - d. English language proficiency
 - e. Diverse populations
 - f. At-Risk populations
 - g. 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



Anticipated Student Population

Demographic information based on the local community population

The anticipated student population will primarily draw from the Las Cruces East Mesa area, where Inspira will be located. The compilation of schools in the Las Cruces East Mesa (Sonoma Elementary, Jornada Elementary, Desert Hills Elementary, and Loma Heights Elementary), based on data from U.S. News & World Report, indicates a notably high minority enrollment ranging from 72% to 90%. This highlights a significant demographic that requires focused attention and tailored educational strategies.

Educational proficiency based upon enrollment at the school

Students in the Las Cruces East Mesa (Sonoma Elementary, Jornada Elementary, Desert Hills Elementary, and Loma Heights Elementary) scored 21%-40% proficiency in Math and between 30% and 56% proficiency in reading based on reported data.

Attendance and truancy trends

While specific attendance and truancy data for the Las Cruces East Mesa schools (Sonoma Elementary, Jornada Elementary, Desert Hills Elementary, and Loma Heights Elementary) is not reported, Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) saw a 30% chronic absenteeism rate in the 2023-2024 school year with nearly 7,000 out of 23,000 students missing 18 or more days of school.

English language proficiency

While specific English language proficiency for the Las Cruces East Mesa schools (Sonoma Elementary, Jornada Elementary, Desert Hills Elementary, and Loma Heights Elementary) is not reported, Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) identifies 15.5% of its student population as English Language Learners (ELLs). Inspira's educational philosophy emphasizes providing equal access to educational opportunities and resources in both English and the native languages of its students, supporting the needs of English language learners. Inspira's 80/20 dual language model aims to develop proficiency in both Spanish and English, initially predominantly in Spanish, then gradually shifting to a 50/50 balance of Spanish/English instruction.

Diverse populations

The student population in the proposed Las Cruces East Mesa area (Sonoma Elementary, Jornada Elementary, Desert Hills Elementary, and Loma Heights Elementary) is anticipated to be highly diverse, with 72% to 90% minority enrollment. Inspira's philosophy and instructional methods are designed to nurture a deep appreciation for diverse cultures, encouraging students to embrace and respect linguistic and cultural diversity.

At-Risk populations

While specific data for the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in the Las Cruces East Mesa schools area (Sonoma Elementary, Jornada Elementary, Desert Hills Elementary, and Loma Heights Elementary) is not reported, 68.2% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. (U.S. News & World Report, n.d.). The high minority enrollment (72%-90%) and the noted proficiency rates (21%-40% in Math, 30%-56% in reading) in the proposed Las Cruces East Mesa area suggest a significant portion of the anticipated student population may be considered at-risk. The instructional methods at Inspira are specifically designed to meet the needs of at-risk students, particularly second language learners and neurodivergent students.

Special Education needs

While specific data for the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in the Las Cruces East Mesa schools area (Sonoma Elementary, Jornada Elementary, Desert Hills Elementary, and Loma Heights Elementary) is not reported, Las Cruces Public Schools reports providing special education services to approximately 5,400 students out of 23,000 (23% of their student population). In the 2022-23 school year, over 16% of public school students in New Mexico were found eligible for special education services (NMPED OSE State Plan Report, 2024). Inspira STEAM Academy projects to have a percentage between 16%-23% of students with special education needs.

Reference chart F(3)a - Las Cruces East Mesa Sonoma Area Demographics for more information.



F(3)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Las Cruces East Mesa Sonoma Area Demographics

Las Cruces East Mesa - Sonoma Area Demographics 2020-22					
Schools	Student Population (Prek-5th)	Math Proficiency	Reading Proficiency	Minority Enrollment	Gender Female Male
Sonoma Elementary	748	40%	51%	79%	52% 48%
Desert Hills Elementary	559	34%	56%	72%	51% 49%
Jornada Elementary	490	28%	41%	88%	45% 55%
Loma Heights Elementary	505	21%	30%	90%	45% 55%

U.S. News & World Report. (n.d.). *Las Cruces Public Schools*. U.S. News & World Report. Retrieved December 30, 2024, from <https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/new-mexico/districts/las-cruces-public-schools-100743>

Special factors influencing the makeup of the anticipated student population

Special factors influencing the anticipated makeup of the student population in the proposed Las Cruces East Mesa area includes a notably high minority enrollment, which ranges from 72% to 90%. The students in this area scored 21%-40% proficiency in Math and between 30% and 56% proficiency in reading. These statistics highlight a significant demographic that requires focused attention and tailored educational strategies to ensure their unique needs are met effectively.

How the educational philosophy has been designed to meet students’ needs:

The instructional philosophy at Inspira STEAM Academy is based on Constructivism, assuming students are proactive learners who build understanding from newly acquired knowledge based on their experiences. This child-centered approach emphasizes their interpretations and experiences. Inspira STEAM Academy has been designed to cater to the diverse student population, including those with high minority enrollment and varying academic proficiency levels. It emphasizes the importance of providing equal access to educational opportunities and resources in both English and the native languages of students. By incorporating robust language instruction and supportive measures, the philosophy aims to empower students to excel academically and thrive socially within a bilingual environment. This approach nurtures a deep appreciation for diverse cultures, encouraging students to embrace and respect linguistic and cultural diversity.

How the instructional methods have been designed to meet students’ needs and specifically how they will meet the needs of at-risk students

The Bilingual model aims to develop proficiency in both languages, emphasizing high levels of fluency in Spanish while maintaining and enhancing English language skills. Instruction will initially be predominantly in Spanish to establish a strong foundation, gradually shifting to include more content in English until reaching a 50/50 balance. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) subject matter will be taught in Spanish through inquiry-based lessons, incorporating cultural and contextual relevance for engagement and comprehension. Inquiry-based learning will involve hands-on activities, experiments, and real-world problem-solving tasks, encouraging deep engagement. Students will be prompted to reflect on their learning processes and findings, refining their questions and approaches. By integrating art into the STEM framework, students gain opportunities for creative expression, discovering the beauty of creativity in problem-solving and scientific inquiry.



These teaching methods aim to meet the needs of all students, particularly those who are at risk of being underserved, specifically targeting second language learners and neurodivergent students. Teaching methods also address the four learning modalities: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile. Inspira provides a comprehensive and dynamic educational program for children who exhibit exceptional academic talents (gifted students), integrating enriching opportunities that challenge advanced learners and ignite their passion for knowledge.

How the yearly calendar and daily schedule have been designed to meet students’ needs

While NMPED requires a minimum of 1140 total instructional hours per year (with up to 60 hours for professional development), Inspira STEAM Academy will provide 1354 total instructional hours, with 136 hours allocated for professional development. This additional time allows for re-teaching, deeper exploration, and individualized support for students. The extensive training for teachers enhances their expertise, ensuring they are well-prepared to support and inspire students. The extended schedule provides students ample opportunities to engage in innovative STEAM projects, fostering creativity and critical thinking skills. Additionally, the program places a strong emphasis on Spanish language acquisition, ensuring students excel academically while developing valuable language skills in a supportive environment.

Section F References Continued


Las Cruces Public Schools. (n.d.). *Special education*. Las Cruces Public Schools. Retrieved December 30, 2024, from <https://www.lcps.net/page/special-education> (<https://www.lcps.net/page/special-education>)

New Mexico Public Education Department. (2024). *New Mexico Office of Special Education State Plan 2024-2027*. <https://www.nmeced.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/OSE-State-Plan-Final-Approved-11-24.pdf#:~:text=In%20the%202022%2D23%20school%20year%2C%20over%2016%,were%20found%20eligible%20for%20special%20education%20services.&text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20survey%20is%20to,services%20and%20results%20for%20students%20with%20disabilities> (<https://www.nmeced.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/OSE-State-Plan-Final-Approved-11-24.pdf#:~:text=In%20the%202022%2D23%20school%20year%2C%20over%2016%,were%20found%20eligible%20for%20special%20education%20services.&text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20survey%20is%20to,services%20and%20results%20for%20students%20with%20disabilities>).

Romero, L. (2024, September 6). *More New Mexico students are going to class*. Source: New Mexico. <https://sourcenm.com/2024/09/06/more-new-mexico-students-are-going-to-class/> (<https://sourcenm.com/2024/09/06/more-new-mexico-students-are-going-to-class/>)

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Applicant Evidence :



F(3)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...

Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

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:

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

b. instructional supports and services to gifted students who have IEPs or are eligible for an IEP;
2. Describe how the proposed school will

a. Ensure that students who are ELs are not over-identified as students with disabilities;

b. Identify specific responsibilities for school staff, classroom teachers, and special education staff; and



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c. 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:

a. Timeline, benchmarks, and people responsible for developing discipline policies and protocols for your special populations.

b. Capacity of the school district in the geographic boundaries of the proposed school to provide special education services and FAPE.

c. Process for tracking this protected population's progress and services, how that will be reported to the board.

4. Narrative Only



Identifying and Providing Special Education Supports and Services

Inspira STEAM Academy will provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to students with disabilities and students suspected of having a disability per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This includes students with IEPs and those eligible for IEPs. Inspira will ensure full compliance with federal and state laws and regulations including the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC.6.31.2), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and considering the implications of the the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit.

Inspira recognizes that a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach is necessary to assist students who may be eligible for IEPs. The Executive Director, classroom teachers, special education teachers, school staff, contracted related service providers, students, and families will collaborate effectively to serve students. Per NMAC 6.21.2.9, Inspira will develop and implement appropriate policies, procedures, programs, and services to ensure students with disabilities are identified, evaluated, and have access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Identifying and providing comprehensive individualized instructional supports and services to students with disabilities begins with an effective Multi-Level Systems of Support (MLSS) process. Inspira will conduct bi-weekly pre-SAT meetings for classroom teachers to identify students struggling in academics or behavior, identify areas of strengths and concerns, and collaborate to recommend and track interventions. Throughout the collaborative MLSS process, the pre-SAT team will collect data in academic and functional domains and prepare documentation to provide to the SAT team when appropriate. The SAT chair will compile data from school interventions, the student's cumulative file, and home records including parent input, medical diagnoses or outside evaluations for consideration and conduct a SAT meeting with school staff and family members to determine all areas of strengths and concern, rule out extrinsic factors and collect additional data needed. The SAT team will make data-driven decisions to determine appropriate evaluations to request and ensure a comprehensive, multidisciplinary initial evaluation is conducted in all areas of concern based on each student's individual needs. This evaluation will be completed within 60 days of parental consent and reviewed by the EDT. If found eligible for special education, an IEP with goals aligned with state standards will be developed and reviewed annually. Students will be re-evaluated every three years (triennial review), per IDEA.

The SAT chair will provide the special education evaluation referral packet to the Special Education Director/Coordinator. The Special Education Director/Coordinator will oversee the evaluation process to ensure compliance with Child Find regulations and timelines in obtaining a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary evaluation for students suspected of having a disability.

The Special Education Director/Coordinator will lead the Eligibility Determination Team (EDT) meeting and, with the information provided by the SAT team and evaluators, the EDT team will determine if the student meets the criteria of a student with a disability and will assign the eligibility category that best suits the student according to New Mexico Technical Evaluation and Assessment Manual (NM TEAMS) if determined eligible. The IEP team will utilize data from the comprehensive initial evaluation to develop an IEP that ensures students receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The IEP team will determine the specific goals, accommodations, modifications, and related services required to make meaningful progress based on the individual needs of each student per IDEA.

Each student with an IEP must receive special education services as outlined in their Individualized Education Plan. These standards outline what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. For students with IEPs, the educational goals in their IEPs must align with content standards, ensuring they access the same rigorous curriculum as their peers, with necessary accommodations, modifications, and related services included to support them meeting their IEP goals.

Inspira STEAM Academy will deliver individualized instructional services and supports to students with disabilities who have Individualized Education Programs IEPs through collaborative, multi-disciplinary teams. Special Education related services including, but not limited to, Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Counseling Services, Social Work, School Nurse Services, and Psychological Services, will be contracted through local agencies and are included in the annual budget.

Inspira STEAM Academy acknowledges the critical role family collaboration and support plays in the success of students with disabilities. Teachers will communicate early and regularly with parents and guardians throughout the MLSS and pre-SAT process, ensuring that families can collaborate with school staff and that the school team has opportunities to consider relevant home and/or medical information that may be impacting the student's ability to access their education. In addition, Inspira will provide regular opportunities for family collaboration and support that may include family training, family support groups, and family and community events.



Staff Roles in Determining Eligibility and Individualized Education Program (IEP) Services

Inspira recognizes that a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach is necessary to assist students who may be eligible for IEPs. The Executive Director, classroom teachers, special education teachers, school staff, contracted related service providers, students, and families will collaborate effectively to serve students. Per NMAC 6.21.2.9, Inspira will develop and implement appropriate policies, procedures, programs, and services to ensure students with disabilities are identified and evaluated and have access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The roles and responsibilities of staff are as follows:

Executive Director:

- Collaborate effectively to serve students.
- Oversee the overall implementation of special education policies and procedures.
- In partnership with the Special Education Director/Coordinator, create discipline policies and protocols for special populations by January 2026.
- Ensure policies are reviewed by legal counsel and published by July 2026.

Classroom Teachers:

- Collaborate effectively to serve students.
- Identify students struggling in academics or behavior in bi-weekly pre-SAT meetings.
- Identify areas of strengths and concerns.
- Collaborate to recommend and track interventions through the MLSS process.
- Collect data in academic and functional domains and prepare documentation for the SAT team.
- Formally monitor and document progress toward IEP goals quarterly on the same schedule as regular report cards.
- Communicate early and regularly with parents and guardians throughout the MLSS and pre-SAT process.
- Be responsible for all students in the building, including those with IEPs.
- Implement Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Universal Design for Learning in Layer 1 core instruction.
- Participate in ongoing professional development on special education topics and best practices.

Special Education Staff (Special Education Director/Coordinator, Special Education Teachers):

- Collaborate effectively to serve students.
- The Special Education Director/Coordinator will oversee the evaluation process to ensure compliance with Child Find regulations and timelines in obtaining a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary evaluation for students suspected of having a disability.
- The Special Education Director/Coordinator will lead the Eligibility Determination Team (EDT) meeting and, with the information provided by the SAT team and evaluators, the EDT team will determine if the student meets the criteria of a student with a disability and will assign the eligibility category that best suits the student according to New Mexico Technical Evaluation and Assessment Manual (NM TEAMS) if determined eligible.
- If found eligible for special education, an IEP with goals aligned with state content standards will be developed.
- Develop and implement appropriate policies, procedures, programs, and services to ensure students with disabilities are identified and evaluated and have access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
- Lead and participate in IEP team meetings.
- Deliver individualized instructional services and supports to students with disabilities.
- Formally monitor and document progress toward IEP goals quarterly on the same schedule as regular report cards.
- Keep service delivery logs to track service time provided and IEP goal data collected during sessions.
- Oversee the annual review and triennial re-evaluation processes for IEPs.
- The IEP team will review and update the IEP at least annually by discussing present levels of performance and adjusting goals, related services, placement, accommodations, and other components of the student's individualized program to ensure we continue to meet the student's evolving needs.
- Collaborate with related service providers.
- Ensure CLR MLSS interventions with multilingual instructional supports in Layer 2 and Layer 3 interventions.
- Consider EL students' full linguistic repertoire and culture throughout the MLSS, pre-SAT, and diagnostic evaluation process.
- Gather information from the student's cumulative file and parent input, rule out factors extrinsic to disability, and monitor the intervention process through MLSS for ELs.
- A comprehensive review of the student's data, including language proficiency growth, academic data, and cultural assets



(acknowledging the student's culture before making a referral for evaluation is crucial. For example, not making eye contact may be viewed as a sign of autism, while in some cultures, this same behavior is considered a sign of respect for elders.) will occur before any referral for special education evaluation is made for ELs.

- The SAT team may consider comparing an EL student's progress to other ELs with similar language and literacy levels for ELs.

Identifying Instructional Supports and Services for Gifted Students

Inspira STEAM Academy will identify students who demonstrate gifted abilities and provide Gifted Individualized Education Programs (GIEP) with goals and specially designed instruction tailored to their needs per NMAC 6.31.3.12. Inspira will create a Gifted Advisory Committee (GAC) to include parents, community members, students, and school staff members that will meet at least three times per year and support the gifted program and review operational plans for student evaluation, identification, placement and service delivery per NMAC 6.31.3.8. The GAC will advocate for students and ensure that groups that are underrepresented due to cultural or linguistic background, socioeconomic status, or disability conditions have equal opportunities to benefit from gifted services. To equalize access to gifted screening and improve proportionality of representation for all demographic groups, Inspira will provide a universal screening to all students in second grade beginning in year 2 (year 1 only consists of kindergarten and first grades).

Per NMAC 6.31.3.11, students may have needs for individualized gifted education in the areas of general intellectual ability; creative or divergent thinking; problem solving or critical thinking; specific aptitude or achievement; artistic ability, creativity, problem solving, or achievement; or leadership ability, creativity, problem solving, or achievement. The GIEP team is responsible for eligibility determination using both qualitative and quantitative gifted qualification data as well as information regarding a student's cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic background, and information about any disabling condition.

A GIEP team will develop the GIEP for students determined eligible. The GIEP will be updated annually to determine educational needs for growth in areas of strength and other areas, short- and long-term goals to address areas of need, planned course of study, accommodation and modifications, transition services, and schedule of services. Gifted programming will include evidence-based programs and service models to support the educational needs of gifted students. The rigorous bilingual and STEAM-focused academic program at Inspira will provide a multitude of opportunities for developing the strengths and interests of gifted students. Leadership and enrichment opportunities will be integrated throughout the program utilizing a constructivist approach. Teachers will be trained in differentiated instruction methods and the characteristics and needs of gifted students. All of these components will work together to develop the strengths and interests of gifted students, preparing them for future educational and vocational endeavors. GIEP goals and academic achievement will be monitored regularly and reported to parents quarterly through progress monitoring reports.

Students who are identified as a gifted student and are identified as a student with a disability qualifying them for an IEP or 504 plan are "twice-exceptional". The IEP of twice-exceptional students will take the place of the GIEP, and will include the required information for a GIEP.

Yazzie-Martinez Lawsuit Implications

Inspira STEAM Academy will address disparities identified in the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit by ensuring that students with disabilities, particularly those from underserved backgrounds, receive equitable access to educational opportunities and resources.

The Yazzie-Martinez v. State of New Mexico lawsuit highlighted deficiencies in the education system, particularly regarding equitable access to quality education for all students, including those with disabilities. The court's findings stressed the need for significant improvements in educational services and supports, especially for marginalized groups.

Identifying Disabilities in English Learners

English learners were being over-identified and placed in special education classes. To prevent misidentification of disabilities in ELs, Inspira will be prepared with teachers who are experts in second language acquisition on pre-SAT teams. They will have the teaching experience to be able to scaffold instruction, differentiate, and use clear language to bring the learning into the classroom environment by implementing Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Universal Design for Learning in Layer 1 core instruction. Using the constructivist approach will also benefit everyone in the class by utilizing visual aids, frequent check-ins and activating prior knowledge. Inspira will ensure the pre-SAT process includes CLR MLSS interventions with multilingual instructional supports in Layer 2 and Layer 3 interventions.

Inspira will consider EL students' full linguistic repertoire and culture throughout the MLSS, pre-SAT, and diagnostic evaluation process. Per NM PED's *Identifying, Serving ELs with Disabilities Guidance Handbook*, the Pre-SAT team will gather information from the student's cumulative file and parent input, rule out factors extrinsic to disability, and monitor the intervention process through MLSS. A comprehensive review of the student's data, including language proficiency growth, academic data, and cultural assets, will occur before any referral for special education evaluation is



made. The SAT team may consider comparing an EL student's progress to other ELs with similar language and literacy levels per the *Identifying, Serving ELs with Disabilities Guidance Handbook*. The information gathered will then be utilized to refer for a comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluation once extrinsic factors have been ruled out. This evaluation will be completed within 60 days of parental consent and reviewed by the EDT. If found eligible for special education, an IEP with goals aligned with state content standards will be developed and reviewed annually, ensuring that students with disabilities are working towards the same educational standards as their peers, with necessary supports. Students will be re-evaluated every three years (triennial review), per IDEA.

Increased Accountability and Resources

The Yazzie Martinez lawsuit underscored the need for adequate funding to support educational programs, including special education services. Inspira STEAM Academy will focus on hiring qualified special education teachers and related service providers to meet the needs outlined in IEPs effectively. We will also provide tailored instructional strategies and interventions to meet each student's unique needs. This will include differentiated instruction and the use of accommodations and modifications as specified in the IEP. Students who are on IEPs will receive access to related services such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, and psychological services as determined by their IEP team. Classroom teachers, special education teachers, and related service providers will formally monitor and document progress toward IEP goals quarterly on the same schedule as regular report cards. This data helps in ensuring students are on track to meet IEP goals and provides opportunities for adjusting instruction and supports as needed. The IEP team will review and update the IEP at least annually by discussing present levels of performance and adjusting goals, related services, placement, accommodations, and other components of the student's individualized program to ensure we continue to meet the student's evolving needs.

Parental Involvement and Communication

Inspira will include the parents in every step of the pre-SAT, MLSS, SAT, and EDT, and IEP process, ensuring they are informed and involved in decisions about their child's education. This will consist of regular communication and collaboration between school staff and parents. We will also ensure they understand the information disseminated at the meetings by providing translation or access to advocates if needed.

Teacher and School Staff Training and Support

Inspira will provide two weeks of extensive training at the beginning of each school year to ensure staff have the resources and tools to deliver Culturally and Linguistically Responsive instruction aligned with our vision and mission. Teachers and Educational Assistants at Inspira will be trained in understanding New Mexico's content standards, bilingual education, and STEAM subjects. Training will also be provided in special education topics and regulations, curriculum adaptations, accommodations, modifications, and the use of assistive technology to support the learning of students with IEPs. Our teachers and Educational Assistants will participate in ongoing professional development on best practices in special education and teaching neurodiverse populations to ensure effective instruction for students with IEPs. Staff members will receive Love and Logic, Conscious Discipline, and Safety-Care training to provide knowledge and tools to provide positive behavior supports. Inspira will provide a full-time Educational Assistant in each kindergarten and first-grade classroom for support. This training will help staff effectively implement IEPs and support students' needs. Inspira will foster collaboration among general education teachers, special education teachers, and related service providers to ensure a cohesive approach to addressing students' needs. Students with IEPs are general education students first; they are the responsibility of **all** the educators in the building, who will work together to help them succeed.

Developing Discipline Policies and Protocols for Special Populations

Inspira STEAM Academy will develop discipline policies and protocols within the allotted 2025-2026 planning year and will have them in place before students begin attending in July 2026. The Executive Director will create discipline policies and protocols for special populations in partnership with the Special Education Director/Coordinator by January 2026. Policies and protocols will follow guidance manuals provided by NM PED, including *Student Discipline for Students with Disabilities* and *Addressing Student Behavior: A Guide for All Educators*. Policies will be reviewed by Inspira's legal counsel and published by the school's opening in July 2026.

Special Education Services and FAPE within Geographic Boundaries

Inspira STEAM Academy's geographic location is within an urban area and has a pool of teachers, staff members, and contractors available to provide appropriate special education services as determined in IEPs. In-person special education services are preferred, however, in the case that an in-person provider is not available, qualified staff will be contracted through online service providers.

Reporting Progress Monitoring and Services Delivery to Governing Board

Inspira STEAM Academy will conduct regular monthly monitoring as documented in students' IEPs (performance assessment, rubric, observation, etc.) to document student progress toward goals and adjust IEPs and GIEPs as needed to ensure students are on track to meet their goals. We will provide quarterly reports of IEP goal progress to parents and guardians and discuss any adjustments to the IEP needed. We will also share



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assessment data with the Governing Board monthly at the Governing Board Meeting to inform them of students' state and district testing performance, as well as any updates or concerns pertaining to service delivery. Delivery of instructional services to students with IEPs is a collaborative effort that involves adhering to federal and state regulations, addressing the findings of the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit, and ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality education tailored to their individual needs. Special Education staff and Special Education Related Service Providers will keep service delivery logs to track service time provided and IEP goal data collected during sessions. The Governing Board will ensure that policies and protocols are in place to provide IEP services and documentation of those services through a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach with individualized instruction, adequate resources, and continuous communication with families to support the educational success of students with disabilities by July 2026.

Section G References

Bailey, R. A. (2015). *Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms* (Expanded & Updated). Loving Guidance, Inc.

Public Education Department, NMAC 6, 31, 2. (2023). Children with Disabilities. <https://www.srca.nm.gov/parts/title06/06.031.0002.html> (<https://www.srca.nm.gov/parts/title06/06.031.0002.html>)

Public Education Department, NMAC 6, 31, 3. (2023). Gifted and talented students. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/new-mexico/title-6/chapter-31/part-3> (<https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/new-mexico/title-6/chapter-31/part-3>)

QBS, Inc. (n.d.). *Safety-Care crisis prevention training for PBIS & ABA environments*. Retrieved from <https://qbs.com/safety-care-crisis-prevention-training/> (<https://qbs.com/safety-care-crisis-prevention-training/>)

Q14.

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

• A complete response must

- 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**



Inspira STEAM Academy will monitor the progress toward special education students' attainment of IEP goals by conducting regular IEP goal assessments and adherence to state standards.

Monitoring Progress toward IEP Goals and Responsible Staff

Inspira STEAM Academy teachers, special education teachers, and related service providers will conduct regular monthly monitoring of IEP goals, benchmarks, and objectives in the methods documented in individual students' IEP (performance assessment, rubric, observation, running records, work samples, standardized assessments, etc.). Teachers' data will include formative assessments (ongoing assessments during instruction) and summative assessments (evaluations at the end of an instructional period).

Special education teachers will initiate email correspondence with general education teachers to request data on the specific goals they are responsible for per the IEP, quarterly, housed in the student information system (SIS). The special education teacher will add their data to the general education teacher's data and enter progress towards IEP goals in the student's IEP and evaluate if the student is making sufficient progress toward meeting their goal. The special education teacher will file a copy in the student's special education file as well. The special education teacher will provide hard copies of quarterly reports of IEP goal progress to parents and will discuss any adjustments to the IEP interventions or goals as needed. Related service providers will document progress for the goals they are responsible for in the IEP and send a hard copy to parents. Quarterly progress towards goals will be reported at the Governing Board Meeting following quarterly progress monitoring periods. Progress toward goals will also be recorded at the annual IEP review in the present levels section of the area of need in the IEP.

Evaluations/Assessments

Special education students are expected to make progress toward grade-level standards, with supports provided to ensure accessibility, and are assessed using either the general state assessments or the state-approved alternate assessment, Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM).

Inspira will administer the following standardized and non-standardized assessments: WIDA Screener for Kindergarten and new students, ACCESS or ALTERNATE ACCESS for ELs, Gifted Screening, Avant STAMP, Childhood Experiences Questionnaire, Measures of Student Success & Achievement, NM Assessment of Science Readiness, Dyslexia Screening, National Assessment of Educational Progress, Dynamic Learning Maps.

The Dynamic Learning Maps Essential Elements are specific statements of knowledge and skills linked to the grade-level expectations identified in the Common Core State Standards. The purpose of the Dynamic Learning Maps Essential Elements is to build a bridge from the content in the Common Core State Standards to academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (Dynamic Learning Maps, 2013).

The special education teacher will share state and district testing performance assessment data with the Executive Director, who will share this data with the Governing Board monthly at the Governing Board Meeting.

Engaging Students and Families in IEP Goal Attainment

Inspira STEAM Academy believes regular communication and collaboration between school staff and parents are imperative to student success. Inspira will provide regular progress reports to parents on a quarterly basis, or sooner if there are areas of concern or regression. These reports will contain the student's progress towards IEP goals and objectives and provide opportunities to discuss updates or adjustments to the instructional strategies or supports needed with families. IEPs will be amended or updated as needed to ensure students are on track to meet their goals. Parents will be provided information and training pertaining to their students' disabilities, how they can help support progress on IEP goals, and how to access outside resources as needed.

Students will be informed of their goals and will be included in age-appropriate tracking and celebration of progress made on goals. For example, a kindergarten student's tracker may be a picture containing the letters of the alphabet in different sections, where they color the portion of the picture as each letter is learned. This may provide a fun way for them to recognize progress and may motivate them to meet their goal and complete the picture. Students will have choice and voice in how they track and celebrate goal progress.

Inspira's policies and protocols will help ensure IEP services are provided through a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach with individualized instruction, adequate resources, and continuous communication with families to support the educational success of students with disabilities. Inspira STEAM Academy will ensure that special education students receive the individualized support they need to succeed academically while adhering to state standards and benchmarks.

Inspira will evaluate the effectiveness of its special education program and services by reviewing IEP goal attainment, standardized assessment scores, grades, and scores on parent satisfaction surveys. Student success measures will be tracked through growth of monthly IEP goal progress monitoring, monthly Istation assessments, and quarterly IEP goal progress monitoring reports. Mission success in Spanish will be measured by



growth in scores of the WIDA assessment and the Spanish portion of Istation. Mission success in STEAM will be measured in the New Generation Standards for Science and Engineering, Istation and Bridges assessments for Math. All STEAM subjects will be assessed through student digital portfolios.

Section G References Continued

Dynamic Learning Maps. (2013). *DLM essential elements for English language arts (Version 4)*. https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/DLM_Essential_Elements_ELA_%282013%29_v4.pdf
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New Mexico Public Education Department. (n.d.). *New Mexico content standards*. New Mexico Public Education Department. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/instructional-materials/new-mexico-content-standards/> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/instructional-materials/new-mexico-content-standards/>)

Q15.

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

• A complete response must

- 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**



English Learner Identification and instructional services/supports to students identified as ELs

Identification Process

Inspira will have a systematic approach to identifying English Language Learners (ELs) in our dual language program, which aims to develop proficiency in both languages for both native English speakers and ELs. To properly identify our ELs, Inspira will first use the Home Language Usage Survey (LUS) to identify potential ELs. The parents will provide home language information at the beginning of the student's school career. The survey will be followed by the WIDA Screener for formal assessment. After we have identified the ELs on campus, we can begin to plan for student services.

To properly identify our ELs, Inspira will address the following questions, as suggested by Dr. Ayanna Cooper in her book *And justice for ELs*:

- How many students are identified as English Learners?
- What are their proficiency language levels?
- How many, if any, English Learners are dually identified? (For example, English Learners who are also gifted and/or have learning disabilities)?
- How many English Learners have reached proficiency?
- How will our English Learners be monitored once they have reached proficiency?

Parents will be strongly connected to the entire process of EL identification. Parents will be fully informed throughout the identification process, service delivery, and progress monitoring phases to ensure English proficiency.

Required Curriculum and Instructional Services/Supports

Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to designing a comprehensive curriculum that aligns with New Mexico's English Language Proficiency Standards, specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of English Learners (ELs). These standards emphasize key areas of language development: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To guide our educational objectives, we will utilize WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment) indicators, which provide a framework for assessing and supporting ELs' language acquisition.

Our curriculum will incorporate thoughtfully designed scaffolding strategies to allow students to engage with challenging materials while simultaneously progressing in their English language proficiency. Our approach will prioritize the integration of culturally relevant resources that not only acknowledge but celebrate the diverse backgrounds of our students, making learning more relatable and engaging.

To support varied learning needs, Inspira STEAM Academy will offer a diverse array of instructional materials, ranging in complexity and aligned with both New Mexico's academic standards and the specific language requirements of ELs. This will ensure that all students, regardless of their proficiency level, can find materials that resonate with their experiences and capabilities.

In addition, we will implement sheltered instructional techniques to enhance accessibility for ELs. This approach includes modifications to the language used during instruction, the integration of visual aids, and the incorporation of interactive activities that promote comprehension and engagement. We believe in fostering collaborative learning environments where ELs can work alongside their peers in structured group activities. This not only encourages language practice within meaningful contexts but also creates opportunities for peer support and social interaction.

Employing a constructivist model of education, we will leverage students' prior knowledge to facilitate their language transfer and acquisition. Our instruction will explicitly aim to teach essential language skills—encompassing vocabulary development, grammar, and language functions—while integrating these language lessons with content instruction. We will utilize the WIDA standards to inform our instruction. We will incorporate Benchmark Adelante Curriculum to support English language development. This dual focus ensures that ELs are simultaneously building their language and academic skills, leading to a more holistic educational experience. Ultimately, our goal is to equip ELs with the necessary tools and confidence to thrive academically and linguistically in their educational journey.

Instructional Supports (Specific Program Details)

Our schedule will have a designated time for small group pull-out. This will be a designated time with the TESOL teacher who will serve a small group of students outside of their general education class for 5 times, 45 minutes a week.

Implementation of English Language Development Standards for ELs

Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to designing a comprehensive curriculum that aligns with New Mexico's English Language Proficiency Standards. To guide our educational objectives, we will utilize WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment) indicators, which provide a framework for assessing and supporting ELs' language acquisition. These standards emphasize key areas of language development:



listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For example, teachers will use WIDA's CAN DO Descriptors to differentiate language demands in content lessons, ensuring that ELs at various proficiency levels can access and engage with the material. Can Do descriptors describe what learners can do with language across different contents. These are meant to supplement English Language development standards, in science, social studies, and math, to assist students who may have double exceptionalities.

During biweekly meetings, teachers will discuss horizontal and vertical alignment utilizing WIDA standards to ensure ELs are being serviced and provided supports for a better understanding. The Can Do statements (outlined in WIDA) will be reflected in teachers' lesson plans, which will be reviewed by the Executive Director and Special Education Director/Coordinator. The teachers will have professional development to further expand their knowledge in supporting EL students.

Our instruction will explicitly aim to teach essential language skills—encompassing vocabulary development, grammar, and language functions—while integrating these language lessons with content instruction. This dual focus ensures that ELs are simultaneously building their language and academic skills, leading to a more holistic educational experience.

Instruction and Support to Develop EL English Language Proficiency

Inspira will identify English Language Learners in our 80/20 dual language program that aims to develop proficiency in both languages. This model will include native English speakers and English Learners. The two-way immersion program will support English language development by allocating small group instruction to English learners 45 minutes, 5 times a week.

Our schedule will have a designated time for small group pull-out. This will be a designated time with the TESOL teacher who will serve a small group of students outside of their general education class for 45 minutes, 5 times a week. While utilizing Spanish Istation resources and Benchmark Adelante, these groups will be focused on targeted academic language skills, complex sentence structures, and advanced language acquisition. Targeted, phonics, academic language frames, vocabulary, and mini grammar lessons will be tailored to the proficiency levels of the group. Inspira will implement ongoing assessments to monitor the progress of EL students. We will use formative assessments to gauge language development and academic understanding, and adjust instruction based on these assessments.

Providing ELs with Access to Grade-level Content

Understanding that ELs may require additional support to access grade-level content, our curriculum will incorporate thoughtfully designed scaffolding strategies. For example, teachers will utilize graphic organizers, sentence frames, sentence starters, think-pair-share opportunities, tiered assignments, opportunities to bridge content with background knowledge, and pre-teaching vocabulary. This will allow students to engage with challenging materials while simultaneously progressing in their English language proficiency.

Inspira STEAM Academy will offer a diverse array of instructional materials, ranging in complexity and aligned with both New Mexico's academic standards and the specific language requirements of ELs. This will ensure that all students, regardless of their proficiency level, can find materials that resonate with their experiences and capabilities.

We will implement sheltered instructional techniques to enhance accessibility for ELs. This approach includes modifications to the language used during instruction, the integration of visual aids, and the incorporation of interactive activities that promote comprehension and engagement.

We believe in fostering collaborative learning environments where ELs can work alongside their peers in structured group activities. Content teachers and TESOL specialists will collaborate to ensure content accessibility by utilizing the embedded interventions in Benchmark Adelante and Istation. When utilizing the interventions based on the students' scores across the school, we will be able to target the needs of the students uniformly in any of the classrooms. As a team, Inspira will have an adaptive curriculum that has the specific teacher resources that will be provide to EL's. Employing a constructivist model of education, we will leverage students' prior knowledge to facilitate their language transfer and acquisition.

Address the Spectrum of Needs that ELs may Present

Diverse Learning Needs

Inspira STEAM Academy will offer a diverse array of instructional materials, ranging in complexity and aligned with both New Mexico's academic standards and the specific language requirements of ELs. This will ensure that all students, regardless of their language proficiency level, can find materials that resonate with their experiences and capabilities.



Scaffolding and Sheltered Instruction

Our curriculum will incorporate thoughtfully designed scaffolding strategies and sheltered instructional techniques (modifications to language, visual aids, interactive activities) to meet varied proficiency levels and learning styles.

Cultural Relevance

Our approach will prioritize the integration of culturally relevant resources that not only acknowledge but celebrate the diverse backgrounds of our students, making learning more relatable and engaging. Inspira will address potential trauma or interrupted schooling that some ELs may have experienced by providing a network of community professional resources. Non-profit organizations will team up with Inspira to support the challenges the students and families may be experiencing.

Dually Identified ELs (Gifted/Disabilities)

To avoid improper diagnosis, we will provide frequent and extensive training for teachers so they can recognize the differences between normal developmental phases in language and conditions such as anxiety disorders. For dually identified ELs, their IEP/GIEP goals will explicitly integrate language development goals and ensure culturally and linguistically responsive accommodations. This implicitly addresses the need to avoid over-identification for disabilities. The students will receive services in both EL and specially designed instruction at their respective scheduled blocked time.

Parental and Community Involvement

Inspira will actively involve families in the education process by providing information in the parents' native languages and offering workshops that help families understand the school's educational goals and how they can support their student's learning. Inspira will also collaborate with community organizations and resources that support ELs. This can include local cultural centers, EL programs, and after-school tutoring services.

Specific Responsibilities for School Staff and Classroom Teachers

School Staff (General)

- Utilize bilingual staff or interpreters when necessary to facilitate communication between EL students, their families, and the school. This support will help address language barriers and ensure that parents are involved in their students' education.
- Implement ongoing assessments to monitor the progress of EL students.
- Collaborate with community organizations and resources that support ELs.
- General education teachers and TESOL teachers will regularly co-plan and co-teach lessons to integrate language and content objectives.

Classroom Teachers/TESOL Teacher

- Be adequately trained in EL strategies and understand New Mexico's EL standards.
- Implement thoughtfully designed scaffolding strategies and sheltered instructional techniques.
- Integrate culturally relevant resources.
- Offer a diverse array of instructional materials ranging in complexity.
- Foster collaborative learning environments.
- Leverage students' prior knowledge using a constructivist model.
- Explicitly teach essential language skills (vocabulary, grammar, language functions) while integrating with content instruction.
- Use formative assessments to gauge language development and academic understanding, and adjust instruction based on these assessments.
- Be trained to know the categories of a disability and recognize the differences between normal developmental phases in language and conditions such as anxiety disorders.
- General education teachers and TESOL teachers will regularly co-plan and co-teach lessons to integrate language and content objectives.
- TESOL Teacher (Specific to "small group pull out") - Serve a small group of students outside of their general education class for 5 times 45 minutes a week.

Executive Director

- Report to the board on a monthly basis with data that demonstrates EL growth.
- May potentially serve as the TESOL teacher



Specific Training for School Staff

TESOL Certification/Licensure

Teachers will have a TESOL certification from the National Board for professional learning standards and shall pass the following PRAXIS exam in English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), or a department-approved licensure test in TESOL from another state. Teachers that serve in state-funded Bilingual Multicultural Education Programs (BMEPs) must meet the licensure requirements in 6.61.1-6.61.12 NMAC.

EL Strategies Training

Inspira teachers will be adequately trained in EL strategies and understand New Mexico's EL standards. This includes professional development in second language acquisition and culturally responsive teaching practices.

Disability Identification Training (to prevent misidentification)

Inspira teachers will be trained to know the categories of a disability. Teachers will be well-informed about various disabilities. To avoid improper diagnoses, Inspira will provide frequent and extensive training for teachers so they can recognize the differences between normal developmental phases in language and disability conditions. If a teacher cannot distinguish between different disabilities, via the pre-SAT process, the team will come together to determine whether a child may have a potential disability and is in need of referral for a special education evaluation, helping to prevent misdiagnosis.

Bilingual Staff/Interpreters

We will utilize bilingual staff or interpreters when necessary to facilitate communication between EL students, their families, and the school.

Ongoing Professional Development

Inspira will implement ongoing assessments to monitor the progress of EL students. Teachers will use formative assessments to gauge language development and academic understanding and adjust instruction based on these assessments. Professional development in data analysis and instructional adjustment will be provided monthly in topics such as WIDA access data analysis and instructional strategies. Each grade band will have a master teacher and a novice teacher. The master teacher will mentor the new teacher in EL strategies. The Executive Director and the Dean of Students (beginning year three) will team teach and provide frequent check-ins and feedback.

Tracking the Protected Population's Progress, Services, and Governing Board Reporting

Tracking Progress and Services

Inspira will implement ongoing assessments to monitor the progress of EL students. We will use formative assessments to gauge language development and academic understanding, and adjust instruction based on these assessments. Istation, WIDA-ACCESS testing will be administered regularly for progress monitoring.

Individualized Language Plans (ILPs) or similar documents will be developed and implemented for ELs, detailing specific language goals and instructional strategies tailored to each student's needs. These ILPs serve as the primary tracking document for individual progress and services.

Reporting to the Board

The Executive Director will report to the board on a monthly basis with data that demonstrates EL growth. This will include data from formative assessments, WIDA-ACCESS scores, and Istation data.

Reporting to Parents/Families

Parents will be fully informed throughout the EL identification process, service delivery, and progress monitoring phases to ensure English proficiency.

By integrating these practices, Inspira will effectively provide the required curriculum and instructional services to ELL students, ensuring they receive a high-quality education that supports both their language development and academic achievement. The Executive Director will report to the board on a monthly basis with data that demonstrates EL growth.

Section G References Continued



Cooper, A. (2021). *And justice for ELs: A leader's guide to creating and sustaining equitable schools*. Solution Tree Press.

New Mexico Public Education Department. (n.d.). *Bilingual multicultural education programs (BMEPs) frequently asked questions (FAQs)*. New Mexico Public Education Department. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/languageandculture/bilingual-multicultural-education-programs-bmeps-frequently-asked-questions-faqs/> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/languageandculture/bilingual-multicultural-education-programs-bmeps-frequently-asked-questions-faqs/>)

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**



Inspira will effectively monitor the progress of English learners (ELs) toward English language proficiency by implementing a comprehensive plan involving clear responsibilities, regular monitoring intervals, family engagement, program evaluation, and follow-up on exited EL students (Reclassified Fluent English Proficient students (RFEPS)). Here is how the plan will address each of these components:

Monitoring Progress of ELs Toward English Language Proficiency

The Kindergarten WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) and WIDA Screener will be administered to identify English language learners (ELLs). The required use of the screener is dependent on parent responses on the Language Usage Survey (LUS). WIDA screening and policy is managed by the Language and Culture Bureau. The test will be administered in the student's initial public school enrollment, typically in Kindergarten. The LUS should only be administered once in the student's school career. The school will use standardized assessments (ACCESS for ELs) annually to assess ELs' English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This assessment will provide a clear benchmark to track progress. We will also utilize monthly Istation Spanish and English short-cycle assessments to keep a pulse on the learning. Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP), are designed for short-term, frequent monitoring of student progress for more frequent data points. Other formative assessments will include classroom-based tasks, writing samples, and teacher observations. These ongoing assessments will help identify areas of strength and areas that need additional support.

Responsibilities of School Staff and Classroom Teachers

The Executive Director (and the Dean of Students beginning in year three)/EL coordinator will oversee the EL program, ensuring that teachers have the resources and professional development they need to support ELs. They will also review assessment data to track the overall progress of ELs and adjust strategies as needed. Teachers will be responsible for providing differentiated instruction based on students' language proficiency levels. They will use data from formative and summative assessments to tailor lessons that meet individual students' needs. Teachers will also maintain regular communication with the EL coordinator to discuss student progress. The TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages) specialists will work directly with ELs, providing targeted language instruction based on the students' proficiency level. They will collaborate with classroom teachers to integrate language learning into content-area lessons.

Regular Intervals for Monitoring Progress

Quarterly Checkpoints

Student progress will be evaluated every 9 weeks (quarterly) using both formative assessments and data from language proficiency tests. Istation results will provide tailored interventions that can be paralleled with the classroom curriculum. Teachers will meet regularly with the EL coordinator to discuss student progress and identify areas for improvement.

Mid-Year Review

The school will conduct a mid-year review of all ELs' progress toward language proficiency. This review will include both formal assessments and teacher feedback. ACCESS testing will be administered at this time, and the results, which will be mailed back to the school site at the end of the year, will provide crucial data points for future lesson and goal planning.

End-of-Year Evaluation

At the end of each school year, the school will conduct a final assessment of EL students' progress, including analyzing results from the annual language proficiency tests and comparing them with their progress over the year. By this time, ACCESS results should return to Inspira, and we will use that data to devise a plan for the following year. At this time, we will also know if we have students who have tested out of the EL designation and no longer require services. With students who have exited, we will continue to monitor their growth.

Engaging Students and Families

Student Involvement

Students will be encouraged to track their progress through individual learning goals (centered around Standards and Benchmarks and the adaptive scores provided by Istation results), and revisited regularly during one-on-one conferences with teachers. These conferences will give students ownership over their learning. The students will also have digital portfolios, which they will have access to and will follow them through their academic journey at Inspira.

Family Engagement

Inspira will actively involve families in the education process by providing information in the parents' native languages and offering workshops that help families understand the school's educational goals and how they can support their student's learning. Parents will be strongly connected to the entire process of EL identification. We will offer support services to inform them of the process, to get their student out of



the EL classification, and continue to support English acquisition. Inspira will also collaborate with community organizations and resources that support ELs. This can include local cultural centers, ESL programs, and after-school tutoring services. Inspira will regularly send home progress reports and host meetings or workshops to engage families in understanding the goals for language acquisition and how they can support their child's progress. The school will also provide access to online resources and tools for families to support language development at home. Teachers will maintain open lines of communication with families, scheduling conferences to discuss student progress and providing strategies for supporting language development outside of school.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of the EL Program and Services

Data Analysis

The school will regularly review data from language proficiency tests, classroom assessments, and student feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of its EL program. If students are not progressing as expected, adjustments will be made to instruction and interventions. *On Demand* Istation assessments will be administered to gather data points more than once a month, along with teacher observations. The EL program will be evaluated annually, with input from teachers, students, and families. The program's effectiveness will be assessed based on student growth in English proficiency, academic success in core subjects, and feedback from all stakeholders.

Monitoring Exited Reclassified Fluent English Proficient Students (RFEPs)

Tracking RFEPs

EL students achieving an overall composite score of 4.7 or higher on the ACCESS for ELLs (https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&rlz=1C1CHZN_enUS1156US1156&cs=0&sca_esv=8a10e867929f74a9&q=ACCESS+for+ELLs&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi176KC0sOMAxW4BHe9zCMMQxccNegQIAhAC) assessment (starting with the SY 2022-2023 results) are reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&rlz=1C1CHZN_enUS1156US1156&cs=0&sca_esv=8a10e867929f74a9&q=Fluent+English+Proficient&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi176KC0sOMAxW4BHe9zCMMQxccNegQIAhAD) (RFEP) and exit EL status. Once this reclassification occurs, Inspira will send a letter home letting the family of the student know of the reclassification. We will invite the family to have a meeting with the Executive Director if they have any questions. The student will also be informed that their pullout services have ended, and they will continue to be supported through their language journey.

The school will continue to monitor their academic progress for two years. This will include regular checks on grades, test scores, and teacher observations to ensure that the student is succeeding in the general education environment without language support. If an RFEP student is identified as needing additional support (e.g., if they regress academically), the school will provide intervention services or reinstate language support as needed. Families of RFEP students will be informed of their child's reclassification and will receive updates on their child's academic progress. Schools will offer strategies for continued language development and academic success at home.

In summary

By implementing this comprehensive approach to monitoring and supporting ELs, Inspira will ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed academically and develop proficiency in English. This plan will provide clear responsibilities, consistent monitoring, and robust family engagement to support both the students' language development and overall academic achievement.

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;



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- 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;
- 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



Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the federal K-12 education law of the United States. ESSA was signed into law in 2015 and replaced "No Child Left Behind". ESSA helps parents have clear, transparent communication from the school. ESSA requires that all states measure performance in reading, math, and science. ESSA increases transparency to empower parents with information to help them make the best choices for their students. For the first time ever, states are required to report how much money, on average, they spend per student. This is called "per pupil expenditures." ESSA also requires states to list their lowest-performing 5% of schools. These schools require "comprehensive support and improvement." (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.)

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;

To ensure that Inspira meets the educational needs of Native American, Hispanic, Black, and bilingual multicultural students within a culturally and linguistically responsive approach to learning, we will incorporate the mandates outlined in the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit and the Elements outlined in the NMPED. We will center on equitable access, culturally relevant teaching, and ongoing community engagement. Inspira STEAM Academy will develop an educational framework that addresses the academic and cultural needs of Native American, Hispanic, Black, and bilingual multicultural students.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching

All units will reflect the history, cultures, and experiences of our diverse student groups. This will help ensure that students can see themselves and their communities represented in what they learn. For example, the units will integrate Native American history, Hispanic heritage, and the contributions of Black Americans across various subject areas, particularly in STEAM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).

Inclusion of Indigenous Languages and Dialects

Inspira's bilingual education programs will honor students' native home languages, including (but not limited to) both Spanish and Indigenous languages, ensuring that language development is nurtured in a culturally relevant context. This practice will support students in gaining academic proficiency in Spanish and English while preserving and strengthening their cultural identities. This will also increase their self-esteem by having a strong sense of belonging.

Alignment with NMPED and Yazzie-Martinez Mandates

The school will align its curriculum with the mandates of the Yazzie-Martinez case, ensuring that all students, especially those from historically underserved communities, have access to a high-quality, rigorous, and relevant education. This includes meeting the need for adequate resources and staffing in the areas of counseling, mentoring, and tutoring services tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of students.

Specific Responsibilities and Professional Development

Specific Responsibilities for School Staff and Classroom Teachers

All classroom teachers and administrators will be trained to understand school-wide policies and align classroom practices to the cultural and linguistic needs of the students.

Teachers will be responsible for creating inclusive lesson plans that incorporate diverse perspectives, historical contexts, and cultural traditions.

ESSA mandates that schools monitor and report on the academic progress of all students, particularly disadvantaged groups, to ensure that they are achieving the academic standards necessary for success.

Professional Development for Teachers

All teachers at Inspira will participate in culturally responsive learning. The staff will read Dr. Sharroky Hollie's book, *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning*, and will also attend professional development sessions. This knowledge will enhance their effectiveness in teaching all subjects.



The New Mexico Department of Education has various resources on their website to guide Inspira teachers to support Black students. NMPED initiated the first two modules of a complimentary webinar series on the Canvas platform, which fulfills the training prerequisites outlined in the Black Education Act. The full series, comprising six modules, aims to meet future training demands and may enable educators to achieve a micro-credential. "Meeting the Moment: Addressing Racism through Recognition & Response" is aimed at increasing awareness of racism while providing actionable information for school or district personnel, governing boards, equity councils, and other pertinent stakeholders to recognize and respond to incidents of racism. This content offers resources to counteract discrimination and racism within the public school system, including strategies for creating and maintaining equitable and culturally responsive learning environments (New Mexico Public Education Department, n.d.).

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Best Practices in Teaching, Mentoring, Counseling and Administration

Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to ensuring that best practices in all areas are culturally and linguistically responsive to students, aligning with the principles of equitable education.

Teaching

All units will reflect the history, cultures, and experiences of our diverse student groups. This will help ensure that students can see themselves and their communities represented in what they learn. For example, the units will integrate Native American history, Hispanic heritage, and the contributions of Black Americans across various subject areas, particularly in STEAM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics). Inspira's bilingual education programs will honor students' native home languages, including (but not limited to) both Spanish and Indigenous languages, ensuring that language development is nurtured in a culturally relevant context. This practice will support students in gaining academic proficiency in Spanish and English while preserving and strengthening their cultural identities. This will also increase their self-esteem by having a strong sense of belonging. All classroom teachers will be trained to align classroom practices to the cultural and linguistic needs of the students and will create inclusive lesson plans that incorporate diverse perspectives, historical contexts, and cultural traditions.

Mentoring

The school will align its curriculum with the mandates of the Yazzie-Martinez case, ensuring adequate resources and staffing in the areas of mentoring services tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of students.

Counseling

The school will align its curriculum with the mandates of the Yazzie-Martinez case, ensuring adequate resources and staffing in the areas of counseling services tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of students.

Administration

All administrators will be trained to understand school-wide policies and align classroom practices to the cultural and linguistic needs of the students. This includes participation in culturally responsive learning and professional development sessions, ensuring leadership fosters an inclusive environment.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Policies

Inspira STEAM Academy's educational framework is designed to ensure its policies are culturally and linguistically responsive.

All classroom teachers and administrators will be trained to understand school-wide policies and align classroom practices to the cultural and linguistic needs of the students.

The overall educational framework, which incorporates mandates from the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit and NMPED elements, centers on equitable access and culturally relevant teaching. This framework guides the development and review of all school policies to ensure they reflect and support the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the student population.

Policies will support the inclusion of Indigenous languages and dialects and ensure that bilingual education programs honor students' native home languages.

Policies will also be developed in accordance with the Black Education Act, including anti-racism policies and those that recognize and protect cultural expressions, as detailed in the Black Education Act Requirements section.



Rigorous and Culturally Meaningful Curricula and Instructional Materials

Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to developing and implementing rigorous and culturally meaningful curricula and instructional materials.

Culturally Meaningful Curricula

All units will reflect the history, cultures, and experiences of our diverse student groups. This will help ensure that students can see themselves and their communities represented in what they learn. For example, the units will integrate Native American history, Hispanic heritage, and the contributions of Black Americans across various subject areas, particularly in STEAM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).

Rigorous Curricula

The school will align its curriculum with the mandates of the Yazzie-Martinez case, ensuring that all students, especially those from historically underserved communities, have access to a high-quality, rigorous, and relevant education.

Instructional Materials

Inspira's bilingual education programs will honor students' native home languages, including (but not limited to) both Spanish and Indigenous languages, ensuring that language development is nurtured in a culturally relevant context. This practice will support students in gaining academic proficiency in Spanish and English while preserving and strengthening their cultural identities. This will also increase their self-esteem by having a strong sense of belonging.

Black Culture and Anti-Racism in Curriculum

To meet the specific requirements of the Black Education Act (HB 43), the school will ensure that Black students receive appropriate support and recognition within the school system by incorporating the history, culture, and contributions of Black Americans across various disciplines, ensuring that Black students see their cultural heritage reflected in the curriculum. The "Black Studies as the Study of the World" curriculum, developed by the Black Education Research Center (BERC) at Teachers College, Columbia University, is a PK-12 interdisciplinary curriculum designed to enrich student learning by exploring the history and contemporary landscapes of America, Africa, and the world through a Black Studies perspective. Although the curriculum was written based on New York standards, it can be adapted for any state.

Progress Monitoring Intervals

Teachers, Administration and Governing Board Monitoring Progress

Students' progress will be evaluated through quarterly formative assessments, including teacher observations, quizzes, and projects. These assessments will help ensure that students are making consistent progress toward their learning goals.

Inspira will conduct annual reviews of student progress using both standardized tests and internal assessments, in accordance with ESSA's requirements for measuring school performance and student outcomes.

Actions/reporting that will Engage Students and/or Families

Community Engagement and Feedback

Inspira will engage with students, families, and community members through surveys, focus groups, and interviews to understand their perspectives on the barriers and challenges faced in the educational system. Inspira will strive to improve the educational experience that many of our families have.

Feedback Integration (Equity Council)

"Equity Councils may choose to use the simple Advisement process to guide their work in producing and delivering advisements based on current district/charter policies, programs, and procedures, as well as the results of the Martinez and Yazzie Readiness Assessment." (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2022).

Inspira will use the data gathered by the community to inform and adjust policies and practices, ensuring they address the real needs and concerns of the community. This information will begin to guide the equity council advisement package to work on for the academic year. An advisement package is a comprehensive collection of ideas and needs gathered during community meetings. This document serves as a vital resource, preserving the community's input and priorities for the long term. By maintaining a clear record of issues and suggestions, the package enables continuity in the work of the equity council. When members rotate or leave, newcomers can seamlessly access this valuable document, ensuring that progress is sustained and that the efforts to address school needs continue without interruption. Please see the sample template of opportunities that may be addressed during an Equity Council monthly meeting.



Program Effectiveness to Improve Educational Outcomes

Data Analysis

Inspira teachers and administrators will analyze the data on student achievement, attendance, and behavior to determine the effectiveness of our programs. ESSA requires schools to use data to assess and adjust programs to improve educational outcomes for all students.

Governing Board Reporting

The results of student progress will be reported to the Governing Board in the monthly meetings. The data we share will evaluate the effectiveness of our educational programs and help ensure that we are meeting the needs of all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Continuous Improvement

Inspira will develop and implement strategic plans that prioritize equity, with specific goals and metrics to improve educational outcomes for all student groups, particularly those that have been historically underserved. Inspira will establish mechanisms for continuously evaluating programs and practices, using data to assess their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. Inspira will also implement feedback loops where students, families, and staff can regularly provide input on the effectiveness of initiatives and suggest improvements. We will conduct a 10-day learning academy for teachers, focusing on the effective implementation of the curriculum. Additionally, there will be embedded professional development days where we will review and practice the strategies we are employing. The Executive Director will actively coach the teachers, providing in-person feedback and modeling effective practices with the support of the Dean of Students beginning in year three. School administrators will utilize Leverage Leadership and Teach Like a Champion strategies to ensure a unified approach among all staff members.

Meeting Requirements of the Black Education Act

The Black Education Act (BEA) was created to improve Black Education within the state of New Mexico for public, chartered, and post-secondary schools. The bill's goal is to improve graduation rates for African American students graduating from high school and post-secondary institutions (New Mexico Public Education Department, n.d.). To meet the specific requirements of the Black Education Act (HB 43), Inspira STEAM Academy will ensure Black students receive appropriate support and recognition within the school system by:

Developing and including anti-racism policies

Inspira will ensure that our discipline policies prohibit racialized aggression and provide a mechanism for reporting such incidents through a statewide hotline. We will comply with non-discrimination policies and not only allow, but encourage students to wear tribal regalia at public school events. Protective hairstyles and cultural or religious headdresses are explicitly safeguarded, including braids, locs, twists, hijabs, head wraps, and other similar expressions. Developing curricula and instructional materials that recognize and teach black culture and anti-racism.

Implementing anti-racism training for teachers and staff

The school will incorporate the history, culture, and contributions of Black Americans across various disciplines, ensuring that Black students see their cultural heritage reflected in the curriculum. All teachers at Inspira will participate in culturally responsive learning. The staff will read Dr. Sharroky Hollie's book, *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning*, and will also attend professional development sessions focused on anti-racism and cultural sensitivity. This knowledge will enhance their effectiveness in teaching all subjects. The "Black Studies as the Study of the World" curriculum, developed by the Black Education Research Center (BERC) at Teachers College, Columbia University, is a PK-12 interdisciplinary curriculum designed to enrich student learning by exploring the history and contemporary landscapes of America, Africa, and the world through a Black Studies perspective. Although the curriculum was written based on New York standards, it can be adapted for any state. The Executive Director is currently in discussions with New Mexico State University with the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity's Black Programs to engage and develop outreach initiatives for elementary schools. The Black Program connects students of African-American, Black, Caribbean, and African descent, focusing on developing leadership and advocacy, and sharing awareness of Black culture and excellence. We hope that this collaboration will lead to the creation of programs inviting elementary and middle schools to either visit the NMSU campus or engage academically, socially, and civically with younger students' campuses.

Opportunities to explore one's identity and societal systems that may impact their identity and future: Our curriculum, particularly through inquiry-based teaching, promotes a student-centered approach, helping to address educational inequities. By encouraging students to explore topics that reflect their own experiences and interests, this method can help Black students find relevance in their learning, which is essential for their academic success and identity exploration. Additionally, the curriculum will address disparities by offering equitable access



to high-quality resources and opportunities in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics). Including diverse role models and culturally relevant content within STEAM subjects can inspire and engage Black students, supporting their academic success and fostering positive identity development.

In Summary

By following the ESSA requirements and meeting the special cultural and language needs of Native American, Hispanic, Black, and bilingual multicultural students in a thoughtful and meaningful way, Inspira STEAM Academy endeavors to create an inclusive and equitable educational environment. This involves implementing focused strategies that recognize and value the diversity of our students' lives, and ensuring all learners have access to the resources and services they require to succeed academically. Our model entails individualized curriculum planning, culturally responsive teaching, and community outreach initiatives to instill a sense of belongingness. Through these, Inspira STEAM Academy aims to empower all students and equip them with the knowledge and skills required to thrive in a more diverse and globalized world.

Section G References Continued

New Mexico Public Education Department. (n.d.). *Black Education Act: Curriculum*. New Mexico Public Education Department. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/student-support-services/black-education-act/curriculum/> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/student-support-services/black-education-act/curriculum/>)

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U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). What is the Every Student Succeeds Act? U.S. Department of Education. <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/laws-preschool-grade-12-education/esea/what-is-the-every-student-succeeds-act> (<https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/laws-preschool-grade-12-education/esea/what-is-the-every-student-succeeds-act>)

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;
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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INSPIRA
STEAM ACADEMY
A BILINGUAL SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

New Mexico Required Statewide Student Assessment

New Mexico Required Statewide Student Assessment for 2024-2025 New Mexico Public Education Department, 2024 Inspira STEAM Academy will adjust dates when the calendar for the 2025-2026 school year is released.			
Assessment	Description	Grades	Dates
ACCESS for ELLs & ALTERNATE ACCESS for ELLs	ACCESS for ELLs is a suite of assessments used to measure English language proficiency, administered to all students identified as English language learners (ELs). It is administered annually to monitor English learners' progress in acquiring academic English. Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is administered to ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities when the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicated this being an appropriate assignment.	K-12	Jan. 14- March 7, 2025
Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ)	The Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ) is completed by parents to provide important contextual information about student's early experiences prior to kindergarten.	K	Oct. 1–Dec. 20,
Avant STAMP	All students enrolled in a state-funded Spanish bilingual multicultural education program who have not already tested and achieved Spanish language proficiency are required to complete the Avant STAMP assessment once per year to measure growth towards Spanish language proficiency. Additionally, the Avant STAMP and specific coursework requirements are one option for a student to earn the State Seal of Bilingualism and Biliteracy (SSBB)	K-12	Oct. 21-March 14, 2025
NM Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR)	The ASR measures science proficiency aligned to the New Mexico STEM Ready! Science Standards. The assessment is required annually.	5, 8 and 11.	March 10-May 2, 2025
Dyslexia Screening	Screening for dyslexia is required for students in first grade. The screeners flag possible characteristics of dyslexia, but do not diagnose students with dyslexia. Screener information is available here and managed by the Literacy Bureau.	1st	By the 40th day of school and within two weeks of initial NM enrollment
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)	DLM assessments maximizes access to the general education curriculum for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and ensures that all students with disabilities are included in assessment and accountability. The student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) must indicate placement in alternate assessments for math, ELA and science rather than SAT, MSSA, and ASR.	3–12	Sept. 9, 2024–Feb. 21, 2025
Measures of Student Success & Achievement (MSSA)* & Interim MSSA (iMSSA)	The MSSA is the summative assessment in math, English language arts, and Spanish language arts, aligned to the New Mexico Common Core Standards and Common Core Español Standards for SLA. The assessment measures a student's grade level proficiency and progress toward college and/or career readiness. The iMSSA is a "mini-summative" designed interim assessment that measures progress toward grade level standards.	3-8 Assessment will be administered in the 3rd year of operation.	March 17–May 2, 2025 (Schools wanting preliminary reports would need to complete testing by April 10.)
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. NAEP results serve as a common metric for all states and selected urban districts. Main NAEP administration is targeted to pre-identified schools serving grades 4 and 8 every other year. Additionally, the NAEP supports the administration of other international and longitudinal studies.	4-8 Assessment will be administered in the 4th year of operation.	late winter early spring.



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English Learner Screening/Identification	The Kindergarten WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) and WIDA Screener to identify English language learners (ELLs). The required use of the screener is dependent on parent responses on the Language Usage Survey. WIDA screening and policy is managed by the Language and Culture Bureau.	1-12	When the kids start school in Kindergarten or in first grade if they were not assessed.
Gifted Screening	All New Mexico students are required to be screened for gifted by the end of the third grade. Each LEA should establish procedures for this universal screening process.	2nd and above if they were not tested.	by 3rd grade
WIDA Screener for Kindergarten & WIDA Screener	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten is an individually administered paper-and-pencil test that helps educators identify students as English learners (ELs). It is typically given to students one time when they enter your school or district as they start Kindergarten or first grade.	1-12	Within 30 days of the start of school OR within two weeks of initial NM enrollment

*Adapted from the New Mexico Public Department Assessment Schedule 2024-2025

Assessments and Progress Monitoring for Special Populations

Inspira STEAM Academy will incorporate the following assessments and progress monitoring tools specifically for special populations

ACCESS for ELLs & ALTERNATE ACCESS for ELLs

This suite of assessments is used to measure English language proficiency, administered to all students identified as English language learners (ELs). It is administered annually to monitor English learners' progress in acquiring academic English. Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is administered to ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities when the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicated this being an appropriate assignment. (See table for grades and dates).

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)

DLM assessments maximize access to the general education curriculum for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and ensure that all students with disabilities are included in assessment and accountability. The student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) must indicate placement in alternate assessments for math, ELA and science rather than SAT, MSSA, and ASR. (See table for grades and dates).

Dyslexia Screening

Screening for dyslexia is required for students in first grade. The screeners flag possible characteristics of dyslexia, but do not diagnose students with dyslexia. (See table for grades and dates).

Gifted Screening

All New Mexico students are required to be screened for gifted by the end of the third grade. Each LEA should establish procedures for this universal screening process. (See table for grades and dates).

English Learner Screening/Identification (WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) and WIDA Screener)

Used to identify English language learners (ELLs). The required use of the screener is dependent on parent responses on the Language Usage Survey. WIDA screening and policy is managed by the Language and Culture Bureau. (See table for grades and dates).

WIDA Screener for Kindergarten & WIDA Screener

Individually administered paper-and-pencil test that helps educators identify students as English learners (ELs). It is typically given to students one time when they enter your school or district as they start Kindergarten or first grade. (See table for grades and dates).

Grade Levels for State or District Mandated Assessment Periods

Please refer to H(1)a "New Mexico Required Statewide Student Assessment for 2024-2025" table provided in section 1. The "Grades" column explicitly identifies the grade levels at which each state or district mandated assessment will be administered.

Data to be Collected, Reported, Analyzed, Evaluated, and Utilized to Inform Instruction

For each state or district-mandated assessment, specific data will be collected, reported, analyzed, evaluated, and utilized to inform instruction as follows:



ACCESS for ELLs & ALTERNATE ACCESS for ELLs

This assessment measures English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The WIDA screener for Kindergarten will offer information regarding students' proficiency levels in English, enabling us to target their listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills effectively. This data will guide our planning, differentiation, and monitoring of student progress. Instructors will be equipped to focus on explicit instruction tailored to individual needs.

Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ)

This questionnaire is completed by parents to provide important contextual information about student's early experiences prior to kindergarten. This data will offer invaluable insights into our students' needs.

Avant STAMP

This assessment measures growth towards Spanish language proficiency across four domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Avant STAMP scores will inform educators about students' proficiency in the Spanish language. This assessment is conducted annually between October and March, and once scores are received, they will assist teachers in addressing the unique needs of each student. The results will guide instruction across the four domains.

NM Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR)

The ASR measures science proficiency aligned to the New Mexico STEM Ready! Science Standards. Data will show student proficiency and growth in science.

Dyslexia Screening

This screening will identify specific areas of need in reading skills, including phonological awareness, word recognition, and decoding. This information will help us implement targeted interventions that meet each child's abilities rather than simply aligning with their current grade level.

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)

DLM assessments provide data on students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, ensuring their inclusion in assessment and accountability for math, ELA, and science.

Measures of Student Success & Achievement (MSSA)* & Interim MSSA (iMSSA)

The MSSA is the summative assessment in math, English language arts, and Spanish language arts, measuring a student's grade level proficiency and progress toward college and/or career readiness. The iMSSA is a "mini-summative" designed interim assessment that measures progress toward grade level standards. These provide a snapshot of student's knowledge at the time of testing. The scores are typically returned to the school the following year, and this data is often utilized in the upcoming school year to drive individualized instruction.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

NAEP results serve as a common metric for all states and selected urban districts, providing data on what America's students know and can do in various subject areas.

Identifying Data to be Used to Inform Instruction

The data identified from all assessments will be central to informing instruction at Inspira STEAM Academy:

- The four assessments administered within the first 40 days of school (WIDA screener for Kindergarten, the dyslexia screening, Avant STAMP, and The Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ)) will provide invaluable insights into our students' needs.
- For English Learners, WIDA screener data will guide our planning, differentiation, and monitoring of student progress in English listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Instructors will be equipped to focus on explicit instruction tailored to individual needs.
- Dyslexia screening results will inform the implementation of targeted interventions for reading skills (phonological awareness, word recognition, decoding), ensuring interventions meet each child's abilities rather than solely their grade level.
- Avant STAMP scores will guide instruction across the four domains of Spanish language: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, assisting teachers in addressing the unique needs of each bilingual student.



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- Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP), designed for short-term, frequent monitoring, will provide more frequent data points to keep a pulse on learning. This will enable tailored interventions that can be paralleled with the classroom curriculum.
- Other formative assessments, including classroom-based tasks, writing samples, and teacher observations, will provide ongoing insights to identify areas of strength and areas that need additional support, allowing for real-time instructional adjustments.
- The scores from state-mandated tests administered throughout the year provide a snapshot of student's knowledge at the time of testing. This data, typically returned the following year, will be utilized in the upcoming school year to drive individualized instruction and inform curriculum adjustments.

Onboarding, Training, and Support for Teachers to Ensure Philosophy is Followed

The philosophy of Inspira in regards to data emphasizes equal access to educational opportunities and resources in both languages. We will use summative, formative, and state assessments to achieve this.

Inspira STEAM Academy will ensure its data philosophy is consistently applied through a comprehensive onboarding, training, and ongoing support system for all teachers:

Onboarding

Orientation Week

All new staff will participate in an Orientation week. This week will focus on welcoming new staff, sharing the school's mission, vision, and culture.

Onboarding Binder (Welcome Packet)

All teachers will be given an onboarding binder (welcome packet) with the following documents: The employee handbook that includes expectations, duties as a teacher, and Human Resources information. This will be read and signed by the teacher and administrator. It will include a yearly calendar and a daily schedule that will outline the school duty schedule for all staff. It will have an SIS tutorial outline, a tutorial on how to use G-suite for education, calendars, and other systems that will be used for internal and external communication. The technology setup will also be done at this time. All login credentials and technology will be assigned.

Training and Support

Initial Professional Development Focus

The first ten days of professional development will be focused on routines and positive reinforcement systems that will be utilized across campus creating a consistent and supportive learning environment that allows for effective data collection and utilization. Specifically, Teach Like a Champion (TLAC) emphasizes a data-driven approach to instruction, focusing on frequent, observable, and actionable data collection directly within the classroom. TLAC includes numerous "Check for Understanding" techniques designed to quickly and efficiently gauge student comprehension throughout a lesson. TLAC's data collection strategies are embedded into daily instruction, providing teachers with immediate, actionable feedback to inform their teaching and ensure high rates of student mastery.

Dedicated Professional Development for Data Use

Teachers will have an additional seven extra days of professional development (when compared to LCPS) where we will focus on adequately training teachers on strategies and understanding all New Mexico's standards. This robust language instruction and support for teachers will empower students to succeed academically and socially in a bilingual context while drawing upon technical STEAM language.

Instructional Support

Instructional support will be provided by sharing pacing guides, working with the teacher to create lesson plans, and aligning the curriculum to the state's standards and benchmarks. We will ensure the teacher understands the grading policies and utilizes all the data analysis tools available at Inspira.

Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

Teachers at Inspira will foster an appreciation of diverse cultures, by encouraging students to embrace and respect linguistic and cultural diversity, which is inherently supported by a culturally and linguistically responsive use of data. This ensures that data analysis and instructional adjustments are always mindful of the student population's unique backgrounds and needs.



Aligning with State Assessment and Data Reporting Requirements

Inspira STEAM Academy's assessment plan is fully aligned with all state assessment and data reporting requirements.

The included "New Mexico Required Statewide Student Assessment for 2024-2025" table directly reflects the mandated assessments, grades, and periods set by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

The school acknowledges and plans to administer assessments such as ACCESS for ELLs, NM Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR), Dyslexia Screening, Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM), Measures of Student Success & Achievement (MSSA), Interim MSSA (iMSSA), National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), English Learner Screening/Identification (W-APT & WIDA Screener), and Gifted Screening, all of which are state requirements.

Inspira recognizes that the required use of the WIDA screener is dependent on parent responses on the Language Usage Survey, and that WIDA screening and policy is managed by the Language and Culture Bureau, demonstrating awareness of state protocols.

The plan adheres to ESSA mandates that all states measure performance in reading, math, and science, and increases transparency to empower parents with information. Inspira's commitment to analyzing data on student achievement, attendance, and behavior to determine program effectiveness aligns with ESSA's requirement for schools to use data to assess and adjust programs to improve educational outcomes for all students.

The assessment and accountability plan ensures that evaluations are comprehensive and align with New Mexico and Common Core standards.

Assessment Plan to Equitably Assess the Projected Student Population

The assessment plan meets the specific needs to equitably assess Inspira STEAM Academy's projected student population through its comprehensive and specialized approach

Bilingual and Multicultural Students

The plan includes specific assessments like ACCESS for ELLs (and Alternate ACCESS) for English language proficiency and Avant STAMP for Spanish language proficiency. This ensures that language development in both English and Spanish is systematically monitored, reflecting the school's bilingual multicultural education program.

Students with Disabilities

The inclusion of Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) ensures that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are equitably assessed and included in assessment and accountability, maximizing their access to the general education curriculum.

Early Childhood

The Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ) provides important contextual information about student's early experiences prior to kindergarten, helping to understand individual student needs from the outset.

Targeted Interventions

The Dyslexia Screening identifies specific areas of need in reading skills (phonological awareness, word recognition, decoding), allowing for targeted interventions tailored to individual abilities, rather than solely grade level.

Data-Driven Equity

The philosophy of Inspira regarding data emphasizes equal access to educational opportunities and resources in both languages. By gathering data on the greatest needs the students have, we ensure that we can tailor the interventions to meet the student where their specific needs are and get them up to grade level as soon as possible.

Holistic View

The combination of summative, formative, and state assessments provides a multi-faceted view of student progress, allowing for a more equitable assessment that considers various aspects of learning and development.

STEAM Education

STEAM education will support a holistic approach to learning by integrating various disciplines and fostering a comprehensive understanding of how they interrelate. This interdisciplinary approach contributes to equitable assessment by providing multiple avenues for students to demonstrate their learning. By incorporating the arts into STEAM subjects, STEAM education nurtures creativity and encourages innovative thinking, essential skills for future success.



Aligning the Assessment Plan to the Mission and Ensuring Equitable Mission Achievement

The assessment plan at Inspira STEAM Academy aligns directly with its mission, which emphasizes equal access to educational opportunities, bilingualism, cultural appreciation, and holistic learning, by utilizing various assessments to measure and track achievement in these areas.

Bilingualism and Cultural Appreciation

Avant STAMP

This assessment directly measures growth towards Spanish language proficiency, a core component of our mission's bilingual aspect. Its results track students' progress in gaining academic proficiency in Spanish.

ACCESS for ELLs & ALTERNATE ACCESS for ELLs

These measure English language proficiency, crucial for ensuring all students, particularly ELs, become proficient in both languages central to our mission.

Philosophy on Data

Our philosophy explicitly states an emphasis on "equal access to educational opportunities and resources in both languages" and fostering "an appreciation of diverse cultures, by encouraging students to embrace and respect linguistic and cultural diversity." The data from language proficiency assessments (Avant STAMP, ACCESS) directly measures our success in achieving these linguistic and cultural goals.

Equitable Access and Student Success

Formative Assessments & Istation (ISIP)

These provide frequent data points for individualized instruction and interventions, ensuring we meet students where they are. This aligns with our mission's commitment to providing "robust language instruction and support" and empowering students to "succeed academically and socially."

Dyslexia Screening & DLM

These specialized assessments ensure equitable identification and support for students with specific learning needs or significant cognitive disabilities, directly supporting our mission's focus on equitable access for all learners.

MSSA (Measures of Student Success & Achievement)

As the summative assessment in math, ELA, and Spanish language arts, MSSA measures grade-level proficiency and progress toward college and/or career readiness. This data directly tracks our mission's goal of empowering all students to succeed academically.

Holistic Learning and Innovation (STEAM)

While not a specific "assessment," the integration of STEAM education itself supports a holistic approach to learning. The NM Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR) directly measures science proficiency, a key component of STEAM (in fifth grade year four of operation).

The overall use of a diverse range of assessments allows us to measure progress across multiple disciplines, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of STEAM and our commitment to fostering creativity and innovative thinking, essential skills for future success.

Negotiating Assessments

Inspira STEAM Academy intends to comply fully with all state assessment and data utilization plan in alignment with the school's philosophy and commitment to equitable education. Inspira STEAM Academy will meet all data reporting requirements, as outlined per the NM required Statewide Student Assessment plan.

Section H References


New Mexico Public Education Department. (2024, August). *Statewide test assessment program 2024–25 [PDF]*. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Statewide-Test-Assessment-Program-2024-25.pdf> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Statewide-Test-Assessment-Program-2024-25.pdf>)



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Applicant Evidence :


H(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM...

Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia
Rivera-Tapia

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.
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



Inspira STEAM Academy will analyze assessment data for our entire student body to monitor school academic performance in several ways. The data collection and preparation process will include three distinct types of assessments: Summative Assessments, Formative Assessments, and Standardized tests.

Formative Assessments

will include various tools, such as regular quizzes, engaging classwork, exit tickets that provide immediate feedback, and observational assessments conducted by educators. These methods gauge student understanding and progress throughout the learning process. By monitoring students' comprehension in real-time, teachers can adjust their instruction to better meet individual needs.

Summative Assessments

will consist of evaluations at the end of the units and terms. These assessments will summarize students' knowledge and skills after an instructional period. Students will demonstrate their understanding of STEAM subjects and growth in Spanish language acquisition by showcasing their knowledge through inquiry-based projects every 6 to 8 weeks.

Standardized Tests

State-mandated assessments will align with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards, providing a standardized measure of students' proficiency in core subjects.

Data Sources

will be collected from teachers and analyzed during collaborative grade-level meetings. The data reviewed will cover several key areas

Academic performance data

This will include scores from various assessments and assignments in core subjects such as mathematics, science, language arts, and STEAM disciplines. This comprehensive overview enables educators to identify trends, strengths, and areas that need improvement.

Language Proficiency Data

Essential assessments that will evaluate English language acquisition and proficiency for English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual students. Understanding students' language development will be crucial for tailoring instruction to support their learning.

Special Education Progress

To support special education students, we will thoroughly review their progress toward the specific goals and objectives outlined in their IEPs. This ensures that each student's unique learning needs are effectively met.

Responsible Parties

Our personnel, including teachers, the Dean of Students, the Executive Director, and special education personnel, will track progress over time.

Triggers for Action

- Monitoring students' comprehension in real-time (with formative assessments) will prompt immediate instructional adjustments by teachers.
- Identifying trends, strengths, and areas that need improvement from academic performance data.
- Identifying any gaps and trends in performance across various student groups, including Special Education, EL, and bilingual students.
- Assessing whether certain groups are consistently underperforming and exploring potential causes for these disparities.
- Seeking out patterns in student achievement (improvement or decline in performance) and determining contributing factors.
- Tracking achievement gaps between groups of students to determine if there are disparities and striving aggressively to determine their potential causes.
- Pre-SAT data results (data collection for 4-6 weeks) to determine if a student moves forward with additional cognitive testing.
- Collecting data through SAT process to identify students with potential disabilities to refer for special education evaluation.

Corrective Action Steps and Timelines

Immediate Adjustments

By monitoring students' comprehension in real-time, teachers can adjust their instruction to better meet individual needs.



Quarterly Evaluation and Intervention Development

Each quarter, we will evaluate the success of current educational practices and programs in meeting the needs of Special Education, EL, and bilingual students.

Targeted Interventions

Based on this quarterly evaluation, Inspira will develop targeted interventions and support strategies, such as potentially changing teaching styles, providing additional resources, or offering professional development to improve our teaching methods.

Continuous Monitoring

We will keep monitoring our recommendations and evaluate their impact on student performance, making improvements as needed based on ongoing data analysis.

Alignment

We will make certain that our proposals are consistent with New Mexico Common Core standards and respond to the equity issues addressed in the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit. We want to offer simple steps that facilitate simplicity in decision-making and promote education practices.

Academic Performance Data

will include scores from various assessments and assignments in core subjects such as mathematics, science, language arts, and STEAM disciplines. This comprehensive overview enables educators to identify trends, strengths, and areas that need improvement.

Language Proficiency Data

has essential assessments that will evaluate English language acquisition and proficiency for English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual students. Understanding students' language development will be crucial for tailoring instruction to support their learning.

Associated Costs

Inspira STEAM Academy has created a lined item in our budget to cover training costs for all staff. Associated costs may include funding for additional professional development sessions, specialized instruction materials or software for interventions, potential staffing for remediation programs such as tutors and interventions, and resources for data analysis tools or platforms. Other costs may include contracting interventionists, special education related service providers, or special education evaluators for students demonstrating needs as determined necessary by SAT and IEP teams.

Support for Students and Teachers

To support special education students, we will thoroughly review their progress toward the specific goals and objectives outlined in their IEPs. This ensures that each student's unique learning needs are effectively met.

Through detailed data collection and assessment, we aim to foster an educational environment that prioritizes student growth and success. We will give ongoing professional growth to teachers to ensure that they possess the needed skills and knowledge to support all students, particularly in bilingual and inquiry-based settings. We want to offer simple steps that facilitate simplicity in decision-making and promote education practices. We will keep monitoring our recommendations and evaluate their impact on student performance, making improvements as needed based on ongoing data analysis. We will make certain that our proposals are consistent with New Mexico Common Core standards and respond to the equity issues addressed in the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit. Inspira is dedicated to making our report available to teachers, administrators, the Governing Board, and parents.

Performance Analysis

Inspira STEAM Academy will analyze performance data across various student groups, including Special Education, EL, and bilingual students, to identify any gaps and trends. We will assess whether certain groups are consistently underperforming and explore potential causes for these disparities. The evaluation will focus on how different instructional strategies and supports are affecting the various student groups.

Responsibilities

Our team, including teachers, the Executive Director, the Dean of Students, and the Special Education teacher, will track progress over time to seek out patterns in student achievement. We will track for improvement or decline in performance and determine the contributing factors. We will also track achievement gaps between groups of students to determine if there are disparities and will strive aggressively to determine their potential causes.



Using Data to Drive Instruction and Support

The grade bands will meet bi-weekly to analyze data and take steps towards evaluating student success. Each quarter, we will evaluate current educational practices and programs in meeting the needs of Special Education, EL, and bilingual students. Based on this evaluation, Inspira will develop targeted interventions and support strategies, such as potentially changing teaching styles, providing additional resources, or offering professional development to improve our teaching methods.

Governing Board's Role in Analyzing Data Gathered to Inform School-wide Progress and Potential Changes

The Governing Board will receive regular monthly, quarterly, and yearly comprehensive data reports from the Executive Director and school leadership. Their role will involve critical analysis of this data to oversee overall school performance, identify major trends, and assess progress towards strategic goals and equity benchmarks. The Board will use this analysis to inform their oversight functions, guide policy decisions, allocate resources, and hold school leadership accountable for academic outcomes. They will discuss the implications of the data in their meetings to make informed decisions about school-wide progress and to approve significant changes or strategic initiatives needed to address identified areas of concern.

In summary

Inspira educators and administrators will effectively analyze assessment data to support the diverse needs of Special Education, EL, and bilingual students, ensuring that educational practices are continually refined to promote equity and academic success for all students.

Section H References

New Mexico Public Education Department. (2024, August). *Statewide test assessment program 2024-25 [PDF]*. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Statewide-Test-Assessment-Program-2024-25.pdf> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Statewide-Test-Assessment-Program-2024-25.pdf>)

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



Communicating Student Achievement to Stakeholders

The Inspira STEAM Academy Student Progress, Achievement, and Communication Plan is designed to provide clear and detailed information about student progress and achievements across Bilingual Education, STEAM, and Inquiry-Based Teaching. It will foster a collaborative environment among educators, students, and parents to support ongoing learning and improvement.

Communicating to Students

Unit Review & Goal Setting

The teacher and students will review each new 6- to 9-week unit together. During these weeks, the teacher will guide students through the learning steps, offering ongoing support, reflections, rubrics, and checkpoints.

Individual Progress Tracking

Students will be encouraged to track their progress through individual learning goals, centered around Standards and Benchmarks, and the adaptive scores provided by Istation results. These goals will be revisited regularly during one-on-one conferences with teachers, giving students ownership over their learning.

Digital Portfolios

Students will have digital portfolios which they will have access to and will follow them through their academic journey at Inspira.

Communicating to Parents

Quarterly Report Cards

Parents will receive digital (or printed as requested) quarterly report cards detailing language acquisition milestones and literacy development in both languages. These reports will also include information about student achievements in science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics, projects, skill development, and knowledge application. Written reports will contain qualitative and quantitative data, such as language proficiency levels and examples of student work.

Progress reports

will be sent at the end of each month to keep parents updated on their student's academic progress.

Parent-Teacher Conferences (PTCs)

PTCs will be held twice a year, in the fall and the spring. Students will guide discussions at their developmental level during these conferences. Detailed conversations will focus on language development, challenges, and strategies for improvement. Additionally, outcomes of STEAM projects, student interests, and future learning goals will be addressed. In-person or virtual meetings (parents have a choice) will be conducted, accompanied by written summaries for parents.

Accessible Communication

We recognize that some parents may only speak English or Spanish. To ensure effective communication, we will have teachers available to assist in both languages during these meetings. If a parent speaks a language other than English or Spanish, we will coordinate with LCPS or a translation company to arrange for professional translators to help facilitate communication.

Shared Digital Portfolios

Digital portfolios will be shared with parents, allowing them to track their student's academic journey. These digital portfolios will also showcase valuable bilingual growth toward obtaining the New Mexico State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy in their future language studies.

Weekly Newsletters

Weekly newsletters will include a summary from each grade level with current STEAM unit information, highlighting bilingual activities, student successes, and tips for supporting language development at home. The newsletter will be distributed digitally, and printed copies will be available for parents.

Showcase Events

Showcase events will occur every 6-8 weeks, depending on the duration of the units. These presentations will feature student projects, experiments, and creative works, providing opportunities for students to explain their learning.

To The Governing Body



Monthly Executive Director Reports

The governing board will receive a written report from the Executive Director during their scheduled monthly meetings. Within these written reports, the Executive Director will discuss ongoing assessment results, language proficiency results, attendance reports, and school updates that pertain to facilities, students, and staff.

Event & Newsletter Inclusion

Governing board members will also be invited to all showcase events and will be included in the distribution of the weekly Inspira STEAM Academy newsletter.

To The Authorizer

- The authorizer will have access to all records containing progress reports.
- The authorizer will be invited to attend community events showcasing student work.

To The Broader Community

The greater community will be invited to attend any events where students' work is showcased.

Inspira STEAM Academy will actively seek volunteers from the community who are willing to share their knowledge and expertise with students, drawing from their careers or skill sets to contribute to the growth of our school community.

Communication Plan for Student Achievement Data from H.(1) and Other Relevant Sources

Inspira STEAM Academy's communication plan integrates specific sources of student achievement data from H.(1) and other relevant assessments into its reporting to stakeholders:

Quarterly Report Cards

- These will include language acquisition milestones and literacy development (in both languages), directly reflecting progress from ACCESS for ELLs/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs and Avant STAMP assessments.
- Reports will detail student achievements in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics projects, skill development, and knowledge application, informed by classroom performance, unit assessments, and state science proficiency data (e.g., NM Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR)).
- Qualitative and quantitative data, such as language proficiency levels and examples of student work, will be included, drawing from various assessment sources.

Progress Reports

These provide ongoing updates on students' academic progress, primarily reflecting daily classroom performance, assignments, and formative assessment results.

Parent-Teacher Conferences (PTCs)

- Discussions will specifically address language development challenges and strategies for improvement, directly informed by individual student results from ACCESS for ELLs/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs and Avant STAMP.
- Outcomes of STEAM projects and overall academic progress (from MSSA/iMSSA and classroom data) will be reviewed.
- Digital portfolios, showcasing student work and valuable bilingual growth toward the New Mexico State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy, will be shared.

One-on-One Student-Teacher Conferences

These conferences directly address individual learning goals centered around Standards and Benchmarks and adaptive scores provided by Istation results, enabling targeted feedback and progress tracking.

Executive Director Reports to Governing Board (Monthly)



These written reports will include ongoing assessment results (encompassing MSSA/iMSSA, ASR, ACCESS for ELLs, Avant STAMP, DLM results as they become available), language proficiency results, and attendance reports, providing a comprehensive data overview for school-wide progress monitoring.

Authorizer Access to Records

The authorizer will have access to all records containing progress reports and results from all state-mandated assessments (e.g., MSSA, ASR, ACCESS, Avant STAMP, DLM, Dyslexia Screening, Gifted Screening, WIDA Screeners), ensuring full transparency of student achievement data.

Showcase Events

These events feature student projects, experiments, and creative works, serving as tangible evidence of academic application and skill development.

Demonstrating Plan Effectiveness for Targeted Population and Community

This communication plan is specifically designed for effectiveness in reaching Inspira STEAM Academy's targeted population (students and parents, especially those from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds) and actively engaging the local community:

Effectiveness in Reaching Targeted Population (Parents)

Accessibility & Preference

Parents will receive digital or printed (as requested) quarterly report cards and weekly newsletters. This flexible approach acknowledges varying levels of technology access and ensures information reaches all families.

Monthly

Progress reports provide consistent and timely updates, allowing parents to stay informed and address concerns proactively, rather than waiting for term-end reports.

Linguistically Responsive Conferences

During parent-teacher conferences, the school explicitly commits to having teachers certified in both English and Spanish available to assist. Crucially, if a parent speaks a language other than English or Spanish, the school will coordinate with LCPS or a translation company to arrange for professional translators to facilitate communication. This dedication to overcoming language barriers is paramount for effectively communicating with Inspira's multicultural student body and their families.

Empowering Parent Engagement

Offering choices for in-person or virtual meetings for PTCs, coupled with written summaries, ensures accessibility. Allowing students to guide discussions during PTCs, tailored to their developmental level, enhances their ownership and makes the information more meaningful for parents.

Dynamic Progress Tracking

Sharing digital portfolios provides parents with a continuous and visual record of their student's academic journey, including bilingual growth, fostering deeper engagement than static reports alone.

Effectiveness in Reaching the Specific Community

Visible Achievement By inviting the greater community to showcase events featuring student projects, experiments, and creative works, the school provides direct, tangible evidence of student achievement and the educational impact of its programs. This builds trust and support within the local area.

Active Community Contribution Inspira STEAM Academy will actively seek volunteers from the community who are willing to share their knowledge and expertise. This initiative fosters a reciprocal relationship, transforming the community from passive recipients of information into active partners who directly contribute to student growth and the school's success.

Transparency and Connection

Including governing board members and the broader community in the distribution of the weekly newsletter and inviting them to showcase events increases transparency about school activities and fosters a sense of shared community investment in the school's



mission.

In Summary

This plan offers a structured and responsive approach to communicating student progress and achievements in Bilingual Education, STEAM, and Inquiry-Based Teaching, ensuring that all stakeholders are well-informed and deeply engaged in the educational process.

Q21.

L. 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. This is an initial application, not a replication.

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(l)).

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



Key Components of Governance Structure

Membership structure

The Inspira STEAM Academy's membership will comprise five to eleven Governing Board members. The Board Member positions will be:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- General Governing members.

Inspira STEAM Academy will hold elections and re-elections every two to three years, depending on the position as detailed in each board member's position below. All Governing Board Members will be elected by majority vote at the annual meeting in July. Current board members can submit nominations for Governing Board positions. All nominations should be submitted 30 days before the election.

The Officer Structures at Inspira STEAM Academy

Roles

The Governing Board President at Inspira STEAM Academy is responsible for leading the Governing Board. The President is responsible for attending all Governing Board Meetings. The President of the Inspira STEAM Academy Governing Board will work closely with the Executive Director, serving as a liaison along with the rest of the Governing Board. The President will oversee committees and appoint chairs to committees that he or she will be overseeing. The President is responsible for all the members of the Governing Board. The President will serve for a term of three years.

The role of the Vice-President is to support the President as needed, maintain communication with the President to ensure the school's success, and provide support in any other capacities. In the event the President is unable to fulfill their duties, the Vice President will be readily available to take on the responsibilities. The Vice President will remain in their position for two years.

The role of the Secretary is to keep track of and record all of the Governing Board's activities. Under the Open Meetings Act (NMSA 10-15-1), the secretary is responsible for taking written meeting notes, posting meeting minute agendas, preparing for future meetings, and supporting the President and Executive Director. The Secretary will remain in their position for three years.

The treasurer is responsible for supervising the school's short-term and long-term finances. The treasurer will also be responsible for chairing the board's Finance Committee. The treasurer will maintain transparency and accuracy through the monthly budget reports presented to the Board. The Treasurer will work closely with the Executive Director and the Business Manager on budget creation and maintenance. The Treasurer will remain in their position for two years.

The general Governing Board members are responsible for attending *all* meetings. They can be a part of any committee to which they are elected or if they accept an appointment. They will support any other needs that the Governing Board may have. The General Governing Board Member will remain in their position for two years.

Committee structures

Governance Committee

The governance committee is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness and ethical functioning of Inspira STEAM Academy. The committee will be responsible for recruiting, planning, overseeing, and maintaining good governance practices (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2024).

Finance Committee

The members will deal with budget-related matters, financial planning, annual budget preparation, and resource allocation of the governing body, NMSA 22-8-12.3 (New Mexico Statutes, 2024).

Audit Committee

The audit committee members will oversee the financial affairs and internal controls of the governing body NMSA 22-8-12.3 (New Mexico Statutes, 2024).



Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Inspira STEAM Academy Parent Advisory Committee will serve as a committee for parents to provide advice, feedback, and offer input on the school's program and initiatives to help support and improve the students' educational experience.

Equity Council Committee (EC)

The Equity Council Committee will ensure equitable outcomes among all students in the school. The committee is responsible for identifying systematic issues that arise, developing strategies, and advocating for new practices or improving them. The EC will primarily serve the identified groups in the Martinez-Yazzie lawsuit: students with disabilities, Native American students, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2022).

Academic Performance Committee (APC)

The Academic Performance Committee, along with the support of the Executive Director, will undertake the analysis of monitoring student achievement, improving attendance, evaluating instructional programs and methods that align with Inspira's mission and vision, and report findings and recommendations to the Governing Board.

Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC)

The School Health Advisory Council is a district-level advisory group composed of various stakeholders, including parents, students, school staff, and community members. Their primary responsibility is to provide guidance on coordinated school health programming, ensuring that health education and services align with the needs of students and the community.

Inspira STEAM Academy Board members may chair other committees; for example, our treasurer may be included in the finance committee, other board members may join the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), the Equity Council, etc.

Selecting New Governing Board Members and Procedures

At Inspira STEAM Academy, we strive to choose a Governing Board that is diverse, mission-driven, and knowledgeable in various areas unique to our school. When recruiting for a new Governing Board member, we will be looking for the following qualifications: Mission and Vision driven, community leader advocating for student choice with families, commitment to academic and fiscal accountability, governance, regulatory oversight, and skill sets including but not limited to: financial expertise, community leadership, legal experience.

Adding Governing Board Members

At Inspira STEAM Academy, any Governing Board Member can recruit candidates to join the Board according to the needs presented by the Board. Potential new candidates will submit a letter of interest to the Governing Board along with their resume. Once the potential candidate is interviewed, the Governing Board Members will have a meeting and vote. For a potential candidate to become a Governing Board Member, they must have two-thirds of the votes from the current Governing Board body.

Governing Board Member Resignations

If a Governing Board Member decides to resign from their position before their term is up, they must notify the President, Vice President, and the Executive Director via email or a printed letter. It is highly encouraged for the resigning Board Member to give a thirty (30) day notice before leaving their position. As a courtesy, they are asked to recommend another person to replace them, however, it is not required.

Discipline of a Governing Board Member

Every Governing Board Member at Inspira STEAM Academy is held to the highest expectations. If a Governing Board member is to present an issue against another board member, the first step is to notify the Governing Board President and Executive Director via email. An in-person meeting can be scheduled, with the following members present: the Governing Board President, Vice President, and Executive Director.

If a Governing Board Member is not fulfilling their responsibilities, violating the Governing Board bylaws or code of conduct, or acting unethically, this will be grounds for the beginning of a formal disciplinary process. If an accusation is made, the Governing Board members will meet as soon as possible to discuss the allegations and will notify the member within 72-hours. The Governing Board Member being accused will have the opportunity to meet with the board to answer questions they may have.

The process will involve the following steps:

- A written complaint needs to be submitted to the Governing Board President or Secretary
- The Governing Board members will review the complaint
- The Board will conduct an investigation with all parties involved in individual settings.
- The Governing Board members will discuss the allegation and make a recommendation on potential disciplinary actions. This may



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include a formal written disciplinary action, a suspension from duties, specific actions pertaining to their position or removal from the Governing Board.

- The Governing Board President or Secretary will provide the board member with a written letter stating the decision they have made.

If the allegation is made against the Governing Board President or Vice President, the complaint should be given to the Secretary and the Executive Director. At this point, the entire Governing Board will discuss the allegations made and will decide with support from the legal team about how to proceed.

Removal of a Governing Board Member

In the event the Governing Board proposes a motion to remove the accused Governing Board member, a two-thirds vote is required for removal. A Governing Board Member may be removed for causes such as misconduct, breach of fiduciary duties, or failure to fulfill their responsibilities. All board members are expected to participate fully in monthly meetings. Missing three meetings without communication via email to the President, Vice President, and Secretary will result in removal from Inspira STEAM Academy's Governing Board.

In Summary

By combining these elements, the governance structure provides a thorough framework for efficiently managing the school and ensuring it achieves its educational goals.

Section A References

New Mexico Public Education Department. (2024, July 31). Charter school boards. (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/options-parents-families/charter-schools/charter-school-boards>)
(<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/options-parents-families/charter-schools/charter-school-board>)
(<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/options-parents-families/charter-schools/charter-school-boards>)

New Mexico Statutes. (2024). § 22-8-12.3. Local school board finance subcommittee; audit committee; membership; duties. <https://law.justia.com/codes/new-mexico/chapter-22/article-8/section-22-8-12-3/>

New Mexico Statutes. (2024). § 22-8-12.3. Local school board finance subcommittee; audit committee; membership; duties. <https://law.justia.com/codes/new-mexico/chapter-22/article-8/section-22-8-12-3/>

https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/School_Charter_Boards_and_Equity_Councils.pdf

Q23.

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

• 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**



Board Member Qualifications and Skill Sets

Inspira STEAM Academy will recruit Governing Board members based on:

- (1.) Diversity and community knowledge, personal qualities, critical thinking skills, and professional experiences**
- (2.) Investment in Inspira STEAM Academy's mission and vision**
- (3.) Commitment and shared vision with New Mexico's public education for all our students.**

The Governing Board has been strategically chosen based on the expertise of each individual. The desired skill areas of Inspira STEAM Academy Governing Board Members are: leadership, community involvement, bilingualism, science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) backgrounds, legal experts, and financial experts. With the ongoing development of Inspira STEAM Academy, we want to ensure incoming members have the diverse skills our Founding Governing Board members also have.

If by some circumstance, the Governing Board Founders are no longer involved, Inspira STEAM Academy will continue to thrive, as the next generation of Board Members will ensure the success of our school. This new generation will possess enhanced skill sets essential for improving Inspira STEAM Academy. These skills will include backgrounds in STEAM fields, financial expertise, bilingual abilities, community involvement, and leadership. The incoming board members will be capable of attracting new community supporters and strengthening existing relationships.

(1.) Diversity and Community Knowledge, Personal Qualities, Critical Thinking Skills, and Professional Experiences

The Founding Team at Inspira STEAM Academy sought diverse board members who could offer a variety of experiences to strengthen the Governing Board. The desired skill sets included expertise in leadership, finance, education, human resources, law, community involvement, and fundraising. Most importantly, we aimed to ensure that all members had overlapping experiences, so that if a member had to resign, the Governing Board would remain strong.

When seeking diversity among individuals, their background experiences, knowledge areas of STEAM, bilingual knowledge, race, gender, and age were considered to make a cohesive committee that can offer different perspectives. Commitment to the education of the students is a critical role for our Board Members to have, as they will support in improving our educational outcomes, the mission and vision of Inspira STEAM Academy.

Leadership potential is necessary for all members and is particularly important for the Governing Board President, as this individual will be working closely with all board members. They will also be working directly with the Executive Director, supporting areas of need. Individuals who are experienced in finances are needed, as we need our Governing Board Members to support the building of financial records, track expenses, maintain expenses, and monitor compliance.

The Governing Board Members, who are well-known community members, will support fundraising and take responsibility for showcasing Inspira STEAM Academy throughout Las Cruces. The Founding Team also sought individuals who have STEAM and bilingual backgrounds. Inspira STEAM Academy offers a Spanish immersion program integrated with STEAM learning. Our Board Members can support this initiative by inviting presenters to speak to the students about their professional fields and how they can improve their work.

(2.) Investment in Inspira STEAM Academy's Mission and Vision

The Governing Board Members will know Inspira's mission and vision. The members will be strongly committed to enhancing our educational outcomes by supporting specific clubs or inviting community members to inform students about developments in the STEAM and bilingual fields. Additionally, members will be responsible for keeping Inspira's core purpose central to all decisions.

(3.) Commitment and Shared Vision with New Mexico's Public Education

Board members will show their commitment to the school in diverse ways. They will work alongside the Executive Director and support decisions being made for the improvement of the education that the students are receiving. As a team, the Governing Board members will share their commitment and shared vision by communicating with the community about the projects they believe in. The Governing Board members will help ensure Inspira STEAM Academy has a diverse student body by helping to recruit students and ensuring that there is equity among all students. The Governing Board members will ensure that the finances are being well managed and that all school finances are in good standing.



Robust Board Membership

The Governing Board at Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to providing a robust and effective board that will meet expectations and provide comprehensive support for our members.

Training Expectations

New board members will be required to complete the onboarding process within the first school year of their service. Training sessions throughout the year will be provided as soon as they become available. Training may be provided by the Charter School Division, Public Charter Schools of New Mexico (PCSNM). Per the New Mexico Public Education Department (2024), the new Governing Board members will complete 10 hours of training in the following area:

- at least two (2) hours covering laws and department policies and procedures affecting governing bodies or charter schools, including ethics and school personnel
- at least two (2) hours covering public school finance, budgeting, and fiduciary responsibilities of governing bodies;
- at least two (2) hours covering legal concepts on governing bodies and charter schools, including the Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act;
- at least two (2) hours covering effective governance practices and effective methods of supporting and supervising a charter school leader
- at least two (2) hours covering student achievement and student support services.

Per the New Mexico Public Education Department (2024), the continuing Governing Board Members must complete 5 hours of training annually. The courses Governing Board Members can take are the following:

- Laws and department policies and procedures affecting governing bodies or charter schools, including ethics and school personnel
- Public school finance, budgeting, and fiduciary responsibilities of governing bodies and performance-based budgeting.
- A governing body's role in evaluating and improving student academic achievement and using data to set individual school goals for student academic achievement in charter schools
- A governing body's role in providing a safe learning environment conducive to improving student outcomes
- Legal concepts pertaining to governing bodies and charter schools, including the Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act,
- Effective governance practices and effective methods of supporting and supervising a charter school leader
- Other matters deemed relevant by the department

The onboarding process will be led by the Governing Board President and the Executive Director. This will support the candidate to become an active member of the Governing Board. The Governing Board President and Executive Director will take the following steps:

First week of approval:

Introductions - The new Board Member will be introduced to the current Governing Board Members and staff members.

Second week:

Document Review - The new Board Member will be provided essential documents to look over, such as the bylaws, strategic plans, the last three months of meeting minutes, and financial reports.

First Month:

Governance Training - The new Board Member will be given access to Governing Board training links provided by the New Mexico Public Education Department Charter Division. The Governing Board President and Executive Director will give alternative training sessions held by Public Charter Schools of New Mexico (PCSNM).

Time Commitments for Governing Board Members

All board members will maintain a time commitment of monthly board meetings (approximately 2-3 hours per month), participate in one or more board committees (additionally 1-2 hours per month), and occasionally attend school events and engage in strategic planning sessions as needed (New Mexico Public Education Department, n.d.).

These qualifications help ensure that governing body members are well-equipped to make decisions that positively impact the school and its community.



Section A Resources

New Mexico Public Education Department. (2024, July 31). *Charter school boards*. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/options-parents-families/charter-schools/charter-school-boards/> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/options-parents-families/charter-schools/charter-school-boards/>)

New Mexico Public Education Department. (2024, July 31). *Charter school boards*. <https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/options-for-parents-and-families/charter-schools/charter-school-boards/> (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/options-for-parents-and-families/charter-schools/charter-school-boards/>)

New Mexico Public Education Department. (n.d.). *Charter school boards*. New Mexico Public Education Department. <https://web.ped.nm.gov/families-and-communities/community-programs/charter-school-boards/> (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/families-and-communities/community-programs/charter-school-boards/>)

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



Selection of Governing Board Members

Effective leadership at Inspira STEAM Academy is essential for preparing both the school and its students. The Founding Team has carefully selected qualified individuals to join the initial Founding Governing Board, which will guide Inspira STEAM Academy through its planning phase, inaugural phase, and, if they choose, for many years thereafter. The selected members are fully committed to our vision and mission. Once the charter school is authorized, all Founding Governing Board Members will continue to serve on the board.

The Governing Board President will commence their term and will play a vital role in making decisions about the school. The Founding Governing Board Committee will be responsible for leading the school with sound governance during this period. Inspira STEAM Academy has also developed a plan to recruit, select, and evaluate future board members who wish to join the Governing Board.

Under New Mexico Statutes Annotated (NMSA) 22-8B-8(I), the process for selecting new Governing Body members for a charter school should ensure that the selection is transparent, fair, and aligned with the principles of good governance.

Qualifications, Skill Sets, and Responsibilities

The Founding Team at Inspira STEAM Academy desired individuals who were diverse and could share different experiences that would make the Governing Board strong. The skill sets the Founding Team desired were experience in leadership, finance, education, human resources, law, community member involvement, and fundraising. Most of all, we wanted to ensure these members held shared experience in case a member has to resign, so the Governing Board can continue to be strong.

The founding team has taken the approach of building a strong and effective Governing Board that requires a regular and ongoing recruitment process. The Governance Committee will ensure the potential candidates have the diverse skills mentioned and have backgrounds that will ensure they are ready to take a seat in the Governing Board.

Key action steps include

Ongoing recruitment

The Governance Committee Members will actively network throughout the year to identify candidates who align with our school's needs. Some of those networking events may occur at community events provided in Las Cruces, such as the Farmers Market, Sports events, the Small Business Bureau, NASA, White Sands Missile Range, the Challenger Learning Center (LCPS), or other community events. The Governance Committee can also support networking within New Mexico State University and Doña Ana Community College. From these events, the committee members may be able to find candidates who can join the board and bring in expertise in areas of need in our board. A significant focus of our recruitment is ensuring the potential candidates represent various professional backgrounds, lived experiences, community involvement, and connections that align with our commitment to be an inclusive and well-rounded board.

Governing Board Member Vacancies (within eight weeks of a vacancy)

If and when a board position opens, the Governance Committee Members will review the candidates who have shown interest in the position and will reach out to them if they fit the role the Governing Board is looking for.

Application and Interview Process (4 to 6 weeks)

Any of the candidates who have shown interest can submit a letter of interest to the Governance Committee and the Executive Director. The Governance Committee will notify the Governing Board Members and will conduct interviews with the potential candidates.

Board Review and Approval (within 1 week of final interviews)

The Governance Committee will present the recommended candidates to the full board for review and vote in accordance with New Mexico Statute (NMSA) 22-8B-8(I), which is designed to ensure transparent and open communication among board members.

The onboarding process will be led by the Board President and the Executive Director, who will support the candidate in a smooth transition and their ability to be successful on the Board. The Governing Board President and Executive Director will take the following steps:

Introductions

(Within 1 week of approval): The new Board Member will be introduced to the current Governing Board Members and staff members.

Document Review

(within 2 weeks): The new Board Member will be provided essential documents to look over, such as the bylaws, strategic plans, the last three months of meeting minutes, and financial reports.



Governance Training

(within 1 month) The new Board Member will be given access to Governing Board training links provided by the New Mexico Public Education Department Charter Division. The President and Executive Director will give alternative training sessions held by Public Charter Schools of New Mexico (PCSNM). A new Board Member is required to obtain 10 hours of governance training in a year.

Per the New Mexico Public Education Department (2024), the new Governing Board members will complete 10 hours of training in the following area:

- at least two (2) hours covering laws and department policies and procedures affecting governing bodies or charter schools, including ethics and school personnel
- at least two (2) hours covering public school finance, budgeting and fiduciary responsibilities of governing bodies;
- at least two (2) hours covering legal concepts on governing bodies and charter schools, including the Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act;
- at least two (2) hours covering effective governance practices and effective methods of supporting and supervising a charter school leader
- at least two (2) hours covering student achievement and student support services.

The Governing Board plays an essential role in chartering Inspira STEAM Academy. Our Governing Board members hold a key role in both the chartering and rechartering by actively participating in the development and support of our vision, mission, and performance standards. In our meeting sessions, we will be engaged in discussions to ensure these documents are up to date or modified to ensure we deliver our commitment to our students, teachers, administration, and community members. Inspira STEAM Academy will be authorized by the New Mexico Charter School Division. The Executive Director will maintain day-to-day communication with authorizers. At the same time, the Governing Board will provide oversight and actively participate in key meetings, ensuring reporting, transparency, and accountability are held to the highest level. The Governing Board members serving will take the key role in looking into academic matrices from state testing data, and key components to ensure the students are being served the quality education they deserve. The Governing Board members will also ensure school finances are being maintained and are appropriated correctly, so we have positive audits throughout the years.

All board members will maintain a time commitment of monthly board meetings (approximately 2-3 hours per month), participate in one or more board committees (an additional 1-2 hours per month), and occasionally attend school events and engage in strategic planning sessions as needed.

Evaluations

The Governing Board Evaluation will ensure effectiveness and improvement through an annual self-evaluation. The Governance committee will provide the Governing Board Members with a self-evaluation to collect their input on beliefs about their engagement, understanding of their responsibilities, and contribution to the school's mission and goals. The self-evaluation results will be significant to the entire board for their professional development to ensure Inspira's mission and vision are being achieved and to identify areas of improvement.

Governing Board Role in Chartering and Rechartering, Authorizer Relations, and Time Commitment

The Governing Board plays an essential role in chartering Inspira STEAM Academy. Our Governing Board members hold a key role in both the chartering and rechartering by actively participating in the development and support of our vision, mission, and performance standards. In our meeting sessions, we will be engaged in discussions to ensure these documents are up to date or modified to ensure we deliver our commitment to our students, teachers, administration, and community members. Inspira STEAM Academy will be authorized by the New Mexico Charter School Division.

The Executive Director will maintain day-to-day communication with authorizers. At the same time, the Governing Board will provide oversight and actively participate in key meetings, ensuring reporting, transparency, and accountability are held to the highest level. The Governing Board members serving will take the key role in looking into academic matrices from state testing data, and key components to ensure the students are being served the quality education they deserve. The Governing Board members will also ensure school finances are being



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maintained and are appropriated correctly, so we have positive audits throughout the years. All board members will maintain a time commitment of monthly board meetings (approximately 2-3 hours per month), participate in one or more board committees (an additional 1-2 hours per month), and occasionally attend school events and engage in strategic planning sessions as needed.

Evaluations:

The Governing Board Evaluation will ensure effectiveness and improvement through an annual self-evaluation. The Governance committee will provide the Governing Board Members with a self-evaluation to collect their input on beliefs about their engagement, understanding of their responsibilities, and contribution to the school's mission and goals. The self-evaluation results will be significant to the entire board for their professional development to identify and improve areas of improvement and close gaps. Under New Mexico Statutes Annotated (NMSA) 22-8B-8(I), the process for selecting new Governing Body members for a charter school should ensure that the selection is transparent, fair, and aligned with the principles of good governance.

Section A References Continued

New Mexico Statutes Annotated § 22-8B-8(I) (2024). Charter application; contents

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;**
- 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**



Governing Body Member Onboarding Process

The onboarding plan for Inspira STEAM Academy's board members outlines the process for integrating new Governing Board members, identifies training needs, ensures compliance with state regulations and requirements, and details the costs incurred.



B(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Governing Board Onboarding Process

Governing Board Member Onboarding Process			
Action Steps	Timeline	Responsible Members	Monitoring Steps
1. Initial Welcome and Introduction	Within 1 week of board approval	Governing Board President and Executive Director	Initial meeting and distribution of welcome materials
2. Document Review and Information Sessions	Within 2 weeks, if board approval	Executive Director, Board Secretary	Checklists of reviewed documents signed
3. Governance and Role Overview	Within 1 month of board approval	Governing Board President and Board Members	Observation of initial board meetings and committee meetings. Informal Check-ins
4. Policy and Procedure Information	Within 2 months of board approval	Executive Director and relevant staff	Confirmation of policy review and opportunity to ask questions.
5. Open Meetings Act and Responsibility Training	Within 1 month of board approval (dependent on training session provided by the NM Charter Division)	Board Attorney or designated expert	Record of attendance at training session, confirmation of understanding.
6. Strategic Plan and Goals Review	Within 2 months of board approval	Governing Board President, Executive Director	Discussion during board meetings, questioning, and confirmation of understanding
7. Financial Oversight Introduction	Within 3 months of board approval	Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair	Review of financial reports, opportunities to ask questions for understanding
8. Committee Assignment and Introduction	Within 3 months of board approval	Governing Board President	Confirmation of committee assignment and introduction to committee members
9. Ongoing Support and Mentorship	Ongoing throughout the first year	An experienced Board member	Regular check-ins between the mentor and the new member. Questions and feedback opportunities
10. Feedback on Onboarding Effectiveness	End of the first 3 and 6 months of board service	Board Secretary, Governance Committee	Formal feedback survey administered to the new board member.

Identifying Governing Body Needs

The Governing Board Training Plan utilizes different approaches to address the training needs of new Governing Board members to ensure that they are in compliance with the state's requirements. Annual training is crucial to all new board members. The Governance Committee will be responsible for conducting an annual review of the board's skills, knowledge, and understanding of current and emergent challenges.

Training Needs:

Annually in May - Board Self-Evaluation Survey

The board will be provided an anonymous survey to gauge their comfort level and identify what further training would be beneficial for them

Annually in May - Review of Board Performance and Effectiveness: The Governance Committee will review board meeting minutes, ensuring completeness of minutes, presence of secretary signature, minutes are uploaded to the website, committee reports are included, as well as input on overall board performance to identify areas of improvement.



Bi-annually (December and May) - Input from Executive Director:

The Executive Director and the Governance committee will review the Governing Board's reflections and will provide ongoing support for each individual board member.

Ongoing-Monitoring State Requirements: The Governing Board Secretary and/or legal counsel will monitor any changes in state laws and regulations Governing Boards. They will communicate updates regarding open meetings, ethics, fiduciary duties, and charter school governance to the Governing Board and Executive Director.

Responsible parties for assuring the Governing Board members are acquiring the information needed are; the Governance Committee, Board Secretary, Legal Counsel, and the Executive Director. Monitoring will be conducted through different means, such as documentation of the assessment process, summary of training needs, and alignment with the state's requirements.

Meeting Governing Board Training Needs

In New Mexico, the Charter School Division requires all Governing Board members of charter schools to undergo continuous training during their board membership. Governing Board members must complete annual training and assessments: new members are required to complete 10 hours, while current members need 5 hours. The Governance Committee will create a comprehensive plan to track the completion of these hours.

Internal Training

Any board member, Executive Director, or senior staff member with expertise in Governing Board training may conduct a training that can be applied towards the members' hours. These areas can include financial oversight, strategic planning, budgeting, policies, etc.

Conferences

Any Governing Board member will be able to attend the annual Charter School Conference in June or the Public Charter Schools of New Mexico (PCSNM) conference in December to obtain board training.

Guest Speakers

Legal, financial education, board member speakers can come and provide a workshop or presentation to help grow the knowledge of our Governing Board Members.

Webinars and Online Resources

The charter school division provides monthly online training where Governing Board members can log on and obtain their hours. These meetings are updated yearly.

It is the responsibility of the Governance Committee and the Executive Director to ensure that the Governing Board members are acquiring the necessary information. Monitoring will involve tracking participation in training activities and assessing the training through feedback, surveys, or discussions. As a charter school in New Mexico, Governing Board Members must ensure compliance with all state requirements. The Board Secretary and/or legal counsel will ensure the training plan is explicit and addresses all mandatory state requirements. The Governing Board will maintain regular reviews of any changes made in the state that pertain to Governing Boards. Tracking changes will involve engaging in legal counsel for clarification of any new or amended requirements. The annual training plan will be reviewed and updated each year to ensure it is up to date. This will incorporate any changes in the state requirements identified through the monitoring process. When changes occur, a training session will be scheduled to address the needs of the new mandate. Monitoring will be conducted through documentation of the state requirements, alignment of the training plan with the new requirements, and records of training provided on state-mandated topics.

Onboarding costs will be included in our school budget plan. There will be a budget item for Inspira STEAM Academy to pay for any costs involving the professional development of the Governing Board.

Training Costs

Conferences

The Charter School Division hosts an annual conference, which is free of charge. Inspira STEAM Academy will be responsible for paying for travel. This would include gasoline, food, and hospitality in another city, following the states' guidelines of travel reimbursements. Public Charter Schools of NM (PCSNM) also host an annual conference with registration fees normally between \$300 and \$500. There would be an allocation between \$2,500 - \$3,000 for training.



Guest speakers

We will make sure to allocate honoraria and travel costs for speakers who are training the members. This would also be an allocation in the budget between \$700-\$1,000 as a line item

Webinars and online resources

Cost for online training through the Charter School Division is free.

The annual budget will include allocated funds with line items to mirror the onboarding and training activities the board members will be completing. The Executive Director, Governance Committee, and Business Manager will support ensuring adequate resources are allocated and used effectively. The onboarding process will be led by the Governing Board President and the Executive Director. This will support the candidate to become an active member of the Governing Board.

The Governing Board President and Executive Director will take the following onboarding steps:

First week of approval - Introductions:

The new Board Member will be introduced to the current Governing Board Members and staff members.

Second week - Document Review:


The new Board Member will be provided essential documents to look over such as the bylaws, strategic plans, last three months of meeting minutes, and financial reports.

First Month - Governance Training:

The new Board Member will be given access to Governing Board training links provided by the New Mexico Public Education Department Charter Division. The Governing Board President and Executive Director will give alternative training sessions held by Public Charter Schools of New Mexico (PCSNM). New board members will be required to complete the onboarding process within the first school year of their service. Training sessions throughout the year will be provided as soon as they become available. Training may be provided by the Charter School Division, Public Charter Schools of New Mexico (PCSNM), and other workshops may be provided. Per the New Mexico Public Education Department (2024), the new Governing Board members will complete 10 hours of training in the following area:

- at least two (2) hours covering laws and department policies and procedures affecting governing bodies or charter schools, including ethics and school personnel
- at least two (2) hours covering public school finance, budgeting, and fiduciary responsibilities of governing bodies;
- at least two (2) hours covering legal concepts on governing bodies and charter schools, including the Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act;
- at least two (2) hours covering effective governance practices and effective methods of supporting and supervising a charter school leader
- at least two (2) hours covering student achievement and student support services.

Applicant Evidence :



B(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...

Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia
Rivera-Tapia

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**



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Inspira STEAM Academy is dedicated to creating a culture that emphasizes continuous improvement for students, staff, administration, and the community. The Governing Board members will regularly evaluate their performance and seek ways to enhance the school's success and their effectiveness. Our Self-Evaluation Plan includes detailed action steps, timelines, responsible members, and relevant standards.



B(2)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Self-Evaluation Plan for Governing Board Members

Inspira STEAM Academy Self-Evaluation Plan for Governing Board Members			
Action Steps	Timeline	Members Responsible	Standards/Descriptor
Develop and review a self-evaluation	Annually in August	Governing Board	NM statute 22-8B-5.1 The board will align the responsibilities with the bylaws to include the following information; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethical and financial oversight, • establishment of, review, and revision of broad organizational policies, • employ and oversee the school's head administrator, • ensure and be accountable for the academic, financial, and organizational performance of the school. (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2024)
Distribution of Self-Evaluation	Annually in September	Board Secretary	All board members will receive the evaluation electronically or in print, <u>with all instructions along with the deadline to be completed.</u>
Self-Evaluation completion	Annually in October	All members of the Governing Board	All members will complete their self-evaluation thoughtfully, providing constructive feedback with examples if needed.
Analysis of data	Annually in December	Governance Committee	The Governance Committee members will meet to discuss the data <u>that was provided by self-assessment</u> completed by the Governing Board Members. The committee will identify <u>different points of strengths</u> and



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Inspira STEAM Academy Self-Evaluation Plan for Governing Board Members			
			areas of improvement. The members will create a report of the summary to present their findings.
Governing Board Discussion of Findings	Annually in January	Governing Board Members, Governance Committee, and Executive Director	The Governance Committee will present their findings to the full board. This will be an open discussion session to identify what steps will be taken to address and develop areas of improvement and areas of strengths.
Improvement Plan Development	Annually in February	Governing Board Members, Governance Committee	A plan will be developed by Governing Board members and Governance Committee members to address areas of improvement to include timelines, responsible members, and action steps.
Follow-Up	Ongoing throughout the year	Governing Board President and committee chairs	<p>The Governing Board President and Committee Chairs will monitor the improvement plan at every meeting to track progress.</p> <p>Each month, they will discuss the implementation of the improvement plan, making adjustments to priorities as needed.</p> <p>The self-evaluation will be reviewed annually to incorporate updates and enhancements. In the following school year, they will reassess the self-evaluation plan to facilitate further progress toward the improvement goals.</p>
Action Steps	Timeline	Members Responsible	Standards/Descriptors

Inspira STEAM Academy Self-Evaluation Plan for Governing Board Members			
Develop and review a self-evaluation	Annually in August	Governing Board	<p>NM statute 22-8B-5.1</p> <p>The board will align the responsibilities with the bylaws to include the following information;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethical and financial oversight, • establishment of, review, and revision of broad organizational policies, • employ and oversee the school's head administrator, • ensure and be accountable for the academic, financial, and organizational performance of the school. <p>(New Mexico Public Education Department, 2024)</p>

The self-evaluation plan is designed to support continuous improvement in several ways. Once the Governing Board members complete the self-evaluation, they will gather data to identify strengths and weaknesses both individually and as a group. With this data, the team can pinpoint areas that require improvement and support.

The Governing Board members will engage in reflective practices, raising awareness and discovering opportunities to enhance the overall system. The improvement plan created will outline specific steps, timelines, and the members responsible for each action, ensuring that these are regularly updated and addressed. The Governing Board President and committee members will have access to the evaluation results and will continuously monitor the data to ensure progress on the listed items.

The Governing Board President will maintain communication with all members and make adjustments if any issues arise. For instance, if the President notices that a financial action item has not been addressed, they can elevate its priority to ensure it receives immediate attention. By incorporating the self-evaluation into the board calendar, it will help clarify which committee members are responsible for each action item.




Through ongoing follow-up in the coming years, the self-evaluation will build upon the previous plan, fostering collaboration among members and refining the actions to be taken.

Section B References

New Mexico Public Education Department. (2024, July 31). Charter school boards. <https://web.ped.nm.gov/families-and-communities/community-programs/charter-school-boards/> (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/families-and-communities/community-programs/charter-school-boards/>)

New Mexico Public Education Department. (2024, July 31). *Charter school boards*. New Mexico Public Education Department. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/options-parents-families/charter-schools/charter-school-boards> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/options-parents-families/charter-schools/charter-school-boards>)

Applicant Evidence :



B(2)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...

Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

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



To ensure the effective governance of Inspira STEAM Academy, the Governing Board must continuously monitor and evaluate academic outcomes, organizational performance, and financial performance. During the school year, the Governing Board will be provided with reliable measurements and monitoring of Inspira STEAM Academy student scores, along with details on the high-quality instruction being provided to them.

Academic Performance Monitoring

The Governing Board will be responsible for reviewing the students' academic performance data in depth at least three times per school year. The Executive Director and leadership will collect the present student data on achievement, attendance, standardized test scores, and classroom assessments. The Academic Performance Committee (APC) will analyze the data, compare performance to the standards and benchmarks for each grade, and identify any trends, whether positive or in need of improvement. When the results are available, the Academic Performance Committee will report the findings and make the appropriate recommendations to the Governing Board. The Governing Board will discuss the report provided by the APC, provide feedback, and make suggestions to improve the academic performance.

Throughout the academic performance monitoring, data collection will be ongoing. These will be based on quarterly report cards and standardized Istation testing conducted at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The APC will meet to gather the data and report to the Governing Board.

Teachers will report data they have collected to the Executive Director, based on the New Mexico Common Core State Standards. The testing coordinator or school leadership will collect reports from Istation to show diverse measurement points. Once data is gathered from the teachers, the school leadership, the Executive Director, and the APC will review and compile a report for the Governing Board.

Inspira STEAM Academy will have different criteria for the data points they will collect. Those criteria points include state standardized test scores, attendance rates, student academic growth, performance on formative and summative assessments in school, and progress toward the New Mexico Common Core State Standards.

Organizational Performance

At Inspira STEAM Academy, we will ensure that a systematic monitoring plan is conducted by the APC and provided to the Governing Board for review. The Executive Director will be responsible for compiling continuous data collections from teachers and testing systems. The Executive Director will request key indicators from the teachers for benchmarks and standards, attendance records from the registrar or administrative assistant, and gather reports from other testing systems. Tracking systems will be in place in order for administration, teachers, and Governing Board Members to easily access the data. This data will be presented monthly in the Executive Director's report, and an in-depth data report will be completed triannually by the Academic Performance Committee.

The Academic Performance Committee, along with the support of the Executive Director, will undertake the analysis of reports and create presentations for the Governing Board Committee. The APC will discuss what areas of strength and improvement are crucial for the school to develop a plan. Once this plan is created, it will be shared with the Governing Board members to discuss and make a decision on whether we move on with the suggestions made by the APC or if there may need to be adjustments throughout the document.

The Governing Board will discuss the report provided by the Academic Performance Committee during their monthly meetings. This collaboration between the Governing Board, Academic Performance Committee, and Executive Director is crucial for improvements of student outcomes. The committee will seek out any insightful feedback, search for clarification, and discuss actions to improve the organizational performance.

Financial Performance

To ensure the responsible stewardship and financial stability of Inspira STEAM Academy resources and funds, a transparent and rigorous monitoring plan will be implemented. This will be overseen by the Finance Committee. The monitoring plan involves the Executive Director, the Treasurer and the Business Manager scrutinizing data and presenting updated financial information. The Business Manager will collect data such as monthly reports comparing budget allocations and actual expenditures and revenues. The Business Manager will provide cash flow statements with movement of funds and balance sheets, providing the school's assets and liabilities, with the annual audit reports conducted. The reports provided will outline the financial data to make informed decisions.

The next step involves the Finance Committee analyzing financial data during their monthly meetings. This analysis will focus on key financial indicators, such as balance sheet ratios and budget variances, to assess the school's financial health. The committee will also ensure compliance with all relevant financial regulations and reporting requirements. The Business Manager, Treasurer, and Executive Director are



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responsible for ensuring the school meets these compliance standards. They will collaborate to review the data and provide documentation to the Finance Committee. Following their review and recommendations, the Business Manager will present the findings to the Governing Board for their subsequent actions and approvals.

The entire Governing Board will play an immense role in maintaining the school's financial health and stability. On a monthly basis, the Governing Board will review and approve the monthly budget or make amendments to ensure the school's overall financial health is in good standing, addressing key performance indicators and trends. Every quarter, the Finance Committee will have an in-depth meeting to go over the quarter's financial information. Annually, the Governing Board will review all financial records thoroughly to ensure healthy finances. Inspira's Finance and Audit committees will present their findings and support with an external audit. The engagement of the Governing Board will strengthen and empower them to take any actions to ensure the management of Inspira STEAM Academy's financial resources, sustaining the commitment as a responsible public entity.

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.**
- 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**



Process for Hiring the Executive Director

The process to hire the Executive Director for Inspira will be based on the guidelines and best practices set forth by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED). Inspira STEAM Academy will recruit and hire a highly qualified administrator who aligns with the school's specific mission and vision.

The Governing Board, the staff, and community members will advertise on social media platforms, universities, local school districts, local newspapers, and word of mouth to gather a pool of applicants they will interview. Assigned Governing Board members, parents, and staff will sit at the interview, ensuring all members are represented. The interview committee will review references and ask for proof of the candidate's work in other districts to ensure that they are the correct fit for Inspira. They will also review the required references. The interview committee will have questions focusing on the candidates' inquiry-based teaching methods and beliefs about bilingual education. The questions will explore the candidate's experience with STEAM education and include behavioral and situational questions to assess the leader's problem-solving skills. This structured format will help ensure fairness across the interview committee.

Timeline

Weeks 1-2: Gather the hiring committee

Weeks 3-4: Post Executive Director job announcement

Weeks 5-6: Interview applicants. Select the most qualified candidate

Weeks 7-8: Extend the job offer and negotiate the contract

Weeks 9-10: Onboard the Executive Director

The Executive Director must possess the following qualifications:

- Must hold a Level 3 New Mexico license and a master's degree in Education Administration
- Must hold a Bilingual certification (English/Spanish)
- Must have extensive experience in educational leadership, particularly in bilingual, STEAM, and/or inquiry-based education
- Strong understanding of NMPED regulations and charter school requirements
- The Executive Director must have excellent written and verbal communication skills

Role Responsibilities

The Executive Director will be responsible for leading Inspira STEAM Academy's academic success, managing the daily operations, including curriculum implementation, maintaining schedules and calendars, managing staff, student affairs, and community relations. They will ensure the academic programs align with the school's mission and vision. They will oversee the implementation of curriculum that supports bilingual education, STEAM, and inquiry-based methodologies. They will provide professional development that focuses on the development and growth of academics.

The Executive Director will implement Governing Board policies to ensure state and federal regulation compliance. They will provide monthly reports to the GB regarding student academic performance, operational status, and financial status. The Executive Director will engage with students, staff, community members, and parents to foster a welcoming and positive school environment.

In addition, the Executive Director will work closely with the financial manager to ensure effective budgeting and financial management. They will be responsible for hiring all the school staff, coaching and supervising, onboarding, and evaluating them. They will foster positive relationships with students, the community, and parents. The Executive Director will be the primary representative for Inspira at community and public events. They will be responsible for ensuring Inspira STEAM Academy complies with all the requirements and regulations set forth by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED).

Executive Director Vacancy

If the Executive Director position becomes vacant during the first two years, the Governing Board will acquire an Interim Executive Director from a contracted service provider. If the Executive Director position becomes vacant during the third year or later, the Dean of Students will assume the role temporarily until the Governing Board hires a new Executive Director.



Candidate Interview and Selection

The committee will evaluate the candidates based on scores that will reflect leadership skills, alignment with Inspira's mission and vision, educational experience, and field experience. When they have decided on the person to be hired, they will extend a formal job offer. If the candidate accepts, they will be invited back to school, where they will meet to discuss salary, benefits, and a start date. There will be a contract that will include compensation and health benefits, which will be reviewed, and negotiations may happen at this time. The school will maintain all documentation of the hiring process to ensure compliance with the NMPED guidelines. We will have thorough documentation of the candidate's licenses, educational background, and years of experience as documented by previous districts.

Executive Director Onboarding

Once a new Executive Director is appointed, an onboarding process will be implemented to help them successfully acclimate to their duties. The office staff and Business Manager will provide the new Executive Director with essential information regarding the school's operations. The Executive Director will be introduced to the community; they will be oriented around school policies and procedures. Additionally, the Dean of Students will assist in sharing day-to-day responsibilities and will teach the new Executive Director how to use the Student Information System (SIS) and other curriculum and communication platforms to ensure a smooth transition into the leadership role.

Potential Executive Director Assurance

Inspira STEAM Academy's potential Executive Director has already been identified and is a Founding Member. The potential Executive Director understands they must be selected and hired by an independent Governing Body. Proof of verifiable experience, licenses, leadership skills, and qualifications will be provided to the independent Governing Body.

In Summary

The plan for hiring an Executive Director who will lead Inspira STEAM Academy includes a thorough and effective hiring process. This process ensures that the selected Executive Director has the capacity to fulfill Inspira's STEAM Academy's mission

Q29.

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

• A complete response must

- 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**



At Inspira Steam Academy, the Governing Body and the Executive Director must have clearly defined roles and responsibilities to ensure effective management and governance. The following outlines how the Governing Body will communicate and differentiate their roles from those of the Executive Director per New Mexico School Governing Rules.

Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for providing oversight, ensuring the Executive Director adheres to the state charter school regulations, and establishing policies. They ensure that there is no "mission drift" by making certain that the school remains focused on the mission and vision. The Governing Board oversees the financial audits and budgets to ensure stability and compliance. They monitor financial reports, make informed decisions, and provide essential feedback. They are responsible for recruiting, evaluating, and hiring the Executive Director. They represent the school in the community and make meaningful connections to promote the school's mission and vision. The Governing Board makes decisions regarding financial matters, strategic directions, and policy. The Executive Director is responsible for managing the daily operations under the direction of the Governing Board.

Executive Director Responsibilities

The Executive Director will ensure the academic programs align with Inspira's mission and vision. They will oversee the implementation of curriculum that supports bilingual education, STEAM, and inquiry-based methodologies. They will provide professional development that focuses on the development and growth of academics.

They will be responsible for managing the daily operations, which will include curriculum implementation, maintaining schedules and calendars, managing staff, student affairs, and community relations. The Executive Director will implement Governing Board policies to ensure state and federal regulation compliance. They will provide monthly reports to the Governing Board regarding student academic performance, operational status, and financial status. The Executive Director will engage with students, staff, community members, and parents to foster a welcoming and positive school environment.

The Executive Director will collaborate closely with the Business Manager to ensure effective budgeting and financial management. They will be responsible for hiring, coaching, supervising, onboarding, and evaluating all school staff. Additionally, the Executive Director will work to foster positive relationships with students, the community, and parents. As the primary representative of Inspira, the Executive Director will attend community and public events. They will also ensure that Inspira STEAM Academy complies with all requirements and regulations established by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED).

The bylaws will include a section outlining the roles and responsibilities of both the Governing Board and the Executive Director. These bylaws and staff responsibilities will be posted on the school website for easy access.

The Executive Director and the Governing Board will meet monthly, unless a special session is required, which may necessitate additional meetings. During these meetings, the Governing Board and the Executive Director will discuss school performance, relevant issues, and provide school updates. Agendas will be prepared, and minutes will be kept to ensure productive meetings and proper documentation of decisions. There will be clear conflict resolution meetings that distinguish between policy and operations. The roles of the Governing Board must be clearly defined so that the Executive Director can perform their daily duties effectively.

The Governing Board will establish clear criteria for evaluating the Executive Director's performance, focusing on operational effectiveness, academic outcomes, and adherence to policies. The Executive Director will be evaluated using the Excel NM Site Administrator Evaluation System (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/administrators/administrative-services/site-administrator-evaluation/>). Additionally, the Executive Director will receive feedback from the Inspira community through surveys, which the Governing Board will analyze and use to assess the Executive Director.

The orientation for new Governing Board members will review roles, responsibilities, and delineating collaboration with the Executive Director. This orientation will ensure that all roles and responsibilities comply with New Mexico state regulations and charter school laws. Inspira STEAM Academy will adopt best practices for governance and administration as recommended by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) and other educational authorities. Please refer to Section C(1) for detailed information and timelines.

In Summary





By implementing this plan, Inspira STEAM Academy and the Governing Board will effectively distinguish their roles from those of the Executive Director, fostering a clear division of responsibilities and a collaborative environment that supports the success of Inspira STEAM Academy.

Section C References

New Mexico Public Education Department. (2025, 21 Februari). *Site Administrator Evaluation*. New Mexico Public Education Department. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/educator-quality/educator-growth-development/educator-evaluation/site-administrator-evaluation/> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/educator-quality/educator-growth-development/educator-evaluation/site-administrator-evaluation/>)

Applicant Evidence :

	
Excel NM _ Five Essential Practic...	Appendix B - Inspira STEAM Acad...
Uploaded on 6/2/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia	Uploaded on 6/2/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

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



Inspira STEAM Academy will implement a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive annual evaluation plan for the Executive Director. The plan is designed to assess the Executive Director’s performance in alignment with the expectations set by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) and the specific goals of the school.

The Executive Director will be evaluated using performance standards based on NMPED’s site administrator evaluation guidelines and the school's strategic goals. The evaluation will focus on effectiveness, instructional leadership, organizational management, and stakeholder communication. Benchmarks will be set for performance in student outcomes, staff development, and fiscal management. This plan will specifically consider that the administrator is well aware of the Yazzie-Martinez case, is bilingual, is familiar with STEAM, and can ensure the equitable implementation of the mission and goals of Inspira STEAM Academy.

The Governing Board will establish clear criteria for evaluating the Executive Director’s performance, focusing on operational effectiveness, academic outcomes, and adherence to policies. The Executive Director will be assessed using the Excel NM Site Administrator Evaluation System (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/administrators/administrative-services/site-administrator-evaluation/>). Additionally, the Executive Director will receive feedback from the community through surveys, which the Governing Board will analyze and use to assess the Executive Director. The following Excel Rubrics are from the Department of Education and will be used to evaluate the Executive Director.

Excel NM Five Essential Practices

(Excel NM, n.d.)

Practice A: Organizational Advancement						
Definition: Strategically manages personnel, financial, technology, and other organizational resources for continuous improvement.						
		Evidence Examples	Innovating	Applying	Developing	Minimally Demonstrating



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Vision and Goals

- School improvement or growth plan
- Teacher survey results
- Interviews with school leadership team, educators, parents, community members
- Artifacts of school communications

Meets the Applying level and...

- Requires educators align major decisions with school vision, goals.
- Coaches others on collaborative school planning.

- Establishes, evaluates, adjusts the school vision and annual goals collaboratively, with educators and community member input.
- Uses the school vision and annual goals to inform all administrative decisions.
- Benchmarks school improvement to the school vision and personally monitors progress.

- Establishes a school vision and annual goals collaboratively, with educators and community member input.
- Uses the school vision and annual goals to inform major administrative decisions.

- Maintains a school vision and annual goals that align with school district priorities with no additional collaboration.
- Communicates school vision and goals to others.

School Structure

- Evidence of compliance with local operating and budgetary procedures
- School improvement or growth plan
- Teacher survey results
- School organizational structure document

Meets the Applying level and...

- Routinely gathers surveys and other data to improve organizational systems from educators.

- Collaboratively evaluates, adjusts school organizational structure for efficiency, effectiveness, and equity.
- Appropriately and equitably assigns people and team responsibilities and engages with teams to support change.
- Uses two-way communication pathways to locate and initiate systems change/innovations.

- Publishes the school organizational structure, which has clear lines of authority and accurately represents work teams.
- Appropriately and equitably assigns people and team responsibilities.
- Routinely convenes school wide leadership team(s) to coordinate work.

- Publishes the school organizational structure for managing work and change, though the structure may be confusing or may not represent how work actually occurs.



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School Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual school budget • Staff course assignments • Student matriculation data • Staff time allocations • School equity plan • Student intervention access data 	<p><i>Meets the Applying level and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates priorities and adjusts allocations to meet emergent priorities and improve equity, efficiency, and effectiveness. • Contributes to district or state-wide strategic plans and budgeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically and equitably manages school programs, staff time, and financial allocations to meet school goals, according to laws, rules, and procedures. • Engages schoolwide educators and staff in annual resource planning. • Monitors, reports, and adjusts resource allocations to meet instructional program and school operations needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages school financial and other resource planning in accordance with laws, rules, and procedures. • Engages school leadership team members in annual resource planning. • Monitors and reports financial and other resource allocations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages school financial and other resource planning to meet school goals, though one or more processes may be misaligned with rule or procedure.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School improvement project planning • Quarterly school improvement reports • Teacher survey data • Educator professional community agendas • Videos of educator PLC meetings • Educator schedule • Sample communications 	<p><i>Meets the Applying level and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches teacher-leaders or other administrators to create, implement, and improve change processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads school improvement processes with a manageable number of ambitious goals that are benchmarked to indicators. • Manages improvement plans, which are well-planned, engaging educators and staff appropriately, and are timely. • Employs a routine continuous improvement cycle to benchmark and adjust change processes. • Assigns responsibility for change to appropriate people/teams, provides teams with autonomy to innovate, and oversight to advance thinking and support excellence and equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads school improvement processes with a manageable number of ambitious goals that are benchmarked to indicators. • Manages improvement plans, which are well-planned, engaging educators and staff appropriately, and are timely. • Assigns responsibility for change to appropriate people/teams and provides teams with autonomy to innovate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads school improvement processes, though plans may include too many or unmanageable goals. • Manages improvement plans, but the change process may occur too quickly/ slowly or may be poorly executed. • Assigns responsibility for change to appropriate people/ teams but provides too much or too little oversight.



Practice B: Instructional Core					
Definition: Ensures curriculum, instruction, and assessment are rigorous, aligned, engaging, equitable, research-based and calibrated to student interests, heritages, and needs.					
	Evidence Examples	Innovating	Applying	Developing	Minimally Demonstrating
Curriculum and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator meetings or professional learning community (PLC) notes • Plan for educators PLC time • Teacher survey results • Evidence of instructional quality • Subject-specific school walkthrough tools 	<p><i>Meets the Applying level and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches teacher-leaders and other administrators on curriculum, assessment review, OR leads state/district curriculum and assessment reviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors curriculum design for rigor, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and alignment with standards, in accordance with state/district rules. • Establishes a regular schedule for curriculum and assessment review, which has been appropriately delegated and resourced. • Improves conditions for curriculum planning, coordination, implementation, and improvement in light of data on student subgroup matriculation, feedback, and performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors curriculum design for rigor, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and alignment with standards, in accordance with state/ district rules. • Establishes a regular schedule for curriculum and assessment review, which has been appropriately delegated and resourced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates that curriculum should be standards-driven, evidence-based, and aligned with state/district rules, though provides little to no implementation monitoring. • Establishes a schedule for matriculation, curriculum, and assessment review, but provides no structure for their review.



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Instructional Engagement

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention schedules and plans • Educator PLC meeting notes and agendas • School instructional leadership team meeting notes and agendas • Teacher survey input • Subject-specific school walkthrough tools | <p><i>Meets the Applying level and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates and adjusts support systems for instructionally focused individual and team interactions aimed at improving instruction • Coaches administrators and/or instructional leaders within or beyond the school to establish a legally compliant, instructional framework for each student. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates and adjusts teaching conditions to support a schoolwide instructional framework, which highlights culturally and linguistically relevant, disciplined inquiry and application of knowledge. • Maintains support systems for instructionally focused individual and team interactions aimed at improving instruction. • Collaboratively evaluates and adjusts instructional interventions to enhance access, performance data. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors use of a school-wide instructional framework, which highlights culturally and linguistically relevant, disciplined inquiry and application of knowledge.⁴ • Engages in instructionally focused interactions with individuals and teams to improve instruction. • Monitors implementation of legally compliant, instructional interventions for each student. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates support for a schoolwide instructional framework but provides little to no support and monitoring instructional coherence. • Ensures implementation of legally compliant instructional interventions. |
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Evidence Use

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator professional learning plans • Teacher survey input • School instructional leadership team meeting notes and agendas | <p><i>Meets the Applying level and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches other leaders on improvement cycles for systematic instructional improvements OR leads district or state-wide efforts to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment at scale. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures all educators use school-wide and subgroup data, and actionable analyses for systematic improvement of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. • Leads and delegates responsibility improvement cycles use with educators to advance instructional rigor, standards alignment, student engagement, and cultural and linguistic relevancy for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. • Connects teachers and other educators to research, guidance, and experts needed to meet professional growth goals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures all educators use schoolwide data for curriculum, instruction, and assessment decisions. • Personally initiates improvement cycles with educators to advance instructional rigor, standards alignment, student engagement, and cultural and linguistic relevancy for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets expectations that all educators improve curriculum and instruction in light of student performance data. • Maintains schoolwide instructional leadership teams and teacher teams. |
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Practice C: Talent					
Definition: Maintains systems for identifying, developing, and retaining a diverse educator workforce.					
	Evidence Examples	Innovating	Applying	Developing	Minimally Demonstrating
Maximizing Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator scheduling criteria • Educator course assignments • Staff certification and demographics • Teacher survey • Educator evaluation results • Educator teacher-leader, chairperson assignments 	<i>Meets the Applying level and...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches other site administrators to recognize, advance and retain educators OR works with district-level leaders to plan comprehensive, differentiated professional learning systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically and collaboratively assigns classes and other responsibilities based on educator certification, training, expertise, and student learning data. • Makes advancement decisions collaboratively that are well-reasoned, transparent, consistent, and equitable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigns class and other responsibilities based on educator certification, training, and expertise with little input from others, with some input from others on preferences. • Makes advancement decisions unilaterally that are well-reasoned, transparent, equitable, consistent, and evidence-informed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigns class and other responsibilities based on educator and staff preference or politics. • Makes advancement decisions that are unexplained, unclear, inequitable, or random.



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Evaluation

- Observation records (e.g., compliance reports, forms, notes from post-conferences and follow-ups)
- Observations of the leader engaged in the evaluation process, specifically providing actionable feedback to improve practice
- Teacher input survey results related to the observation and feedback process
- Evidence of analysis of evaluation data and related action planning

Meets the Applying level and...

- Coaches site administrators and other administrators on performance evaluation processes OR works at the central office or state level to evaluate and improve performance evaluation.

- Completes evaluator training to ensure observation accuracy.
- Conducts fair, routine, consistent, appropriate performance evaluations that use evidence in providing timely, face-to-face, actionable formal and informal feedback, personally or with other administrators.
- Evaluates and adjusts organizational support for peer feedback approaches (e.g., student work-study, peer observation) to engagement and use.
- Examines performance evaluation results for strengths and gaps, which inform professional learning plans.

- Completes evaluator training to ensure observation accuracy.
- Evaluates teachers and other staff by using a consistent, routine, appropriate performance evaluation system that generates actionable, formal, face- to-face feedback either personally or with other administrators.
- Encourages peer feedback by providing time, training, and resources.

- Completes evaluator training to ensure observation accuracy.
- Alone or with other administrators, uses the performance evaluation system to evaluate educators and staff, though feedback may not be timely, face-to-face, and actionable, or the procedure is inconsistent.
- Encourages peer feedback in teacher teams but provides no resources for peer feedback.



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Professional Learning

- Individual educators' professional learning plans (to gauge differentiated support)
- Teacher input survey results related to the leader's support for their professional learning and growth
- Aggregate data summaries or displays of educators' professional learning and observation data (e.g., from school improvement or growth plan)

Meets the Applying level and...

- Evaluates professional learning plan process effectiveness.
- Welcomes new educators to the school and provides access to standard orientation training.
- Creates innovative solutions to increase educator access and completion of professional learning for the school and/or district.

- Ensures all professional learning plans align with performance evaluation results.
- Adjusts resources to support all educator and staff progress on professional learning plans.
- Provides equitable access to professional learning resources for common and differentiated opportunities through well-organized, school-wide activities and professional learning communities.
- Organizes professional learning that provides public opportunities for sharing applied learning.
- Implements a first-year educator induction program, which includes mentorship and foundational learning on instruction.

- Ensures all professional learning plans align with performance evaluation results.
- Monitors some educators or staff members' progress on professional learning plans and adjusts resources and support for success.
- Provides information, financial and other resources about professional learning to educators and staff.
- Organizes school-wide professional learning.
- Matches new hires with more experienced peers for first-year mentoring.

- Encourages all educators to complete an annual professional learning plan but may not connect educator learning plans to evaluation results, invest resources in plan completion, or reinforce the importance of professional learning.
- Provides information about professional learning opportunities to educators and staff.



Practice D: Culture and Safety					
Definition: Creates a safe, positive culture aimed at improving professional and educational experiences.					
	Evidence Examples	Innovating	Applying	Developing	Minimally Demonstrating
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School safety documents/evidence of emergency readiness Teacher input survey results about student well-being PDP (e.g., analyses of behavioral and mental health data) School climate survey results Observations of student behavior Attendance rates Discipline referrals and reports (suspension and expulsion rates) 	<p><i>Meets the Applying level and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains support systems that ensure student discipline is equitable and mediates behavior. Coaches others to proactively plan and improve school safety and discipline responsiveness, equity, and effectiveness OR advocates for improved school safety measures and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complies with all school safety rules and procedures and maintains proactive efforts addressing physical, social, and emotional well-being and safety. Allocates responsibility for enacting and improving school safety and discipline and provides a clear decision-making structure to a multi-disciplinary team. Actively coordinates with community emergency preparedness organizations on proactive safety efforts. Evaluates school safety and support systems to ensure student discipline is equitable and mediates behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimally complies with school safety rules and procedures and maintains proactive efforts addressing physical and social well-being and safety. Allocates responsibility for school safety and discipline and provides a clear decision-making structure to a multi-disciplinary team. Evaluates support systems to ensure student discipline is equitable and mediates behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimally complies with school safety rules and procedures in response to physical threats, but the safety plan does not include responses to social or emotional safety or proactive safety efforts. Maintains a disciplinary policy compliant with state and district rules and laws.



Community Engagement

- Community and parent survey
- Teacher survey
- Student survey
- Website
- School partnership plan
- Community engagement documents
- Samples of communications with community and parents

Meets the Applying level and...

- Grows and improves partnerships with businesses and community organizations that support school vision and goals.
- Coaches teacher-leaders and others on effective community engagement strategies.

- Evaluates communications plans which use multiple channels for timely information about school life, student successes and warning signs, especially those who are hard to reach.
- Creates in-school, online forums to support two-way communications which leverage partnerships and existing channels.
- Enacts plans to strategically solicit community input on programs, policies, and practices.
- Employs language, graphics, and other symbols that positively represent the school and district educational system values and actions.

- Enacts and monitors communications plans, which use multiple channels for exchanging timely information about school life, student successes, and warning signs.
- Provides community and private forums for voicing problems.
- Employs language, graphics, and other symbols that positively represent the school and district educational system values and actions.

- Maintains communications plans, which use multiple channels for exchanging timely information about school life and student successes and warning signs.
- Encourages community members to connect with the school when problems arise.
- Uses appropriate language, graphics, and other symbols to represent school/district activities to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.



Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family engagement artifacts (e.g., meeting agendas and schedules, parental volunteer logs newsletters, phone, or email communications) 	<p><i>Meets the Applying level and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches other administrators to positively influence student, educator, and staff well-being. Publicly celebrates student and educator accomplishments, though celebrations may be poorly planned and attended. Encourages educators and personally participates in community cultural celebrations. Contributes to district-wide or regional celebrations of accomplishments, culture, and language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates, evaluates, and improves guidance for respectful and culturally and linguistically responsive student and educator interaction. Communicates, supports, and evaluates educational programs that build physical and mental health habits. Encourages educators and personally participates in community cultural celebrations. Encourages educators to celebrate and learn about historical events in communities in ways that highlight the importance of diverse cultures and languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates expectations and monitors educator and student interactions to ensure they are respectful and culturally and linguistically responsive. Communicates school efficacy and supports educational programs that build physical and mental health habits. Supports meaningful school-wide celebrations or recognition of important historical events in school and community cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates expectations for respectful and culturally and linguistically responsive student and educator interaction. Communicates school efficacy for positively affecting student physical and mental health but provides little guidance or programming
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Practice E: Personal Integrity	
<p>Definition: Ethics, responsibilities, and other observable, personal leadership characteristics common to all site administrators.</p>	



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	Evidence Examples	Innovating	Applying	Developing	Minimally Demonstrating
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School climate survey Teacher survey Community and parent survey Parent or teacher reports Supervisor observation 	<p><i>Meets the Applying level and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches assistant site administrators and others to act with ethics and integrity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always maintains high levels of trust and transparency in school leadership, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality. Exhibits honesty and follows through with commitment consistently, explains changes in plans as necessary, and seeks feedback to improve ethical practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always adheres to district and state professional ethics. Exhibits honesty and follows through with commitments fairly consistently and explains changes in plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally adheres to district and state professional ethics standards, but one or more instances of unethical behavior have been documented. Exhibits honesty and follows through with commitments inconsistently.
Leadership Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning plan District site administrator professional learning plans Supervisor observation 	<p><i>Meets the Applying level and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to district-level site administrator professional learning improvement efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly seeks feedback from educators and supervisors about significant decisions. Completes annual professional growth plans and applies learning to improve personal leadership practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasionally seeks feedback from educators and supervisors about significant decisions. Partially completes the annual professional growth plan and applies learning to improve personal leadership practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely or never seeks feedback from educators and supervisors about significant decisions. Does not complete the annual professional growth plan to improve personal leadership practices.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of communications Teacher survey 	<p><i>Meets the Applying level and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches other administrators or teacher-leaders to improve school safety, respect, and cultural and linguistic competence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models communications and social interactions with constituents in ways that convey safety, respect, and cultural and linguistic competence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates and interacts with constituents in ways that always convey safety, respect, and cultural and linguistic competence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates and interacts with constituents in safe, respectful, and culturally and linguistically competent ways, but one or more incidents of disrespectful speech or interactions were observed.



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Time Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher survey Supervisor observation Site Administrator calendar 	<i>Meets the Applying level and...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches other leaders on how to create effective meetings OR coaches other leaders on how to balance personal time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balances personal time for school, district, and community responsibilities by delegating responsibilities and prioritizing time; evaluates time use. Encourages others to reserve meeting time primarily for substantive conversations about important issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balances school, district, and community responsibilities, by delegating and prioritizing time. Uses meeting time primarily for substantive conversations about important issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balances school, district, and community responsibilities, though relatively poorly delegates responsibilities or prioritizes time. Organizes meeting times for conversation and administrative updates.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher survey Supervisor observation 	<i>Meets the Applying level and...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentors other administrators or leaders on leadership resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently displays appropriate resilience when faced with adversity or conflict and adjusts actions in light of the evidence and others' input. Adapts leadership style to contexts by delegating responsibility to those with more expertise, time, and authority. Seeks feedback from others about resilience in decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes displays appropriate resilience when faced with adversity or conflict and adjusts actions in light of the evidence and others' input. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays rigidity when faced with adversity or conflict, even when provided evidence or other input OR displays little resilience when faced with adversity or conflict.

The Executive Director's annual evaluation uses an objective rubric from the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) to assess performance across key areas.

Monthly, the Governing Board will review data on student academic performance, including standardized test scores and other relevant metrics. They will also review staff performance data and gather feedback regarding the Executive Director's leadership and support. Additionally, financial management and budget adherence will be evaluated to assess the administrator's fiscal responsibility. The Governing Board will analyze the collected data, including performance metrics, survey results, and self-assessments, to evaluate the Executive Director's performance.

Annually, the Governing Board will distribute and collect surveys to teachers, staff, and parents to gather feedback on the administrator's performance. Interviews will also be conducted with key stakeholders to obtain qualitative insights into the Executive Director's effectiveness. The Governing Board will summarize these findings and compare them against established benchmarks and NMPED standards. They will review the information among themselves and produce a comprehensive evaluation report that outlines strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations. Following this process, they will schedule a meeting with the Executive Director to discuss the evaluation results, provide feedback, and set goals for the upcoming year.

The Governing Board will collaborate with the Executive Director to establish professional development goals and objectives for the coming year. Together, they will provide the necessary resources and support to help the Executive Director achieve these goals and enhance their performance for the benefit of the school.



In Summary

By implementing this specific plan, Inspira STEAM Academy will ensure a thorough and effective evaluation of the Executive Director's performance, fostering continuous improvement and alignment with the school's mission and goals and NMPED standards.

Section C References Continued

Excel NM. (n.d.). *Five essential practices* [Google Doc]. Retrieved April 23, 2025, from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LME8oDq0h9XBxI0ymLM9EJ5ZIt6NxHmk_XL0nPuE9Zc/edit (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LME8oDq0h9XBxI0ymLM9EJ5ZIt6NxHmk_XL0nPuE9Zc/edit)

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



INSPIRA STEAM ACADEMY

Organizational Chart for each year as part of the rollout with **grade** additions



INSPIRA STEAM ACADEMY
Organizational Chart
for each year as part of the rollout with **grade** additions

Academic Year	Number of Students	Grade Levels	Student/Teacher Ratio	Number of classes
INSPIRA STEAM ACADEMY Proposed Classroom Loading				
Year 1	80	K-1	20:2* 20:2*	2 Kinder 2 First grade
Year 2	120	K-2	20:2* 20:2* 20:1*	2 Kinder 2 First grade 2 Second grade
Year 3	160	K-3	20:2* 20:2* 20:1* 20:1*	2 Kinder 2 First grade 2 Second grade 2 Third grade
Year 4	200	K-4	20:2* 20:2* 20:1* 20:1* 20:1	2 Kinder 2 First grade 2 Second grade 2 Third grade 2 Fourth grade
Year 5	240	K-5	20:2* 20:2* 20:1* 20:1* 20:1 20:1	2 Kinder 2 First grade 2 Second grade 2 Third grade 2 Fourth grade 2 Fifth grade
At Capacity (Enrollment Cap)	240	K-5	*third grade and above, unless an IEP requires something differently.	12 classes

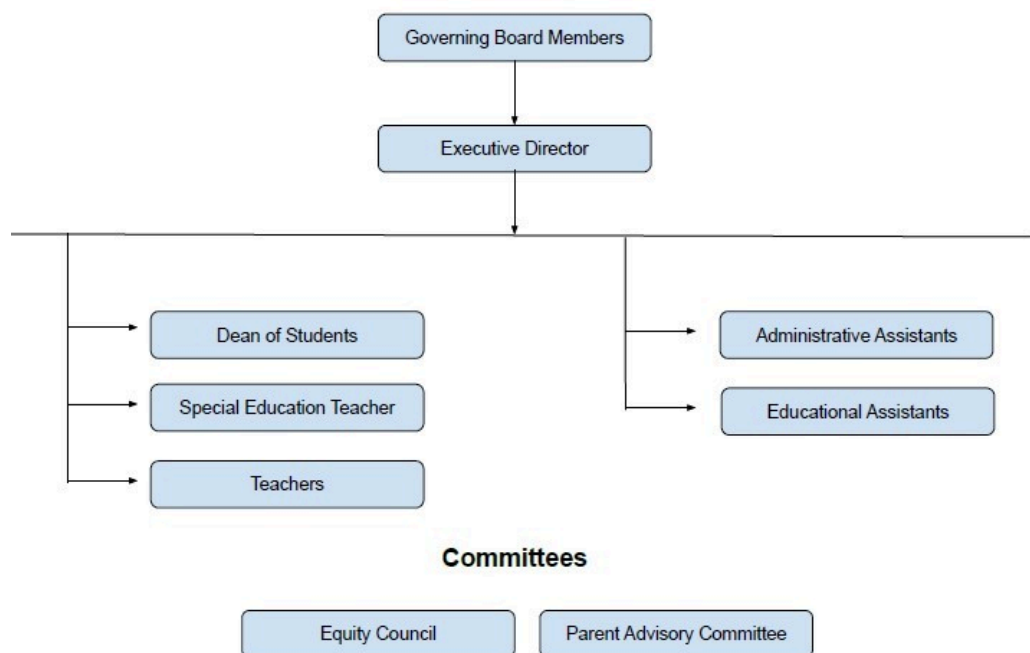


INSPIRA STEAM ACADEMY
Organizational Chart
for each year as part of the rollout with **STAFF** additions

INSPIRA STEAM ACADEMY Organizational Chart for each year as part of the rollout with STAFF additions					
Proposed Staff Loading					
Staff	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Number of Teachers	4	6	8	10	12
Special Education/Gifted Facilitator	1	1	1	1	1
Number of EAs (Unless an IEP requires more support)	4	5	5	5	5
Number of Administrators	1	1	1	1	1
Dean of Students	0	0	1	1	1
Number of Administration Assistants	1	1	2	2	2



Inspira STEAM Academy Organizational Chart



The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for providing oversight, ensuring the Executive Director adheres to the state charter school regulations, and establishing policies. They ensure that there is no "mission drift" by making certain that the school remains focused on the mission and vision. The Governing Board oversees the financial audits and budgets to ensure stability and compliance. They monitor financial reports, make informed decisions, and provide essential feedback. They are responsible for seeking, finding, and evaluating the Executive Director. They represent the school in the community and make meaningful connections to promote the school's mission and vision. The Governing Board makes decisions on financial matters, strategic directions, and policy. The Executive Director is responsible for managing the daily operations under the direction of the Governing Board.

The Executive Director

will be responsible for managing the daily operations, which will include curriculum implementation, maintaining schedules and calendars, managing staff, student affairs, and community relations. They will ensure the academic programs align with the school's mission and vision. They will oversee the implementation of the curriculum that supports bilingual education, STEAM, and inquiry-based methodologies. They will provide professional development that focuses on the development and growth of academics.

The Executive Director will implement Governing Board policies to ensure state and federal regulation compliance. They will provide monthly reports to the Governing Board regarding student academic performance, operational status, and financial status. The Executive Director will engage with students, staff, community members, and parents to foster a welcoming and positive school environment.

The Executive Director will collaborate closely with the Business Manager to ensure effective budgeting and financial management. They will be responsible for hiring, as well as coaching, supervising, onboarding, and evaluating all school staff. Additionally, the Executive Director will work to foster positive relationships with students, parents, and the community. As the primary representative of Inspira, the Executive Director will attend community and public events. Furthermore, the Executive Director will ensure that Inspira STEAM Academy complies with all requirements and regulations set by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED).

The Dean of Students

(starting in the academic year 2028) will be responsible for the daily operations of the school, focusing on student affairs, academic coaching and leadership, and staff management. They will ensure the school's mission and vision are effectively implemented and that the high instructional



quality is maintained. They report to the Executive Director and work closely with teachers and Educational Assistants (EAs) to support student learning and achievement.

The Business Manager

will secure financial stability and comply with state and federal regulations. They oversee the school's budget, accounting, and financial operations. They report to the Executive Director and provide financial reports to the Governing Board and the NMPED. The Business Manager also leads the finance meeting before reporting to the Governing Board monthly.

The Administrative Assistant

Greets and assists visitors. They will answer phones, emails, and in-person inquiries from parents, students, staff, and the public. They manage the student registration and enrollment processes. They maintain accurate and up-to-date student records, including attendance, tardiness, early dismissals, and other relevant information. They assist with the procurement of school supplies and equipment. They report to the Executive Director.

Teachers

will be responsible for delivering the curriculum, assessing student progress, and providing instruction that supports academic success. They work directly with students and implement instructional strategies in line with the school's educational goals. They report to the Executive Director and collaborate with EAs to support students' academic needs.

Educational Assistants (EAs)

will support teachers and students by providing additional instructional and behavioral assistance. They help in managing classroom activities, supporting individual student needs, and facilitating a conducive learning environment. They report to the Executive Director and work closely with teachers to support classroom activities and student learning.

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

is involved in supporting the school community through volunteer activities, fundraising, and providing feedback. They are crucial in fostering a strong school-community relationship and supporting school events and programs. They interact with the Executive Director and Dean of Students to align their activities with school goals and initiatives. They also provide notes to be presented at the Monthly Governing Board Meetings.

Equity Council (EC)

Equity Councils are responsible for informing and advising school boards, superintendents, charter school governing bodies, and executive directors to ensure that the Martinez and Yazzie Consolidated Lawsuit decision is implemented with a focus on the students most in need of specific support. The Equity in Action items are designed to support the NMPED, districts and charter schools in;

- the work of remedying the Martinez and Yazzie Consolidated Lawsuit findings on students with disabilities, Native American students, students who are English learners, and economically disadvantaged students,
- creating culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) educational environments, and
- improving outcomes for all New Mexico students." (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2022)

At Inspira STEAM Academy, the Equity Council will work to complete the Martinez and Yazzie Readiness Assessment and CLR Inventory, informing the design of the educational plan. The Equity Council will support the design of the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) Framework, and will provide recommendations to the Executive Director and Governing Board as an advisement package.

In summary

This organizational structure ensures clear lines of authority and communication within the school. The Governing Board provides oversight and strategic direction, while the Executive Director manages overall operations and liaises with the Governing Board. The executive director handles day-to-day academic and operational responsibilities and is supported by the finance director for financial management. Teachers and EAs focus on delivering quality education and supporting students, with parent groups contributing to the school's community engagement and support efforts. This clear structure helps in effective management, accountability, and alignment of the school's educational and operational goals.

Section D Reference






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



New Mexico Public Education Department. (2022). Equity councils brief 2022. New Mexico Public Education Department. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Equity-Councils-Brief-2022.pdf> (https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Equity-Councils-Brief-2022.pdf)

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

Applicant Evidence :

		
D(1)a. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...	D(1)c. - Reference Inspira STEAM ...	D(1)b. - Reference Inspira STEAM...
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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:
- a. all certified and licensed staff identified in the application

b. all non-certified or unlicensed staff identified in the application who could be considered essential to the operation and success of the proposed school

c. 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:
- a. List all major responsibilities of the positions

b. Include responsibilities that specifically relate to the school’s mission, goals, and educational philosophy

c. Identify all hiring requirements including qualifications and licensure or certification

d. Identify reporting lines (“reports to”) that align to the organizational chart.
4. Narrative and Other uploads



Inspira Staff Members

Certified employees

hold a valid license issued by the state of New Mexico Public Education Department. These are specialized individuals who instruct, administer, and support the schools. To receive a license, they must meet specific requirements such as education, a background check, and testing. Their license requires a renewal (each with different terms) and completion of ongoing professional development. Some of the classified employees will have performance metrics.

Inspira will employ the following certified employees:

- Executive Director
- Dean of Students (to begin in the 3rd year)
- Regular Education Teachers
- Special Education Teacher

Non-Certified Employees

Are school personnel who do not require a NMPED license. They support the school by performing technical, operational, and essential functions to operate a school and provide student services. This group of employees do not hold a license from the NMPED. They may have other specialized certifications (for example a CDL for drivers). They are hourly employees (non-exempt) and they are regularly supervised by a certified staff member.

Inspira STEAM Academy will employ the following Non-certified employees:

- Administrative Assistants
- Educational Assistants

Contracted Services

As enrollment and budget at Inspira STEAM Academy continue to grow, the academy will assess the necessity for various contracted services. These may include Custodial Services, Meal Services, IT Services, School Nurses, and Librarians. Additionally, there will be an evaluation of related service providers for special education, which includes Counselors, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs).

Job Descriptions for Certified and Licensed Staff at Inspira STEAM Academy

Teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree in Education and hold a teaching license from the state of New Mexico (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2024).

Additionally, they must have endorsements in bilingual education and one or more STEAM subjects (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2024). Teachers must also pass La Prueba de Español: NM Spanish Language Proficiency Exam (Eastern New Mexico University, n.d.). They are expected to possess bilingual certification and demonstrate expertise in providing targeted Spanish language instruction. Preference will be given to candidates with experience in inquiry-based and STEAM education. The teacher will report directly to the Executive Director.

Teachers are responsible for delivering bilingual instruction in STEAM and inquiry-based learning. They develop and implement lesson plans, assess student progress, and support the educational and personal development of students. They develop and implement lesson plans aligned with state standards and school goals. They deliver bilingual instruction in STEAM subjects using inquiry-based teaching methods. They assess student performance through formal and informal processes. Provide feedback and adjust instruction to meet individual needs. They maintain a positive and effective classroom environment. Implement strategies for behavior management and student engagement. Teachers participate in ongoing professional development related to bilingual education, STEAM, and inquiry-based learning.

The teachers at Inspira STEAM Academy play a pivotal role in cultivating engaging and innovative learning experiences, fostering critical thinking, and guiding students toward academic and personal growth.

Special Education Teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree and hold a Special Education teaching license from the state of New Mexico (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2024).



It is preferred that the Special Education Teacher also hold a Gifted Education Endorsement or be willing to work toward obtaining a Gifted Endorsement upon hire. Special Education Teachers report directly to the Executive Director. They must have strong knowledge of educational laws and regulations pertaining to special education services. They will ensure the special education program and gifted education program comply with district policies, state regulations, and federal regulations.

The Special Education Teacher will collaborate within a multi-disciplinary team to include educators, parents, and support staff to support students with disabilities. The Special Education Teacher will develop, implement, and manage the special education program and gifted program and make necessary adjustments to improve student outcomes. They will oversee the evaluation process to ensure compliance with Child Find regulations and timelines in obtaining a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary evaluation for students and facilitate Eligibility Determination Team (EDT) meetings. They will conduct assessments, maintain accurate records of student progress, develop Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) and Gifted Education Programs, and facilitate IEP and GIEP meetings.

The Special Education Teacher at Inspira STEAM Academy plays a pivotal role in designing and delivering individualized education programs, promoting an inclusive learning environment, and ensuring equitable access to a high-quality education for students with diverse learning needs. This dedicated position ensures the academic program can effectively serve students with diverse learning needs, including identifying students with disabilities or who are gifted, IEP and GIEP implementation, IEP AND GIEP programming, and teacher support and training for instructing students with disabilities and gifted students.

Educational Assistants have different requirements depending on their level.

For Inspira, we require that they hold an Associate's degree or equivalent and have experience in education. Experience in educational settings, particularly with bilingual and STEAM education. They must maintain a New Mexico teaching assistant license (New Mexico Public Education Department, n.d.) with endorsements (or in the process of taking classes) in bilingual/Spanish education and STEAM subjects. The teaching assistant reports directly to the Executive Director.

Educational Assistants support teachers in delivering bilingual, STEAM, and inquiry-based instruction. They assist with classroom activities, provide individualized support to students, and contribute to a positive learning environment. Assist teachers with lesson implementation, classroom management, and student supervision. Provide one-on-one or small group support to students, especially in STEAM subjects and bilingual activities. Help with administrative tasks such as grading, record-keeping, and preparing instructional materials. Although there may be short instances where Educational Assistants (EAs) are by themselves and overseeing a classroom of students, their main role should be to collaborate with or operate under the direct oversight of properly licensed personnel. They will participate in professional development opportunities related to bilingual education and STEAM instruction.

The Educational Assistant at Inspira STEAM Academy plays a pivotal role in supporting classroom instruction and facilitating an inclusive learning environment for all students. The allocation of 4 EAs in Year 1, increasing to 5 in Year 2 and subsequent years, provides crucial in-classroom support for teachers, particularly in a dual-language environment where additional small-group or individual student assistance may be required.

The Executive Director is required to have a Bachelor's degree in education, a Master's degree in Educational Leadership, and a level 3 teaching license (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2025).

They must have at least 180 hours of apprenticeship or internship experience. They must have ample experience in bilingual education, STEAM, and/or inquiry-based teaching. Strong leadership and organizational skills.

They are responsible for the overall leadership, academic success, management, and administration of the school. They will implement policies set by the Governing Board, oversee day-to-day operations, and ensure the school meets its academic, financial, and operational goals. They provide visionary leadership and ensure alignment with the school's mission of bilingual education, STEAM, and inquiry-based learning. Implement and enforce policies established by the Governing Board and ensure compliance with state regulations and charter requirements. Oversee the development and implementation of curriculum that supports bilingual education, STEAM principles, and inquiry-based methodologies. They ensure effective budgeting and financial management in collaboration with the Business Manager. Hire, supervise, and evaluate school staff, including the Executive Director. Foster positive relationships with students, parents, and the community. Represent the school at community and public events. Ensure compliance with all NMPED requirements and regulations.

The Executive Director at Inspira STEAM Academy plays a pivotal role in providing strategic leadership and managing all aspects of the school to ensure its overall success and adherence to its mission. This ensures sufficient administrative capacity for daily operations, compliance, and general school management, freeing teachers to focus on instruction.



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The Dean of Students (will be hired in the 2028 school year) must hold a Bachelor's degree in education, a Master's degree in Educational Leadership, and a level 2 or 3 teaching license (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2025).

They must have ample experience in bilingual education, STEAM, and inquiry-based teaching. Strong leadership and organizational skills. Strong leadership and organizational skills. The Dean of Students reports directly to the Executive Director.

The Dean of Students will manage academic programs, teacher academic support, and student services. This role ensures that the educational environment supports bilingual learning, STEAM, and inquiry-based teaching.

The Dean of Students leads the development and implementation of bilingual, STEAM, and inquiry-based curriculum and instructional practices. They help develop lessons, check on lesson plans, and model lessons for teachers. The Dean of Students helps supervise and support teachers and teaching assistants. They conduct evaluations and provide professional development opportunities. They oversee student services, including behavioral management and academic support. Ensure a safe and conducive learning environment. Ensure the curriculum is delivered effectively and aligns with state standards and school goals. Handle some of the administrative tasks, including scheduling, discipline, and communication with parents and guardians.

The Dean of Students at Inspira STEAM Academy plays a pivotal role in fostering a positive and supportive school culture, ensuring student well-being and academic success. The addition of a Dean of Students as the school grows provides dedicated leadership for student culture, discipline, and well-being, directly supporting a positive learning environment essential for academic success.

Administrative Assistants must possess a high school diploma or GED, with an Associate's Degree or relevant certification in office administration preferred.

The Administrative Assistant manages the front office, overseeing administrative tasks such as maintaining accurate student records within the Student Information System (SIS), handling correspondence, scheduling appointments, and managing school calendars. They are responsible for processing incoming and outgoing communications, including phone calls, emails, and physical mail. A key aspect of this role involves supporting the Executive Director and other school leadership by preparing reports, presentations, and other essential documents.

This position serves as the primary point of contact for students, parents, staff, and the wider community, requiring exceptional interpersonal and communication skills. This role requires a high degree of organization, discretion, and the ability to multitask effectively in a dynamic educational setting.

The School Administrative Assistant at Inspira STEAM Academy plays a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth and efficient daily operation of the school. These roles provide essential logistical and clerical support, ensuring smooth operations that underpin effective academic program delivery.

In summary

This comprehensive set of job descriptions ensures that all key staff roles are clearly defined and aligned with the school's mission of bilingual, STEAM, and inquiry-based education, while adhering to NMPED requirements.

Section D References Continued

Eastern New Mexico University. (n.d.). *Prueba de Español: NM Spanish Language Proficiency Exam*. Testing Center. Retrieved May 16, 2025, from <https://www.enmu.edu/academics/academic-resources-services/testing-center/prueba-de-espanol-nm-spanish-language-proficiency-exam> (<https://www.enmu.edu/academics/academic-resources-services/testing-center/prueba-de-espanol-nm-spanish-language-proficiency-exam>)






New Mexico Public Education Department. (2024, August 5). *Elementary license (K-8)*. Retrieved May 16, 2025, from <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/licensure/licensure-requirements/elementary-license-k-8/> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/licensure/licensure-requirements/elementary-license-k-8/>)



New Mexico Public Education Department. (2025, February 24). Alternative administrator license (Pre K-12). Retrieved May 17, 2025, from <https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/licensure/licensure-requirements/alternative-administrator-license-pre-k-12/> (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/licensure/licensure-requirements/alternative-administrator-license-pre-k-12/>)

New Mexico Public Education Department. (n.d.). Education assistant (Pre K-12). Retrieved May 17, 2025, from <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/licensure/licensure-requirements/education-assistant-pre-k-12/> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/licensure/licensure-requirements/education-assistant-pre-k-12/>)

Applicant Evidence :

 Appendix C - Inspira STEAM Acad...	 Appendix C - Inspira STEAM Acad...	 Appendix C - Inspira STEAM Acad...	 Appendix C - Inspira STEAM Acad...
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 Appendix C - Inspira STEAM Acad...			
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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



Proposed Staff Loading					
Staff	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Number of Teachers	4	6	8	10	12
Special Education	1	1	1	1	1
Number of EAs (Unless an IEP requires more support)	4	5	5	5	5
Number of Admin	1	1	1	1	1
Dean of Students	0	0	1	1	1
Number of Administrative Assistants	1	1	2	2	2

Ongoing Staffing Plan and Process for Hiring All Necessary Staff

Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to implementing a robust and ongoing staffing plan to ensure all necessary positions are filled with highly qualified individuals, both for the initial launch and for any subsequent vacancies. This process is designed to be proactive, transparent, and aligned with the school's mission and growth trajectory.

Initial Hiring Process (Planning Year & Inaugural Year - leading up to 2026-27)

Action Steps

Define Needs

The Executive Director, in collaboration with the Governing Board, will finalize staffing needs based on the projected enrollment for the inaugural year (2026-27) and the academic program requirements (4 teachers, 1 Special Education/Gifted Facilitator, 4 EAs, 1 Admin, 1 Admin Assistant).

Job Description Development

Consult with legal experts to finalize detailed job descriptions for each role, outlining qualifications, responsibilities, and alignment with Inspira's mission (bilingual, STEAM, inquiry-based).

Recruitment Strategy (Weeks 1-4)

Develop a comprehensive recruitment plan focusing on attracting highly qualified, licensed staff. This includes advertising on diverse platforms such as state education department job boards (e.g., NMPED job bank), university career services, professional organizations such as TESOL, National Science Teaching Association (NSTA), social media, local school districts, and community networks (e.g., Farmers Market, NASA, NMSU, DACC). A significant focus will be on reaching candidates representing various professional backgrounds, lived experiences, community involvement, and connections that align with our commitment to inclusivity.



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**Application & Screening (Weeks 5-7)**

Collect applications and conduct an initial screening to identify candidates who meet the minimum qualifications and licensure requirements.

Interview Process (Weeks 8-10)

Form diverse interview committees (including Executive Director, school leadership, teachers, and parents where appropriate) to conduct structured interviews. Questions will assess pedagogical beliefs, experience with bilingual/STEAM/inquiry-based education, and problem-solving skills through behavioral and situational scenarios.

Reference & Background Checks (Weeks 11-13)

Conduct thorough reference checks and initiate background checks for top candidates. Verify licensure and prior experience.

Offer & Negotiation (Weeks 14-15)

Extend formal job offers, including salary and benefits, and negotiate contracts.

Contract Finalization (Weeks 16-17)

Secure signed contracts from accepted candidates.

Onboarding & Professional Development (Weeks 18-20, leading into school start) Initiate comprehensive onboarding (as detailed in previous sections) and pre-service professional development for all new staff.

Timelines The entire initial hiring process will begin approximately 20-24 weeks prior to the start of the 2026-27 school year, ensuring all staff are hired no later than two weeks prior to the start.

Responsible Parties The Executive Director will oversee the entire process. School leadership (e.g., Dean of Students, Special Education Teacher) will lead specific recruitment and interview efforts for their respective departments. HR support (potentially contracted or handled by administrative assistants) will manage applications and background checks.

Process for Filling Vacancies (Ongoing - 2027-28 and subsequent years):**Action Steps****Immediate Notification**

Upon a vacancy, the Executive Director is immediately notified.

Needs Assessment (1 week)

The Executive Director, in consultation with relevant school leadership, assesses the immediate impact of the vacancy and confirms the need to fill the position.

Internal Posting (1 week)

Explore highly qualified internal staff and conduct interviews.

External Posting (1-2 weeks)

If there is no suitable internal candidate, the job will be immediately posted.

Expedited Screening & Interview (2-3 weeks)

Conduct rapid screening of applications and schedule expedited interviews with qualified candidates. Interview committees will be formed quickly.

Offer & Onboarding (1-2 weeks)

Extend offers and begin a streamlined onboarding process, focusing on immediate integration into the school culture and academic program (Refer to section D.4 under *Novice Onboarding*).

Timelines

Vacancies will be filled within a reasonable time, typically 4-8 weeks, depending on the role's complexity and market availability. Critical instructional vacancies will be prioritized for faster turnaround.

Responsible Parties The Executive Director is ultimately responsible for hiring and onboarding staff. School leadership (Dean of Students, Special Education/Gifted Facilitator) will lead departmental hiring. Administrative Assistants will support logistical aspects.



Ensuring Highly Qualified Staff & Timely Hiring

The staffing plan and process are meticulously designed to ensure the hiring of highly qualified staff and to meet critical timelines, including the requirement to hire no later than two weeks prior to the start of the school year annually, and to fill all vacancies within a reasonable time.

Recruitment of Highly-Qualified, Licensed Staff

Targeted Outreach

Recruitment efforts will specifically target candidates holding or eligible for New Mexico licensure relevant to their roles (e.g., Level 3 teachers, Special Education endorsements, Bilingual endorsements).

Diverse Platforms

Utilizing a wide array of advertising platforms (state education department, universities, professional organizations) ensures access to a broad and diverse pool of qualified candidates.

Mission-Aligned Interviewing

Interview questions are specifically crafted to assess candidates' alignment with Inspira's mission (bilingual, STEAM, inquiry-based), ensuring not just licensure but also philosophical fit.

Verification

A rigorous verification process includes checking licensure status directly with NMPED, conducting thorough reference checks, and requesting proof of prior work experience.

Competitive Compensation

The school will strive to offer competitive salaries and benefits, aligned with the budget, to attract and retain top talent.

Timely Hiring (No later than two weeks prior to school year start)

Proactive Planning

The Executive Director and Governing Board will finalize staffing needs and budget allocations well in advance (typically 6-8 months prior to the school year start).

Early Recruitment Launch

The recruitment process will be launched early (e.g., January/February for a July start) to allow ample time for advertising, screening, interviewing, and background checks.

Streamlined Process

The hiring action steps are designed to be efficient, with clear timelines for each stage of the process, minimizing delays.

Dedicated Resources

Assigning clear responsible parties (Executive Director, school leadership, HR support) ensures dedicated focus on meeting hiring deadlines.

Filling Vacancies Within a Reasonable Time

Expedited Process The vacancy filling process is streamlined, prioritizing immediate needs assessment, internal options, and rapid external posting.

Pre-Vetted Pool Ongoing recruitment efforts (as described above) will help maintain a pool of interested and pre-screened candidates, reducing the time needed to identify suitable applicants when a vacancy arises.

Flexible Onboarding A streamlined onboarding process for mid-year hires allows for quicker integration into the school.

Reasonableness and Adequacy of Staffing Plan for Academic Program

The staffing plan is reasonable and adequate to support the effective and timely implementation of Inspira STEAM Academy's academic program and curriculum during the planning year and for all subsequent years, aligning with its specialized mission.

Student-to-Teacher Ratios



- **2026-27 (Year 1):** 4 teachers for projected enrollment (80 students for K-1, 20:2 ratio)
- **2027-28 (Year 2):** 6 teachers for projected enrollment (120 students for K-2, 20:2 ratio)
- **2028-29 (Year 3):** 8 teachers for projected enrollment (160 students for K-2, 20:1, 3rd, 20:1 ratio)
- **2029-30 (Year 4):** 10 teachers for projected enrollment (200 students for K-2, 20:2 ratio. 3rd-4th 20:1 ratio)
- **2030-31 (Year 5):** 12 teachers for projected enrollment (240 students for K-2, 20:2 ratio. 3rd-5th. 20:1 ratio). These ratios are conducive to implementing a dual-language, inquiry-based, and STEAM-focused curriculum, allowing for personalized attention and small group instruction.

Specialized Support Staff

Special Education/Gifted Facilitator (1 FTE annually)

This dedicated position ensures the academic program can effectively serve students with diverse learning needs, including identifying students with disabilities, IEP implementation, gifted programming, and teacher support for differentiated instruction.

Educational Assistants (EAs)

The provision of 4 EAs in Year 1, increasing to 5 in Year 2 and subsequent years, provides crucial in-classroom support for teachers, particularly in a dual-language environment where additional small-group or individual student assistance may be required.

Administrative and Leadership Support

Number of Admin (1 FTE annually) This ensures sufficient administrative capacity for daily operations, compliance, and general school management, freeing teachers to focus on instruction.

Dean of Students (1 FTE in 2028-29) The addition of a Dean of Students as the school grows provides dedicated leadership for student culture, discipline, and well-being, directly supporting a positive learning environment essential for academic success.

Administrative Assistants (1 FTE in year one and two; 2 FTE annually thereafter) These roles provide essential logistical and clerical support, ensuring smooth operations that underpin effective academic program delivery.

Curriculum Alignment The staffing plan prioritizes hiring staff with backgrounds and experience in bilingual education, STEAM, and inquiry-based methodologies, directly aligning human resources with the school's unique academic model. This ensures the expertise is present to implement the specialized curriculum effectively.

Alignment with Budget and Projected Enrollment

The proposed staffing plan is directly aligned with the school's budget and projected enrollment, demonstrating fiscal responsibility and strategic growth.

Enrollment-Driven Staffing: The "Proposed Staff Loading" table clearly shows a phased increase in staffing that directly corresponds with projected student enrollment growth over the first four years.

- **Teachers:** Increase from 4 (Year 1) to 10 (Year 4) as enrollment expands.
- **EAs:** Increase from 4 (Year 1) to 5 (Year 2-4) to maintain support ratios.
- **Admin/Dean:** Strategic additions of administrative roles (Dean of Students in Year 3) are planned for when the student population reaches a size that necessitates more leadership and operational support.
- **Budgetary Allocation:** Each position outlined in the staffing table will have corresponding salary and benefits allocated in the annual budget. The phased increase in staff allows for controlled growth in personnel expenditures, directly tied to anticipated revenue from increased enrollment. The school's financial planning will ensure that projected per-pupil funding can adequately support the proposed staffing levels. This ensures the plan is financially sustainable as the school grows.

Adjustments to the Staffing Plan for Enrollment Differences

Inspira STEAM Academy has a clear process for making adjustments to the staffing plan in the case of differences between projected and actual enrollment, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness.

Responsible Parties:

The Executive Director, in collaboration with the Governing Board (specifically the Finance and Governance Committees), will be responsible for making these adjustments.



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Triggers for Adjustment:

Significant variances (+/- 10% or a specific number of students that impacts class sizes) from projected enrollment will trigger a review.

Action Steps for Lower Actual Enrollment

Early Monitoring: Continuous monitoring of enrollment numbers during the recruitment period and leading up to the school year start.

- **Hiring Freeze/Delay:** If enrollment is significantly lower than projected, the school may implement a temporary hiring freeze or delay hiring for non-critical positions.
- **Adjusting Class Sizes:** Class sizes might be slightly adjusted within acceptable limits to accommodate fewer teachers.
- **Reallocation of Roles:** Existing staff may be cross-trained or have responsibilities reallocated to cover essential functions with fewer personnel.
- **Attrition:** Natural attrition will be leveraged to reduce staff numbers without forced reductions where possible.

Action Steps for Higher Actual Enrollment

- **Early Monitoring:** Continuous monitoring of enrollment numbers.
- **Expedited Hiring:** If enrollment significantly exceeds projections, the school will immediately initiate an expedited hiring process for additional teachers and support staff, leveraging the established recruitment process.
- **Temporary Staffing:** Consider temporary or part-time staff to manage initial surges in student numbers until permanent hires can be secured.
- **Class Size Adjustments:** Class sizes may be temporarily increased within state guidelines.
- **Resource Allocation Review:** The budget will be reviewed to ensure resources are available for additional salaries and materials. The Governing Board will approve any necessary budget amendments.

Timeline for Adjustment: Decisions regarding staffing adjustments due to enrollment variances will be made prior to the start of the school year by early June and, if necessary, re-evaluated within the first few weeks of school once actual attendance stabilizes. This allows for a timely response to ensure student needs are met.

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**
 - 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**



Annual Professional Development Plan

During the first ten days of professional development, we will focus on beginning each day with a restorative practice strategy that teachers can then apply in their classrooms. Following this, we will delve into the book *Teach Like a Champion*, modeling its strategies and allowing time for practice and questions. This approach ensures that all staff members are using a consistent language across the campus. Using these books and strategies will align with inquiry-based learning by helping the students to think critically, learn to ask questions, investigate and continue to be active participants to construct their knowledge.

Teaching inquiry means helping students learn *how to ask questions, investigate, think critically, and construct knowledge* rather than just absorb information. It is a student-centered, active learning approach used widely in science, social studies, language arts, and other disciplines.

Additionally, we will emphasize effective practices for Spanish language acquisition and ensure that all staff have a solid understanding of the principles of *Love and Logic*, *Conscious Discipline*, and *Safety-Care Crisis Prevention Training*.

At Inspira STEAM Academy, we are committed to equipping our staff with effective strategies for teaching students with special needs, EL students, and those from low-income backgrounds. We aim to enhance instructional practices and leadership abilities by utilizing best practices from *Teach Like a Champion* and *Leverage Leadership*. Our focus will include classroom management and student engagement strategies from *Love and Logic*, *Conscious Discipline*, and *Safety-Care Crisis Prevention Training* in addition to providing special education and neurodiversity training.

We will offer interactive workshops focused on specific strategies and techniques, providing one-on-one support and guidance for personalized development. Teachers will have opportunities for collaboration and peer learning, allowing them to share best practices. We will conduct regular evaluations and make adjustments based on feedback and student outcomes.

Professional Development plans meet state statutory requirements (New Mexico Statutes, 2024). The Executive Director will work on plans at the beginning of the year to address the specific needs of the teachers. This will allow the teachers to receive individualized training to strengthen their skills in the classroom. Systematic professional development for the entire staff ensures quality training for all staff working with the students. Some of the professional development training we are planning may be paid for by the state, depending on the student population we receive. The annual budget will include allocated funds to mirror what the teachers will need for professional development.

D(4)a - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Professional Development Plan



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D(4)a - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Professional Development Plan

Professional Development Plan				
Training	Timeline	Responsible Parties	Action Step	Cost
Curriculum Development	Ongoing throughout the year	Kindergarten Teacher Lead	Establish dedicated bi-weekly collaborative planning sessions for the kindergarten team led by the Kindergarten Teacher Lead to review and refine curriculum units.	Free
Bridges Math Training	Ongoing throughout the year	Kindergarten Teacher Lead/Online Resources	Organize a peer observation schedule where teachers can observe each other implementing Bridges Math strategies and provide constructive feedback.	Free/with membership
MC2 Math Training	Ongoing throughout the year	NMSU/MC2 or Kindergarten Teacher	Create a shared digital resource folder for all staff to access MC2 Math materials, lesson plans, and differentiation strategies.	Grant/Free
Benchmark Adelante/Advance	Ongoing throughout the year	Kindergarten Teacher Lead/Online Resources	Facilitate monthly grade-level meetings to analyze student reading data from Benchmark Adelante/Advance assessments and plan targeted interventions.	Free/with membership



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Professional Development Plan				
STEAM	Ongoing throughout the year	Asombro Institute Free, NMC3, Kinder Lead	Designate a "STEAM Friday" once a month where students engage in cross-curricular, hands-on STEAM projects, with teachers collaborating to integrate subjects.	Free/with membership
Arts	Ongoing throughout the year	Dona Ana Arts Council Cruces Creatives	Plan and execute at least two school-wide events per year (e.g., an art show, a drama performance) to showcase student artistic achievements.	Free
Dual Language	Ongoing throughout the year	Dual Language Education of NM	Implement a "Language of the Day" system where specific subjects or time blocks are exclusively taught in either English or Spanish to reinforce dual language immersion.	Free
Inquiry-Based Teaching	Ongoing throughout the year	Kindergarten Lead Teacher	Provide teachers with templates and examples of effective inquiry-based lesson plans that align with curriculum standards.	Free
Universal Design Learning	Ongoing throughout the year	Special Education	Conduct a school-wide audit of instructional materials and technology tools to ensure they incorporate principles of Universal Design for Learning, identifying areas for improvement.	Free
Special Education/Neurodiversity	Ongoing throughout the year	Special Education Teacher	Host a regular "Neurodiversity Forum" for staff to share best practices, discuss specific student needs, and collaborate on inclusive instructional strategies.	Free
Leverage Leadership	Ongoing throughout the year	Executive Director	The Executive Director will establish individual coaching cycles with identified leadership team members, focusing on specific leadership skills outlined in "Leverage Leadership."	Free

Professional Development Plan				
Restorative Justice	Ongoing throughout the year	Executive Director	Develop a school-wide consistent framework for implementing restorative circles and conflict resolution strategies in classrooms and common areas.	Free
Love and Logic	Ongoing throughout the year	Executive Director	Implement a "Tip of the Week" email from the Executive Director, sharing practical "Love and Logic" strategies for classroom management and student engagement.	Free
Teach Like a Champion	Ongoing throughout the year	Executive Director	Conduct targeted classroom observations by the Executive Director, providing specific feedback to teachers on their implementation of "Teach Like a Champion" techniques.	Free
Conscious Discipline	Ongoing throughout the year	Special Education Teacher	Integrate "Conscious Discipline" language and calming strategies into morning announcements and daily classroom routines school-wide.	Free
Safety Care	Beginning of the school year	Special Education Teacher	Schedule a mandatory refresher course for all staff trained in Safety Care within six months of the initial training to reinforce critical skills and procedures	\$2,200 \$6/person

Section D(4)b - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - State Safety and Compliance Training



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D(4)b - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - State Safety and Compliance Training

State Safety and Compliance Training				
Training	Timeline	Responsible Parties	Action Step	Cost
Sexual Abuse Prevention *Strongly Recommended training which will meet HB128	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Establish and clearly communicate a confidential reporting system for all staff, students, and parents regarding concerns about sexual abuse.	Free
Sexual Harassment	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Clearly post the school's sexual harassment policy and reporting procedures in prominent staff areas and on the school's internal digital platform.	Free
Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Prevention	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Distribute digital and physical copies of the Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan to all staff for review prior to the Vector Solutions training.	Free

State Safety and Compliance Training				
FERPA: Confidentiality of Records	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Before the annual training, prepare a brief scenario-based quiz to be administered immediately after the Vector Solutions module to assess understanding of FERPA application in real-world school situations.	Free
HIPAA	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Develop a clear, concise one-page "HIPAA Do's and Don'ts" cheat sheet to be provided to all staff at the beginning of the school year following the Vector Solutions training.	Free
Playground Supervision	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Conduct a walk-through of all playground areas with staff after the training, identifying potential blind spots and establishing clear zone responsibilities for supervision.	Free
Cybersecurity Awareness	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Implement a quarterly email reminder campaign to all staff with quick tips on recognizing phishing attempts and best practices for password security.	Free
Diversity Awareness Staff-to-Staff and Staff-to-Student	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Following the training, facilitate small group discussions (e.g., during faculty meetings) where staff can share and discuss strategies for fostering an inclusive environment.	Free
Diversity Awareness Staff-to-Student	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Following the training, facilitate small group discussions (e.g., during faculty meetings) where staff can share and discuss strategies for fostering an inclusive environment.	Free
Active Shooter Training	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Schedule a follow-up drill or simulation after the initial training to allow staff to practice learned protocols in a realistic, non-threatening environment.	Free

State Safety and Compliance Training				
Civil Rights Training	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Review and update the school's non-discrimination policies annually, ensuring they align with current civil rights guidelines and are easily accessible to all staff and families.	Free
Food Service Training	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Conduct a practical demonstration and review of proper food handling and allergy awareness procedures in the cafeteria and kitchen areas.	Free
Standardized Test Administrator Training	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Create a detailed checklist for test administrators covering all steps from secure materials handling to proper test environment setup and proctoring guidelines.	Free
First Aid/CPR	Beginning of the school year (Annually)	POMS - Vector Solutions	Conduct hands-on practice sessions for all newly trained staff on CPR techniques and basic first aid scenarios (e.g., choking, cuts, allergic reactions).	Free

Meeting State Professional Development Requirements and Rules



Professional development plans will revolve around the use of standards and benchmarks. As mandated by state law and regulations (New Mexico Statutes, 2024), Inspira will ensure that all of the PD follows standards in order for our program to have high-quality education that is consistent and equitable for all students. Using the Standards and Benchmarks as the guide, the primary goal for the school will ensure that we have measurable goals for student achievement and will guide teacher expectations. Utilizing the standards will also ensure that the curriculum development and instructional practices meet and or surpass state expectations. As a legal requirement of the state of New Mexico, the entirety of our academic goals will be driven by the standards and benchmarks. The standards will serve as a foundation for English, Science (Technology, Engineering), Art, Math, Social Studies, and World Languages. (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2023).

Inspira STEAM Academy will implement a professional development plan designed to support the diverse needs of our students, including those with special needs, English Learners (EL) learners, at-risk, and students from low-income backgrounds. This plan will draw on successful models from Uncommon Schools and incorporate strategies from *Teach Like a Champion* and *Leverage Leadership*. Specialized training in *Love and Logic*, *Safety-Care Crisis Prevention Training*, *Conscious Discipline*, and *Restorative Justice* will provide teachers with the skills for effective classroom management, social-emotional learning, de-escalation strategies, and restorative justice practices. These resources will enhance our instructional practices, leadership skills, and classroom management techniques.

Annual professional development plan

During the first ten days of professional development, we will focus on beginning each day with a restorative practice strategy that teachers can then apply in their classrooms. Following this, we will delve into the book *Teach Like a Champion*, modeling its strategies and allowing time for practice and questions. This approach ensures that all staff members are using a consistent language across the campus. Using these books and strategies will align with inquiry-based learning by helping the students to think critically, learn to ask questions, investigate and continue to be active participants to construct their knowledge.

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We will offer interactive workshops focused on specific strategies and techniques, providing one-on-one support and guidance for personalized development. Teachers will have opportunities for collaboration and peer learning, allowing them to share best practices. We will conduct regular evaluations and make adjustments based on feedback and student outcomes.

Professional Development plans meet state statutory requirements (New Mexico Statutes, 2024). The Executive Director will work on plans at the beginning of the year to address the specific needs of the teachers. This will allow the teachers to receive individualized training to strengthen their skills in the classroom. Systematic professional development for the entire staff ensures quality training for all staff working with the students. Some of the professional development training we are planning may be paid for by the state, depending on the student population we receive. The annual budget will include allocated funds to mirror what the teachers will need for professional development.

Ensuring Professional Development Time is not Used for Routine Staff Meetings

Agendas with scheduled times and activities will be prepared ahead of time to ensure professional development time is not used for routine staff meetings. In-person routine staff meetings will be scheduled for one hour monthly, intentionally scheduled outside of the professional development agenda to prevent professional development infringement. Routine announcements of school activities and reminders will be shared with the staff electronically weekly so staff meetings.

Mentorship Plan for Novice Teachers

To support our new hires and ensure their successful integration and growth, the Executive Director will assign the novice teacher a dedicated mentor. The Executive Director will ensure that each grade level has at least one experienced teacher. This intentional placement provides a natural mentorship structure within teams, fostering collaboration and informal learning among colleagues.



This mentorship relationship will extend beyond initial onboarding. Mentors will:

- **Provide individualized support:** Offering tailored advice on classroom management, curriculum implementation, and adapting to the school's unique culture.
- **Facilitate professional growth:** Helping new teachers set professional goals, identify areas for development, and connect with relevant resources and opportunities.
- **Encourage reflective practice:** Engaging in regular check-ins and discussions to help new hires process their experiences and refine their instructional strategies.
- **Share institutional knowledge:** Guiding new teachers through school policies, procedures, and available resources to ensure smooth operation.
- **Foster a sense of belonging:** Helping new teachers feel welcomed, valued, and connected to the Inspira STEAM Academy community from day one.

The Executive Director will provide quarterly check-ins with the novice teacher to provide further support if needed.

Teacher Onboarding Binder

An Essential Welcome Packet

All new teachers will receive a comprehensive Onboarding Binder (Welcome Packet) designed to provide immediate access to vital information and resources, ensuring a smooth transition into the Inspira STEAM Academy community. This binder will be thoroughly reviewed with each teacher, and key documents will be signed by both the teacher and an administrator to confirm understanding.

Onboarding Binder

An Employee Handbook containing school policies, expectations, and procedures, including a detailed breakdown of teacher duties and responsibilities. It will contain essential Human Resources information, such as benefits, payroll details, and contact information. The binder will have school calendars and schedules. These include a yearly academic calendar highlighting key dates, holidays, and school events, a daily bell schedule for classes and transitions, and a comprehensive school duty schedule outlining supervision responsibilities for all staff. The binder will provide information on technology and communication resources. An SIS (Student Information System) tutorial outline to guide you through managing student data, a G-Suite for Education tutorial covering the use of Google Classroom, Drive, Docs, Sheets, and Slides, and guidelines on using school email, shared calendars, and other internal/external communication platforms. All necessary login credentials and technology assignments will be provided and set up during the initial orientation.

Campus and Community Information

A clear map of the school campus will help navigate classrooms and common areas. The teacher dress code policy to ensure clarity on professional appearance standards. Information on local community resources and partnerships relevant to the school's mission. The comprehensive binder will serve as the initial go-to guide, providing clarity and support to become an integral part of the Inspira STEAM Academy team.

Instructional support will be provided by sharing pacing guides, working with the teacher to create lesson plans, and aligning the curriculum to the state's standards and benchmarks. We will ensure the teacher understands the grading policies and utilizes all the data analysis tools available at Inspira. The first ten days of professional development will be focused on routines and positive reinforcement systems that will be utilized across campus, for example, TLAC and *Love and Logic*.

To support our novice teachers, we will assign them a mentor and ensure each grade level has at least one experienced teacher to provide natural mentorship. Creating a supportive environment in the school for learning and coaching will enable teachers to grow and engage in self-reflection. We aim to cultivate a culture that values diversity and inclusivity, where teachers feel safe and respected as they develop their skills. Our program is very specialized, and we want to prevent burnout by providing training in self-care and maintaining personal balance. The novice teacher and mentor will have time to meet once a week to check in. The novice teacher can sit in on the mentor teacher's class to observe and ask clarifying questions. The Dean of Students and the Executive Director will also have opportunities to team teach to help support the novice teachers.

Professional development at the beginning of the year will focus on planning and supporting inquiry-based lessons with the timeline of 6-8 weeks. Teachers will learn how to scaffold each unit to ensure differentiation and to incorporate best practices for providing an inclusive education for diverse learning needs. Teachers will ensure that all NM CCSS are targeted and achieved through rubrics, formative assessments, and summative



assessments. As a school, we will ensure that all of our lessons are culturally responsive and meet all of the expectations for our students as outlined in the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit. Inspira's professional development will align with the school's mission and vision.

The Executive Director will do frequent walk-throughs looking for *Teach Like a Champion* strategies and ensuring the curriculum is being delivered with effectiveness and quality. After the walk-through, there will be time for feedback and reflection with the teacher.

Our program is very specialized, and we want to prevent burnout by providing training in self-care and maintaining personal balance.

Professional Development Activities

We will conduct workshops on specific techniques from *Teach Like a Champion*, focusing on strategies that support diverse learners, including students with special needs and English Learners (EL) students. TLAC instructional excellence will highlight academic expectations by employing techniques such as "No Opt Out" and "Right is Right" to set high standards and ensure that all students are engaged. The "No Opt Out" strategy helps children find solutions to questions, whether it is asking a peer or sharing what they think the answer is in a safe environment. This fosters a classroom environment where high expectations and mistakes are embraced as part of the learning process. The "Right is Right" technique emphasizes feedback that challenges the students to reach their full potential when responding to a question, it does not reinforce the wrong answers.

An engagement technique we will include is "Check for Understanding" to actively involve students and assess their comprehension. This technique ensures the students are paying attention and are actively engaged in their learning process. Through modeling, we will demonstrate effective practices through live teaching demonstrations and provide individualized coaching. Peer observation sessions will facilitate opportunities for teachers to learn from each other's implementation of these techniques and offer constructive feedback.

Instructional leadership will emphasize strategies such as "Lead with Data" and "Create a Culture of Achievement" to support teachers in improving instructional practices. Leading with data will underline the students' results from formative and summative assessments to inform and drive instruction. Creating a Culture of Achievement focuses on a rigorous, engaging, and positive learning environment.

We will set goals as a staff using the standards and benchmarks as guiding principles. By establishing clear goals and providing focused feedback, we aim to drive school-wide improvement and address the needs of all students. Support systems will be implemented to delegate responsibilities, develop our staff, and build a strong team to enhance effectiveness and professional growth.

Our professional development program for all Inspira STEAM Academy staff integrates two powerful approaches: *Conscious Discipline* and *Safety-Care Crisis Prevention Training*. Through *Conscious Discipline*, we will proactively build a connected "School Family," teaching essential self-regulation and social-emotional skills to both staff and students, fostering positive relationships and preventing challenging behaviors from escalating. Complementing this, *Safety-Care Crisis Prevention Training* will provide our team with vital de-escalation techniques and strategies for safely managing moments of heightened behavioral crisis. Together, these programs ensure we cultivate a consistently safe, supportive, and harmonious learning environment where every student can thrive.

We will also offer professional development opportunities for school leaders, focusing on creating a culture of high expectations, using data to drive decisions, and supporting diverse learners. The Executive Director, Dean of Students, and Special Education Director will participate in ongoing coaching sessions to help them implement effective leadership strategies and support teachers. Inspira will ensure that school leaders attend professional development sessions with experienced educational leaders to discuss best practices and case studies to improve outcomes for students with special needs, EL students, at-risk students, and low-income students.

Classroom Management and Student Engagement Using *Love and Logic*

As a staff, we will read the book "9 Essential Skills for the *Love and Logic Classroom* - 3rd Edition" throughout the year and revisit these strategies at each professional development session. We will also look for these strategies during classroom walkthroughs. Monthly emails from the *Love and Logic* website will provide bite-sized strategies that staff can use in the classroom. Additionally, virtual staff attendance at professional development sessions offered by *Love and Logic* will be encouraged. This professional development will also be shared with the community during community nights, using available resources and focusing on the needs of the community.

We will emphasize empathy and respect by implementing strategies such as "Empathy and Consequences" to build strong relationships and manage behavior effectively. This technique allows children to learn from their mistakes by balancing genuine sympathy with logical consequences. This helps the children foster responsibility for their actions.



Techniques from “Natural and Logical Consequences” will be used to address behavior issues and foster a positive classroom environment. We will encourage responsibility and foster independence to help students take ownership of their learning and behavior. Role-playing exercises will be used to practice and internalize discipline techniques and nurture positive relationships with students.

We will implement differentiated instruction strategies to promote the needs of all students. Culturally responsive teaching practices will be integrated to acknowledge and respect the cultural backgrounds of low-income and EL students. We will also integrate support services and interventions for students requiring additional assistance. Training on differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching will be provided, and we will collaborate with special education and EL specialists to offer targeted support and resources. We will also develop strategies to engage parents and communities in supporting the educational success of low-income and EL students.

Annual Professional Development Calendar

We will schedule workshops monthly, focusing on different components of our professional development plan. Monthly coaching sessions will be held to provide individualized support through coaching and mentoring. Biannual reflection sessions will take place to review progress, celebrate successes, and identify areas for further development. We will employ performance metrics to guide instruction, utilizing data such as classroom observations, student achievement, and staff feedback to assess the effectiveness of our professional development activities. Surveys will be conducted to gather input from staff regarding the relevance and impact of the sessions. Adjustments will be made to the professional development plan based on this feedback and evaluation results to ensure continuous improvement.

Resources and Support

Inspira STEAM Academy will provide access to various resources, including books, online modules, and instructional materials related to *Teach Like a Champion* (Lemov, 2021), *Leverage Leadership* (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2018), *Love and Logic* (Fay & Fay, 2025), *Conscious Discipline*, *Safety-Care Crisis Prevention Training*, and *Restorative Justice* (Boyes-Watson, Pranis, & Riestenberg, 2015). We will engage external experts and consultants to lead workshops and offer specialized training. Collaboration among staff members will be encouraged to share best practices and support each other's growth. We will stagger visits to other schools where the teachers will learn techniques in real time from expert peers.

Sustainability and Growth

We will build a culture of continuous improvement and encourage lifelong learning. Inspira STEAM Academy will foster an environment where continuous professional development is valued and supported. We will acknowledge and celebrate the achievements and progress of our staff members on their professional development journeys.

Long-Term Planning

Inspira STEAM Academy will establish pathways for career advancement and leadership development within the school. We aim to grow our own instructors by creating pathways for our Educational Assistants (EAs) to become licensed teachers. We will seek grants to fund classes for EAs, allowing them to invest their time at Inspira. We will also partner up with educational institutions such as Doña Ana Community College to keep abreast of scholarship opportunities such as the *Grow Your Own Teacher (GYOT) Scholarship*, available for eligible Educational Assistants who want to be licensed teachers (Doña Ana Community College, n.d.).

By implementing this comprehensive professional development plan, Inspira STEAM Academy will equip its staff with the skills and knowledge to effectively teach and support special needs, EL, at-risk students, and low-income students. Ongoing investment in professional development resources and support will ensure we maintain high standards.

This plan integrates best practices from *Teach Like a Champion*, *Leverage Leadership*, *Love and Logic*, *Conscious Discipline*, and *Safety-Care Crisis Prevention Training*, ensuring that all students receive a high-quality and equitable education aligned with the school's mission and goals.

Section D Reference Continued

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Applicant Evidence :

	
D(4)a - Reference Inspira STEAM ...	D(4)b - Reference Inspira STEAM ...

Uploaded on 6/2/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

Uploaded on 6/2/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

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



The primary classes of employees

Certified employees

Hold a valid license issued by the state of New Mexico Public Education Department. These are specialized individuals who instruct, administer, and support the schools. To receive a license, they must meet specific requirements such as education, a background check, and appropriate professional testing. Their license requires a renewal (each with different terms) and completion of ongoing professional development. These employees may have the option to join collective bargaining agreements or unions. Some of the classified employees will have performance metrics such as NMTEACH. Certified employees will be: Regular Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Administrative Assistant, Dean of Students (at the third year), and the Executive Director.

Non-Certified Employees

Are school personnel who do not require an NMPED license. They support the school by performing technical, operational, and essential functions to operate a school and provide student services. This group of employees does not hold a license from the NMPED. They may have other specialized certifications (for example, a CDL for drivers). They are hourly employees (non-exempt) and they are regularly supervised by a certified staff member.

Contracted Services

As enrollment and budget at Inspira STEAM Academy continue to grow, the academy will assess the necessity for various contracted services. These may include Custodial Services, Meal Services, IT Services, School Nurses, and Librarians. Additionally, there will be an evaluation of related service providers for special education, which includes Counselors, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs).

Teacher Onboarding Binder

An Essential Welcome Packet

All new teachers will receive a comprehensive Onboarding Binder (Welcome Packet) designed to provide immediate access to vital information and resources, ensuring a smooth transition into the Inspira STEAM Academy community. This binder will be thoroughly reviewed with each teacher, and key documents will be signed by both the teacher and an administrator to confirm understanding.

Onboarding Binder

An Employee Handbook containing school policies, expectations, and procedures, including a detailed breakdown of teacher duties and responsibilities. It will contain essential Human Resources information, such as benefits, payroll details, and contact information. The binder will have school calendars and schedules. These include a yearly academic calendar highlighting key dates, holidays, and school events, a daily bell schedule for classes and transitions, and a comprehensive school duty schedule outlining supervision responsibilities for all staff. The binder will provide information on technology and communication resources. An SIS (Student Information System) tutorial outline to guide you through managing student data, a G-Suite for Education tutorial covering the use of Google Classroom, Drive, Docs, Sheets, and Slides, and guidelines on using school email, shared calendars, and other internal/external communication platforms. All necessary login credentials and technology assignments will be provided and set up during the initial orientation.

For returning staff, we will follow the same onboarding procedure as above. We will ensure that their certifications are current and to update any new technology staff. For detailed information, see the

Employee Policy Handbook.

Employee Unions

If the staff decides to unionize, the Governing Board and Executive Director will create policies to address employee unions. These policies will be developed within the legal framework. A union will not be recognized unless the employees formally organize and vote in accordance with the Public Employee Bargaining Act (PEBA), which is a New Mexico state law (NMSA 1978, §10-7E-1 et seq). This law regulates labor relations between public employers and employees (New Mexico Public Employee Labor Relations Board, n.d.). Inspira STEAM Academy will not interfere with the right to organize and will not retaliate against any employee for participating in union activities.




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



Section E Reference

New Mexico Public Employee Labor Relations Board. (n.d.). *Statute (PEBA II)*. Retrieved May 3, 2025, from <https://www.pelrb.nm.gov/resources/statute-peba-ii/> (<https://www.pelrb.nm.gov/resources/statute-peba-ii/>)

Applicant Evidence :


Inspira STEAM Academy Employ...

Uploaded on **6/2/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**

Q36.

F.(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



Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to fostering a vibrant and collaborative school community through robust operational and governance structures that actively invite input and participation from all stakeholders.

School Operation and Governance Structures for Stakeholder Input

Inspira STEAM Academy's operational and governance framework is designed to ensure a dynamic and inclusive environment where the voices of parents, professional educators, and the broader community are heard and integrated into school decision-making.

Meaningful Parental Input and Participation

Parent Advisory Committee

A formalized PAC will serve as the primary vehicle for parents to engage in school activities, organize events, fundraise, and provide direct feedback on school initiatives and programs. Parents will serve on dedicated leadership teams and committees to drive school improvement initiatives, shape instructional practices, and make recommendations to administration.

School Advisory Committees

Parents will be encouraged to join various school advisory committees focused on areas such as curriculum development, school safety, technology integration, and strategic planning, offering their unique perspectives and insights.

Regular Surveys and Feedback Platforms

Annual anonymous surveys, online suggestion boxes, and designated parent forums will provide consistent channels for parents to share their concerns, ideas, and satisfaction levels.

Direct Communication

The Executive Director, Dean of Students (beginning in year 3), and all teaching staff will maintain an open-door policy and accessible communication channels (email, phone, scheduled meetings) to ensure parents feel heard and supported.

Governing Board Representation

One non-voting member of the Governing Board may be a parent of a current Inspira STEAM Academy student. This member shall be nominated by the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) to serve as a non-voting member of the Governing Board and as a member of the PAC. The Governing Board will, in turn, vote to accept or reject this person as a Governing Board member.

Meaningful Professional Educator Input and Participation

Faculty Leadership Teams

Teachers will serve on dedicated leadership teams and committees (e.g., Curriculum & Instruction, Professional Development, Assessment) to drive school improvement initiatives, shape instructional practices, and make recommendations to administration.

Collaborative Planning

Regular grade-level and subject-area meetings will be structured to foster collaborative planning, peer feedback, and collective problem-solving, ensuring educators have a direct say in their daily work and school-wide policies.

Professional Development Design

Educators will actively contribute to the identification of professional development needs and the design of training sessions, ensuring PD is relevant and impactful.

Staff Surveys and Climate Checks

Regular anonymous surveys and informal check-ins will gather feedback on school operations, working conditions, and overall school culture.

Meaningful Community Input and Participation

Governing Board

A standing Governing Board, comprising diverse local leaders, business representatives, and residents, will provide guidance on community needs, potential partnerships, and alignment with local development goals.



Open Governing Board Meetings

All Governing Board meetings will be open to the public, with a dedicated time for public comment, allowing community members to directly address the Board on issues of concern or interest.

Strategic Partnerships

As detailed in our community outreach, relationships with institutions like NMSU, Doña Ana Community College, and local businesses will not only provide resources but also serve as ongoing feedback loops for community needs and opportunities.

Facilitating Parental Involvement to Advance the School's Mission

These structures are specifically designed to facilitate parental involvement that directly advances Inspira STEAM Academy's mission of providing a K-5 STEAM, bilingual, and multicultural education.

STEAM Mission

Parents will be invited to volunteer in our STEAM labs, serve as guest speakers sharing their expertise in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics, assist with STEAM-focused field trips to local institutions like NMSU or Spaceport America, and participate in family STEAM nights designed to extend learning into the home.

Bilingual and Multicultural Mission

Parents, particularly those fluent in multiple languages, will be crucial partners in our dual-language program, potentially serving as classroom volunteers, reading buddies, or cultural advisors. They will be actively engaged in planning and celebrating multicultural events, helping to create a truly inclusive and globally-minded learning environment. Parent workshops will be offered on supporting bilingual development at home.

Overall Mission

Through direct participation in school committees and regular feedback mechanisms, parents will gain a deeper understanding of Inspira's educational philosophy and goals. This understanding empowers them to become vocal advocates for the school's mission within the wider community, fostering a shared vision for student success.

Role of the Equity Council in Governance and Operation

The **Equity Council** will play a vital and explicit role in the governance and operation of Inspira STEAM Academy, ensuring that equity, inclusivity, and access are at the forefront of all school practices. Composed of diverse parents, staff, and community members, the Equity Council will:

Review and Advise

Regularly review school policies, programs, and operational practices through an equity lens, advising the Executive Director and Governing Board on potential biases or disparities and recommending strategies for improvement.

Monitor School Climate

Assess the inclusivity of the school environment, identifying areas where all students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds (e.g., low-income, minority, special education, English language learners, unhoused students), feel valued, respected, and supported.

Advocate for Equitable Resources

Advocate for the equitable allocation of resources and implementation of culturally responsive practices to address achievement gaps and ensure all students have access to high-quality instruction and support services, directly addressing the principles of the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit.

Inform Grievance Processes

The Equity Council may provide input or guidance on the school's grievance process, particularly when concerns relate to issues of fairness, discrimination, or inequitable treatment.

Assurances Regarding Parental Involvement

Inspira STEAM Academy firmly assures that family or parental support or involvement is never a requirement or condition for accepting, not accepting, enrolling, dis-enrolling, or otherwise differentiating treatment of a student. Our commitment is to provide an equitable and accessible education to all students, regardless of their family's capacity for involvement. Parental participation is highly valued and encouraged, but it is entirely voluntary and will not impact a student's standing at the school.



Opt-Out Process for Parental Support Opportunities

While Inspira STEAM Academy will offer numerous opportunities for parents to support the school, we recognize that families have varying capacities due to work schedules, other obligations, or personal circumstances. All parental support opportunities, such as volunteering in classrooms, participating in fundraising activities, or attending specific school events, are entirely voluntary.

Parents who are unwilling or unable to meet the proposed school's support opportunities can easily opt out through a simple and respectful process:

Clear Communication of Opportunities

All parental support opportunities will be clearly communicated at the beginning of each school year and on an ongoing basis through the school handbook, newsletters, and the school website, detailing the nature of the opportunity and the estimated time commitment.

No Questions Asked, No Consequences

The school will not inquire about the reasons for opting out, and a parent's decision will have absolutely no bearing on their child's enrollment status, academic performance evaluations, access to programs, or any other aspect of their child's school experience. Our focus remains on supporting every student to succeed.

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



Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to establishing a transparent system for addressing and resolving concerns and complaints from students, parents, and the community. This strategy is important for creating a trusting community, resolving issues promptly, and ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice. Our approach is dedicated to adhering to regulations from the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED), the *Love and Logic* methodology, and principles set by the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit. Together, these components will help develop a responsive, supportive, and equitable environment for our families.

Guiding Principles for the Complaint Process

NMPED specifically outlines protections for student and teacher conduct. The Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit brought to light that many of the schools in New Mexico were not providing sufficient support or resources to students who come from disability, minority, low-income, or rural backgrounds. To address this, Inspira will implement a complaint process that is inclusive, culturally sensitive, and ensures equitable access to services for all families, particularly those from underserved communities. The *Love and Logic* approach focuses on empathy, respect, and the teaching of consequences through a positive, solution-oriented lens. This philosophy will guide how we receive and address complaints, especially when engaging with parents or community members who may be frustrated or upset.

Multiple Access Points for Complaints

Families and students can report complaints in person or online to the Executive Director, Dean of Students, or governance members, depending on the nature of the complaint. If the complaint is against a staff member, families should meet with the Executive Director.

For complaints regarding the Executive Director, the matter will be referred to the Governing Board. If parents do not feel comfortable reporting to either of those options, there will be a designated staff member available to assist them, such as a school liaison, Equity Council representative, counselor, or trusted parent coordinator.

We will create a user-friendly online complaint form on the school's website, allowing parents, students and community members to easily submit concerns at any time. All complaints will be treated with respect and confidentiality. Parents can be assured that their concerns, especially regarding sensitive issues such as special education services or student discipline, will be handled professionally and confidentially.

All complaints will be acknowledged within 72 hours of submission or sooner. An initial response will be sent to the complainant, confirming receipt of the complaint and outlining the next steps. We will maintain clear communication and provide the complainant with a timeline for resolution, including expected response or meeting times, so they know when to anticipate further action.

Investigation and Response for Initial Assessment

The Executive Director or a designated staff member, such as a complaint coordinator, will carefully assess the nature of each complaint to determine whether it necessitates immediate action or requires a more comprehensive investigation. Depending on the specific issue at hand, the following procedural steps will be implemented:

In cases involving behavioral issues, student discipline, or conflict resolution, we will employ the *Love and Logic* and *Restorative Justice* approach. These compassionate methods emphasize empathetic listening and cultivate a safe space where individuals can openly express their concerns. They also focus on establishing clear and consistent consequences that foster personal growth and responsibility.

When addressing academic concerns or issues concerning teacher conduct, we will initiate a fair and thorough investigation to uncover the underlying causes. This process includes collaborating with the involved teacher or staff member to effectively resolve the issue, maintaining a focus on constructive outcomes. For complaints involving students with disabilities, special education services or special education procedures, we will ensure that the issue is directed to a trained staff member who is familiar with IDEA, NMAC, ADA, and Section 504 in addition to the *Love and Logic* and *Restorative Justice* approaches. The Executive Director and Special Education Director/Coordinator will reference the student's IEP to ensure it is being followed as part of the complaint fact-finding process in addition to conducting interviews with relevant parties.

The Fact-Finding Process for any complaint will involve a detailed and systematic approach. We will interview all relevant parties who are involved in the complaint, including parents, students, teachers, and staff, to develop an understanding of events. Necessary documentation will be meticulously collected, such as student records, incident reports, and communication logs, to support the investigation. Throughout this process, we will ensure that the investigation remains impartial and equitable for all parties involved. In cases where expertise is needed, we will consult with specialists, including special education coordinators, bilingual education experts, or counselors, etc. to ensure that the complaint is addressed appropriately and adheres to legal guidelines.



Resolution and Communication

Following an in-depth investigation, we will propose potential solutions based on our findings to the complainant. These solutions may include: adjustments to a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), modifications in teaching practices, classroom management strategies, additional support services aimed at assisting English learners or other students requiring extra help, or implementation of behavioral interventions or conflict resolution strategies in alignment with the *Love and Logic* approach. Where applicable, we will invite the complainant—typically a parent—to meet with the teacher or other involved parties to discuss the proposed solution, fostering a collaborative problem-solving environment. After reaching a resolution, a written summary detailing the findings and actions taken, including any follow-up steps, will be maintained by the Executive Director. We will conduct follow-up communication (phone or email) and/or schedule a follow-up meeting after the complaint has been resolved. This allows for ongoing communication and support.

Inspira will make efforts to work together with parents to find a solution to disagreements and continue positive relationships before needing to use a more formal dispute resolution process in cases involving students with disabilities. Parents will be provided a copy of NMPED's Notice of Procedural Safeguards and dispute resolution options for students with disabilities at the beginning of each year. Inspira will ensure compliance with IDEA, NMAC, ADA, and Section 504 regulations, resulting in families and students receiving the support they are entitled to.

Continuous Improvement

We will actively use feedback from complaints to identify recurring patterns and areas needing improvement in the school's policies, services, or communication methods. A regular review of the complaint process will be conducted to ensure it is effectively meeting the needs of our school community and fostering a positive environment for all.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Director will oversee the entire complaint process, ensuring that it is handled fairly and in a timely manner. They are responsible for communicating with parents, organizing meetings, and ensuring that all legal and ethical guidelines are followed.

Complaint Coordinator- A designated staff member will be responsible for managing the flow of complaints, ensuring they are acknowledged promptly, and coordinating the investigation and resolution process.

Special Education Director/Coordinator- For complaints related to special education services, the special education coordinator will ensure that all processes comply with NMPED and federal laws (IDEA).

Teacher and Support Staff- Teachers and staff are expected to address concerns in the classroom, use the *Love and Logic* and *Restorative Justice* framework to manage conflict, and collaborate with the administration on resolutions.

Compliance with NMPED Law and the Yazzie-Martinez Lawsuit

Our complaint process will fully align with the New Mexico Public Education Department's regulations, particularly concerning student rights, teacher accountability, and the special education process. All policies, practices, and complaint resolutions will adhere to the legal standards established by the Yazzie-Martinez ruling. We will prioritize and urgently address complaints related to inadequate services, resources, or educational support for at-risk, disabilities, low-income, and minority students. We are committed to addressing concerns about the unequal distribution of resources, insufficient language support services, and a lack of academic enrichment programs.

Incorporating *Love and Logic* and *Restorative Justice* into Conflict Resolution

When addressing complaints, particularly those involving student behavior or interactions between parents and the school, we will adopt the *Love and Logic* and *Restorative Justice* approaches.

Empathy and Active Listening- Staff members will listen empathetically to parents and community members, acknowledging their concerns without judgment.

- **Setting Clear Boundaries and Consequences-** After a concern is heard, it will be addressed with clear, fair, and consistent actions that emphasize learning and growth for everyone involved.
- **Promoting Positive Solutions-** We will collaborate with the complainant to develop positive, long-term solutions that benefit both the student and the school community.

Governing Board Involvement in Grievance



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Appeal to the Governing Board- If the complainant is not satisfied with the Executive Director's response, they may submit an appeal to the Governing Board. The Governing Board will review and discuss the appeal and respond to the complainant within 30 days of the appeal.

McKinney-Vento and special education grievance processes

"Under the McKinney-Vento Act, State educational agencies (SEAs) must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other children and youths" (U.S. Department of Education [ED], 2018). To ensure that Inspira STEAM Academy fully complies with the legal requirements outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act and the special education grievance processes established under New Mexico law, the school will take several proactive measures.

First, we will designate a qualified McKinney-Vento Liaison whose primary responsibility will be to oversee all compliance efforts related to educational requirements for students experiencing homelessness. This liaison will serve as the main point of contact for families, ensuring they are aware of their rights and the resources available to them. We will implement comprehensive policies that facilitate the immediate enrollment of unhoused students, eliminating barriers that may prevent them from accessing education without delay. This includes providing support services tailored to meet the unique needs of unhoused students, such as transportation assistance, access to counseling, and academic support programs. If there is a dispute, the resolution process should be prompt and take no less than 15 days and no more than 30 calendar days. If a dispute is not resolved at Inspira, the family has the right to appeal to the New Mexico Public Education Department (New Mexico Public Education Department [NMPED], 1998).

Next, Inspira STEAM Academy will establish clear and transparent procedures for filing and addressing state complaints, due process hearings, and mediation requests pertaining to special education (New Mexico Public Education Department [NMPED], 2025). These procedures will be communicated to families in an accessible manner, ensuring they understand how to navigate the grievance process effectively. To enhance support for families, Inspira will provide information about the Special Education Ombud and other parent advocacy organizations, ensuring that parents and guardians have access to advocacy services and information about their rights (New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Planning Council [NMDDPC], n.d.). By proactively addressing these critical areas, Inspira STEAM Academy is committed to fulfilling its legal obligations while also championing the educational rights and needs of all students, particularly those facing homelessness or special educational challenges. This holistic approach aims to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where every student has the opportunity to succeed.

In Summary

Inspira STEAM Academy will utilize this plan for receiving and processing concerns and complaints from parents and the community. By incorporating NMPED regulations, the principles of the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit, and the empathetic strategies of *Love and Logic* and *Restorative*, the school will create a transparent, supportive environment where concerns are addressed promptly, fairly, and with respect for all stakeholders. This process not only seeks to resolve individual complaints but also aims to build trust and foster a positive school culture that benefits students, parents, and the wider community.

Section F References

- New Mexico Public Education Department. (1998, December 31). *6.10.3 NMAC: Complaint procedure*. New Mexico Administrative Code. <https://www.srca.nm.gov/parts/title06/06.010.0003.html> (<https://www.srca.nm.gov/parts/title06/06.010.0003.html>)
- New Mexico Public Education Department. (2025, February 25). *Dispute resolution*. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/special-education/dispute-resolution/> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/special-education/dispute-resolution/>)
- New Mexico Public Education Department. (2025, February 25). *State Complaint*. New Mexico Public Education Department. (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/special-education/dispute-resolution/state-complaint/>)<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/special-education/dispute-resolution/state-complaint/> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/special-education/dispute-resolution/state-complaint/%E2%80%8B>)
- New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. (n.d.). *Office of the Special Education Ombud*. Retrieved May 19, 2025, from <https://www.nmddpc.com/office-of-special-education-ombud> (<https://www.nmddpc.com/office-of-special-education-ombud>)



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U.S. Department of Education. (2018, August). *Education for homeless children and youths program non-regulatory guidance* (Non-Regulatory Guidance). <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2020/07/160240ehcyguidanceupdated082718.pdf>
(<https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2020/07/160240ehcyguidanceupdated082718.pdf>)

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 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**



Engaging and Growing Our Inspira STEAM Academy Community

Recruitment Plan

Our comprehensive outreach and recruitment plan is designed to connect deeply with families, build lasting trust, and showcasing what makes Inspira STEAM Academy special. We are leveraging a blend of community engagement, digital outreach, and grassroots strategies to create a welcoming and informative pathway for prospective students and their families.

Associated Cost

The initial cost for recruiting will be covered by the founding team. Our initial efforts will be to recruit families in the neighborhood. After the school is authorized, we will utilize the fund 60000 and fundraise for donations to continue recruitment.

If projected numbers are not met

If our recruitment methods are ineffective and we do not meet the projected number of students, we will aggressively begin a new marketing campaign. If the initial numbers drop, we will visit daycare centers, pediatrician offices and engage the parents in verbal recruiting.



G. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

G.(1) Outreach & Recruitment Plan

Inspira STEAM Academy Community-Based Outreach Events		
Strategy	Objective	Action Plan
Pizza at the Park	Engaging families in an informal, welcoming setting	Host events in local parks with pizza, refreshments, games, and a short presentation. Include bilingual staff, school staff mingling with families, and informational materials.
Saturdays at the Pool	Build personal connections within local neighborhoods.	Encourage community-hosted gatherings with popsicles, brief school presentations, and Q&A. Foster peer-to-peer recruitment through casual home-based or local space gatherings.
Church Partnerships	Partner with churches in the Sonoma Area	Establish relationships with churches, present at services or events, distribute materials in bulletins, and offer post-service info sessions with refreshments and swag. Host "school Sundays" to engage attendees.
Word of Mouth	Empower parents to recruit through personal networks.	Create a Parent Ambassador program with incentives for referrals, recognition, and gear. Encourage sharing through social media and informal channels. Establish a referral program with rewards for bringing in new families.
Community Centers	Provide accessible and informative sessions in local spaces.	Partner with centers to host bilingual sessions showcasing school programs, offering interactive materials, refreshments, and swag. Engage community leaders to co-host sessions for wider attendance.

Inspira STEAM Academy Community-Based Outreach Events		
Participation in Local Events	Increase visibility and community engagement.	Set up booths at local events with hands-on activities for kids and materials for parents. Volunteer or sponsor community initiatives and use staff, students, and parents to staff booths.
Digital and Social Media	Reach tech-savvy families and expand digital outreach.	Develop active social media presence, run targeted ads for events, create engaging video content (e.g., school tours, teacher intros), and encourage community sharing using hashtags.
Local Media & PR Campaigns	Broaden awareness through traditional and digital media.	Issue press releases, feature school events in local media, pitch impactful stories to news outlets, and highlight achievements and programs in newspapers, radio, and TV.
Metrics and Evaluations	Track and assess the effectiveness of strategies.	Track event participation, measure enrollment tied to specific activities, survey families for feedback, and adjust strategies based on results.




Annual Evaluation

A strong metrics and evaluation system will guide ongoing improvements. We will track attendance, measure enrollment success, and gather family feedback to continuously refine our strategies, ensuring we effectively reach and welcome a diverse and vibrant community to Inspira STEAM Academy. We will also conduct exit surveys when families leave the program to ensure we are responsive in addressing any feedback and provide continuous improvement.

Tailored Plan

This outreach and recruitment plan will be implemented by the Executive Director, the Governing Board, the Founders, and parent volunteers. We will utilize a combination of community-driven initiatives, digital engagement, and personal relationships to foster a welcoming environment for prospective students and families. By connecting with the community through events like "Pizza at the Park," church-based recruitment, word-of-mouth referrals, and attendance at local events, the school can build trust, raise awareness, and ultimately increase enrollment. This multi-faceted approach ensures that the school reaches a broad, diverse audience, including families from historically underserved communities, and creates a vibrant, inclusive school culture. Once Inspira has a permanent building, we will have the ability to host open houses in our location.

Applicant Evidence :



G(1)a - Reference Inspira STEAM ...

Uploaded on **6/2/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**

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



Inspira STEAM Academy will implement a lottery admission process that will be in compliance with state laws, regulations from the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED), and provisions in response to the Yazzie-Martinez case, which addresses educational equity for students in historically marginalized groups.

Our Lottery Process will be conducted with fairness and transparency to ensure that the admissions process is equitable and transparent for all students.

We will hold pre-lottery informational sessions for parents and guardians to explain the lottery process, answer questions, and address concerns. These sessions will be accessible in various languages and held at different times of day during our school's information sessions. The admission process will be advertised on our website and social media platforms.

Inspira STEAM Academy Lottery System Structure

- Our application will request the name and grade of the incoming student, the parent's name, and phone number or email for communication purposes.
- Random Selection Process: The lottery will be based on a random selection process once we exceed capacity, to ensure fairness and compliance with Section 22-8B-4.1 NMSA (1978).
- The application period will be announced two months in advance and clearly communicated to the community.
- The application window will be open for a minimum of two months to allow for sufficient time for interested families to apply.
- A public, recorded lottery drawing process will be implemented during a live session at school and streamed online for families who are unable to attend.
- Once the student has been selected, the families will have 24 hours to respond to the open seat. If the families do not respond in 24 hours, we will move on to the next selected student and the originally selected student will go to the bottom of the waitlist. If the call is made on a Friday, we will wait for a response until the school closes on Monday.
- Lottery results will be posted at the Inspira front office and made publicly available on our school website, utilizing the students' assigned identifier provided in an email.
- The lottery process will include a system for families to track their application status, including waitlists.
- A waitlist will be created for students who are not selected in the initial lottery. The waitlist will be managed transparently and will follow the same equity principles as the lottery process.
- The school should follow the policy in place to update families regularly on their waitlist status if seats become open.
- Special categories of enrollment preference; State law 22-8B-4.1 NMSA (1978) provides that only the following categories of applicants may be given enrollment preference in the lottery/admission process:
 - students who have been admitted to the charter school through an appropriate admission process and remain in attendance through subsequent grades
 - children of employees employed by the school
 - siblings of students already admitted to, or attending, the same charter school.

Post lottery

- We will comply with the non-discrimination provisions of the New Mexico Charter Schools Act Section 22-8B-4(T) NMSA (1978). We will not discriminate on the basis of "disabilities, physical or mental
- capacity, serious medical condition, race, creed, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services.
- We will report the results of the lottery process to NMPED, including the demographic breakdown of applicants, selected students, and those on the waitlist.
- We will maintain records of all applications for auditing purposes and to ensure compliance with state law.
- We will ensure that the lottery process does not exacerbate inequities, particularly regarding students from low-income households, students with disabilities, and students who require language support services.
- Additional support will be made available for these populations, such as early literacy programs, bilingual education services, and social-emotional support services.
- We will conduct a new lottery each enrollment year and the prior waitlist will not carry over.



Section G References

New Mexico Public Education Department. (2023, August 18). *Lottery guidance*. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Lottery-Guidance.pdf> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Lottery-Guidance.pdf>)

New Mexico Statutes Annotated. (2024). *Section 22-8B-4: Charter schools' rights and responsibilities; operation*. <https://law.justia.com/codes/new-mexico/2024/chapter-22/article-8b/section-22-8b-4/> (<https://law.justia.com/codes/new-mexico/2024/chapter-22/article-8b/section-22-8b-4/>)

Q40.



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

Please see PDF for the Conflict of Interest Acknowledgment and Disclosure form and the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Applicant Evidence :

	
Conflict of Interest Acknowledg...	Inspira STEAM Academy Charter ...
Uploaded on 6/2/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia	Uploaded on 6/2/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

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 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.

Inspira STEAM Academy has no third-party relationships that control or influence our school's essential operations, curriculum, or instruction; all partnerships are strictly supportive and do not dictate our core functions. Our Governing Board and school leadership maintain full and independent authority over all critical decisions.



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.

Inspira STEAM Academy has no third-party relationships that control or influence our school's essential operations, curriculum, or instruction; all partnerships are strictly supportive and do not dictate our core functions. Our Governing Board and school leadership maintain full and independent authority over all critical decisions.

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

Applicant Evidence :


Appendix I_ Inspira STEAM Acade...

Uploaded on **6/3/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**

Q43.

J.(1) Transportation and Food - Transportation Plan

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



Transportation Services Plan for Inspira STEAM Academy

Inspira STEAM Academy's transportation plan for its initial year will focus on facilitating essential off-campus educational experiences and ensuring compliance with special education needs, rather than daily student transport.

Identified Transportation Needs

Field Trips

Transportation for enriching STEAM field trips to New Mexico State University and other Inspira organizational supporters within Las Cruces.

IEP-Related Transportation

Daily transportation for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who require it, as mandated.

Specific Entities/Potential Partners

DS Bus Transportation

Identified as the primary partner for field trip transportation services.

Action Steps, Timelines, Responsible Parties, and Associated Costs:



J. Transportation and Food

J. (1) Transportation Plan

Transportation Services Plan for Inspira STEAM Academy				
Action Item	Steps	Timeline	Responsible Parties	Cost
Identify Bus Needs	Partner with DS Bus Transportation to provide buses and trained drivers for field trips.	Initial partnership confirmed by July 1	Business Manager, Executive Director	Included in the transportation budget allocation
Hire/Contract transportation company	No direct hiring in Year 1; relying on DS Bus Transportation for all field trip needs.	Partnership set up by July	Business Manager	Cost per trip based on vendor contract
Establish Training/Inspection Process	Ensure DS Bus Transportation provides proof of driver training and vehicle inspection records.	Confirmed before each trip	Business Manager	Covered by vendor
Identify Travel Routes/Pick-Up & Drop-Off Points	Coordinate field trip pick-up/drop-off points at the school and the destination.	2 weeks prior to each trip	Teacher/Trip Coordinator; Business Manager	Integrated into the planning process for each field trip
Create transportation policies and practices	Develop a field trip transportation policy, including behavior guidelines and emergency protocols.	Completed by September 1	Executive Director, School Safety Committee	Minimal Administrative cost for policy drafting and distribution
Identify student transportation needs	Assess and document specific needs for students with IEPs	As needed per the IEP schedule	Special Education Coordinator	Costs covered by Inspira STEAM Academy.
Identify transportation plan cost	Allocate budget for field trips and IEP-related transportation expenses.	Reviewed quarterly	Executive Director, Finance Committee	Approx. \$300-\$500 per field trip, depending on location and duration
Identify potential partners/vendors	DS Bus Transportation (field trips)	Ongoing Partnerships	Business Manager	DS Bus Transportation trip will be covered by Inspira.

Methodology

The school will establish protocols for coordinating transportation needs with these entities. This includes timely communication of field trip schedules to DS Bus Transportation to reserve appropriate vehicles and drivers.

Establishing Training Needs and Inspection Process Needs

Field Trips

DS Bus Transportation is expected to provide drivers who are already experienced and specifically trained in child transportation safety.

Inspira STEAM Academy will verify driver credentials and conduct pre-trip inspections of vehicles to ensure they meet safety standards.



IEP Transportation

Inspira STEAM Academy is responsible for ensuring their transportation providers meet all legal and safety requirements for transporting students with IEPs, including appropriate training and vehicle inspections.

Establishing Travel Routes and Pick Up/Drop Off Points

Field Trips

Routes will be pre-planned by Inspira STEAM Academy staff in coordination with DS Bus Transportation to ensure efficiency and safety to and from designated field trip locations. Pick-up and drop-off will occur at the school campus.

IEP Transportation

Specific routes and pick-up/drop-off points for students with IEPs will be established and managed by Inspira STEAM Academy, as per the student's IEP.

Establishing Transportation Policies and Practices

Field Trips

Inspira STEAM Academy will develop clear policies for student conduct on buses, staff supervision ratios, emergency procedures, and communication protocols with DS Bus Transportation.

IEP Transportation

Policies will align with federal and state regulations for special education transportation, acknowledging Inspira's primary role in this area.

Transportation Plan Costs

Field Trips

The cost of bus rental from DS Bus Transportation for field trips will be covered by the school's dedicated budget for transportation needs. Specific costs will vary based on the duration and distance of each trip, but these will be pre-negotiated and budgeted.


IEP Transportation

The cost for IEP-related transportation will be managed by Inspira STEAM Academy in accordance with state and federal special education mandates.

Section J Reference

<https://dsbuslines.com/about-sts-new-mexico/>

Applicant Evidence :



J(1)a - Reference Inspira STEAM A...

Uploaded on 6/3/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

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



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- 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;
- 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



Inspira STEAM Academy Food Services

The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in Las Cruces stands at 68.2% (U.S. News & World Report, n.d.). To address the nutritional needs of our student body, we are committed to offering comprehensive cafeteria services, contingent on securing a facility equipped with the necessary features for food preparation. The responsible parties for food services are as follows:

Responsible Parties

The Executive Director will ensure that program guidelines are met and will cover the cost from the school meals operation fund before receiving reimbursement. Once the reimbursement for the food paid for by the school is received, the governing board will approve transferring the funds from the reimbursement to the operating fund. The cafeteria manager will prepare the food, order it, and submit all reimbursements for approval. The custodial staff will manage trash disposal. The Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) will convene twice a year to provide feedback to the cafeteria manager. Teachers will provide nutrition education lessons along with community volunteers. The weekly newsletter will provide information about the food that is being served.

Contingency Plans and Potential Partner Vendors

In the event that our facility lacks the space to prepare hot lunches, we have developed a contingency plan for the first school year. During this period, students will be encouraged to bring packed lunches from home. We understand that not all families may have the resources to prepare nutritious meals, consequently, we have reached out to Cravings Catering to explore the possibility of providing sack lunches specifically for students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch programs. Inspira is committed to working closely with families to ensure that those who qualify for assistance receive adequate meals for their children. We will strive to create an environment that prioritizes the health and nutritional needs of every student, fostering a supportive community for all.

Additionally, we will organize parent meetings to provide guidance on how to pack healthy and balanced lunches, emphasizing the importance of nutrition in supporting our students' academic performance and overall well-being.

Federal and State Food Programs

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) serves as the primary federal initiative in New Mexico that offers food in educational institutions. Participating in the NSLP supports schools by supplying financial assistance and providing complimentary or discounted meals to qualifying students, which enhances their health and academic success (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA], n.d.). After gaining approval, Inspira STEAM Academy plans to apply for the National School Lunch Program during the 2026 academic year. First, we will contact the NMPED to ensure the information we have is up to date. Second, we will watch the video with the instructions. Third, we will submit a request for a Certificate of Authority. Fourth, we will submit the completed NSLP Application. The last step after being approved is to begin program implementation.

We will also be applying for the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program which is "A federally assisted program aimed at increasing children's acceptance and consumption of FRESH fruit & vegetables by providing a variety of free produce to students at participating elementary schools during the school day" (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2025). This program aims to increase the variety of fresh produce that children experience. They teach the kids to enjoy unprocessed produce and increase consumption by providing a variety of free produce to students at participating elementary schools during the school day. Inspira will apply for the FFVP. If Inspira has a high percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, we will qualify for the FFVP.

Section J Reference

New Mexico Public Education Department. (2025, January). *Fresh fruit and vegetable program (FFVP)*. <https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Fresh-Fruit-and-Vegetable-FFVP.pdf> (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Fresh-Fruit-and-Vegetable-FFVP.pdf>)

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (n.d.). *National School Lunch Program*. Retrieved May 19, 2025, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp> (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp>)



U.S. News & World Report. (n.d.). *Las Cruces Public Schools*. U.S. News & World Report. Retrieved April 28, 2025, from <https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/new-mexico/districts/las-cruces-public-schools-100743> (<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/new-mexico/districts/las-cruces-public-schools-100743>)

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 to 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

Please see the approval letter from PSFA in **Appendix E**

Please see the attached screenshot with the email time-stamped with the facilities Master Plan.

Applicant Evidence :

	
Appendix E - Inspira STEAM Acad...	Appendix E - Inspira STEAM Acad...
Uploaded on 6/2/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia	Uploaded on 6/2/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

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



Researched Facilities/Properties

The Inspira STEAM Academy founding team has actively traveled through various neighborhoods in the Northeast region of Las Cruces to identify suitable buildings for the future school location. In this effort, Mrs. Rivera-Tapia reached out to Luis Quiterio, an associate broker at Select Realty, to explore several potential properties throughout the Northeast of Las Cruces. They have established a strong line of communication and are in regular discussions to evaluate and visit various commercial properties that align with the school's needs. This ongoing collaboration aims to ensure that the chosen location not only meets the logistical requirements but also supports the vision and mission of Inspira STEAM Academy.

During the planning phase and the first year of operations, Inspira will seek potential grants and utilize SEG operational funds to prepare the facility to meet programmatic and student needs. Inspira's budget is based on a lease assistance reimbursement rate of \$815 per student. It assumes that funding for the first year will be determined by year one's 80th day membership, as specified in 22-24-4 NMSA 1978, with subsequent years based on the prior year's average of the 80th and 120th day membership. We have also been in communication with Mr. Steve Nakamura who currently serves as the Chief Visionary of Rachel Matthew Development. After our application is approved, we will communicate with him to strategize on planning and development strategies of a permanent building for Inspira STEAM Academy.

Facility requirements

Before opening Inspira STEAM Academy, the proposed building has to meet New Mexico's educational Standards found in Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978. We will have to apply for an E-occupancy permit with the Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC). First, we will have to notify PSCOC to inform them of our intent to utilize the building as a school. The notification will include;

- A statement of need
- The number of projected student
- Estimated cost
- Description of the building including square footage, location, and number of bathrooms.
- A map showing existing school attendance centers within a five-mile radius and any obstructions to attending these centers

1. After submitting this information, the PSCOC will assess the facility to determine compliance with statewide adequacy standards.
2. Inspira STEAM Academy will demonstrate that the facilities meet the required occupancy standards by the end of the planning year. We will provide evidence of compliance of adequacy standards (N.M. Stat. Ann. § 22-8B-4.2, 1978).
3. Facilities Assurances proof of Documentation, *Certificate A Public Facility*
4. The authorizer will grant approval for the charter school upon receiving the documentation stated above.

Capital Outlay

Inspira STEAM Academy will reach the full capacity of 240 students by the year 2031. As a new charter school, Inspira will seek federal grants and private funds to prepare the school before qualifying for support from the state capital outlay. When Inspira is in full operation, we can qualify for lease assistance and apply for capital outlay through our authorizer. We plan to align our facility usage with student enrollment, potentially starting with a smaller leased site in the school's early years and transitioning to a larger, permanent location as enrollment and funding increase.



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New Mexico Public Education Department



Efforts to date in the search for a perfect building for Inspira Potential Building Search/Efforts to Date					
Date of visit	Potential Building	Location	Advantages of location	Challenges of location (if any)	Next steps
2.21.25	4300 Sonoma Ranch Blvd. Las Cruces, NM 88011	Within desired location	Brand New vacant Shopping Center	No space for a playground or pick up or drop off. Not enough space for all classes.	None
N/A	900 S. Telshor Blvd. Las Cruces, NM 88011	Within desired location	Lots of traffic, Vacant business	Too many renovation needs	None
N/A	4420 E Lohman Ave Las Cruces, NM 88011	Within desired location	Vacant land	No building	None
N/A	2650 Mall Dr Las Cruces, NM 88011	Within desired location	Vacant land	No building	None

2.21.25	HWY 70 6225 Bataan Memorial West	Within desired location	Land and a metal building	Too many renovation needs	None
2.27.25	2100 Summit Ct. Las Cruces, New Mexico 88011	Within desired location	-Space for playground -Overflow Parking -Space to do drop off and pick up -High traffic location -Ready to move in. -Easy access to HWY 70.	Exiting the parking lot may be difficult. Rent is out of our budget.	Will follow up with the realtor
3.15.25	1770 S. Telshor Blvd Las Cruces, NM 88011	Within desired location		Too small	None
3.17.25	4420 Sonoma Ranch Blvd, Suite C Las Cruces, NM 88011	Within desired location	-Easy access to HWY 70.	Not large enough	None

Potential Facility that Meets Requirements

Inspira STEAM Academy has identified 2100 Summit Ct. in Las Cruces, New Mexico, as a preferred facility to meet the school's long-term operational needs. This property complies with most of the requirements outlined in NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-4.2, including legal occupancy and ownership structure.

Facility Preparation Plan



To ensure the school is prepared to open on schedule in July 2026. The facility preparation process will begin immediately upon finalizing the lease agreement, anticipated in June 2026. The plan is structured to meet all state and local requirements while aligning the building with the educational model of a STEAM-focused charter school.

Final Facility Due Diligence and Compliance Review (June 2026)

The Executive Director, in collaboration with legal counsel, will complete a final review of the property to verify compliance with statutory requirements. This includes occupancy status, ADA compliance, educational adequacy, and zoning alignment. A licensed inspector will conduct a full facilities inspection.

Estimated cost: \$200-300 per hour

Renovation and Facility Upgrades (February 2026)

Renovation will include classroom reconfiguration, updated restrooms, safety and security upgrades (alarms, fencing, secure entry), HVAC servicing, and ADA adjustments where necessary. A licensed contractor and a Facilities Manager will oversee this work to ensure timelines and safety codes are met.

Estimated cost: \$50.00-300.00 per square foot

Cafeteria and Kitchen Setup (March 2025)

Depending on the existing infrastructure, Inspira will install essential food service equipment or designate a vendor prep space to support its participation in the National School Lunch Program. *In the event that a full-service kitchen is not viable for the first year, a partnership with Cravings Catering will be activated to provide sack lunches to students.*

Estimated cost: \$15,000-\$25,000

Technology Infrastructure and Equipment Installation (April- August 2026)

Technology upgrades will include Wi-Fi installation, classroom smart boards, student computers, and STEAM lab equipment. An IT consultant will lead the integration of digital tools aligned with the school's curriculum.

Estimated cost: The current building is wired and has IT infrastructure. A needs assessment will have to be made to determine the technology needs.

Furniture and Fixtures Procurement (March 2026)

Desks, chairs, whiteboards, cafeteria tables, administrative furniture, and staff equipment will be ordered and delivered. Procurement will be managed by the Executive Director and a designated Purchasing Coordinator.

Estimated cost: \$50,000

Safety Inspections and City Permits (August 2026)

Prior to occupancy, the school will coordinate with the City of Las Cruces and the fire marshal to schedule all required inspections. The Facilities Manager will ensure any final compliance items are addressed.

Estimated cost: \$2,000

Outdoor Learning and Recreational Space Setup (August 2026)

Inspira will develop a basic outdoor area with fencing and play space to support recess and outdoor STEAM activities. All equipment during the first two years will consist of portable equipment such as; tricycles, soccer goals, fun shot hoops, and other equipment that will help develop their gross motor skills.

Estimated cost: \$15,000

Responsible Parties

- Executive Director - oversees entire facility preparation and ensures compliance with the charter and legal requirements.
- Facilities Manager - manages contractors, renovation work, safety checks, and inspections.
- Cafeteria Manager - Advises on food service equipment needs and health code compliance.
- IT Consultant - Leads tech installation and system configuration.
- Governing Board - Reviews and approves capital outlay expenditures.

2.3. Financial Framework



Q47.

A. School Size - Projected Enrollment

• A complete response must


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

State the requested enrollment, grade levels to be served, and student/teacher ratio. Please note that this is a projected enrollment. If approved, actual funding will be determined by NMPED School Budget Bureau based on data regarding enrollment membership, including, but not limited to, lottery applications submitted and registrations completed in the spring of the implementation year.

**A(1)a - Reference Inspira STEAM Academy - Projected Enrollment**

Academic Year	Number of Students	Grade Levels	Student/Teacher Ratio
Year 1	80	K-1	20-2
Year 2	120	K-2	20-2
Year 3	160	K-3	20-1
Year 4	200	K-4	20-1
Year 5	240	K-5	20-1
At Capacity (Enrollment Cap)	240	K-5	20-1 *third grade and above, unless an IEP requires something different.

Applicant Evidence :



A(1)a - Reference Inspira STEAM ...

Uploaded on **6/3/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**

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 applicable).
- 5. Required to use tool provided

Inspira STEAM Academy will have the primary funding source as the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Please see **Appendix F** for the 910B-5 showing the first year estimated SEG Award.

Resources




910B-5-Tool New Charter.xlsx


Applicant Evidence :




Inspira STEAM Academy - 910B-5...



Inspira STEAM Academy - 910B-5...



Inspira STEAM Academy - 910B-5...




Inspira STEAM Academy - 910B-5...

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Inspira STEAM Academy - 910B-5...

Uploaded on 6/2/2025 by Julia Rivera-Tapia

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

Inspira STEAM Academy plans to have controlled and measured growth each of the five years, starting with kindergarten and first grade, expanding to fifth grade by year five.

Please see **Appendix G** for the five-year budget.

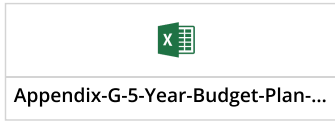
Resources



Appendix-G-5-Year-Budget-Plan-...



Applicant Evidence :



Appendix-G-5-Year-Budget-Plan-...

Uploaded on **6/2/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**

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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Inspira STEAM Academy developed its five-year budget to achieve the school's mission and prioritize the school's educational programming. Inspira STEAM Academy uses a developmental financial approach that allows for the addition of classrooms and membership each of the five operational years.

The primary revenues will be through the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG), Title I, IDEA B, Title IV, and other local funding opportunities.

The projections with the SEG are based on the planned student distribution of the following classes and membership per year:

Year 1: K-1 (4 classrooms, 80 students total) \$945,676

Year 2: K-2 (6 classrooms, 120 students total) \$1,406,116

Year 3: K-3 (8 classrooms, 160 students total) \$1,799,903

Year 4: K-4 (10 classrooms, 200 students total) \$2,154,099

Year 5: K-5 (12 classrooms, 240 students total) \$2,508,294

Year One SEG revenue also utilizes a 1.1 TCI factor. The teachers hired initially for each grade level will include a master teacher. This master teacher will be able to provide mentoring, guidance, and support to other instructors.

Although not incorporated into the budget, Title I and Title IV funds will be utilized to offset some of the Educational Assistant FTEs and associated expenses. The At-Risk factor is initially set for the Las Cruces Public School district's factor.

Expense (Function 1000)

The teaching staff who will carry out the educational objectives of Inspira STEAM Academy are of utmost importance. Bilingual endorsement required, TESOL (preferred) endorsements will be required for teaching personnel, as well as a calendar that goes well beyond the hour requirements set forth by the State of New Mexico. We feel this is crucial for the appropriate language acquisition of the students.

Instructional staff will have contracts that are based on a typical 1,140-hour calendar year. However, additional stipends will be included in the contract for additional professional development hours, extended instructional days, and language-based endorsements. Inspira STEAM Academy is aware that the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers is dependent on compensation, environment, and personal/professional support. The school will be recruiting Level 2 and 3 teachers for master teacher positions.

Benefits will include ERB, FICA, Medicare, NMPSIA Insurance (Health, Dental, Vision, Life, ADL, ADD, and LTL), State Unemployment Insurance and Worker's Compensation.

Personnel Costs (Function 1000)

(1411) Teachers-Grades 1-12: 2 Teachers * 65,000 avg. salary = 130,000

Additional Compensation: 12,000

Associated Benefits: 54,200

(1412) Teachers – Special Education: 1 Special Education Teacher * 72,000 avg. salary = 72,000

Additional Compensation: 3,000

Associated Benefits: 33,300

(1413) Teachers-Grades K: 2 Teachers * 65,000 avg. salary = 130,000

Additional Compensation: 12,000

Associated Benefits: 54,150

Other Costs (Function 1000)

Other Contract Services: 20,000

Inspira STEAM will contract special education services with local providers inclusive of diagnostic evaluation and services.

Software: 10,000

The Student Information System (SIS) will be evaluated to ensure appropriate capacity, transferability and integration with NOVA.



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General Supplies and Materials: 20,000

Normal supplies and materials for teachers and students.

Expense (Function 2100)

Although no personnel will be allocated to this function initially, the support services will be contracted out to local providers. This is inclusive of consultants and mental health providers.

Other Costs (Function 2100)

Other Contract Services: 20,000

Inspira STEAM will contract student support services with local providers inclusive of technical assistance in SIS management, social services referrals, and challenging behavior management.

Expense (Function 2300)

The proposed Executive Director for Inspira STEAM Academy has over twenty years of experience in bilingual and inquiry-based education. The Executive Director will ensure the academic programs align with the school's mission and vision. They will oversee the implementation of the curriculum that supports bilingual education, STEAM, and inquiry-based methodologies. They will provide professional development that focuses on the development and growth of academics.

They will be responsible for managing the daily operations, which will include curriculum implementation, maintaining schedules, calendars, managing staff, student affairs, and community relations. The Executive Director will implement Governing Board policies to ensure state and federal regulation compliance. They will provide monthly reports to the Governing Board regarding student academic performance, operational status, and financial status. The Executive Director will engage with students, staff, community members, and parents to foster a welcoming and positive school environment.

The Executive Director will collaborate closely with the Business Manager to ensure effective budgeting and financial management. They will be responsible for hiring, coaching, supervising, onboarding, and evaluating all school staff. Additionally, the Executive Director will work to foster positive relationships with students, the community, and parents. As the primary representative of Inspira, the Executive Director will attend community and public events. They will also ensure that Inspira STEAM Academy complies with all requirements and regulations established by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED).

Benefits will include ERB, FICA, Medicare, NMPSIA Insurance (Health, Dental, Vision, Life, ADL, ADD, and LTL), State Unemployment Insurance and Workers' Compensation.

Personnel Costs (Function 2300)

Director 1111: 102,000

Associated Benefits 1111: 37,870

Secretarial 1217: 50,000

Associated Benefits 1217: 23,270

Other Costs (Function 2300)

Professional Development: 8,000

Training and professional development for the Inspira STEAM Academy employees and Governing Board Members that is not provided by other funding sources.

Auditing: 5,000

Internal control, compliance, and financial auditing are required by the state of New Mexico.

Legal: 5,000

Attorney and Legal fees associated with the charter school and any contracts entered into with other entities.

General Supplies and Materials: 5,000

Normal supplies and materials for general administration.



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**Expense (Function 2400)**

For the first two years of operation, there are no personnel budgeted to function 2400. In year three of operation, it is anticipated that a Dean of Students position will be able to be budgeted along with appropriate benefits.

Expense (Function 2500)

The Business Manager will be a part-time employee, ensuring that appropriate internal controls are in place. Procurement and payroll activities will be managed alongside the Executive Director and Dean of Students to ensure accuracy and understanding of school finance. As the school grows, a full-time employee can be retained to manage the school's finances.

Benefits will include ERB, FICA, Medicare, NMPSIA Insurance (Health, Dental, Vision, Life, ADL, ADD, and LTL), State Unemployment Insurance and Workers' Compensation.

Personnel Costs (Function 2500)

Business Manager 1115: 30,000

Associated Benefits 1111: 8,500

Other Costs (Function 2500)

Software: 20,000

Inspira STEAM Academy will utilize financial software that is capable and appropriate for the needs of the school. Skyward, APTA, and Visions will each be evaluated for compatibility with the school.

General Supplies and Materials: 2,000

Normal supplies and materials for the business office.

Expense (Function 2600)

Although no personnel will be allocated to this function initially, the custodial and maintenance work will be contracted out to local providers.

Other Costs (Function 2600)

Electricity: 10,000

Natural Gas and Utilities: 2,000

Property/Liability Insurance: 16,000

Estimated year one coverage through POMS and Associates.

Other Contract Services: 20,000

Inclusive of maintenance and custodial services.

Maintenance Supplies/Parts: 10,000

General supplies for maintenance and repairs needed for the facility.

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 Inspira STEAM Academy.



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 beginning of the proposed school year.



Budget Control Strategies & Budget Adjustments to meet Budget and Cash Challenges

The effectiveness of budget control is derived from the effectiveness of communication among the governance and administrative teams. Throughout the implementation year, the Executive Director, Administrative Assistants, Governing Board, and Business Manager will participate in financial training.

The training programs will be customized for each entity, as they will require different levels of knowledge regarding the school budget. The secretary will attend the New Mexico Association of School Business Officials (NMASBO) boot camp for a few days to gain better insights into the procurement processes and laws related to school budgets. Others, including Governing Board members, parents, and staff, are also encouraged to attend.

The Governing Board members will participate in a module that provides financial training using the financial software we utilize. This will help them better understand the school budget. There will be an assigned Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) who will hold the necessary license for two years. If we do not have a CPO by the beginning of the school year, the Business Manager will assume this responsibility until the secretary is certified. Each individual will receive an appropriate level of training pertaining to finance at Inspira STEAM Academy. This will set a foundation for the school to have knowledge of financial planning, as well as what to look for in budget reports. Along with monthly Finance Committee meetings, these types of training will help guide the appropriate expansion of the school.

Budget Control Strategies & Budget Adjustments Due to Failure of Anticipated Funding

As detailed in previous sections of this application, Inspira STEAM will be diversifying funding streams as much as possible. This includes capital outlay funds such as SB-9 and the PSCOC Lease Reimbursement Program. Also, the Enterprise fund 60000, which will allow the school to raise unrestricted funds for utilization in any area in which funding may not be received or is less than anticipated. The school will create the Grants.gov and SAM accounts to be able to apply for direct federal funding.

As budget monitoring and reporting will occur on a monthly basis, any changes to anticipated revenues will be addressed with enough time to make small changes over a period of time rather than dramatic changes prior to the end of the fiscal year.

The proposed operational budget has a 90% capacity enrollment. This conservative approach also provides flexibility for change if enrollment does not meet the anticipated levels. Although it is believed that the enrollment percentage will be higher, the school will utilize conservatism in all membership and revenue projections. Also, in the proposed budget, an average of 10% of funding is planned to be carried forward into the following year. This provides a safe cash balance as well as budgetary flexibility should the school not achieve anticipated funding.

Inspira STEAM has consulted with a variety of school business officials in preparing this application. Each of their recommendations is reflected in the budget, cash management, and internal control strategies.

Budget Control Strategies: Providing Capacity to Manage the Budget Successfully

As the school formulates the annual budget, the goal will be to ensure that a percentage of the budget is available for carry-over. During the initial year, the carryover percentage will be at its lowest, approximately 3-6%. In subsequent years, the carryover percentage should range from 8-10%. This will allow the school to have a positive cash balance availability as well as flexibility when the inevitable additional changes and cash needs arrive.

It is understood that charter schools receive less funding per student than districts, so ensuring cash availability will be paramount. Through federal funding, federal flow-through funding, and state reimbursable funding, it is important to systematically create and submit Requests for Reimbursement monthly or as funds are expended. Since the Inspira receives these funds on a reimbursement basis, the more frequently that the requests are made, the less time that Inspira must absorb the loss of operational funds and cash due to the reimbursement process.

Budget Modification for Students with Special Needs

There is a large range of needs for students, both with and without disabilities. Students with disabilities may at times require more attention or physical assistance than budgeted. The student's education will not be sacrificed for this reason. Inspira STEAM will utilize community resources as needed to ensure that the child has the appropriate tools and care to receive a high-quality learning experience. Agreements will be made with Lion's Club (vision), Mariposas (autism), and other community resources to ensure that the needs of the students are met. If required, Inspira STEAM will make appropriate budget adjustments to ensure that appropriate care and tools are provided.



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Inspira STEAM will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Southwest Regional Cooperative for Medicaid Reimbursement. This will allow the school to be reimbursed by a percentage of the funds that it uses from the operational fund for services provided to students with disabilities. Services for students with disabilities will always be provided prior to reimbursement requests. The primary utilization for IDEA funding will be through Educational Assistant – Special Education salaries and benefits. Requests for Reimbursements will be done on a monthly basis to ensure appropriate cash flow for the school.

Addressing the Budget for Enrollment Under Projections

Proposed budgets are based on membership projections. Actual membership numbers from the 40D, 80D, and 120D define the final program cost and budget for the school. When the membership projects do not meet the actual enrollment, the budget will be decreased early in the second semester. Enrollment must be monitored continuously by the Executive Director and Business Manager, not just on the 3 membership reporting dates. If enrollment is falling short of projections, budget adjustments should be made early to ensure adequate changes can be made within the fiscal year.

In addition to the budget management, Inspira STEAM Academy will be implementing a marketing strategy that utilizes donations and sponsorships through Fund 60000. Fundraising will begin as the online presence is set with a strong foundation. Zeffy will be utilized as the online transaction tool, allowing credit card donations while not charging any amount for each transaction. Fund 60000 will be utilized to ensure that additional cash is available. It will also be budgeted as per the priorities of the Governing Board.

Inspira STEAM Academy will monitor its cash and budget balances carefully. As the above strategies have shown, the school plans to have multiple courses of action in case of enrollment shortfall or other areas that require additional funds. However, if enrollment was significantly overestimated and the school still needed to cut expenses, the Executive Director and Business Manager would put forth a plan for expense reduction. As a last resort, the school may have to consider a Reduction in Force. If the Governing Board approved a Reduction in Force, it would only be because all other avenues have been exhausted. The school understands this very well and therefore will rely on communication, monitoring of cash and budget, and diversification of revenue to ensure that this scenario never takes place.

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



Accounting

I. Proposed Fiscal Year

The fiscal year for Inspira STEAM is July 1 through June 30.

II. GAAP

The accounting procedures used by Inspira STEAM shall conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) to ensure the accuracy of information and compliance with external standards. The school will also follow the GASB, which is the Governmental Accounting Standards Governing Board and is the source of generally accepted accounting principles used by state and local governments in the United States.

III. Accounting Basis

Inspira STEAM will use the modified accrual basis of accounting. This requires that revenues will be recognized as they are received, and expenditures will be recognized as they are paid. Additionally, payroll expenditures will be recognized as they are incurred.

Year-end audited Financial Statements will be prepared on a full accrual basis.

IV. Restricted Grant Tracking

Inspira STEAM shall maintain its general ledger using grant fund codes aligned with the New Mexico Public Education Department's Universal Chart of Accounts for the purposes of tracking restricted revenues and expenses.

V. Capitalization and Depreciation

Inspira STEAM will capitalize and depreciate annually all assets of \$5,000 or more as required by the State of New Mexico.

All assets purchased with an individual value less than \$5,000, will be recognized as non-depreciable assets and will be expensed in the year incurred. Only single items that are equal or greater than \$5,000 will be depreciated. Capitalized assets are recorded at cost and depreciated under the straight-line method over their estimated useful lives as follows:

1. Leasehold improvements: Lease term or up to 30 years, whichever is shorter.
2. Can only install leasehold improvements if an approved lease-purchase is in place.
3. Facility purchases: up to 30 years.
4. Building and site improvements if there is a lease-purchase in place.
5. Computers and associated technology: 3 years.
6. Furniture & equipment: 5 years.

Repair and maintenance costs, which do not extend the useful life of an asset, are recognized as expenses.

Throughout the year, items will be recognized as expenses. They will be reviewed at year-end for possible capitalization and depreciation. Depreciation will be calculated from when the item was purchased and will be treated as placed in service at that time unless otherwise specified.

Items will be tagged when placed in service by the Office Administrator or Executive Director

As part of the annual close, staff will conduct an inventory of all assets, noting condition and location. The Office Administrator and Executive Director will review the inventory and approve it.

Assets sold, retired, lost, or stolen and related amounts of accumulated depreciation will be eliminated from the asset accounts, and any resulting gain or loss will be recognized within that year. h. Nothing in this practice is to prevent Inspira STEAM from maintaining an estimated impact of capitalization and depreciation on operating income and fund balance for the year on interim financial statements.

VI. Bank Reconciliations

A reconciliation of all bank accounts, whether checking or savings accounts, will be performed monthly by the contracted financial management. The financial manager does not have the ability or authority to disburse funds or approve expenses. Inspira STEAM Appendix H Internal Control Procedures

Inspira STEAM will provide the financial management with either online access or paper copies of the monthly statements no later than the 5th business day of the following month.



All bank statements and reconciliations will be reviewed by the Executive Director and Governing Board Treasurer. The school will have access to all bank reconciliations.

Uncleared checks older than one year will be reviewed for reissuance, voidance, or escheatment proceedings in compliance with New Mexico State law. e. All checks will have printed on the face of the check "void after one year from date."

Financial irregularities discovered during the banking reconciliation process will be brought to the attention of the Executive Director and the Governing Board Treasurer.

VII. Financial Record Retention and Destruction

All financial records will be retained as per the State of New Mexico Records Retention Law. Records include but are not limited to transaction ledgers, bank statements, canceled and voided checks, payroll records, audits, and tax filings.

Banking

I. Checking Accounts

The Governing Board shall authorize the creation of a non-speculative, public funds checking account with a federally insured banking institution for the purposes of school operations. The checking account will be held by a NM institution.

An account bearing interest will not be considered speculative per NM State Law. Any other interest-bearing account must follow the restrictive NM State banking laws for public entities.

The established checking account shall be the primary account for school financial obligations, as well as the primary account for deposit and receipt of all funds. Authorized signatories to this account shall be the Executive Director, Business Manager, Governing Board Treasurer, Governing Board President, and any designee of the Governing Board.

No additional checking accounts shall be established without Governing Board approval.

Governing Board approval is also required to close a public fund checking account.

II. Federal Deposit Insurance

Inspira STEAM recognizes that deposits are only insured up to \$250,000 per qualified banking institution, and its bank balance may otherwise exceed \$250,000. Any balance in any account that will exceed the FDIC-insured \$250,000 must be collateralized per NM State Law regarding the protection of public funds.

III. Deposits of Receipts

Inspira STEAM will deposit all funds received within 24 hours or one banking day.

Cash payments will be strongly discouraged.

Inspira STEAM will direct individuals to use ACH or other services to make a payment electronically to the school as an alternative. If this is not possible, all cash payments received will also be receipted using a cash receipt book with 2 copies. The original copy will be given to the payor, the first copy will be kept with the deposit slip in which the money is deposited, and the second copy will be retained in the receipt book. The Executive Director will review the cash receipt book each week and affirm that the total collected matches the supporting documentation.

Checks and cash waiting to be deposited will be stored in a secure location.

The Office Admin will restrictively endorse ("For Deposit Only") the checks or money orders to the checking account and deposit them, along with any cash collections. The Executive Director will then forward a completed log and copy of the associated backup to the financial management, including any revenue coding.

Purchases

I. Authorization of Expenditures

All purchases of goods and services shall be consistent with the most recently Governing Board-approved budget.

All purchase orders will be signed by the Executive Director and acknowledged or initialed by the Governing Board Treasurer.



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These expenditures shall not require additional Governing Board approval, except for contracts for professional services that will exceed or are likely to exceed a total annual amount greater than \$10,000, or if the term will go past one year.

All expenditures over \$10,000 must be approved by the Governing Board Treasurer, who will review to ensure that the purchase follows the requirements of the NM State Procurement Code, and the Executive Director, who will review to determine whether it is consistent with the Governing Board-approved budget. The Executive Director is the only staff person authorized to sign contracts.

All contracts that cross fiscal years or extend beyond one year must contain the required State of New Mexico law language regarding cancellation for non-appropriation. Additionally, no long-term contracts may extend beyond 4 years (or 48 months) per New Mexico State Law.

Nothing in this section shall prevent the Executive Director from making an assessment to rebalance individual line items within the approved budget, provided the adjustments do not otherwise jeopardize the financial health of the school or disrupt the school's educational program. All Budget Adjustments must be approved through a vote by the Governing Board during a scheduled Governing Board meeting open to the public.

II. Contracts and Bidding

All professional services shall be contracted. The Executive Director will review and approve all contracts prior to the contract being signed by a member of the Governing Board.

The Executive Director can execute single-year contracts for professional services that will not exceed or are not likely to exceed \$10,000.

For contracts for professional services that will exceed or are likely to exceed a total annual amount greater than \$10,000 or the term will extend for a period greater than one year, Governing Board approval will be required prior to execution. Length of contracts shall be at the discretion of the Governing Board in consultation with the Executive Director, and multi-year contracts shall not be prohibited as long as the term of the contract does not exceed 4 years or 48 months.

All multi-year contracts will contain the State-required non-appropriations clause in the contract.

Should a contract require Governing Board approval per the above, but timing or other circumstances require execution prior to being approved at a Governing Board meeting, the Executive Director, with the approval of both the Governing Board President and Governing Board Treasurer, may conditionally execute said contract. The contract will need to then be formally approved at the next Governing Board meeting.

Unless otherwise expressly required by conditions of a funding source, Inspira STEAM shall not be required to conduct a formal bid process for contracted services less than \$60,000. However, the Executive Director shall make good faith efforts to secure multiple quotes and proposals to ensure a prudent, cost-effective use of funds.

Nothing in this section shall require or be interpreted to require Inspira STEAM to choose or select the lowest cost provider of goods or contracted services, and Inspira STEAM will have discretion in what criteria it gives most weight when selecting vendors and providers.

Any purchases with Federal funds will follow the rules or regulations governing expenditure of federal funds, which shall supersede the above when otherwise contradictory.

III. Purchasing

Inspira STEAM will follow New Mexico Procurement Code.

The Chief Procurement Officer for INSPIRA STEAM will be an employee who does not have the authority to sign checks to pay for purchases.

IV. Sales Tax Exemption

Inspira STEAM will apply for tax-exempt status with the State of NM, Taxation and Revenue Department, and will be exempt from sales tax on goods purchased for their own internal use.

The Office Admin or Executive Director will ensure all vendors have a copy of a tax-exempt certificate.

V. Personal Use of School Funds

Use of school funds for personal use is prohibited. Violation of this policy may result in discipline up to and including dismissal or in case of a Governing Board member, removal.



Payroll

I. New Employees

The Executive Director shall hire all employees at both headcount and compensation levels consistent with the approved salary schedule.

New employees shall complete an application for employment and all necessary paperwork for payroll addition.

New employees shall be fingerprinted and background checked consistent with state law. Fingerprint and background clearance must be received by the school before any employee may start work.

Each employee shall have a job description that they read, review, and sign off on before starting their employment.

Independent Contractor Vs. Employee

Unless otherwise specified, Inspira STEAM shall treat individuals as employees unless he or she meet the IRS test for classification as an independent contractor.

If someone is determined to be an independent contractor, he or she will need to provide a W-9, as well as proof of insurance, depending on the nature of his or her work on behalf of the school.

All independent contractors shall be formally engaged under a contract that is approved by the Executive Director or the Governing Board, based on the contract approval criteria previously enumerated.

Financial Reporting & Planning

I. Budget Approval

The annual budget shall be approved by the Governing Board no later than June 1st prior to the start of each new fiscal year.

The approved budget will include a summary of assumptions and include both restricted and unrestricted revenues and expenses.

Quarterly, or as necessary, the Governing Board will adopt an amended budget as expenses and revenue projections change, or as student counts are updated.

The annual budget and budget modifications will be reported to the authorizer and state by the required deadlines.

II. Monthly Financial Statements

The financial manager shall prepare a budget vs. actuals report, balance sheet, statement of cash flow, checking account register and purchasing order register as well as a financial synopsis each month.

The Finance Committee and the Governing Board shall review these materials on a regular basis.

1. Interim Financial Reports a. The financial manager shall prepare and submit the required financial reports to the PED on the timeline required by the PED.

Additional Practice & Financial Matters

I. Conflict of Interest

Any Governing Board member with a financial interest in a matter presented to the Governing Board shall fully disclose such interest prior to Governing Board discussion on the issue and shall recuse themselves from the discussion and voting on the matter.

For more information on the school's Conflict of Interest Policies, please consult the school's Bylaws.

II. Whistleblower Policy

The financial manager's policy shall extend to financial matters and improprieties.

III. Political Contributions & Advocacy

The financial manager will not make any direct or indirect contribution of funds, assets, or resources to a political party or individual serving in or seeking public office. Inspira STEAM Appendix H Internal Control Procedures



Nothing in this section is to prevent the financial manager from seeking membership with charter association or charter advocacy organizations, local or otherwise, that may be engaged in political campaign activities.

The financial manager will not pay for lobbying with school funds.

IV. Confidentiality

Confidential information includes information gained during employment with or service of Inspira STEAM that is otherwise not common knowledge, including, but not limited to, student records, and personnel records, information. All employees and Governing Board members must maintain confidentiality to the extent that is allowed by law.

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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Charter schools have distinct differences from districts, both advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages of charter schools is the flexibility that is inherent to a charter school, while the inverse is that the personnel in charter schools must excel in a variety of duties. The three positions outlined in this section must master the art of conducting various duties while providing high-quality outcomes.

Although the financial oversight of the school is a responsibility shared by the Governing Board, management, and key committees, the work is based on the quality of individuals employed by the school to conduct appropriate business transactions and report with effectiveness and integrity. In alignment with the budget, five year plan, and the organizational framework, there are three key employees involved in the financial management of Inspira STEAM Academy.

The Executive Director of Inspira STEAM Academy holds the primary responsibility for ensuring that the school's financial health is in order. This person will supervise all staff, inclusive of business personnel, while ensuring accuracy, transparency, and accountability for all financial expenditures and endeavors. They must hold a Level 3 Professional K-8 Administrator License and Level 3 K-12 License has extensive experience in administration as well as education. The Executive Director of the school sets the tone and the culture. Inspira STEAM Academy has identified an individual whose extensive experience and expertise is matched only by her integrity. The Executive Director will approve all expenditures, bank reconciliations, journal entries, and incoming deposits.

The Executive Director

will be an integral part of the selection of the Business Manager. The Governing Board and Executive Director will decide on a Business Manager who has a Level 2 School Business Official license and at least 7 years of experience in school finance. As outlined in the budget, the school will utilize approximately .5 FTE for the initial year of implementation for a Business Manager. If no other funds are available, the school will select a Business Manager that can meet the goals as a .5 FTE. The Business Manager will be responsible for the implementation of the school's accounting and finance while adhering to the internal control procedures set forth in section C1 of this application.

The advice and counsel of the Business Manager will assist the Executive Director in the selection of the appropriate financial software as well as the technology structure that must be in place to ensure secure data and protect employee and student information. The implementation of the financial operations and transactions will be guided by the Business Manager. However, in order to assure appropriate checks and balances as well as separation of duties, another position is key to this organization.

The Administrative Assistant

will be the definition of excellence in a variety of duties. The Administrative Assistant will be proficient in the student information system as well as the accounting and human resource systems. This position will be the counterbalance to the responsibilities of the Business Manager, creating an appropriate separation of duties. For instance, the Administrative Assistant will make deposits to the bank while the Business Manager reconciles the bank statement. The Administrative Assistant will enter a request for purchase while the Business Manager issues a purchase order. The Administrative Assistant will also serve as the Chief Procurement Officer (CPO), ensuring that the procurement code is adhered to with each transaction.

In Summary

By working as an effective and efficient team, the Finance and Audit Committees can verify the accuracy and completeness of the work. As they report to the Governing Board, the level of transparency only increases. Inspira STEAM Academy will demonstrate the effectiveness of various duties while maintaining integrity and a focus on the education of young children.

Q55.

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

• A complete response must

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.



Function Generally

Forming the Finance and Audit Committees will be a crucial step to establishing a robust oversight for our school. Both committees will be formed and presented to the Governing Board for verification of the committee's responsibilities through a formal resolution process. The resolution process will outline the purpose of the Audit and Finance Committee, the membership criteria, and the general responsibilities of each of the committees. The individuals in each committee will have relevant expertise and will be committed to Inspira STEAM Academy's success and ethical operations.

The Finance Committee will have members with experience in finance management, budgeting, and business administration. The individuals who will be a part of the Audit committee are those who have backgrounds in auditing, accounting, or risk management. For the prevention of conflict of interest with individuals who are employed by the school and or have direct contact related to management or staff may be excluded from the Audit and Finance committees. The Finance Committee will focus on the Inspira STEAM Academy's financial health and sustainability. Many of the responsibilities include monitoring the annual budget, overseeing investment strategies, ensuring fiscal management practices are in place, and reviewing financial performance against the budget. The Finance Committee will attend monthly meetings to view and monitor financial reports, discuss potential financial risks and opportunities, and make recommendations to the entire Governing Body regarding decisions and financial policies. The Finance Committee will focus on proper financial oversight.

The Audit Committee will oversee the financial reporting, compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and internal controls. Their responsibilities will involve reviewing financial statements, evaluating the effectiveness of internal audit findings, addressing any identified weaknesses in internal controls, and ensuring that corrective actions are implemented. The Audit Committee will be tasked with monitoring the school's compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. They will review legal agreements, oversee school risk management, and ensure adherence to ethical standards. The Audit Committee will work with legal counsel, as needed, and will address any legal concerns and potential liabilities.

Proper Legal Oversight/Financial Oversight

To ensure proper legal oversight will be a shared responsibility between the Audit and Finance Committees. They will work diligently reviewing financial records, monitoring expenditures, and ensuring the resources are being used efficiently and effectively in alignment with the school's mission and strategic goals. They will closely analyze all budget variances, review revenue streams, and ensure accountability and transparency in all financial transactions.

The Audit and Finance Committee will interact closely with Inspira STEAM Academy's Executive Director, Business Manager, Treasurer, and Governing Board Members. The Business Manager and the Executive Director will provide both committees with the necessary information, such as financial reports, updates on legal and compliance matters, and audit findings. The committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification, and provide feedback to the Executive Director, Business Manager, Treasurer, and Governing Board Members. The Financial and Audit committees will maintain their independence and objectivity in their oversight functions. This will ensure that both committees can provide an unbiased assessment of the school's financial and legal health. The Executive Director and Business Manager will be expected to take the committees' recommendations seriously and implement necessary changes to improve Inspira STEAM Academy's financial management, legal compliance, and internal controls.

The Financial and Audit Committees will communicate with the full Governing Board, providing them regular reports on their findings, activities, and recommendations. These reports will keep the entire Governing Board informed about Inspira's financial condition, audit outcomes, and legal compliance status. Either committee can bring specific issues and concerns to the attention of the Governing Board for transparency, discussion, and action. At this point, the Governing Board will use their expertise and insight to make informed decisions regarding Inspira's overall governance, legal well-being, and financial stability.

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;



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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 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



Community Outreach During the Application Process

Since February 2025, our team has actively engaged with diverse segments of the Las Cruces community through a variety of outreach activities. These efforts were not just about sharing information; they were designed to foster two-way communication, gather input, and build genuine partnerships.

Our initial major event was the Charter School Fair at the Las Cruces Convention Center on February 2, 2025. Here, we directly engaged with over one hundred families, distributing community surveys to collect their immediate feedback and interest. These hands-on interactions provided invaluable early insights.

Complementing our in-person efforts, we launched a continuous and broad social media campaign across multiple platforms. On Nextdoor, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, our founders consistently shared information about Inspira STEAM Academy, including QR codes and direct survey links. This digital outreach proved incredibly effective, with Nextdoor generating 1,500 views, Facebook 930 views, and Instagram also 930 views. WhatsApp provided consistent daily engagement, averaging 30 views per day. This digital presence allowed us to reach a wide, diverse audience, capturing their initial thoughts and interest through accessible surveys.

Beyond online engagement, we have actively pursued community outreach by visiting local businesses throughout May 2025. On May 12, 2025, we visited the National Sinus Institute, where the founder informed staff and patients about Inspira, resulting in 6 completed surveys. On the same day, at Diamond Nutrition and Voltage, we posted our QR code survey, inviting direct community input. Our presence extended to other key community hubs like Matteo's Restaurant, Kasa Blanka, Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, Museum of Nature & Science, COAS Books, The United Postal Services, New America Las Cruces High School, New Beginnings Child Care Center, and Deputy Dawgs and Smashburgers on May 21 and 23, 2025. Most recently, on May 28, 2025, we visited Sonoma Dental, collecting 5 surveys. In all these business interactions, we spoke with owners, staff, and customers, sharing our vision and encouraging participation through QR code scans to gather community surveys and explore potential partnerships.

On May 12, 2025, focused social media postings targeted neighbors in the Sonoma area on Nextdoor, garnering 1,300 views, demonstrating a localized outreach effort. We also engaged with specific community groups, such as speaking to parents of the Wolves Basketball team on May 15, 2025, where we collected surveys and discussed the potential for a new charter school.

To further enhance accessibility and direct communication, we established an official email address and phone number on May 5, 2025, providing direct channels for parents and community members to request information about the school. Our online presence was solidified with the creation of the Inspira STEAM Academy Instagram page (@inspiraSTEAMacademynm) on May 5, 2025.

The input obtained from all these activities primarily consisted of completed community surveys and direct engagement, often captured through QR code scans. The specific action taken to incorporate this feedback has been an ongoing process where the founders continuously share and promote these channels, integrating the collected data to demonstrate broad community demand and interest in Inspira STEAM Academy for this application. This robust outreach reflects a strong community demand, representative of various demographics within Las Cruces.



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Appendix H: Community Outreach

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
2/2/2025	Families of students	Charter School Fair	Las Cruces Convention Center	Community surveys		Over a hundred families from all over Las Cruces attended this event
Ongoing	Families and community members	Nextdoor social media platform	Social Media	QR code and survey link		1,500 views
Ongoing	Families and community members	Facebook	Social Media	QR code and survey link	The Founders continuously share on their social media	930 views
Ongoing	Families and community members	Whatsapp	Social Media	QR code and survey link	The Founders continuously shares on their social media	Average of 30 views per day in the last.
Ongoing	Families and community members	Instagram	Social Media	QR code and survey link	The Founders continuously shares on their social media	930 views

05/12/25	Community outreach	Communicating new charter school to businesses	The National Sinus Institute	Community Surveys	Founder provided information to the staff/patients about Inspira	6 surveys completed
5/12/25	Community outreach	Communicating new charter school to businesses	Dimond Nutrition in the 70 hwy area	Community surveys and partnerships	Founder left the community QR code survey posted for people to take	QR code scans
5/12/25	Families and community members	Nextdoor social media platform focused in the Sonoma area	Social Media	Social media postings for neighbors in the Sonoma Area	Founder shared this information on the next door app	1,300 views
5/15/25	Parents and children	Spoke to the parents about the potential opening of a charter school	Wolves Basketball team	Collected surveys from parents	Founder spoke to parents about the potential of opening up a new charter school in Las Cruces	QR code scans
5/21/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	Matteo's Restaurant	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans
5/21/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	Kasa Blanca	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans
5/23/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	Thomas Branigan Memorial Library	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans
5/23/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	Museum of Nature & Science	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans



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5/23/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	COAS Books	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans
5/23/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	The United Postal Services	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans
5/23/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	New America Las Cruces High School. New Beginnings Child Care Center.	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans
5/23/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	Deputy Dawgs and Smashburgers	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans
5/28/25	Community outreach	Communicating new charter school to businesses	Sonoma Dental	Community Surveys	Informed them about Inspira	5 Surveys completed
5/5/20225	Email address has been established	Email was shared on our		Parents have requested information about the school		
5/5/20225	Phone number has been established			Parents and community members have called to request information about the school.		
5/5/20225	Instagram Inspira STEAM Academy page creation					

Applicant Evidence :

Appendix H - Inspira STEAM Aca...

Uploaded on **6/3/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**

Q57.

B. Community Support - Evidence of Community Support and Demand

• 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**



Evidence of Demand and Need for Inspira STEAM Academy

Inspira STEAM Academy's proposed opening in the Telshor or Sonoma Ranch area of Las Cruces is strongly supported by clear quantitative and qualitative measures of family interest, coupled with a demonstrated need for high-quality educational alternatives for the community's student population.

Quantitative and Qualitative Measures of Family Interest (Demand)

Our comprehensive community outreach, which included direct interactions and extensive digital engagement, has yielded compelling evidence of demand for Inspira STEAM Academy.

High Interest in Geographic Area

Out of 62 survey respondents, 49 (approximately 79%) explicitly expressed interest in having their child attend an elementary charter school in the Telshor or Sonoma Ranch Area, directly affirming the suitability of our proposed location.

Overwhelming Programmatic Demand

54 out of 62 respondents (approximately 87%) indicated interest in a K-5 STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) charter school, demonstrating a strong desire for this specialized curriculum.

56 out of 62 respondents (approximately 90%) are interested in their child learning to understand, speak, read, and write in multiple languages, underscoring the high value placed on bilingual education.

Similarly, 56 out of 62 respondents (approximately 90%) desire a well-rounded multicultural education for their child.

High Value on Inspira's Components

Survey results show that families overwhelmingly consider Inspira's proposed educational components as "Very Important" or "Important":

Bilingual education was rated "Very Important" by 46 respondents and "Important" by 11 respondents.

Inquiry-Based Learning received 43 "Very Important" and 13 "Important" ratings.

All STEAM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) also garnered robust support, with "Very Important" ratings ranging from 44 (Engineering/Arts) to 49 (Mathematics), and "Important" ratings consistently high across all subjects.

Demand for After-School Services

A significant 50 out of 62 respondents (approximately 81%) expressed interest in after-school services, indicating a need for extended learning and care options.

Qualitative Feedback Highlights

Beyond numerical data, qualitative feedback from the surveys articulated a clear desire for:

Schools that "make our future leaders focus on what matters" and "help to make our future leaders focus on what matters."

Opportunities for children to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical skills.

A more bilingual community and an appreciation for diverse cultures.

Schools that "nurture future leaders who can drive positive change and growth within their own communities" and "provide quality education that prepares students for future careers and responsible citizenship."

Addressing the lack of individualized curriculum and providing more educational options.

This combined quantitative and qualitative data provides compelling evidence of strong family interest in enrolling their students in Inspira STEAM Academy, confirming a robust demand for our specific educational model within the targeted community.

Educational Options for Similar Populations and Demonstrated Need for a High-Quality Charter Option



The current educational landscape in Las Cruces, particularly in the vicinity of the proposed Telshor/Sonoma Ranch location, reveals a significant need for a high-quality charter option serving its particular demographics. The existing public elementary schools in the immediate area – Sonoma, Desert Hills, Jornada, and Loma Heights Elementary – serve student populations that are demographically aligned with Inspira's target population, yet they exhibit academic performance challenges and do not consistently offer the specialized programming that the community explicitly seeks.

Demographic Alignment and Economic Disadvantage

These four elementary schools serve a combined student population ranging from 490 (Jornada) to 748 (Sonoma).

Their student bodies are predominantly minority, with Minority Enrollment percentages ranging from 72% at Desert Hills to 90% at Loma Heights.

The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in Las Cruces stands at 68.2% (U.S. News & World Report, n.d.). This highlights that Inspira STEAM Academy would serve a population with significant socioeconomic needs, mirroring and directly addressing the needs of the surrounding community.

Low Academic Performance in Existing Options

Math proficiency in these schools ranges from a concerning 21% at Loma Heights to 40% at Sonoma Elementary.

Reading proficiency ranges from 30% at Loma Heights to 56% at Desert Hills Elementary.

These low proficiency rates indicate a clear gap in academic outcomes for a substantial number of students in the area, signaling a critical need for an educational intervention that can significantly improve foundational skills in math and reading.

Lack of Programmatic/Instructional Models Responsive to Community Demand

The overwhelming survey responses for STEAM (87% interest), bilingual education (90% interest), and multicultural education (90% interest) highlight a significant unmet demand for these specific instructional models. Existing public schools in the area do not prominently feature a comprehensive, integrated K-5 STEAM curriculum with a strong dual-language and multicultural focus that Inspira proposes. The qualitative feedback reinforced this, with respondents explicitly stating, "This new charter school will provide academics where others are lacking" and "I believe teaching kids dual language and curriculum in the steam program it gives our students an advantage in real world."

The high demand for after-school services (81% interest) also suggests a need for programs that extend learning opportunities beyond the traditional school day, which may not be fully met by current offerings.

Lack of Access to Seats/Program Offerings

While specific waitlist data for existing schools is not provided, the high interest in a new charter school in the area, coupled with the expressed desire for specific programming not widely available, implies a lack of satisfactory options for families seeking these specialized educational models. Comments like "There is no charter school in this area. It would provide more options for parents" and "The selection of private or charter schools in Las Cruces is so small" directly speak to the limited array of choices currently available.

Demonstrated Support Specific to the Targeted Community and Demographics

The evidence of demand is highly specific to the targeted geographic location, grade levels, and demographics:

Geographic Location

The explicit survey question regarding interest in a charter school "in the Telshor or Sonoma Ranch Area" directly confirms geographical relevance, with 79% positive response.

Grade Levels

All data, including current school populations (PreK-5th) and survey questions, specifically target the K-5 elementary grade levels, aligning precisely with Inspira STEAM Academy's proposed scope.

Demographics of Targeted Student Population



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The demographic data from surrounding schools (72-90% minority enrollment) precisely matches the population Inspira STEAM Academy aims to serve.

The overwhelming interest in bilingual education (90% interest) and multicultural education (90% interest) directly reflects the needs and values of a community with a high minority enrollment, indicating that Inspira's culturally responsive and dual-language approach is highly desired by the very population it intends to serve. This is further underscored by comments such as, "Al enfocarse en Ciencia, Tecnología, Ingeniería y Matemáticas, la escuela equipará a los estudiantes con el pensamiento crítico, la resolución de problemas y las habilidades técnicas que son necesarias. En una comunidad diversa como Las Cruces tener una escuela que ofrezca El Bilingüismo es una ventaja." ~ *in a diverse community like Las Cruces, having a school that offers bilingualism is an advantage~*

In Summary

The data powerfully demonstrates a significant demand for Inspira STEAM Academy as a high-quality charter option that directly addresses the academic needs and programmatic desires for the community in the Telshor/Sonoma Ranch area of Las Cruces.

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**



Inspira STEAM Academy is actively cultivating meaningful and strategic networking relationships and resource agreements with key local community agencies, groups, and individuals to ensure our school is deeply embedded within and supported by the Las Cruces community.

Specific Meaningful and Strategic Networking Relationships

Our approach to community integration is anchored in building robust relationships with institutions that resonate with our STEAM-focused mission and the unique local environment.

Spaceport America and Virgin Galactic (Local Presence and Headquarters)

By virtue of their proximity to Las Cruces, including Spaceport America's office and Virgin Galactic's headquarters, these entities represent vital networking opportunities. Our ongoing engagement involves exploring avenues for guest speakers, potential field trips, and showcasing real-world applications of STEAM. The fact that these pioneering space entities are based here demonstrates the strong local connection to high-tech industries that our curriculum aims to foster. While direct, formalized agreements are pending our operational phase, the geographical proximity and shared emphasis on innovation create a natural foundation for a supportive networking relationship.

New Mexico State University (NMSU)

NMSU stands as a cornerstone of our community and a critical networking partner. We are establishing direct relationships through their Community Outreach programs, specifically MC2 and NMC3. These programs indicate NMSU's commitment to K-12 education and community engagement, providing a clear pathway for collaboration. Our discussions with NMSU outreach coordinators lay the groundwork for Inspira STEAM Academy to tap into their expertise and resources, fostering a network that extends beyond our campus.

White Sands Missile Range and NASA

These entities symbolize the pinnacle of STEM application in our region. Our networking strategy involves reaching out to their community relations departments to explore possibilities for STEM mentorships, educational presentations from their scientists and engineers, and potentially access to unique learning experiences that can only be found in a community with such a prominent research and development footprint.

Specific Meaningful and Strategic Resource Agreements

Beyond general networking, we are actively pursuing and have initiated foundational steps towards formal resource agreements that will directly support Inspira STEAM Academy.

New Mexico State University (NMSU)

Community Outreach Programs (MC2 and NMC3): This is a concrete resource agreement in development. NMSU's commitment to supporting K-12 education through MC2 (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) and NMC3 (New Mexico Center for Career and Technical Education) programs provides a direct pathway for Inspira STEAM Academy to access resources such as:

Curriculum support and expertise

in STEAM fields.

Professional development

for our teachers.

Student enrichment activities

and mentorship opportunities.

Evidence of this relationship

lies in ongoing communications and preliminary discussions with NMSU's Community Outreach leadership, which has confirmed their willingness to collaborate and extend their established programs to a new charter school, aligning with their educational mission. These programs are already operational and designed to serve the community, making Inspira a natural extension of their existing outreach.

General Community Support (Qualitative Data from Outreach)

While not formal "resource agreements" in the traditional sense, the overwhelming community feedback from our surveys serves as a powerful qualitative resource demonstrating widespread support. For example:

Comments like, "New Mexico has a strong presence in Steam-related jobs, promoting this culture to our children will ensure that the future workforce can come from New Mexicans and further promote our economic growth," indicate a community that sees our school as a vital resource for their future.



The high interest in after-school services (81% of respondents) directly signals a need for extended support that can be met through community partnerships for various programs and activities.

The expressed desire for a "bilingual community" points to a resource in the community itself – its cultural and linguistic diversity – that Inspira will embrace and utilize as a strength.

Why these Relationships Demonstrate Community Embrace and Support

The identified relationships and the broader community engagement unequivocally demonstrate that Inspira STEAM Academy will be embraced and supported as the community's school, with abundant enthusiasm.

Alignment with Local Economic Drivers and Values

Our partnerships with Spaceport America, Virgin Galactic, NMSU, DACC, White Sands Missile Range, and NASA are not arbitrary. They are deeply rooted in Las Cruces' identity as a hub for science, technology, and innovation. By aligning our curriculum and outreach with these pillars, we directly respond to the community's vision for future economic growth and workforce development. The qualitative feedback from community members, such as "New Mexico has a strong presence in Steam related jobs, promoting this culture to our children will ensure that the future workforce can come from New Mexicans and further promote our economic growth," explicitly confirms this alignment.

Responsiveness to Demonstrated Needs and Desires Our outreach actively sought and incorporated community input. The overwhelming demand for K-5 STEAM, bilingual education, and multicultural education, as evidenced by our survey results (87-90% interest), directly shaped our programmatic design. This responsive approach signals to the community that Inspira is not just *a* school, but *their* school, designed to meet *their* specific needs and aspirations.

Leveraging Existing Community Assets

Instead of creating programs in isolation, Inspira STEAM Academy intentionally seeks to leverage existing, well-respected community assets like NMSU's established outreach programs (MC2, NMC3). This collaborative model fosters trust, demonstrates sustainability, and ensures the school is seen as an integral, contributing part of the broader educational ecosystem, rather than an external entity.

Building a Shared Future

The qualitative feedback reveals a profound understanding that education is key to the community's long-term development. Comments like "A school like this can best contribute to the long-term development of a community by providing quality education that prepares students for future careers and responsible citizenship" indicate a shared vision for the future. By demonstrating concrete steps to partner with local institutions and incorporating community feedback into our foundational design, Inspira STEAM Academy solidifies its position as a truly community-driven initiative, destined for strong support and embrace.

*All quotes are exact quotes taken directly from parent surveys.

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



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Please see attached for Inspira STEAM Academy Applicant Team.

Reference **Appendix A**



Appendix A: Applicant Team

Use this table to identify Applicant Team Members

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)
Mrs. Julia Rivera- Tapia (505)553-6788 azuqueeta@yahoo.com	J. Paul Taylor Academy, Assistant Director	Head Administrator Assistant Principal	Executive Director	
Ms. Jessica Castro-Buelna (505) 573-2765 castrobj92@gmail.com	J. Paul Taylor Academy, Teacher	Kindergarten Teacher	Teacher Dean of Students	
Mrs. Christina Gonzales (575) 635-9481 christinagonzales4444@gmail.com	J. Paul Taylor Academy, Special Education Coordinator	Special Education Coordinator/Teacher	Special Education Coordinator	
Mrs. Patricia Watkins (575) 405-1922 Pm845697@gmail.com	J. Paul Taylor Academy, Educational Assistant	Educational Assistant	Member at large	
Mr. Enrique Avalos (209) 482-2046 enriqueavalosiii@gmail.com	El Paso Leadership Academy Central Office, Director of Student Wellness	Educational Leadership	Founder/Governing Board Member	Vice-President
Mrs. Vanessa Alegria (575) 993-4964 h.van3ssa@gmail.com	J. Paul Taylor Academy, Substitute	Substitute	Administrative Assistant	
Mr. Fredrick Parker (575) 644-6641 fparker74@gmail.com	Deming Public Schools	Deputy Superintendent of Operations and Strategy	Governing Board Member	Governing Board President

Ms. Joy Viveca Chavez (575) 202-6969 joyviveca3@gmail.com	Doña Ana County – Office of Emergency Management	Emergency Management Coordinator	Governing Board Member	Secretary
Mrs. Tania Silva (281) 766-7744 Tania@AbogadaFiera.com	Nationally Recognized Immigration Attorney	Community-Focused Legal Strategist	Governing Board Member	Treasurer
Mr. Matthew Garcia (575) 635.0183 gotmatt0386@gmail.com	Hakes Brothers	Construction Manager	Governing Board Member	General Governing Board Member
Mrs. Susana T. Harper (915) 253-3730 Susana.A.Harper@nasa.gov	NASA	NASA Chemical Engineer	Governing Board Member	General Governing Board Member
Mr. Manuel Arrellano Covarrubias (575) 288-8529 josecovarrubias522533@gmail.com	Retired	Community Member/Chess Instructor	Governing Board Member	General Governing Board Member

Applicant Evidence :

Appendix A_ Inspira STEAM Acad...

Uploaded on **6/3/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**

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	<p>Sent flyers to community-based organizations serving children and families with special needs.</p> <p>Hosted a meet/greet to introduce team and solicit feedback on application.</p>	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



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Appendix H: Community Outreach

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Ongoing	Families and community members	Facebook	Social Media	QR code and survey link	The Founders continuously share on their social media	930 views
Ongoing	Families and community members	Whatsapp	Social Media	QR code and survey link	The Founders continuously shares on their social media	Average of 30 views per day in the last.
Ongoing	Families and community members	Instagram	Social Media	QR code and survey link	The Founders continuously shares on their social media	930 views

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5/21/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	Kasa Blanca	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans
5/23/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	Thomas Branigan Memorial Library	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans
5/23/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	Museum of Nature & Science	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans



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5/23/25	Families and community member	Communicating new charter school to businesses	COAS Books	Community Surveys	Founder spoke to owner for support about the potential of opening a new charter in Las Cruces	QR code scans
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5/5/20225	Email address has been established	Email was shared on our		Parents have requested information about the school		
5/5/20225	Phone number has been established			Parents and community members have called to request information about the school.		
5/5/20225	Instagram Inspira STEAM Academy page creation					

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

Applicant Evidence :

Inspira STEAM Academy - AI Plag...	Assurance of AI Plagiarism Scree...

Uploaded on **6/3/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**

Uploaded on **6/3/2025** by **Julia Rivera-Tapia**

Q62.

I certify that the application is complete.

Signature



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

