Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School

A Charter Petition Submitted to the Conejo Valley Unified School District
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AFFIRMATIONS/ASSURANCES

As the authorized lead petitioner, I, Marlo Hartsuyker, hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter for the conversion of Meadows Elementary School to a California public charter school to be named Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School (“MATES” or “Charter School”), to be located at the school site currently known as Meadows Elementary School within the boundaries of the Conejo Valley Unified School District (“District”), is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that this application does not constitute the conversion of a private school to the status of a public charter school; and further, I understand that if awarded a charter, the Charter School:

• Shall meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Section 60605, 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)]

• Shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(O)]

• Shall be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]

• Shall not charge tuition. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]

• Shall admit all students who wish to attend the Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary 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 each application will be given equal chance of admission through a public random lottery process. 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 except approved in Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B).

• Shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, 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)]

• 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 1974, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004.

• 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)]
• Shall ensure that teachers in the Charter School hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools are required to hold. As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to non-core, non-college preparatory teachers. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(l)]

• Shall at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.

• 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. California Education Code Section 47605(d)(3)]

• Will follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to the Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School including but not limited to:
  
  ➢ The Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School shall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection.

  ➢ The Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School shall on a regular basis consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's education programs.

  ➢ The Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School shall comply with any jurisdictional limitations to locations of its facilities.

  ➢ The Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School shall comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment.

  ➢ The Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School shall comply with all applicable portions of the No Child Left Behind Act.

  ➢ The Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School shall comply with the Public Records Act.

  ➢ The Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

  ➢ The Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School shall meet or exceed the legally required minimum of school days.
Marlo Hartsuyker, Lead Petitioner

Date
I. INTRODUCTION AND FOUNDING GROUP/CONSULTANTS

A. Introduction

Conejo Valley Unified School District was not always unified. Valley Oaks School District and Timber School District housed the few schools located in the small town called Thousand Oaks. The two high schools, Newbury Park and Thousand Oaks, were a part of the Oxnard Union High School District. The city incorporated in 1964 and the district unified in 1974, renaming itself as the Conejo Valley Unified School District. Meadows Elementary is located in one of the oldest parts of town, opening its doors in 1963. Neighborhood “development” during this time period consisted of custom homes and builder homes on large lots that served equestrian and other rural interests of the residents.

Over the years, new neighborhoods were created so the school that once sat in the company of horses, chickens, sheep, goats, and cattle became the central and only public elementary school for over 2,000 homes. Today the tradition continues with horses and other livestock that still coexist next to parks, soccer fields, and a library/teen center/senior center. Throughout its forty-five years, as communicated by alumni, residents, former teachers and principals, former School Site Council members, former PTA members, and former staff members, Meadows Elementary has four decades of solid history in teaching excellence along with a passion for the arts. In fact, the longstanding use of innovative teaching methods once considered “progressive” are nowadays considered “best teaching practices.”

Meadows Elementary is a school that has always been on the cutting edge. In the late 1980’s and early 1990’s under the leadership of principal Dr. Tim Stephens, the entire staff went through intensive training and in 1993 earned approval to become a Restructuring School. Listed here are some of the training, research and accomplishments from the Restructuring:

• Staff went to UCLA to observe and study the thematic based Charter School – Seeds. (1992)
• Storyline Training Topic Study Method (training in integration of curriculum) by Kathy Fifield and Eileen Vopelak. (1992)
• United with a sister school, Santa Susanna School in Simi Valley, in which we often shared information, visited each other’s sites and trained together. The principal of Santa Susanna was Rob Hunter (brother of the famous Madeline Hunter). (1990)
• Attended workshops on Curriculum and Instruction for the 21st Century given by Eileen Vopelak, VCSS Consultant. (1993)
• Took numerous workshops on Developmentally Appropriate Practices in the Las Virgenes Unified School District Office Training Center. (1993)
• Observed and studied Lupin Hill’s Elementary School K-3 (L.S.V.U.D.) Plan, Do and Review Multi-aged Primary Brain Based curriculum. (1993)
• In 1993 submitted a proposal that was approved by the school board to make Meadows Elementary School a Restructuring School.
• Studied in depth and rewrote school report cards to reflect developmentally appropriate practices. (1994)
• Studied Susan Kovalik’s “Integrated Thematic Instruction” and attended her summer workshop in Lake Tahoe. (1995)
• Took numerous workshops at the Ventura County Curriculum Center presented by Steve Dunn of the Wright Group. These workshops covered Balanced Literacy including Guided Reading, Shared Reading, Literature Circles, Independent Reading and Integrating Writing. (1996)
• Set up a K-5 literacy library to better enhance our Guided Reading instruction. (1994)
• In 1997 Meadows Elementary School received the 1997 National Blue Ribbon Recognition Award.

Meadows was the first school in CVUSD to formally innovate and establish within our school:

• Team Building
• Thematic Instruction
• Cognitive Education
• Authentic Assessment
• Balanced Language Arts

Meadows Elementary has not gone unrecognized in its delivery of positive educational programs that result in solid achievement outcomes. It was the first school in the entire district, elementary through high school, to receive the National Blue Ribbon Award in 1997. Meadows Elementary also holds the rare distinction of being a three-time recipient of the California Distinguished School Award, most recently bestowed in April of 2008.

These distinguished awards presented through the years clearly demonstrate how the community of parents, students, and teachers of the Meadows family are never satisfied with “status quo.” “Driven to excellence” would describe the motivation behind this “family” in the quest for quality education. It follows, then, in search for better ways of teaching, better ways of reaching out to all students, and looking ahead to the future, that the school had prepared for the initiation of a new program that would increase diversity, serve students not currently in the district school system, and apply a more focused program to achieve greater success in educating all children. The Meadows community was poised, prepared, trained, and ready to embark on the journey to become an Arts Magnet School. This required the ambitious vision of the staff, a tremendous dedication of time, and the support of the school and neighborhood.

Tragically, the school board of Conejo Valley Unified School District voted 3-2 in March of 2008 to CLOSE two of its three National Blue Ribbon elementary schools, Meadows being one of them, due to a district-wide decline in enrollment. Several major components the state of California uses to evaluate and score distinguished school applications are curriculum, special needs, collaboration, family & community partnerships, school environment, and culture. These components were not deemed relevant in the district’s school closure selection process.

Needless to say, the entire city and the entire school district were shocked; but nobody, not even the charter petitioners, were prepared for the mobilization of the Meadows community in its
quest to perpetuate the tradition and history of excellence. Grandparents, blue collar and white collar residents, educators, parents from private schools, and even strangers united in search of an instrument that would keep alive both the spirit and the unique educational program that took over forty years to cultivate. A vehicle for a true neighborhood school that has become the reflection of the outstanding community it serves with an off the charts rate of per capita volunteerism that is highest in the district, a passion for creativity and artistic expression, and an openness for ingenuity. These unique features will ignite interest in a new public school choice as well as satisfy the needs and high academic expectations of the community at large.

The situation became absolutely unbearable for the Meadows community when it was notified that students would be absorbed by three schools, all with API scores averaging one hundred points lower. With immense support, a large group of parents decided to unite. The charter movement was born. This charter school would reflect as closely as possible the very components that have made Meadows Elementary such a force in the educational community. The drive for excellence remains and will continue in this new public school.

While Meadows has distinguished itself as a cohesive, organized body, let it be known that the Meadows community forged an even stronger bond of working toward a common vision after the vote was taken to close. That is, maintaining the quality of a rigorous, child-centered, balanced program for all students, with respect and admiration to those people that walked the campus grounds over forty years ago.

**Isolated Location**

If one were to study a current map, it would be clear that Meadows Elementary is unique in both its location and proximity to other public elementary schools. First, the density of homes in the Meadows attendance area is lighter than most other neighborhoods in the city. The way of life that existed at the time these homes were built and that still exists today is one of a ranch life, outdoors, rural, full of nature. This area is one of the oldest parts of the city and the ranch life is reflected in the size of the lots on which homes are built. Naturally, one sees spacious lots and fewer homes per acre of property. This is not a negative attribute, only an acknowledgement that the school was and is intended to serve the neighborhood children. Since the density has not changed due to strict city building codes, Meadows remains a true neighborhood school with manageable numbers. Children still walk to school without the need or desire for a drive-through drop off lane. The nearest public schools are 1.6 and 1.8 miles away, respectively, with a six lane freeway intersecting the path to one of the schools. The capacity of the school can exceed 400 students and the National Association of Elementary School Principals recommends an elementary school size of no more than 400 students for kindergarten through the 5th grades ([Source: http://www.senate.gov/~feinstein/releases01/school_size_esea.html](http://www.senate.gov/~feinstein/releases01/school_size_esea.html)).

It is also important to note that there are four private schools closer to Meadows Elementary than the nearest public elementary school. These private schools all serve elementary-age students and none of these private schools require children to cross under a freeway. To be sure, the Meadows attendance area NEEDS a neighborhood public school. Without a public elementary school, there will be a huge hole filled with children who are not receiving a public education without crossing a freeway and passing by four private schools along the way to a public school.

Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School
Submitted June 2, 2008
As a new charter school, it is understood that enrollment will increase and MATES is aware that the school can accommodate this increase. This change is both welcomed and expected. The charter petitioners adamantly believe that Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School will fulfill the needs of the entire community, the city, the county and the state in the creation of an excellent new option in public education.

There are four private schools located closer to Meadows than any other public elementary school (Source: Google Maps, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nearest Private Schools</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Distance from Meadows (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Baptist Elementary School</td>
<td>1250 Erbes Road</td>
<td>.2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Patrick’s Episcopal Day School</td>
<td>1 Church Road</td>
<td>.8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillcrest Christian School</td>
<td>384 Erbes Road</td>
<td>1.1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascension Lutheran School</td>
<td>1600 E. Hillcrest Drive</td>
<td>1.2m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nearest Elementary Schools</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Distance from Meadows (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conejo Elementary</td>
<td>280 N. Conejo School Rd.</td>
<td>1.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenwood Elementary</td>
<td>1135 Windsor Drive</td>
<td>1.8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang Ranch Elementary</td>
<td>2450 Whitechapel Pl.</td>
<td>2.3m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Oaks Elementary</td>
<td>1335 Calle Bougainvillea</td>
<td>2.4m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compelling Argument For A Charter:**

1. Provide a diverse group of students the opportunity for focused learning in the arts and technology in addition to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum that serves to close the achievement gap in society as detailed in State Superintendent Jack O’Connell’s P-16 Council Initiative.
2. Provide the typical student not receiving any special services the opportunity to be challenged in a new direction.
3. Desire to provide enrichment opportunities in the focus areas of the arts and technology to those that are inclined and drawn to this program.
4. Desire to draw students back to our attendance area from private and home school settings. (culture of excellence, use of innovative research-based strategies, guaranteed childcare, focused program in the arts and technology, progressive education, high achievement, historical success, equity in the admissions process, responsive to needs of the school)
5. Ability to offer a longer school day (grades 1-5) than students in CVUSD.
6. Ability to offer an extended kindergarten day at Meadows.
7. Desire to offer a more in-depth GATE program than is currently offered in CVUSD.
8. Desire to keep the award winning school culture and climate intact while providing a more diverse group access to our unique, outstanding program.
9. Charter schools exist to offer a vehicle for upward student achievement, which is what MATES will provide.
10. Create new professional opportunities to current and future teachers and expanded choices in public education for parents and students.
11. Our school is slated to close in September of 2009.

The Founders of MATES have attempted to meet with District Board members to personally describe the mission and vision of the conversion of Meadows Elementary to MATES. Thus far, a meeting with only one Board member has successfully been scheduled. The Founders reiterate this invitation to all District Board members and employees, and seek a cooperative relationship between MATES and the District, in order to maximize the benefit to the students of the District. Attached as Appendix A, please find letters of support for MATES.

B. Founding Group

The conversion of Meadows Elementary to MATES is founded by parents, teachers, and community members with expertise in curriculum, instruction, school finance, business, legal, government, and facilities. Attached as Appendix B, please find a list of MATES founders along with a brief biography of each describing their education, experience, and role in the creation of MATES.

C. Consultants

MATES will utilize consultants with expertise necessary to enhance the success of the Charter School, including but not limited to legal, curriculum, and charter school back office service providers. Attached, as Appendix C, please find a list and description of consultants selected by the founders to assist in the creation and operation of the Charter School.
II. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM

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

- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)

A. Mission and Vision Statement

The MATES mission statement is: “Instituting a vision that welcomes innovation, honors the past, transforms the future, commands achievement, and empowers all children through the Arts and Technology.”

The petitioners seek to capitalize on the momentum of the already established school community with a history of and commitment to excellence. This is a true neighborhood school that has become a reflection of the outstanding community it serves, with the highest rate of per capita volunteerism in the District, a passion for creativity and artistic expression, and openness for ingenuity. The mission of the school will become a reality for all students by offering a school setting that reflects the community’s desire to have access to a rigorous academic program with an emphasis on the visual and performing arts and technology. Study of the arts is seen as a window to understanding and experiencing culture anthropologically. Both modern and traditional forms will govern the arts program. The school will implement an integrated educational program that provides students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life situations and in service to their community. We envision building on the collaborative learning resources of parents, teachers, community members, universities, and students, all partnered and dedicated to the goal of enabling all students to become self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners.

B. Students To Be Served —“Whom The School Intends To Educate”

MATES’ educational program has been developed to provide expanded educational choice and opportunities for families in the community of Thousand Oaks, California. As a conversion school, it is likely that the demographics of MATES will initially reflect those of Meadows Elementary School’s current population. Although the demographics of the current Meadows population are analogous to those of the District, MATES will, in good faith, strive to match those percentages of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district. MATES could actually realize greater diversity than city and district averages in future years. In addition, if the District’s Severely Handicapped Program is moved, our percentages of students with disabilities will reflect this change. MATES will follow state/federal guidelines for the admission process.
Parents in the community have voiced a strong desire to keep the site-based Meadows program and community intact while continuing the tradition of excellence with a focus on the arts and technology. MATES intends to serve families that choose to attend a school that has an exemplary program in the arts, integrated with technology, nestled in an area of Thousand Oaks which is recognized as an artistic community. The individualized attention afforded to students in a smaller setting allows unsurpassed access to the support system that validates and enhances the creative process. The unique school culture and friendly climate frees the students in their artistic endeavors while supporting a system of high achievement.

It is also the intent of MATES to provide outreach to families from neighboring schools in the area in order to extend the opportunity for school choice. MATES will welcome families from all backgrounds who choose to embrace our vision and mission, along with our success in academic achievement. We intend to provide an excellent educational program to all those who choose our public charter and are at the greatest risk of not attaining the rigorous achievement standards set forth by the state of California. MATES will proudly be the first public charter school in Conejo Valley Unified School District, taking advantage of innovation and flexibility to increase learning opportunities for students and professional opportunities for teachers, as articulated in the spirit of California charter law (See Outreach Plan in Appendix D).
MATES will continue to serve students in grades K-5. We intend to serve approximately 315 students during year 1 and approximately 400 students by year 3. Depending on the applicants’ grade levels, MATES reserves the right to adjust classroom/grade level enrollment, including the option of offering multi-age classes if necessary. Age of students will comply with state guidelines.

Our outreach will be conducted with the intent that MATES will serve all students to the capacity that the school is able to provide. We currently have over 100 Interest Surveys that include families currently attending private schools in the area, as well as home school settings. The results show that there is interest in a new choice in public education within the area surveyed. Depending on our physical capacity to grow the school, we may choose to increase enrollment of the school in future years, up to approximately 420 students. Upon that decision, made collaboratively with the school community, MATES will notify the district/county/state by February of the year prior if school enrollment levels exceed year 3 projected enrollment. The table below shows estimated grade level enrollment and projected growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Expected Year 1 Enrollment 2009-2010</th>
<th>Expected Year 2 Enrollment 2010-2011</th>
<th>Expected Year 3 Enrollment 2011-2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. **What It Means To Be An Educated Person In The 21st Century**

MATES will aspire to provide an environment in which children will develop into confident, self-motivated, competent, and productive lifelong learners. The challenges posed by contemporary society include globalization and the changing role of technology. These tasks require proficiencies obtained in a school setting that will transfer to real-world situations. To meet these challenges, students at MATES will acquire the habits, skills, and confidence with technology necessary to succeed in school and beyond, as contributing citizens of the 21st century. Youth of today will need to rely on advanced academic skills as well as highly evolved interpersonal skills to navigate the world of global enterprise and community.

Both in attitude and in skill, MATES students will flourish under the pedagogical assumption that cultural, historical, and scientific proficiencies demanded of an educated person in the 21st century are key elements to be introduced and further developed at the charter school. That being said, MATES students will develop meaningful skills in social and academic realms, with...
the opportunity to develop an awareness of their innate artistic and creative abilities through our arts and technology focus. Our students will become creative problem solvers, sophisticated in interacting cooperatively, resolving conflicts peacefully, researching/analyzing data, and engaging in a democratic society while being challenged to achieve in the core basics of reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, computing, reasoning, and solving mathematical problems.

These skills and attributes will be commonplace in the international, interdependent world of the 21st century. MATES students will be provided a foundation to build life skills and become strategic problem solvers. It is the overall belief that staff, parents, and community partners will support and nurture our students so that all students will have a positive vision of lifelong learning and their individual and collective importance in our democratic society and world affairs. Students will also experience advances in technology and learn about new and innovative ideas in development.

The governing board of MATES will ensure that these ideals and aptitudes, touched upon above and also listed below, are continually evaluated to keep abreast of what it means to be an educated person in the 21st century who is self-motivated, competent, and a lifelong learner.

**Academic Skills**

- Students will read at or above grade level.
- Students will develop application and computational abilities, as well as a conceptual understanding of mathematical reasoning.
- Students will communicate effectively through excellent listening, speaking, and writing skills via projects and presentations.
- Students will possess creative, logical, and critical thinking skills enhanced through the arts and technology.
- Students will develop age or grade level technological proficiency that extends beyond the classroom to the real world.
- Students will develop knowledge about and an appreciation of the diverse visual and performing arts and their interplay with academic learning.
- Students will find, select, evaluate, organize and use information from various sources and disciplines of thought. They will be able to make logical connections among them.

**Life Skills**

- Students will accept responsibility for personal decisions and actions.
- Students will develop self-confidence and a willingness to take risks, resulting from a safe learning environment.
- Students will learn concentration, perseverance, and independent working skills by setting personal goals and through self-assessment.
- Students will develop an appreciation and respect for the culturally diverse environment of California.
- Students will be committed to community service.
- Students will work both cooperatively and independently in a respectful manner.
• Students will make the connection between themselves and the diverse global community.
• Students will gain confidence in individual expression of creative capabilities and creative problem solving.
• Students will be inspired to be inquisitive and self-motivated life-long learners.

In order to cultivate these skills and habits of mind in students, the MATES team will continue to find ways to create an optimal learning environment for its students based on the criteria described in the next section.

D. Curriculum And Instructional Design –“How Learning Best Occurs”

Every child possesses a wide range of learning skills and significant research has been done in the field of brain-based research on how students learn best (Caine, R. & Caine, G., 1998). MATES is committed to creating a learning environment that embodies the twelve key principles of brain-based research. Specifically, we have determined that learning best occurs in an environment that:

• is accepting of varied methods of demonstrating knowledge • Principle 1
• promotes physical and emotional health and well-being • Principle 2
• supports questioning, experimentation, self-expression, creativity and appropriate risk-taking • Principle 3
• encourages multi-disciplinary and cross-curricular study • Principle 4
• is relevant and authentic • Principle 4
• is developmentally supportive • Principle 5
• is democratic and student centered • Principle 5
• models and requires high-level thinking skills and communication skills, including synthesis and analysis • Principle 6
• models continued learning, interest and enthusiasm • Principle 7
• celebrates cultural and individual diversity • Principle 7
• models reflection and self-assessment • Principle 8
• is rich and demanding and promotes depth of learning (as opposed to memorization only) • Principle 9
• creates opportunities for knowledge to be applied to real-world contexts • Principle 9 and 10
• is psychologically safe • Principle 11
• provides a variety of ways for students to engage in coursework and in the school community • Principle 12

MATES will apply the following practices to foster the learning environment described above:

Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School
Submitted June 2, 2008
• Standards-based curriculum utilizing Backwards Design (or mapping) that is differentiated to meet the needs of all students
• authentic, standards-based assessments, promoting use of data to inform instruction; may include portfolio-based evaluations
• teaching for mastery, not coverage
• thematic instruction to promote learning connections, using multi-sensory, differentiated instruction to build on student aptitudes and meet developmental needs
• Project-Based Learning opportunities
• opportunities to interact with the community
• integration of the arts across the curriculum
• integration of technology across the curriculum
• consistent home-school connection and communication
• after-school intervention and enrichment programs
• cross-age “Study Buddy” activities
• comprehensive professional development and teacher accountability
• a code of conduct for all members of the school community founded on a set of core values that promote individual and collective responsibility
• collaborative decision making among all stakeholders
• policies and procedures maintaining a focus on the school mission and student achievement
• commitment and sensitivity to the needs of all English Learners (EL) and Economically Disadvantaged Students (EDS) and families
• commitment to serve as stewards of the community and to honor the abundant history of our city
• meaningful field trips and field work that enhance and compliment units of study and build character

Implementation of Educational Program

With a collaborative culture anchored in hard work and pride, the school has succeeded in providing a high quality educational program to all of our students. Our innovative approaches, further enumerated in the following sections, not only demonstrate how we are unique, but how we will continue to be successful.

The MATES curriculum will follow state standards for the subject areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, the Visual and Performing Arts, Physical Education, and English Language Development. Teachers will utilize the Backwards Design Process to develop thematic units integrating the content areas. This planning framework ensures that content standards are addressed in each lesson/unit of study. The teacher’s implementation of thematic units provides both depth and breadth of curriculum, allows for student choice, and promotes differentiation. The arts and technology will be emphasized throughout the curriculum.

Attached, as Appendix E, MATES has provided sample Educational Plan documents as evidence of its expertise and readiness to begin the MATES educational program in fall of 2009. The
following sections provide an overview of the philosophy of the key instructional strategies, as well as descriptions of the content areas and curricular resources.

**Instructional Strategies**

The following combination of key elements comprise MATES approach to instruction:

- Standards-based instruction through backwards design
- Project-Based Learning
- Integration of the Arts
- Integration of Technology
- Community Service

**Backwards Design**

MATES understands the importance of utilizing research-based instructional practices to promote student achievement. In order to address how learning best occurs, MATES faculty will draw on their professional skills to design and deliver standards-based instruction using the principles of the Backward Design Program (Wiggins and McTighe). The traditional backward design approach guides teachers through a three step process: (1) internalization and prioritization of State Content Standards (learning goals/the “big picture”), (2) differentiated assessment methods aligned to prioritize standards and identified learning targets, (how students demonstrate their learning) and (3) innovative, research-based instructional strategies clearly articulating student learning objectives (learning experiences that access higher level thinking skills).

At MATES, it will be expected that students are engaged in the curriculum and learning objectives at all times. Teachers are expected to continuously communicate learning objectives to all students while formatively assessing for student mastery of all concepts and state content standards. Research clearly suggests that learning best occurs when students are actively engaged in their own learning. This requires that students are involved in conversations about learning objectives, instruction, and assessment. Furthermore, this student-centered approach supports a more culturally relevant curriculum that connects with students’ interests and prior experiences. Frequent and meaningful connections with parents and engaging in conversations about their children’s education will also ensure that the academic program reflects the diversity of the community being served. Parent and community volunteers will bring additional talents, skills, and proficiencies to learning objectives that will elevate the level of relevancy and curricular engagement of all students.

As part of the curriculum design process, research-based instructional strategies for increasing student achievement will be embedded into the daily culture of the classroom. Strategies brought to light in, *Classroom Instruction That Works* (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock), will be utilized by teachers in their classrooms. These researchers have compiled teaching practices and strategies that “have a high probability of enhancing student achievement for all students in all subject areas at all grade levels” (Marzano, Pickering, Pollock, 2001). A few examples include creating graphic organizers (non-linguistic representations), webbing, cooperative learning
techniques, questioning techniques, and feedback techniques as a teacher sets goals and moves students through the introduction, practice, review, and application of knowledge.

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

A key instructional approach to meeting a variety of student needs is standards-based Project Based Learning (PBL). Standards-focused PBL is a “systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks.” Research shows that students engaged in PBL “construct solutions, thus shifting the emphasis [from the product] toward the process of learning” (Buck Institute for Education, 2004). http://www.bie.org/pbl/pblhandbook/intro.php).

Brain-based research conducted by Kotulak (1996) and Kuhl (1994) has shown that human beings learn most what is most meaningful to us, which is what PBL is designed to provide. According to this research, PBL makes the content areas more relevant and meaningful, while enhancing the quality of student learning, and the development of self-directed learners. Through PBL, MATES students will make the emotional connections that reinforce learning. Furthermore, a recent review of, “Research on Project-Based Learning” (Thomas, 2000), suggests that PBL is a teaching method that may be particularly well adapted to disadvantaged youth, therefore supporting the diverse group of learners served by MATES. The same review also suggests that PBL can enhance professionalism and collaboration among and between educators. MATES has teachers trained in brain-based learning strategies, as well as qualified parents in this field, who will provide additional collaborative opportunities that strengthen the link between home and school.

All project-based units will reflect the principles of Backwards Design in that the project content and processes will be framed by an essential question that is aligned to standards. Each project will be anchored by an enduring understanding standard or big idea that teachers have identified within the content standards. “Enduring Understanding” standards generally require high levels of critical thinking (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation on Bloom’s Taxonomy) and also require a performance assessment to adequately assess student mastery of such standards. Therefore, Project-Based Learning provides a successful vehicle through which students can demonstrate their mastery of big ideas that reside at the heart of content standards. Along with the Enduring Understanding standard that anchors each project, teachers will identify standards that represent discrete skills or isolated pieces of knowledge that support the enduring understanding or big idea. Students will address these standards in relation to the big idea, which will enable students to see the connections between isolated facts or discrete skills and the big picture. This approach to curricular design and delivery is solidly grounded within the backward design approach to curricular planning and provides for a meaningful, comprehensive way in which to promote mastery of content standards.

Students will be assessed for their mastery of standards, as well as their ability to solve problems individually and in cooperative groups. Project design will incorporate rigorous and complex problems that require students to understand the relationships between concepts from different disciplines and perspectives. All projects will culminate in a tangible product and often a public
exhibition of the students’ work. Projects in which students create multimedia presentations, Web pages, presentations, performances, artwork or songs may be evaluated differently than traditional written papers. Assessment strategies can include performance evaluation, teacher observations, personal communications, standardized testing, and student and teacher developed project rubrics, and self-assessment. (Global SchoolNet Foundation, 2004) Furthermore, all projects will reflect the “6 A’s” of high quality PBL.

- Authenticity
- Academic Rigor
- Applied Learning
- Active Exploration
- Adult Relationships
- Assessment

By integrating Backwards Design into PBL, teachers are empowered to utilize creative and authentic instructional methods, while ensuring the coverage of California State Content Standards. Teachers will rely heavily on resource-based materials (core literature selections, periodicals, electronic research, library selections/resources, teacher-created lessons, field trips/field study, and electronic field trips). MATES reserves the right to calibrate the level that traditional textbooks play in units of study. Taken together, these strategies support closing the achievement gap for students who have been historically underserved by more “one-size-fits-all” instructional methods found in many public school classrooms and provide all students with an accessible, meaning-rich education and a desire to remain lifelong, competent, self-directed learners.

Integration of the Arts

MATES will build upon the solid foundation inherent in the existing, four decades-long emphasis at Meadows Elementary. Teachers have been trained and are currently utilizing methods that integrate the arts into the state’s core content areas. Parent and community volunteers are in place, planning and organizing programs that bring the arts to the forefront of learning. The reason for this is found in the research.

Research shows that art improves achievement. The arts improve cognitive development and increase motivation and engagement in school and community service, especially to at-risk students. (Catterall, J. S., UCLA, 2002). Furthermore, the arts and the transfer of learning applies to all students as found in R. J. Deasy’s (Ed.), Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development [pp. 151-157, Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership]. Research clearly points out that English Language Learners (Ingram and Reidel, 2003) and particularly children in Special Education Programs (Deasy, 2002) benefit from the presence of art in the classroom. MATES will serve an important, diverse group of students who will benefit from the existence of this unique, established program not currently found in any other school in the CVUSD.
An illustration that conveys our strong belief in providing art in our school involves two Meadows parents who were awarded a grant from the Tri-County GATE Council for their “Art @ Lunch” program, initiated two years ago. All students are encouraged to attend this once a week activity in which various materials and mediums are made available for the students to create a unique piece of art. It is hands-on, encourages the use of subject-based vocabulary, encourages students to talk about their art, and builds their confidence to take risks in other areas of their lives. Gifted students are not the only target audience. Art @ Lunch is for all students. Our severely handicapped students enter into a transformative milieu to participate and work with tactile and visual stimuli while spending time to further interact with their study buddies, to participate in a whole-school event, and enjoy the experiential process of creating something that is inherently “theirs.” This program is currently spreading throughout Ventura County. (See Appendix E for more examples).

The study of the arts serves as a mechanism for investigation and problem solving while addressing multi-modal learning. Artistic literacy and creative powers are promoted through exposure to different methods, ideas, and materials from global points of view. Eric Oddeilefson, Chairman of Center for Arts in the Basic Curriculum, states from an address to the Boston Council of Elementary Principals, that the arts, “…teach both the process of learning and discipline; they motivate; they awaken the imagination; they address strengths, not weaknesses; they teach cultural respect and require meaningful interaction between students, and students and their teachers. They increase the yield from knowledge, as they teach the ways knowledge is applied in the real world.” (Oddleifson, Center for Arts in the Basic Curriculum, 1997) The arts provide a glimpse into culture and helps students see themselves as part of a global, culturally diverse society. MATES values diversity, especially as it relates to the arts. “Art, as a form of communication, is one of the basic language skills students need to participate in a multicultural democracy” (DBAE and Cultural Diversity: Some Perspectives from the Social Sciences, McFee, J.K., University of Oregon, 1992).

The integrated curriculum will be aligned with the Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools and will include dance, drama/theater, music and visual arts. (Refer to the sample year long plan for 4th grade in Appendix E) Media studies will be explored as a means for artistic communication using modern technology. Through the Backwards Design process of unpacking and prioritizing content standards for the four core content areas, teachers will identify opportunities to integrate the arts into those curricular areas, and will build unit clusters that maximize student exposure to and engagement in the arts. A focused summer program will be explored as an enhancement to the arts focus. Teachers have been and will continue to be trained by art specialists through partnerships such as the Getty Institute, LACMA, and Joni Chancer, Co-director of the South Coast Writing Project. MATES teachers are also trained in Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE, the Getty Institute) amongst other programs, and effectively integrate the arts into the overall educational program. Additional professional development will be utilized that will further hone the skills of the teachers. Arts specialists will be funded through the parent association. In conjunction with teachers and volunteers, these specialists will implement a standards-based arts education plan that will enrich and help to define our school community.
Collaborative efforts between staff, community, and families will focus on contemporary, innovative educational programs that may help define student goals in the area of the arts and the need to utilize risk-taking, experiential approaches to creative expression. The arts will also be studied as distinct disciplines. MATES students will have opportunities to showcase their work at various times during the school year. Students will be able to discuss the essential steps in the process of creating their piece, taking pride in their hard work, knowledge gained, and their end product. There is an acknowledgement that the artistic process is at least as important, if not more than, the end product. Grant writers will actively pursue funding for the arts program to supplement the parent support group’s efforts.

Integration of Technology

In the course of a 21st century education, technological skills and applications will be prime common denominators of all students entering into a global society. MATES recognizes the value of introducing students from widely varied backgrounds to the technological advances available today. Technology will be integrated into academic coursework at MATES, and will continue to be offered after school as well. Efforts will be made to mesh technology with the arts as these two fields become increasingly intertwined. The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities believes, “that as new technologies advance, artists and humanists, with their expertise in organizing complex ideas and their skill in the use of symbols and visual material, must be at the forefront of this development.” (Creative America: A Report to the President, PCAH, 1997) Students will be able to apply technological solutions to academic and real-world situations (inventions, multi-media presentations, spreadsheet applications, etc.). Among other applications, students may use technology to work on creative art projects, for mathematics and reading instruction and assessment, for Student Council promotions/projects, for research purposes, remediation, and enrichment activities, and so forth.

Furthermore, the use of technology will enrich project-based learning, and will also act as a scaffold for many under-performing students. Over the next several years, MATES will implement a plan that will maintain, upgrade, and expand the technological infrastructure, providing the tools needed to deliver innovative and efficient instruction to all students. MATES staff will have the opportunity to choose professional development/training in technology-based fields of study based on collaborative decision-making. Through training, teachers will enrich instructional experiences by providing students, beginning in kindergarten, with multiple opportunities to use and learn from developmentally appropriate uses of technology. Keyboarding skills will be emphasized. Many current project-based units involve the use of technology to create, and amplify the learning process. For example, students in fourth grade learn how to use Microsoft Powerpoint to create a presentation on the students’ California Mission project that involved, among other things, internet research, word processing, and graphic art skills.

In addition to the integration of technology in the classroom as described above, further Technology Education will be available through a variety of after school enrichment programs that may include internet skills, web design, motion graphics, video production, and musical scoring/editing. Recent research on technological equity suggests that consistent access to technology after school is an essential component of closing the digital divide (Warschauer,
UCACCORD Public Policy Series, 2004). This opportunity will assist and challenge all students in a differentiated environment to learn new skills while using technology productively, in a safe atmosphere. (Baker, Gearhart, & Herman, 1994; Dwyer, Ringstaff, & Sandholtz, 1990; Means & Olson, 1995) The MATES community will collaborate to study the best way to offer our students access to enjoyable learning instances through these programs/activities.

MATES will promote technological development in our students by engaging technologically savvy parent volunteers to model and assist in the use of state-of-the-art equipment available to students and teachers. Volunteers will be integral for maximizing the integration of technological tools into classroom instruction and after school programs. A Technology Specialist will be funded through the parent association at the earliest time possible. Furthermore, teachers will receive professional development, on-going support, and coaching from the Technology Specialist; enabling the use of applications to manage and analyze student performance data and to integrate technology into their curricula. The ultimate goal is to create school-wide “Smart Classrooms.” These are classrooms that are developed on a foundation of integrated technology that enhances the delivery of well-designed instruction.

MATES has access to donated equipment through various sources and will strive to fund technology generously at the same time. It is the goal of MATES to have classroom computers available for daily, in-class use, with a possible computer lab for group learning. Over a five-year span, MATES will work towards building an improved technology program with the options to have a wireless environment in place, laptop computers that roam the campus, and to pilot at least one “Smart Classroom” in the upper grades. MATES is fully aware that technology is not low-cost, and funding will be obtained on a competitive basis for the most part. Fortunately, MATES has tremendous parent and community support that will optimize the odds of successfully planning and implementing the technology goals. In fact, MATES already has the commitment of a software company to provide materials and training for an arts-math-technology based program.

Presently, MATES has a Grant Writing Committee working on competitive applications to obtain technology monies. Just as we demand high expectations of our students, we hold ourselves to the same level. We expect to achieve positive results from these ongoing efforts. It is foreseeable that technology will supplement the project-based units and assist in delivering content-standards efficiently and captivatingly. Teachers will use technology as appropriate, retaining close teacher-student interaction.

Community Service

MATES students are involved students. Staff, students, and parents are quick to offer ideas of how to incorporate “service to others through giving” which have been implemented, recognized, and honored by the state of California through the Distinguished School Award (three times) and the nation through the National Blue Ribbon Award. At the local level, we have been involved in numerous programs involving many agencies that have given all students the opportunity to serve as community stewards. MATES students will continue to participate in service projects that will increase awareness of their civic responsibilities, build relationships with adults, and ultimately help fulfill the unmet needs of our community. In short, MATES students will
assume responsibility for their part in building a better community. Classroom assignments typically accompany these projects whereby the core subjects are validated via life experiences. The following chart shows a partial list of our service projects that provides a framework showing how MATES students will continue to be active members of society.

Table 4: Community Service Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE AGENCY/PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Tolerance</td>
<td>Mix-It-Up Lunch Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLK Memorial Penny Drive</td>
<td>Event organized school-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Founding Sponsor of the MLK Jr. National Monument</td>
<td>Student initiated idea to support the construction and maintenance of the Monument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Ribbon Week</td>
<td>Various activities involving our Mayor, City Council members, community helpers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald McDonald House</td>
<td>Toy Drives; Soda can lids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National “Hello” Day</td>
<td>Being friendly to others; making friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Live Aloha”</td>
<td>Service/Environmental Awareness Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Cultural Feast</td>
<td>International Foods, Awareness of cultural diversity on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Buddy Project</td>
<td>Severely Handicapped students buddy up with all 5th graders in a yearlong partnership that become lifelong friendships-15 year program history. Upper and Lower grades also pair up in the Study Buddy Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants from the City of Thousand Oaks</td>
<td>Environmental Projects/Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conejo Valley Botanical Garden</td>
<td>Service projects such as planting/maintaining native plants and removing invasive species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of California/Conejo Recreation &amp; Parks District</td>
<td>California Coastal Clean-Up Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Civics</td>
<td>“We the People” program at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Food Banks</td>
<td>MANNA food drives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Drives</td>
<td>Hurricane Katrina/Hurricane Rita; Native American Nation; shelters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventura County, State Department of Fish and Game</td>
<td>Trout in the Classroom- Certified Program with release of trout into local rivers overseen by representatives of government agencies and/or Conejo Fly fishers club members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Lifestyles</td>
<td>National Walk to School Day, Red Ribbon Week, Recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Acts of Kindness Week</td>
<td>Various school-wide and classroom activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Heart Association</td>
<td>Jump For Heart Fundraiser to benefit AHA research and outreach efforts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the addition of community service, founded upon the ideal of volunteerism, MATES students will share their time and resources for the common good of our citizenry. Mandatory commitment to community service hours may be required as voted upon by the parent support group/Board. Additionally, with historically high rates of parent volunteerism on campus, MATES will continue to provide our youth with positive modeling of service to others on a daily basis.

Table 5: Implementation Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backwards Design</td>
<td>New teachers trained</td>
<td>Formal training on using data to differentiate units and lessons</td>
<td>Lesson tuning protocols to examine and refine standards-based units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refresher training for all teachers</td>
<td>Vertical and horizontal alignment of standards-based units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project-Based Learning</td>
<td>Each grade level completes at least one project</td>
<td>Formal training on integrating PBL into standards-based units</td>
<td>Implementation of one PBL unit each trimester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of the Arts</td>
<td>One evening arts event</td>
<td>Formal training on integrating arts into standards-based units</td>
<td>An evening arts event each trimester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All current arts curriculum and programs continue</td>
<td>Arts integrated into all standards-based units</td>
<td>Arts integrated into all standards-based units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Technology</td>
<td>Revisit and revise technology policies and procedures</td>
<td>Additional training on integrating technology into standards-based units and assessments.</td>
<td>Each grade level implements technology into one project per trimester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers trained on integrating basic technology applications into instruction</td>
<td>All students using technology to demonstrate their learning</td>
<td>After school enrichment programs implemented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Curriculum
This next section provides a brief description of each core content area. As stated before, teachers utilize an interdisciplinary approach, in a standards-based system, supported by the instructional strategies described earlier. Each grade level has a developed pacing plan that encourages a vertically planned curriculum with consistent goals for K-5. The curricular programs and resources used are listed in Table 6. The Leadership Team will meet on a regular basis to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. MATES reserves the right to modify the instructional program where necessary to serve the needs of the school community utilizing a committee structure and ultimate approval by the MATES Board and consideration as required by law of any need to submit a material revision of the charter petition to Education Code Section 47607.

Reading

A primary goal of the program at MATES is to encourage students to value reading as a source of information and as a stimulating pastime. Students’ love of reading will encourage their growth as readers and writers. MATES will offer a balanced approach to reading, drawing on respected resources on comprehensive literacy instruction such as Gail E. Tomplins’ *Literacy for the 21st Century: A Balanced Approach*, 1996. The National Reading Panel, in a comprehensive study, found five general areas of reading instruction which were crucial for developing excellent readers: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. Using a balance of whole group instruction, guided instruction in small groups, and independent practice, teachers will develop these skills in students in a developmentally appropriate manner, supporting the individual needs of every student.

There will be a strong emphasis on phonics and phonemic awareness in the primary grades where students are “learning to read.” Examples of instructional strategies that promote phonics and phonemic awareness include daily chants/songs using sound-spelling cards, word sorts, rhyming, making words through manipulation of letter cards, and oral blending and segmentation. In the upper grades, instructional focus shifts from “learning to read” to “reading to learn,” with an increased emphasis on comprehension strategies. Students create meaning from what they read using the following comprehension strategies; predicting, connecting, questioning, monitoring, clarifying, summarizing, inferring, and visualizing. Using reference materials, grammar-based lessons, study buddy readings, literature circles, and self-selected books serve to further instruct all MATES students. Fluency and articulation will be developed, with opportunities to engage in public speaking, recitation, oral reports, choral reading, small group interactions, and projects. Performances in song and theater will reinforce and apply the standards behind the teaching strategies.

Critical thinking skills are addressed through read alouds, think alouds, open-ended questioning, and oral retellings. Vocabulary development will be the natural result of these basic peer and adult interactions. The use of word walls, thematic instruction, and reading from different, multicultural genres and periods of time expose all students to different languages and vocabulary. Classroom libraries include books of different genres and levels with a balance between fiction and non-fiction selections. Leveled lending libraries will support a strong at-home reading program where all students read nightly.
Writing

The goal of writing instruction at MATES is to help students figure out reading “from the inside out.” As children write, they use their letter-sound knowledge, develop knowledge they have read about, and practice the art of writing that they have previously analyzed in models that they have read. Children who write become more fluent in reading. Students in every grade level will have the opportunity to write in one or more of the four genres: narrative, expository, persuasive, and response to literature. The core of writing instruction is built on the steps of the writing process, i.e. brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Beginning in Kindergarten, teachers in every grade level guide students through this process so that students become independent writers who can write on demand for a variety of audiences and purposes.

MATES utilizes a variety of writing techniques using the writing process. Models include those from Lucy Calkins, author of The Art of Teaching Writing, suggested writing projects from Open Court (primary grades K-2), Houghton Mifflin (upper grades 3-5), and from the South Coast Writing Project at Santa Barbara, taught by Joni Chancer, utilizing the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing. These traits include:

1. Ideas: The content, or main theme. Can be looked at as the heart of the message.
2. Organization: The internal structure of the writing.
3. Voice: The personal voice of the author comes through. This gives a sense of a real person speaking.
4. Word Choice: The use of precise, colorful, and rich words to communicate.
5. Sentence Fluency: The writing flows together often with a rhythm or cadence.
6. Conventions: Mechanical correctness, including spelling and grammar.
7. Presentation: The final product: publication, project, or multi-media.

The 6+1 Traits Writing Process is recursive; it is not a step-by-step process. The six traits of writing are not separate entities; they influence each other (Chancer). We have adapted writing rubrics from the Kid Friendly Rubric developed by Judy Bowers, Language Arts Specialist at the Ventura County Office of Education, and supplemental rubrics from Lucy Calkins’ The Art of Teaching Writing program.

Technology is incorporated into writing instruction in a variety of ways. Students use the Internet as a research tool, word processing to draft and revise, and PowerPoint to assist in presenting their work to classmates and other audiences. Keyboarding skills are taught along with basic handwriting, beginning in Kindergarten. Cursive handwriting is taught when the students show readiness.

Math
The goal of mathematics instruction is to produce students who are fluent with numbers, have built mathematical reasoning skills, and developed a strong math vocabulary through real world experiences. Within the context of the California State standards, students will be constantly challenged to reason and communicate mathematically in addition to demonstrating proficiency in all required math standards. Specifically, teachers will focus on developing students’ number sense and algebraic reasoning abilities. This approach is supported by the recently released “Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel” (USDE, 2008, p. 17). Even young students can begin to understand numbers conceptually, and can recognize relationships among mathematical concepts (Building a Foundation for Learning in the Elementary Grades, NCISLA VOL. 1, NO. 2, Fall 2000). According to research conducted at the University of Texas, Austin, “number sense not only leads to automatic use of math information, but also is a key ingredient in the ability to solve basic arithmetic computations.” (Gersten, 1999) As a result, MATES students will be prepared for the rigors of higher math. Important elements of number sense among young children include linking symbols to quantities, understanding part-to-whole relationships, and being able to make calculations with the same fluency that we stress in reading, so that they can devote more of their thinking to visualizing and tackling difficult word problems. The math program, which is spiraling, includes hands-on activities, classroom discussion about mathematical reasoning, and sufficient calculation practice to make mathematical operations automatic. Various artistic concepts and elements, such as music, are incorporated into the math program, and vice-versa, as the two disciplines intertwine, complement, and help explain one another.

Science

Students will discover and learn about the natural world by using the methods of science as extensions of their own curiosity and wonder. Students will acquire knowledge of the biological and physical sciences from a balanced curriculum, which includes building on their understanding of science concepts to learn about the logic of the scientific method and applications of science to the world around them. Students will develop critical thinking skills of science: observing, comparing, organizing, inferring, relating, and applying. Our desired outcomes from science are an understanding of the process of scientific inquiry, curiosity about the world around them, skills to comprehend informational text, and increased self-esteem from producing a tangible work-product as a result of their understanding. Science, technology, and societal issues are strongly connected to community health, population, natural resources, environmental quality, natural and human-induced hazards, and other global challenges. The standards should be viewed as the foundation for understanding these issues (California State Board of Education Science Content Standards, 2008).

Through the thematic teaching approach, teachers will incorporate fictional and expository text into their science instruction. On a regular basis, students will write non-fiction text in relation to their experiments. When appropriate, students will also write fictional pieces relating to the scientific topic of study. For example, a first grader studying the butterfly life cycle will write in her journal, illustrating and identifying the parts of the insect’s body and recording factual observations, but will also experience the creative writing process using butterflies as the main topic. MATES students will also participate in community service events/projects that relate to topics of science and environmentalism. Combined, laboratory science and real-life experiences
provide MATES students with a well-rounded science program. Keys to a successful science program include engaging in the scientific process and having opportunities for questioning and hands-on laboratory experiences. Guest speakers and field trips provide reinforcement and real-life relevancy as does the annual Science Fair held in May.

Social Studies

Teachers will build upon students’ curiosity about themselves and their world by presenting history as an exciting and dramatic series of events and issues. Students will engage in problem solving as they acquire, evaluate, and use information in a variety of ways. Frequent opportunities will exist for all students, including English Learners, to share their language, cultural ideas, customs, and heritage, thereby providing multicultural dimensions to the curriculum. Content standards are encountered as integrated features of the humanities, geography, science, mathematics, language arts, and the visual and performing arts. Assorted activities found within absorbing units of study will accentuate the arts and use of technology while students learn about themselves in the world. Teachers will provide equal access to the core curriculum for all students through a variety of appropriate strategies and thematic, project-based units. Teachers also facilitate the exploration of values critical to understanding the democratic process.

Key content outcomes for Social Studies include knowledge and cultural understanding, democratic principles and civic values, and academic and social skills necessary for effective participation in diverse societies. Key skills and goals for students to acquire include the integration of multiple skills to solve a project-based problem, the ability to use informational text, mastery of academic vocabulary, and increased reading and writing skills. Current events and real-world issues that may or may not be represented in our school and/or community will help MATES students understand common and complex themes that reoccur throughout history.

Visual and Performing Arts

The goal of the visual and performing arts program at MATES is to expose and engage students in different art forms and encourage students to experience and appreciate art as a form of communication and cultural language. The strands of visual and performing arts are as follows: artistic perception, creative expression, historical and cultural context, aesthetic valuing, and connections, relationships, and applications.

The arts program is aligned with California State Standards and integrated throughout the curriculum. MATES is committed, through instruction and exploration, to providing students with many artistic avenues for creative self-expression. By engaging in visual and performing arts, students enhance and solidify their knowledge of core academic subjects, apply critical thinking skills, and deepen artistic skill, style, and self-expression. Lessons and activities may include the following arenas: principles of design, dance, ethnomusicology, chorus, theater, instrumental/electronic music, ceramics/sculpture, painting/drawing, art history, art as communication, photography, and cinema.
Students will engage in self-discovery, risk taking, fine motor skill development, make links to mathematical concepts, be exposed to a broader range of media, gain self-confidence in creative expression, synthesize their knowledge of the arts to other realms of life, and will participate in performances and exhibitions. Students will also complete projects based on a larger thematic unit as provided by the classroom teacher, grade level cluster, or school-wide community. Students will create, invent, play, interact, devise, move, think critically, and respond to world cultures by learning through the arts.

Artful assessment is at the heart of each arts discipline. This includes the assessment of student works and performances, open-ended projects or questions, research assignments, constructed responses, and multiple-choice items. Using rubrics that describe levels of accomplishment for performances, teachers will involve the students in self-appraisal and communicate the need for the ongoing monitoring of progress. The end product should not be over-emphasized as creative expression is encouraged. Principles, such as those from Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), will aid in the assessment process. DBAE is a program that facilitates the integration of arts into the curriculum involving higher order thinking skills and problem solving. Rubrics such as the National Assessment Governing Board’s Arts Education Assessment Framework will be used in tandem with concepts from DBAE to qualitatively assess individual student progress in the arts. Teaching the arts requires the student creators to thoughtfully reenter the work multiple times to reflect and refine it and, ultimately, find satisfaction with its expression. This creative evolution may be tracked and communicated through such qualitative means as journals and discussions, video documentation, photography, and through the artistic work itself.

Physical Education and Health

The goal of the physical and health education curriculum is to promote healthy lifestyles among students and their families through the development of positive physical and social-emotional practices. The physical education and health curriculum covers the following strands: movement skills and knowledge, self-image and personal development, and social development. In the arts, ethnomusicology and world dance forms may be used to add multicultural experiences to the physical education curriculum. Also, sports and games from other cultures augment classroom units of study.

The California Content Standards will be met through a variety of physical activities, including dance. The physical education program emphasizes individual motor skills, fitness and good sportsmanship. Beginning in kindergarten, skills are taught and developed in preparation for the grade 5 standardized performance test, the California Fitness Gram. Standards-based, age-appropriate health education lessons are incorporated into the academic curriculum whenever possible. Proper nutrition and healthy lifestyles are also woven into unit themes and school-wide service projects/events.

Instructional Materials

Meadows Elementary currently utilizes a variety of curriculum resources detailed in Table 6 below. These resources are used to implement state content standards and to guide and
supplement the thematic units created by teachers. Curriculum materials are aligned with California State Content Standards. As directed by the Leadership Team and School Site Council, the school will make future curriculum decisions by creating a committee drawn from staff and parents to review materials and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors. MATES Governing Board will then make final decisions for adoption of materials. Decisions on new adoptions and selections will be driven by the school mission and vision.

Table 6: Curriculum Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Core Materials 2008-2009</th>
<th>Current Supplemental Materials 2008-2009 and Possible Core and/or Supplemental Materials 2009-2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>Houghton Mifflin</td>
<td>Zoophonics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Open Court</td>
<td>First Hand– Lucy Calkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guided Reading book sets</td>
<td>Grammar with a Giggle</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literacy Library</td>
<td>S’Cool Moves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCWRP</td>
<td>Education Through Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caldecott Award Winning Picture Books (K-2: integrating art into curriculum)</td>
<td>Orchard Language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fearon Teacher Aids (Think, Draw, Write;Level 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evan-Moor (Draw, Then Write Grades 1-3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Barker Creek (Draw… Write Now; Books 1-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evan-Moor (Language Arts Centers; K-2, 2-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>Carousel</td>
<td>Education Through Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rosetta Stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Everyday Math</td>
<td>SIOP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Singapore Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ST Math-MIND Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marcy Cook: Math Their Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marcy Cook: Math: A Way of Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Math in a Basket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Houghton Mifflin Science</td>
<td>Laboratory-Based Experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FOSS Kits</td>
<td>NASA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Scott Foresman</td>
<td>National Park Foundation/Ball State University-EFT’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Children’s Discovery Center for Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bad Wolf Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Worldstrde</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Living History Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Calendar**

MATES’ academic calendar will follow the Conejo Valley Unified School District’s traditional academic calendar. The school year will contain 180 instructional days and commence before
September 30 in accordance with California Charter School Law\(^1\). The District school calendar for 2009-2010 is attached as Appendix F which will be utilized as a guide in creating the MATES calendar. The Executive Board of MATES reserves the right to formally make minor adjustments to the schedule to accommodate special functions.

**Bell Schedule**

The daily schedules for all grade levels are listed below. The number of instructional minutes offered for all grades will meet or exceed the State’s requirements in Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(1). The kindergarten day will be extended to 1:20 pm Monday-Friday. MATES will extend the length of the school day to allow teachers extra time for synthesis, analysis, and evaluation of the days’ lessons. This translates to over 1,400 minutes of added instructional time over the course of 180 days, adding to our uniqueness as a public school. Appendix E includes a narrative of a “typical day” for a MATES’ student.

**Table 7: Bell Schedule**

**KINDERGARTEN BELL SCHEDULE: MONDAY-FRIDAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:05 am</td>
<td>First Bell-Line Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10 am</td>
<td>Kindergarten Begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10 am-8:30 am</td>
<td>Morning Business-Building Our Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 am-10:00 am</td>
<td>Language Arts Block: Reading, Writing, Thematic Instruction (incorporates art, music, theater, dance, technology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am-10:20 am</td>
<td>Nutrition/Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:20 am-10:40 am</td>
<td>Quiet Time/ Read Aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:40 am-11:45 am</td>
<td>Math/Sciences (thematic instruction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 am-12:30 pm</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 pm-1:20 pm</td>
<td>Developmental Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20 pm</td>
<td>Ending/Evaluation of Our Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BELL SCHEDULE: GRADES 1-5, MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, AND FRIDAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:05 am</td>
<td>First Bell-Line Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10 am</td>
<td>School Starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:55 am-10:15 am</td>
<td>Grades 1-2 Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10 am-10:30 am</td>
<td>Grades 3-5 Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50 am-12:35 pm</td>
<td>Grades 1-2 Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 pm-1:00 pm</td>
<td>Grades 3-5 Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 pm-2:35 pm</td>
<td>Grades 1-3 Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 pm</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BELL SCHEDULE: GRADES 1-5, TUESDAY**

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\(^1\) Education Code Section 47652(c) requires a charter school to commence instruction within the first three months of the fiscal year beginning July 1. Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations Section 11960 requires charter schools to offer no fewer than 175 days of instruction.
8:05am  First Bell-Line Up
8:10am  School Starts
9:55am-10:15 am  Grades 1-2 Recess
10:10am-10:30 am  Grades 3-5 Recess
11:50 am-12:35 pm  Grades 1-2 Lunch
12:15 pm-1:00 pm  Grades 3-5 Lunch
1:20 pm  Dismissal

**Professional Development**

MATES plans to provide extensive professional development opportunities to our teachers and staff. Professional development is based on collaboration and tailored to the needs of teachers and their students. Driven by school data, the Leadership Team determines professional development needs based on responses to staff evaluations, teacher input based on students’ academic needs, feedback from grade level teams, school goals, and school initiatives such as the increased integration of technology.

Key elements of professional development at MATES include ongoing identification of instructional needs, differentiated professional development for teachers at varying levels of experience, and providing time and resources for teachers and staff to share and reflect on best practices. Monthly meeting times rotate between staff meetings, full staff professional development, and cluster meetings for grade level teams to assess/reassess student progress and modify instructional plans accordingly. In order to build in-house expertise on a variety of topics, money is also allocated in the budget for teachers to attend outside workshops and institutes. Teachers are expected to bring knowledge and skills back to share with their colleagues.

As described earlier, all teachers receive ongoing training on how to implement the school instructional approaches such as project-based learning and backwards design. Current professional development priorities include the continued integration of the arts into curriculum, training around new technology tools, enhanced GATE methods, EL methods, additional Lucy Calkins training, Education Through Music (ETM), and Mel Levine – Schools Attuned.

**E. Plan For Students Who Are Academically Low Achieving**

MATES will attend to the individual needs of all students. Teachers are highly qualified and meet the requirements of the Federal “No Child Left Behind Act.” As such, MATES teachers are well versed in identifying students having difficulty, then providing differentiated intervention strategies, and monitoring advancement with struggling students. Meaningful instructional methods (theme-based, multi-modal, differentiated, flexible groupings) and engaging content will boost student interest in the learning process as it ties to the state’s rigorous content standards. Instructional activities will vary to accommodate different learning styles to draw out students’ various strengths. Students who are not meeting grade level benchmarks will be provided additional interventions beyond the regular school schedule and will be funded by the state and/or by parent support group monies. The interventions, using...
researched, state-adopted programs, will focus on building and supporting basic reading, writing, and math skills for success in regular grade-level appropriate curriculum. Our smaller school will also allow more intimate interactions with school staff and parent volunteers who work with students in small groups on a daily basis.

When additional interventions are needed, the staff will be proactive in coordinating support services. MATES will adhere to a three-step Student Study Team (SST) intervention process in year one of the charter, with the goal of revisiting the process for further refinement in successive years of operation. Please see Appendix G for information on the MATES three-step SST intervention process. There is an increased focus on reassessment and re-teaching using differentiated methods with each advance in level. In all cases, the focus of the SST will center on the student’s unmet needs and how MATES can provide necessary support. Parental involvement and open lines of communication will be integral to the process. SST members may include the teacher(s), the principal, the learning center teacher, the parents, the school psychologist, the nurse, peer teachers, and any other specialists needed to provide additional insights and strategies. This team addresses needs of the whole child, with assessment driven as well as teacher observation data to support decision-making on the intervention level. Dedication to finding timely solutions supports positive student outcomes. Indicators of an undiagnosed disability will lead to further assessment and possible placement in a specialized program. MATES will engage in a detailed review process of intervention programs for English Language Arts and Mathematics.

F. **Plan For Students Who Are Academically High Achieving**

Since the mission of MATES includes assuring that the educational experience of all students is rigorous, teachers will be prepared to provide additional challenges for those who are learning at a faster pace than the majority. Students identified for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) as well as those students working above grade level will benefit from accelerated study and peer clustering as well as individual and group lesson extensions that demand creative uses of high-level thinking skills in terms of scope, sequence, depth, and complexity. MATES understands that not all GATE students are self-directed learners. Students that need further differentiation will be offered activities that support their interests and curiosities that will engage and accentuate the overall learning experience. Heterogeneous groupings will allow for leadership and cooperative learning encounters with above-, at- and below-grade level peers. Brain-based research shows that people deepen understanding through the process of teaching others (Caine & Caine, 1998). Above-grade-level students will receive appropriate activities that will be of high interest and will stretch their natural abilities.

The goal is to build different components of the GATE program, possibly including after school/ lunchtime clubs and enrichment activities, offering qualitatively differentiated projects, community service options, and cross-age tutoring opportunities. It is also the goal of MATES to offer a richer, more focused exposure to academia through supplemental, part-time enrichment. This pull out program will address the social and emotional needs of GATE students while offering lessons based on higher skill levels and advanced application/synthesis/evaluation skills. Frequency and duration of this program, if adopted, will be determined through a collaborative
venture involving staff and parents. These programs will be intended for, but not limited to, GATE students.

Projects and exhibitions are particularly useful in assuring that students are working up to potential by customizing expectations to the learner. Again, these types of culminating projects align with project-based learning as well as the emphasis on arts and technology. The school vision inherently supports leadership roles and community involvement, focus on the arts and technology, preparation for the future, and achievement of GATE students.

Professional development will be encouraged in the realm of GATE concerns. Parental input for high achieving students will be critical in devising an individualized learning plan for the student. MATES welcomes and expects parental involvement in realizing all aspects of the school’s mission and vision. Our mission and vision is further supported by the National Association of Gifted Children in their policy position that, “Schools with well supported arts education also often report enhanced reading, writing, and math skills; improved critical and creative thinking; and increased commitment to learning, and heightened multicultural understanding.” (NAGC, 1997).

G. Plan For English Learners

1. Overview

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

2. Home Language Survey

MATES will administer the home language survey upon a student’s initial enrollment into the Charter School (on enrollment forms).

3. CELDT Testing

All students who indicate that their home language is other than English will be California English Language Development Test (“CELDT”) tested within thirty days of initial enrollment\(^2\) and at least annually thereafter between July 1 and October 31\(^{st}\) until re-designated as fluent English proficient.

\(^2\) 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.
MATES will notify all parents of its responsibility for CELDT testing and of CELDT results within thirty days of receiving results from publisher. The CELDT shall be used to fulfill the requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act for annual English proficiency testing.

4. Strategies for English Learner Instruction and Intervention

English Learners will be supported through a combination of modified instruction, a supportive school culture, and additional academic support as needed to develop proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in the English language. English Language Development ("ELD") standards will be used to supplement English Language standards so ELs will demonstrate proficiency in all grade level benchmarks leading up to the student’s current grade level. Frequent monitoring by teachers will ensure that ELs are internalizing English language skills.

MATES supports California’s ambitious “P-16 Initiative” whereby a plan is developed, implemented, and sustained to create essential steps for closing the achievement gap. MATES will work hard to provide a school where all ELs achieve. P-16 identified the main components that are needed for ELs to thrive and are as follows:

- ACCESS to a rigorous curriculum
- CULTURE & CLIMATE that is safe and warm
- EXPECTATIONS of a high achievement standard for ALL students
- STRATEGIES or use of collaborative leadership practices and promising teaching methods by all teachers

To provide ELs with the outstanding learning environment detailed above, teachers will continue to receive training in providing content-based /sheltered instruction using Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English ("SDAIE") techniques as well as other effective methods of sheltering. Grade-level standards-based subject matter will be taught in English. Differentiated instruction, which supports all learners, including ELs, will be supported by instructional strategies such as project-based learning. The emphasis on the arts and technology also creates learning opportunities that allow English Learners to access content in different formats. These approaches diminish the reliance on reading and writing as the only classroom learning tools and allow students to demonstrate their mastery of subject matter in a variety of ways. Research shows that this method of instruction requires significant teaching skills in both English language development and subject-specific instruction; clearly defined language and content objectives; modified curriculum, supplementary materials, and alternative assessments (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000).

Meadows currently utilizes a wide variety of supplemental materials in covering ELD standards (see Table 6, list of Curriculum Resources). The school will also promote the success of English Language Learners by valuing their home language as a critical resource and by honoring bilingual families. Additionally, MATES will refer to
California Department of Education’s “Quality Indicators” in providing translations to Native language(s) to encourage parent participation in the school and in conveying information about their child’s education. MATES will identify new-enrollees with a home language other than English, monitor their progress in learning English, and help reclassify them when they become proficient in English, using assessment tools in compliance with California Law. Qualified personnel will perform these assessments.

5. Reclassification Procedures

Reclassification procedures utilize multiple criteria in determining whether to classify a pupil as proficient in English including, but not limited to, all of the following:

- Assessment of language proficiency using an objective assessment instrument including, but not limited to, the CELDT.

- 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 pupil’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 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 and 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.

The Student Oral Language Observation Matrix will be used by teachers to measure progress regarding comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar usage.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

The evaluation for the program effectiveness for ELs in the Charter School will include:

- Adhere to Charter School-adopted academic benchmarks by language proficiency level and years in program to determine adequate yearly progress.

- Monitoring of teacher qualifications and the use of appropriate instructional strategies based on program design.
• Monitoring of student identification and placement.
• Monitoring of parental program choice options.
• Monitoring of availability of adequate resources.

H. Serving Students With Disabilities

1. Overview

The Charter School shall comply 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 in Education Improvement Act OF 2004 (“IDEIA”).

The Charter School shall be categorized as a public school of the Conejo Valley Unified School District ("District") in accordance with Education Code Section 47641(b).

The Charter School shall comply with all state and federal laws related to the provision of special education instruction and related services and all Ventura County Special Education Local Plan Area (“SELPA”) policies and procedures; and shall utilize appropriate SELPA forms.

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

2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

The Charter School 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 School.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Principal and shall include the parent/guardian, 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 IDEIA but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEIA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504. The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team who 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 include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligent 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 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 IDEIA, a referral for assessment under the IDEIA 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 the 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 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. Attached as Appendix H, please find the MATES 504 policy and administrative regulation and Parent rights Form.
3. Services for Students under the IDEIA

The Charter School intends to provide special education instruction and related services in accordance with the IDEIA, Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and practices of the SELPA. The Charter School shall remain, by default, a public school of the District for purposes of Special Education purposes pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b). However, the Charter School reserves the right, in the future, to make written verifiable assurances that the Charter School shall become an independent Local Education Agency (“LEA”) and join a SELPA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a) either on its own or with a grouping of charter school LEAs as a consortium. It is the understanding of MATES that the District would continue to maintain and operate its District-wide special day classes, and thus MATES has not currently anticipated including these as part of the conversion charter, but would be open to discussing options as part of the memorandum of understanding negotiations as discussed below.

As a public school of the District, solely for purposes of providing special education and related services under the IDEIA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b), in accordance with Education Code Section 47646 and 20 U.S.C. 1413, the Charter School seeks services from the District for special education students enrolled in the Charter School in the same manner as is provided to students in other District schools. The Charter School will follow the District and SELPA policies and procedures, and shall utilize SELPA forms in seeking out and identifying and serving students who may qualify for special education programs and services and for responding to record requests and maintaining the confidentiality of pupil records. The Charter School will comply with District protocol as to the delineation of duties between the District central office and the local school site in providing special education instruction and related services to identified pupils. The Charter School will request an annual meeting between the Charter School and the District to review special education policies, procedures, protocols, and forms of the District and the SELPA and District protocol, to ensure that the Charter School and the District have an ongoing mutual understanding of District protocol and will facilitate ongoing compliance.

The Charter School acknowledges the importance of cooperating with the District so that the District can provide special education services to Charter School students. The Charter School agrees to promptly respond to all District inquiries, to comply with reasonable District directives, and to allow the District access to Charter School students, staff, facilities, equipment and records as required to fulfill all District obligations under this Agreement or imposed by law. The Charter School believes that the allocation of responsibility for the provision of services (including but not limited to referral, identification, assessment, case management, Individualized Education Plan (“IEP”) development, modification and implementation) shall be divided in a manner consistent with their allocation between the District and its school sites.

The following provisions are meant to summarize the Charter School Petitioner’s understanding of the manner in which special education instruction and related services shall be provided by the Charter School and the District. Petitioners have met with the

Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School
Submitted June 2, 2008
Ventura County SELPA Assistant Superintendent, Mary Samples on May 15, 2008, and have discussed the special education responsibilities of the Charter School and the application of SELPA policies. Petitioners were given a copy of the SELPA policy on Charter Schools (Appendix XII.L to the Local Plan). The following language aligns with the SELPA policy, the information discussed with Ms. Sample, and mirrors the typical “industry standard” arrangement between a school district and a charter school and aligns with State and Federal law which requires that students in charter schools receive special education and related services in the same manner as any other student in the District. The language that follows is not meant to unilaterally bind the District, or to preclude alternative arrangements between the District and the Charter School as agreed upon in a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”).

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 California’s Education Code and the IDEIA. Charter School staff shall participate in all mandatory District in-service training relating to special education.

It is the Charter School’s understanding that the District 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 unless the District directs the Charter School that current District practice is for the individual school sites to hire site special education staff or the District and the Charter School agree that the Charter School must hire on-site special education staff. In that instance, the Charter School shall ensure that all special education staff hired by the Charter School is qualified pursuant to District and SELPA policies, as well as meet all legal requirements. The District may review the qualifications of all special education staff hired by the Charter School (with the agreement of the District) and may require pre-approval by the District of all hires to ensure consistency with District and SELPA policies. The District 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.

Notification and Coordination

The Charter School shall promptly notify the District of all requests it receives for assessment, services, complaints, IEP meetings, reimbursement, compensatory education, mediation, and/or due process whether these requests are verbal or in writing.

The Charter School shall follow District policies as they apply to all District schools for notifying District personnel regarding the discipline of special education students to
ensure District pre-approval prior to imposing a suspension or expulsion. The Charter School shall assist in the coordination of any communications and immediately act according to District and SELPA policies relating to disciplining special education students.

**Identification and Referral**

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 District and 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 by MATES for special education only after the resources of the regular education program have been considered, and where appropriate, utilized.

It is the Charter School’s understanding that the District shall provide the Charter School with any assistance that it generally provides its schools in the identification and referral processes, and will ensure that the Charter School is provided with notification and relevant files of all students who have an existing IEP and who are transferring to the Charter School from a District school. The District shall have unfettered access to all Charter School student records and information in order to serve all of Charter School’s students’ special needs.

**Assessments**

The term “assessments” shall have the same meaning as the term “evaluation” in the IDEIA, as provided in Section 1414, Title 20 of the United States Code. The District will determine what assessments, if any, are necessary and arrange for such assessments for referred or eligible students in accordance with the District’s general practice and procedure and applicable law. The Charter School shall work in collaboration with the District to obtain parent/guardian consent to assess Charter School students. The Charter School shall not conduct special education assessments unless directed by the District.

**IEP Meetings**

In accordance with the role of the District and the District school sites, the District shall arrange and notice the necessary IEP meetings. 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 or as otherwise agreed upon by the District and Charter School: the Principal and/or the Charter School designated representative with appropriate administrative authority as required by the IDEIA; the student’s special education teacher (if Charter School employee as opposed to District employee); 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. It is the Charter School’s understanding that the District 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 IDEIA, a speech therapist, psychologist, resource specialist, and behavior specialist; and shall document the IEP meeting and provide the notice of parental rights.

IEP Development

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 District, pursuant to the District’s 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 District and of the SELPA and State and Federal law.

IEP Implementation

Pursuant to District policy and how the District operates special education at all other public schools in the District; the District shall be responsible for all school site implementation of the IEP. The Charter School shall assist the District in implementing IEPs, pursuant to District and SELPA polices in the same manner as any other school of the District. The District and Charter School will need to be jointly involved in all aspects of the special education program, with the District holding ultimate authority over implementation and supervision of services. As part of this responsibility, the Charter School shall provide the District and the parents with timely reports on the student’s progress as provided in the student’s IEP, and at least quarterly or as frequently as progress reports are provided for the Charter School’s non-special education students, whichever is more. The Charter School shall also provide all home-school coordination and information exchange unless directed otherwise by the District. The Charter School shall also be responsible for providing all curriculum, classroom materials, and modifications and accommodations, unless directed otherwise by the District. The Charter School shall comply with any directive of the District as relates to the coordination of the Charter School and District for IEP implementation including but not limited to adequate notification of student progress and immediate notification of any considered discipline of special education students in such matters, the petitioners would notify the District of relevant circumstances and communications immediately and act according to District administrative authority.

Interim and Initial Placements of New Charter School Students

For students who enroll in the Charter School from another school district outside of the SELPA with a current IEP, the District and the Charter School shall conduct an IEP meeting within thirty days. Prior to such meeting and pending agreement on a new IEP, the District and the Charter School shall implement the existing IEP at the Charter School, to the extent practicable or as otherwise agreed between the District and parent/guardian.
Non-Public Placements/Non-Public Agencies

The District shall be solely responsible for selecting, contracting with, and overseeing all non-public schools and non-public agencies used to serve special education students. The Charter School shall not hire, request services from, or pay any non-public school or agency to provide education or services to special education students without the prior written approval of the District. The Charter School shall immediately notify the District of all parental requests for services from non-public schools or agencies, unilateral placements, and/or requests for reimbursement.

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 follow District policies as they apply to all District schools for responding to parental concerns or complaints related to special education services. The Charter School shall instruct parents/guardians to raise concerns regarding special education services, related services and rights to the District unless otherwise directed by the District. The Charter School shall immediately notify the District of any concerns raised by parents.

The District’s designated representative, in consultation with the Charter School’s designated representative, shall investigate as necessary, respond to, and address the parent/guardian concern or complaint. The Charter School shall allow the District access to all facilities, equipment, students, personnel, and records to conduct such an investigation.

The Charter School and the District shall timely notify the other of any meetings scheduled with parents/guardians or their representatives to address the parent/guardian concerns or complaints so that a representative of each entity may attend. The District, as the LEA, shall be ultimately responsible for determining how to respond to parent concerns or complaints, and the Charter School shall comply with the District’s decision.

The Charter School and the District shall cooperate in responding to any complaint to or investigation by the California Department of Education, the United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights or any other agency, and shall provide timely notice to the other upon receipt of such a complaint or request for investigation.

Due Process Hearings
The District may initiate a due process hearing or request for mediation with respect to a student enrolled in Charter School if the District determines such action is legally necessary or advisable. The Charter School agrees to cooperate fully with the District in such a proceeding. In the event that the parents/guardians file for a due process hearing, or request mediation, the District and the Charter School shall work together to defend the case. In the event that the District determines that legal representation is needed, the Charter School agrees that it shall be jointly represented by legal counsel of the District’s choosing.

The Charter School understands that the District shall have sole discretion to settle any matter in mediation or due process. The District shall also have sole discretion to file an appeal from a due process hearing or take other legal action involving any Charter School student necessary to protect its rights.

**SELPA Representation**

It is the Charter School’s understanding that the District shall represent the Charter School at all SELPA meetings and report to the Charter School of SELPA activities in the same manner as is reported to all schools within the District.

**Funding**

The Charter School understands that it will enter into a MOU with the District regarding Special Education funding, and cannot at this time unilaterally dictate the funding relationship between the District and the Charter School. The Charter School anticipates, without binding the District to these terms, that based upon State and Federal law that the fiscal relationship could be summarized as follows:

**Retention of Special Education Funds by the District**

The District shall retain all state and federal special education funding allocated for Charter School students though the SELPA Annual Budget Plan, and shall be entitled to count Charter School students as its own for all such purposes.

**Retention of ADA Funds by the District for Non-Public Placements**

The Parties acknowledge that the District may be required to pay for or provide Charter School students with placements at locations other than at the Charter School’s school site in order to provide them with a free appropriate public education. Such placements could include, without limitation, programs or services in other District schools, in other public school districts within the SELPA, in a County Office of Education program, in a non-public school, at home, at a hospital, or in a residential program. When such programs or services are provided at District expense, the District shall be entitled to receive from the Charter School the pro rata share of all funding received for such student, including, without limitation, all ADA funds, based on the number of instructional days or minutes per day that the student is not at the Charter School site.
**Contribution to Encroachment**

The Charter School shall contribute its fair share to offset special education’s encroachment upon the District’s general fund. Accordingly, the Charter School shall pay to the District a pro-rata share of the District’s unfunded special education costs (“Encroachment”). At the end of each fiscal year, the District shall invoice the Charter School for the Charter School’s pro-rata share of the District-wide Encroachment for that year as calculated by the total unfunded special education costs of the District (including those costs attributable to Charter School) divided by the total number of District ADA (including Charter School students), and multiplied by the total number of Charter School ADA. The Charter School ADA shall include all Charter School students, regardless of home district.

The Charter School is eager to discuss this arrangement, or a mutually agreed upon reasonable alternative in our discussions with the District to develop the MOU.
III. MEASURABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES AND OTHER USES OF DATA

_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 pupils of the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school's educational program.”

-- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(B)

_Governing Law:_ The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is measured.

-- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(C)

A. Assessment Assumptions

Our assessment methods are based on the following beliefs:

- In order to have a complete picture of a student’s growth, multiple assessment methods must be used. Assessments for individual students should focus on individual mastery of specific content standards and learning objectives.
- There should be an appropriate relationship between a desired student outcome and the means used to assess it. Assessments should be aligned to the prioritized standards and student objectives.
- Assessment should promote and support reflection and self-evaluation on the part of students, staff, and parents.

MATES is dedicated to documenting student achievement of the state content standards each year through state-mandated pupil assessments. As is required by the California Department of Education Code Section 60605, students will participate in the Statewide Testing and Reporting program (CST, CAT6, SABE) and all other mandated accountability programs (CELDT, etc.). Through these assessments, MATES shall demonstrate student mastery of state standards. Standardized assessments allows MATES to compare student performance with the rest of the state. In addition, the school may provide internal learning performance accountability documentation. This internal documentation may include, but is not limited to, publisher assessments, student portfolios, anecdotal records, student self-assessment, performance evaluation, and other methods by which student progress may be measured. Social, emotional, and developmental growth will be addressed as appropriate.
Table 8: Measurable School Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable School Outcomes/Goals</th>
<th>Local Benchmark Instruments</th>
<th>State-level Year-End Assessments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least 95% student attendance</td>
<td>Daily attendance reporting via Student Management System</td>
<td>Calculated ADA rate, comparison of attendance rate to other district schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make at least one level of advancement in language proficiency (Beginning, Early Intermediate, etc.) annually for ELs</td>
<td>Reading Inventory, Student Portfolios, Benchmark Assessments</td>
<td>CELDT Individual Student Score Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet or exceed State-wide Academic Performance Index growth targets</td>
<td>Benchmark Assessments</td>
<td>AYP/API Data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Measurable Pupil Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil Outcome Goals</th>
<th>Proposed Assessment Tools/ Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students will develop and show growth towards grade-level proficiency, or higher, in reading and language arts as readers, writers, listeners, speakers, collaborators, and fact-finders.</td>
<td>• Pre-Post Reading/Language Arts diagnostics (e.g. Reading Results for K-5, Sight Words, Spelling Inventory) • Curriculum embedded benchmark assessments • Writing Samples regularly gathered and scored with a rubric as appropriate in addition to the appropriate equivalent, as stated in an IEP. • STAR test data • Informal classroom-based assessments • Student Projects • Student Report Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students will demonstrate growth towards grade-level proficiency, or higher, in mathematical application, problem solving, and computation skills.</td>
<td>• Pre-post diagnostic assessments • Curriculum embedded benchmark assessments • STAR test data • Informal classroom-based assessments • Student Report Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate their innate creative abilities, acquire knowledge, and gain appreciation of the fine, performing, and applied arts.</td>
<td>• Student Performances • Student Projects • Teacher assessments based on DBAE or similar teacher-made rubrics • Student self-assessment based on DBAE or similar • Participation in arts programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students will develop and show growth in history/social science, promoted through global/environmental awareness, cultural appreciation, service to community, and democratic values/social justice.

- Curriculum embedded benchmark assessments
- Student Projects
- Student Report Card
- Informal classroom-based assessments
- Self-Assessment

Students will gain knowledge of scientific concepts using the scientific method and through experimentation, inquiry, exploration, research, and application.

- Curriculum embedded assessments
- Student Report Cards
- STAR, as applicable by grade level
- Teacher Observation
- Student Projects

Students will develop an understanding of physical fitness and its relationship to a healthy mind and body and the related concepts of nutrition, healthy habits, and making healthy choices.

- State mandated physical performance tests
- Student Report Card
- Student self-evaluation
- Staff observations
- Informal assessments/checklists

All students will utilize technology, as appropriate, and develop awareness of its application to learning

- Student Projects/Presentations
- Teacher Observations
- Participation in technology-based enrichment programs
- Teacher-selected rubrics

All students will participate in at least one performance or exhibition showcase each year.

- Student Projects
- Student Performances
- Student participation in events outside of school
- Student self-assessment

School will hold an annual evening arts event.

- School Events Calendar/SARC

School will participate in 3-5 events to better the community.

- School Events Calendar/SARC

Parents will attend at least 2 outside-of-school- hours events and will be encouraged to commit to at least 40 hours of service annually. *

- Volunteer Log (per capita hours)
- Attendance at School Events
- SARC/School Survey

GATE Students will receive an ILP with 2 parent meetings annually.

- GATE Survey
- Fall & Spring ILP Parent Meetings

GATE students will attend at least one part-time pullout program annually.

- SARC
- GATE ILP Meetings
- GATE Survey

* Flexible structure to accommodate working parents and non-traditional schedules

B. **Measuring Student Progress**
MATES recognizes the importance of being a data-driven school. MATES will identify a student management system that has the capacity to create a variety of reports on student achievement, including disaggregated data by content strand, student subgroup, grade-level, and classroom. Meaningful, reliable data provides a tool to measure student progress in an ongoing, authentic arena. This includes both standardized and non-standardized tools that, when taken together, will paint a picture of student achievement.

STAR data will be used at the beginning of the year to help teachers understand the baseline achievement of their students along with specific areas of strength and weakness. To correctly assess whether students are on track during the year, MATES will conduct regular assessments of each student in Reading, Writing, and Math. Internal assessments will be correlated tightly with performance on end of year STAR testing to correctly measure progress and give teachers detailed data about areas of strengths and weaknesses in which each student’s needs are addressed.

Staff will be trained on how to interpret test data, and will be engaged in critical analysis of the data in order to determine how the school can address any performance deficiencies or negative data trends. The data analysis will be tied to professional development in instruction, so that teachers can enhance their understanding of student performance in light of normative data, and modify their instructional designs accordingly. In this way, staff will continuously be challenged to rethink current pedagogical practices to meet the changing needs of students.

C. Use and Reporting of Data

Data will be collected, analyzed, and reported in a timely manner. As mentioned above, teachers will spend time developing the expertise to use data to understand student challenges and then to develop the skills they need to individualize instruction and address student deficiencies. Data will also be used to continuously monitor student progress and identify students for accelerated learning or those who need additional support.

The objective means of measuring student outcomes will assist in evaluating the effectiveness of instruction at MATES and to make modifications in instruction for both individual students and groups of students. The above-mentioned data will provide detailed information, allowing MATES to make informed decisions on pupil progress. Data will be shared with all stakeholders including families.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents are respected, integral partners in their child’s education who provide valuable insight to the teacher. Teachers will meet with parents in the fall to formally discuss student strengths, needs, progress, and to identify learning goals and other factors that may impact student learning. Informal conferences may be scheduled as needed. Arranging spring conferences will be encouraged. Teachers will share students’ academic, social, emotional, and physical progress with parents. Upper grade students may participate in conferences to reinforce their participation in the learning process.
Standards Based Report Cards

Student progress towards skill mastery will be documented three times annually in standard-based report cards. Progress Reports are sent out once a trimester or as needed. Student assessments are designed to align to the mission, exit outcomes, and the curriculum described in the charter. MATES will exercise the right to revamp and improve the report card in the future.

School Accountability Report Card (“SARC”)

Additionally, the school will publish student results annually through the School Accountability Report Card (“SARC”), in compliance with the California Constitution, California Education Code, and NCLB criteria. The report includes pertinent facts and data about MATES and will be made available to the public as required by law.

Annual Parent Survey

MATES will compile survey results gathered at the end of each school year where parents evaluate their child’s educational experiences. The survey will ask parents to measure satisfaction in categories such as overall student growth (academic and social), satisfaction with program offerings, how well MATES fulfilled its mission and vision, and overall parent satisfaction. Results will be reported to the charter authorizer and published in the SARC. Results will also be used to support school policy, matters of curriculum, and help identify future goals.

Annual Performance Report

In addition to the SARC, MATES will provide to the District a yearly performance report. This report will include the following information:

- Summary data showing student progress toward the goals and outcomes listed above. This data will be displayed on both a charter school-wide basis and disaggregated by reportable subgroups to the extent feasible without compromising student confidentiality.
- A summary of major decisions and policies set forth by the MATES Board of Directors during the year.
- Data on the parent involvement in the School’s governance (and other facets of the school) and summary data from a yearly parent satisfaction survey.
- Data regarding the number of staff working at the school and their qualifications, including copies of credentialing, proof of fingerprinting and background checks, and TB testing.
- A copy of the school’s health and safety policies and any major changes to those policies during the year.
- Data showing whether MATES implemented the means listed in the charter to strive to achieve racially and ethnically balanced student population.
- A comprehensive view of the School’s admissions practices during the year. This will include information regarding the numbers of students enrolled, children on
waiting lists and the students expelled and/or suspended.

- Analyses of the effectiveness of the School’s internal dispute mechanisms and information regarding the number and resolutions of disputes and complaints.
- Any other information regarding the educational program, the administrative, legal and governance operations of the School relative to compliance with the terms of the charter generally.

MATES shall comply with District Board of Education requests regarding the content, evaluation criteria, timelines and process for the annual performance report. The School will use the data in the performance report to assess and improve upon its educational programming as deemed necessary.

**District Visitation/Inspection**

MATES will comply with a District requested visitation process to enable the District to gather information needed to validate the school’s performance and compliance with the terms of this charter. However, the Charter School agrees to and submits to the right of the District to make random visits and inspections or observations in order to carry out its statutorily required oversight in accordance with Education Code Section 47607.

**Response to Inquiries**

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604.3 the School shall promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries including, but not limited to inquiries regarding its financial records from the District, the County Office of Education, County Board of Education, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
IV. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

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

--- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(D)

A. **Non Profit Public Benefit Corporation**

MATES will be a directly funded independent charter school and will be operated as a California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation, pursuant to California law upon approval of this charter.

MATES will operate 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 the School. Pursuant to California Education Code Section 47604(c), the District shall not be liable for the debts and obligations of the Charter School, operated by a California non-profit benefit corporation or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by the Charter School as long as the District has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law.

Attached, as Appendix I, please find MATES Articles of Incorporation, Corporate Bylaws, and Conflicts Code.

B. **Board of Directors**

The Charter School will be governed by a corporate Board of Directors (“Board” or “Board of Directors”) in accordance with its adopted corporate bylaws, which shall be consistent with the terms of this charter.

The number of directors shall be no less than five (5) and no more than nine (9). All directors shall be designated by the existing Board of Directors or elected as specified hereafter. All directors will be designated or elected, as provided hereafter, at the corporation’s annual meeting of the Board of Directors.

Except for the initial Board of Directors, each director shall hold office unless otherwise removed from office in accordance with these bylaws for two (2) years and until a successor director has been appointed or elected as required by the position as described below.

Terms for the initial Board of Directors shall be nine (9) seats for a term of either one (1) or two (2) year(s). The terms of the initial Board of Directors shall be staggered, with four (4) members serving for one (1) year and five (5) members serving for two (2) years. The staggering of the initial directors' terms of service was drawn by lot, as memorialized below. The initial Board of Directors and their terms is as follows:
Each of the initial Board members is described in Appendix J under the description of the Initial Board of Directors.

The Permanent Board shall have three parent representatives elected amongst the parent body (one vote per family); three employee representatives elected amongst all employees; and three community representatives appointed by the Board existing at the time of the vacancy. Board members shall have experience in one or more of the following areas: education, government, law, business, finance/accounting, fundraising, facilities, or public relations. The Principal shall not serve on the Board and shall not vote in Board elections.

No more than 49 percent of the persons serving on the Board of Directors may be interested persons. An interested person is (a) any person compensated by the corporation for services rendered to it within the previous 12 months, whether as a full-time or part-time employee, independent contractor, or otherwise, excluding any reasonable compensation paid to a director as director; and (b) any brother, sister, ancestor, descendant, spouse, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, or father-in-law of such person. The Board has adopted a conflicts of interest policy in accordance with the Political Reform Act.

C. Board Meetings and Duties

The Board of Directors of the Charter School will meet regularly, at least once a month (except during the summer) and in accordance with the Brown Act. The Board of Directors is fully responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of MATES including but not limited to the following:

- Hire, supervise, evaluate, discipline, and dismissal of the Principal of MATES;
- Hire, promote, discipline and dismiss all employees of MATES after consideration of a recommendation by the Principal;

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3 For future election/appointment upon vacancy.

4 “Community Members” will be sought who have strong ties and recognition in the local community through volunteer activities, philanthropy, public employment, or local business. The Board may choose to select a current MATES parent to serve in the Community Member capacity in the event that the Board cannot find a suitable non-parent community member to serve in this capacity.
• Approve all contractual agreements;
• Approve and monitor the implementation of general policies of the Charter School. This includes effective human resource policies for career growth and compensation of the staff;
• Approve and monitor the Charter School’s annual budget and budget revisions;
• Act as a fiscal agent. This includes but is not limited to the receipt of funds for the operation of the Charter School in accordance with applicable laws and the receipt of grants and donations consistent with the mission of the Charter School;
• Contract with an external independent auditor to produce an annual financial audit according to generally accepted accounting practices;
• Establish operational committees as needed;
• Regularly measure progress of both student and staff performance;
• Involve parents and the community in school related programs;
• Execute all applicable responsibilities provided for in the California Corporations Code;
• Engage in ongoing strategic planning;
• Approve the school calendar and schedule of Board meetings;
• Review requests for out of state or overnight field trips;
• Participate in the dispute resolution procedure and complaint procedures when necessary;
• Approve charter amendments as necessary and submit requests for material revisions as necessary to the District for consideration;
• Approve annual independent fiscal audit and performance report;
• Appoint an administrative panel or act as a hearing body and take action on recommended student expulsions.

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 are not in conflict with this charter or the purposes for which schools are established.

MATES shall comply with the Brown Act.

The Charter School has adopted a conflicts code which complies with the Political Reform Act, Corporations Code Conflicts of Interest rules, and which shall be updated with any charter school specific conflicts of interest laws or regulations. As noted above, the Conflicts Code is attached within Appendix I. As required, the Conflicts Code will be submitted to the County Board of Supervisors for approval.

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:

5 It is the understanding of Petitioners that recent legislation and regulatory action has been considered regarding the charter school specific conflicts of interest.
• 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 MATES Board of Directors will attend an annual in-service for the purposes of training individual board members on their responsibilities with topics to include at minimum Conflicts of Interest, and the Brown Act.

D.  The Principal

The Principal will be the leader of the school. The Principal will ensure that the curriculum is implemented in order to maximize student-learning experiences. The Principal must report directly to the Charter School Board of Directors, and s/he is responsible for the orderly operation of the school and the supervision of all employees in the school.

The Principal shall perform assigned tasks as directed by the Charter School Board of Directors and shall be required to undertake some or all of the tasks detailed below. These tasks may include but are not limited to the following:

• Ensure the charter school enacts its mission;
• Supervise and evaluate teachers and staff;
• Communicate and report to the Charter School Board of Directors;
• Oversee school finances to ensure financial stability;
• Participate in and develop professional development workshops as needed;
• Serve or appoint a designee to serve on any committees of the School;
• Interview and recommend employee hiring, promotion, discipline, and/or dismissal;
• Ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and help secure local grants;
• Communicate with parents, recruit new families and students, and assure families of academic growth;
• Take responsible steps to secure full and regular attendance at school of the students enrolled in accordance with policies established by the Board of Directors;
• Complete and submit required documents as requested or required by the charter and/or Charter School Board of Directors and/or the District;
• Identify the staffing needs of the school and offer staff development as needed
• Maintain up-to-date financial records;
• 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 and publish the Charter Program in the community and promote positive public relations and interact effectively with media;
• Encourage and support teacher professional development;
• Attend District Administrative meetings as requested by the District and stay in direct contact with the District regarding changes, progress, etc.;
• Attend meetings with the Chief Financial Officer of the District on fiscal oversight issues as requested by the District;
• Provide all necessary financial reports as required for proper attendance reporting;
• Develop the School annual performance report and the SARC;
• Present independent fiscal audit to the MATES Board of Directors and after review by the Board of Directors present 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, implement the suspension and expulsion process;
• Participate in IEP meetings as necessary.

The above duties, with the exception of personnel matters, may be delegated or contracted as approved by the Board of Directors to a business administrator of the School or other appropriate employee or third party provider.

E. Parent Advisory Council

Parents will be encouraged to form a Parent Advisory Council to be responsible for parent involvement in school activities, fundraising, and advising the Charter School Board of Directors on any and all matters related to the strengthening of the MATES community. Parent participation will play a vital role in the effectiveness of our program as is the case with our current school Meadows Elementary School. We would encourage the parents to continue the efforts of the PTA at the same level of support to MATES in terms of program enhancement and fundraising.

Parent Involvement in Governance

In addition to maintaining a minimum of three parent participants on the Board and the parent participation on the Parent Advisory Council, Parents will be strongly encouraged to contribute a minimum of 40 hours per family, per academic year to MATES. The Principal shall maintain a comprehensive list of volunteer opportunities including but not limited to the following: volunteering in the classroom/school (including at-home assistance); tutoring, attending parent-teacher conferences; attendance at charter school Board meetings; participation in the planning of, or attendance at, fundraising or Academic/Arts Events; or, other activities. No child will be excluded from MATES or school activities due to the failure of his or her parent or legal guardian to fulfill the encouraged 40 hours of participation.
Attached as Appendix K, please find an Organizational Chart. Attached as Appendix L, please find a timeline of MATES parent involvement activities to date and those that are scheduled through June of 2008.
V. HUMAN RESOURCES

_Governing Law: The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the school._

- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(E)

A. Qualifications Of School Employees

In addition to meeting the health and safety clearances described below, all employees shall meet the following qualifications:

1. Teachers

Teachers for core classes must hold appropriate California teaching certificates, permits, or other documents equivalent to that which a teacher in other schools would be required to hold pursuant to Education Code Section 47605(l).

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(l), the School 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 capacity to work successfully in an instructional capacity in noncore, non-college preparatory courses and activities.

MATES teachers at all levels shall meet or exceed all “highly qualified requirements” under the No Child Left Behind Act (“NCLB”).

Accordingly, a teacher of core academic subjects must have:

(a) a bachelor’s degree;

(b) a State credential or have an Intern Certificate/Credential for no more than three years while actively working toward completion of their State credential;

(c) demonstrated core academic subject matter competence. Demonstrated core academic subject competence for elementary grades is done through CCTC’s approved subject matter examination or by completing the California High Objective Uniform State Standard of Education (“HOUSSE”).

In addition, teachers who desire a position with MATES must:
• Be willing to work collaboratively with parents in the classroom and community;
• Show enthusiasm for collaboration with other teachers at the school;
• Be willing to participate in professional development opportunities and to engage in continuous reflection on the goals and methods of education at MATES;
• Strive toward implementing MATES mission and vision;
• Be skilled at using project-based, structured cooperative learning strategies, integrated thematic units, multi-cultural education and conflict resolution; and
• Be knowledgeable about educational psychology and developmentally appropriate practices.

2. Principal

The School Principal serves as the educational leader and chief executive of the school. The principal shall be responsible for direction of the instructional program, evaluation of staff, operation of the school facility, participation in school activities, community leadership as well as other relevant duties assigned.

The Principal of MATES shall hold an appropriate Administrative Services Credential authorizing service as a Principal at the elementary school level. An advanced degree in education is desirable and training in the broad aspects of school administration, instructional strategies and curriculum development would be necessary. A minimum of five (5) years of teaching experience and at least two (2) years of administrative experience is required. An applicant without a current Administrative Services Credential may be considered only if the applicant provides evidence of five or more years of public school administrative experience.

3. Office Manager

Under the supervision of the Principal, the Office Manager performs a wide variety of secretarial and clerical duties including:

• Screens office visitors and telephone calls for routing to the proper areas;
• Answers questions regarding classes, activities or programs;
• Refers people to other sources for information;
• Schedules appointments for school administrator;
• Types materials of a confidential nature such as letters, reports, bulletins, announcements, memorandums, and other documents;
• Composes letters dealing with routine school activities independently or from oral instruction;
• Receives, opens and organizes mail;
• Helps make arrangements for and coordinates school and community activities;
• Bilingual language skills desirable;
• Maintains active teacher correspondence, student cumulative files and other records;
• Prepare, compile and maintain accurate and complete records and reports;
• Operates office machines including computer terminal, word processing equipment, adding machines, mimeographs and tape dictation equipment;
• Coordinates arrangements for substitute teachers who are assigned to the schools;
• Assigns and plans the work of student helpers, and may assign work to other clerical assistants including volunteers;
• Requisitions and issues supplies, keeps records for budget controls and types purchase orders when necessary;
• Assists students who are ill or injured providing first aid if required and administers medication;

The position would require a basic first aid certificate and at least two years of secretarial experience in a school setting.

All other non-instructional personnel will be considered based upon their expertise and ability specific to the position.

B. **Compensation And Benefits**

**Governing Law:** The manner by which staff members of the Charter Schools will be covered by the State Teachers’ Retirement System, the Public Employee’s Retirement System, or federal social security.

-- *California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(K)*

In order to hold and secure experienced staff committed to innovation, MATES recognizes the importance of an attractive compensation package, which includes salaries and health benefits. MATES anticipates having a compensation package that is competitive with what the Conejo Valley Unified School District offers. Employees at MATES shall participate in STRS, PERS and the federal social security system as applicable to the position. The Charter School shall inform all applicants for positions within the School of the retirement system options for employees of the School.

Compensation for employees is discussed under Section C, immediately following this Section.

C. **Employee Representation**

**Governing Law:** A declaration whether or not the Charter School shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the Charter School for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act.

-- *California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O)*

MATES shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act (“EERA”). MATES
recognizes the employees’ rights under the EERA provisions to organize for collective bargaining.

Whether any group of employees at the charter school becomes represented by an exclusive representative or not, the School shall negotiate with such representative, subject to the requirements of the Educational Employment Relations Act, and will ensure any resulting collective bargaining agreement provides salary and health benefits for all employees are at an equivalent or better level than at the school district for the respective job positions/classifications.

D. Rights Of School District Employees

_Governing Law:_ A description of 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 school district after employment at a charter school.

-- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(M)

Persons employed by the Charter School are not considered employees of the District for any purpose whatsoever. Employees of the District who resign from employment to work at the Charter School and who later wish to return to the District shall be treated the same as any other former District employee seeking reemployment in accordance with District policy, applicable law, and applicable bargaining agreements. The Charter School shall not have any authority to confer any rights to return on District employees.

E. Health and Safety

_Governing Law:_ The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall include the requirement that each employee of the school furnish the school record summary as described in Section 44237.

-- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(F)

In order to provide safety for all students and staff, the Charter School will adopt and implement full health and safety procedures and risk management policies at our school site in consultation with its insurance carriers and risk management experts and using the District health and safety policies as a guide. A full draft will be provided to the District for review at least 90 days prior to operation. An early draft of these procedures is attached as Appendix M.

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

1. Procedures for Background Checks

Employees and contractors of the Charter School will be required to submit to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Sections 44237 and 45125.1. New employees not possessing a valid California Teaching Credential 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 School shall
monitor compliance with this policy and report to the Charter School Board of Directors on a quarterly 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 without the direct supervision of a credentialed employee.

2. Role of Staff as Mandated Child Abuse Reporters

All non-certificated and certificated staff will be mandated child abuse reporters and will follow all applicable reporting laws, the same policies and procedures used by the District.

3. TB Testing

Faculty, staff and volunteers will be tested for tuberculosis prior to commencing employment and working with students as required by Education Code Section 49406.

4. Immunizations

Employees will be required to provide records documenting immunizations as is required at all public schools pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 120325-120375, and Title 17, California Code of Regulations Section 6000-6075.

5. Medication in School

MATES will adhere to Education Code Section 49423 regarding administration of medication in school.

6. Vision, Hearing/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 School.

7. Emergency Preparedness

MATES shall adhere to an Emergency Preparedness Handbook drafted specifically to the needs of the converted school site in conjunction with law enforcement and the Fire Marshall. This handbook shall include, but not be limited to the following responses: fire, flood, earthquake, terrorist threats, and hostage situations. The existing emergency preparedness plan for the school site (pre-conversion) shall be used as a starting basis for updating the handbook for the Charter School.

8. 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.

9. Drug Free/Alcohol Free/Smoke Free Environment

The Charter School shall function as a drug, alcohol and tobacco free workplace.

10. Facility Safety

The Charter School shall comply with Education Code Section 47610 by either utilizing facilities that are compliant with the Field Act or facilities that are compliant with the State Building Code. The 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 School shall conduct fire drills monthly and in conjunction with the District.

11. Comprehensive Sexual Harassment Polices and Procedures

MATES is committed to providing a school that is free from sexual harassment, as well as any harassment based upon such factors as race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. The Charter School has developed a comprehensive policy to prevent and immediately remediate any concerns about sexual 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 sexual harassment policy, a draft of which is attached as Appendix N.

F. Dispute Resolution

_Governing Law:_ The procedures to be followed by the Charter School and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter.

-- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(N)

The following dispute resolution language is proposed by the Petitioners to resolve disputes between the District and the Charter School relating to provisions of the charter. It is not meant to unilaterally bind the District. Ultimately, the Charter School anticipates that the dispute resolution process would be agreed upon by the District and Charter School in accordance with an MOU:
MATES and the District will be encouraged to attempt to resolve any disputes with the District amicably and reasonably without resorting to formal procedures.

In the event of a dispute between the Charter School and the District, Charter School staff, employees and Board members of the Charter School and District agree to first frame the issue in written format (“dispute statement”) and refer the issue to the Superintendent and Principal of the Charter School. In the event that the District Board of Trustees believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter in accordance with Education Code Section 47607, the Charter School requests that this be noted in the written dispute statement. However, participation in the dispute resolution procedures outlined in this section shall not in any manner be interpreted to impede or act as a pre-requisite to the District’s ability to proceed with revocation in accordance with Education Code Section 47607.

The Principal and Superintendent shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute, not later than 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 Board members from their respective boards who shall jointly meet with the Superintendent and the Principal of the Charter School and attempt to resolve the dispute within 15 business days from receipt of the dispute statement. If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the Superintendent and the Principal 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. Mediation shall be held within sixty business days of receipt of the dispute statement. The costs of the mediator shall be split equally between the District and the Charter School. 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 the Charter School.
VI. STUDENT ADMISSIONS, ATTENDANCE, AND SUSPENSION/EXPULSION POLICIES

A. Student Admission Policies And Procedures

_Governing Law: Admission Requirements, if applicable._
--California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(H)

1. Non-Sectarian/Non-Discrimination/No Tuition

The Charter School will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, and all other operations, and will not charge tuition nor discriminate against any student based upon any of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220.

2. The School shall admit all pupils who wish to attend the School up to capacity. No test or assessment shall be administered to students prior to acceptance and enrollment into the school.

The application process is comprised of the following:

- Parent attendance at a school orientation meeting is encouraged
- Completion of a student enrollment form

Registration forms for students who are admitted will also gather the following:

- Proof of Immunization
- Home Language Survey
- Completion of Emergency Medical Information Form
- Proof of minimum age requirements, e.g. birth certificate
- Release of records

Applications will be accepted during a publicly advertised open application period each year in early spring 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, the School will hold a public random drawing to determine enrollment for the impacted grade level, with the exception of existing students who are guaranteed enrollment in the following school year.

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6 For the first year of operation (2009-2010), existing students shall include any student who attended Meadows Elementary in the year prior to conversion pursuant to the California Department of Education, Public Charter Schools Grant Program (“PCSGP”) 2007, 2008, 2009, Planning and Implementation Grants. Revised March 2008, p. 46

7 During any period of PCSGP funding, the public random drawing will be held as a single weighted public lottery.
Enrollment preferences in the case of a public random drawing shall be as follows:

1. Siblings of existing pupils of the School
2. Children of founding group members
3. Children of employees of the School
4. Pupils who reside within the former attendance area of Meadows Elementary School.
5. All other District residents
6. All other pupils

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 wait 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.

3. The Charter School will comply with all laws establishing minimum and maximum age for public school attendance in charter schools.

4. **Planned Application, Public Random Drawing, and Admission Schedule**

   - **January – March**: Applications forms available at school administrative office or online at the Charter School’s website.
   - **Middle of March**: Deadline for parents of existing Charter School students to notify the school if their student will be returning next year.
   - **First week of April**: Public random drawing conducted (if necessary).
   - **First week of May**: Admission notification and enrollment packets distributed to parent and children who have been drawn in the public random drawing.
   - **July 1**: Completed enrollment packets due back to the Charter School, which will include proof of immunizations, proof of residency, proof of age requirements and proof of withdrawal from prior school and district of residence.

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8 During any period of PCSGP funding, siblings will be listed as an “exception” to the lottery.
9 Founding Group members are defined as any family who has contributed 25 hours toward the creation of this charter before December 1, 2008. During any period of PGSGP funding, this preference will be limited to 10% of available space.
10 During any period of PCSGP funding, this preference will be limited to “children of faculty” and limited to 10% of available space.
11 These timelines are estimates based upon the current District calendar – subject to change as necessary to accommodate school holidays and scheduling conflicts.
B. **Non-Discrimination**

*Governing Law:* The means by which the school will achieve 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.

-- California Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(G)

The Charter School shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, 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 will implement a student outreach strategy that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following elements or strategies to ensure a racial and ethnic balance among students that is reflective of the District:

- An enrollment process that is scheduled and adopted to include a timeline that allows for a broad-based recruiting and application process.
- The development of promotional and informational material that appeals to all of the various racial and ethnic groups represented throughout the District.
- Student recruitment efforts may include, but are not limited to, direct mail, print advertising, and informational meetings directed toward targeted student populations to recruit students from the various racial and ethnic groups represented within the District.
- The School’s Outreach Plan shall include a marketing plan which details significant outreach activities in local newspapers, public libraries, community club-houses and newsletters, local community groups, and local businesses. The marketing plan shall include the preparation and distribution of recruiting materials in English and other commonly spoken languages.
- The Outreach Plan shall schedule dates, times, and locations of open houses, informational meetings, and other activities in a manner which insures, to the extent possible, that all interested students are able to attend. The Outreach Plan shall be updated each year.

The School, in its annual report, shall include student enrollment indicating the racial and ethnic mix of students and the percentage of students from the District and steps taken to ensure a racial and ethnic balance as described herein. The annual report shall disaggregate racial and ethnic class, free and reduced lunch participation percentage, English Learners, and shall include the percentage versus total of those who applied and those who were admitted.

An Outreach Plan is attached in Appendix D.

C. **Public School Attendance Alternatives**

Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School
Submitted June 2, 2008
**Governing Law:** The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools.

-- *California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(L)*

No student may be required to attend the Charter School. Students who reside within the District who choose not to attend the Charter School 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 policies. Parents and guardians of each student enrolled in the charter school will be informed on admissions forms that the students have no right to admission in a particular school of a local education agency as a consequence of enrollment in the charter school, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency.

**D. Suspension/Expulsion Procedures**

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

-- *California Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(J)*

This Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy has been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well being of all students at the School. 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.

School staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This Policy and its Procedures will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook and will clearly describe discipline expectations.

Discipline includes but is not limited to advising and counseling students, conferring with parents/guardians, detention during and after school hours, use of alternative educational environments, suspension and expulsion.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of the Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

The Charter School administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline policies and procedures. The notice shall state that these Policy and Administrative Procedures are available on request at the Director/Principal's office.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.
A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act ("IDEIA") or who is qualified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to regular education students except when federal and state law mandates additional or different procedures. The School will follow Section 504, the IDEIA, and all applicable federal and state laws including but not limited to the California Education Code, when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in according due process to such students. The Charter School shall notify the District of the suspension of any student identified under the IDEIA (or for whom there may be a basis of knowledge of the same) or as a student with a disability under Section 504 and would grant the District approval rights prior to the expulsion of any such student as well.

1. Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students

   A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at anytime including but not limited to: a) while on school grounds; b) while going to or coming from school; c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

2. Enumerated Offenses

   Students may be suspended or expelled for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:

   a. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person or willfully used force of violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.

   b. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Director/Principal or designee’s concurrence.

   c. Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.

   d. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another
liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.

e. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.

f. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.

g. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.

h. Possessed or used tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel.

i. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.

j. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11014.5.

k. Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

l. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.

m. Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.

n. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a or 289, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code 243.4.

o. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.

p. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.

q. Engaged in or attempted to engage in hazing of another.

r. Aiding or abetting as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person.

s. Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property.
t. Committed sexual harassment.

u. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence.

v. Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.

Alternatives to suspension or expulsion will first be attempted with students who are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from assigned school activities.

3. Suspension Procedure

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

a. Conference

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the Principal or the Principal's designee with the student and his or her parent and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the Principal. The conference may be omitted if the Principal or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the conference, the pupil shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against him or her and shall be given the opportunity to present his or her version and evidence in his or her defense.

This conference shall be held within two school days, unless the pupil waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization.

No penalties may be imposed on a pupil for failure of the pupil's parent or guardian to attend a conference with school officials. Reinstatement of the suspended pupil shall not be contingent upon attendance by the pupil's parent or guardian at the conference.

b. Notice to Parents/Guardians
At the time of the suspension, an administrator or designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension and the date of return following suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may also state the date and time when the student may return to school. If school officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.

c. Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Placement/Expulsion

Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension.

Upon a recommendation of Placement/Expulsion by the Principal or Principal’s designee, the pupil and the pupil's guardian or representative will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the pupil should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. This determination will be made by the Principal or designee upon either of the following determinations: 1) the pupil's presence will be disruptive to the education process; or 2) the pupil poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the pupil's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

d. Authority to Expel

A student may be expelled either by the Board following a hearing before it or by the Board upon the recommendation of an Administrative Panel to be assigned by the Board as needed. The Administrative Panel should consist of at least three members who are certificated and neither a teacher of the pupil or a Board member of the School’s governing board. The Administrative Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense.

e. Expulsion Procedures

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Unless postponed for good cause, the hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the Principal or designee determines that the Pupil has committed an expellable offense.

In the event an administrative panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the Board for a final decision whether to expel. The hearing shall be held in closed session unless the pupil makes a written request for a public hearing three (3) days prior to the hearing.
Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Upon mailing the notice, it shall be deemed served upon the pupil. The notice shall include:

i. The date and place of the expulsion hearing;

ii. A statement of the specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;

iii. A copy of the School's disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;

iv. Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at the school to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;

v. The opportunity for the student or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel or a non-attorney advisor;

vi. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;

vii. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;

viii. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

f. Special Procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses

The School may, upon a finding of good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations which shall be examined only by the School or the hearing officer. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, shall be made available to the pupil.

i. The complaining witness in any sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of his/her right to (a) receive five days notice of his/her scheduled testimony, (b) have up to two (2) adult support persons of his/her
choosing present in the hearing at the time he/she testifies, which may include a parent, guardian, or legal counsel, and (c) elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.

ii. The School must also provide the victim a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to and during breaks in testimony.

iii. At the discretion of the person or panel conducting the hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which he or she may leave the hearing room.

iv. The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.

v. The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours he/she is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.

vi. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the person presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The person conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany him or her to the witness stand.

vii. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, the School must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the School. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising his or her discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom he or she believes is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.

viii. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.
ix. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in the public at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have his/her testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are no alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing room by means of closed-circuit television.

x. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the person conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstance can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

g. Record of Hearing

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

h. Presentation of Evidence

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense.

Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay and sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the Board, Panel or designee determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

If, due to a written request by the expelled pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900, a
complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public.

The decision of the Administrative Panel shall be in the form of written findings of fact and a written recommendation to the Board who will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The final decision by the Board shall be made within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The Decision of the Board is final.

If the expulsion hearing panel decides not to recommend expulsion, the pupil shall immediately be returned to his/her educational program.

i. Written Notice to Expel

The Director/Principal or designee following a decision of the Board to expel shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the Board's adopted findings of fact, to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall also include the following:

   i. Notice of the specific offense committed by the student.

   ii. Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the School.

The Director/Principal or designee shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the District. This notice shall include the following:

   i. The student's name.

   ii. The specific expellable offense committed by the student.

Additionally, in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(3), upon expulsion of any student, 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.

j. Disciplinary Records

The School shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the School. Such records shall be made available to the District upon request.

k. No Right to Appeal
The pupil shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from the Charter School as the Charter School Board’s decision to expel shall be final.

1. Expelled Pupils/Alternative Education

Pupils who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including, but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence.

m. Rehabilitation Plans

Students who are expelled from the School shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Board at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to the School for readmission.

n. Readmission

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school district or charter school shall be in the sole discretion of the Board following a meeting with the Director/Principal and the pupil and guardian or representative to determine whether the pupil has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the pupil poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Director/Principal shall make a recommendation to the Board following the meeting regarding his or her determination. The pupil's readmission is also contingent upon the School's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission.

o. Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities

i. Notification of District

The Charter School shall immediately notify the District and coordinate the procedures in this policy with the District the discipline of any student with a disability or student who the Charter School or District would be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability.

ii. Services During Suspension

Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year shall continue to receive services so as to enable the student to
continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment or functional analysis, and behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

iii. Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

a) If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or

b) If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team determine that either of the above is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP Team shall:

a) Conduct a functional behavioral assessment or a functional analysis assessment, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that the Charter School had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement;

b) If a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
c) Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the Charter School agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team determine that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student’s disability and that the conduct in question was not a result of the failure to implement the IEP, then the Charter School may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

iv. Due Process Appeals

The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or the Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request an expedited administrative hearing through the Special Education Unit of the Office of Administrative Hearings.

When an appeal relating to the placement of the student or the manifestation determination has been requested by either the parent or the Charter school, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the forty-five (45) day time period provided for in an interim alternative educational setting, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the Charter School agree otherwise.

v. Special Circumstances

Charter School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

The Principal or designee may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student’s disability in cases where a student:

a) Carries or possesses a weapon, as defined in 18 USC 930, to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function;
b) Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or

c. Has inflicted serious bodily injury, as defined by 20 USC 1415(k)(7)(D), upon a person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

vi. Interim Alternative Educational Setting

The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP team.

vii. Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services

A student who has not been identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to IDEIA and who has violated the district's disciplinary procedures may assert the procedural safeguards granted under this administrative regulation only if the Charter School had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred.

The Charter School shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if one of the following conditions exists:

a) The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement, to Charter School supervisory or administrative personnel, or to one of the child’s teachers, that the student is in need of special education or related services.

b) The parent has requested an evaluation of the child.

c) The child’s teacher, or other Charter School personnel, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education or to other Charter School supervisory personnel.

If the Charter School knew or should have known the student had a disability under any of the three (3) circumstances described above, the student may assert any of the protections available to IDEIA-eligible children with disabilities, including the right to stay-put.
If the Charter School had no basis for knowledge of the student’s disability, it shall proceed with the proposed discipline. The Charter School shall conduct an expedited evaluation if requested by the parents; however the student shall remain in the education placement determined by the Charter School pending the results of the evaluation.

The Charter School shall not be deemed to have knowledge of that the student had a disability if the parent has not allowed an evaluation, refused services, or if the student has been evaluated and determined to not be eligible.
VII. FINANCIAL PLANNING, REPORTING, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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.

-- California Education Code Section 47605(g)

Attached, as Appendix O, please find the following documents:

- A projected first year budget including startup costs
- Cash flow and financial projections for the first three years of operation.

These documents are based upon the best data available to the Petitioners at this time.

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

1. By July 1, a preliminary budget for the current fiscal year. For a charter school in its first year of operation, financial statements submitted with the charter petition pursuant to Education Code 47605(g) will satisfy this requirement.

2. By December 15, an interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through October 31. Additionally, on December 15, a copy of the Charter School’s annual, independent financial audit report for the preceding fiscal year shall be delivered to the District, State Controller, State Department of Education and County Superintendent of Schools.

3. By March 15, a second interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through January 31.

4. By September 15, a final unaudited report for the full prior year. The report submitted to the District shall include an annual statement of all the Charter School’s receipts and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year.

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. Prior to opening, the Charter School will provide evidence of the above insurance coverage to the District.

C. Administrative Services

_Governing Law: The manner in which administrative services of the School are to be provided._
-- California Education Code Section 47605(g).

It is anticipated that the Charter School will provide or procure most of its own administrative services including, but not limited to, financial management, personnel, and instructional program development either through its own staff or through an appropriately qualified third-party contractor. The Charter School is interested in discussing the possibility of purchasing administrative services from the District. If the District is interested, the specific terms and cost for these services will be the subject of an annual memorandum of understanding between the Charter School and the District and subject to District availability.

Currently, MATES has received a proposal for back office services from Ventura County Schools Business Services Authority (“VCSBCA”). VCSBCA can provide complete business and benefit services to MATES charter school, including but not limited to budget and cash flow management, financial reporting, fiscal controls, payroll, employee benefits, other human resource services, and student information systems. The proposal from VCSBCA is attached as Appendix P.

Once MATES has discussed any possible services that the District may be interested in providing to the Charter, it will have a more complete understanding of its options for back office service providers. Upon approval of the charter, if not completed during the charter approval process, the Charter School shall begin MOU negotiations with the District over contracted services. Should services be unavailable, or by January 1, 2009, if no MOU has been executed between the Parties, the Charter School shall obtain its own administrative services either in house or through a third party contractor.

D. Facilities

As a conversion charter, MATES will be located at 2000 La Granada Drive, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362 within District boundaries. A Proposition 39 request will be made in accordance with Education Code Section 47614 and its implementing regulations. Attached as Appendix Q, please find a letter of intent for requesting Proposition 39 facilities.

E. Transportation

The Charter School will not provide transportation, except as required by law for students with disabilities in accordance with a student’s IEP which shall be handled in accordance with the MOU between the District and MATES.
F. **Audits**

*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.

-- *California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(I)*

An annual independent fiscal audit of the books and records of the Charter School will be conducted as required under the Charter Schools Act, section 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 and 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 Controllers Guide.

An audit committee will select an independent auditor through a request for proposal format. The auditor will have, at a minimum, a CPA and educational institution audit experience and 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.

It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within four months of the close of the fiscal year and that a copy of the auditor's findings will be forwarded to the District, the County Superintendent of Schools, the State Controller, and to the CDE by the 15th of December of each year. The Principal, along with the audit committee, will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the Charter School Board of Directors with recommendations on how to resolve them. The 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 an anticipated timeline for the same. All exceptions and deficiencies must be resolved to the satisfaction of the District.

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

G. **Closure Protocol**

*Governing Law:* A description of the procedures to be used if the Charter School closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the School, including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records.

-- *California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(P)*
Closure of MATES 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.

The Board of Directors will promptly notify parents and students of the Charter School, the District, the Ventura County Office of Education, the School’s SELPA, the retirement systems in which the School’s employees participate (e.g., Public Employees’ Retirement System, State Teachers’ Retirement System, and federal social security), and the California Department of Education of the closure as well as the effective date of the closure. This notice will also include the name(s) 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, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements.

The Board 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 School.

The Board 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 they will provide to the entity responsible for closure-related activities.

As applicable, MATES 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 student records will be made in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. The School will ask the District to store original records of Charter School students. All records of the School shall be transferred to the District upon School closure. If the District will not or cannot store the records, the Charter School 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.

As soon as reasonably practical, the School will prepare the final financial records. The School will also have an independent audit completed within six months after closure. The School will pay for the final audit. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant selected by the School and will be provided to the District promptly upon its completion. The final audit will include an accounting of all financial assets, including cash and accounts receivable and an inventory of property, equipment, and other items of material value, an accounting of the liabilities, including accounts payable and any reduction in apportionments as a result of audit findings or other investigations, loans, and unpaid staff compensation, and an assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to the charter school.
MATES will complete and file any annual reports required pursuant to Education Code section 47604.33.

On closure of the Charter School, all assets of MATES, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property and all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by students attending the Charter School, remain the sole property of the Charter School and shall be distributed in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation upon the dissolution of the non-profit public benefit corporation to another public educational entity. Any assets acquired from the District or District property will be promptly returned upon School closure to the District. 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, MATES shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of the School.

As MATES is operated as a non-profit public benefit corporation, should the corporation dissolve with the closure of the 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.

As specified by the Budget in Appendix O, the Charter School will utilize the reserve fund to undertake any expenses associated with the closure procedures identified above.
VIII. IMPACT ON THE CHARTER AUTHORIZER

*Governing Law:* Potential civil liability effects, if any, upon the school and upon the District. *(Education Code Section 47605(g)).*

MATES 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 23701d.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), an entity 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. MATES 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, Charter School and District shall enter into a MOU, wherein Charter School shall indemnify District for the actions of the Charter School under this charter.

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

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

The MATES Board will institute appropriate risk management practices as discussed herein, including screening of employees, establishing codes of conduct for students, and dispute resolution.
IX. CONCLUSION

By approving this charter, the District will be fulfilling the intent of the Charter Schools Act of 1992 to improve pupil learning; create new professional opportunities for teachers; and provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in education and following the directive of law to encourage the creation of charter schools. The Petitioners are eager to work independently, yet cooperatively with the District to establish the highest bar for what a charter school can and should be. To this end, the Petitioners pledge to work cooperatively with the District to answer any concerns over this document and to present the District with the strongest possible proposal requesting a five year term to begin operation in September 2009.