

# 2006-2007 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

## U.S. Department of Education

**Cover Sheet** Type of School: (Check all that apply)  Elementary  Middle  High  K-12  Charter

Name of Principal Mrs. Michelle Mock Clark  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Sunset Mesa Schools  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3020 Morris St NE  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Albuquerque NM 87111-4902  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Bernalillo State School Code Number\*N/A

Telephone (505) 298-7626 Fax (505) 298-6132

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I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* N/A  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name N/A Tel. ( ) N/A

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Director Mr. Alan Mask

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Director's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2006-2007 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2001 and has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Middle schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Junior high schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ High schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other  
 \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:  
 Urban or large central city  
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
 Suburban  
 Small city or town in a rural area  
 Rural
4. 8 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	66	68	134	7			
K	35	36	71	8			
1	28	31	59	9			
2	29	24	53	10			
3	32	29	61	11			
4	21	19	40	12			
5	20	18	38	Other			
6					231	235	456
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →</b>							<b>456</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 69% White  
3% Black or African American  
16% Hispanic or Latino  
11% Asian/Pacific Islander  
1% American Indian/Alaskan Native  
**100% Total**

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 5%

[This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.]

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year	17
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year	8
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	456
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	.055
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5.5

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 1%  
2 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 2  
Specify languages: Farsi, Austrian

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: Not Available

Total number students who qualify: Not Available

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the federally supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

Sunset Mesa does not participate in the federally supported lunch program, nor does it have any

financial information about its families. Some children probably are from low-income families, but the school has no way with which to determine that.

10. Students receiving special education services:  $\frac{-0-}{-0-}$  %  
 Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>        </u> Autism	<u>        </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>        </u> Deafness	<u>  1  </u> Other Health Impaired
<u>        </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u> 16 </u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>  1  </u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>  7  </u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>  1  </u> Hearing Impairment	<u>        </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>        </u> Mental Retardation	<u>        </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>        </u> Multiple Disabilities	

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>	
	<b><u>Full-time</u></b>	<b><u>Part-Time</u></b>
Administrator(s)	<u>  5  </u>	<u> -0- </u>
Classroom teachers	<u> 29 </u>	<u>  3  </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>  8  </u>	<u>  1  </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>  8  </u>	<u>  3  </u>
Support staff	<u>  8  </u>	<u>  1  </u>
 Total number	 <u> 58 </u>	 <u>  8  </u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1  15:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Also explain a high teacher turnover rate.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	*%	*%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	97%	97%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	19%	17%	26%	12%	22%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	N/A %				
Student drop-off rate (high school)	N/A %				

\*The data for student attendance is not available for these years.

In 2001-2002, three of the seven non-returning teachers moved because of their spouse's job transfer. The percentage in 2003-2004 included two retirements, three who moved because of their spouse's job transfers, and two who taught a program component (Montessori kindergarten) that the school eliminated. The percentage in 2005-2006 included three retirements.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Sunset Mesa Schools is a privately-owned, non-sectarian, independent school. Each of these adjectives reflects a significant truth about this school. First, Sunset Mesa has been a tax-paying, privately-owned school since its founding in 1948. The current family ownership dates from 1975; the current directors are “second generation” who are on site full-time. The learning that happens, the personal growth that occurs and the community that exists at Sunset Mesa are matters of family stewardship, personal reputation and lengthy heritage.

Second, the school is non-sectarian. Religious instruction has never been part of the curriculum. No faith requirement has ever been applied to students or faculty. However, Sunset Mesa has over the years been owned and directed by Christian people; it is not a “secular” school. A Christian worldview informs the administrative decisions made even though “religion” is not taught to the students. Beliefs and ideas have consequences in daily life. Some of the beliefs that affect the daily life of the school are that people are uniquely created by God, are highly valued by Him and are responsible to Him. Some of the consequences that follow from those beliefs are: the expectation that all people in the school community will treat one another as valuable, respected individuals; the presumption that students have great potential to develop and learn; and an appreciation that students and faculty have unique characteristics and traits. Values which have historically been called Judeo-Christian should be modeled by adults and taught to students. Those values include honesty, integrity, loyalty, patriotism, diligence, respect, personal responsibility, perseverance, courage, and friendship. Students should be challenged with high expectations and held to high standards for learning, behavior and values. The same is true for the adults at Sunset Mesa.

Third, Sunset Mesa is an “independent school.” Its ownership, governance and finances are independent of governmental or diocesan control. Of course, independence has its consequences. Sunset Mesa must persuade families year by year that this education is worth the tuition; no other source of revenue exists for a tax-paying independent school. “Independent” also means “hands on.” The decision-makers—directors, principal and other administrators are on campus every day and available to students, faculty, parents and grandparents.

These three characteristics are given vitality by the accountability exists at Sunset Mesa. Families who have high expectations for learning and safety and community pay close attention to what happens on campus. If family expectations are not met, administrators and owners are expected to respond. The ultimate accountability also exists because “choice” is the norm at Sunset Mesa. Families choose to place their children at Sunset Mesa; if families are not satisfied, they choose another school.

Sunset Mesa has the blessing of a learning community pulling in a common direction. Parents want high-level academics and traditional values; they are engaged positively in their children’s learning and lives. Teachers choose to work because they love the orderly teaching environment and supportive families; they all could find work elsewhere if they wished. Children enjoy a place that is physically and emotionally safe—a place where they are loved. They can learn and explore and attempt without fearing failure; although they may try and fail, they are not ridiculed or demeaned. As a result, students are free to try, and they generally succeed.

In this context, Sunset Mesa offers a demanding academic climate that fosters intellectual and emotional growth. Students learn responsibility; they earn self-esteem. Students are challenged to be productive, responsible and caring people by learning sound values, compassion and ethical behavior. They are encouraged to develop good study habits, act independently, solve problems, and think critically. Students leave Sunset Mesa ready to learn, participate and excel at the next academic level.

## **PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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### **1. Assessment Results**

The broadest category of student assessment used by Sunset Mesa is the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), published by Harcourt Educational Assessment. The newest version of the SAT is the 10<sup>th</sup> Edition which Sunset Mesa began administering in April 2006. The SAT, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, was used for many years before that. The SAT is one of several nationally normed tests that measure student achievement. Sunset Mesa administers the SAT to 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students every April. All students are tested every year; none are excluded. The only variation from 100% participation is if a student is absent; no make-ups are allowed.

The SAT does not measure absolute knowledge. Rather, it compares a given student's performance against the performance of a representative sampling of students across the nation within a particular grade. The SAT is a series of multiple choice subtests over the major subject areas taught to elementary students. The tests are developed by Harcourt based on the general consensus of educators nationally of what knowledge and skills students at various grade levels should have. After months or even years of creating the various subtests, the publisher administers the test to representative groups of students across the nation over additional lengthy periods of time. The result is a representative national standardization sample. Having this nationally standardized sample allows comparisons of specific student performance against "national norms." The SAT publisher adjusts its scoring of the tests based on the time of year that the test is given. The goal is to provide a broad, general snapshot of how a student compares to students of the same grade level nationally.

At the grade levels tested at Sunset Mesa, the "reading" test scores are a combination of the scores on two, three or four subtests, depending on grade level. The "math" test scores are a combination of scores on two subtests. The tests are scored by the publisher, and results are returned to the school. The school receives results for individual students as well as for each classroom and each grade level. The assessment results reported below are the national percentile ranks of grade levels in the areas of total reading and total math. Without addressing the complex math involved in scoring, comparing and computing the numbers, it is fair to say that these numbers represent the average percentile rank of the Sunset Mesa students in each grade.

Percentile rank is a comparative standard based on a scale of 1 to 99. Scores of Sunset Mesa students are compared to scores of the national reference group. For example, an individual percentile rank of 80 means that a student scored as well or better than 80% of the students in the national reference group.

To apply this to the school's specific assessment results, consider the 5<sup>th</sup> grade scores in 2006—91 in reading and 94 in math. The average 5<sup>th</sup> grader at Sunset Mesa performed as well as or better than 91% of the national reference group in reading and as well as or better than 94% of the national reference group in math. Other parts of the SAT results show that, in the group of forty-nine 5<sup>th</sup> graders, forty-four scored at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally in reading and every 5<sup>th</sup> grader scored at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally in math.

Percentile ranges between the mid-80s and the mid-90s are the norm at Sunset Mesa. This is true of the entire student body and of the subgroups as well. This is one indicator of meeting two school goals—having every student meet grade level expectations and helping many students to greatly exceed those expectations.

## 2. Using Assessment Results

Sunset Mesa uses assessment data to understand and improve student and school performance in a variety of ways. The SAT results provide a consistent comparison to other schools nationwide. Therefore, the school is able to evaluate the effectiveness of its adopted curriculum and its instructional practices against a national indicator. Testing annually allows for year-to-year comparisons of grade-level performance and may highlight the need for changes in a given subject area.

Academic excellence has been the Sunset Mesa standard for many years. Deviation from customary grade level assessment results would therefore prompt questions about the cause. Results within the customary range give some assurance that school expectations are being met.

Another benefit of annual testing at all grade levels is that it allows administration to design teacher training for mastery of curriculum on a school-wide and individual basis. Needs for additional staff development or change of materials in a given curriculum area may become apparent through analysis of test results. One example is in the spelling curriculum. SAT scores in spelling for several years were consistently lower than scores in other subtests. After some observation and evaluation, the school added the *Rebecca Sitton* spelling program in grades 3-5.

Finally, the school administration reviews individual test results for each student to identify specific trends and/or needs in student intervention. Because of the relative stability of the school population, several years of test results are available for most students. Comparing individual student performance to national, school grade level, and class results gives a wealth of data for customizing each student's educational plan. These comparisons also provide a tool to validate or question the individual assessments made by the classroom teacher.

## 3. Communicating Assessment Results

Communication to students and parents is frequent and detailed. Each student is given a planner. Teachers guide students daily in using the planner to track assignments and other necessary information. Parents review the planner to stay informed. The school's email system (which teachers can access at school and remotely) is always available for communication.

Quarterly report cards are issued in grades 1-5. Younger students receive one three times a year. The current format was created for use beginning with the 2004-2005 school year. It includes three sections: a detailed report on the child's overall educational development, a separate checklist of progress in math skills, and specific teacher comments. The principal reviews and edits every report card every reporting period to ensure clear and accurate communication to families. This process keeps the principal current on academic, social and behavioral information. It also gives her a long-term perspective that is useful when assessment results indicate the need for new or additional strategies. When student performance issues arise, teachers collaborate with administrators, devising strategies for dealing with them. Teachers then communicate with parents about these issues and strategies. Teachers and parents communicate in special called conferences as desired by parents or teachers. Two scheduled days in October and two in March are devoted to parent/teacher conferences to review the current report card and progress.

The school orders detailed reports of individual SAT results and mails them to parents. Parents who want to review their child's results can meet with the principal. The scores give parents a point of reference for their child's academic performance. The scores typically confirm the accuracy of the grade and anecdotal information communicated during the school year.

Sunset Mesa never published grade level or school-wide SAT results until 2005. In 2005, the school began posting reading and math scores by grade level on its web site, making those scores available to prospective families, and sending them to current families.

#### 4. **Sharing Success**

Sunset Mesa's primary accrediting agency and membership organization is the National Independent Private Schools Association (NIPSA). NIPSA is comprised of tax-paying independent schools across the country, and Sunset Mesa has held a position on its board of directors for over 20 years. NIPSA has regular meetings at which school owners and leaders share problems and solutions, *i.e.*, successes, with one another. These meetings are often held at member schools, and Sunset Mesa has hosted several over the years. The opportunities to share (and receive) ideas and practices with other school leaders in informal settings has substantial value for all the schools.

Because Sunset Mesa makes effective use of instructional materials, faculty from local public schools sometimes visit or confer about specific curriculum options. For example, the school hosted teachers and team leaders from local schools who were considering adopting the *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum that Sunset Mesa has used for six years. They observed in classrooms, discussed specific issues with teachers, and visited with the curriculum specialist and principal about the pros and cons of the program.

Sunset Mesa has for many years provided team members for accreditation site visits at NIPSA-accredited schools. Because it obtained co-accreditation with North Central Association-CASI two years ago, it has begun similar participation with NCA accreditation teams. Although "sharing successes" is not the object of accreditation visits, team members invariably share, inquire, and brain-storm with one another about their own schools. Those times spent with other school leaders have been fruitful occasions for addressing the myriad factors that cause learning to work or not work in given schools.

On an indirect level, the school has periodic chances to share philosophy and practices with policy-makers. Because it is known in the community as a successful school, Sunset Mesa was asked by Leadership Albuquerque to provide a tour and to answer questions for a dozen community leaders. Their interest was in improving the public schools, and they sought some insight into the factors that have made Sunset Mesa a happy and effective learning community.

# PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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## 1. Curriculum

Sunset Mesa’s curriculum takes into account the truth that children have many different learning styles and types of intelligence. Sunset Mesa is committed to providing classroom environments and experiences that recognize and utilize each child’s unique learning style. Teachers are trained in the theory of multiple intelligences. The curriculum, while based on a solid foundation of literacy and mathematics, provides multiple cross-curricular opportunities for learning emphasizing higher-level thinking skills. The curriculum structure is successful in engaging students with significant content based on high standards because it centers on a consistent core curriculum that spirals from grade level to grade level in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Instruction in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade uses *Saxon Phonics* as one component of literacy education. This series presents learning in increments which are reviewed throughout the year. Students gain and retain essential phonemic awareness, phonics knowledge, spelling skills, reading and writing fluency, and handwriting skills. The spelling curriculum is the *Rebecca Sitton* program. One of its strengths is its focus on helping students master, for the long-term, many high frequency words often used in everyday writing. A second program strength is that it helps students acquire a set of skills, concepts, and strategies they can use to spell words used less frequently.

The writing component of the literacy program focuses on the Six-Trait system of teaching and assessing writing. *Write Source* materials from Great Source Publishing are used for additional support. Students learn to think of their writing in terms of its ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. The *Step Up to Writing* program is also used to give students a framework for the ideas, organization, and sentence fluency pieces of the Six-Trait system. The *Step Up to Writing* program is emphasized in grades K-2, and the Six-Trait system is highlighted in grades 3-5. Grades 1-5 also use the McGraw-Hill language series for teaching and guided student practice in grammar and genres of writing.

The Macmillan/McGraw Hill reading curriculum provides a basis of reading skills instruction supported by the reading of quality literature. This basal series is supplemented by picture books and/or novels at all grade levels. Both basal instruction and supplemental literature lessons emphasize the development of higher level thinking skills through guided reading questions, group discussion, and individual student response to their reading.

The *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum gives students the opportunity to develop high level conceptual understanding of math concepts and to understand the real-world applications of those important concepts. Fact fluency and computational accuracy are also priorities of the mathematics curriculum.

Sunset Mesa uses a hands-on approach to science instruction. The curriculum allows students to experience science skills and concepts—not just read or hear about them. Science instruction is supplemented with field trips and guest speakers. An annual two-day retreat for grades 4 and 5 has a science emphasis.

Social studies instruction at Sunset Mesa stresses not only the knowledge of the history of the community, state, country, and world, but applies this knowledge to the child’s development in understanding current events, citizenship, and values. Classroom, grade level, and school-wide community service projects, such as fund-raisers for the American Heart Association, give students the opportunity to grow in citizenship awareness and participation. Science and social studies relationships

are acknowledged when they occur. Social studies and science instruction are often supplemented by the reading of picture books and/or novels.

Enrichment classes give students a basic knowledge of the concepts and skills involved in each of these disciplines. Enrichment teachers often coordinate with the classroom teachers to provide cross-curricular connections. This allows the classroom teacher to concentrate on core curriculum, plan for cross-curricular experiences, and structure thought-provoking discussions.

## **2a. Reading**

Sunset Mesa's reading curriculum is based on a multi-faceted philosophy combining a foundational phonetic background with whole language practices. This allows students to approach the process of reading with many tools for fluent reading and in-depth comprehension.

Sunset Mesa uses a developmental approach to all instruction and assessment in grades K-2. Reading instruction in these grades uses a variety of methods and is highly individualized to promote each child's literacy growth in synch with her personal developmental level. Materials, programs, and training available to teachers include Saxon phonics in grades K-1 and the Macmillan/McGraw Hill reading basal series in grades K-2. Another resource used by all teachers is a bookroom stocked with over 1000 titles leveled according to Guided Reading principles and with many other picture books and beginning novels. All primary teachers are trained in the Four Block Method and incorporate Word Wall and Make-A-Word strategies in their instruction.

Sunset Mesa students exit second grade with strong foundational skills which prepare them for a shift in reading instruction focus for the remainder of their elementary education. In grades three through five a transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" takes place. Teachers use a basal reading textbook which allows students to continue to practice strong reading and grammar skills. Supplemental novels and non-fiction reading material provide students with opportunities to develop vocabulary along with comprehension skills such as story analysis and evaluation. Much supplemental reading material relates to other curriculum areas. One example of this relationship is historical fiction relating to an area of study in social studies. Culminating activities for novel studies are frequently presentations showing the student's ability to make connections between subject areas. Intermediate students work on synthesizing their understanding and knowledge into a cohesive world view.

## **3. Additional Curriculum Area**

The enrichment programs apply the philosophy of multiple intelligences to enhance the education of the students. Beginning in kindergarten, students receive instruction once or twice a week from six full-time enrichment specialists. Playing board games in Spanish, writing simple computer programs, building confidence through physical education and learning to express themselves through art or music are only a few of the ways students realize their full potential.

Computer technology is integrated throughout the curriculum. The elementary campus is networked with computers in each classroom and in two student labs. The teaching lab is utilized for instruction by a specialist in software literacy and keyboarding skills. The student lab is used by students for research and classroom projects.

The fine arts programs are beginning steps through the doors of self-expression. From creating simple compositions to performing in a staged musical, the interactive music program develops both the kinesthetic and musical intelligences. Goals in art are help the student artists grow through a natural progression of experiences, as well as to build their enthusiasm and appreciation for fine arts. The

children learn to apply numerous methods (drawing, painting, sculpting, collage, and printmaking) to create art. They are encouraged to evaluate their feelings and experiences resulting in continuous improvements in technique and further exploration of alternative methods.

For children living in the Southwest, learning Spanish is important. Each student is exposed to Spanish through age appropriate activities beginning in kindergarten. Students begin building vocabulary and progress to language fluency, verb conjugation, and sentence structure.

The physical education program offers a wide variety of challenging activities and sports. Team building and skill development at both the individual and group level are emphasized.

The full time librarian introduces students to different literature genres and to varieties of research sources—both print and electronic. The librarian works closely with the computer teacher and classroom teachers as they coordinate projects requiring research skills.

#### **4. Instructional Methods**

Sunset Mesa's organizational and academic structure provides a framework which increases the effectiveness of its instructional methods. Sunset Mesa affords students an atmosphere of ordered tranquility in which each child knows she is loved, appreciated, and safe. The atmosphere of the school is one in which academic expectations are high, yet appropriate. Behavioral expectations—which are taught and enforced—are that students will respect, help, and encourage one another and the adults on campus.

The school makes available to teachers and students the best curriculum and teaching materials possible. Collaboration between teachers within each grade level and across grade levels allows them to facilitate a smooth and continuous flow of instruction and learning for each student. This collaboration is strengthened during weekly meetings with the principal and curriculum specialist at each grade level for planning and coordination. The ideas from each teacher and the unification of planning at the grade level increase the success of the instructional methods used.

The multiple intelligences theory of learning is used to present educational content to students in a variety of ways. Each student has the opportunity to receive instruction in a way that makes it accessible to him through his stronger modalities of learning. Students are also encouraged to strengthen all the modalities of their intelligence and develop appreciation for the learning modalities of others. Many learning activities are applied, active explorations of subject area and concepts.

Small class size allows for instructional methods to be hands-on and often individualized, with a high level of interaction between teacher and student. Teachers are aware of and have time to respond to each child's needs and progress. The presence of the enrichment teachers addressing their areas of specialty allows the classroom teachers to focus on the core curriculum and on meeting each student's individual needs.

Instructional methods are chosen with the goal of encouraging students to see practical applications of their learning in every subject area. Whether an instructional activity involves a hands-on math lesson, a social studies simulation, or a science experiment utilizing the scientific method, practical application is the end goal.

## **5. Professional Development**

Most staff development takes place on campus. The administrative team consisting of the owners, the elementary principal, the curriculum/training specialist, and the preschool director consistently work together to evaluate current professional development needs. Resources (such as expert guest speakers, professional development materials in print, videos, etc.) are then provided during scheduled in-service days and at weekly grade level meetings to direct staff development. Each year many of these development opportunities concentrate on a specific annual focus.

In addition to training in the area of the school's annual focus, the school provides opportunities for the faculty to receive training in differentiating instruction for students with various learning differences.

Sunset Mesa also encourages individual teachers to take advantage of off-campus professional development opportunities in support of Sunset Mesa's chosen curriculum direction. This training allows the teacher to share the expertise she has gained with the rest of the teaching staff during weekly grade level meetings and/or during all staff in-service days.

Sunset Mesa's parent organization has established an endowment fund dedicated to staff professional development. Teachers can apply for grants from this fund in order to attend seminars or other training opportunities for professional development. This fund may also be used to pay for nationally recognized speakers in the field of education when they present at Sunset Mesa. These presentations are for the benefit of both school staff and parents in the school community.

The administrative structure of the school has been arranged to maximize the direct assistance given to teachers. The principal's responsibilities are allocated in order to spend significant time in classrooms and in grade level meetings. The curriculum and training specialist position was created several years ago in order to help teachers. These two administrators devote substantial time to professional development—advising, modeling, observing, brain-storming, coaching—in one-on-one and in small group settings.

## PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

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1. Private school association(s): National Independent Private Schools Association; North Central Association (Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. List the primary association first.)

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No x

3. What are the 2006-2007 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

<u>\$8800</u> K	<u>\$9750</u> 1 <sup>st</sup>	<u>\$9750</u> 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<u>\$9750</u> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<u>\$9750</u> 4 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$9750</u> 5 <sup>th</sup>
<u>\$</u> 6 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$</u> 7 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$</u> 8 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$</u> 9 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$</u> 10 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$</u> 11 <sup>th</sup>
<u>\$</u> 12 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$</u> Other				

4. What is the educational cost per student? \$8504  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$2800

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? \_\_\_\_\_7%

7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? \_\_\_\_\_20%

**Part VII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS**  
**SUNSET MESA SCHOOLS**  
**Albuquerque, NM**

SAT 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, Form A, published by Harcourt Educational Assessment was administered at all grade levels in 2005-2006.

SAT 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, Form S, published by Harcourt Educational Assessment, was administered at all grade levels in all earlier years.

Scores are reported here as percentiles. No students were excluded from the tests.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing month	April	April	April	April
<b>Grade 5</b>				
Reading	91	88	88	87
Mathematics	94	91	83	87
Number of Students tested	49	46	30	36
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of students excluded	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Percent of students excluded	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>				
1. Hispanic or Latino				
Number of students tested	*	*	*	*
Reading	*	*	*	*
Mathematics	*	*	*	*
2. Asian/Pacific Islander				
Number of students tested	*	*	*	*
Reading	*	*	*	*
Mathematics	*	*	*	*
<b>Grade 4</b>				
Reading	93	86	87	87
Mathematics	96	89	92	89
Number of Students tested	38	55	47	32
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of students excluded	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Percent of students excluded	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>				
1. Hispanic or Latino				
Number of students tested	*	*	*	*
Reading	*	*	*	*
Mathematics	*	*	*	*
2. Asian/Pacific Islander				
Number of students tested	*	*	*	*
Reading	*	*	*	*
Mathematics	*	*	*	*

\* No data reported for fewer than ten students.

**Part VII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS**  
**SUNSET MESA SCHOOLS**  
**Albuquerque, NM**

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Scores are reported here as percentiles. No students were excluded from the tests.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing month	April	April	April	April
<b>Grade 3</b>				
Reading	90	88	87	85
Mathematics	92	88	83	88
Number of Students tested	46	37	57	48
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of students excluded	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Percent of students excluded	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>				
1. Hispanic or Latino				
Number of students tested	*	*	*	*
Reading	*	*	*	*
Mathematics	*	*	*	*
2. Asian/Pacific Islander				
Number of students tested	*	*	*	*
Reading	*	*	*	*
Mathematics	*	*	*	*
<b>Grade 2</b>				
Reading	87	89	86	90
Mathematics	88	88	90	86
Number of Students tested	60	49	43	46
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of students excluded	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Percent of students excluded	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>				
1. Hispanic or Latino				
Number of students tested	13	*	*	*
Reading	86	*	*	*
Mathematics	86	*	*	*
2. Asian/Pacific Islander				
Number of students tested	*	*	*	*
Reading	*	*	*	*
Mathematics	*	*	*	*

\* No data reported for fewer than ten students.

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**Albuquerque, NM**

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SAT 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, Form S, published by Harcourt Educational Assessment, was administered at all grade levels in all earlier years.

Scores are reported here as percentiles. No students were excluded from the tests.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing month	April	April	April	April
<b>Grade 1</b>				
Reading	82	88	92	91
Mathematics	91	85	89	88
Number of Students tested	58	54	53	50
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of students excluded	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Percent of students excluded	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>				
<b>1. Hispanic or Latino</b>				
Number of students tested	*	12	*	*
Reading	*	88	*	*
Mathematics	*	86	*	*
<b>2. Asian/Pacific Islander</b>				
Number of students tested	*	*	*	*
Reading	*	*	*	*
Mathematics	*	*	*	*

\* No data reported for fewer than ten students.