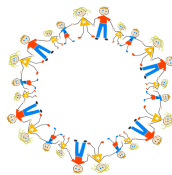




Welcome to a brand-new school year to both our new and returning families! The Taos Academy staff has been working hard to prepare for a wonderful new year of building relationships and learning together. We know that positive relationships are the cornerstone of personalized learning and in creating an environment of true academic excellence. You will be hearing more on how we are working to achieve this goal throughout the school year as we support all of our students in reaching their highest potential.

As part of this goal and our work as a Community School, we are partnering more and more closely with families and community organizations alike to build more great learning experiences for our students. Watch for more opportunities for family input, training, community connection, and participation in TA activities!! Let's get started!



**Introducing Our Team:** We are excited to welcome several new staff members to the TA team! All staff members at Taos Academy have been actively working to set the stage for an amazing school year. Please see below for the many roles they play in making our school the great palace that it is for our students:

#### **Administration**

Dr. Traci Filiss - Executive Director/Superintendent  
Dr. Mae LaBella - Principal  
Erica Olsen-Hensley - Administrative Assistant, 504, STC  
Jamie Lucero-Martinez - Programs Director/District Testing Coordinator  
Amy Lucero - Front Office Manager/Registrar  
Ashley Duran - Administrative Assistant  
Michelle DeHerrera - Attendance Officer  
Cruz Duran - STEM Administrative Assistant/ Registrar /Assistant Health Officer  
Pamela Rodriguez - Assistant Business Manager  
Jose Espinoza - Maintenance/ Facility Manager  
Chris Torrez - Security/Facility Support  
Dr. Mary Diggin - Technology Administrator  
Deborah Branchal - ELD & Community Schools Coordinator

#### **Special Education**

Sarah Bradley - Special Education Director  
Jeanette Henshaw - Special Education Coordinator  
Patricia Meagher - Gifted Coordinator  
Corey Shropshire - Special Education Teacher/Case Manager

Tom Duke - Special Education Teacher/Case Manager  
Andrea Olonia - Special Education Assistant  
Sherry Arnowitz, School Psychologist (counseling for IEP Services & Evaluations)  
Kendra Risinger - Occupational Therapist  
Marie LeCuyer - Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant  
Margeaux Hurtado - Speech and Language Therapist  
Aicha Froeschle - Physical Therapist

**School Counseling Office and Nurse**

Angelina Vialpando - School Counselor  
April DeHerrera - School Nurse

**Early College High School/College Link**

Patricia Meagher - College Link Advisor  
Kelci Pike - Early College Coordinator/UNM Liaison

**Career & College Readiness / 21st Century Teachers:**

Erica Olson-Hensley- CCP2 10th Grade Career Pathways & CCP4 Senior Capstone  
Megan Jenkins - 5/6 & 9th SmartLab  
Robert Smith- 7/8 SmartLab  
Patti Kravitz - MS PE, Health and Wellness  
Dr. Denisha Moodley - MS Sustainable Leadership  
Billy Pepper - CCP1 PE, Health and Wellness  
Mary May - MS Global Studies  
Jason Weisfeld - CCP3 CTE Design / Internship & Work Study Coordinator

**Academic Support Teachers:**

Gayle Densow - Literacy Support for HS  
Lisa Joseph - Literacy Support for MS and HS SSL

**Academic Advisors:**

5th & 6th Grade Advisors - Cal Van Willigen & Emmett Moulton  
7th & 8th Grade Advisors - Megan Jenkins, Deborah Branchal, & Kelsea Connell  
9th Grade Advisors - Billy Pepper, Bre Messerole  
10th Grade Advisors - Billy Pepper & Robert Smith  
11th/12th Grade Advisors - Patricia Meagher (& College Link advisor), Jason Weisfeld & Mary May  
\* Curriculum & Rosetta Stone Coordinator - Tami Martinson  
\* eSports Coordinator - Cal Van Willigen  
\* FLEX Advisor- Bre Messerole  
\* Dorota Witney - Math Enrichment, Math Lab

*All teachers may be reached via email using first initial and last name@taosacademy.org as follows: [alucero@taosacademy.org](mailto:alucero@taosacademy.org). Please reach out! We love to hear from you!*



## **Please read carefully: Parking Lot Flow & Safety Rules**

**DROP OFF** each morning is from 7:45 to 7:55. School starts promptly at 8:00.

**PICK UP** each afternoon is from 4:00 to 4:15. Students not picked up by 4:15 will be escorted to the front office.

**All traffic is one way onto and off of the TA campus.** Cars enter through the west gate and exit through the east gate. Please note that traffic is low before 7:55 or after 4:05 if you prefer not to wait in line! Otherwise please follow the processes below:

### **Drop Off/Pick up: By grade-**

- **5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grades:**  
**Drop off/Pick up**  
**STEM building along the turf** - Stay straight and continue to the back of the building. Stay to the right. Pull up to cones at the end of the turf.
- **7<sup>th</sup> Grade:**  
**Drop off in Front of Main Building** - Pull forward into the farthest space along the sidewalk and wait in the car for students. No parking in the front of the building. No parking in front lanes.  
**Pick up in Back of Main Building** - Stay straight and continue to the back of the building. Stay to the left. Pull up to cones past the safe areas.
- **8<sup>th</sup> Grade:**  
**Drop off/Pick up**  
**Front of Main Building** - Pull forward into the farthest space along the sidewalk and wait in the car for students. No parking in the front of the building. No parking in front lanes.
- **9<sup>th</sup> Grade:**  
**Drop off/Pick up**  
**Front of Main Building** - Pull forward into the farthest space along the sidewalk and wait in the car for students. No parking in the front of the building. No parking in front lanes.
- **10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> Grades:**  
**Drop off/Pick up**  
**Back of Main Building on Left** - Stay straight, stay to the left, and continue to the back of the building to the end of the sidewalk on the left.
- **STEM Classes & MidPlus Program:**  
**Drop off/Pick up**  
**Back of Main Building on Right** - Stay straight and continue to the back of the building. Stay to the right and pick up along the turf. Pull up to cones.
- **HS SSL**  
**Drop off/Pick up**  
**Back of Main Building on Left** - Stay straight, stay to the left, and continue to the back of the building to the end of the sidewalk on the left.

### **Parking:**

- Stay straight or turn right (west) into visitor parking. First day overflow and special events parking to the south and east of the building.
- **Safe Zones** are marked with orange/yellow cones for students to wait for their parents. Students must be dropped off or picked up along the safe area ONLY.
- Students may not cross the parking lot for any reason during drop off or pick up times.
- Student walkers/bike riders will be released at 4:10 to avoid conflict with traffic and will be escorted across the street to the sidewalk.
- **All students leaving early must be signed out by their parents**



## TA Fall Semester: Starting Dates and Times

### **HIGH SCHOOL ORIENTATION (ALL STUDENTS)**

**Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup> – Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Monday 8/12 & Tuesday 8/13** - School starts at 8 am and concludes at 4 pm for all TA high school students this week. Students will participate in orientation activities, get started in their coursework, check their Next Step Plans, and meet their fellow students and teachers. Please be there!

*PLEASE NOTE: All Orientation Days and activities are required for College Link and FLEX students as part of their participation in those programs.*



## **HS LEADERSHIP DAYS**

These are required instructional days for all HS students. As stated earlier, Taos Academy is built on relationships and these trips offer students and teachers the chance to learn and get to know one another outside of the school environment. Parents and/or students are responsible for transportation and lunch.

***All trips require a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian. Permission slips and gear lists are linked below and hard copies are available at the front office.***

## Wednesday 8/14 - High School Leadership Days

- **Grade 9** will be participating in the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Challenge Course and on-campus team building activities from **8:00 am - 4:00 pm**. Drop-off and pick-up at Taos Academy Campus.
  - **BRING WATER & LUNCH.**
  - **Challenge Course Participation Forms [here](#)**
- **Grades 10 & 12** will attend TA campus from 8 am - 4 pm for lab time and continued orientation, as well as individual advisory meetings to set weekly schedules, review courses and Next Step Plans, set goals and complete UNM registrations as needed. *This includes College Link students.*
- **Grade 11** will be rafting the Racecourse on the Rio Grande with Los Rios River Runners. Students need to meet at 9:00 am at the Rio Grande Visitor's Center in Pilar. Pick up time is at 1:00 at the same place. **Parents and/or students will be responsible for transportation to and from Pilar**
  - **BRING LUNCH**
  - **[Permission Slip](#) link here**
  - **[Directions and Gear List](#) links here**

## Thursday 8/15 - High School Leadership Days

- **Grades 9 & 11** will attend TA campus from 8 am - 4 pm for lab time and continued orientation, as well as individual advisory meetings to set weekly schedules, review courses and Next Step Plans, set goals and complete UNM registrations as needed. *This includes College Link students.*
- **Grade 10** will be meeting at Taos Academy at 8 and taking a bus to Taos Ski Valley for a hike to Williams Lake with team building activities from **9:00 am - 3:00 pm**. Students will be back at Taos Academy by 4 pm for pick-up.
  - **BRING WATER & LUNCH.**
  - **[Permission slip](#) link**
- **Grade 12** will meet at 9:00 am at the Rio Grande Visitor's Center in Pilar for rafting the Rio Grande with Los Rios River Runners. Pick up time is at 1:00 at the same place. **Parents and/or students will be responsible for transportation to and from Pilar.**
  - **BRING LUNCH**
  - **[Permission Slip](#) link**
  - **[Directions and Gear List](#) links**

## Monday 8/19 – Thursday 8/22: HS Students Off Campus

ALL high school students are required to stay current with their pacing calendar for all digital coursework in Edgenuity and to attend their scheduled UNM classes. Students are encouraged to attend the HS Student Success Lab at Taos Academy Monday through Thursday from 8-12. The assignment calendar will be in effect during this time.

\*\*\* Attendance at SSL is required for students on a Success Plan or in credit recovery.



**COLLEGE LINK and DUAL CREDIT Students:** All dual credit *UNM classes begin the week of August 19*, and all College Link and Friday Early College Program students are required to attend their very first day of class. The last day to drop a class without receiving a W on your transcript is Monday, September 2. Make sure to accept the invitation into the Dual Credit Google Classroom and communicate regularly with Miss Pike to stay up to date on textbook ordering, important information, dates, etc. There will be an optional UNM tour for students new to the UNM-Taos campus - details will be released soon.



## **MIDDLE SCHOOL ORIENTATION & LEADERSHIP DAYS:** **Monday, August 19th – Thursday August 22nd**

The Middle School Orientation and Leadership Days schedule is as follows:

- **5th & 6th Grade:**
  - **Monday, August 19th:** 5th and 6th grade students attend Taos Academy from 8 am - 4 pm.
  - **Tuesday, August 20th:** 5th and 6th grade students attend Taos Academy from 8 am - 4 pm.
  - **Wednesday, August 21st:** 5th and 6th grade students have their Outdoor Ed and potluck at Taos Junction Bridge from 10 am to 6:30 pm.
    - Students should arrive at the group campsite at Rio Bravo Campground in the Orilla Verde Recreation Area at 10 am Students should bring a sack lunch, two full water bottles, and dress in layers - ready to play outdoors, rain or shine!

- Families are invited to attend a Family Potluck with the 5th and 6th grade teachers, students, and other families from 5:00 - 6:30 pm prior to pickup. Please bring a food or beverage item to share!
- [Permission slips here](#)
- **Thursday, August 22nd:** 5th and 6th grade students attend Taos Academy from 8 am - 4 pm for advisory, team-building, and academic support.
- **7th & 8th Grade:**
  - **Monday, August 19th:** 7th and 8th grade students attend Taos Academy from 8 am - 4 pm.
  - **Tuesday, August 20th:** 7th and 8th grade students attend Taos Academy from 8 am - 4 pm.
  - **Wednesday, August 21st:** 7th and 8th grade students attend Taos Academy from 8 am - 4 pm for advisory, team-building, and academic support.
  - **Thursday, August 22nd:** 7th and 8th grade students have their Outdoor Ed and potluck at Taos Junction Bridge from 10 am to 6:30 pm.
    - Students should arrive at the group campsite at the Rio Bravo Campground in the Orilla Verde Recreation Area at 10:00 am. Students should bring a sack lunch, two full water bottles, and dress in layers - ready to play outdoors, rain or shine!
    - Families are invited to attend a Family Potluck with the 5th and 6th grade teachers, students, and other families from 5:00 - 6:30 pm prior to pickup. Please bring a food or beverage item to share!
    - [Permission slips here](#)



### **What to bring and expect for the first day:**

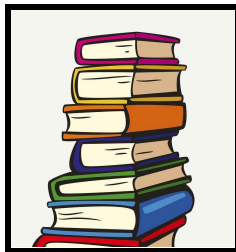
Beginning the week of August 26<sup>th</sup>, ALL students will attend TA on their regularly scheduled days. Middle school students attend campus on Monday and Wednesday from 8-4; high school students attend Tuesday and Thursday (8-4). College Link lab times will be scheduled around their UNM class schedule and must accommodate one full advisory time (4 hours), enrichment for ELA and Math classes that are not being taken through UNM, and CTE Design or Capstone classes.

**\*\*\* Looking ahead, September 2nd is Labor Day and the school is closed. During this week only, Mid School Students will attend Wednesday (9/4) and Friday (9/6).**

The school day begins at **8:00 am** and concludes at 4:00pm. Students are required to be in class at 8:00 am or they will be marked tardy. **Do not drop students off before 7:45.**

Please be sure to bring:

- Your school supplies
- A full water bottle (labeled with the student's name). Access to the water fountain may be limited; please plan ahead!
- Lunch and snacks for the day
- **STUDENT HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE (SIGNED)**
- **FAMILY HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE (SIGNED)**



REMINDER - STUDENT HANDBOOK: Taos Academy provides an environment that promotes learning. Students and families accept the handbook as a condition of attending Taos Academy. Among other items, please remember:

- Dress for being outside and inside. Students will need to dress and wear shoes for the weather. You will take breaks outside and walk for 20 minutes each day. Please plan for this each day you are on campus.  
Taos Academy Dress Code: Torn, frayed clothing or clothing with holes, even with material underneath, does not follow the dress code. Hats, bandanas, hoodies, and sunglasses are removed inside school buildings. Messages and images that depict violence, weapons, illegal substances, or gender, racial and cultural bias are not welcome at school. Avoid over-loose or tight clothes and clothes that show undergarments, or are revealing. Take a careful look at the full dress code in the Student Handbook for this and other policies.
- Cell phones and personal devices including wireless earbuds: Personal phones and other devices are powered off and device placed in the specified hanging pocket during class, not on your person. You can use your devices during breaks and lunch. You may NOT film or photograph other students on campus. *Wireless earbuds are not allowed on campus.*
- Taos Academy is a closed campus. Students remain on campus during the school day unless signed out by a family member at the front office. College Link students follow a separate schedule and policy.
- Student Drivers: Student drivers will park in the TA student parking lot and display a student driving pass. You will need to provide a copy of your license, your insurance, your registration and have written parent permission. You can drive yourself only to school. You will need a staff escort to visit your vehicle during the school day and students should not be in the student parking lot other than at the start of the school day or dismissal times.
- Lunch, water, and snacks: Please bring your lunch, healthy snacks, and a reusable water bottle with you in your backpack. Lunch is not provided by Taos Academy. There are vending machines

available ONLY at lunch or with a teacher escort - class time will not be used to visit the vending machines.

- Food and non-water drinks in designated areas: Food and drink are not allowed near computers, in the gym, or on the playing fields and track. To have a snack and refuel during class, you will move to a designated table. Water bottles will save you having to wait to go to the water fountain; just keep the water bottle closed tightly on the floor near you.
- Rest Rooms: There are gender-inclusive individual locking restrooms in each of our buildings. Bathroom passes will be used to keep these as safe spaces for students who need them.
- Over-the-Counter Medications, Drug, Tobacco and Vape Free Campus: Do not bring these things to school. Please report them to a staff member if you see them.
- Weapon free campus: TA is a weapons-free zone and this includes pocket knives and items you may use at work or home. Please be sure to remove these items from your bag and pockets before school. Please report them to a staff member if you see them.

Thanks for your attention to these details to help us all have a strong, safe start!

## STUDENT SUPPORT

**HS Student Success Lab** will be offered for our high schoolers from 8-12 Monday through Thursday, starting August 26th. Please take advantage of our open computer lab staffed with tutors and get your Edge on! This is a great opportunity to get a jump start on the academic year.

### **Student Success Planning:**

All students with a GPA of lower than 2.0, credit recovery, a failure in more than two core academic classes in the prior semester and/or not meeting proficiency in any academic area, will be put on a Student Success Plan. Students and families will work with the advisor to create a plan for increased student achievement and success here at TA, which may include required attendance at SSL or MS+, and/or additional STEM class attendance to boost engagement and student skills.

At the 9 week mark, an appropriate placement meeting will be scheduled by the advisor with the parent, student, curriculum coordinator and director to discuss success at TA and continued enrollment.

## MS+

Middle School Plus (MS+) is offered from 8-4 on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting August 26th for grades 5-8. Attendance is voluntary and not bound to an 8:00 am arrival **UNLESS** a student is on a Student Success Lab contract (SSL). Students must be enrolled in a STEM class in order to stay after 12 pm.

In MS+, Taos Academy provides a learning service for middle school students on their optional days that is flexible and based on the needs of participating students. Service components include: student-driven progress tracking for meeting social and academic goals, support for completing coursework, restorative practice techniques, and other activities that provide a rich environment for students to interact with each other, our staff and our community.

Parents are encouraged to contact Jamie Lucero-Martinez at [jlucero-martinez@taosacademy.org](mailto:jlucero-martinez@taosacademy.org) with questions about the Middle School Plus enrichment program. We welcome your ideas and support!



**Special Education:** Families of Special Education Students: If you are joining Taos Academy for the next school year and have an IEP, please drop off a hard copy or email a digital copy of your last evaluation and current IEP. If you have any questions or want to check in prior to the start of school, we are happy to connect with you in person.

As documents come in, we will be developing a Transfer IEP and contacting you to set up a meeting. If you have any questions or concerns or need to set up a meeting prior to the Transfer IEP, please contact Mrs. Sarah Bradley. We look forward to working with you and your child. Thank you for your support & welcome to Taos Academy!

**Our Special Education Team includes:**

Corey Shropshire & Tom Duke as our Special Education Case managers and Direct Service Providers. Andrea Olonia is joining TA as a full time Special Education Educational Assistant. Patricia Meagher will be continuing as our Gifted Coordinator.

**Jeanette Henshaw** [jhenshaw@taosacademy.org](mailto:jhenshaw@taosacademy.org)  
**TA Special Education Coordinator** 575-758-3109  
Ms. Henshaw will be focusing on school level support for students and teachers.

**Sarah Bradley** [sbradley@taosacademy.org](mailto:sbradley@taosacademy.org)  
**TA Special Education Director** 575-758-3109 x 104  
Mrs. Bradley is our district level Special Education administrator, focusing on compliance, processes, and oversight.

**Additional Parent Support/Resources:** [NM Parents Reaching Out](http://NM Parents Reaching Out)  
[michelle.tregembo@state.nm.us](mailto:michelle.tregembo@state.nm.us) 505-841-4565 [OSEA Flier](#)



If you are new to the school, please email a copy of your child’s 504 plan or drop a hard copy off at the front desk if you haven't provided one already! 504s are usually reviewed annually on the date they were initiated; however, you may request to have a review done at the beginning of the school year to support your child’s transition to Taos Academy if needed.

For families of students who have concerns about a physical or mental impairment, please reach out to me.

Each student suspected of having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities should be evaluated by the district or charter school, on a case-by-case basis, to determine whether they may qualify as having a disability under Section 504.

#### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to:

- (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
- (2) have a record of such an impairment, (i.e., the person has a history of, or has been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, even though the person does not currently have a disability); or
- (3) be regarded as having such an impairment, (i.e., the person does not have an impairment but is treated as having an impairment).

#### 504 Overview Information

With thanks!

Angelina Vialpando  
School Counselor and 504 Coordinator  
[avialpando@taosacademy.org](mailto:avialpando@taosacademy.org)



**MS STEM+Art Institute classes** are for 7 weeks and will begin the week of August 26th. Classes will be announced **Tuesday, August 13th** and will be first come first serve with a **\$10 materials fee required at signup**.

**HS STEM+Art Institute classes** are for a full semester and will begin the week of August 27th. Classes will be announced on **Tuesday, August 13th** and will be first come first serve with a **\$20 materials fee required at signup**.

Registration will open on August 19th no exceptions. Fees must be paid at the time of registration. All registration will take place in the STEM office.

Please contact Jamie Lucero-Martinez [jlucero-martinez@taosacademy.org](mailto:jlucero-martinez@taosacademy.org) or Cruz Duran [cduran@taosacademy.org](mailto:cduran@taosacademy.org) for more information.

### **TA FLEX Program is back!**

Taos Academy will continue to offer a FLEX learning option for eligible students. Students should be on track in their studies, demonstrate excellent independent work habits, and have a family member who will serve as their learning coach who is available

to support them in their work.

Interested families should review the handbooks and application packet. Applications may be emailed to Dr. Mae LaBella at [mlabella@taosacademy.org](mailto:mlabella@taosacademy.org) or dropped off at the front office. These should be turned in by Friday, August 9th for high school students and Friday, August 16th for middle school students.

\*\*\* Regardless of FLEX eligibility or application status, all students should plan to attend their Orientation ON CAMPUS per the schedule posted above. This is part of your responsibility as a FLEX student.



**UNM Classes begin the week of August 19th.** Students make sure to join the ECHS Google Classroom for information on how to access your courses, request purchase for all textbooks and course materials, as well as other important information.



Welcome Taos Academy students, parents, and community! We hope you had a fun and relaxing summer vacation and that everyone is ready for a new school year filled with new possibilities and new experiences.

School counselors help all students. Here is an idea of what our counseling team does:

- Academics: Apply academic achievement strategies
- Social Emotional Learning: Help students manage emotions and apply interpersonal skills
- Career and College Planning
- Student academic planning and goal setting
- School counseling classroom lessons
- Referrals for long-term support
- Collaboration with families/teachers/ administrators/ community for student success
- Advocacy for students at individual education plan meetings and other student-focused meetings
- Data analysis to identify student issues, needs and challenges
- Acting as a systems change agent to improve equity and access, achievement and opportunities for all students

We want to assure you that your students will be supported and encouraged by the teachers and staff. If situations come up that need another layer of support, the school counseling office is here for them as well. If you have any concerns about your student, please feel free to contact the school counseling office. Email is the best way to reach us.

- **Angelina Vialpando**, [avialpando@taosacademy.org](mailto:avialpando@taosacademy.org)



### **Mark Your Calendars!**

- 8/7-8/8** - New Student/Parent Training (9 am to 1 pm)
- 8/12 - 8/13** – High School Orientation & Leadership Days
- 8/12** - Governing Council Meeting 5:30
- 8/14-8/15** - High School Activity Days
- 8/19 - 8/20** - Middle School Orientation & Leadership Days
- 8/21-8/22** - Middle School Activity Days
- 8/26** - STEM + Art Begins / MS Plus
- 8/28** - Community Council



### **Mark Your Calendars!**

- 9/2** - Labor Day - No School
- 9/6** - MS Make-Up Day
- 9/09** - Governing Council @ 5:30
- 9/20** - Professional Development
- 9/25** Community Council

If you have any questions feel free to call or email the contacts below:

Amy Lucero [alucero@taosacademy.org](mailto:alucero@taosacademy.org) 751-3109

Ashley Trujillo [atrujillo@taosacademy.org](mailto:atrujillo@taosacademy.org) 751-3109