

# ~~ CHARTER FOR NORD COUNTRY SCHOOL ~~

## ELEMENT 1

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*A description of the educational program of the school designed, among other things, to identify those whom the school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in the program must include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent and lifelong learners.*

Nord Country School prepares its students for the future by creating exceptional opportunities for them to learn. We equip our children with strong academic skills. Concurrently, we help them begin the lifelong process of learning and enable them to find paths that make their lives and the lives of others sustainable, productive and enjoyable.

Because of our small school environment the education from this charter school is different from the education of most traditional schools; our students develop a strong foundation of skills in the safe, nurturing learning environment.

While striving for the highest standards throughout the curriculum, NCS, develops distinctive programs in social studies, science and technology and the arts – social studies because of the need to understand the way others in the world think and communicate; science and technology because of their increasing role in improving the effectiveness of group and individual learning; and the arts because of the critical role they play in fostering creative thinking a problem solving.

An essential characteristic of the school’s educational program is its continued emphasis on the balance of intellectual, physical and social/emotional development of its students. To stimulate the mind, the school will offer a broad and balanced, personally rigorous curriculum that is both carefully planned and regularly reviewed. The program will offer students continuous opportunities to be engaged in learning and to achieve success in their studies. To promote physical development, the school will maintain an outdoor program including a garden and maintain a focus on student “wellness” (health and nutrition, including weight loss and diabetes) that will prepare students to care for their physical and emotional well being throughout their lives. To encourage the growth of the spirit, the school will provide a community that celebrates diversity, emphasizes individual and group responsibility and fosters self-esteem.

The uniqueness of each child is honored and an accepting environment is cultivated where individual interests and skills are encouraged, honoring the developmental stages of the child as well as their unique learning style.

The school will seek ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic diversity and will welcome applicants with a wide range of talents and learning styles.

NCS will serve grades K-6 with approximately seventy students. Grade configuration is determined by available facilities and enrollment keeping a 20-1 student to teacher ratio K-3 with CUSD maximum or less than the average class size in the other grades.

The school’s desire is to offer a personal education in which teachers, students, and parents know one another well and collaborate in the learning process and to achieve this goal, and the school will, within available resources, strive to maintain a low teacher/student ratio.

## ELEMENT 2

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*The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. "Pupil outcomes," for purposes of this part, means the extent to which all students of the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school's educational program.*

Today's students attending this charter school continue their education in a world growing ever more complex, interdependent and uncertain. This demanding future will require citizens who are self-confident and broadly educated, who possess ethical standards against which they can judge the choices they will have to make, and who are eager to contribute to a changing world. NCS students have a well-founded understanding of the interdependence among people and will have the capacity to approach the world with compassion and respect.

Basic intellectual skills will include the ability to think clearly and creatively, to communicate orally and in writing, and to find and use information. Students learn to accept challenges and learn from their mistakes. They acquire the capacity to work hard, independently and in groups, and to contribute to their community. All curriculum and instruction at NCS is designed to align to California State Academic Content Standards. Our goal is to have Nord Country School students meet or exceed the benchmark requirements established by the Chico Unified School District for all curricular areas.

### COGNITIVE PROCESSING

Students will demonstrate complex thinking skills by identifying, accessing, integrating and using available resources and information to reason, make good decisions, and solve complex problems in a variety of contexts based upon content knowledge, and by articulating their thinking process.

### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Students will demonstrate their ability to define problems, hypothesize, design and carry out investigations, observe, collect, display and analyze data, communicate findings, redefine problems, and revise experimental design using appropriate methods, materials and tools of technology.

### COMMUNICATION

Students will exhibit effective communication through listening, speaking, reading and writing in a critical, reflective, responsible, and extemporaneous fashion using a variety of media, including the arts. Student will have an awareness and understanding of multiple perspectives.

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL BEING

Students will exhibit healthy self-esteem by demonstrating respect for others and making positive choices in interpersonal relationships. Please see Appendix 1, Life skills and Lifelong Guidelines.

### PHYSICAL

Students will demonstrate physical skills that will enable them to participate in individual and team activities. They will recognize and pursue healthy habits of fitness, nutrition, sportsmanship, and safety. They are taught why a healthy lifestyle is important to maintain.

Our goals are that all promoted from NCS will be:

Educated individuals who:

- ✓ Attain a level of knowledge that meets or exceeds California grade level standards
- ✓ Attain subject area learning standards including, but not limited to, English/Language Arts, History/Social Science, Science, Math, Health, P.E., and Visual and Performing Arts
- ✓ Access information from a variety of sources

Contributing members of society who:

- ✓ Possess and apply the skills to be productive in the workforce, family and community
- ✓ Adjust to new situations and ideas
- ✓ Adapt to a changing world
- ✓ Work effectively in a team setting
- ✓ Analyze, interpret and communicate information effectively
- ✓ Serve as positive role models

Critical, reflective thinkers and problem solvers who

- ✓ Gather, analyze and process information from a variety of sources
- ✓ Organize relevant information, make connections, and draw conclusions
- ✓ Work individually and cooperatively towards effective solutions

Informed, responsible individuals who

- ✓ Recognize and appreciate individual and cultural uniqueness
- ✓ Contribute to solutions of community and worldwide issues
- ✓ Take positive action on issues affecting our environment
- ✓ Demonstrate teamwork and/or leadership skills
- ✓ Exhibit mutual respect
- ✓ Set, prioritize and revise personal goals

Effective communicators who

- ✓ Understand and convey written, oral and visual ideas and information
- ✓ Listen and ask questions

Effective users of technology who

- ✓ Are computer literate
- ✓ Are able to use the internet appropriately for various uses including research
- ✓ Are able to create, revise and save documents
- ✓ Are able to use a variety of technological tools to enhance learning

### ELEMENT 3

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*The method by which pupil progress is to be measured in meeting pupil outcomes.*

Nord Country School uses performance, authentic and standardized testing methods, to demonstrate that the students have obtained the desired skills and knowledge. All testing methods required by the state of California and our sponsoring agency, CUSD are used by NCS.

Assessments include annual results from the Statewide Testing and Reporting (STAR) program and any other statewide standards or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. Other strategies and assessment tools continue to be adopted by Nord Country School as appropriate. Student academic expectations are consistent with CUSD's academic expectations and are included in the NCS Strategic Plan.

Furthermore, NCS has established ongoing communication with parents using, but not limited to, phone and personal conferences, progress reports and student report cards given to students several times a year.

NCS provides CUSD with an annual performance report focusing on overall student and teacher performance, progress towards school goals, and the financial condition of the school. NCS provides CUSD with quarterly financial reports in accordance with all current law.

As we define the process of evaluating student learning, these critical questions will continue to guide our work:

- How do we help students articulate their learning process?
- How do we help students evaluate their own learning?
- How do we measure student gains in learning other than standardized testing?
- How do we regularly examine student work to ensure students are mastering grade level standards?
- How do we use informal and formative assessments to determine student needs and guide classroom lesson planning?

### ELEMENT 4

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*The governance structure of the school including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement.*

The charter is granted to, and the Nord Country School is governed by the Nord Country School, Inc., a California nonprofit public benefit corporation that was formed and organized pursuant to the Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law (Part 2 (commencing with Section 5110) of Division 2 of Title 1) of the Corporations Code). The Board of Directors of the corporation has a legal, fiduciary responsibility for the well being of the organization. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604, both parties recognize that the Chico Unified School District shall not assume any liability for any debts or obligations of the charter school, or for any claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by the charter school so long as the school district has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law, including, but not limited to, those required by Section 47604.32 and subdivision (m) of Section 47605.

The NCS Board of Directors is composed of a broad cross-section of the school community and the community at-large, including parents, professionals, and community leaders. These members are encouraged to attend training in effective board practices.

The number of people serving on the Board of Directors and the length of terms are specified in the NCS Board of Director Bylaws. The Board will always consist of at least the following members: two (2) parents nominated by the school's parent community and elected by the Board of Directors, three (3) community members, nominated and elected by the board, one (1) classroom teacher nominated by the teaching staff at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting and elected by the board. Consistent with state law, one (1) Chico Unified School District administrator, acting in an advisory capacity, may serve on the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors reserves the right to amend the by-laws to increase the number of directors at any regularly scheduled board meeting. A quorum by the board shall be a majority of the voting members.

The Board of Directors is responsible for making collaborative decisions about the school's governance, through the establishment of operating policies and procedures and NCS Board of Director By-laws. Major roles and responsibilities will include establishing and approving all major educational and operation policies, approving all major contracts, approving the school's annual budget and overseeing the school's fiscal affairs, selecting and evaluating the top administrative staff, and overseeing fundraising activities. Nord Cana Community Association with its long-time community members will provide continuity to NCS. It will help and support NCS as needed.

Any Board member who has a conflict of interest or whose child is before the Board for disciplinary reasons, must abstain from voting.

Modifications to NCS policies adopted by the NCS governing board are presented to the Board of Directors for approval. Specific procedures are addressed in the operating policies and procedures and the Board of Director By-laws. The NCS Board of Directors and the CUSD Board of Trustees must approve all changes to NCS Charter.

The NCS Board of Directors addresses personnel issues. The Administrator/ Manager is accountable to the Board of Directors and will work closely with the Teaching Principal to insure a smooth functioning school.

NCS and Chico Unified School District pledge to work in cooperation with all local education agencies (LEA) and special education local plan areas (SELPA) to ensure that a free and appropriate education is provided to all students with exceptional needs.

Nord Country School intends to function as a public school of the Chico Unified School District for purposes of providing special education and related services pursuant to Education Code Section 47(b). During each school year which the school operates as an arm of the district for special education purposes, CUSD is responsible for the delivery of all required Special Education services to eligible NCS students, and NCS shall pay to the district an amount of funding per unit of average daily attendance equal to the district's direct costs of provide special education and related services minus the district's revenues from all special education and transportation funding sources. Specific costs and charges are to be determined in a mutually agreeable Memorandum of Understanding, negotiated on a yearly basis between CUSD and NCS. In return, the district shall provide the school with all funding and/or services reasonably

necessary to ensure that all students with exceptional needs who attend the school are provided a free and appropriate education.

The charter school and CUSD shall annually and in good faith negotiate and enter into a written agreement to more clearly specify the desired mix of special education funding and services to be provided. The school shall enjoy reasonable flexibility to decide whether to receive services, funding or some combination of both pursuant to Education Code Section 47646(b), the school and the district shall work in good faith to document the specific terms of this relationship in an annual contract or memorandum of understanding.

The school shall have the right to pursue independent local education agency (LEA) and/or special education local plan area (SELPA) status pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a) and the district shall not hinder or otherwise impede the efforts of the school to do so. In the event that the school opts not to establish independent LEA and/or SELPA status, it shall remain an arm of the district for special education purposes as required by Education Code Section 47641(b), and shall continue to receive funding and services pursuant to the terms of this section and annual agreement.

Nord Country School has established operations at the former CUSD elementary school site and continues to use those facilities. The charter school and district shall enter into a lease agreement with standard terms, and specifying that the charter school shall pay rent which shall be deemed to be “substantially rent-free.” The lease shall also specify that Chico Unified School District is responsible for all major maintenance, in accordance with current law, at a level comparable with major maintenance services provided for similar facilities, and the charter school is responsible for routine maintenance of the facilities, including janitorial, grounds keeping, minor maintenance, and utility costs. The specific lease terms for this facility are negotiated in an operational agreement to be developed by the charter school and charter-granting agency.

NCS is non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, shall not charge tuition, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability.

Parents are a vital and important resource to the school. Their participation as instructional partners in the program and their support of the program’s philosophy are critical. Parents are encouraged to volunteer at school and to support their students at home to achieve their maximum potential. Working together we can achieve educational excellence in the development of the whole child.

A separate parent organization, Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), will provide support for academic programs by organizing volunteer and service activities. These activities should focus on fostering community spirit, facilitating the transition of new families into the school, promoting the school in the larger community, and fundraising.

Parents are given a Parent & Student Handbook every year, which outlines the role NCS encourages our families to take in the educational process as it relates to assisting the school, helping their student(s) with homework, attending parent meetings, and assisting in the fundraising activities of the school. Sensitive to the busy schedules of parents, staff members and the PTO will explore ways that all parents can contribute to the program.

## ELEMENT 5

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*The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the school.*

Nord Country School recognizes and embraces:

- Teacher preparation may include differing areas of expertise. It would be beneficial to the program for each teacher to have a different teaching strength such as computer/technology, art, drama, physical education/ movement, science or language arts and math.
- Teachers will integrate new, reliable research into methodology and curriculum as appropriate.
- Learning is a creative process. Teachers must be able to be facilitators of learning rather than dispensers of knowledge and to be sensitive to students' needs.
- Educators should believe that education is ultimately an art. Creativity and resourcefulness should become the very essence of the teaching method.
- Teachers will need to have a high level of commitment to the program and its philosophy.
- Teachers are team members. They work with parents as partners to execute the program.
- Teachers are flexible, resourceful and imaginative.

When necessary, Nord Country School will seek teachers with appropriate California teaching credentials or credentials from states with California reciprocity. Teachers with credentials other than the aforementioned will fulfill the following qualifications:

- ✓ A teaching credential; no criminal record;
- ✓ Three professional recommendations;
- ✓ One personally supervised administrative recommendation from a direct supervisor and;
- ✓ A sound knowledge of current educational philosophies; and CLAD certified.

NCS is the exclusive employer of all employees of the school. Certificated employees are employed by Nord Country School, on a yearly contract, and will have comparable salaries and benefits to CUSD while employed by Nord Country School. Non-certificated employees are employed by Nord Country School through individual agreements with NCS.

In the event of disciplinary action, certificated employees are protected by due process pursuant to written NCS policies. The certificated employee's immediate supervisor, with review and appeal to the Charter's Board of Directors, deals with any disciplinary matters.

Substitute teachers are drawn from the CUSD substitute teacher pool.

The teachers are in charge of the class at all times and are responsible for meeting all administrative requirements. Curriculum is developed by the teaching staff and is modified as appropriate to adhere to California State Educational Standards and to NCS educational philosophy.

## ELEMENT 6

*The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures will include the requirement that each employee of the school will furnish the school with a criminal record summary as described in Education Code Section 44237.*

Hiring procedures are followed as described in NCS board policies and procedures.

NCS will meet all local building codes and all safety regulations. This will include adherence to local fire regulations, safety inspections, earthquake drills, visitor control, and the CUSD disaster plan. In addition, a safety committee, consisting of parents, teachers, and school administrators, will conduct periodic classroom and grounds safety inspections. The safety committee will have the authority to make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding changes necessary to improve NCS' safety and will adhere to the safety plan adopted by the NCS Board of Directors.

NCS will adopt and implement a comprehensive set of health, safety, and risk management policies. These policies are developed in consultation with the school's insurance carriers and at a minimum address the following topics:

- A requirement that all enrolling students and staff provide records documenting immunizations to the extent required for enrollment in non-charter public schools
- Policies and procedures for response to natural disasters and emergencies, including fires and earthquakes
- Policies relating to preventing contact with blood-borne pathogens
- Policies requiring that instructional and administrative staff receive training in emergency response, including appropriate "first responder" training or its equivalent
- Policies relating to the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines
- A policy that the school is housed in facilities that have received state Fire Marshal approval and that have been evaluated by a qualified structural engineer who has determined that the facilities present no substantial seismic safety hazard
- A policy establishing that the school functions as a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free workplace
- Each employee of the school is required to submit to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Section 44237.

These policies are incorporated as appropriate into the school's student and staff handbooks and are reviewed on an ongoing basis in the school's staff development efforts and governing board policies.

All volunteers at NCS must be professional in their conduct. All confidential items will only be handled by certificated or classified personnel entitled to have access to those materials.

## ELEMENT 7

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*The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted.*

NCS will implement a student recruitment strategy that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following elements or strategies to ensure a racial and ethnic balance among students that is reflective of the district:

- An enrollment process that is scheduled and adopted to include a timeline that allows for a broad-based recruiting and application process
- The development of promotional and information material that appeals to all of the various racial and ethnic groups represented in the district
- The appropriate development of promotional and informational materials in languages other than English to appeal to limited English proficient populations
- The distribution of promotional and informational materials to a broad variety of community groups and the agencies that serve the various racial, ethnic, and interest groups represented in the district
- Outreach meetings in several areas of the district to reach prospective students and parents

An open enrollment policy will seek to maintain a diversified balance among students of the Charter School. Any child residing within the Chico Unified School District, regardless of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, or socioeconomic profile, will be equally welcome and eligible to apply for enrollment.

## ELEMENT 8

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*The Admission requirements, if applicable.*

NCS will actively recruit a diverse student population from the district and surrounding areas who understand and value the school's mission and are committed to the school's instructional and operational philosophy. Prospective students and their parents or guardians are briefed regarding the school's instructional and operational philosophy and are given a copy or summary of the school's student-related policies. Completing and submitting an application form will request admission. A waiting list is maintained as needed and students will be selected by lottery to fill vacancies.

Enrollment priorities:

1. Children of staff members
2. Kindergarten siblings of currently enrolled students
3. New kindergarten students (lottery)
4. Re-entry students with a planned leave of absence
5. Students currently on the waiting list

NCS serves grades K-6. Grade configuration is determined by available facilities and enrollment.

Parents and students are given handbooks at the beginning of the academic year that describes the educational philosophy of the Nord Country School. Parents are encouraged by NCS to support the school in a variety of ways, including volunteering in the classroom, driving on field trips, or assisting in fundraising efforts.

Students will sign an agreement stating they are willing to participate, do homework, respect others, be honest, work cooperatively and obey school rules. All students are required to follow the school rules and policies regarding student behavior. All students are afforded the protections under written policies adopted by NCS Board of Directors with respect to nondiscrimination.

#### ELEMENT 9

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*The manner in which an annual audit of the financial and programmatic operations of the school is to be conducted.*

NCS is a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit corporation and was incorporated May 17, 2005. NCS complies with all state laws pertaining to financial reporting to CUSD and the State of California. As a non-profit corporation, the NCS Board of Directors will select an independent auditor and oversee the completion of an annual audit of the school's financial affairs.

#### Audits

The NCS will facilitate an annual independent audit of the school's financial affairs. The NCS Board will select and oversee an auditor with education audit experience.

The audit will verify the accuracy of the School's financial statements, attendance and enrollment accounting practices and review the school's internal controls. The audit is conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the Charter School. It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed four months after the close of the fiscal year and that a copy of the auditor's findings will be forwarded to the District, the County Superintendent of Schools, the State Controller and to the CDE by December 15th each year. The Charter School's Principal along with an audit committee will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the School Board with recommendations on how to resolve them. The NCS Board of Directors will submit a report to the District describing how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved to the satisfaction of the District. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies will be referred to the dispute resolution process contained in this Charter.

#### Financial Reporting

The Charter School shall provide reports to the District as follows, and may provide additional fiscal reports as requested by the District:

1. By July 1, a preliminary budget for the current fiscal year with financial statements submitted with the charter petition pursuant to Education Code 47605(g) will satisfy this requirement.
2. By December 15, an interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through October 31. Additionally, on December 15, a copy of the Charter School's annual, independent financial audit report for the preceding fiscal year shall be delivered

to the District, State Controller, State Department of Education and County Superintendent of Schools.

3. By March 15, a second interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through January 31.
4. By September 15, a final un-audited report for the full prior year is submitted. The report submitted to the District shall include an annual statement of all the Charter School's receipts and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year.

Nord Country School compiles and provides to the district on an annual basis a performance report. This report will, at a minimum, include the following data:

- Summary data showing student progress toward the goals and outcomes specified in Element 2 from assessment instruments and techniques listed in Element 3.
- An analysis of whether student performance is meeting the goals specified in Element 2. This data will be displayed on both a school-wide basis and disaggregated by major racial and ethnic categories to the extent feasible without compromising student confidentiality.
- A summary of major decisions and policies established by the school's governing board during the year.
- Data on the level of parent involvement in the school's governance and summary
- Data from an annual parent and student satisfaction survey
- Data regarding the number of staff working at the school and their qualifications
- A copy of the school's health and safety policies and/or a summary of any major changes to those policies during the year
- Information demonstrating whether the school implemented the means listed in charter Element 7 to achieve a racially and ethnically balanced student population
- An overview of the school's admissions practices during the year and data regarding the numbers of students enrolled, the number on waiting lists, and the numbers of students expelled and/or suspended
- Analyses of the effectiveness of the school's internal and external dispute mechanisms and data on the number and resolution of disputed and complaints
- Other information regarding the education program and the administrative, legal and governance operation of the school relative to compliance with the terms of the charter.

Generally NCS and CUSD will jointly develop the content, evaluation criteria, timelines, and process for the annual performance reports. The school and CUSD will also jointly develop an annual site visitation process and protocol to enable CUSD to gather information needed to confirm the school's performance and compliance with the terms of this charter.

## ELEMENT 10

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*The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled.*

Nord Country School maintains comprehensive student discipline policies. These policies are in accord with CUSD policies, printed and distributed as part of the school's parent, student and teacher handbooks and describe the school's expectations regarding school rules, attendance, substance abuse, violence, safety, and the dress code. Each student and their parent or guardian is required to verify that they have reviewed and understand the policies prior to enrollment by signing a statement at the beginning of each academic year.

The school's policies provide students with an opportunity for due process, pursuant to applicable federal law regarding students with exceptional needs. The Principal or their designee may, pursuant to the school's adopted policies, discipline and suspend students. If students fail to comply with the terms of a remediation agreement, the Teaching Principal may recommend expulsion to the NCS Board of Directors. The School's governing Board of Directors will appoint a Hearing Officer to handle the expulsion process at NCS, in accordance to all procedures and policies adopted by Chico Unified School District and the California Education Code.

The Hearing Officer will notify the NCS Board of Directors of any pending expulsions. NCS will include suspension and expulsion data in its annual performance report. Students who present an immediate threat to health and safety may also be immediately suspended by the NCS Principal or their designee and later expelled by the NCS Board of Directors upon recommendation by the Hearing Officer.

## ELEMENT 11

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*The manner by which staff members of the Charter Schools will be covered by the State Teachers' Retirement System, the Public Employees' Retirement System, or the Federal Social Security program.*

The non-certificated (Classified) staff at Nord Country School participates in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) as adopted into policy by the NCS Board of Directors.

As it currently operates, NCS certificated staff participates in the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS). The district will cooperate as necessary to forward any required payroll deductions and related data. NCS contracts directly with Butte County Office of Education (BCOE) for administration of STRS and NCS pays BCOE for indirect costs and oversight, fees for which are negotiated on an annual basis.

NCS retains the option for its board to elect any changes to retirement plan participation and coordinate such participation, as appropriate, with the social security system or other reciprocal systems in the future, should it find that participation enables the school to attract and retain a higher quality of certificated and classified staff.

## ELEMENT 12

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*The public school attendance alternative for pupils residing within the District who choose not to attend charter schools.*

Students who opt not to attend NCS may attend other district schools or pursue an inter-district transfer in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of Chico Unified School District or their county of residence.

## ELEMENT 13

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*A description of the rights of any CUSD employee upon leaving the employment of the District to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the District after employment at a charter school.*

Any Nord Country School staff member that has left permanent status employment in the district to work at NCS shall have the right to return to a comparable position in the district during their tenure at the school, in accordance with CUSD leave policies. Such staff shall also continue to earn service credit in the district, in accordance with CUSD policy.

Teachers hired outside of Chico Unified School District have no rights to employment within CUSD in the event of charter school closure, dismissal or the voluntary termination of said teacher.

## ELEMENT 14

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*Dispute Resolution Process, Oversight, Reporting, and Renewal.*

### Intent

The intent of this dispute resolution process is to (1) resolve disputes within the school pursuant to the school's policies, (2) minimize the oversight burden on the district, (3) ensure a fair and timely resolution to disputes, and (4) frame a charter oversight and renewal process and timeline so as to avoid disputes regarding oversight and renewal matters.

### Public Comments

The staff and governing board members of NCS and CUSD agree to attempt to resolve all disputes regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section. Both shall refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

### Disputes Arising from within the School

Disputes arising from within Nord Country School, including all disputes among and between students, staff, parents, volunteers, advisors, partner organizations, and governing board members of the school, shall be resolved pursuant to policies and processes developed by the school.

The district shall not intervene in any such internal disputes without the consent of the governing board or Board of Directors of NCS for resolution pursuant to the school's policies. The district agrees not to intervene or become involved in the dispute unless the dispute has given the district reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this charter or related laws or agreements has occurred, or unless the governing board of the school has requested the district to intervene in the dispute.

### Disputes between NCS and CUSD

In the event that Nord Country School or CUSD have disputes regarding the terms of this charter or any other issue regarding the school and grantor's relationship, both parties agree to follow the process outlined below.

In the event of a dispute between NCS and CUSD, the staff and governing board members of the school and district agree to first frame the issue in written format and refer to the issue to the Superintendent of the district and Board of Directors of the school. In the event that the grantor believes that the disputed relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter, this shall be specifically noted in the written dispute statement.

The Principal and Superintendent shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion in an attempt to resolve the dispute. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, both parties shall identify two governing board members from their respective boards who shall jointly meet with the Superintendent of the district and the Principal and attempt to resolve the dispute. If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the Superintendent and the Principal shall meet to jointly identify a neutral, third party arbitrator. The format of the arbitration session shall be developed jointly by the Superintendent and the Principal, and shall incorporate informal rules of evidence and procedure unless both parties agree otherwise. The findings or recommendations of the arbitrator shall be non-binding, unless the governing boards of the school and grantor jointly agree to bind themselves.

### Oversight, Reporting, Revocation, and Renewal

The Chico Unified School District may inspect or observe any part of the school at any time, but shall provide reasonable notice to the Teaching Principal of NCS prior to any observation or inspection. The CUSD shall provide such notice at least three working days prior to the inspection or observation unless the school's board or Teaching Principal agrees otherwise. Inspection, observation, monitoring, and oversight activities may not be assigned or subcontracted to a third party by CUSD without the mutual consent of the governing board of NCS.

If the governing board of CUSD believes it has cause to revoke this charter, the board agrees to notify the governing board of NCS in writing, noting the specific reasons for which the charter may be revoked, and grant NCS reasonable time to respond to the notice and take appropriate corrective action.

CUSD agrees to receive and review the annual fiscal report as specified in Element 9. Within two months of the receipt of this annual review, CUSD must notify the governing board of NCS as to whether it considers the school to be complying with CUSD Charter school policies and California state law. This annual notification will include the specific reasons for the charter-granting agency's conclusions.

## ELEMENT 15

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### *Labor Relations*

Nord Country School is deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Education Employment Relations Act.

ELEMENT 16

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*School Closure*

Should Nord Country School either voluntarily close the School or have its charter revoked by CUSD, NCS students shall have the right to attend any other school in the Chico Unified School District, subject to the CUSD's placement policies and procedures.

NCS shall dispose of its assets in a manner consistent with CUSD policy and procedures as long as it remains an arm of the district. If NCS is a non-profit corporation at the time of closure, it shall dispose of its assets in a manner consistent with California Non Profit Corporation Codes and its Articles of Incorporation.

NCS shall carry its insurance policies for three years following the date of closure.

NCS shall maintain its records for three years following the date of closure.