



**VISTA GRANDE**  
CHARTER SCHOOL

# FOR SCHOOL AND LAND

FOUR YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN





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This is our work, to discover  
what we can give. Isn't this  
the purpose of education, to  
learn the nature of your own  
gifts and how to use them  
for good in the world?



- Robin Wall Kimmerer

## Welcome

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# Isabelle St. Onge

## SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students,

As the School Director of Vista Grande, it is my honor to share our four year strategic plan. I am excited to work together with our students, staff, and families to achieve our common goals and ensure that each and every student is successful.

At Vista Grande, our mission is to **empower the school community to create positive change in an inclusive environment that embodies our shared values of compassion, authenticity and sustainable growth.** To achieve this mission, we have developed a comprehensive strategic plan that outlines our goals, objectives, and action steps for the upcoming year.

Our strategic plan is focused on four main areas: academic excellence, family and community engagement, collaborative leadership, and high-quality teachers. Through these areas, we aim to provide a challenging and supportive learning environment that fosters academic growth, personal development, and social responsibility.

**Academic excellence:** Our goal is to provide a rigorous and engaging curriculum that prepares students for success in higher education and the workforce. We will achieve this by providing high-quality instruction, utilizing data to inform instruction and learning, and offering opportunities for enrichment and acceleration.

We believe that student well-being is essential to academic success. To promote well-being, we will focus on providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive school environment, promoting social-emotional learning, and offering resources to support mental and physical health.

Our curriculum includes Culturally and Linguistically responsive teaching and learning strategies to provide an equitable learning experience for all.

**Family and Community engagement:** We recognize that a strong partnership between the school, families, and community is critical to student success. To build and maintain this partnership, we will focus on improving communication and collaboration between school and home, providing opportunities for family involvement, and fostering community partnerships.

**Collaborative Leadership and High Quality teachers** are focus areas in the strategic plan. I am committed to having strong structures that support collaborative leadership including students at all levels of leadership. VGHS will foster and mentor teachers to achieve long-term retention of a talented and dedicated teaching staff.

We are committed to implementing our strategic plan with fidelity and measuring our progress towards our goals. We believe that by working together, we can create a learning community where every student thrives.

Thank you for your partnership and support. I look forward to working with you throughout the upcoming year.

*Isabelle St. Onge*

## ABOUT VISTA GRANDE

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### OUR COMMUNITY

Taos is a community overflowing with a long proud history, three cultures living side by side, and a heritage of colorful people. Its diversity makes Taos a very interesting and dynamic place to live and learn.

Taos Valley was first settled by the Tiwa Speaking – Taos Pueblo Native Americans over 1,000 years ago. Taos Pueblo is the only UNESCO Living World Heritage Site in the U.S.

The first Spanish settlers were farming throughout the area by 1615. Taos Plaza came into existence as a fortified plaza around 1796 following the Don Fernando de Taos Land Grants from the King of Spain. The Town of Taos was incorporated in 1934.



Taos is 7,000 to 8,000 ft above sea level with a mild four-season climate, an arid high desert with brief summer monsoonal rains, mountain snows in winter and clear crisp air with clean, cloudless skies year-round.

Recreational opportunities include; mountain biking, world-class skiing, hiking, camping, fishing, river rafting, golfing, and rock climbing. There is a vibrant art community and many galleries to explore.

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### OUR SCHOOL

Vista Grande Charter was established in 2007 by two members of the Taos community, Dr. Stephanie Owens and Mr. Todd Wynward. Community members articulated a clear need for a new and vibrant community school that honored the local heritage Northern New Mexico Hispanic and Native American cultures. The original charter was for a 9-12 school that began operations in the 2007-2008 school year. The first students graduated from VGHS in 2010.

Since the original charter with Taos Municipal Schools, VGHS has successfully rechartered twice with district-authorization. In 2022, the VGHS leadership team saw the need for more autonomy and rechartered with the New Mexico Public Education Commission. Vista Grande Charter is now a 6-12 school with the 6th grade academy beginning in the 2023-2024 school year.



# Our Mission

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To empower the school community to create positive change in an inclusive environment that embodies our shared values of compassion, authenticity, and sustainable growth.

## CORE VALUES

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# People, place, and purpose.

## CULTURE

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Vista Grande High School is a place where students experience a transformative, holistic education focused on developing critical and creative thinking. We have a long history of building deep connections with our students, their families, and the Taos community. Vista Grande is a small school, built around the traditional wisdom and culture of our local elders, whose vibrant culture serves as the foundation for learning.

## MODEL

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To build this environment, we believe we must be excellent stewards of our land and our people. At Vista Grande, you will immediately notice our outdoor classrooms and farm. Our learning model emphasizes Project Based Learning, helping our students bridge the gap between theory and land-based practices. At the same time, our teachers are continuously growing their practice, exhibiting a strong focus on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching.

## PEOPLE

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We strive to ensure that all identities are affirmed, welcomed, and provided an environment that allows them to thrive. And through close partnerships with Taos Pueblo, the Green Schools Network, the New Mexico Public Education Department, and many others, we are building a student body that is engaging in in the world around them.

## STUDENTS

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Most of all, our students are at the center of all we do. They are treated with love, respect, and care. When they make mistakes, we practice restorative justice, giving them an opportunity to learn and grow. When they succeed, we celebrate them as unique individuals with important gifts to share with the world.

# The Path Forward

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Over the last 15 years, we have laid the foundation for a school that is truly unique in its service to students and families in the Taos community. It's now our honor to invite you to join us in dreaming about the future that lies ahead.

Over the next four years, Vista Grande Charter School will embark on a mission to ensure each student receives a transformative, holistic education focused on developing critical and creative thinking, character, and community involvement.

In the following pages, you will find our plans and goals for achieving this mission, but these are just a start. You are a part of our community and we want your voice included in this process.

As you read our plan, please share your thoughts and feedback at [\*\*THIS\*\*](#) link or going to this QR code on your phone:



## THE PATH FORWARD

# Academic Achievement

## GOAL

Provide students with skills applicable to success in the larger world so they can be successful in their life goals. In doing so, Vista Grande will build a bridge from childhood to adulthood.

### OUR PATH TO THIS GOAL:

Through a focus on culturally and linguistically responsive instruction strategies and strong support for students' social emotional development, VGHS will:

- reduce disparities in core subject areas
- deepen students sense of belonging
- foster the development of strong and trusting relationships among students, teachers, and families
- improve school climates
- reduce exclusionary disciplinary practices
- increase opportunities for students to have voice in the design of in-school and out-of-school experiences that are aligned with their interests and goals

View the detailed list of **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT** strategies and outcomes by visiting [THIS](#) link.



## THE PATH FORWARD

# High Quality Teachers

## GOAL

Highly effective educators use culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy to increase students' successful completion of high school to become college- and career- ready and contribute as productive members of their communities.

### OUR PATH TO THIS GOAL:

- Ensure that all students have access to enriching, meaningful, 21st century programming and initiatives that contribute to improved academic achievement and personal success, regardless of demographics.
- Provide equitable access of high quality instructional materials to teachers and students to mitigate the external barriers to learning and provide asset-based supports and opportunities to enhance student achievement.

View the detailed list of **HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS** strategies and outcomes by visiting [THIS](#) link.



## THE PATH FORWARD

# Collaborative Leadership

## GOAL

Develop school, district, and school board leaders who foster collaborative, trusting learning environments where students and teachers thrive.



## OUR PATH TO THIS GOAL:

- Increase students' successful completion of high school with research-based, relevant, applied, and experiential learning opportunities that support all students to become college- and career-ready and contribute as productive members of their communities.
- Increase student learning and development by engaging in deeper, enriched academic learning that is integrated with social-emotional learning and that is culturally and linguistically responsive.

View the detailed list of **COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP** strategies and outcomes by visiting [THIS](#) link.

## THE PATH FORWARD

# Family and Community Engagement

## GOAL

Provide equitable access to support services and learning opportunities for all stakeholders in our community that enable all students to thrive in their educational setting regardless of their demographics, family income level, or disability status.

### OUR PATH TO THIS GOAL:

Vista Grande will focus on a broad array of interactions among parents, students, educators, and community members, including:

- strengthening the tools that caregivers can leverage to support their children academically
- increasing opportunities for families to volunteer at school
- creating meaningful roles and power structures for students to shape change
- designing meaningful engagement that supports positive student outcomes, reduced absenteeism, improved academic outcomes, and a positive school climate
- increasing trust among students, parents, and staff

View the detailed list of **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** strategies and outcomes by visiting [THIS](#) link.



## IN ACTION

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Watch the video below to see our Strategic Plan in action.

(You can also access this video on the Vista Grande Website at:  
[www.vistagrande.org](http://www.vistagrande.org))



# THE RE-GENERATION

## INSIDE THE OUTSIDE CLASSROOM

Ready to make this plan a reality? Click the button or visit the QR code to join us:

GET INVOLVED



VISTA GRANDE  
CHARTER SCHOOL

## APPENDIX LINKS

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To view a detailed set of strategies and outcomes aligned to each goal in our Strategic Plan, please visit the following Appendix links:

- **APPENDIX A (ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT)**
  - <https://www.canva.com/design/DAFd1dZvU3I/vEt9ifPs-179FYE6IOEEyg/view?website#2:academic-achievement>
- **APPENDIX B (HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS)**
  - <https://www.canva.com/design/DAFd9M3G9NA/JioR7YiyrhXAEHDdHcDyug/view?website#2>
- **APPENDIX C (COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP)**
  - <https://www.canva.com/design/DAFd9OYJOqQ/vaGiatq76VYadSM4NpUoUg/view?website#2:collaborative-leadership>
- **APPENDIX D (FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)**
  - <https://www.canva.com/design/DAFd9bv8frs/7Xshs45-NeU0PLH-ouqI5w/view?website#2:family-community-engagement>