February 20, 2024

TK1 Strategic Plan
2024-2026

Overview

From its beginnings as a student-led radio project in 2017 to its current form as a youth media-and-technology nonprofit serving young learners across Northern New Mexico, TK1 continues its rapid evolution. The number of students and classrooms served has grown substantially over the past few years, as has its reputation, revenue, and organizational partnerships. Now navigating the post-COVID realities of schools and classrooms, alongside new opportunities for educational nonprofits, TK1 inspires a community of learners across northern New Mexico.

This is the organization's third Strategic Plan, and sixth draft (with key input and reflections from Frank Mirabal of Lovato Consulting in Albuquerque). It is divided into four sections:
- Section I includes our Mission, Vision, and Values
- Section II provides some Key Definitions
- Section III outlines our Strategic Priorities
- Section IV includes Learning and Evaluation

There are some comments in the margins to reflect areas that require group discussion, deliberation, and decision making.

Section I: Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

We inspire young learners and the community around them to create, communicate, and safely navigate the digital world.

Vision

We envision a community where all – from young learners to their parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, and local leaders – enjoy the safe, creative, and balanced presence of technology in their lives; and where young learners can access expert training and inspiration in media and technology fields, then exploring

opportunities to connect with the local workforce, higher education, and the wider creative economy.

In pursuing our mission and vision, we recognize that Taos is a community with a rich cultural history that is also marked by both generational poverty and generational trauma. Against this very real context, our vision is to help this community heal and advance through our intentional, conscious instruction and dynamic mentorship.

Values

In pursuing our mission and vision, TK1 follows, deepens, and advances this set of core values. True Kids 1 has confidence that:

- **digital media must be a positive force** for our young learners, our communities, and our shared future.

- digital media opens essential **economic and personal opportunities** for young learners to succeed in a modern local-to-global economy. As such, we are dedicated to helping students develop core digital and soft skills needed to compete. Further, we believe in the great power of media to record and present local career pathways to better inform and inspire young learners of the choices before them.

- the increased understanding and application of **technology tools** is central to the future of our young learners. We assert that basic computer-science skills are now as essential as basic English or mathematics skills, and that many young learners now require basic skills in computer logic, analysis, and applied application development; and that in teaching those, crucially important additional doors open for them.

- we must teach all young learners, and the community around them, ***about technology*** – including how they can use technology to advance their own self expression and entrepreneurial ideas, how they can successfully and creatively balance screen time, how and where they might incorporate AI into their lives, and how our community can keep our children safe while online.

- incorporating **diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging** in all aspects of the organization is essential, from our staff and Board of Directors, to the young learners and community members we work with, to the content we teach, to the accessible and vibrant after-school programs we offer.

- promoting the **safe and responsible use of the always-on Internet** is core. We are dedicated to preparing students to consume and communicate on the Internet safely and responsibly. We empower students and their parents to spot intimidation, bullying, inappropriate behavior, and misinformation online.

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- the great power of **mentorship and project-based learning** is foundational to our work. Young learners need to take their own agency in their media and technology projects, make their own mistakes and decisions to accomplish their own vision, with TK1 mentors providing active and inspired feedback in a truly dynamic two-way relationship.

- robust **civic empowerment** is crucial to our shared future. We want to engage young learners to participate in the levels of government that set and implement policy in Taos County and beyond, and foster a sense of empowerment by giving them the tools to interview decision-makers, hold candidate forums, participate in governance bodies, and document local culture, challenges, and commerce.

- media production opens essential avenues into **critical thinking, media literacy, and digital literacy competencies.** Building production skills – including the use of cameras, audio equipment, and other digital tools – on its own is insufficient; we believe in helping young learners actively connect these skills to the wider world of media consumption, with attention to how media is successfully disseminated and critically consumed.

- **the integrity, history, and brilliance of NM culture** is of high value, and developing and retaining our youth is fundamental to protect and project that culture into the future.

- **speaking a second language** is a true superpower, with TK1 programs offered in multiple languages and media projects produced in languages other than English to increase their accessibility and reach.

The ideal graduate of TK1 programs is a High School senior rising to college or trade school, or a young learner up to age 22 taking positive steps forward into the workforce. Essential, measurable qualities of a TK1 graduate include:
- **Self-agency**. TK1 graduates know how to discriminate among information sources, are highly aware of the evolving world of media and technology, and use this knowledge to make important decisions in their daily lives and in building their future.
- **The possession of high technological and media skills**. In a world and school system where demand for technological and media skills can go unmet, TK1 graduates have exceptional and proven abilities in both domains, primarily through our mentorship and project-based learning modalities.
- **Confidence, well-being, meaning, purpose, critical thinking, and belonging**. By taking part in TK1 programs, and working closely with TK1 staff and other young learners atTK1's Headquarters and other places, young learners gain essential personal and interpersonal skills that will drive them forward. These Social and Emotional Learning moments are foundational to the success of TK1 graduates.

- A budding sense of **entrepreneurship**, including how to serve paying clients through attention to quality, deadlines, client feedback, and how careful, guided effort can translate into financial reward.

Section II: Definitions

Digital World. Sometimes referred to as the Information Age, the "digital world" captures humanity's evolving and rapid shift from the Industrial Revolution to an economy based on information technology.

Young Learners. This builds around the definition of "student," to incorporate those who are both within the formal education system, and those who have graduated high school up to age 22.

The Community *Around* Young Learners. Key to this *Strategic Plan* is the concept that we cannot teach young learners alone. In teaching about technology, we must also teach parents, grandparents, and guardians to be as effective as we can. In advancing media-and-technology opportunities to young learners, we can also serve the wider community with fee-for-service work, with regular attendance at important community events, and in working with community leaders.

Safety. More historically referred to as "internet safety," we now refer to this simply as "safety," helping young learners of all ages to see, understand, and take action against unsafe behavior, whether their own (e.g. excessive social-media use) or that of others (e.g. engaging with predatory online actors).

Responsibility and Balance. Key to our teaching about technology is ensuring that young learners can effectively embrace the concepts of responsibility and balance: in their screen time (not too much), in the balance of media-and-technology in their lives, in how they use online channels to communicate with each other and the wider world.

Technology Tools. This includes aspects like coding, gaming, hardware and software considerations, app development and management, cybersecurity, networking and beyond: the tools young learners use to construct or manage technology of any form in the digital age.

Digital Literacy. This includes the ability to read, write, produce, and analyze information through all media (social, Internet, print, broadcast, photography) to discern facts, opinion, and misinformation.

Digital Media. This includes any and all means of electronic communications including video, animation, illustration, photography etc. that are digitally distributed, broadcast, or shared via social media, print, and/or other electronic channels.

Digital-Media Arts. This is a widely recognized term that captures the ways we tell stories using digital media, which includes digital images, video, and audio, software, video games, web pages, mp3s, podcasts, streaming services, electronic documents, e-books and more.

Section III: Strategic Priorities

Robust evaluation efforts, as set out in **Section IV** below, will ensure the continual meeting and adjustment of these strategic priorities.

1. **Develop and deliver innovative programs both in schools (i.e. during class time) and after school, creating a mutually reinforcing set of unique opportunities for young learners and the communities around them that deepen media production, media/digital literacy, and technology competencies.**

    Objective 1.1: Lead innovative media-production projects for young learners, moving from idea to recording to edited completion in classrooms, in TK1's Production Studio, and/or on sanctioned field trips led by TK1 instructors.
    Objective 1.2: Lead robust conversations, teachings, and understandings of core media-literacy principles among young learners, connecting media production to a full consideration of its dissemination.
    Objective 1.3: Directly instruct young learners in the art and science of core technology and computer skills, including the disassembly and reassembly of hardware alongside instruction in app development, coding, cyber security, IT management, and more.
    Objective 1.4: Directly instruct classrooms of young learners on significant and current media and technology issues, with particular attention to how they *use* technology including phones, laptops, tablets, gaming consoles, and other screens in ways that are safe, responsible, balanced, and creative.
    Objective 1.5: Develop and deepen mentorship and project-based (and work-based) learning approaches.
    Objective 1.6: Furnish young learners with key information, resources, and contacts to advance their career or educational pathways – e.g. via partnerships, Memoranda of Understanding, apprenticeships, internships, and produced media.
    Objective 1.7: Pursue partnerships with like-minded organizations that push forward and deepen TK1 programs, and that serve to better amplify

young-learner projects (e.g. short media pieces or broader communications plans).

Objective 1.8: Lead specific cultural projects, including oral histories, that directly connect young learners with the cultures, the dynamism, and the complexities of this place.

Objective 1.9: Create functioning and vibrant relationships with institutions of higher learning in order to connect young learners with those specific opportunities.

Objective 1.10: Continue to create and maintain a digital-media archive of local jobs emphasizing realistic employment pathways for youth, and encourage regular young-learner engagement with workforce employers and associated opportunities.

2. Maintain an accessible, vibrant, free, clean, nurturing, and safe space at TK1 Headquarters for young learners and the wider community.

Objective 2.1: Work with schools, nonprofits, churches, unions and others for routine outreach efforts to ensure knowledge of our free, after-school programs is widely known to maximize participation and effectively serve all youth including those who face the needs and realities of underserved and disadvantaged populations.

Objective 2.2: Create and host after-school programming that amplifies the voice of young learners; encourages the expression of (radically diverse) self-identity; boosts young-learner understandings of civics; advances the use of second languages as "superpowers"; and advances project-based learning on core media-and-technology topics.

Objective 2.3: Ensure that transportation is not a barrier for a majority of young learners participating in our programs – chiefly through TK1's direct provision of transportation and via its location in walking distance from major schools.

Objective 2.4: Provide healthy, free food to any and all students who participate in an after-school program at HQ.

Objective 2.5: Through careful boundary setting, routine staff training opportunities, and regularly reviewed organizational policies, ensure that TK1 HQ is itself considered by all to be a safe and neutral space, and that there are individual safe spaces within HQ able to hold different groups of young learners who may require privacy for their work to thrive.

Objective 2.6: Ensure all instructors, volunteers, students aged 18+ who have direct contact with minors undergo a full background check at TK1's expense.

Objective 2.7: Ensure that all TK1 staff know and can execute a **Protocol** for addressing issues of great importance (e.g. reported suicidal ideation, self harm, harassment) in a way that is humane, legal, and appropriate.

3. At TK1 HQ, lead collaborative and informed dialogues for the wider community on major technology issues.

Objective 3.1: Through community partnerships, identify and invite key stakeholders to community conversations at HQ on the major technology issues shaping young learners.

Objective 3.2: Convene, lead, speak at and/or moderate community-wide conversations about technology, including discussions about how parents, grandparents, and guardians can better balance the role that screens play in their children's lives.

Objective 3.3: Provide all the needed support to ensure a wide diversity of stakeholder participation, including childcare, food, refreshments, gas cards, concurrent translation into Spanish, and/or convening dialogues entirely in Spanish.

4. Pursue specific programming that serves young learners across the state of New Mexico with our unique approach to media and technology.

Objective 4.1: Regularly and dynamically participate in statewide planning exercises (e.g. Digital Equity) to advance TK1's work and reputation with audiences across the state.

Objective 4.2: Expand media-and-technology classroom instruction into Española and Questa, specifically responding to local demand.

Objective 4.3: Via institutional networking, invite classrooms from other towns and counties to visit HQ for a set of specific media and/or technology intensives.

Objective 4.4: Create high quality instructional media and other materials that can support young learners in other parts of the state. This could include Spanish-language materials.

Objective 4.5: Visit other schools and classrooms with our unique methodology as time, interest, and resources permit.

Objective 4.6: Offerstate-wide access to specific TK1 programs and our instructors via Zoom or other web-based technology.

Objective 4.7: Identify, create, evaluate, and maintain partnerships with like-minded organizations that can advance TK1's work locally, regionally, and across the state.

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Objective 4.8: Appropriately engage in statewide efforts around Professional Development for teachers, boosting core skills in media-and-technology domains.

5. Promote youth leadership and civic engagement through a learning-for action model that amplifies youth voice.

Objective 5.1: Establish dynamic, media-focused platforms and partnerships for youth voice in public forums, town government, school governments, nonprofits, and businesses.

Objective 5.2: Directly support and mentor a youth from the TK1 Youth Council to serve as the Town of Taos Youth Council Member.

Objective 5.3: Provide unique opportunities to engage in civics and policy through the after-school program the TK1 Youth Council, designed primarily to amplify youth voice through our *Future Dialogues* and other innovative methods.

Objective 5.4: Introduce students to cultural, environmental, and civics-based assets of the community, encouraging students to learn about and provide critical analysis of issues in their community through civic engagement, social-media awareness, and project-based opportunities.

6. Implement and refine a strategic, predictable and reliable financing plan that blends public, philanthropic, private, and fee-for-service revenue streams to support TK1's mission.

Objective 6.1: Continue to diversify revenue, working towards a healthy balance of funding from the public sector (state and federal); foundations; individual philanthropists; corporations; and fee-for-service revenue from school districts, corporations, nonprofits, businesses, foundations, cooperatives, and individuals.

Objective 6.2: Deepen new and ongoing relationships with local, regional, and national foundations and government agencies aligned with the TK1 mission.

Objective 6.3: Expand access to state and local public funding to support TK1's programming, technology needs, and organizational growth.

Objective 6.4: Provide opportunities for partners to financially support TK1 through sponsorships, grants, fee-for-service projects, etc.

Objective 6.5: Increase fee-for-service opportunities, particularly by interfacing TK1's services in print and computers with the public. Beyond adding another invaluable revenue stream to TK1, this also teaches young learners core and essential entrepreneurship skills.

7. Serve as a key member of the wider community, as a leading nonprofit organization able to contribute and help shape community discourse.

> ***Objective 7.1:*** Lead dialogues, conversations, and presentations for other community groups, showcasing the mission and achievements of TK1.
> ***Objective 7.2:*** Meet regularly with elected officials to better understand how and where TK1 programs might intersect with government programs and decision-making processes.
> ***Objective 7.3:*** Offer free and highly discounted services to community members such as nonprofits, government, and individuals, including our video and photography services, our expertise in communications strategies, etc.
> ***Objective 7.4:*** Offer the deliberative, feedback-oriented services of the TK1 Youth Council to any entity requesting it as reasonable and appropriate.

Section IV: Learning and Evaluation

Over the lifetime of this SP, TK1 will use various metrics, tools, and approaches coordinated through rigorous internal information and review systems to ensure TK1 routinely learns from its programs, adapts programs, and reflects upon all progress. TK1 will also contract external evaluators as appropriate to assist with better understanding programs, partnerships, and directions.

At the **program level**, TK1 will:
- regularly evaluate via focus groups and simple mid- and post-program surveys of each individual classroom and after-school program.
- create standardized program surveys to capture longitudinal data for year-over-year analyses.
- regularly adjust, make wholesale changes to, or even discard individual programs as a consequence of evaluative findings.
- include youth participation and research to better understand how TK1 amplifies youth voice or changes youth perspective and opportunity.
- understand the differences among young learners who participate in our programs every day, twice a week, or once a week.

At the **organizational level**, TK1 will:
- regularly discuss individual and staff learning moments at weekly staff meetings.
- conduct self-evaluations every December, where individual staff members reflect on their progress, strengths, and challenges over the past year to support continuous performance improvement and appropriate professional development.
- maintain a centralized data system to serve as a repository for all collected data and evaluations past, present, and future.

- formalize community collaborations to develop metrics and research points. What does the community most want to see from the work of TK1?
- conduct participant research & focus groups for feedback/reflections from students, teachers, instructors, staff, and more.
- create longitudinal methods to track alumni progress over time, with a specific focus on future educational or career paths connected directly to time and experience with TK1 programs and instructors.

TK1 will regularly issue synthesis and reflection documents on its progress, in response to a grant, as a summary of a year-long program, and/or as a means to disseminate invaluable lessons learned.