



For students with passion,  
promise, aptitude and skill  
in academics and the arts

## **New Mexico School for the Arts Curriculum Overview and Audition Process**

New Mexico School for the Arts is a charter high school that combines intensive pre-professional and professional instruction in the performing and visual arts with a comprehensive academic program leading to a high school diploma.

The School's objectives are that:

- Students will excel artistically and academically in this dual curriculum and graduate with a superior academic and arts education;
- Students will receive the highest quality pre-professional and professional instruction in the arts, leading to a level of mastery in their chosen field;
- Students will develop discipline, high academic and artistic standards, and a strong belief in themselves and their abilities;
- Students will receive an education aligned with the requirements of entrance into higher educational institutions and professional programs in the arts.

### **Academic Curriculum**

New Mexico School for the Arts is accredited by the New Mexico Public Education Department and aligns with New Mexico Standards and Benchmarks. The School is committed to maintaining high academic standards and to exceeding the normal expectations of New Mexico public high schools.

The curriculum includes the normal range of high school-level liberal arts disciplines: science, mathematics, foreign language, social science, English, and health/physical education. Most of the departments offer one or more courses that may lead to college credit. All students at the School study New Mexico art forms that are characteristic of our state.

The School takes advantage of the presence of distinguished artists and scholars on its faculty by offering multi-disciplinary opportunities such as seminars in the humanities. We encourage the faculty to create integrated lessons that emphasize the interconnectedness of the disciplines. We subscribe to the theory that the best education is "learning by doing" so there are frequent opportunities for students to lead, teach, demonstrate, and direct classroom and campus activities. Whenever possible, the School facilitates dual enrollment at regional institutions of higher learning for those

prepared to pursue advanced or specialized studies. College and career counseling are normal features of the program.

## **Arts Curriculum**

New Mexico School for the Arts offers pre-professional instruction in the fields of dance, music, theater and visual arts. Each arts discipline is rooted in a classic core that serves as a platform for further study or entry into the profession. This is a school for the student who seeks a path to mastery of his or her art.

The weekly schedule involves an extended school day, structured to provide several hours of advanced arts training in the student's area of focus that includes technical, creative and historical instruction.

NMSA helps the student find the path to cultivating his or her artistic voice. We seek the student's broad intellectual development so that in addition to developing strong technique, our students will begin to refine their personal artistic vision and purpose, and the means to communicate that vision through their art.

To achieve this goal there is a rich array of in-class coursework, studio work, in-the-field experiences, presentations, performances and exhibitions. Guest artists, master teachers and partnerships with other arts institutions in the area are used to complement the instruction provided by the School's faculty.

Throughout all four artistic disciplines of study, New Mexico School for the Arts seeks students with passion, aptitude, promise and skill in their chosen fields. All students in their senior year of study at NMSA will complete a Senior Project within their field of concentration, providing time to for students to refine their mastery in a particular area.

## **DANCE**

New Mexico School for the Arts strives to provide each dancer with the essential fundamentals in preparation for a dance career or post secondary study in dance. These fundamentals include a strong technique and physique, musicality, individual expressiveness and artistry, mental acuity, versatility, performance experience and skill and body/health awareness. NMSA believes that today's successful dancer needs all the technical skills of the past along with a willingness to experiment, a skill set that can combine a multitude of dance techniques, and a mental maturity that allows some dancers to assist in the choreographic process. In this respect, we are committed to training well-rounded human beings who also have a superb technique and work ethic.

NMSA offers two concentrations in dance: ballet and contemporary. Ballet students must have developed skill prior to admission and will be placed according to level. The contemporary program is open to the student without prior training who has an aptitude, passion and drive to be an excellent dancer. NMSA is committed to taking all our students as far as they can go along their own specific paths.

Ballet students have a ballet class each day. They also are required to take a contemporary class as well as a pointe or men's class. Contemporary students take a contemporary class each day and also a ballet class several times a week as well as ballet coaching. In addition to this core curriculum, students receive classes in jazz, dance history and theory, body conditioning, dance composition, partnering repertoire, improvisation and audition skills and dance pedagogy. The curriculum also includes master classes with visiting artists and companies and trips to see dance in various regions of New Mexico.

Senior Projects in the area of dance might include a piece of choreography, a solo performance, a historical reconstruction, or other area of interest related to dance. In-depth time spent working alone and with an art mentor results in a deeply personal and informative piece of work that is representative of each student.

### **Dance Audition Process**

Dance is physical art form and you will be expected to meet the expectations of the curriculum. We suggest that you maintain a healthy body that will enable you to push yourself physically in the medium. Students with chronic health issues, and/or injuries are not encouraged to apply.

All applicants will be evaluated based on their potential for a career in dance. These areas include:

- Physical aptitude and body alignment
- Musicality and rhythm
- Flexibility and coordination
- Technical ability (Ballet Concentration only)
- Passion for dancing
- Ability to listen, take corrections, function in a classroom setting

The interview will be used to help us understand what you hope to get from the program and your personal aspirations for the future. NMSA will also assess your passion for dancing and your commitment and willingness to study dance at least two hours each day.

### **Ballet Applicants**

Please bring two photos and be prepared for a three hour process including the interview. At the audition, ballet applicants will be given a standard ballet class followed by a pointe class for girls.

Photographic requirements: girls - black leotard, pink tights, ballet shoes; boys - white top, black tights and ballet shoes. Each dancer must bring two photographs: 1) in first arabesque and 2) tendu a la second. Please put your name on the back of each photo.

### **Contemporary Applicants**

Please bring a photo and be prepared for a three hour process including the interview. Contemporary applicants will be given a dance/movement class that includes improvisation. Applicants for the contemporary program should come prepared with a short (1 minute maximum) solo that demonstrates how you move best. You can pick any style of dance: contemporary, Flamenco, tap, jazz, Hip Hop, etc.

Photographic requirements: girls – leotard or tank top, jazz pants or tight sweat pants, bare feet; boys – tank top, bicycle shorts or tight shorts, bare feet. Each dancer must bring one photograph in a dance pose of your choosing. Please make sure we can see you your face and put your name on the back.

## **MUSIC**

The Music Program at the New Mexico School for the Arts is designed to provide students with a comprehensive background in the fundamentals of music, and skill in the art of music performance. Through a rich environment that includes private lessons on his/her principal instrument, ensemble rehearsals, classes, performances and master classes with renowned musicians, students will develop their musicianship to the highest possible level in preparation for post secondary study.

NMSA recognizes the importance of individual practice and master teaching in acquiring music performance skills. The high school years are critical years of physical development. As a student in the Music Program at NMSA, your schedule will be designed to help you devote the time required for daily practice of your primary instrument. You will be guided by teachers who are masters of your instrument and who will help you achieve your potential. In addition to your primary instrument teacher, classes will be offered at different times during the school year with distinguished guest artist teachers.

You will also be a member of student ensembles, with regular rehearsals and performances designed to provide you with the opportunity to learn the fundamental qualities of a good ensemble musician. Classical and jazz ensembles will be created based on student enrollment and the individual level of accomplishment of each student. All rehearsals will strive to build positive attitudes, trust, teamwork, cooperation, confidence, compassion, and a sense of humor - skills and values that will serve musicians well throughout their educational and professional lives.

New Mexico School for the Arts will offer concentrations in instrumental and vocal music in combination with core subjects designed to develop well rounded musicians. As a student at NMSA, your musicianship will grow as you acquire knowledge of music history and theory. As your aural skills develop in ear training and singing classes, you will gain the confidence to excel as a musician.

Students will also complete Senior Projects which in most cases will be recital programs that may include solo and chamber music compositions. Senior recitals will be supervised by your primary instrument teacher.

## **Music Audition Process**

Your audition involves several components designed to identify your potential, aptitude and passion for music. As a candidate for admission to the Music Program you must have previous instrumental or vocal experience and be able to demonstrate your level of musical accomplishment through an audition process.

### **Instrumental Applicants**

Each applicant invited to audition will give a live performance of two contrasting works. For example, you may choose a work from the classical era in a quick tempo and contrast that with a slow or moderate tempo work from another historic or contemporary period. If these works have a piano accompaniment you will need to bring the music on a CD (no cassette tapes will be accepted) or have an accompanist with you for the audition. Each piece should be no longer than ten minutes in length.

### **Vocal Applicants**

If you are a singer, your voice will be your instrument. All vocal applicants will be required to sing two contrasting works. If these works have a piano accompaniment, please bring with you a CD (no cassette tapes will be accepted) or an accompanist. Each piece should be no longer than three minutes, and should provide the audition panel with a sense of your vocal knowledge and ability.

### **All Applicants**

After the performance component of your audition, you will have an interview with the audition panel. This will be an opportunity for you to learn more about the School and for us to gauge the depth of your interest in the program.

## **THEATER**

The theater arts program at New Mexico School for the Arts focuses on the art of storytelling through performance. Students will learn their role as an artist in creating the narrative, understanding the scope and sequence of developing characters and performances and their personal expression as part of the larger whole.

You will gain the basic physical, vocal and mental techniques necessary to develop and maintain believable characters in a variety of styles and genres. You will explore movement, vocal styles and systems of character development, textual analysis and history. The teaching program will focus on developing the complete performer by a thorough study of the literature.

Coursework in theater arts may include studio theater instruction, including acting for stage and camera, drama/stagecraft, playwriting, technical theater, sound, production, direction, audition technique, voice, dance and physical theater. These will be augmented by performance opportunities, apprenticeships/mentoring experiences and collaborations with other arts departments in the use of digital media.

NMSA seniors studying theater will complete a Senior Project relating to acting, playwriting or production. All theater students will be guided in developing the quality of theater experience needed for admission to higher education in colleges or arts schools, or for direct entry into the profession.

### **Theater Audition Process**

Your audition process involves several different components designed to identify your promise, aptitude and passion for the theater, as well as your drive and discipline.

You will be asked to memorize, prepare and present two recitations of your choice, each of which will be of two minutes or less in length and will vary from each other in setting and mood. In an interview that may last about 15 minutes, the panel will ask you why you chose these particular selections and what they mean to you. They will also probe your experience and commitment to the theater.

You will also be asked to participate with other applicants in an ensemble group where you will be led through a series of warm up exercises that will transition into an improvisational theater performance.

## **VISUAL ARTS**

The visual arts program at New Mexico School for the Arts focuses on developing the fundamentals of drawing, painting, sculpture and photography while producing visual arts literacy and visual acuity. Media arts and the digital tools that accompany them will be used to support learning in the visual arts. Students acquire basic technological skill sets, familiarity with a wide range of materials and approaches, and understanding of art history that allow them to go deeper into their own art and to explore specific areas of study as they advance. Over the course of their high school careers, our students greatly enhance their aesthetic, imaginative, and creative faculties.

The program develops your observational skills and your ability to understand and work with creative problem solving. You will reach a level of mastery in a specific art form that will be distinctively personal. You will gain context for your own artistic journey through the study of other artists, particularly the traditional arts of New Mexico. Finally, you will become a literate student of the visual arts with a refined ability to critique your own work and the work of others.

Courses may include painting, drawing, design and photography where you will learn to translate a 3-D reality to a 2-D work. Sculpture and new media courses, including digital video, film and performance, will emphasize translating a 2-D design or concept into a 3-D reality, or in the case of new media, a 4-D platform that can include time and movement. The use of technology will be incorporated into many classes so as to emphasize its place as a tool for supporting exploration and documentation across the visual arts. Digital media tools will be used throughout NMSA's visual arts classes, but no separate media arts program exists at the school at this time.

The formal course work in visual arts at NMSA is augmented by master classes, apprenticeships, opportunities for presentations, and collaborative projects with other departments. There are frequent trips to museums, galleries and studios throughout New Mexico.

An independent Senior Project will be required for graduation and will include development of a portfolio needed for admissions consideration at colleges and art schools. A Senior Project will highlight a particular niche of interest or expertise in visual arts. Students will be encouraged to access New Mexico artists and resources to complete this project.

### **Visual Arts Audition Process**

The portfolio review process involves several different components designed to identify your promise, aptitude and passion for the visual arts. You will be asked to bring a portfolio of at least five pieces of art for presentation to the audition panel. You will also be asked to select one piece of art from your portfolio that is of particular importance to you and discuss it with the panel.

For the discussion, you should consider sharing what prompted the work, how it communicates the inner feeling of what you wanted to express, why you chose the medium and the materials, and what the work means to you.

An additional component of the audition is an observational drawing from an object identified by the panel that is present in the audition space. The applicant will be given pencil and paper and asked to render the object in no more than five minutes. Discussion and critique will follow. The entire process will take no more than thirty minutes.

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