

# Charter Petition for Renewal

Term: July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2022



## Nord Country School

5554 California Street Chico, CA 95973

**Submitted to the Chico Unified School District Board of Education**

**December 14, 2016**

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## Affirmations and Declarations

Nord Country School (“NCS” or the “Charter School”) will follow any and all federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to the Charter School, including but not limited to:

- The Charter School shall meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Sections 60605 and 60851, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)(1)]
- The Charter School shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of Nord Country School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(b)6]
- The Charter School shall be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- The Charter School shall not charge tuition. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- The Charter School shall admit all students who wish to attend the Charter School, and who submit a timely application; unless the Charter School receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case a public random lottery process shall occur. Except as provided in Education Code Section 47605(d)(2), admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or his or her parents within the State. Preference in the public random drawing shall be given as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B). In the event of a drawing the chartering authority shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the Charter School in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(C) [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(A)-(C)]
- The Charter School shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics). [Ref/ Education Code Section 47605 (d)(1)]
- The Charter School shall adhere to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

- The Charter School shall meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11967.5.1(f)(5)(C)]
- The Charter School shall ensure that teachers in the Charter School hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools is required to hold. As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to noncore, non-college preparatory teachers. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(1)]
- The Charter School shall at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
- The Charter School shall, for each fiscal year, offer, at a minimum, the number of minutes of instruction per grade level as required by Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(1)(A)-(D).
- If a pupil is expelled or leaves the Charter School without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the Charter School shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil's last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card and health information. [Ref/ Education Code Section 47605(d)(3)]
- The Charter School shall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection. [Ref. Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(2)]
- The Charter School shall, on a regular basis, consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's educational programs. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)]
- The Charter School shall comply with any applicable jurisdictional limitations to locations of its facilities. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47605 and 47605.1]
- The Charter School shall comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment. [Education Code Sections 47612(b) and 47610]
- The Charter School shall comply with all applicable portions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ("ESEA"), as reauthorized and amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA").
- The Charter School shall comply with the Public Records Act.

- The Charter School shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- The Charter School shall comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act.
- The Charter School shall meet or exceed the legally required minimum number of school days. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11960]
- The Charter School will work collaboratively in a joint partnership with the Chico Unified School District

## **Introduction**

### **Background**

Nord Country School is operated as a California nonprofit public benefit corporation. The Charter School was founded in 2005 by parents, teachers and community members. NCS became an independent 501(c)(3) Corporation in May of 2005.

The Charter School was first approved for a two year term by Chico Unified School District on May 18, 2005. Several renewals have occurred. The first authorized our charter from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2012 and the second authorized our charter from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2017. In 2011 Nord Country School was approved for a material revision to our charter to include 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The current charter is approved through June 30, 2017.

### **Successes and Accomplishments Since the Last Renewal**

There have been many accomplishments since our last renewal. Our intervention staff has been the recipient of two grants from Teacher's Professional Learning for Inland California through Chico State. Over \$30,000 was received for trainings in Dyslexia and Orton Gillingham methods of teaching reading and pre-reading skills. A second grant was received to look into different behaviors, disabilities and disorders exhibited by an ever-growing number of our students, such as Sensory Processing Disorder, Autism, and Executive Functioning Disorder. With this grant, staff received trainings to better understand these student's needs and the most effective ways to support them.

Our staff continues to be recognized as valued members of the education community outside of our school as well. We have two teachers on the board of the Mt. Lassen Math Council. We have one teacher on the Next Generation Science Standards Leadership Institute working with Dr. Bev Marcum at Chico State and we have another teacher who is a Lesson Study Facilitator for the MathTIME Grant at Chico State.

Our biggest success in the last five years has been the full implementation of our Middle School program. The project included the addition of 4 classrooms, a bathroom, a quad area with a shade structure, and a basketball court. This area was strategically placed in order to maintain the small school feeling and yet, at the same time, give the students a sense that they had moved away from the elementary school. We call their space "up the hill".

Each student receives a Chromebook in sixth grade and they will continue to use that device through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. These students use their Chromebooks on a daily basis. Our middle school students are able to select two different electives and they have the opportunity to join a sports team if they want. We are happy that we are now able to give our parents the opportunity to remain at our small school through the eighth grade.

### **Enrollment**

Since 2011 we have grown from 140 to 180 students. We currently have 125 students in TK through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 55 students in grades 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>.

## Current Status of Nord Country School

Although we have grown to 180 students, Nord Country School continues to maintain its small school atmosphere. Each morning our students and staff meet to salute the flag and sing a patriotic song. We then have a morning assembly at which we can talk about upcoming events, school rules or sing “Happy Birthday” to a student. Starting each day in such a caring, positive way helps the students know that they are in a safe, nurturing environment.

## Pupils Served by Percent

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
African American	2.9	3.3	3.6	3.6	7.2
American Indian/Alaska Native	2.2	2.7	7.1	6.6	7.2
Asian	0	0	1.4	1.2	1.1
Hispanic	35.5	28.9	21.4	19.8	19.9
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0	.7	.06	1.1
White	59.3	63.7	62.1	65.3	66.3
Two or More Races	0	1.3	4.5	3	7.73

## Calendar and Instructional Minutes

On a yearly basis Nord Country School’s Board of Directors will determine the number of school days in the school calendar. This number will vary between 175 and 180 days depending on funding. Instructional minutes will continue to meet or exceed those required by the State of California throughout the renewal term.

Grade Level	CA State Requirement	NCS Minutes Offered 2013/2014	NCS Minutes Offered 2014/2015	NCS Minutes Offered 2015/2016	NCS Minutes Offered 2016/2017
K	36,000	68,230	67,740	59,920	59,920
1	50,400	55,840	55,420	56,400	56,400
2	50,400	58,375	57,925	58,920	58,920
3	50,400	58,347	57,925	58,920	58,920
4	54,000	60,910	57,925	58,920	58,920
5	54,000	60,910	57,925	58,920	58,920
6	54,000	60,910	57,925	58,920	65,640
7	54,000	N/A	N/A	64,800	65,640
8	54,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	65,640

*See Appendix C for current school calendar and daily schedule*

## Charter School Intent and Charter Requirements

In 1992, the California Legislature enacted the Charter Schools Act of 1992. Section 47601 of the California Education Code states that:



*It is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting this part, to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a method to accomplish all of the following:*

- (a) Improve pupil learning.
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
- (e) Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.
- (f) Hold the schools established under this part accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule based to performance based accountability systems.
- (g) Provide vigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools.

The Charter Schools Act requires each charter school to have a “charter” that outlines at least the fifteen (15) elements identified in Education Code Section 47605(b)(5). The following provisions of this charter coincide with the required elements.

### **Charter Renewal Criteria**

*Evidence of Meeting Charter Renewal Standards Pursuant to Education Code Section Education 47607(b) and the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 11966.4(b)(1)*

Education Code Section 47607(b) requires that a charter school must meet at least one of the following renewal criteria prior to receiving a charter renewal:

1. Attained its Academic Performance Index (API) growth target in the prior year or in two of the last three years, both school wide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school.
2. Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API in the prior year or in two of the last three years.
3. Rank in deciles 4 to 10 inclusive, in the API for a demographically comparable school in the prior year or in two of the last three years.
4. The entity that granted the charter must determine that the academic performance of the charter school is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that the charter school pupils would otherwise have been required to attend, as well as the academic performance of the schools in the school district in which the charter school is located, taking into account the composition of the pupil population that is served at the charter school.
5. Has qualified for an alternative accountability system pursuant to subdivision (h) of Education Code Section 52052.

## Notes on Testing

Assembly Bill 484 amended Education Code sections 52052(e)(2)(C) and 52052(e)(4) to allow schools to use one of the following criteria to meet legislative and/or programmatic requirements:

- The most recent API calculation;
- An average of the three most recent annual API calculations: or
- Alternative measures that show increases in pupil academic achievement for all groups of pupil’s schoolwide and among significant groups.

The Charter School meets the charter renewal criteria established in Education Code Section 47607(b) by utilizing “the most recent API calculation” as further specified below.

As indicated in the table below, Nord Country School meets the requirement of Education Code Sections 47607(b)(1) because it achieved its API growth target schoolwide and for all numerically significant subgroups in the most recent year (2013) and meets the requirement of Section 47607(b)(2) because it ranked in decile 6 in the most recent year (2013).

### API

Year	API Statewide Ranking	API Growth Scores	Actual Growth	Met Growth Target?
2013 - 2014	State mandated testing was suspended in 2013-2014 so API data was not calculated or reported  3 Year Average API: 781			
Schoolwide	6*	818	61	YES
White		853	54	YES
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged		786	47	YES

See Appendix D for CDE DataQuest Reports (2013)

### CAASPP

#### Comparison to Demographically Similar Schools in the District

<u>2016 CAASPP Results</u> <u>Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards</u>		
	ELA	Mathematics
Nord Country School	31%	29%
Neal Dow	37%	37%
Rosedale	35%	35%
McManus	39%	29%

Additionally, Education Code Section 47607(a)(3) requires the authorizer to consider increases in pupil academic achievement for all groups of pupils served by the charter school (defined as numerically significant pupil subgroups) as the most important factor in determining whether to grant a charter renewal.

The 2015 and 2016 comparison data presented below shows an increase in pupil academic achievement schoolwide and for white students in ELA. The data also shows a decrease in pupil academic achievement in the following areas: ELA (economically disadvantaged students) and mathematics (schoolwide, white students, and economically disadvantaged students).

<b>CAASPP – ELA Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards Percent Change from 2015 to 2016</b>			
	2015	2016	Percent Change
All Students	29%	31%	+2%
White Students	31%	38% *	+7%
Economically Disadvantaged	21%	18% **	-3%
* The “white student” sub group only contains scores from the 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade classrooms (42 students). ** The “economically disadvantaged” sub group only contains scores from the 4 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> grade classrooms (25 students).			

<b>CAASPP – Mathematics Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards Percent Change from 2015 to 2016</b>			
	2015	2016	Percent Change
All Students	33%	29%	-4%
White Students	35%	31% *	-4%
Economically Disadvantaged	36%	18% **	-18%
* White students subgroup only contains scores from the 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> grade classrooms (42 students) ** Economically Disadvantaged subgroup only contains scores from the 4 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> grade classrooms (25 students).			

## Plans for Future Improvement

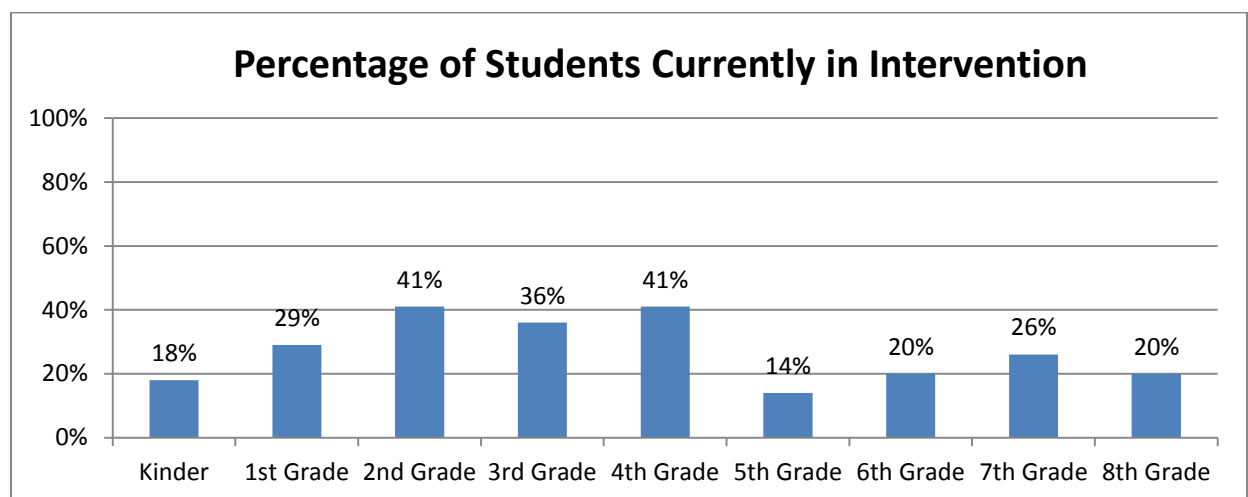
In reviewing student data, including CAASPP results, we have identified three areas of focus for improvement.

In ELA the focus will be in writing. We have begun research into a school wide writing program including staff development in its implementation. Two of the programs we have been researching are ‘Write from the Beginning and Beyond’ which is an extension of Thinking Maps. Since the staff already uses Thinking Maps in their classrooms, we feel this could be a positive extension into writing. Another program currently being researched is ‘Units of Study – Writing’ authored by Lucy Calkins.

In math the focus will be in the CAASPP Claim areas of Problem Solving & Modeling & Data Analysis as well as Concepts & Procedures. These two areas were determined to be where students struggled the most. We have begun unpacking these concepts, looking at the standards and brainstorming new lessons and strategies to support our students. We have begun two new math intervention groups for students to work with a credentialed aide two to four days a week.

The last area of focus is technology. Through the High Speed Network grant we have just recently been able to increase our connectivity allowing more than one classroom to be on the internet at the same time. With this advancement, teachers are now able to stream educational videos and have students conduct their own research. We are also increasing our computing devices. This year we have purchased over 80 Chromebooks to increase access for our students. Students will have more practice using computers, allowing them to become more familiar and comfortable with their use. We believe that the increase in usage will have a positive impact on our test scores.

As a staff we examined the interventions being provided to our students. The graph below represents the percentage of students in each grade who are working below or far below grade level and are receiving pull out interventions in math and/or language arts.



We believe that the high number of students receiving intervention reflects in our CAASP test results. For these students, the appropriate testing accommodations for each student will be reviewed more closely to ensure that the students are receiving the best support possible.

### **Charter School Request**

In accordance with Education Code Section 47607, Nord Country School petitions Chico Unified School District (“CUSD”) for renewal of the NCS charter for a term of five years, from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2022.

This charter authorizes the operation of Nord Country School, a public charter school, which shall operate within the geographic boundaries of Chico Unified School District, as authorized pursuant to Education Code Section 47605. NCS occupies the school site at 5554 California Street, Chico, CA as provided by the district under a Facilities Use Agreement dated August of 2012

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## **ELEMENT 1: Educational Program**

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*Governing Law: The educational program of the charter school designed, among other things, to identify those whom the charter school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21<sup>st</sup> 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. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)(i)*

*The annual goals for the charter school; for all pupils and for each subgroup of pupils identified pursuant to Section 52052, to be achieved in the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school, and specific annual actions to achieve those goals. A charter petition may identify additional school priorities, the goals for the school priorities, and the specific annual actions to achieve those goals” Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii)*

### **NCS Mission**

Nord Country School’s mission is to create partnerships with students, families, staff and the community in order to provide a safe and inviting environment in which students will experience the best of traditional education with modern approaches.

### **NCS Educational Vision**

Nord Country School provides high quality, standards based learning experiences that build academic skills, character, community and global awareness.

### **NCS Philosophy**

We believe that learning is a life-long adventure. We believe in the freedom to wonder, to ask, to explore, to imagine, and to create. As we strive to reach our goals, we believe that success means doing our best, being our best, and feeling proud of our effort. We believe that every one of us has special talents, and that the talents of each of us help all of us. We believe that learning best occurs in a safe and nurturing environment where the school forms close ties with the students, parents and community members.

### **We Value**

- Literate, life-long learners who respect diversity of people and beliefs.
- Academic excellence.
- Self-confidence and compassion.
- Appreciation and respect for the natural world.
- Imagination, personal expression, intrinsic motivation and self-direction.
- The use and understanding of modern-day technology.
- The development of creative talents and skills.
- A unifying school, parent and community effort.

## **Target Student Population and Whom the Charter School is Attempting to Educate**

Nord Country School currently attracts a variety of students from all over the city of Chico and surrounding communities. The Charter School values ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic diversity and welcomes applicants with a wide range of talents, learning styles and abilities.

NCS serves grades K – 8. The Charter 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. To achieve this goal the Charter School will, within available resources, strive to maintain a low student/teacher ratio of 22:1 in grades K - 3 and 25:1 in grades 4 - 8. Ultimately, however, grade configuration will be determined by available facilities, enrollment and budget constraints.

## **What it Means to Be an Educated Person in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

We believe a well-educated person in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will be technologically fluent, self-motivated, committed to being a lifelong learner, able to think critically, and communicate effectively. The development and emphasis on all Nord Country School students as 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners is reflected through all that we do.

An essential characteristic of the Charter School’s educational program will be its continued emphasis on the balance of intellectual, physical and social/emotional development of its students. The Charter School will continue to offer a curriculum that is both carefully planned and regularly reviewed. Nord Country School will prepare its students for the future by creating exceptional opportunities for them to learn. We will strive to interweave our academic goals with consistent exposure and exploration through technology.

To keep our children competitive, Nord Country School will remain current with ever evolving technology within the classrooms. We will maintain a student computer ratio of two to one in grades one through eight. Each classroom will also possess a working projector, teacher computer and document camera. This technology will be utilized to access curriculum to meet or exceed the Common Core State Standards (“CCSS”). Students will develop beginning competency and fluency with the working of computers and tablet skills. The goal of this is to provide a solid basis in technology literacy, an integral skill in today’s work force.

## **Basic Learning Environment and Instructional Design**

Nord Country School offers a site-based, broad and balanced curriculum which includes thorough instruction in the traditional academic disciplines: English/language arts (“ELA”), mathematics, science and social studies. Fine arts, technology, physical education (“PE”), music, creative thinking, problem solving and environmental education are also integral parts of the program.

Multi-faceted assessment drives instruction, and we provide an environment where all learners have access to student support services. We provide a broad and enriched education that is aligned with the current California State Standards (including Common Core state standards and Next Generation science standards).

Daily practice in math, ELA, and critical thinking skills are taught with an emphasis on integrated and conceptual learning where connections are made across the subjects as much as possible. Teachers create learning opportunities that include a range of experiences and incorporate aspects of multiple intelligences. Differentiated learning takes place so that all students are challenged and supported in the learning process.

The use of well-planned field trips and hands-on experiences actively engage learners and enables them to obtain a greater degree of meaningful understanding of the material and concepts to be learned.

The uniqueness of each child will continue to be honored and an accepting environment will continue to be cultivated where individual interests and skills are encouraged. We recognize and honor the developmental stages of the child as well as his/her unique learning style.

### **The Teachers**

Nord Country School teachers agree that education is an active, engaging process that encourages students to accept challenges, give their personal best, and learn from their mistakes. Our teachers are an exceedingly capable and dedicated group who care deeply about children and are responsive to the needs of individual students and families. They value the best elements of traditional and innovative education and support the development of every student's mind, body and spirit.

Teachers engage in many staff development opportunities throughout the year. Supported by new technologies and ideas, they are eager to consider fresh approaches and strategies to maintain high standards throughout the curriculum. They are totally committed to the academic and personal growth of students and are willing to put in the extra time to ensure that their students succeed.

### **The Community**

The community of Nord and the surrounding area is active and diverse. The community is committed to the students of Nord Country School and participates in their success in many ways. Volunteers work in the classroom as well as at special events, drive on field trips, work from home helping teachers with projects, and work in the garden. They also donate supplies and support field trips and student's sporting events. Some of our school and community events include our annual Harvest Festival, Halloween Carnival, Stone Soup Day, Loved Ones Day, and the Annual Pie Auction Dinner.

### **The Parents and the Students**

Much of the Charter School's philosophy lies in the knowledge that children with families that are involved in their child's education are more successful academically. Parents and staff support each other for the success of NCS. Each family is encouraged to volunteer and support NCS in many different ways, including assisting teachers in the classroom, driving on field trips, serving in our Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO), or serving on our School Site Council (SSC).



Supporting fundraising efforts and attending Charter School functions are other opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's education.

Nord Country School strives to make our families feel welcome and makes every effort to include our families in all aspects of our Charter School. We promote family unity at our different events throughout the year. These events bring families, volunteers and staff together to create a positive learning environment.

Parents volunteer countless hours at our Charter School. The number of volunteers working to help our students and Charter School succeed keeps growing. Whether they help in the classroom, in the garden, on the playground or at special events, their support helps convey the message to students that school is important. Last year our volunteers worked over 2,000 hours to help support our school. Although NCS strongly encourages parents to volunteer, parents are not required to volunteer and no student will be denied admission or continued enrollment for failure of his or her parent to volunteer.

Good communication between parents and the Charter School is important. Twice a month we send home our Nighthawk Newsletter which includes information on upcoming important dates, information about fundraisers or other school business, as well as a list of students who were chosen for Golden Tickets. Our student information system, School Wise, provides the ability to contact our families to remind them of special events, check attendance status or contact them if an emergency should occur.

The parents of Middle School students can use the School Wise Parent Portal to check on their student's grades in each class. They can also see if their student has any missing assignments.

Students are expected to adhere to high standards of behavior and academic achievement. Character Education is directly taught and modeled by staff. Students are expected to demonstrate these values in their schoolwork as well as in their interactions with peers and adults.

## **How Learning Best Occurs**

### **Differentiated Learning**

Nord Country School will continue to provide a standards-based curriculum where teaching focuses on the individual child's needs. Student achievement data will inform instructional decisions. Student academic and behavioral growth will continue to be monitored through a progress monitoring assessment system.

### **Standards Based Curriculum**

Nord Country School will continue to ensure that all students, including economically disadvantaged and low achieving students are working towards mastery of the Common Core State Standards and have the opportunity to learn in a technology-rich environment. Concepts will be taught thematically utilizing the CCSS and Next Generation Science Standards ("NGSS"), and the applicable state content standards.

## **The Educational Program**

Our approach to educating our students is based on offering a broad and enriched education aligned with CCSS, NGSS, and applicable state content standards. We provide students with standards based curriculum that is both thematic and hands-on. The instruction delivered is both engaging and rigorous, increasing the students' depth of knowledge and understanding of essential concepts and ideas.

The students also receive character instruction to foster skills in citizenship, cooperative learning, and perseverance; all essential skills embedded in the CCSS. The education of the students is highly driven by school wide and nationwide assessments. The information obtained guides the strategies and the structures used to deliver appropriate, differentiated instruction. Our focus is to have high student performance by offering an engaging educational experience that is fitting to each student's needs.

## **Positive Behavior Support**

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a school wide program based upon a philosophy of recognizing positive contributions of students. Staff works to create consistent routines and guidelines in order to promote a safe and caring environment. Emphasis is placed on teaching desired skills and coaching students in having positive social interactions. PBIS means students will know exactly what is expected of them. Students who take responsibility to behave positively will be recognized and rewarded in a variety of ways.

## **Character Education**

Character education provides students the necessary skills to be effective communicators, presenters and participants in teamwork as required by the Common Core State Standards. Our program is implemented through Second Step Curriculum that ensures students are actively involved with the philosophy in the classroom as well as out on the playground.

Our character education program reinforces the following character traits:

Respect and Responsibility	Kindness and Caring
Citizenship	Self Control
Empathy and Understanding	Patience
Honesty and Integrity	Perseverance

These traits are reviewed during morning assemblies with little skits, books or presentations. Each character trait has an assigned color. On "Wear it Wednesday" we wear that color to remind us about the character trait. Every week class points get tallied and at the end of the month the winning class earns extra recess.

## **Curriculum**

### **Language Arts**

Currently, teachers start with CCSS and use Treasures Curriculum along with teacher created lessons to design a balanced literacy program that moves students towards effective reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Teachers use a variety of instructional materials including State

adopted Treasure’s Curriculum, Making Words, Step Up to Writing, Thinking Maps, a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction buddy reading, silent reading, Barton Reading and Spelling program, Read Naturally, and Moby Max.

Teachers create a rich literary environment where students are exposed to vocabulary and discuss content from a wide variety of publications and genres. Students also receive direct instruction in grammar, spelling, vocabulary, handwriting and keyboarding. Research projects incorporate the analysis and comparison of informational print and digital texts as students choose appropriate materials/information and utilize resources to broaden knowledge and provide evidence to support their ideas.

### **Math**

The current CCSS for mathematics emphasize practice of mathematical skills in a real world context, promoting the mastery of math content and furthering the development of mathematical problem solving strategies. Mathematics instruction focuses on mathematical reasoning and problem solving.

K – 5<sup>th</sup> grades use the Bridges Math Program – Bridges is a comprehensive K–5 curriculum that equips teachers to fully implement the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics in a manner that is rigorous, coherent, engaging, and accessible to all learners.

The curriculum focuses on developing students’ deep understanding of mathematical concepts, proficiency with key skills, and ability to solve complex problems. Bridges blends direct instruction, structured investigation, and open exploration. It taps into the intelligence and strengths of all students by presenting material that is as linguistically, visually, and kinesthetically rich as it is mathematically powerful.

The Middle School (6<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grades) has adopted College Preparatory Mathematics (“CPM”) and uses the full program with all accompanying materials. Teachers have been trained in program usage and supplement with other materials as necessary to further real world experiences and mastery.

### **Science**

The scientific method and inquiry-based teaching practices that allow students to act as independent learners are key components of our program. The wealth of computer-based relevant and timely information, coupled with scientific modeling and simulations, provide 21st century learners with a robust and challenging content area. Engineering concepts are introduced as early as kindergarten in conjunction with science in order to instill innovation and creativity.

### **Social Studies**

Teachers create engaging lessons using a range of supplementary and state adopted resources. Thematic units are created and used to teach important concepts in this area. Students make connections between what life was like in the past compared to life in the present. Different cultures are studied as well as historical figures and their contributions throughout the ages. They also learn how geography is integral to the study of human civilization. Students learn how to critically examine texts, search for clues and compare information coming from two different sources.

## **The Arts**

The goal of our arts education program is to help children achieve a better understanding of themselves and their world through the visual, musical, and dramatic arts. While the emphasis is on the creative process, lessons are woven with multicultural explorations. In our world's ever increasing reliance on visual imagery and technology, building visual literacy is imperative for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner. Some of the opportunities include:

- Music twice a month
- Art twice a month
- Violin for older students
- For Middle School students we offer the following fine arts electives
  - Drama
  - Band
  - Violin
  - Photography

## **Health and Physical Education**

An essential characteristic of the school's educational programs will be the continued emphasis on health and development of the whole child. To promote health and wellness, the school will continue to have a nutrition and garden program to focus on making healthy food choices.

Our garden continues to grow under the care of Ernie Dalton, Mark Koch and other volunteers. Students can choose to work in the garden at recess weeding, planting and harvesting vegetables and fruit. Ernie and Mark also work in the afternoon with several classes teaching lessons on planting, how crops grow, nutrition and healthy eating. We even cultivate our own 1/4 acre pumpkin patch that provides students pumpkins in October.

Along with this, a physical education program will provide them with the skills to help create a healthy, active lifestyle. Physical activity is designed to meet the individual physical needs of all students. Building self-esteem, promoting social skills, increasing team work, emphasizing sportsmanship and improving physical coordination are all built into our program,

## **Charter School Goals and Actions to Achieve the Eight State Priorities**

Please see the section "Goals, Actions and Measurable Outcomes Aligned with the Eight State Priorities" in Element 2 of the charter for a description of the Charter School's annual goals to be achieved in the Eight State Priorities schoolwide and for all pupil subgroups, as described in Education Code Section 52060(d), and specific annual actions to achieve those goals, in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii).

## **Additional Charter School Goals**

Students attending Nord Country School will 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 will have a well-founded understanding of the interdependence among people and will have the capacity to approach the world with compassion and respect.

It is our goal to develop proficiency in the Common Core State Standards in English/Language Arts and Mathematics, Next Generation Science Standards, and California content standards in History/Social Science.

Basic intellectual skills will include the ability to think clearly and creatively, to communicate orally and in writing, to find and use information, to problem solve and to develop mathematical reasoning. Students will learn to accept challenges and learn from their mistakes. They will acquire the capacity to work hard, independently and in groups, and to contribute to their community.

- **Cognitive Processing**  
Students will demonstrate complex thinking skills by identifying, accessing, integrating and using available resources and information. They will be able to reason, make good decisions, and solve complex problems in a variety of contexts based upon content knowledge, and by articulating their thinking process.
- **Communication**  
Students will exhibit effective communication through listening, speaking, reading and writing in a critical, reflective, and responsible fashion using a variety of media, including the arts. Student will have an awareness and understanding of multiple perspectives.
- **Social & Emotional Well Being**  
Students will exhibit healthy self-esteem by expressing respect for others and making positive choices in interpersonal relationships. Students will develop skills in respect, honesty, teamwork, perseverance, and kindness.
- **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 will be taught why a healthy lifestyle is important to maintain.

## **Serving Special Populations**

### **Plan for Special Education**

NCS is committed to high levels of academic success for all students, including students with disabilities. NCS complies with all applicable State and Federal Laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ("Section 504"), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA").

In 2009 Nord Country School was approved by the Butte County Special Education Local Plan Area ("SELPA") to be an independent LEA for Special Education purposes pursuant with Education Code 47641(a). NCS complies with all state and federal laws related to the provision of special education instruction and related services and follow all SELPA policies and procedures. NCS will participate in the state's quality assurance process for special education

(i.e., verification reviews, coordinated compliance self-reviews, complaints monitoring, procedural safeguards, and the local plan). The Charter School will participate in internal validation reviews.

The Charter School shall be solely responsible for its compliance with Section 504 and the ADA. The facilities used by NCS are accessible to all students with disabilities.

The Charter School may request related services (e.g. Speech, Occupational Therapy, Adapted P.E., Nursing, and Transportation) from the SELPA, subject to SELPA approval and availability. The Charter School may also provide related services by hiring credentialed or licensed providers through private agencies or independent contractors.

### **Services for Students Under the “IDEA”**

The Charter School shall provide special education instruction and related services in accordance with the IDEA, Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and practices of the SELPA.

The Charter School will provide services for special education students enrolled in the Charter School. The Charter School will follow SELPA policies and procedures in seeking out, identifying and serving students who may qualify for special education programs and services; in responding to record requests and parent complaints; and in maintaining the confidentiality of pupil records.

The Charter School agrees to promptly respond to all District or SELPA inquiries, to comply with reasonable District or SELPA directives, and to allow the District or SELPA access to Charter School students, staff, facilities, equipment and records as required to fulfill all District obligations under this Agreement or imposed by law.

### **Identification and Referral for Assessment**

The Charter School shall have the responsibility to identify, refer, and work cooperatively in locating Charter School students who have or may have exceptional needs that qualify them to receive special education services. The Charter School will implement SELPA policies and procedures to ensure timely identification and referral of students who have, or may have, such exceptional needs. A pupil shall be referred for special education only after the resources of the regular education program have been considered, and where appropriate, utilized.

A referral may also be made by a parent, guardian, foster parent, teacher or other service provider of the student, consistent with the limitations contained in Federal law. The referral process includes an examination of pre-screening data (e.g. test scores, teacher observations, grades, response to initial interventions) as well as Student Study Team (SST) results and observations. If the SST team concludes that assessment is warranted, NCS will obtain written permission from the student's parent or legal guardian in order to provide a formal assessment.

The term “assessments” shall have the same meaning as the term “evaluation” in the IDEA, as provided in Section 1414, Title 20 of the United States Code. The Charter School will determine what assessments, if any, are necessary and arrange for such assessments for referred or eligible

students in accordance with applicable law. The Charter School shall obtain parent/guardian consent to assess Charter School students.

### **Staffing**

All special education services at the Charter School will be delivered by individuals or agencies qualified to provide special education services as required by the California Education Code and the IDEA. Charter School staff shall participate in District or SELPA in-service training relating to special education.

The Charter School will be responsible for the hiring, training, and employment of site staff necessary to provide special education services to its students, including, without limitation, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and resource specialists. The Charter School shall ensure that all special education staff hired or contracted by the Charter School is qualified pursuant to SELPA policies, as well as meet all legal requirements. The Charter School shall be responsible for the hiring, training, and employment of itinerant staff necessary to provide special education services to Charter School students, including, without limitation, speech therapists, occupational therapists, behavioral therapists, and psychologists.

NCS employs its own Resource teacher who works closely with the classroom teachers to make sure each student is receiving access to the core curriculum and that their accommodations and modifications are being met in the classroom. This teacher coordinates the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and the corresponding services to those students. Also employed are a part time Speech teacher and an Adaptive PE teacher. Currently, NCS currently contracts with Chico Country Day School for School Psychology services.

### **Notification and Coordination**

The Charter School shall follow SELPA policies as they apply to all SELPA schools implementing special education services. The Charter School will adopt and implement policies relating to all special education issues and referrals.

### **Development and Implementation of IEP**

The Charter School understands that the decisions regarding eligibility, goals/objectives, program, services, placement, and exit from special education shall be the decision of the IEP team, pursuant to the IEP process. Programs, services and placements shall be provided to all eligible Charter School students in accordance with the policies, procedures and requirements of the SELPA and State and Federal law.

The Charter School shall be responsible for all school site implementation of the IEP. As part of this responsibility, the Charter School shall provide parents with timely reports on the student's progress as provided in the student's IEP at least as frequently as report cards are provided for the Charter School's non-special education students. The Charter School shall also be responsible for providing all curriculum, classroom materials, classroom modifications, and assistive technology.

Each student who is referred for formal assessment will have an IEP that documents assessment results and determines eligibility for education services. If the student is eligible for services

NCS will provide those services in accordance with the student's IEP. These services will be provided in the least restrictive environment.

The Charter School shall arrange and notice the necessary IEP meetings. IEP team membership shall be in compliance with state and federal law. Every student at NCS with an IEP will have an IEP team that oversees the implementation of the plan and monitors progress of the IEP. IEP team membership shall be in compliance with state and federal law. The Charter School shall be responsible for having the following individuals in attendance at the IEP meetings: the Principal and/or the Charter School designated representative with appropriate administrative authority as required by the IDEA; the student's special education teacher; the student's general education teacher if the student is or may be in a regular education classroom; the student, if appropriate; and other Charter School representatives who are knowledgeable about the regular education program at the Charter School and/or about the student. The Charter School shall arrange for the attendance or participation of all other necessary staff that may include, but are not limited to, an appropriate administrator to comply with the requirements of the IDEA, a speech therapist, psychologist, resource specialist, and behavior specialist; and shall document the IEP meeting and provide notice of parental rights.

If required, NCS will provide an interpreter to ensure non-English speaking families understand and can fully participate in the process. If the parent is unable to attend, Charter School personnel will ensure that the parent is informed and involved in the process through phone or email communications.

### **IEP Review**

An IEP review will be performed in accordance to state and federal law, meeting at least once a year to ensure IEP goals are being met.

### **Placements of New Charter School Students**

The Charter School shall comply with Education Code Section 56325 with regard to students transferring into the Charter School within the academic school year. In accordance with Education Code Section 56325(a)(1), for students who enroll in the Charter School from another school district within the state, but outside of the SELPA with a current IEP within the same academic year, the Charter School shall provide the pupil with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the previously approved IEP, in consultation with the parent, for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days, by which time Charter School shall adopt the previously approved IEP or shall develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP that is consistent with federal and state law.

In accordance with Education Code Section 56325(a)(2), in the case of an individual with exceptional needs who has an IEP and transfers into the Charter School from a district operated program under the same special education local plan area of the Charter School within the same academic year, the Charter School shall continue, without delay, to provide services comparable to those described in the existing approved IEP, unless the parent and the Charter School agree to develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP that is consistent with federal and state law.

For students transferring to the Charter School with an IEP from outside of California during the same academic year, the Charter School shall provide the pupil with a free appropriate public



education, including services comparable to those described in the previously approved IEP in consultation with the parents, until the Charter School conducts an assessment pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of Section 1414 of Title 20 of the United States Code, if determined to be necessary by the Charter School, and develops a new IEP, if appropriate that is consistent with federal and state law.

### **Non-Public Placements/Non-Public Agencies**

The Charter School shall be solely responsible for selecting, contracting with, and overseeing all non-public schools and non-public agencies used to serve special education students.

### **Non-discrimination**

It is understood and agreed that all children will have access to the Charter School and no student shall be denied admission nor counseled out of the Charter School due to the nature, extent, or severity of his/her disability or due to the student's request for, or actual need for, special education services.

### **Parent/Guardian Concerns and Complaints**

The Charter School shall adopt policies for responding to parental concerns or complaints related to special education services. The Charter School shall receive any concerns raised by parents/guardians regarding related services and rights.

The Charter School's designated representative shall investigate as necessary, respond to, and address the parent/guardian concern or complaint.

### **Due Process Hearings**

The Charter School may initiate a due process hearing or request for mediation with respect to a student enrolled in Charter School if it determines such action is legally necessary or advisable. In the event that the parents/guardians file for a due process hearing, or request mediation, the Charter School shall defend the case.

### **SELPA Representation**

The Charter School understands that it shall represent itself at all SELPA meetings.

### **Funding**

The Charter School understands that it will be subject to the allocation plan of the SELPA.

### **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**

NCS recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability, shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program of the Charter School. Any student who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity including, but not limited to, learning is eligible for accommodation by the Charter school.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Principal of NCS and shall include parents/guardians, the student (where appropriate), and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations. The 504 team will

review the student's existing records, including academic, social and behavioral records and is responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate. If the student has already been evaluated under the IDEA but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504.

The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team, which will evaluate the nature of the student's disability and the impact upon the student's education. This evaluation will include consideration of any behaviors that interfere with regular participation in the educational program and/or activities. The 504 team may also consider the following information in its evaluation:

- Tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and are administered by trained personnel.
- Tests and other evaluation materials including those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.
- Tests are selected and administered to ensure that when a test is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

The final determination of whether the student will or will not be identified as a person with a disability is made by the 504 team in writing and notice is given in writing to the parent or guardian of the student in their primary language along with notice of the procedural safeguards available to them. If during the evaluation, the 504 team obtains information indicating possible eligibility of the student for special education per the IDEA, a referral for assessment under the IDEA will be made by the 504 team.

If the student is found by the 504 team to have a disability under Section 504, the 504 team shall be responsible for determining what, if any, accommodations or services are needed to ensure that the student receives a free and appropriate public education ("FAPE"). In developing the 504 Plan, the 504 team shall consider all relevant information utilized during the evaluation of the student, drawing upon a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, assessments conducted by the Charter School's professional staff.

The 504 Plan shall describe the Section 504 disability and any program accommodations, modifications or services that may be necessary.

All 504 team participants, parents, guardians, teachers and any other participants in the student's education, including substitutes and tutors, must have a copy of each student's 504 Plan. The site administrator will ensure that teachers include 504 Plans with lesson plans for short-term substitutes and that he/she review the 504 Plan with a long-term substitute. A copy of the 504 Plan shall be maintained in the student's file. Each student's 504 Plan will be reviewed at least once per year to determine the appropriateness of the Plan, needed modifications to the plan, and continued eligibility.

## **Plan for Serving English Learners**

English learners are faced with the challenge of having to simultaneously learn a second language and the core curriculum. Often times they have not fully developed sufficient English skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing to master standards at their grade level. Many steps are taken to provide additional support for these students so they can be successful.

Nord Country School will meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners (EL) as they pertain to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, EL and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, re-classification to English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirements. Nord Country School will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding ELs and the rights of students and parents.

## **Home Language Survey**

Nord Country School will administer the home language survey upon a student's initial enrollment into the charter school.

## **CELDT Testing**

All students who indicate that their home language other than English will be tested using the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) within 30 days of initial enrollment<sup>1</sup> and at least annually thereafter between July 1 and October 31<sup>st</sup> until re-designated as fluent English proficient.

The Charter School will notify all parents of its responsibility for CELDT testing and of CELDT results within thirty days of receiving results from the publisher. The CELDT shall be used to fulfill the requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for annual English proficiency testing.

All references in the charter petition to the CELDT will be understood by the Charter School and the District to mean the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), when it replaces the CELDT.

## **Reclassification Procedures**

The Charter School utilizes multiple criteria in determining whether to classify a student as proficient in English including, but not limited to, the following:

- Assessment of language proficiency using CELDT test scores
- Participation of the pupil's classroom teachers and any other certificated staff with direct responsibility for teaching or placement decisions of the pupil to evaluate the student's curriculum mastery.
- Parental opinion and consultation, achieved through notice to parents or guardians of the language reclassification and placement including a description of the reclassification process and the parents' opportunity to participate, and encouragement of the participation of parents or guardians in the reclassification

<sup>1</sup> The thirty-day requirement applies to students who are entering a California public school for the first time or for students who have not yet been CELDT tested. All other students who have indicated a home language other than English will continue with annual CELDT testing based upon the date last tested at the prior school of enrollment.

procedure including seeking their opinion and consultation during the reclassification process.

- Comparison of the pupil's performance in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance in basic skills based upon the performance of English proficient pupils of the same age that demonstrate to others that the pupil is sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively in a curriculum designed for pupils of the same age whose native language is English.

### **Strategies or English Learner and Intervention**

Teachers at Nord Country School will continue to use specialized instructional strategies that are designed to help ELs such as Guided Language Acquisition Development ("GLAD") and Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English ("SDAIE"). Thematic instruction will allow for structured English immersion where the curriculum and presentation is designed for EL students.

Nord Country School's low student-teacher ratios allow for more focused instruction for EL students and for more opportunities for intensive interventions where appropriate, including increased opportunities for varied type of groupings.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of Program Effectiveness**

The Charter School evaluates the effectiveness of its education program for ELs by:

- Adhering to Charter School-adopted academic benchmarks by language proficiency level and years in program to determine adequate yearly progress.
- Monitoring teacher qualifications and the use of appropriate instructional strategies based on program design.
- Monitoring student identification and placement
- Monitoring availability of adequate resources.

### **Plan for Serving Academically High Achieving Students**

Universal screening, teacher assessment information as well as informal classroom observations are used to identify high achieving students.

Nord Country School supports high achieving students in expanding their understanding of grade level standards by providing challenging activities to progress beyond grade level content standards, and to pursue special interests through genius hour projects. To engage and challenge each student at his or her level, the Charter School will use one or more of the following approaches:

- Modification of instructional activities
- Assigning challenging activities/projects
- Opportunities for students to work in small groups with higher level curriculum
- Opportunities to serve as cross-age tutors
- Providing opportunities for higher order thinking

## **Plan for Serving Academically Low Achieving Students**

Universal screening is employed beginning in Kindergarten and given to all newly admitted students in order to detect possible learning difficulties early on. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (“DIBELS”) is given three times a year. If a student scores extremely low on the DIBELS test, the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processes (“CTOPP”) is given to better determine the areas of struggle. The results of these tests are reviewed in order to identify low achieving students and then a determination is made regarding which intervention will be the most beneficial.

Nord Country School has developed a plan for achieving students that is modeled after the Response to Intervention (“RTI”) framework. Our goal is to meet the needs of all our students through the use of a three-tiered system of support.

### **Tier 1: Prevention**

Tier 1 includes high quality classroom instruction delivered by qualified teachers, and regular assessments of all students to monitor their progress toward reaching grade level benchmarks. Teachers are trained to address different learning styles of their students.

### **Tier II: Identification and Selected Interventions**

Students who are not achieving at or above expected grade level are identified in the classroom and referred to the Intervention Team for more refined assessment (see assessment list in Element 3). After assessments, the student’s specific deficits are addressed with the correlating program to best support their needs.

#### **Selected Interventions:**

Selected interventions are implemented by our intervention staff, including our Resource Specialist Teacher. Interventions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- On Cloud 9 – math
- Times Tales – math
- Seeing Stars
- LiPS
- Barton Reading & Spelling Program
- Read Naturally
- SIPPS
- Visualizing & Verbalizing

### **Tier III: Student Success Team**

The Student Success Team (“SST”) explores concrete and possible avenues to support the student’s individual needs. Strengths and concerns regarding the student are discussed. The SST then develops strategies to help support the learning needs of the child including possible referral to special education and the potential of an IEP assessment. SST meetings may be referred by the parent, teacher or administration for those students with significant behavioral or academic issues.

## ELEMENT 2: Measurable Pupil Outcomes

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*Governing Law: “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. Pupil outcomes shall include outcomes that address increases in pupil academic achievement both school wide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school, as that term is defined in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 47607. The pupil outcomes shall align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school.” [Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(B)]*

### **Goals, Actions and Measurable Outcomes Aligned with the Eight State Priorities**

Pursuant to Education Code Sections 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii) and 47605(b)(5)(B), the Charter School’s annual goals, actions and measurable outcomes, both schoolwide and for each subgroup of pupils, which address and align with the Eight State Priorities as described in Education Code Section 52060(d), can be found in the Charter School’s Local Control Accountability Plan (“LCAP”). Each of these goals addresses the unique needs of all students attending the Charter School, including our numerically significant student subgroups. The metrics associated with these goals help the Charter School to ensure that these specific subgroups are making satisfactory progress, and are provided with necessary additional supports made possible by additional funds from the Local Control Funding Formula.

As of July 1, 2015 our school goals are:

**Goal #1:** NCS will increase overall achievement in core academic programs (*state priority #1 basic conditions of learning, #2 implementation of State Standards, #4 pupil achievement, and #8 other pupil outcomes*).

Outcomes for all students will include:

- The number of students scoring meets or exceeds standards will increase by 2% over 2014 – 2015 benchmark scores
- Every month chronic absenteeism will remain under 4%
- Common Core state standards in ELA and Math will be used in all classrooms
- Professional development will be provided for all teachers in NGSS strategies
- Based on previous year’s evaluation, Common Core materials will be supplemented

We will achieve these outcomes by:

- Reviewing the ongoing needs of curriculum every trimester and purchasing Common Core curriculum when needed
- Continuing Universal screening for all students using DIBELS and Moby Max
- Monitoring individual progress for students in interventions every 6 weeks

- Retaining intervention aides
- Retaining specialized ELA teacher
- Continuing to work with the Charter SARB board
- Continuing staff professional development
- Staff development in Next Generation Science Standards
- Providing bussing to all students

**Goals #2:** NCS will use a campus wide PBIS program to provide a safe, caring and positive climate where students, staff and parents feel safe, valued, and connected (*state priority #3 parental involvement, #5 pupil engagement, #6 school climate & #8 other pupil achievement*).

Outcomes will include:

- Tier II and Tier III supports will be maintained for students in need
- Major referrals will be kept at or below previous years number
- Suspension rate will be maintained at 5% or under
- A safe facility will be maintained
- At least 97% of parents will feel connected to NCS
- PBIS meetings will be held at least once per trimester
- Parents will have access to a portal to monitor their student's academic progress

We will achieve these outcomes by:

- Having continued collaboration and staff wide training
- Maintaining access to school counseling services
- Using 2<sup>nd</sup> Step curriculum to foster positive character development and give students strategies to self-regulate their emotions
- Conducting quarterly facility inspections
- Retaining the Student Information System
- Adding a school wide calling system

The Charter School shall annually update and develop the LCAP in accordance with Education Code Section 47606.5 and shall use the LCAP template adopted by the State Board of Education. The Charter School reserves the right to establish additional and/or amend school-specific goals and corresponding assessments throughout the duration of the charter through the annual LCAP update. The Charter School shall submit the LCAP to the District and County Superintendent of Schools annually on or before July 1, as required by Education Code Section 47604.33.

The LCAP and any revisions necessary to implement the LCAP shall not be considered a material revision to the charter, and shall be maintained by the Charter School at the school site.

*See Appendix E for the entire LCAP*

## **ELEMENT 3: Methods of Measurement**

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*Governing Law: “The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured. To the extent practicable, the method for measuring pupil outcomes for state priorities shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a school accountability report card.” Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(C)*

Nord Country School uses multiple measures of student performance to monitor student progress toward achieving grade level standards. Assessment data includes mandatory state assessments (CAASPP, Physical fitness and/or CELDT), standards-based report cards, interim benchmark assessments, teacher observations, portfolios and all other assessment tools. These assessments will be combined to determine student growth. Assessments are formative and used in progress monitoring, as well as summative to measure student attainment of benchmark and year end grade level standards. Nord Country School will conduct the student assessments required pursuant to Education Code Sections 60605 and 60851 and any other statewide standards authorized in statute or student assessments as applicable to students in non-charter public schools.

Our goal is to create a Charter School that motivates and assists all students in meeting proficiency on state academic standards. The Charter School will ensure alignment of the curriculum in order to ensure success for all students in meeting the requirements of state mandated assessments. These standards will serve as a guide in developing goals and in making budgetary decisions.

The methods for measuring pupil outcomes are consistent with the way the Charter School will report information on its school accountability report card (“SARC”). Other assessments may be used that are not reported on the school accountability report card but which the Charter School will use to gain a more complete picture of student progress and achievement.

Our assessment methods are based on the following beliefs:

- In order to have a complete picture of a student’s growth, differentiated assessment methods must be used. Assessments for individual students should focus on individual mastery of specific content standards and learning objectives.
- Identifying what we expect students to know and be able to do with specific information is a vital piece of all assessment methods.
- Assessment should promote and support reflection and self-evaluation on the part of students, staff, and parents.

### **Specific Assessments**

Multiple measures of student performance are chosen to accurately monitor student progress toward achieving grade level standards and benchmarks. Assessments may also be given to provide a pretest baseline or as a screening tool. Student assessments should promote reflection and self-evaluation on the part of students, staff, and parents. Below are the assessments used at Nord Country School:



- **Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processes (CTOPP)**  
 The Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processes assesses a student’s ability to manipulate sounds and their basic phonemic awareness skills. Through a battery of skills tests, one can determine isolated phonological weaknesses a student may possess. This test is administered to all kindergarteners at the beginning of the year and to other students as needed. The data from the results determines early intervention needs.
- **Barton Screener Tool**  
 The Barton Screener is an assessment given to students who are identified as under-performing in reading. The Barton Screener assesses the student’s phonemic awareness skills. The results from this test dictate the appropriate intervention to be administered to that child. If the child passes, they will begin with the Barton System. If the child does not pass, they will begin using the Lindamood Phonemic Sequencing (LiPS) program.
- **ESGI (Educational Software for Guiding Instruction)**  
 ESGI is a computer based benchmark tracking program. This program is used in kindergarten and first grade to record trimester benchmark standards in language arts and math. Using simulated flash cards, the program is able to chart and graph individual student and whole class progress.
- **Accelerated Reader (AR)**  
 Accelerated Reader is a school wide progress monitoring system to determine a student’s reading level and monitor the practicing of reading. One component of the program is a comprehensive leveling test which provides a suggested reading level and range of independent book levels. This is also used to set reading goals for the child. The other main component is individual comprehension tests on stories read. The data from this can determine their general comprehension at a particular reading level.
- **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)**  
 The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They are designed to be one minute fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. DIBELS are comprised of seven measures to function as indicators of phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. We screen all students three (3) times a year.
- **Basic Phonics Skills Test III (BPST)**  
 The Basic Phonics Skills Test III is a phonics assessment that consists of the recognition of letter sounds, specific phoneme patterns, and the blending of single syllable and polysyllabic words out of context. The BPST is a tool for teachers to isolate the phonics sounds a student can identify and blend successfully. This assessment is given on a trimester basis in grades one through three.
- **Johnston Spelling Inventory**  
 This inventory is designed to assess the word knowledge students bring to their reading and spelling. Students are given a spelling test consisting of 26 unpracticed words. The words contain specific spelling conventions. This test is administered to first and second

graders at the completion of each trimester and the data is used to drive spelling instruction.

- **Writing Assessment**

School wide, the students are administered a writing assessment to evaluate their use of writing conventions, content and use of genre structure at their particular grade level. Their samples are then scored against a rubric specified for each test. The students complete a formalized writing assessment three times a year, two of which are saved in their Cumulative File.

- **Report Cards**

Our report cards are standards based and contain data from many of the assessments given. First trimester report cards will continue to be discussed with parents during individual conferences in the fall. At the second and third trimesters the Charter School's standards based report cards will be sent home to parents.

- **Moby Max**

MobyMax's adaptive curriculum creates an individualized education plan for each student, allowing gifted students to progress as quickly as they like while simultaneously ensuring that remedial students get the extra instruction they need.

## **Reporting and Other Uses of Data**

The School Accountability Report Card (SARC) is developed and reviewed each year, with assessment results being a primary focus area. Among other relevant areas of focus, the SARC includes outcome objectives, grade-level improvements, and school-wide attendance goals.

Survey results from parents are reviewed annually to determine the level of satisfaction parents have with the current educational program. Standardized testing data, along with formative and additional summative results, is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Teachers meet with parents both informally as well as scheduled parent teacher conferences held in November and on an as-needed basis throughout the year. A standards based report card offers specific feedback in a comprehensive manner on the areas of strength and growth for each student. Each standard area report details corresponding benchmarks and provides a summative rubric score for each benchmark. In addition to academic performance outcomes, the trimester report cards include assessment of each student's social skills and behavior. Newsletters, website, board meetings and School Site Council meetings also provide useful feedback to parents.

## **Continuous School Improvement**

The Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) will be reviewed and modified each year in compliance with applicable state law. The LCAP is a tool NCS uses to help monitor progress towards required objectives. The processes used for development, review, and submittal of the charter's LCAP include the relevant deadlines, state priorities, stakeholder input and formatting required as part of the reporting process. NCS will comply with the applicable law and compliance requirements.

## **ELEMENT 4: Governance Structure**

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*Governing Law: “The governance structure of the Charter School including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the Charter School to ensure parental involvement”. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(D).*

### **Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation**

Nord Country School is a directly funded independent charter school and is operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation, pursuant to California law.

Nord Country School operates autonomously from the District, with the exception of the supervisory oversight as required by statute and other contracted services as negotiated between the District and NCS. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), the District shall not be liable for the debts and obligations of NCS, operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation, or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by NCS as long as the District has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law.

*See Appendix F for the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws*

### **Board of Directors**

The Charter School is governed by the Board of Directors (“Board”) of Nord Country School in accordance with its adopted Bylaws, which shall be consistent with the terms of this charter.

The Board of Directors will be composed of a broad cross-section of the school community and the community at-large, including parents, professionals, and community leaders. These members attend training in effective board practices including Brown Act and Conflict of Interest conducted by a legal professional.

The number of people serving on the Board of Directors and the length of terms will be specified in the NCS Bylaws. Currently, the number of directors shall be no less than seven (7) and no more than nine (9). The current Board is composed of

- Four (4) Parent Representatives elected by Nord Country School’s parent community then appointed by the Board
- Three (3) Community Representatives elected by the community then appointed by the Board.
- One (1) Classroom teacher from Nord Country School selected by the teaching staff at a regularly scheduled meeting then appointed by the board.
- One (1) Educational Representative from the field of education, current or retired, who is not an employee of Nord Country School, nominated by board committee and elected by the Board.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47604(b), the District may appoint a representative to sit on the Board of Directors. If the District chooses to do so, the Charter School may appoint an

additional community member to ensure that the Board is maintained with an odd number of directors.

### **Board Meetings and Duties**

The Board meets regularly and in accordance with the Brown Act. The Board is responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of Nord Country School including, but not limited to, the following:

- Hiring and evaluating the Principal and Chief Business Officer of the School.
- Approving and monitoring the implementation of general policies of NCS, including personnel policies for career growth and compensation of staff.
- Developing and monitoring an operational business plan that focuses on student achievement.
- Approving and monitoring the NCS annual budget
- Acting as a fiscal agent.
- Contracting with an external auditor for an annual financial audit according to generally accepted accounting practices.
- Establishing an operational steering committee of parents, educators, and community business leaders.
- Monitoring of student achievement.
- Developing of Board policy and procedures.
- Reviewing of requests for out of state or overnight field trips.
- Participating in the dispute resolution procedure and complaint procedures when necessary.
- Approving of charter amendments.
- Approving of annual audits.
- Approving of personnel discipline
- Creating of committees as needed, including a personnel committee and an audit committee.

The NCS Board of Directors also addresses personnel issues related to the Principal. Personnel issues pertaining to other employees of NCS shall be addressed by the Principal.

The Board may initiate and carry on any program or activity or may otherwise act in a manner which is not in conflict with or inconsistent with or preempted by any law and which is not in conflict with this charter or the purposes for which schools are established.

The Charter School shall comply with the Brown Act.

The Charter School has adopted a Conflict of Interest Code that complies with the Corporations Code conflict of interest rules, and which shall be updated with any charter school-specific conflict of interest laws or regulations.

*See Appendix G for the Conflict of Policy*

The Board may execute any powers delegated by law to it and shall discharge any duty imposed by law upon it and may delegate to an employee of the Charter School any of those duties with

the exception of budget approval or revision, approval of the fiscal audit and performance report, and the adoption of Board policies. The Board however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated. Such delegation will:

- Be in writing;
- Specify the entity designated;
- Describe in specific terms the authority of the Board of Directors being delegated, any conditions on the delegated authority or its exercise and the beginning and ending dates of the delegation; and
- Require an affirmative vote of a majority of Board members.

## **The Principal**

The Principal is the leader of Nord Country School. The Principal ensures that the curriculum is implemented in order to maximize student-learning experiences. The Principal reports directly to the Board. The Principal is responsible for the orderly operation of NCS and the supervision of all other employees at the school.

The Principal performs assigned tasks as directed by the NCS Governing Board and is required to undertake some or all of the tasks detailed below. These tasks may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Ensure NCS enacts its mission
- Supervise and evaluate teachers and staff
- Communicate and report to the NCS Governing Board
- Oversee school finances to ensure financial stability
- Serve or appoint a designee to serve on any committees
- Interview and recommend employee hiring, promotion, discipline, and/or dismissal
- Ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal laws
- Take responsible steps to secure full and regular attendance at school of the students enrolled in accordance with policies established by the Governing Board
- Complete and submit required documents as requested or required by the charter and/or Governing Board and/or District
- Identify the staffing needs of NCS and encourage, support and offer staff development as needed
- Ensure that appropriate evaluation techniques are used for both students and staff
- Establish and maintain a system to handle organizational tasks such as student records, teacher records, teacher credentialing information, contemporaneous attendance logs, purchasing budgets, and timetables
- Hire qualified substitute teachers as needed
- Ensure the security of the school building
- Promote NCS in the community and promote positive public relations and interact effectively with media
- Provide all necessary financial reports as required for proper attendance reporting
- Present independent fiscal audit to the Charter School Board of Directors and, after review by the Board of Directors, submit audit to the District Board of Education and the County Superintendent of Schools, the State Controller and the California Department of Education;

- Manage student discipline, and as necessary participate in the suspension and expulsion process;
- Participate in IEP meetings as necessary.

## **Parental Involvement**

Parents are a vital and important resource to the Charter School. Their participation as partners in the educational 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-Teacher Organization provides support for academic programs by organizing volunteer and service activities. These activities will focus on fostering community spirit, facilitating the transition of new families into the Charter 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 Charter School, helping their student(s) with homework, attending parent meetings, and assisting in the fundraising activities of the Charter School. Sensitive to the busy schedules of parents, staff members and the PTO will explore ways-in which all parents can contribute to the program.

*See Appendix H for Parent- Student Handbook*

## **School Site Council**

Nord Country School has a School Site Council comprised of teachers, parents and classified staff that works with the Administrator to develop, review and evaluate school improvement programs including proposed expenditures of funds allocated to the school through the Consolidated Application. The members of the site council are elected by their peers.

## **ELEMENT 5: Employee Qualifications**

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*Governing Law: The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the Charter School. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(E)*

### **Administrator Qualifications**

The Administrators of Nord Country School should possess leadership abilities, a comprehensive educational vision that is consistent with NCS' mission and educational program, skill in hiring and supervising excellent teachers, technology and data-analysis experience, and, if possible, business and legal experience.

The minimum criteria for administration candidates include:

- A B.A. degree or its equivalent,
- Relevant educational experience after college,
- Experience supervising certificated personnel
- Having positive references from the most recent places of employment, college or graduate school.

### **Chief Business Officer Qualifications**

A Bachelor's of Science Degree in a Business Administration field is required. Related business experience is preferred for this position. The Chief Business Officer will possess the ability to complete and present complicated financial and attendance reporting to parents, constituents, staff and board members in a positive, professional manner both verbally and in writing. The Chief Business Officer will be responsible for all business reports.

### **Office Manager Qualifications**

The Office Manager is responsible for overall front office activities. They should possess experience with administrative functions including operating standard office equipment, utilizing pertinent software applications, planning and managing projects and preparing and maintaining accurate records. Specific knowledge-based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include: having business telephone etiquette; understanding concepts of grammar and punctuation; being able to work with constant interruptions; being able to resolve conflict and establish and maintain effective working relationships.

As acting nurse aide the candidate shall also possess CPR and first aid certifications.

### **Teacher Qualifications**

Nord Country School teachers adhere to California Education Code Section 47605(l), which states that, "Teachers in charter schools shall hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold." These qualifications adhere to State Priority #1, sub priority A.

These documents shall be maintained on file at the charter school and are subject to periodic inspection by the chartering authority. It is the intent of the legislature that charter schools be given flexibility with regard to noncore, non-college preparatory courses.”

Nord Country School will focus on competency within the standards for the teaching profession. Teachers will also continue to:

- Integrate new, reliable research into methodology and curriculum as appropriate.
- Be able to be facilitators of learning rather than dispensers of knowledge and be sensitive to all students’ needs.
- Be creative and resourceful in their teaching method.
- Have a high level of commitment to the program and its philosophy.
- Have the ability to work collaboratively.
- Teachers will be flexible, resourceful and imaginative.

Credentials will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Principal.

Since the intent of the Legislature that charter schools be given flexibility with regard to noncore, non-college preparatory courses, NCS may also employ non-certificated instructional staff in any case where a prospective staff member has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience, and the demonstrated ability to work successfully in an instructional capacity.

### **Non-Certificated Qualifications**

Non-teaching employees, including office staff, maintenance staff, and paraprofessionals serve in support roles to keep the whole school operating efficiently. All non-certificated classified staff shall have a high school diploma or equivalent, go through a background/fingerprint check and have TB clearance. All staff will be able to relate to students, parents, and other staff in a positive and professional manner and communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing.

### **Aide Qualifications**

Aides shall possess experience working with students, preferably in a group setting. They will assist students in academic subjects, work effectively with students in classrooms and assist them in living skills. They will continue to assist in maintaining records and charts on individual students, attendance records, test scores and progress of student learning. All aides will be under the supervision of credentialed teachers.



## **ELEMENT 6: Health and Safety Procedures**

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*General Law: The procedures that the Charter School will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures will include the requirement that each employee of the Charter School will furnish it with a criminal record summary as described in Section 44237. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(F)*

In order to provide safety for all students and staff, the Charter School has adopted and implemented full health and safety policies and procedures and risk management policies at its school site in consultation with its insurance carriers and risk management experts. These policies are incorporated into the Charter School's student and staff handbooks and are reviewed on an ongoing basis by the School Principal and Board of Directors. The Charter School shall ensure that staff is trained annually on the health and safety policies.

The following is a summary of the health and safety policies of the Charter School:

### **Procedures for Background Checks**

Employees and contractors of the Charter School will be required to submit to a criminal background check and to furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Sections 44237 and 45125.1. Applicants for employment must submit two sets of fingerprints to the California Department of Justice for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. The Principal of the Charter School shall monitor compliance with this policy and report to the Charter School Board of Directors on a regular basis. The Board President shall monitor the fingerprinting and background clearance of the Principal. Volunteers who will volunteer outside of the direct supervision of a credentialed employee shall be fingerprinted and receive background clearance prior to volunteering.

### **Role of Staff as Mandated Child Abuse Reporters**

All employees will be mandated child abuse reporters and will follow all applicable reporting laws, the same policies and procedures used by the District. The Charter School shall provide mandated reporter training to all employees annually in accordance with Education Code Section 44691.

### **Tuberculosis Risk Assessment and Examination**

Employees and volunteers who have frequent or prolonged contact with students will be assessed and examined (if necessary) for tuberculosis prior to commencing employment and working with students as required by Education Code Section 49406.

### **Immunizations**

All enrolled students will be required to provide records documenting immunizations as is required at public schools pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 120325-120375, and Title 17, California Code of Regulations Sections 6000-6075. All rising 7<sup>th</sup> grade students must be immunized with a pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine booster.

## **Medication in School**

The Charter School will adhere to Education Code Section 49423 regarding administration of medication in school.

## **Vision, Hearing, and Scoliosis**

Students will be screened for vision, hearing and scoliosis. The Charter School will adhere to Education Code Section 49450 *et seq.* as applicable to the grade levels served by the Charter School.

## **Diabetes**

The Charter School will provide an information sheet regarding type 2 diabetes to the parent or guardian of incoming 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, pursuant to Education Code Section 49452.7. The information sheet shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

1. A description of type 2 diabetes.
2. A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes.
3. A recommendation that students displaying or possibly suffering from risk factors or warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes should be screened for type 2 diabetes.
4. A description of treatments and prevention methods of type 2 diabetes.
5. A description of the different types of diabetes screening tests available.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

The Charter School shall adhere to an Emergency Preparedness Handbook drafted specifically to the needs of the facility in conjunction with law enforcement and the Fire Marshal. This handbook shall include, but not be limited to the following responses: fire, flood, earthquake, terrorist threats, and hostage situations. If assuming a facility that was previously used as a school site, any existing emergency preparedness plan for the school site shall be used as a starting basis for updating the handbook for the Charter School.

Staff shall receive training in emergency response, including appropriate "first responder" training or its equivalent.

## **Blood Borne Pathogens**

The Charter School shall meet state and federal standards for dealing with blood borne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials in the work place. The Board shall establish a written infectious control plan designed to protect employees and students from possible infection due to contact with blood borne viruses, including human immunodeficiency virus ("HIV") and hepatitis B virus ("HBV").

Whenever exposed to blood or other bodily fluids through injury or accident, staff and students shall follow the latest medical protocol for disinfecting procedures.

## **Drug-, Alcohol-, and Smoke-Free Environment**

The Charter School shall function as a drug-, alcohol-, and smoke-free environment.

## **Facility Safety**

The Charter School shall comply with Education Code Section 47610 by utilizing facilities that are either compliant with the Field Act or facilities that are compliant with the California Building Standards Code. The Charter School agrees to test sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms annually at its facilities to ensure that they are maintained in an operable condition at all times. The Charter School shall conduct fire drills as required under Education Code Section 32001 and in conjunction with the District (if at District facilities).

## **CPR/First Aide Training**

It is important for all staff to be prepared for health emergencies that may occur at school. Therefore, every two years CPR and First Aide training is provided to all employees in August before school starts.

## **Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policies and Procedures**

The Charter School is committed to providing a school that is free from discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as any harassment based upon the actual or perceived characteristics of race, religion, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, national origin, ancestry, ethnic group identification, genetic information, age, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, childbirth or related medical conditions, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. The Charter School shall develop a comprehensive policy to prevent and immediately remediate any concerns about discrimination or harassment at the Charter School (including employee to employee, employee to student, and student to employee misconduct). Misconduct of this nature is very serious and will be addressed in accordance with the Charter School's anti-discrimination and harassment policies.

## **ELEMENT 7: Racial and Ethnic Balance**

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*Governing Law: 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. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(G)*

NCS has 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 general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction 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 informational 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.
- Conduct outreach in several areas of the district to reach prospective students and parents.

An open enrollment policy will continue to maintain a diversified balance among students of NCS. We welcome any student regardless of race or ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, gender expression, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic, that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics.

## **ELEMENT 8: Admission Requirements**

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*Governing Law: Admission requirements, if applicable. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(H)*

NCS will continue to be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies—and all other operations. NCS does not charge tuition and does not discriminate on the basis of any characteristic described in Education Code Section 220.

NCS shall admit all pupils who wish to attend NCS. No test or assessment shall be administered to students prior to acceptance and enrollment into NCS. NCS will comply with all laws establishing minimum and maximum age for public school attendance in charter schools. Admission, except in the case of public random drawing, shall not be determined by the place of residence of the pupil or his or her parent or legal guardian within the state.

The Charter School shall require students who wish to attend the Charter School to complete an application form. After admission, students will be required to submit an enrollment packet, which shall include the following:

1. Student registration form
2. Proof of immunization
3. Home Language Survey
4. Completion of Emergency Medical Information Form
5. Proof of minimum age requirements
6. Release of records

### **Public Random Drawing**

Applications will be accepted during a publicly advertised open enrollment period each year for enrollment in the following school year. Following the open enrollment period each year, applications shall be counted to determine whether any grade level has received more applications than availability. In the event that this happens, NCS will hold a public random drawing to determine admission for the impacted grade level, with the exception of existing students, who are guaranteed enrollment in the following school year.

Admission preference in the case of a public random lottery shall be given to the following students in the following order:

- Siblings of currently enrolled students
- Children of NCS staff members
- Students living in the Nord community
- Children of NCS alumni
- Any other residents of the District

At the conclusion of the public random drawing, all students who were not granted admission due to capacity shall be given the option to put their name on a waiting list according to their draw in the lottery. This wait list will allow students the option of enrollment in the case of an opening during the current school year. In no circumstance will a wait list carry over to the following school year.

Public random drawing rules, deadlines, dates and times will be communicated in the application form and on the Charter School's website. Public notice for the date and time of the public random drawing will also be posted once the application deadline has passed. The Charter School will conduct the lottery in the spring for enrollment in fall of that year.

## **ELEMENT 9: Independent Financial Audit**

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*Governing Law: The manner in which an annual, independent, financial audit shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority. Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(I)*

An annual independent financial audit of the books and records of the Charter School will be conducted as required by Education Code Sections 47605(b)(5)(I) and 47605(m). The books and records of the Charter School will be kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and as required by applicable law, the audit will employ generally accepted accounting procedures. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with applicable provisions within the California Code of Regulations governing audits of charter schools as published in the State Controller's K-12 Audit Guide.

The NCS Board of Directors will select an independent auditor and oversee the completion of the audit. The auditor will have, at a minimum, CPA and educational institution audit experience and will be approved by the State Controller on its published list as an educational audit provider. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars.

The annual audit will be completed and forwarded to the District, the County Superintendent of Schools, the State Controller and to the CDE by December 15th each year. The Principal, or the Principal's designee, along with an audit committee, if any, will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the Charter School Board of Directors with recommendations on how to resolve them. The Charter School Board 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 along with the anticipated timeline for the same. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies will be referred to the dispute resolution process contained in this Charter.

Audit appeals or requests for summary review shall be submitted to the Education Audit Appeals Panel ("EAAP") in accordance with applicable law.

The independent financial audit of the Charter School is a public record to be provided to the public upon request.

*See Appendix I for 2015 – 2016 Audit Report*

## **ELEMENT 10: Suspension and Expulsions**

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*Governing Law: The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(J)*

Nord Country School's comprehensive student discipline policy has been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students at the Charter School. In creating this policy, NCS has reviewed Education Code Section 48900 *et seq.* which describes the non-charter schools' list of offenses and procedures to establish its list of offenses and procedures for suspensions and expulsions. The language that is included in the policy mirrors the language of Education Code Section 48900 *et. seq.* The Charter School is committed to annual review of policies and procedures surrounding suspensions and expulsions and, as necessary, modification of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension or expulsion.

When the policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. This policy shall serve as the Charter School's policy and procedures for student suspension and expulsion, and it may be amended from time to time without the need to amend the charter so long as the amendments comport with legal requirements. Charter School Staff will continue to enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently amongst all students. This policy and its procedures will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook and will clearly describe discipline expectations.

The Principal or Principal's designee will continue to ensure that students and their parent/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline policies and procedures. The notice shall state that this policy and administrative procedures are available on request at the Principal's office.

*See Appendix J for the full Suspension and Expulsion Policy*



## **ELEMENT 11: Retirement System**

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*Governing Law: 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 federal social security. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(K)*

Nord Country School has the responsibility to provide retirement benefits to its employees. All full-time certificated employees participate in the State Teacher's Retirement System (STRS). Employees will contribute the required percentage and NCS will contribute the employer's portion. All withholdings from employees and from NCS will be forwarded to the STRS funds as required.

Eligible classified employees at NCS will participate in the Public Employee's Retirement System ("PERS"). All classified employees will participate in the federal Social Security system. Employees and NCS will contribute the required rate as designated by PERS and Social Security. All withholdings will be forwarded to the PERS fund and the IRS as required.

The Chief Business Officer is responsible for ensuring that arrangements for retirement coverage are made for all NCS employees.

## **ELEMENT 12: Public School Attendance Alternatives**

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*Governing Law: The public school attendance alternative for pupils residing within the District who choose not to attend charter schools. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(L)*

Nord Country School is a public school of choice. No student may be required to attend NCS. The students who reside within the District who choose not to attend NCS may attend school within the District according to District policy or at another school district or school within the District through the District's intra- and inter-district transfer policies.

Parents/guardians of each student enrolled in the Charter School will be informed on admission forms that students have no right to admission in a particular school of a local education agency as a consequence of enrollment in NCS, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency.

## **ELEMENT 13: Employee Return Rights**

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*Governing Law: The rights of any employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the District after employment at a charter school. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(M)*

No public school district employee shall be required to work at the Charter School. Employees of the District who choose to leave the employment of the District to work at the Charter School will have no automatic rights of return to the District after employment by the Charter School unless specifically granted by the District through a leave of absence or other agreement. Charter School employees shall have any right upon leaving the District to work in the Charter School that the District may specify, any rights of return to employment in a school district after employment in the Charter School that the District may specify, and any other rights upon leaving employment to work in the Charter School that the District determines to be reasonable and not in conflict with any law.

All employees of the Charter School will be considered the exclusive employees of the Charter School and not of the District, unless otherwise mutually agreed in writing. Sick or vacation leave or years of service credit at the District or any other school district will not be transferred to the Charter School. Employment by the Charter School provides no rights of employment at any other entity, including any rights in the case of closure of the Charter School.

## **ELEMENT 14: Dispute Resolution**

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*Governing Law: The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to the provisions of the charter. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O)*

### **Intent**

The intent of this dispute resolution process is to (1) resolve disputes within the Charter School pursuant to the Charter School's policies, (2) minimize the oversight burden on the district, and (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.

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 Charter School**

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

The districts shall not intervene in any such internal disputes without the consent of the Board of Directors of NCS for resolution pursuant to the Charter 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 Charter school has requested the district to intervene in the dispute.

### **Disputes Between NCS and CUSD**

In the event NCS or CUSD have disputes regarding the terms of this charter or any other issue regarding the Charter school and the District's relationship, both parties agree to follow the process outlined below.

In the event of a dispute between NCS and CUSD, Charter School staff, employees and governing Board members of the Charter school and District agree to first frame the issue in written format ("dispute statement") and to refer the issue to the District Superintendent and the Principal of NCS, or their designees. In the event that CUSD believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter, in accordance with Education Code Section 47607, this shall be specifically noted in the written dispute statement.

The Principal and District Superintendent, or their respective designees, shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute, not later than five (5) business

days from receipt of the dispute statement. 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, or their designees, and attempt to resolve the dispute.

If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the Superintendent and the Principal, or their respective designees, shall meet to jointly identify a neutral, third party mediator to engage the parties in a mediation session designed to facilitate resolution of the dispute. The format of the mediation session shall be developed jointly by the Superintendent and the Principal, or their respective designee. Mediation shall be held within sixty (60) business days of receipt of the dispute statement. The costs of the mediator shall be split equally between the District and NCS. If mediation does not resolve the dispute either party may pursue any other remedy available under the law. All timelines and procedures in this section may be revised upon mutual written agreement of the District and NCS.

### **Oversight, Reporting, Revocation, and Renewal**

The Chico Unified School District may inspect or observe any part of the Charter School at any time, but shall provide reasonable notice to the Principal of NCS prior to any observation or inspection. CUSD shall provide such notice at least three working days prior to the inspection or observation unless the Charter School's Board or 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 District 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.

## **ELEMENT 15: Closure Procedures**

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*Governing Law: The procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedure shall ensure a final audit of the charter school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the charter school, including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O)*

NCS is operated by a non-profit public benefit corporation. Should the corporation dissolve with the closure of NCS, the Board will follow the procedures set forth in the California Corporations Code for the dissolution of a non-profit public benefit corporation and file all necessary filings with the appropriate state and federal agencies.

### **Documentation of Closure Activities**

Closure of NCS will be documented by official action of the Board of Directors. The action will identify the reason for closure. The official action will also identify an entity and person or persons responsible for closure-related activities.

### **Notification of Closure**

The Charter School will promptly notify parents and students of NCS, the District, the Butte County Office of Education, the Charter School's SELPA, the retirement systems in which the Charter School's employees participate (e.g. PERS, STRS), and the California Department of Education of the closure as well as the effective date of the closure. This notice will include the names of and contact information for the person(s) to whom reasonable inquiries may be made regarding the closure; the pupils' school districts of residence; and the manner in which parents/guardians may obtain copies of pupil records.

The Charter School will ensure that the notification to the parents and students of the Charter School of the closure provides information to assist parents and students in locating suitable alternative programs. This notice will be provided promptly following the Board's decision to close the Charter School.

The Charter School will also develop a list of pupils in each grade level and the classes they have completed, together with information on the pupils' districts of residence, which will be provided to the entity responsible for closure-related activities.

### **Student and Charter School Records**

As applicable, NCS will provide parents, students and the District with copies of all appropriate student records and will otherwise assist students in transferring to their next school. All transfers of students records will be made in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") 20 U.S.C. §1232g. The Charter School will ask the District to store original records of Charter School Students. All records of the Charter School shall be transferred to the District upon NCS closure. If the District will not or cannot store the records,

NCS shall work with the County Office of Education to determine a suitable alternative location for storage.

All state assessment results, special education records, and personnel records will be transferred to and maintained by the entity responsible for closure-related activities in accordance with applicable law.

### **Financial Close-Out**

As soon as reasonably practical, the Charter School will prepare final financial records. NCS will also have an independent audit completed within six months of closure. NCS will pay for the final audit. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant selected by NCS and will be provided to CUSD promptly upon its completion. The final audit will include an accounting of all financial assets including: cash and accounts receivable; an inventory of property, equipment, and other items of material value; an accounting of the liabilities, including accounts payable; any reduction in apportionments as a result of audit findings or other investigations; loans; unpaid staff compensation; and an assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to NCS.

NCS will complete and file any annual reports required pursuant to Education Code section 47604.33.

### **Dissolution of Assets**

On closure of NCS, all assets, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property and all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by the students attending NCS, remain the sole property of the nonprofit public benefit corporation. Upon the dissolution of the nonprofit public benefit corporation, all net assets shall be distributed to another public school that satisfies the requirements of paragraphs (a) through (e) of section III.A of Notice 2015-07 issued by the Internal Revenue Service and the Treasury Department entitled “Relief for Certain Participants in § 414(d) Plans” or any final regulations implementing 26 U.S.C. § 414(d) or to a State, political subdivision of a State, or agency or instrumentality thereof. Any assets acquired from the District or District property will be promptly returned upon NCS closure. The distribution shall include return of any grant funds and restricted categorical funds to their source in accordance with the terms of the grant or state and federal law, as appropriate, which may include submission of final expenditure reports for entitlement grants and the filing of any required Final Expenditure Reports and Final Performance Reports, as well as the return of any donated materials and property in accordance with any conditions established when the donation of such materials or property was accepted.

On closure, the Charter School shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of the Charter School. As the Charter School is operated as a non-profit public benefit corporation, should the corporation dissolve with the closure of the Charter School, the Board will follow the procedures set forth in the California Corporations Code for the dissolution of a non-profit public benefit corporation and file all necessary filings with the appropriate state and federal agencies. The Charter School will utilize the reserve fund to undertake any expenses associated with the closure procedures identified above.

*See Appendix K for Budget information*

## Miscellaneous Charter Provisions

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### ***A. Budgets and Financial Reporting***

*Governing Law: The petitioner or petitioners shall also be required to provide financial statements that include a proposed first year operational budget, including startup costs, and cash flow and financial projections for the first three years of operation Education Code Section 47605(g).*

In Appendix L, please find the NCS budget, including cash flow and financial projections for the next three years of operation. These documents are based upon the best data available to NCS at this time, including the most recent Local Control Funding Formula projections.

The Charter School shall provide reports to the District and County Superintendent of Schools as follows in accordance with Education Code Section 47604.33, and shall provide additional fiscal reports as requested by the District:

- By June 15th, a preliminary budget for the next fiscal year
- By July 1, an annual update (LCAP) required pursuant to Education Code Section 47606.5
- By December 15, an interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through October 31. Additionally, on December 15, a copy of NCS's annual, independent financial audit report for the preceding fiscal year shall be delivered to the District, State Controller, California Department of Education and County Superintendent of Schools.
- By March 15, a second interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through January 31
- By September 15, a final unaudited report for the full prior year. The report submitted to the District shall include an annual statement of all receipts and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year.

The Charter School shall provide reporting to the District as required by law and as requested by the District including, but not limited to, the following: California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), actual Average Daily Attendance reports, all financial reports required by Education Code Sections 47604.33 and 47605(m), the School Accountability Report Card (SARC), and the LCAP.

The Charter School agrees to and submits to the right of the District to make random visits and inspections in order to carry out its statutorily required oversight in accordance with Education Code Sections 47604.32 and 47607.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604.3, the Charter School shall promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries including, but not limited to, inquiries regarding its financial records from the District.

## ***B. Insurance***

The Charter School shall acquire and finance general liability, workers compensation, and other necessary insurance of the types and in the amounts required for an enterprise of similar purpose and circumstance. Coverage amounts will be based on recommendations provided by the District and the Charter School's insurer. The District Board of Education shall be named as an additional insured on all policies of the Charter School.

## ***C. Administrative Services***

*Governing Law: The manner in which administrative services of the school are to be provided. Education Code Section 47605(g).*

The Charter School will provide or procure its own administrative services including, but not limited to, financial management, accounts payable/receivable, payroll, human resources, and instructional program development through its own staff or through an appropriately qualified third-party contractor.

## ***D. Facilities***

*Governing Law: The facilities to be utilized by the school. The description of the facilities to be used by the charter school shall specify where the school intends to locate. Education Code Section 47605(g)*

NCS occupies the previous Nord Elementary School site located at 5554 California Street, Chico, CA 95973. As this site is the only school site located in Nord and the purpose of NCS is to maintain an education option in the Nord community, while at the same time providing a valuable education alternative for the Chico Community and beyond, these facilities are an integral part of our charter.

District Facilities include four (4) classrooms, a multipurpose room, an office area, and six (6) bathrooms. In addition, the Charter School owns ten (10) classrooms and a portable bathroom. The site also includes a blacktop play area, basketball courts, a playground area with climbing structures, slides and swings, a playfield and a school garden.

Facilities are currently acquired from the District through a Facilities Use Agreement with a term of five years, to coincide with the schools' charter term.

## ***E. Oversight and Reporting***

Pursuant to California law, the District is required to provide oversight and performance monitoring services, including monitoring school and student performance data, reviewing the school's audit reports, performing annual site visits, engaging in any necessary dispute resolution processes and considering charter amendment and renewal requests. In accordance with



Education Code Section 47613(a), the District may charge for the actual costs of supervisory oversight of NCS not to exceed one (1) percent of the revenue of NCS. The District may charge up to three (3) percent of the revenue of NCS if NCS is able to obtain substantially rent free facilities from the district. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47613(f), “revenue of the charter school” is defined as the amount received in the current fiscal year from the local control funding formula calculated pursuant to Education Code Section 42238.02, as implemented by Education Code Section 42238.03.

### ***F. Potential Civil Liability Effects***

*Governing Law: Potential civil liability effect, if any, upon the school and upon the District.*

*Education Code Section 47605(g).*

The Charter School shall be operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 23701(d).

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), an authority that grants a charter to a charter school operated by or as a non-profit public benefit corporation shall not be liable for the debts or obligations of the charter school or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors or omissions by the charter school if the authority has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law. The Charter School shall work diligently to assist the District in meeting any and all oversight obligations under the law, including monthly meetings, reporting, or other District requested protocol to ensure the District shall not be liable for the operation of the Charter school.

Further, The Charter School and the District shall enter into a memorandum of understanding wherein NCS shall indemnify the District of the actions of NCS under this charter.

The corporate bylaws of the Charter School shall provide for indemnification of the NCS Board, officers, agents, and employees. The Charter School shall purchase and maintain general liability insurance, Board Members and Officers insurance, and fidelity bonding to secure against financial risks.

As stated above, insurance amounts are determined by recommendation of the District and the Charter School’s insurance company for schools of similar size, location, and student population. The District is named an additional insured on the general liability insurance of the Charter School.

The Charter School Board shall institute appropriate risk management practices as discussed herein including screening of employees, establishing codes of conduct for students, and dispute resolution.