

# NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

## STUDENT SELECTION POLICY

New Mexico School for the Arts is a statewide charter high school. The School was created to give New Mexico students who demonstrate exceptional promise, aptitude and passion for the arts the opportunity to work toward mastery in their chosen fields and to earn a New Mexico high school diploma.

The concept of a student selection policy for a New Mexico charter school is a departure from normal practice. The New Mexico School for the Arts is the only public school in the state permitted to choose its students following an audition or portfolio review and based on published assessment criteria. There is no lottery involved. The primary principles underlying the student selection policy are exceptional promise, aptitude and passion for the arts. The selection process for the School ensures access and nondiscrimination. According to the School's authorizing legislation (SB 34, 2008), "...admissions criteria shall be designed to admit students who show exceptional promise or aptitude in the arts and a strong desire to pursue a career in the arts." The legislation makes it clear that the School's admissions and recruitment activities must reach out to the widest feasible audience of New Mexico students, encouraging applications from those who meet the broad criteria, and attempting to "eliminate barriers to prospective students in the application process." It goes on to stipulate, "To the greatest extent possible without jeopardizing admission standards, students shall be admitted in equal numbers from each of the State's congressional districts.

The School subscribes to all federal and state standards with respect to both students and staff in this regard. Its frequently published policy statement is as follows: *The New Mexico School for the Arts admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, sexual preference, culture, and religion or with any disability to all of the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to its students. The New Mexico School for the Arts does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, sexual preference, culture, disability, and religion in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial aid programs, arts and other programs.*

In collaboration with the Governing Council of the School, the Head of School and the Director of Admissions designed recruitment practices and admissions procedures in the fall of 2009 that implement these student selection policies. They are described in detail on the School's Web site and in published materials. They include, but are not limited to, a plan for statewide mailings, advertisements, and radio spots; introductory meetings for prospective families at strategically selected sites throughout New Mexico; announcements on the Web of admission criteria, application materials and audition protocols and rubrics; and the selection of admissions panels in each of the School's four arts departments. These panel members are active artist educators, primarily from New Mexico, who conduct the individual and group auditions, rate each applicant according to the published criteria and rubrics and then turn the final decisions over to the

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Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

Amended: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Admissions and the Head of School. The Head of School makes the ultimate selection of students to be admitted or wait listed. His or her decision is discretionary and not subject to review. Recommendations and audition records are gathered with the assumption of confidentiality and are the property of the New Mexico School for the Arts. These materials will not be shared with applicants or their families. A student or parent may request an explanation from the Head of School outlining the general explanation for the admission decision.

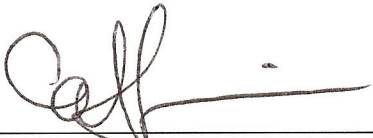
It is possible that a real or perceived conflict of interest may arise involving a panel member and an applicant. If a panelist has a direct or indirect relationship to an applicant, whether by family or professional association, the panelist must disclose this fact to the other members of the panel. Having taught or knowing a student who is applying shall not necessarily be considered a conflict. If a conflict of interest does exist, the panelist will recuse himself or herself from filing a report on that particular applicant.

Once an applicant has been offered admission to the New Mexico School for the Arts, he or she may apply to the School for the Arts-NM for admission to its residential program. This process involves further background checking to ensure that the student is suited for dormitory life. Since space in the residence hall is limited, other criteria that may be considered are distance of the applicant's hometown from Santa Fe, gender (there will be a pre-set number of rooms for boys and girls, on different floors), and overall quality of the application.

This Student Selection Policy was adopted by resolution of the Governing Council of the New Mexico School for the Arts, effective as of 9/28, 2010.

New Mexico School for the Arts

Attest:



\_\_\_\_\_  
CATHERINE OPPENHEIMER, Chair  
Of the Governing Council



\_\_\_\_\_  
CINDY MONTOYA, Secretary  
Of the Governing Council

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