

Taos Academy Charter School
Governance Council Bylaws and Operation Guidelines
Reviewed 7/14/25

Taos Academy is governed by the Governing Council, who act as a Board of Finance for the state-approved charter school. The Governing Council has a responsibility to ensure that Taos Academy operates in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, complies with the Open Meetings Act (NMSA 1978.10.15), and meets its commitments to the PED authorizer as reflected in its charter.

Development and size:

From the term that begins upon the approval of this charter all members of the Governing Council shall be appointed by the founding members as listed in the charter applications. Positions that become available on the Governing council after this term shall be filled by the remaining majority vote of the Governing Council.

The Governing Council consisting of five (5) members shall govern Taos Academy. Taos Academy's Educational Director will be the sixth non-voting member of this council. The Governing Council may also include other non-voting members: student, parent, and staff member. This aligns with our advisory required participation.

A Governing Council member will hold office for three years from the date of their first election. Members may serve no more than two elected terms during an eight-year period. Terms will be staggered so that approximately one third of the terms expire each year. The seats on the Governing Council shall be assigned as follows: *See GC terms for updated term assignments.*

- Seat 1- term expires on June 30th, 2010 and every three years following
- Seat 2- term expires on June 30th, 2011 and every three years following
- Seat 3- term expires on June 30th, 2011 and every three years following
- Seat 4- term expires on June 30th, 2012 and every three years following
- Seat 5- term expires on June 30th, 2012 and every three years following.

Description of Positions:

The Governing Council will consist of: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and one additional office.

President: The President will act as a liaison between the Governing Council and the Educational Director and Business Manager. The President will coordinate all orders and resolutions of the council with the Educational Director and Business Manager and will review progress with these individuals at the Governing Council Meetings.

Vice President: The Vice President will have all powers and perform all duties of the President in the absence, resignation, or incapacity of the President.

Secretary: The Secretary will keep full minutes of all meetings of the Governing Council.

Treasurer: The Treasurer will oversee the maintenance of records for all revenues and expenditures of the Charter School, maintain accurate and up-to-date records of the school budget, and oversee the monthly status of these records.

Recruitment and selection, orientation process and professional development:

The governing body will be selected from the community. Due to the nature of the responsibilities of a Board of Finance, Taos Academy will recruit community members who have finance, business, law, and/or school leadership experience.

Individuals wishing to serve on the Governing Council need to submit their names, brief resumes, and a short statement outlining their interests, goals, and objectives in serving on the Governing Council. If a Governing Council Member resigns, the member's seat will be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Governing Council members until the expiry of the term without penalty against the two-term limit.

Newly elected board members will be expected to participate in training, review the charter bylaws and content, and review meeting minutes. The Governing Council will support new members by ensuring he/she feels prepared to participate in the decision-making process.

The Governing Council are required to attend yearly training including but not limited to: charter school law, budget, policy, procurement code, open meetings act, code of ethics, strategic planning and the Council will support the New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools as appropriate. Taos Academy will provide each Council member travel and training expenses as appropriated by the Council.

Governing Council members who wish to resign must do so with 30 day notice in writing to the council president. The existing council member agrees to return all Taos Academy equipment and materials.

Code of Ethics:

The Taos Academy Governing Council commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as council members.

- Council members must have loyalty to the founding mission and vision and avoid conflicts caused by loyalties to staff, other organizations, and any personal interests.
- Council members must avoid conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility.
 - There will be no self-dealing of business by a member with the organization. Members must disclose any conflict of interest and then refrain from comment and voting.
 - Council members will not use their position to obtain employment in the organization for themselves or family members. Council members must resign 30 days prior to applying for employment.
- Council members will respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.
 - All personnel discussion must only occur in closed session
 - Members must refrain from individual judgments of employees of the school.
 - Council members and designees are authorized to only repeat explicitly stated board decisions to the public, press, and other entities.

- Council members will be properly prepared for board meetings, actions, and deliberation.
- Council members, to the best of their ability, will be prompt and consistent to their attendance of meetings.

Governing Council Meetings:

The Governing Council will meet at regularly advertised monthly meetings. All meetings will be open to the public and the Council will provide notices to comply with all provisions of the Open Meetings Act. All meetings will be advertised in the local media and posted throughout the area in a timely manner and according to the provisions of the Open Meetings Act (NMSA 1978.10.15). An agenda will be made public and contain items of business to be discussed. Public participation will be made available at a specific time in each agenda. Personnel issues will be discussed in closed session and reported thereafter. A majority vote will be required to pass a vote on school matters. The general rules of procedures will be governed by a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order.

When necessary the Governing Council may proceed into Executive Session as provided by The Open Meetings Act to discuss personnel matters, litigation, and acquisitions or sales of real property. Final actions taken in Executive Session shall be taken into open session if required by the Act. Members of the Governing Council will be expected to adhere to the Code of Ethics for New Mexico School Board Members. (See Open Meetings Act Policy)

Parental/Community Involvement:

Taos Academy Governing Council is committed to parental and community involvement to further utilize resources needed to maximize student potential for success. Our parent cooperative model forms partnerships for parents to be actively involved in their child's educational growth through advisory roles.

Advisory council is a representative structure for students and parents, through which they can become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management and staff for the benefit of the school and its students. The advisory council brings a forum to share ideas, interests, and concerns with teachers and school officials. Part of the advisory council's duties will be to assign a parent liaison to report to the Governing Council. This will ensure that decision making will be shared among all those associated with the school. The parent liaison has no voting powers.

Decision making:

The decisions and role of the Taos Academy Governing Council in areas such as policy, personnel, budgeting, curriculum, contracts, and facility rests in the voting members of the Governing Council. The State Board of Education requires the Governing Council to be accountable for content standards, benchmarks, performance standards, state accreditation, standardized testing, and the school report card. Taos Academy Governing Council will uphold all those state requirements.

The Taos Academy Governing Council will make known and delegate all programs, policies, procedures, fiscal and otherwise, to the Educational Director and Business Manager, who will then be responsible for their implementation and administration on a day-to-day basis. The Governing Council will not be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school other than on an advisory level.

The Governing Council will review and discuss annually the appropriate methods of implementing the school's program, policies, and procedures with all educators, staff, parents, and students. The Council will review the policies at least annually for compliance with all state and federal Acts and regulations.

Taos Academy will operate in compliance with all local, state or federal laws, acts, rules and regulations including constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, disability, age, creed, gender, religion, or ancestry.

Description of site-based reporting structure-

The governing council will have full fiscal responsibility along with other duties listed. The Business Manager along with the Educational Director of the school will have direct communications with the Council pertaining to the fiscal and legal operations of the school. In turn, the Administrative Assistant, Counselor, Maintenance, Technology Director, Special Programs Director, and Special Education Director will report directly to the Educational Director pertaining to day-to-day operations. The general education teachers will report directly to the Special Programs Director for student issues and report to the Educational Director for personnel issues. The educational assistant and ancillary staff will report directly to the Special Education Director for all student issues and report to the Educational Director for personnel issues.

Governing Council Responsibilities and Accountability-

In accordance with the 1999 Charter Schools Act Taos Academy will operate with a school-centered Governing Council, site-based and autonomous fiscal management, and an innovative educational program. The Governing Council will be empowered to make decisions in school matters unless otherwise prescribed by the PED or other state and federal regulations. The Taos Academy Governing Council will manage the general property, business, and affairs of the charter school. The Governing council may exercise powers provided by the State Board of Education, the Taos Academy Charter Application, and the charter bylaws. The Governing Council will assign and reassign as necessary duties and responsibilities to appropriate committees. The Governing Council will not be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school other than on an advisory level.

The Governing Council will be responsible for:

- Compliance with all local, state, and federal law
- Fiscal oversight
- Progress towards achievement of school's goals
- Strategic planning

- Policy development and review
- Community partnerships
- Hire and evaluate school's head administrator
- Charter compliance
- School facility funding
- Public Relations

Legal Responsibility

- Ensure the charter school is properly managed. The Governing Council will have a way to validate information from the educational director.
- Maintain legal status; ensures proper paperwork is submitted to governmental agencies in compliance with all state and federal law.
- Review financial and business dealings and exercise proper judgment in self-dealing transactions to avoid conflicts of interest.
- Adopt and comply with all provisions of the Open Meetings Act. The Governing Council will advertise all meetings in the local media and post notices throughout the area in a timely manner and according to the provisions of the Open Meetings Act (NMSA 1978.10.15). Agendas will be made public and contain items of business to be discussed. Public participation will be made available at a specific time in each agenda. Personnel issues will be discussed in closed session and reported thereafter.

Financial Responsibility

- Held accountable for Taos Academy's fiscal performance in accordance with the 1999 Charter School Act.
- Acts as board of finance responsible for fiscal soundness.
- Review, approve and monitor implementation of the annual budget
- Review periodic financial reports such as balance sheets, income statements, and changes in financial position.
- Ensure proper internal controls are in place.
- Accept or reject any charitable gift, grant, devise or bequest
- Develop finance and audit committees for fiscal oversight.

Planning Responsibility

- Reviews strategic plan and progress.
- Assess compliance and progress in achieving educational outcomes.
- Assess program evaluation plan.
- Plan for school facility funding

Policy Responsibility

- Develop and adopt written policies.
- Review policies periodically.
- Maintain mission and program direction for the charter school.
- Make policy changes when needed.
- Approve amendments to the Charter

Personnel Responsibility

- Sets and reviews personnel policies.
- Hire lead administrator and evaluate his/her performance.
- Delegate to the lead administrator the authority to implement the charter, policies and procedures, facilities plans, budget and such other directives and policies adopted by the Governing Council from time to time. To the extent reasonable, the Governing Council shall not be involved in the day-to-day operations of the school
- Approve all personnel based on the recommendation of the lead administrator.
- Procurement of insurance: Taos Academy will participate in the New Mexico Public School Insurance Authority.
- Enter contracts consistent with approved budget for any service or activity that is required to perform in order to carry out the educational program
- Complete yearly training of PED approved Governing Council.

Public Relations Responsibility

- Develop Community/Parent partnerships
- Review satisfaction surveys and make changes if necessary.

School Facility and Property Responsibility

- Acquire, lease and dispose of property, both real and personal to the extent permissible by laws applicable to public schools
- Authorize the repair and maintenance of all property
- Acquire and dispose of property

Such other powers and authorities as provided for by law.

- Charter School Act (NMSA 1978 §§ 22-8B-1 et seq.)
- School Personnel Act (NMSA 1978 §§ 22-10A-1 et seq.);
- Procurement Code (NMSA 1978 §§ 13-1-1 et. seq.);
- Open Meetings Act (NMSA 1978, Sections 10-15-1 et seq.);
- Public School Finance Act (NMSA 1978 §§22-8-1 et seq.); and
- applicable rules and regulations issued by the New Mexico Public Education Department (“PED”) (contained in Title 6 of the New Mexico Administrative Code)

Bylaw Amendment Regarding Quorum and Governing Council Resignation

Should the Governing Council fall below three members, new members shall be appointed by the remaining board members until there are at least three members. Once there are at least three board members, all further members shall be voted in during a public meeting of the governing council.

Should every member of the Governing Council resign or no longer be in service to the School, the School’s head administrator will appoint new board members. Those new members will be assigned to the prior governing council members’ terms and serve accordingly.

Passed by the Taos Academy Charter School Governance Council this day of July 14th, 2025

President or designee: ____Sam Gonzales_____

Date: ____7/14/25_____