2022-2025 Strategic Plan

Mountain Middle School

Written by the Board October 2021 - May 2022
Adopted by the Board May 2022
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Introduction

Mountain Middle School (MMS) is a free, public, state-chartered school located in Durango, Colorado, providing education to 4th – 8th grade students, with a focus on integrating technology into project-based learning in a safe environment.

Vision (who we say we are)
To be a distinguished educational community leader that empowers students to own their future.

Mission (what we say we do)
Within a safe and supportive culture, Mountain Middle School integrates technology and project-based learning into a rigorous curriculum that prepares students to achieve their highest academic and social potential.

A Culture of Excellence

Insisting on high standards benefits all students

“When students enter a family culture, a community culture, or a school culture that demands and supports excellence, they work to fit into that culture. A culture of excellence transcends race, class, and geography; it doesn’t matter what color, income, or background the children come from. Once the children enter a culture with a powerful ethic, that ethic becomes their norm. It’s what they know.”

-From Ron Berger, An Ethic of Excellence

Habits of Heart and Mind

Fostering character is not an add-on at Mountain Middle School – it is embedded in all aspects of our school culture and permeates academic studies. Character is a focus all day long. Mountain Middle School defines Habits of Heart and Mind as having two facets – relational character and performance character.

- **Relational character** focuses on Respect and Integrity
  Relational character skills are essential for positive collaboration, ethical interaction, appropriate participation, and personal responsibility for actions.

- **Performance character** focuses on Effort and Refinement
  Performance character skills (habits of scholarship) are needed to obtain a standard of excellence in academic or real-world endeavors.

Both types of character are essential for success in school and in life.
Academic learning at Mountain Middle School is seen not as an end to itself, but rather in service of preparing students to contribute to a better world. Therefore, all learning is character-based.

A History of Mountain Middle School

MMS was founded in 2010 and is one of two independent public charter schools in La Plata County, Colorado, authorized by the Charter School Institute (CSI).

CSI audits our school each year and focuses on academic, financial, and organizational performance. MMS has met or exceeded the expectations set by CSI consistently every year since opening and has received the top accreditation rating of a “Distinction School” 7 of the 10 years we have been open.

As an independent charter school, MMS takes an innovative and rigorous approach to curriculum by designing project based instructional experiences that meet the mandated academic standards while fostering a culture of experiential learning. MMS celebrates new ideas, the drive to expand the limits of each student's academic and social potential, the joy of learning, and the friendship and personal growth that come from challenging endeavors.

The initial charter allowed MMS to open in 2010 with 2 classes of 60 students total in grades 6 through 8.

In 2014, MMS achieved its first capital milestone with the purchase of its original building, or north wing. This purchase gave MMS the financial freedom from rent and building debt and freed up capital equity upon which to leverage critical financial opportunities including competitive and industry and community leading compensation packages to attract and retain high quality staff, and opportunities to expand the campus to serve a larger number of students. At this time, the Mountain Foundation for Education (MFE), a non-profit building corporation, was established to own the property for the sole purpose of offering it to Mountain Middle School to utilize as a school governed by State charter. The establishment of MFE would allow MMS to continue to benefit from State budgeted capital funding and opportunities to leverage the building equity to obtain financing for continued growth and expansion while meeting the requirements of TABOR.

In 2016 Mountain Middle School participated in a history-making ballot tax initiative in Durango and entered into a contractual agreement with the Durango School District 9R to share in Mill Levy funding. This achievement was the first of its kind in the history of public-school ballot initiatives in the State of Colorado – funds being shared with a non-district-chartered charter school – and subsequently led to the passage of Mill Levy Equalization Law in the State.

In 2017, the school completed two capital expansion projects on the campus. It constructed a new building, the east wing, which housed the initial 4th and 5th grade classes (an
expansion to its original charter) along with a state-of-the-art makerspace. It collaborated with Pediatric Partners of the Southwest to establish a community-based health center inside the school. This expansion afforded MMS the opportunity to expand enrollment and serve up to 240 full time students in grades 4 - 8 as well as a thriving homeschool program. The second project was to purchase the property to the south of the campus and convert it into a green space for the school and Animas City community.

In 2018 Mountain Middle School completed the lease payoff for a solar garden on the roof of the north wing that saw the school achieve net zero status with its generation and use of electricity generated in the solar garden.

In 2020 MMS had the honor of setting ballot initiative history once again by successfully lobbying to participate with the Durango public school district and fellow community charter schools in a $90 million bond campaign. That initiative successfully passed, and MMS entered into contractual agreement with the Durango school district to be awarded $2.5 million for capital expansion.

In 2021 MMS broke ground on construction of the south wing of the school. This wing will allow enrollment expansion for an additional 60 students in grades 4 and 5, bringing total school enrollment opportunity to 300 students. The south wing is expected to open in August 2022, and in addition to classroom space it will house a full kiln, state of the art technology lab and digital recording studios, and expanded makerspace, as well as a rooftop open air classroom and board/staff room. As part of finalizing the construction of this wing of the campus, the school intends to invest in a second solar garden on the roof of the south wing, aiming to maintain net zero status for electricity generation and usage once again.

**Overview of Strategic Planning Process**

At Mountain Middle School, the goal of strategic planning is to partner with the Head of School to ensure the conditions for the success they and our staff strive for are agreed on and adequately planned. Looking through the lens of a 1, 3 and 5-year timeframe, we take a mid-term approach to consider the academic, financial, and organizational goals and expectations for the school and plan an appropriate path for implementation, while considering the following questions: who are we? where are we now? where do we want to be? how will we get there? and how will we measure progress and success?

Over 3 separate days during the fall of 2021, the MMS board and Head of School invited guest speakers from the community, state and from across the country to explore topics that included the changing landscape for charter school success in Colorado, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that exist for MMS to adapt to and evolve within the conditions to continue to ensure our student success. We heard from equity and diversity experts and explored the goals for enrollment diversity within the school. The board also discussed the strategic adoption of a high performing governance model to help
the current and future boards operate with maximum effectiveness and continue to attract and retain high quality board members who will contribute to the future of the school.

**General Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats at Mountain Middle School**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic success - performance for 10 years, distinction for 8 (performance-based assessments, rigorous)</td>
<td>Limited green space on campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment numbers, including enrollment growth (going to lottery for 10 years) - positive community perception</td>
<td>When no co-teaching available, class size goes to 1 teacher for 30 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highly credentialed staff - all staff have master’s Degrees, 3 Bachelor’s Degrees, 1 PhD</td>
<td>Always a wish for more teacher planning time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use for technology to enhance curriculum (prepares school/students for remote learning and real world)</td>
<td>Communication - families don't know about the degree of community outreach and partnerships we have. They don't know enough about the strategic wins we have. They don't know enough about what the board does.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial strength (strong audits, strong reserves, consistently performing within budget, competitive teacher wages with raises every year))</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety (proactive approach to COVID, student body wide testing, preparedness)</td>
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<tr>
<td>COVID preparedness and response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff (driven, creative, independently capable of teacher led curriculum design, passionate, caring, synergistic, high emotional intelligence, highly credentialed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities (state of the art resources, growing maker space, own our budlings, larger art and digital media spaces coming in new building in addition to larger</td>
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classrooms for elementary grades)

Own transportation (staff all trained in use of vehicles, ease of access for staff to use them)

School culture (focus on character and development of student agency)

Active parent community (volunteering, donation, highly engaged, large % of respondents to surveys and RFIs)

Small school (developing sense of belonging and personalization, self-reliance, confidence, self-advocacy, social awareness & presentation skills)

Class size (funded co teaching in every classroom, 1 teacher to every 29 students)

Relationship with 9R (Mill Levy, Bond, transportation)

SPED (doubled staffing in this program, able to have more bots in classrooms for targeted interventions - 2 interventionists for 13 IEPs)

Staff professional development (leadership team involved in design, teacher’s identify needs and PD designed around the, early release Mondays maintained to allow time for this)

High staff retention (intentional and strategic staffing improvements in last 2 years to improve teams and to replace teacher retirement, strengthened documentation regarding staff performance to support these)

Relationship with Animas City Bazar
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential acquisition of property to south of campus in future - turn into green space</td>
<td>Student fear about rising to traditional HS after 3+ years of project-based learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch for signs Animas City Museum may be relocated downtown - possible acquisition of current schoolhouse and property - more classroom and potential green space</td>
<td>Head of School (reliance on his leadership, knowledge, relationships)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHS CTE center - participate in design discussions to maintain awareness</td>
<td>COVID (limiting after school programs, threats to staying open for in person instruction)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHS - Collaborate on communication about MMS student preparedness for DHS</td>
<td>Shifting political climate on State Board of Education and within state in general</td>
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<tr>
<td>Past students coming back to talk about transition to HS</td>
<td>Growing too fast - could threaten quality, takes a toll on time/energy/capacity/capability for leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus strategic planning and future initiatives on doing better, not more</td>
<td>Miller construction - potential to impact continued high enrollment with a high-tech brand-new middle school a few blocks away with all the resources of the district that we cannot offer directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore ways to pay down construction loan in 5 years instead of 10 (budget scenarios going into 2022 and beyond)</td>
<td>Burnout: staff, HEAD OF SCHOOL, board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board has a representative on MMS PTO</td>
<td>PPR - funded annually in state budget, any sizable changes could impact our budget negatively</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased social media presence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased communication and advertising about community partnerships and MMS wins.</td>
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The Changing Landscape for Charter School Success in Colorado

Guest Contributor: Tim Miller

Tim is a central voice on the Colorado League of Charter Schools’ Governmental Affairs Committee and works with Charter School lobbyists in Denver and will speak on both impending legislation and general politics influencing the charter school landscape in Colorado.

Factors Influencing the Charter Landscape in Colorado

A Look at Colorado

- Charter Schools Act passed in 1993, becoming only the third state to do so
- Over 130,000 students currently attend 261 charter schools across the state
- This represents 15% of students in Colorado

Colorado’s Charter School Law is Ranked #2 in the Country by the National Association of Public Charter Schools. Why?

- No Caps
- A Variety of Charter Schools Allowed
- Non-district Authorizers Available (CSI)
- Authorizer and Overall Program Accountability System Required
- Adequate Authorizer Funding
- Transparent Charter Application, Review, and Decision-making Processes
- Performance-based Charter Contracts Required
- Comprehensive Charter School Monitoring and Data Collection Processes
- Clear Processes for Renewal, Nonrenewal, and Revocation Decisions
- Transparency Regarding Educational Service Providers
- Fiscally and Legally Autonomous Schools with Independent Charter School Boards
- Clear Student Enrollment and Lottery Procedures
- Automatic Exemptions from Many State and District Laws and Regulations
- Automatic Collective Bargaining Exemption
- Multi-school Charter Contracts and/or Multi-charter Contract Boards Allowed
- Extracurricular and Interscholastic Activities Eligibility and Access
- Clear Identification of Special Education Responsibilities
- Equitable Operational Funding and Equal Access to All State and Federal Categorical Funding (BIG WIN, MMS Played a part!)
- Equitable Access to Capital Funding and Facilities
- Access to Relevant Employee Retirement Systems
- Full-time Virtual Charter School Provisions 1
The Major “Players” in Charter School Decision-making in Colorado

Local Control and School Boards: Approvals, impositions of conditions/contracts, renewals, revocations, some have exclusive chartering authority (Durango)

Charter School Institute (CSI): A committee under the State Board of Education. Available for chartering in districts where there is no local exclusive chartering authority, or for appeal and application in a district with exclusive authority that denies a viable charter contract. Can petition for release or loss of ECA. This is exactly how Mountain came to be.

State Board of Education: Charter appeals (VERY Important), Standard of Review

Legislature: Funding, “Rules” of the processes

The Politics that Affect Charter Schools in Colorado

- Traditional political alliances (teachers unions, CASE, CASB, DFER, political parties, etc.)
- Charter Schools are one of the more bipartisan issues, especially in Colorado (Gov. Polis avid supporter of charter schools)
- Local control and school boards
- Legislature composition
- State Board of Education composition

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats for MMS about the Shifting Political and Decision-making Landscape for Charter Schools in Colorado

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charter Schools are a large subsection of the student population: MMS is estimated to enroll 15% of Durango students.</td>
<td>Board has lost its relationship with the League (primary lobbying organization for Charter Schools in CO) therefore does not stay abreast of shifts in politics at State Level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local District Board supportive of Charters (and MMS).</td>
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**Community outreach/partnerships (Shane list) - local, State, National**

Shane relationship with Barbara McLachlan (State Legislature Education Committee).

Shane relationship with CO League of Charter Schools.

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<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Board can become more involved with the League - at least remain knowledgeable on lobbying initiatives and political work being done.</td>
<td>Lack of Mill Levy Equalization in Colorado.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members rotate to attend CSI and League education meetings to learn more about what is happening at State Level.</td>
<td>Not a lot of charter-specific voter information campaigns, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members rotate to attend CO League of Charter School Annual Conference.</td>
<td>Shifting political landscape at State level making it harder to hold the bipartisan coalition together (Gov. Polis is very important)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board continues to prioritize relationships with the 9R board - rotate to attend board meetings.</td>
<td>Standard of Review bill back on table for state legislative review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a HUB of excellence - inviting other schools/boards/staff into MMS to lead development and coaching.</td>
<td>Shifting political climate on 9R board (partnership survives through MOU, threatens transportation, free and reduced lunch program, athletics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board and leadership tours for political leaders, potential donors, business leaders, other community influencers (Make a list of leaders/community members we want to invite for tours, include future local school board candidates)</td>
<td>Shifting political landscape in local communities surrounding Durango (Bayfield, Cortez, Ignacio, Pagosa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get exhibitions back into the community</td>
<td>Changing dynamics with the State Board of Education</td>
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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Guest Contributor: Tommie Lewis, President, and CEO of Make It Plain Consulting

Tommie offers a robust knowledge and expertise in performance coaching, leader development, organizational engagement and global diversity spanning corporate, public, government, education, and not-for-profit sectors. Tommie has been sought after to provide leadership, employee development and diversity consultancy across the nation. Tommie and Make It Plan are also currently engaged in equity and diversity training and consulting for Durango 9R.

Diversity

“It's important to remember that diversity is less about what makes people different—their race, socioeconomic status, and so on—and more about understanding, accepting and valuing the differences.”

Equity

“Whereas diversity refers to all the many ways that people differ, equity is about creating fair access, opportunity, and advancement for all the different people. It's about creating a fair playing field.”

Inclusion

“Inclusion is the extent to which various team members, employees, and other people feel a sense of belonging and value within a given organizational setting.”

Source:
Ideal.com

What Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Really Mean
Common Mistakes and Misunderstandings with DEI

DEI discussions in schools are often focused on race, religion, and sexual orientation but there are far more societal factors to consider such as ethnicity, physical and emotional ability, geographic location, familial dynamics, socio-economic status, historical experiences.

DEI discussions usually focus on the what and who and do not consider the how. For example, diversity is not simply a headcount of students from different backgrounds and means, but also needs to include discussion and exploration around understanding and accepting of the different values the different backgrounds afford.

Too often when DEI is assessed, a box is checked where there are demonstrated attempts to achieve appropriate DEI goals. The box should not be checked until there is demonstrated success of achieving the goals.

“Try not. Do. Or do not. There is no try.” Spoken by Yoda, played by Frank Oz, in the film Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back, directed by Irvin Kershner (1980).

The Diversity Wheel

The Diversity Wheel which reviews the dimensions of diversity that exist in the community.
Recommended Ongoing Board Discussions on DEI

Reactionary - what problems are we having right now?
Proactionary- what does education need to look like in the future?

Areas to assess:

1. People (who) - Who are our leaders (board and staff), Who are our students and families, who else supports our school - what are the DEI strengths and areas of opportunity
2. Process (what) - What does recruit, and retention of staff and students look like. What are we teaching, what discussions are happening, what needs exist?
3. Culture (how) - How do we educate, grow, support, discipline our students. Is it inclusive of all members of the community (would it work on anyone)?

All this work boils down to the individual. Meet them where they are. Find the common language (for example, laughing and crying are two common languages).

Don’t just assess the who and what - look and how the community responds to the who and what. Event + Response = Outcome. Focus on the outcomes of the DEI work you do.

Current & Ongoing Diversity Outreach for Student Enrollment and Support at MMS

Alternative Horizons
Counseling for youth who have experienced violence in any way. Call 970-247-9619

Axis Health System
Suicide prevention and mental health emergencies 247-5245
281 Sawyer Dr. Durango, CO 81301

Axis / La Plata Integrated Health
Assistance with finding a primary care doctor 335-2288
1970 E 3rd Ave, Unit 1

Boys and Girls Club

Big Brothers Big Sisters
Non-profit dedicated to finding mentors for youth. Located at 1079 Main Ave. in Durango. Call 247-3720.
Durango 4-C Council
Community coordinated child care, grantee for tri-county head start program, Lead Agency Colorado Consolidated Child Care pilot demonstration. Call 247-5960.

The Durango Children’s Chorale
Meets from 4:00pm to 5:15pm Mondays, September through May, at Fort Lewis College. Call 385-5132 or 247-7447.

La Plata Family Centers Coalition
Operates five family centers – Pine River Early Learning Center, Bayfield Family Center, Fort Lewis Mesa Family Center, Ignacio Family Center, and Durango Family Center, offering parenting education and support, recreation, child care resource and referral. Call 385-4747.

La Plata Family Medicine
Family medicine 259-3110 316 Sawyer Dr.

La Plata Youth Services
www.lpys.org
La Plata Youth Services (LPYS) supports and advocates for youth facing challenges in school, home, or court. ... 2490 Main Avenue Durango, CO 81301.

Pediatric Associates of Durango
Pediatric Family Practice 259-7337
1199 Main Ave. #205

Pediatric Partners of the SW
Pediatric Family Practice 375-0100
810 E 3rd Ave. #301

The San Juan Basin Health Department
Offers various immunization clinics, children’s nutrition programs and various health care education classes. Call 247-5702.

The Single Parent Family Association
Offers a monthly family potluck, local resource referrals, support, and friendship for single parents. Call 259-1586.
Compañeros: Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center
701 Camino Del Rio #319 · In Commons · (970) 375-9406

La Plata Family Centers Coalition
Provides direct support to families: Health insurance enrollment, utility bills, housing payment, groceries, etc.
385-4747 150 Tech Center Dr. Suite A

Mercy Family Medicine
School to work alliance program (SWAP)
Counseling, guidance, and support for youth with disabilities 247-1178
701 Camino del Rio #208

Southwest Center for Independence
Supportive services and assistance for persons with disabilities / youth services 259-1672
3473 Main Ave Suite 23

Southwest Colorado Peace and Justice Coalition
A group of La Plata County community members committed to staying active in addressing peace and social justice issues on a local, state, national and international levels. Call 375-1344.

Volunteers of America Durango Community Shelter
Temporary place to stay for men, women, & families / counseling / referrals / food and clothing 259-1255

The Women’s Resource Center
Helps women help themselves by providing education, resources and referrals, mentoring, community building, professional clothing, and networking opportunities. Call 247-1242.

Current Demographic Data at MMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Durango Demographics:</th>
<th>Mountain Middle School Demographics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● White: 86.29%</td>
<td>● White: 81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Native American: 7.63%</td>
<td>● Hispanic/Latino 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Two or more races: 2.72%</td>
<td>● Native American: 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Another race: 2.25%</td>
<td>● Two or more races: 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Asian: 0.62%</td>
<td>● Asian: 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Black or African American: 0.47%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.02%


Black or African American: 0.7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.03%

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats for MMS about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Mountain Middle School.

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<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment diversity mirrors Durango diversity.</td>
<td>Lack of racial diversity on staff and board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot of community diversity outreach</td>
<td>Lacking native American diversity in student body</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch options coming from area restaurants</td>
<td>Low % of IEP students compared to district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free and reduced meal program from 9R - currently offered to all students - breakfast and lunch</td>
<td>Low % of Free and Reduced Lunch students compared to district</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack of sports programs for athletically inclined students.</td>
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<td>After school offerings (impacted by COVID).</td>
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<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Approach 9R about ways to advertise MMS enrollment in district elementary schools</td>
<td>Durango becoming less diverse as a community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue partnership with FLC teacher education (Native American Diversity)</td>
<td>Rising cost of housing prohibits larger families from less affluent socio-economic backgrounds from moving into community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political changes in Ignacio district may open interest in MMS (need Spanish translations of website and enrollment brochure)</td>
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</table>
Explore offering weighted lottery for IEP students

Advertise strength of SPED services at MMS during student enrolment tours and in any outside advertising during enrollment season.

Advertise access to athletics through Miller and other community partnerships.

Look for more after school program partnerships (as COVID restrictions ease).

Increased Social media presence

FLC - teacher training classes at MMS. Shane continues working one on one with the Dean of Education.

Explore State accreditation and awards to go after (generate greater awareness)

Consider transportations options for students from outlying areas using own vehicles - facilitate enrollment recruitment from Ignacio

Research associations for educators that are minority oriented to attract staffing applicants from

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**Governance Models for School Boards**

Guest Contributor: Kristin Smith, 9R Board Chair

*Durango 9R uses Coherent Governance as the blueprint for how decisions are made, accountability is assigned, and performance is measured within the school district. They use this model to guide their actions and behaviors as a governing board and determine the best and most appropriate ways to engage with the superintendent, staff, and the*
community at large. Kristin engages the creators of the model as consultants for their board development and speaks across the country about the model and how it is used for board success at Durango 9R.

**Introduction to Coherent Governance**

What is governance?

“The system by which entities are directed and controlled. It is concerned with structure and processes for decision making, accountability, control, and behavior at the top of an entity. Governance influences how an organization's objectives are set and achieved, how risk is monitored and addressed and how performance is optimized”.

Governance Today
2021 © Governance Today | ABN: 75 159 265 175

What is a governance model?

“An ‘operating system’ to enable boards to function at their highest level of effectiveness.”

Good Governance is a Choice
Randy Quinn and Linda J Dawson

Coherent Governance

“Coherence Governance® focuses on boards and their role as trustees of the school districts they lead on behalf of the communities they serve. This board focus is centered on student achievement and how effective the school district is in producing results defined by the board.”

Foreword, Good Governance is a Choice, by Randy Quinn and Linda J Dawson
Written by Thomas A Shannon, Attorney at Law, and Executive Director Emeritus, , National School Boards Association
Principles of Coherent Governance®

1. The Board is accountable to the organization’s owners (the citizens) and serves as their trustee.

2. The Board, not individual members, governs the organization. The Board is more than a collection of individuals.

3. The Board deliberately and thoughtfully creates its own culture, in policy, and faithfully monitors its performance against those standards.

4. The Board governs by policy, not by approvals, resolutions or random directives.

5. The Board makes big decisions before it makes small decisions.

6. The Board's most important responsibility: define the desired results for the organization and require their achievement.

7. The Board defines its expectations, then delegates their execution.

8. Whoever makes the decision is accountable for the result.

9. The Board empowers the superintendent to do his or her job, without Board approvals, and the superintendent is accountable for achieving defined Results and will be evaluated accordingly.

10. The performance of the organization and the performance of the superintendent are identical.
**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats for MMS about Coherent Governance.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization (structures, systems, norms)</td>
<td>Board member succession (identifying strong members to replace members terming off)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of School (strong leadership, proactiveness, decisiveness, organization - longest tenured secondary leader in community, lends to consistency)</td>
<td>Board turnover - consistent systems and processes, understanding of background and history of school - how we got where we are, mistakes made to be avoided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board (current clear lines of delineation between board and HEAD OF SCHOOL roles, trust in and support of HEAD OF SCHOOL - focus on governance and policy and not implementation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board member appointment process (board led but stakeholder driven, interviews and committee recommendations)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adopting a strong governance model to guide board decision making and action as well as recruitment for membership</td>
<td>HEAD OF SCHOOL succession - no clear plan exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to HEAD OF SCHOOL and school leadership succession planning</td>
<td>Lack of VP on board - board leadership succession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a strong training model for incoming Board members (not just CDE training modules - focus on CG training)</td>
<td>Past derailing of board focus and priorities, personal agendas, conflicts of interest, drama, gossip, blurring of board/HEAD OF SCHOOL role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspen Group International to help transition to Coherent Governance now and continue to train new board members in the future</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Strategic Goals and Performance Measures

In addition to driving towards achievement of the opportunities outlined above, the Mountain Middle School board, in partnership with the Head of School, have agreed to the following goals in the areas of academic, financial, and organizational success. Timeframes have been identified and measurement will occur through the Head of School and board setting annual work plans and tracking progress through monthly reports, quarterly reviews, the annual CARS report provided by CSI and the continual gathering of feedback from our staff, parents, and students.

Academic

CSI Standards:
- School achieves a rating of “Performance” or higher in all areas of academic review as indicated on the annual CARS report.
- School maintains student attendance rates above 90% in all grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>30% of Student demonstrations of learning planned to be held off campus in the community (exhibitions, TPOLs, community service, field work).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>2022-2023 school year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Measures | 1. Staff project planning actively engaged in finding ways to get students off campus as part of the learning journey, starts Odyssey Week and continues throughout the year.  
2. Assessment of locations throughout the year reveals to have maintained the desired goal for off campus events, by June 2023. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
<th>Staff actively and consistently engaged with education professionals for professional development, student, and staff enrichment activities, and for collaboration for higher learning preparedness.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>2023-2024 school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>1. Consistent rhythm established for collaborative activities for staff and students documented with education professionals, reported at board meetings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GOAL 3
School achieves a percentage of enrolled students with IEPs and special education requirements that appropriately mirrors the local school district.

Timeframe
2024-2025 school year

Measures
1. Reflected in enrollment diversity count.

Financial Goals and Performance Measures

CSI Standards:
- School meets the statutory TABOR emergency reserve requirement of 3% of fiscal year spending.
- School maintains 3 months of cash on hand.
- School maintains sufficient assets to cover liabilities.
- School maintains a positive 3-year aggregate gross margin.
- School meets budgeted enrollment numbers for the year.

GOAL 1
School achieves full enrollment of onsite students per grade, 4th through 8th grade.

Timeframe
2022-2023 school year

Measures
1. Full enrollment of 60 students per grade documented at October count in 4th through 8th grade classes (does not include homeschool partnership).

GOAL 2
Explore appropriate opportunities to utilize financial reserves to support the cost-of-living affordability of Durango to attract and retain high quality staff for Mountain Middle School (affordable housing, cost of living supplements, competitive compensation, and benefits packages).

Timeframe
2023-2024 school year

Measures
1. With CSI approval, explore options for being able to utilize an appropriate portion of reserves to directly fund staff attraction and retention strategies for high quality staff.
GOAL 3
Board adopts school budget that fast tracks payoff of 2021 construction loan by 2032.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. School budget reflects the payoff rhythm to achieve this goal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizational

CSI Standards:

Education Program
- School complies with applicable education requirements including state and federal government standards and requirements outlined in charter agreement.
- School protects the rights of all students and complying with all federal and state laws governing student rights

Governance Management
- School complies with governance requirements including maintaining adequate board policies, compliance with open meeting law, and holding itself accountable for performance?

Financial Management
- School satisfies financial reporting and compliance requirements including transparency, complete and on time oversight as well as submission of financial reports, and audits are devoid of significant findings.

School Operations and Environment
- School complies with health and safety requirements including facilities and transportation if applicable?
  - School complies with employee credentialing and background check requirements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>Board successfully implements Coherent Governance.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeframe</strong></td>
<td>2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025 school years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Measures** | 1. Aspen Group signs off on revised policies and their alignment to Coherent Governance, June 2022.  
2. Board successfully approves revised policy manuals by September 2023 board meeting.  
3. Board successfully documents systems and processes to follow new policies and focus the board on goals of student success and Head of School evaluation and oversight, June 2023.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
<th>Board develops a detailed, clear Coherent Governance training and onboarding program for future board members.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeframe</strong></td>
<td>2022-2023 school year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Measures** | 1. Board member recruitment plan in place and generating at least 2 candidates for every open position, February 2023  
2. Board members consistently complete 3-year terms.  
3. Officer roles documented (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer), May 2023  
4. Training program includes Coherent Governance training. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 3</th>
<th>Board and Head of School partner on development of a specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely succession plan for Head of School and Board leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeframe</strong></td>
<td>2024-2025 school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measures</strong></td>
<td>1. Head of School and Board President succession plans in place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>