

# Innovation Proposal Brief



# Santa Fe Public Schools

## Schools of Innovation Proposal Brief

### PURPOSE

This brief proposal allows school leaders to present an innovation concept for consideration for designation as a Santa Fe Public Schools School of Innovation. If approved by the Board of Education, the school will enter **Year 1: Planning and Training** for SY 26-27.

---

### SCHOOL INFORMATION

**School Name:** Atalaya Elementary

**Principal:** Cameron Sperry

**Grade Levels Served:** K-6

**Current Enrollment:** 250

**Proposed Innovation Focus Area:** Piloting a team teaching staffing model in conjunction with a reduced technology/screen time initiative.

**Requested Planning Year:** 26-27 school year

---

### INNOVATION OVERVIEW

*Provide a brief description of the proposed innovation. Clearly describe what will look different for students and teachers in daily classroom practice.*

Include:

- What the innovation is
- How instruction or programming will differ from current practice
- What students will experience differently

*(Approximately 1–2 paragraphs)*

**Response:**



I propose the development of an innovative school model at Atalaya Elementary that prioritizes reduced screen time and emphasizes hands-on, real-world learning, supported by a collaborative team-teaching staffing approach designed in partnership with [Arizona State University's Next Education Workforce initiative](#). In this model, teachers work in teams to co-plan and co-teach, allowing them to leverage their individual strengths while supporting a shared group of students with smaller effective student-to-adult ratios. Instruction will focus on interactive, student-centered learning experiences that promote critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving, while technology is used intentionally as a tool rather than a constant presence or as passive entertainment.

This proposal is grounded in Santa Fe Public Schools' Reimagining initiative and aligns with Resolution 2024/2025-19 by creating innovative programming that expands meaningful school choice for families. Students will experience more engaging and relevant learning through hands-on activities, flexible grouping, and increased opportunities for collaboration and ownership of their learning. By reducing screen dependence and strengthening relationships between students and educators, this model is designed to better meet diverse student needs, including different learning styles and social-emotional development. Ultimately, this approach aims to deepen student engagement, strengthen community, and provide a compelling educational option that supports both student success and long-term staff sustainability.

---

## **PROBLEM OF PRACTICE/RATIONAL**

*Explain the need for this innovation. Consider including:*

- *Student achievement trends*
- *Engagement or attendance data*
- *Program gaps or unmet student needs*
- *Community demand*

*(1 paragraph)*

### **Response:**

The need for this innovative school model is underscored by several converging challenges:

NMSSA, iReady, and Amira student achievement trends for Atalaya show stagnation or decline in core subjects. In the year 2023 Atalaya's Math proficiency according to NMSSA scores was 56% and Reading was 74%, in 2024 Math proficiency was 45% with Reading at 65% and in 2025 Math proficiency was 51% and Reading 66%.



Teachers and students report that students struggle to retain knowledge, stay motivated, and apply critical thinking skills in meaningful contexts. Additionally, Atalaya families and community members have voiced that many students feel disconnected due to passive, screen-heavy instruction and that there are limited opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning. The Atalaya community is requesting more integration across subject areas, more personalized support for students, and more focus on students' social-emotional development. Finally, Atalaya has a high population of students with Individualized Learning Plans (IEPs) and, therefore, smaller student to adult ratios and targeted small learning groups could more effectively accommodate student learning styles and academic supports. These factors highlight the need for a more engaging, collaborative, and student-centered approach such as the team-teaching model along with less dependence on technology and screentime.

Team teaching also has a strong positive impact on teacher retention by creating a more supportive, collaborative, and sustainable work environment, especially when paired with a reduced screen-time, hands-on learning model. When teachers share responsibility for planning, instruction, and classroom management, the workload becomes more manageable, reducing burnout and stress—two of the most common reasons educators leave the profession. At the same time, limiting screen use benefits both teachers and students by decreasing digital fatigue, improving focus, and fostering more meaningful in-person interactions, which can make teaching more energizing and rewarding. Working in teams reduces professional isolation, giving teachers regular opportunities to exchange ideas, problem-solve challenges, and learn from one another's strengths, increasing job satisfaction and a sense of belonging. During common planning time, teachers will work collaboratively to analyze student performance data and adjust lesson plans, instruction, and student groupings. Students, in turn, tend to be more engaged, attentive, and behaviorally regulated in hands-on environments, which can ease classroom management and improve overall teaching conditions. Newer teachers benefit from embedded mentorship within a team structure, while all educators gain flexibility to focus on their strengths and maintain better work-life balance. Altogether, these factors contribute to a healthier, more dynamic school culture that supports both student success and long-term teacher retention.

---

## EXPECTED IMPACT

*Identify 2–3 outcomes the school expects the innovation to improve and how success will be measured. Examples may include:*

- *Increased academic achievement*
- *Improved attendance*



Santa Fe Public Schools | Schools of Innovation

- *Increased student engagement*
- *Expanded access to advanced coursework*
- *Development of career pathways*

**Response:**

**Long-term teacher retention:** The Atalaya leadership team will form teams of educators with distributed expertise to replace the conventional one-teacher, one-classroom staffing model. Success can be measured with lower turnover rates, higher teacher evaluation scores, and teachers who are more likely to recommend the teaching profession and report feeling more supported than peers in non-teamed models. ASU’s Next Education Workforce has created teacher surveys meant to gauge the program’s successes and areas for improvement.

**Increased student learning and progress:** Students served by Next Education Workforce teams made [1.4 more months of reading growth in 3rd grade](#) than students in traditional models and report strong relationships with their teachers. When educators work together to support a shared roster of students, they’re able to better meet the needs of students with smaller student to adult ratios, targeted student groupings for intervention or extension, and more opportunities for individualized learning and student autonomy. Success can be measured through formal and informal assessments including BOY, MOY, NMSSA, and EOY. Student achievement and the efficacy of small group support will also be monitored and measured by the Special Education and Gifted Services educator teams.

**Intentional focus on community and social-emotional wellbeing:** Removing screens as a constant presence in the classroom allows students to engage with one another and their teachers more consistently. Reducing dependence on screens and technology use ensures more time for hands-on learning, collaboration, and social emotional learning. The Teaming model also emphasizes the strengthening of community with whole group morning meetings and intentional skill building around collaboration, problem solving with others, and discussion. Atalaya will not only focus on building community and team values with students, but also, very importantly, with teachers as they navigate how to lesson plan and teach together. Teacher teams can be exquisite role models for students in how to work with others who may have different ideas, styles, and expertise. Ultimately, when teachers feel supported by a team and less stressed, students will in turn feel similarly. Success will be measured through discipline tracking systems and community surveys that include the Panorama survey and internally created surveys.

---

**INITIAL PLANNING APPROACH**



*Briefly describe how the school will use Year 1 (Planning and Training) to prepare for implementation. This may include professional learning, curriculum design, staff collaboration, and any anticipated external partners supporting implementation.*

*(1-2 paragraphs)*

**Response:**

In April of 2026 the Atalaya staff was given a survey to initiate brainstorming and planning for both a teaming model and reduced screen time and technology use. The survey was used to inform Atalaya leadership which teachers are on board to start the Team Teaching pilot and began a working whole staff definition of what reduced technology will look like.

**Reduced dependence on screens and technology:**

- Teachers will plan units collaboratively with a focus on hands-on learning (inquiry-based, project based, experiential, etc.) while using district approved HQIM (prioritizing print) and focusing on the Priority Standards.
- Teacher Teams will decide how to phase out screens in their classrooms and be intentional about how to have students use computers, smartboards, websites, videos, etc. as learning tools. Teacher teams will agree that the use of screens will never become a “time filler” and to be aware of when a technology-based tool starts being used passively or for too long.
- Each classroom will have computer carts to store Chromebooks (one for each student). This will help meet community concern about young students carrying laptops back and forth between school and home and will help create a culture of less screentime even at home. It will also reduce the potential for student distraction if there is no laptop constantly sitting on their desk or next to them in backpacks.
- Center-based use of required district online programs like Amira and ST Math
- Teacher-made progress monitoring assessments and structured use of the PLC Data Analysis Protocol.

**Team Teaching Staffing Model:**

- Team Teaching Pilot teams:
  - Team 1: Grades 5 and 6, Resource teacher, Gifted Teacher, Interventionists
  - Team 2: Grade 4, Resource teacher, Gifted Teacher, Interventionists
- Whole School: At least two educator partners will plan together for the scheduled Layer 3 Intervention block in order to share students and create targeted and flexible student groups.
- Intentional team building with staff
- Special Master Schedule and time for in-house PD to ensure training and proper time for planning/teaming



Santa Fe Public Schools | Schools of Innovation

- Atalaya Elementary School will partner with Arizona State University's Next Education Workforce (NEW) to pilot one or more team-based models in the school, where two or more educators share responsibility for a common roster of students. The principal, school leadership team, and pilot team(s) will engage in professional learning to build understanding of teaming, examine the possibilities to shift master schedules, and identify one or more pilot teams. NEW will engage educators in foundational training on team-based models and distributed expertise.
- Next Education Workforce, School Leader Launchpad - April 16 & April 23, 2026  
Our school leadership team will develop the knowledge, structures, and strategies we need to pilot team-based models. School Leader Launchpad is for school leadership teams launching their first educator teams. Our leadership team will create a comprehensive plan to define a team-based model and address critical implementation decisions, including selecting pilot teams, master scheduling, shared rosters, and collaboration structures.
- Next Education Workforce, Educator Team Institute - June 2nd & 3rd, 2026:  
This is a 2-day, virtual experience for our pilot educator teams and school leadership providing tools and strategies to foster a collaborative culture and set a vision for learners in the year ahead.

[HERE is a document with a more thorough 3-year plan guide for Team Teaching.](#)

[HERE is a link to a school map with classroom max capacity according to the fire code.](#)

**Family and Community Engagement for School of Innovation:**

- To help families and the community understand the benefits of the above innovation concepts, Atalaya leadership will share plans with the PTA board members and at quarterly general PTA meetings.
- Atalaya will host family information sessions about the pilots and the three year plan to become a School of Innovation to help families understand what will be different and why this programming at Atalaya is ideal.
- Community and family surveys will be distributed in order to collect data on family concerns, understandings, and ideas, including getting community feedback on their preferences surrounding a reduced technology program.

---

**PRELIMINARY COST CONSIDERATIONS**

*Briefly describe any known or estimated costs associated with this innovation, including training, materials, external partnerships, and any anticipated funding sources (if applicable).*

**Response:**



Santa Fe Public Schools | Schools of Innovation

## Year 1 – Planning Year

### Cost:

- Training and on-site coaching from ASU's Next Education Workforce costs about \$30,000 a year. Thanks to the generous support of the Thornburg Foundation of New Mexico, **there is no cost for the professional learning and coaching** provided in Year 1.
- Because the teachers' professional learning from ASU takes place outside of contract time during the summer, teachers should be paid their hourly rate during the training. For year one, this is likely to be 9 teachers at \$30/hour for two days, June 2nd and 3rd. The total cost in teacher stipends for these two professional learning days will be around: \$1,620
- If feasible with teacher schedules and interest, stipends for two more professional learning days before the school year begins would be beneficial. This would also cost: \$1,620 for the 9 teachers.
- Pilot classrooms will need new furniture to allow for enough space to fit an entire grade level at times. The district Facilities and Maintenance department is working on measurements and official estimates. A rough estimate at this time is around \$6,000.
- Computer Carts for every classroom will cost around \$11,200 at \$800 each. The district Technology Department has already allotted funds for this.
- Atalaya leadership will work with the district Teaching and Learning department if more print HQIM materials are needed to use instead of online versions.

Estimate of Total Outstanding Costs for Year 1: \$7,620

## Year 2 – Implementation

### Cost:

- Training and on-site coaching from ASU's Next Education Workforce costs about \$30,000 a year. Thanks to the generous support of the Thornburg Foundation of New Mexico, **there is likely no cost for the professional learning and coaching** provided in Year 2.
- In year two the remaining teaching staff will be trained. Because the teachers' professional learning from ASU takes place outside of contract time during the summer, teachers should be paid their hourly rate during the training. For year two, this is likely to be 7 teachers at \$30/hour for two days. The total cost in teacher stipends for these two professional learning days will be around: \$1,260.



Santa Fe Public Schools | Schools of Innovation

- Remaining classrooms will need new furniture to allow for enough space to fit an entire grade level at times. The district Facilities and Maintenance department is working on measurements and official estimates. A rough estimate at this time is around \$6,000.
- Atalaya leadership will work with the district Teaching and Learning department if more print HQIM materials are needed to use instead of online versions.

Estimate of Total Outstanding Costs for Year 2: \$7,260

**Year 3 – Ongoing Support**

- Training and on-site coaching from ASU’s Next Education Workforce costs about \$30,000 a year. Thanks to the generous support of the Thornburg Foundation of New Mexico, **there is likely no cost for the professional learning and coaching** provided in Year 3.

Estimate of Total Outstanding Costs for Year 3: \$0

**Total 3-Year Estimated Cost: \$15,000**

---


**STAFF AWARENESS**

Indicate the level of staff awareness or support.

- Initial idea being explored
  - Discussed with leadership team
  - Discussed with staff
- 

**PRINCIPAL STATEMENT**

I believe this innovation has the potential to improve student outcomes and align with the strategic priorities of Santa Fe Public Schools.

**Principal Signature:** 

**Date:** 4/17/26

# Application

# Santa Fe Public Schools

## Schools of Innovation

### Full Application

---

## I. Purpose

The Schools of Innovation designation is intended to support school-based innovation that strengthens student outcomes, expands high-quality programming, and advances the strategic priorities of Santa Fe Public Schools (SFPS).

This designation is distinct from Magnet School conversion. Schools of Innovation remain subject to all existing district enrollment, lottery, and transfer procedures.

Final approval of Schools of Innovation designation rests with the Board of Education.

---

## II. School Information

School Name:

Principal:

Grade Levels Served:

Current Enrollment:

Innovation Focus Area:

Planning Year:

---

# III. Innovation Vision and Rationale

## Innovation Overview

Provide a description of the proposed innovation including:

- The core innovation
  - The instructional or programmatic shifts proposed
  - How the model differs from current practice
  - The intended student experience
- 

## Rationale

Explain:

- Why this innovation is needed at your school
  - Relevant student performance data or trends
  - The problem of practice the innovation seeks to address
  - Alignment to SFPS strategic priorities
- 

# IV. Instructional Model and Student Impact

## Instructional Design

Describe how teaching and learning will differ under this model, including:

- Curriculum and instructional shifts
  - Assessment approach
  - Student engagement strategies
- 

## Measurable Outcomes

Identify **3–5 measurable outcomes** the school expects to achieve within three years of launch.

These must include:

- At least one academic achievement metric
- At least one attendance or engagement metric

Examples may include:

- Increase in proficiency rates
  - Growth percentiles
  - Reduction in chronic absenteeism
  - Graduation rate improvement
- 

## **Monitoring and Accountability**

Describe how progress will be monitored, including:

- Data review cycles
- Leadership monitoring structures

Schools designated as Schools of Innovation will submit an annual Innovation Progress Report to the Superintendent and Board of Education.

---

# **V. Implementation Plan**

## **Three-Year Implementation Timeline**

### **Year 1 – Planning and Training**

- Detailed program design
- Professional development
- Curriculum alignment

### **Year 2 – Launch**

- Initial implementation of the innovation model
- Ongoing coaching and refinement

### **Year 3 – Full Implementation**

- Full-scale implementation
  - Evaluation of outcomes
  - Adjustments based on data
- 

## **Professional Development Plan**

Describe the training and professional learning required to support implementation.

Include:

- Types of training
  - Estimated timeline
  - Staff participation expectations
- 

## **Staffing Considerations**

Indicate whether the proposal requires:

- New positions
- Role adjustments for existing staff

Provide a brief description of staff readiness and support.

---

## **VI. Equity and Access**

Explain how the innovation will ensure equitable access and support for:

- Students with disabilities
- English learners
- At-risk students

All Schools of Innovation must remain open-access public schools and comply with district enrollment procedures.

---

# VII. Stakeholder Engagement

## Engagement Process

Describe how the following groups have been engaged in the development of this proposal:

- School staff
  - Families
  - Community partners
- 

## Evidence of Support

Provide documentation if available, such as:

- Staff surveys or feedback
  - Meeting summaries
  - Partner commitments
- 

# VIII. Budget and Sustainability

## Planning Year Costs (Year 1)

Provide estimated one-time planning and preparation costs.

---

## Implementation Costs (Years 2–3)

Provide estimated costs associated with launching and sustaining the innovation.

---

## Funding Sources

Identify anticipated funding sources such as:

- District allocation
- Grant funding
- Title funds

Provide a summary budget sufficient to demonstrate feasibility and sustainability.

---

## **IX. Board Acknowledgements**

The school acknowledges that:

1. Schools of Innovation remain public schools under SFPS governance.
  2. All existing enrollment, lottery, and transfer procedures remain in effect.
  3. The Board of Education retains authority over designation, continuation, or revocation.
  4. Annual progress reports are required.
  5. Substantial program changes require Superintendent and Board approval.
- 

Principal Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_