

**Petition for
BRIDGES
Charter School**

Submitted to the Ventura County Board of Education

Date: December 16, 2009

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AFFIRMATIONS/ASSURANCES

As the authorized representative of the petitioners, I, Lori Peters, do hereby certify that the information submitted in this petition for a California public charter school to be named **BRIDGES Charter School** (the "Charter School"), submitted to the Ventura County Board of Education ("VCBE") and the Ventura County Office of Education and Superintendent of Schools ("VCOE") (collectively referred to as the "County" unless specifically noted), and to be located in the boundaries of the **Conejo Valley Unified School District** ("CVUSD") is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that this petition 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:

- Will 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)]
- Will be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the BRIDGES Charter School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(O)]
- Will be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- Will not charge tuition. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- Will admit all students who wish to attend the BRIDGES Charter School, and who submit a timely application, unless the Charter School receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case each application will be given equal chance of admission through a public random lottery process, except for existing pupils of the Charter School. Preferences in the public random drawing shall be provided only in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(2). In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the Charter School and in no event shall take any action to impede the Charter School from expanding enrollment to meet pupil demand. 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 as provided in Education Code Section 47605(d)(2) and 51747.3.[Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(A)-(B)]
- Will 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)]

- Will 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.
- Will 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)]
- Will 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 any other public school is required to hold. As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to non-core, non-college preparatory teachers. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(1)]
- Will comply with fingerprinting and background check requirements of Education Code Sections 44237 and 45125.1
- Will at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
- Will promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries from the County, including but not limited to inquiries of our financial records. [Ref. Education Code 47604.3]
- Will, 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)]
- Recognizes that although generally exempt from state laws pertaining to school districts, charter schools are still a part of the public school system and must still comply with certain laws. These may include, but are not limited to: the U.S. Constitution and federal laws, including but not limited to all anti-discrimination and civil rights statutes, the No Child Left Behind Act, Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act; the State Constitution and certain California laws; i.e. the Brown Act (Public Meeting Law), the Public Records Act, conflict of interest laws, Government Code Section 1090 and the

Political Reform Act, Government Code Section 87000, *et. seq.*, laws relating to the minimum age for public school attendance and fingerprinting of employees. The Charter School shall also comply with all the provisions set forth in its chart and the terms of any MOU with the County.

- Will follow any and all other federal, state and local laws and regulations that apply to the Charter School including but not limited to:
 - The Charter School will maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance, and make these records available for audit and inspection.
 - The Charter School shall on a regular basis consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's education programs.
 - The Charter School will comply with any jurisdictional limitations related to the location of its facilities.
 - The Charter School will comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment.
 - The Charter School will comply with all applicable portions of the No Child Left Behind Act.
 - The Charter School's Board of Directors and Administration will comply with the Brown Act.
 - The Charter School will meet or exceed the minimum numbers of days as required by law.
 - The Charter School will comply with the Public Records Act.
 - The Charter School will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Authorized Representative's Signature: _____
Lori Peters Date

BRIDGES CHARTER SCHOOL OVERVIEW

- **An Adherence to the Open Classroom Philosophy of Education.** We will incorporate creative, effective teaching methods, differentiation, and flexibility while meeting (and often exceeding) the California standards. Children will learn and practice conflict resolution skills and collaboration. Content will be meaningful and relevant to students and the world around them.
- **A K-8 Campus.** We are creating a Middle School alternative where children can learn in a small, safe, and positive learning community, and where all educators value whole child education, project-based learning, parent volunteers, and the continued development of their students' social and emotional needs. Unless there is a significant level of interest for 8th grade in the first year, our plan is to include K-7th graders in 2010-2011, and add 8th grade in 2011-2012.
- **Autonomous Decision-Making Regarding Staffing and Structure.** The Charter School Administrator, Board of Directors, and Charter School community will:
 - Hire and retain educators who are philosophical-aligned with BRIDGES Charter School, and who have the qualifications and intrinsic abilities necessary for success.
 - Put the needs of our students first when deciding how to spend our state monies.
 - Help to ensure that all members of our community, including support staff, embrace and support our philosophy.
- **Active Parent Involvement.** All parents are expected to engage in active *volunteer participation*, as well as ongoing *parent education* (in collaboration with the CVUSD Adult Education parenting program at Horizon Hills) via lectures, workshops, and/or discussion groups. Parents will be involved in one of many *Parent-Managed Cohorts*, all of which either directly impact groups of students, or the Charter School as a whole. Parents will also have direct access to a *Parent Resource Center* on site. We plan to develop a *Child-Care Co-Op*, with parent support.
- **A Homeschool Alliance.** Many homeschool families share the Open Classroom philosophy and we will expand this effective educational approach through a **Homeschool Alliance**. Homeschool families who enroll in this component will have access to our campus, resources, and an on-site educator who will manage and support their goals. Homeschool parents will also be encouraged to participate in the Charter School community through ongoing parent education opportunities.
- **Flexibility in Scheduling.** We will increase the time children have each day to:
 - Complete independent work after school and on site, thus reducing “homework”
 - Participate in active movement and positive social interaction, thus creating a healthier lifestyle & enhancing brain development

- Attend to and develop areas of interest and creativity, thus inspiring innovation & brain development
- Engage in socially responsible and proactive collaborative activities, thus developing stronger relationships and strengthening community: the context of all learning.
- **A Focus on Sustainability and Health.** The Charter School will advocate responsibility to our community and ourselves:
 - Healthy eating habits will be supported.
 - Environmental education and stewardship will prepare students for success in the green economy of the future.

I. INTRODUCTION

BRIDGES Charter School was inspired by the desire of a Founding Group of educators and parents to expand upon and further develop the philosophical structure of the Open Classroom Magnet Program at Conejo Elementary in a way that has not proven possible at the current site, where, for more than 15 years, the Open Classroom Magnet Program has resided. The Magnet Program and the Traditional school have had a mostly symbiotic relationship, primarily due to the resources provided the Magnet by the host school, and the parent participation and fund raising efforts provided the host school by the Magnet. The Magnet school's student population has also provided a boost in test scores for the entire school. However, through its years of ongoing development and growth, both parents and educators at the Open Classroom Magnet Program have noted increasing difficulty in maintaining the philosophical integrity of the Magnet Program, as well as added strain on Conejo Elementary School's office staff and the school's administrator in matters related to the Open Classroom Magnet Program's needs.

Despite being fortunate enough to currently have an outstanding Director at Conejo Elementary, one site administrator has been expected to oversee two programs at one school for far too long. The Open Classroom Magnet Program includes distinct philosophical needs with respect to educating the whole child; unique curriculum, planning, and instructional pedagogy; and a high-level of parent involvement that requires additional organization, meetings, and oversight from the Director. This same Principal must also manage the Traditional campus, which has twice as many students as in the Magnet, and which serves a Title 1 population and a high percentage of students who have instructional needs which are different, but no less important, than the needs of the general student population in the Magnet. Currently, Conejo Elementary School is in Program Improvement, which adds an additional burden to the site administrator. Due to this intense rigor, and the fact that Conejo School has had 7 administrators in 8 years, thus impacting leadership continuity, the Open Classroom Magnet Program's teachers have shouldered the added burden of handling much of the administration, additional meetings, and staff training for incoming Open Classroom teachers. Just this year, after the disastrous layoff process in May 2009, the Magnet Program lost a cohesive, established team. Three of its probationary teachers (each with 3 years of program experience) and one temporary teacher were laid off, leaving two remaining senior members with the responsibility of retraining team members, as well as the added strain of reassuring a tight knit community frustrated over the loss. Fortunately, one of our probationary teachers was rehired. The other two, while rehired, were reassigned to other schools.

Besides staffing upheaval, the Open Classroom teachers oversee and help organize parent involvement committees, including but not limited to: website development (which has been funded primarily by the Program), community outreach and advertising (again, mostly funded by the Program), new-parent training, festival planning, fund raising, and more. Many Open Classroom educators, both past and present, have noted that this strain is often excessive, and have had to weigh concerns of the extra work load when considering employment in the Magnet

Program, since the Magnet's educational team has, in effect, had no choice but to work additional hours, often throughout the summer, in order to keep the program running smoothly, with little in the way of district-supported resources. Several educators have voluntarily left the Open Classroom Magnet Program, citing extra hours required as consideration in leaving. This extra time takes away from the necessary planning, assessment, and paperwork associated directly with the classrooms, taking its toll on the essential creative process, and thus impacting the Magnet Program's philosophical integrity as a whole. Additionally, the wide range of needs at the Conejo School site impact what is needed for optimal student success within both Open Classroom and the Traditional program, in terms of staff development, as well as the continuity of the school's overall instructional design.

Simply put, the Open Classroom Magnet Program has long needed its own Principal and office staff, as well as support in training its educators, in order to ensure the program's philosophical integrity. Understandably, BRIDGES Charter School will provide the resources and support necessary for philosophically aligned educators to effectively and passionately carry out their jobs in the classrooms without the added burden of site administration, since a site Director and office staff will be dedicated fully to the support, training, parent involvement, paperwork, and oversight of the program as a whole.

Beyond the need for autonomous site administration, current trends in the CVUSD point to an increased desire by parents to have more educational choices for their children, and to have more opportunities to be actively involved in the educational process. Since 1993 the Open Classroom Magnet Program at Conejo Elementary has been the only public education program of its type in the Conejo Valley to actively involve parents in the classroom (90 minutes *per child per week* is required in the Magnet Program), allowing them a hands-on role in the planning and implementation of program activities. This unique component of consistent, **active parent participation**, in support of our Charter School's educational program and philosophy, provides the foundation that will create a successful learning community and yield competent and confident citizens for the 21st century.

As evidenced by an annual waiting list for the Magnet Program, the BRIDGES Charter School Founding Group also believes that the Open Classroom Magnet Program has limited growth potential at its current site, Conejo Elementary School. According to the program's tour and PR facilitators, many potential families have stated that, due to space availability uncertainties, they feel discouraged and often choose not to apply to the program. (See Appendix A, Testimonials). The Open Classroom Magnet Program has maintained its "comfort zone" of six classrooms and six teachers since 2002. Without more staffing and governance autonomy, as well as a fulltime Director committed only to the Magnet, expanding beyond six classrooms at the current site would further encroach upon the needs of the host school in terms of the availability of its Director, office staff, and resources, thus making it virtually impossible to maintain the Magnet Program's integrity and continuity.

BRIDGES Charter School will *expand and enhance* the current Open Classroom Magnet Program's philosophy and availability, most notably by adding grades 7 and 8. There are limited options for 6th grade Open Classroom graduates in the Conejo Valley if they and their families prefer to continue in a middle school learning environment which values attention to the **whole child**, conflict resolution, project-based learning, parent involvement, and the maintenance of an academic program that provides some choice in the way students learn. In addition, it has been noted by some Open Classroom families (see Appendix A, Testimonials) that their students' academic, social and emotional needs have been compromised in middle school by a variety of factors including: a) the limited time that teachers and support staff have to provide genuine attention to the individual student, b) peer pressure, c) unruly behavior, and d) counterproductive social dynamics in the classroom and on campus.

For years, many parents have sought an alternative to the available middle school options because of the reasons listed above, as well as limited (if any) opportunities for **active parent participation** in the middle school system. For some, the only alternative has been to homeschool or to enroll their children in private education, rather than risk a lapse in the academic, social/emotional growth and confidence experienced in the Open Classroom Magnet Program. This is not to say that there aren't some educators and some programs in existence in the CVUSD middle schools that consider social/emotional growth along with academics, but there is little way to ensure a child will have access to such an educator or program. We seek to create a middle school option that will be a part of a coordinated whole, ensuring the continuity of an educational philosophy for students in grades K-8 which considers the **whole child**. We believe this continuity will enable our students to be more physiologically and psychologically ready to embrace the dynamics of high school in 9th grade.

Because we know that our educational philosophy cannot succeed without a cohesive and philosophically aligned educator team, hiring flexibility and autonomy is of utmost importance. Our teachers at BRIDGES Charter School will be recruited and retained based solely on their abilities to provide excellent teaching, to understand and implement our philosophy, to work effectively with parents and as a team, and to maintain the Charter School's rigorous and high-quality expectations for student achievement. The classroom cannot be successful, nor can the parent effectively provide support in that classroom and in the Charter School, unless talented and philosophically matched educators are in place. It is our intent to develop a hiring policy where qualifications, intrinsic capabilities and philosophical alignment take precedence over all else in staffing. Having autonomy in hiring will also allow us to recruit support personnel of our choice, and maintain preferred staffing even during times of cutbacks via flexible and creative means of budgeting and fund raising.

Without having to consistently meet the needs of a host school, the Charter School educators will have more creative freedom and curricular autonomy. In addition, to fully provide a **whole child** educational philosophy, it is advantageous for us to expand on a site where all employees support the goals and guidelines of BRIDGES Charter School. This is not currently the case at

Conejo Elementary School, since the campus is shared with a traditional classroom program whose general population has, as noted earlier, different academic needs than the general Open Classroom Magnet Program population. In addition, some Conejo Elementary educators have historically had varying opinions toward Open Classroom's pedagogical methods, beliefs that are sometimes in conflict with the needs of Open Classroom students and the philosophy of the Open Classroom educators. It is also possible, due to the implementation of Education Code requirements and collective bargaining agreements, that an educator who is not "the right fit", and who is not philosophical aligned with the Open Classroom philosophy, be placed at the Open Classroom Magnet, despite any pedagogical differences. This has happened several times in the past, and the program found itself limited in options available to replace such an educator who was the "wrong fit." Beyond staffing, the Charter School site will be organized to allow more parent integration on the campus as well as a more fluid transition for parents and students who come from the CVUSD Parent Education Program (at Horizon Hills). Furthermore, we recognize that, just as Conejo Elementary is a K-5 with the exception of the Open Classroom 6th graders, adding a middle school to the campus is not in line with the CVUSD plan for elementary campus use. Thus, the BRIDGES Charter School site will provide for a middle school that closely follows our philosophy of **whole child** education and builds upon the model established in grades K-6.

With the creation of this charter proposal, it is the Petitioners' intent to provide the Open Classroom philosophy to more children in the community, to maintain a high level of student achievement, and to inspire confidence and a sense of efficacy among parents. BRIDGES Charter School will focus its recruitment efforts on families who want to be in the Open Classroom but who have been denied or discouraged due to limited enrollment, and on any interested families and students whether or not they are currently being served by the CVUSD.

Finally, in conjunction with our K-8 classroom-based model, BRIDGES Charter School will additionally develop a Homeschool Alliance. Homeschooling is increasing in popularity each year. In 2008, there were over 1 million homeschooled children nationwide.¹ In Open Classroom, approximately 5% of our families have opted to homeschool at some point, particularly for middle school. Direct communication with homeschool coordinators in the Conejo Valley, including Open Classroom parents who are also involved in homeschool programs, indicate that some would be willing to reconsider public schooling if there was a viable option for them, particularly in middle school (see Appendix A, Testimonials). Some of these families are currently enrolled in private distance learning programs, including Somis, Golden Valley and Gorman, and have expressed frustration that the CVUSD does not provide any homeschooling support or alternative. The BRIDGES Homeschool Alliance component will be managed on-site, and will be structured to allow for the periodic interaction of homeschooled children with children in the classroom-based program. Creating a partnership with families who homeschool will allow

¹ Ullman, Melanie. "Homeschool Statistics - Over 1 Million Homeschooled Kids in the US Alone!" June 25, 2008. Article online.

us to expand our community and build bridges of communication, social awareness and academic success amongst a greater population. It is the Charter School’s desire to not just meet the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs of the students who are enrolled full-time in the classroom, but to open up that opportunity to more of their homeschooled peers. A possible outcome of this connection to a K-8 classroom-based program chartered in the CVUSD boundaries might be consideration of the homeschool family to matriculate to a CVUSD high school.

In conclusion, **BRIDGES Charter School** will be a progressive, high-quality, student-centered K-8 educational program that will expand educational choices for parents and their children in the public school system, will support a nurturing community of learners, and will stimulate student achievement. In order to possess the skills necessary for a successful, healthy and satisfying life, students will be active participants in their education and not passive receptacles for facts. We will educate the **whole child** by addressing the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical needs of all students. We will enable students to become lifelong learners and global citizens through the use of innovative curriculum and instruction that empowers them to reach their innate intellectual, creative, and leadership potentials. In our multi-age classrooms, adult to student ratios will be lowered by **required parent participation** which will enable us to nourish curiosity, creativity, compassion, independence, resourcefulness, and respect for diversity, all of which we know results in quantifiable academic success.

A. Founding Group

BRIDGES Charter School is founded by a group of teachers, parents, and community members, with combined expertise in curriculum, child development, educational research, the arts, school finance, business, public relations, government and facilities. Attached as Appendix B, please find a list of BRIDGES Charter School Founders, including biographical information and resumes for the lead petitioners and Board of Directors, all of whom are members of the Founding Group.

**Table One:
Expertise Represented in the Planning Committee and Consulting Agencies**

	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Business and Finance	Technology Website, and content	Legal Services	Facilities	Home School Program	Progressive Education & Philosophical Research	Community Relations, Advertising, Fund Raising
Lori Peters	X						X	
Laura Holt-Erlig	X						X	

Jon Baker			X				X	X
Randy Witt		X			X			
Jim Floyd								X
Kathy Jonokuchi						X	X	
Melissa Swanson, CPA		X						
Rose Ann Witt							X	X
Liza Scheer	X					X	X	
Todd Geist		X	X					
Brenda Harari, Ph.D	X						X	
Marlo Hartsuyker, Board President MATES				X				X
Lisa Hildebrand, Director of Education, Ventura Charter School	X					X	X	
Jessica Norman, ExED- Charter Organization		X						
Middleton, Young & Minney Legal Services				X				
Eilene Green, Parenting Program/ Horizon Hills	X						X	

The Founding Board of Directors will be responsible for ensuring the Charter School’s viability and integrity, will work in collaboration with the teachers and parents, and will proactively

communicate with the County to manage legal and personnel issues as they relate to both the County and the Charter School. The governance mechanism of BRIDGES Charter School will include a nominating committee, a process to recruit and vet candidates for the Board, and the election or appointment of officers and board members. The Founding Board, which will be comprised of a diverse cross-section of parents, educators, and community members, will be expected to remain supportive of the Program's philosophy and intent. To this end, the Founding Board will help to ensure that all teachers, parents and students in the Program responsibly honor their individual commitments to the BRIDGES Charter School educational community in vision, intent, and effort. (The structure of the Board of Directors is more fully explained in Section 4, Governance.)

Charter School Goals

The following Charter School design goals are aligned with the seven statutory purposes for Charter Schools as defined by Education Code 47601 and are designed to enable pupils to become creative, self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners:

- 1) Encourage the use of varied and innovative teaching methods, through the promotion of meaning and relevance in an integrated curriculum. This includes mastery learning through the review of concepts as needed, providing accelerated lessons as needed, valuing peer teaching and collaboration, and connecting what is learned to the world around us.
- 2) Create responsible citizens in our democracy by encouraging and facilitating daily interaction with the community via project based learning, collaboration, community outreach, environmental stewardship and sustainability, all of which are both interpersonal and physical. By learning how to interact in meaningful and authentic ways, students will gain greater confidence to think independently and act proactively.
- 3) Improve student learning through small group instruction, achieved by active parent participation in the classroom. Parent effectiveness will be enhanced via ongoing parent education and the availability of an onsite parent resource center. Parents will be asked to support (and impart) the BRIDGES Charter School educational philosophy at home as well as in the classroom.
- 4) Utilize comprehensive, varied authentic assessments, which will be developed to meet a variety of needs: student centered (portfolio-based and student-directed), collaboration on educational goals, mastery learning, and standard assessments.
- 5) Provide new professional opportunities and responsibilities for educators, which include providing for creative freedom, support, progressive group discussion, and ongoing professional development. This forum of united and inspired educators will seek partnerships with other schools and universities that promote a progressive child-centered approach.
- 6) Stimulate improvement and competition in all public schools.
- 7) Expand educational choices for parents and students within the public school system in order to improve student achievement.

B. Consultants

The BRIDGES Charter School 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. Our Vision and Mission Statement

Our vision is to create a K-8 learning community in which all teachers, parents and students partner to support the cognitive, emotional and social success of our students; where there exists positive, respectful and peaceful collaboration, and where children are enabled and empowered to become lifelong learners and compassionate global citizens.

Our mission is to educate the **whole child** using a combination of innovative curriculum and instruction along with social/emotional education embedded in the program. Students will be enabled to reach their innate intellectual, creative, and leadership potential through our commitment to nourish curiosity, compassion, independence, resourcefulness, and respect for diversity.

B. Whom the School is Attempting to Educate

It is projected that BRIDGES Charter School will serve approximately 180 K-7 students in the first year, and up to 20% of enrolled students in the Homeschool Alliance. If there is measurable interest for adding 8th graders in the classroom-based or Homeschool alliance in year one, the Charter School will consider what is needed to include them. At least one class will be added each subsequent year for 5 years to bring our projected enrollment in 2014-2015 to a full capacity of 300 full time K-8 students in the classroom-based program. The projected growth of the Homeschool partnership will be dependent on the enrollment of K-8 students in the classroom-based program. BRIDGES Charter School will seek to maintain limited class size in all grades, including a 20:1 ratio in grades K-3, and no more than 30:1 in grades 4-8.

As shown in Table 2 below, the CVUSD student population is approximately 67% Caucasian, 19% Hispanic, 9% Asian, 1% African American, and 5% other. The Open Classroom Magnet program has attracted a racial balance more in line with the CVUSD student populace than with the Conejo Elementary neighborhood population. The ethnicity breakdown in Table 1 for Conejo Elementary includes 144 Open Classroom students. If the Open Classroom population is removed from this aggregate, the Latino/Hispanic population would grow even larger and the Caucasian population would decrease causing Conejo Elementary School to be even less representative of the CVUSD demographic averages. In addition, we recognize that almost half of the children in the Open Classroom Magnet Program, grades 2-6, are identified as gifted learners, as opposed to 5% for the Traditional program at Conejo Elementary. In order to achieve and maintain a racial and ethnic balance of students that is reflective of the general population of CVUSD, BRIDGES Charter School’s recruiting efforts will include flyers, media outreach,

presentations and preschools and community –based agencies, and public information meetings. Special efforts will be made to reach and draw students from communities underrepresented in our student’s population. For example, wherever possible, informational brochures will be printed in both English and Spanish, and efforts will be made to provide bilingual services, if needed, as informational meetings. BRIDGES Charter School will schedule dates, times and locations of open houses, informational meetings, and other activities in a manner which assures, the extent possible, that all interested families are able to attend.

BRIDGES Charter School will attempt to serve all students who wish to enroll in the Charter School; we anticipate our population will closely mirror the current population of the Open Classroom Magnet School. This gives us a basis for predicting the population that may choose the school by way of demographics, educational strengths, needs, and the parents’ desire to be actively involved in the school itself.

There is no plan at this time to serve high school students, but the Petitioners are willing to consider this as a possibility either by seeking a material revision to this charter or by seeking the approval of a new high school age charter in CVUSD, since we understand CVUSD’s desire and intent to further develop and support educational alternatives for its K-12 student population.

Table 2: CVUSD Demographics

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Percentage CVUSD²</i>	<i>Percentage Conejo Elementary³</i>	<i>Percentage Open Classroom 2008-2009⁴</i>
African American	1%	4%	3%
Asian	9%	4%	4%
Latino or Hispanic	19%	58%	12%
Caucasian	67%	30%	70%
Other	5%	4%	11%
<i>Sub-Group</i>			
Free or Reduced Lunch Participants	13%	53%	8%
English Learners	10%	44%	12%
Students with Disabilities	12%	13%	9%
Gifted and Talented	N/A	5% ⁵	45% (grades 2-6)

² Approximate percentages based on CVUSD SARC summary

³ Based on most recent information available on the CVUSD website for the District and Conejo Elementary SARC, 2007-2008. These percentages include the 144 students enrolled in the Open Classroom Magnet Program. Total school population: 446 students.

⁴ Approximations based on class roster from start of 2008-2009 school year. GATE percentage is based on 45 Open Classroom students in grades 2-6 out of 141 total students.

⁵ Based on 13 GATE-identified students grades 2-5 out of 305 Traditional students at Conejo

Table 3: City of Thousand Oaks- Demographics*

Population 123,091 (July, 2008)	
Caucasian	77.7%
Latino	13.1%
Asian	5.9%
African American	1.1%
Other	1.7%

*Source: 2008, City-Data.com.

The BRIDGES Charter School’s outreach plan will include a website, flyers, and presentations to preschools and community agencies, as well as public information meetings. We will have program information and applications printed in both English and Spanish, and will aim to provide bilingual support at meetings if possible.

The Charter School will attract and appeal to K-8 students and families who desire a flexible, community-based, nurturing, integrated, balanced, multi-age and whole-child focused learning environment. We will strive to effectively support the needs of a wide range of learning styles, interests, and abilities. BRIDGES Charter School will be a dynamic, welcoming, passionate community where knowledge, innovation, and individual creativity are honored and celebrated. The Charter School will also remain one of two “homes” (the other being the Open Classroom Magnet Program) for families who wish to be **actively involved** in their child’s education, and where that involvement is integral to the Charter School’s success.

Learning Styles Anticipated to be Most Successful in the Open Classroom Structure

BRIDGES Charter School students will have the same spectrum of learning styles, needs and behaviors as those in any traditional setting. While we feel that any child can benefit from the type of nurturing environment that BRIDGES Charter School will offer, children who will likely be most successful will share some or all of the following traits:

- They take responsibility for their learning, or strive to do so.
- They are self-motivated, independent learners, or strive to be.
- They practice taking responsibility for their actions and interactions.
- They are flexible in making transitions from one class or grouping to another.
- They work well in a stimulating, collaborative and active environment.
- They are accepting of directions and of adult/peer guidance.

Gifted and Talented Education (“GATE”) students (or accelerated learners) will benefit from a curriculum and a structure that easily allows for differentiated instruction, and which varies depending on the needs of the learner. The focus of the Charter School on emotional and social needs provides a well-balanced approach to educating the gifted learner. Projects, collaboration, and small groups facilitated by teachers and parents, and a rich opportunity to learn effective communication and collaboration skills, will motivate the accelerated learner to challenge him or herself more effectively and authentically. The Charter School’s dedication to social and

emotional development will enhance the learning of the gifted student. (Goleman, 1995)

We like to think that all of our children are special, and have needs that must be honored on both an individual and a group basis. If a child has special education learning needs, and can learn best in an environment with frequent transitions, cross-age groups, and within a stimulating environment, and their family is committed to the philosophy of the program, then they will be successful in BRIDGES Charter School.

Table 4: Projected Enrollment and Staffing Needs
Enrollment Projections (classroom-based program only):

GRADE	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Kindergarten	30	30	40	40	40
First	25	30	30	40	40
Second	25	25	30	30	40
Third	20	25	25	30	40
Fourth	20	20	20	25	30
Fifth	20	20	20	25	30
Sixth	20	20	20	25	30
Seventh	20	20	25	25	25
Eighth		20	25	25	25
Totals	180	210 ⁶	235	265	300

Table 5
Projected Staffing needs:

GRADE/ CLUSTER	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
K	1	1	1	1	1
K/1	1	1	2	2	2
1/2	1	1	1	2	2
2/3	2	2	2	2	3
4/5	1	1	1	2	2
5/6	1	1			
6			1	1	1
6/7 ⁷ math & science	1				
7/8 math & science		1	1	1	1

⁶ Grades K-3 may have up to 22 students per class in year two.

⁷ Math/Science director for grades 6 and 7 in 2010-2011 will work ½ time in the classroom-based program; the other ½ time will be spent overseeing adherence to math/science standards in the Homeschool Alliance, as well as providing math intervention where most needed in the classroom based program. In year 2, this certificated employee may become the full time 7/8th grade math/science teacher if credentialed to teach 8th grade algebra.

7/8 ELA/SS		1	1	1	1
Homeschool teacher ⁸	1	1	1	1	2
Total Teachers	9	10	11	13	15

Additional teaching staff (certificated or non-certificated) desired:

- Special Education/ Resource Specialist⁹
- Band instructor
- Physical Education instructor
- Chorus and/or Drama Specialist
- Computer Specialist/ tech support
- Counselor/Advisor (part time)
- Reading Specialist (part time)

C. Educational Philosophy (How Learning Best Occurs)

BRIDGES Charter School is committed to providing a high quality, effective, and standards-based program through the education of the **whole child**, whereby the cognitive, social, emotional and physical aspects of individual students are addressed.

The BRIDGES Charter School philosophy is closely aligned with the philosophy of the Open Classroom Magnet Program.¹⁰ We (educators, parents and students) operate under the shared philosophy that we are all teachers and learners in our educational community. Educators view the classroom as a rich, evolving experience, and consider the learning styles of our students when planning a meaningful, balanced and standards-based curriculum. Students are primarily motivated by their interests and passions, yet can learn to be motivated by opportunities to challenge themselves and improve in areas *they* determine to be ripe for growth. Children learn best, and will be most motivated, in a nurturing, safe, and supportive environment, where their curiosities and talents are respected. Thus, the impact of positive interpersonal relationships amongst classroom and community members cannot be understated. It is through these positive, collaborative and respectful interactions that learning will best occur.

We believe the school day has ample opportunities to discuss, engage in, and learn from everyday experiences, be it a current event or playground dynamics. The exploration of relevant and sometimes challenging social issues and circumstances provides practice in conflict resolution and creates a participatory classroom community. When children are active participants in their learning, what they learn becomes more relevant. Making learning relevant

⁸ Homeschool Alliance enrollment will not exceed 20% of the Charter School's ADA.

⁹ The hours required for this position shall be determined by the needs of our students as outlined in their IEPs.

¹⁰ The Open Classroom philosophy as it relates to whole child education, curriculum and physical structure, and as outlined on the Open Classroom Magnet's website, was originally drafted, revised, and further developed by members of BRIDGES' Founding Group: Lori Peters, Jon Baker and Rose Ann Witt. Therefore, some of this document's content in section C (Educational Philosophy), section E (Teaching Methods), and section F (Organizational Structure and Physical Environment) is worded similarly. Only the wording that was originally drafted by these listed BRIDGES' Founding Group members has been taken in any entirety.

to the world around us is vital, as is providing a context-driven curriculum. Context-driven lessons and activities allow students to recall and utilize what they know already, and apply that prior knowledge to new experiences. Thus, the learning and practice of basic, fundamental skills becomes part of the process, not the goal itself. As students mature and matriculate from one level to the next, they will each work toward the goal of being a confident, participatory, socially responsible, and independent life-long learner.

The educational design of the Charter School has its basis in the theory of constructivism (Piaget), which details *how* people learn. Understanding cannot simply be transferred by explanation from one mind (that of an educator) to another mind (that of a student). Rather, each of us constructs our own image of the universe and how it fits together through personal engagement with it. This approach is student-centered, whereby teachers (and parents) act as facilitators, providing the guidance and structure necessary for the children to construct meaning from their environment and experiences. Ultimately, children travel from engagement to learning, from learning to understanding, and from understanding to the competent application of information.

During this educational process and experience, our students will practice effective oral and written self-expression, critical thinking and problem solving, and learn personal responsibility. They will actively engage in the curriculum and find meaningful ways to demonstrate their mastery of concepts, be it thematic, collaborative, dramatic, presentation-style, or a combination of choices. Through cooperative activities and project-based learning, students will develop powerful reasoning, negotiating, and creative-thinking skills. Students will also learn to engage with a variety of learners, in order to further appreciate the variety of cumulative talents their groups have to offer, whether if be in cross-age groups, homogeneous groups, or while working with adults. Having ample opportunities to learn from, learn with, and assist in the learning of others builds and nurtures a sense of community and social responsibility, and fosters the skills necessary for life-long learning. Consequently, these fundamental life skills serve as a foundation for the pursuit of academic excellence and high achievement.

We believe that all children have an innate desire to learn and that children learn best by doing. Since we recognize that each child is unique, we have committed ourselves to creating an inclusive educational experience that combines current educational research, common sense, and attention to various needs and learning styles in order to move each child forward. We feel that such a dynamic, responsive learning environment is only possible when the student to adult ratio is dramatically lowered by consistent parent participation in the classroom. We also believe that a successful student is one who emerges from school as a balanced individual who is confident and competent not only academically, but also socially and emotionally.

In conclusion, it is our belief that learning best occurs when children are presented with ample opportunities to engage with others; when they have room for self-expression, creativity and mastery within the context of their learning; and where a nurturing educational environment is provided so that each student reaches his or her potential as a respected individual.

Our guiding principles are:

1. Children learn best when they engage in activities that are interesting, interactive, and relevant, and when the teacher, the parents and the child all understand what a student's learning style is. Personal understanding of a child's strengths, weaknesses, passions, and fears allows educators to present material in a meaningful manner. This knowledge, coupled with sufficient time for in-depth exploration, allows students to develop real understanding.
2. Teachers and parents are partners in education. Teachers and parents each have a different sphere of influence with respect to the children. Consequently, they must work together to educate the whole child, in order to help him or her reach their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally.
3. A child's natural desire to learn is to be preserved and developed. Without genuine understanding, learning is often rote and quickly forgotten. Although children's interests are varied and often transitory, they are always the best vehicles by which to catch and keep attention on a topic.
4. Creative and critical thought must be nurtured and actively developed. Creativity is often enhanced through active and unstructured play and exploration, which leads to problem-solving and critical thinking. The ability to synthesize creative ideas is one of the most profound goals of any education.
5. Every child deserves a solid foundation of basic knowledge. Creative and critical thought is best served by a wealth of knowledge upon which to work. Each child should be encouraged and supported to take in as much knowledge as he/she can comprehend.
6. An integrated curriculum provides more meaning and relevance. Whenever possible, the inter-relationship between concepts and topics must be highlighted and explored. We strive to put even practice and skill-building activities into a context that has some meaning on a larger scale.
7. Completing a task well fosters self-esteem. Preserving a joy of learning is compatible with teaching self-discipline in learning, including the learning from mistakes. An expectation of accomplishment helps our children develop and maintain a greater respect for their own abilities.
8. A sense of community aids development immeasurably. When children feel secure and cared for in their surroundings, they become better able to develop social and academic skills. Fear of failure is one of the greatest barriers to enjoying school activities. Acceptance as a person first, and as a student second, clears the way for less stress and more enjoyment in learning and interaction with others.
9. Communication is essential. Frequent in-depth communication between teacher, parent, and child is essential, as students need guidance to make responsible choices in their learning. The Charter School will attract a diversity of passions and opinions. Thus, some disagreements over content and/or strategies are to be expected. Clear communication that focuses on the issue at hand greatly facilitates the process of consensus and resolution.

10. All members of the community must support the philosophy to the best of their ability, both at school and at home, in order for the Charter School and students to thrive. This includes a commitment to promoting sustainable, environmentally conscious and healthy habits, and the nurturing of conflict resolution skills.

Research-based Pedagogical Strategies that Guide our Philosophy

Our philosophical beliefs are derived from, but not limited to, a variety of educational and behavioral researchers. While we may or may not endorse the educational and behavioral philosophy of the following researchers in full, the BRIDGES Charter School's educational philosophy is guided by the following key tenets:

- Fostering positive interpersonal relationships is essential to developing independence and confidence. To this end, “emotional intelligence” (EQ) is a stronger indicator of human success than IQ. The development of character qualities that develop one’s emotional intelligence is paramount to whole child education. Emotionally intelligent children are better able to learn academically. (Daniel Goleman)
- The ability to communicate compassionately and empathetically with others is fundamental in building respectful, long lasting relationships and fundamental to successful integration into society at large. The daily practice of conflict resolution methods such as Non Violent Communication (NVC), or compassionate communication, is necessary and will be an integral element of our Charter School. We will teach and practice conflict resolution skills in *Circle*, our daily forum for conflict resolution and mediated communication (more fully explained in Section E, Teaching Methods), and throughout the day. As teachers, we will model these skills for our students; parents will further develop their conflict resolution ability through ongoing parent education. (Marshall Rosenberg)
- The student must learn actively and is not a vessel to be filled with facts. Children need opportunities to explore, manipulate, experiment, question, and seek answers, and the teacher must have confidence in the child’s ability to do so. In constructivist learning, intelligence grows through the twin processes of assimilation and accommodation, whereby children build upon their experiential understanding of events, materials, and subject matter. Therefore, we will build upon what children know, and provide many opportunities for children to actively engage in their learning. (Jean Piaget)
- Social interactions make up our culture, and our culture shapes our cognition. Within the socio-cultural perspective is the idea of scaffolding, whereby the learner is provided clues and hints in order to solve problems and that, given appropriate help, a child can perform challenging tasks. Guided discovery in the classroom involves the teacher posing intriguing questions, offering feedback, and providing opportunities for students to learn and master the necessary tools they need to be successful. This socio-cultural model promotes multi-age groupings and peer teaching so that students themselves offer the dialogues and scaffolding needed to better understand the material. (Lev Vygotsky)
- Art, music, invention and play are **necessary** components to education. The brain must be

fully stimulated through the mastery of six “high-concept, high-touch” abilities essential to professional success and personal fulfillment: design, story, symphony, empathy, play and meaning. We will honor and promote the attention to a child’s ability and desire to be creative and exploratory, and provide environments most conducive for optimal brain development. (Daniel Pink)

- Diverse learners must be provided with diverging pathways that lead to their success. Thus our curriculum will maintain rigorous standards while permitting innovation and creativity in curriculum choices, and maintain the flexibility to allow highly specialized minds to prepare for a productive adulthood. In addition, our assessments will take into consideration that different minds can show what they know in different ways. We reject the traditional paradigms that focus on exposing and fixing a student’s deficits, while neglecting the student’s latent or blatant talents. (Mel Levine)
- Differentiation within clusters can provide the extra scaffolding needed for optimal understanding of a subject, via the support of peers and adults. We will focus on a differentiated model rather than an individualized model when preparing for the needs of our students. Differentiation in our classrooms will facilitate the understanding of ideas and the application of skills so that students develop frameworks of meaning that allow them to retain and transfer what they study. We will find “zones” in which students cluster, so that on a particular day, we offer several routes to a goal- instead of 30 routes, as an “individualized” model would suggest (an individualized model being one in which it is expected that every child has his or her specific needs met). (Carol Ann Tomlinson)
- The avoidance of humiliation and public embarrassment will be of paramount importance. Thus, in order to fulfill our School’s vision of positive, respectful and peaceful collaboration, discipline practices will focus on proactive resolutions and the understanding of natural consequences. (Mel Levine)
- Collaboration and cooperation promote higher achievement and lead to greater fulfillment than competition. It is a waste of one’s energy to prevent another from winning, thereby lowering individual and group productivity. We seek to change the competitive nature of society by fostering a sense of true community in our classrooms. (Alfie Kohn)
- Most human behavior is chosen. According to *Choice Theory*, the present psychology of most people in the world is that we must get what we want through external control, when in effect external control is destructive to relationships. Therefore, we will teach and model, either specifically or similarly, the “Seven Caring Habits” (replacing the “Seven Deadly Habits”)¹¹ in order to address our School Vision of connecting to one another and the world around us. (William Glasser)
- Students think and learn differently and express their intelligence in a multitude of ways;

¹¹ The Seven Caring Habits, according to Glasser’s Choice Theory, replace the need for external control. Those habits are: supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting, respecting, and negotiating. By replacing “deadly habits” (criticism, blame, complaints, nagging, threats, punishments and bribery) with caring habits, we can build and protect healthy interactions and relations.

thus, we will consider a student's intellectual and affective learning style in order to maximize his or her learning. The *Multiple Intelligence Theory* defines eight separate intellectual domains: verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, spatial, musical, body/kinesthetic, intrapersonal, interpersonal and naturalist. (Howard Gardner)

The Charter School's Educational Philosophy (including guiding principles and researched-based pedagogical strategies), in its entirety, will serve to direct all curriculum and classroom management methods in BRIDGES Charter School.

D. What it Means to be an "Educated Person" in the 21st Century

The 21st Century needs innovative, productive and conscientious workers with excellent problem solving and communication skills. However, it is impossible to determine just what *kind* of work will be needed, as the development of industry, technology and global needs is ensuing at a much faster pace than "formal education" can possibly keep up with or anticipate. Thus, it is far more important that students develop a sense of *how* to learn, *how* to realize and communicate their ideas, *how* to listen to the needs of a global community, and *how* to build upon their inherent and learned talents than for them to possess a common thread of facts and figures. The ability to collect information must now be replaced by an ability to manage information, as newer methods of communication are becoming available at a phenomenal pace. Once able to manage information, it is necessary for individuals to know how to apply that information to the world around them in a way that bridges relevance with innovation. This broad definition of education promotes the development of a child's social, emotional and academic balance. It is critical that students learn how to effectively balance the acquirement of knowledge with the deepening of their emotional and social intelligence, and that they ultimately possess the desire to be thoughtful, creative, compassionate, productive and involved citizens.

In this century, family time and "face to face" community interaction are being increasingly replaced by relationships built around and within cyberspace. Children are quickly becoming used to new norms in communication, and are losing out on the valuable lessons brought forth when observing others and physically interacting with peers and adults- lessons of ethics, non-verbal communication, common courtesy, turn-taking, patience, good listening, and public speaking. It is imperative that students spend increased time in school becoming adept at these skills, best achieved through collaborative activities, conflict resolution and class discussion, and community outreach. Students who are successful at learning these skills today will be able to effectively lead others tomorrow, in order to solve the global challenges that lay ahead.

In this time of rapid change and innovation, our education system is struggling to keep pace with our dynamic, digital world. We cannot expect young people to learn 21st-century skills with 20th-century tools.

As stated by Alfie Kohn¹², "Any set of intellectual objectives, any description of what it means to think deeply and critically, should be accompanied by a reference to one's interest or intrinsic motivation to do such thinking. Dewey reminded us that the goal of education is more education.

¹² Kohn, Alfie. "What Does it Mean to Be Well Educated?" Essay, *Director Leadership*, 2003.

To be well educated, then, is to have the desire as well as the means to make sure that learning never ends.”

In conclusion, an educated person in the 21st century must be an individual who is emotionally, socially and academically balanced, and who has the creative and higher level thinking skills needed to add meaningfully to the world in which he or she lives.

E. Teaching Methods

Children's interests, although varied and often transitory, are often the best means of capturing their attention. Students often construct in-depth knowledge of a subject that excites their curiosity, and thereby develop a genuine understanding of it. Likewise, because an integrated curriculum provides more meaning and relevance, BRIDGES Charter School educators will strive to highlight the inter-relationship between concepts whenever possible. To this end, interdisciplinary teaching methods, like **project-based activities** and **cooperative learning**, are coordinated to accommodate diverse learning styles and aptitudes. This allows each child to assimilate information in ways that are harmonious with their unique way of thinking. Through such thematic exercises, our students will develop powerful reasoning, negotiating and creative-thinking skills. These fundamental life skills establish a foundation from which high achievement and academic excellence can flourish. BRIDGES Charter School will employ the follow teaching methods:

Project Based Learning

Project-based learning will appear different across the grades, but generally speaking, it is an opportunity that allows a child to deeply explore subjects within an area of their interest. While the teachers will define parameters for the area/s of study, the students have some creative license and choices of how they will conduct their research and learning. An example of Project Based learning in the primary grades might be a country study, with an oral presentation. In the upper grades, it could be a 6-week research project on a state or historic event of their choosing. Along the way, research skills are taught, and students collaborate to share their findings. Most projects culminate with oral presentations. **Public speaking** improves all aspects of a child's communication abilities and builds self-confidence. By the time students are in the upper grades, they will be expected to give many well-prepared oral presentations within the year.

Collaboration

It is important that students have ample opportunity, on a regular basis, to share ideas and listen to the ideas of their peers. Students will not often be grouped with the same peers over and over, unless they are “buddies,” thus providing them the chance to communicate with as many different perspectives/personalities as possible. It is far more engaging for students to discuss ideas than to listen to an adult lecture them. Collaboration enables them to connect what they learn to their prior experiences. As students get older, they have more self-direction and discipline in order to cooperate with others. We will have them work together, for example, in literature groups, on history or reading, to create presentations, or in science pods. The more

students practice collaborating, the more they develop their abilities to communicate their own perspectives, the more they will recognize and appreciate the strengths of others, and the more helpful and patient they will become with one another.

Socratic (or Probing) Questioning

In helping our students to develop critical thinking and the confidence to explain their reasoning, it is vital that students are not simply receptacles for information. They must learn to question and probe the information they are studying more deeply. Through the use of active questioning by teachers (and parents), children will learn to clarify (“What exactly does this mean?”), make assumptions and develop convictions (“Do you agree/disagree with him/her? Why or why not?”), provide evidence and rationale for their opinions (“Can you provide an example of this?” Or, “Show me how you discovered this.”), question viewpoints and perspectives (“Who benefits from this? Why is this necessary, or is it?”), and form conclusions (“If this happens, what will happen next? Why do you think this?”). Through the use of questions, the teacher and pupil(s) are engaging in more active dialogue, and the idea of “we are all teachers and learners” is honored. Furthermore, children learn how to ask the kind of questions which correct misconceptions and lead more effectively to a reliable base of knowledge.

Inquiry-based Learning

In an inquiry-based classroom, the teacher serves as a facilitator (or guide), as children seek to find answers to their questions, using what they know, or by accessing the curriculum, the Internet, peers, or resources beyond the classroom. This type of learning environment also guides children to be life-long learners. While questioning and searching for answers are extremely important parts of the inquiry method, effectively generating knowledge from this questioning and searching is greatly aided by a conceptual context for learning. Well-designed inquiry-based learning activities and interactions should be set in a conceptual context in order to help students accumulate knowledge as they progress from grade to grade. Inquiry in education should be about a greater understanding of the world in which they live, learn, communicate, and work. Memorizing facts and information is not the most important skill in today's world. Facts change, and information is readily available. Students today must become proficient at gathering and synthesizing the mass of data available to them. Therefore, educators will guide students to this goal through instruction that is **process-orientated rather than product-orientated**, through direct written and oral feedback, and via the offering of both explicit and general directions. Ultimately, students will learn to generate knowledge that is both useful and applicable- the product of *inquiry learning*.

Circle

In many ways, the school community represents a microcosm of the larger world. As such, the importance BRIDGES Charter School places on social development is reflected in the daily activities of the classroom, where life skills such as constructive communication, conflict resolution, and a commitment to proactive problem solving are necessary components of a cooperative environment. An integral part of each day and primary vehicle for teaching these skills is **Circle**, a discussion group that encompasses the whole class and provides a daily forum

for the expression, exploration, and resolution of social interaction among the children. It is an important component in the development of each student's social and emotional self.

BRIDGES Charter School educators will be trained to lead children through **Circle**, a time for conflict resolution and peacemaking discussion. Specific language and necessary training, such as found in Non-Violent Communication (Rosenberg) or Choice Theory (Glasser), may be incorporated or utilized fully. Children will begin training for **Circle** in grades K-1, learning skills such as taking turns when speaking, active listening, patience, reflection, observation and "I Messages." In grades 2/3, children will become more adept at guiding discussion, problem solving, and offering appreciations and concerns in a proactive, compassionate way; this grade cluster will graduate from having to use a "talking stick" (or other tool) in order to facilitate speaking and listening norms. From grades 4-8, **Circle** will become an indispensable problem-solving vehicle whereby students will learn to maturely question, debate, share concerns, establish order, observe patterns in behavior and societal norms, develop confidence, take responsibility for their actions, and generate positive and proactive strategies for handling life's challenges and celebrations. **Circle, and the skills learned within**, will therefore serve as a foundation for all communication between peers, teachers, siblings and parents, thus clearing the way for the most effective, honest, and safe learning environment possible.

Circle is an integral part of the instructional day. Through the strategies built upon each subsequent year during Circle at BRIDGES Charter School, students will develop, practice, and master the following skills:

- The ability to listen well to others, which includes greater exposure to the modeling of English sentence structure, including the formation of articulate and effective questions and responses;
- The ability to speak well, which includes responding to others, and addressing the ideas and/or opinions of others, in a way that garners respect, resolution and the collaborative exchange of ideas;
- The ability to think critically, through the shared exchange of ideas and the inclusion of varied opinions to real and perceived issues;
- The ability to develop citizenry, where student behavior optimally mirrors positive social structures set forth in effective local and national governance.

Creative Arts

A successful student is one who emerges from school as a balanced individual whose education allows him/her to live a more content, meaningful and fulfilling life through the appreciation and enjoyment of the broad range of experiences which life has to offer. Thus, in recognition of the essential need for creative self-expression in the maintenance of a healthy human spirit, we unequivocally support the inclusion of the fine and performing arts into our academic curriculum. All children will receive art and music instruction at BRIDGES Charter School, both as focus areas of study and as components of **integrated theme-based activities**. We plan to have a band director, and an art and/or music specialist, but additional resources in the creative

arts will be determined by the willingness of parents to support such endeavors. This support may come in the way of fund raising efforts specific to the hiring of additional art and music specialists, or by parents working directly with children to offer their talents and expertise in order to meet their volunteering requirement. Opportunities to showcase their resulting projects and talents are provided in school-wide art exhibits and performances. Additional opportunities for students to express themselves creatively in ways that appeal to their personal inclinations will be available through various extra-curricular options, via parent-developed and parent-run “courses,” for example: cartooning, photography, dance, mythology, or dramatic reading.

Field Trips

BRIDGES Charter School students may participate in a number of supplemental excursions each school year. These serve to complement and enhance subject area studies while simultaneously synthesizing educational concepts with real-world applications, thereby heightening meaning and relevance. Each teaching-team cluster will present to the Charter School’s Board of Directors and Director the proposed field trip calendar for the coming year. Outside of contributions to our Charter School’s booster club, parents may be asked to provide additional funds necessary for bus rides and admission costs.

Independent Work (“Homework”) - Grades K-8

The most important reason for students to have independent work is to develop self-efficacy and confidence in their skills. It is also important that students learn critical time management strategies and develop a sense of responsibility with tasks. However, giving homework for the sake of “busy-work” is ineffective and runs counter to the development of an intrinsic desire for lifelong learning. In fact, students who are burdened with hours of homework each night often see school as a chore, and develop stress-related issues that interfere with real learning. (Kohn, 2006). Additionally, families must endure the stress of their child’s resistance to homework. “Busy work” assigned simply for the sake of working a select number of additional minutes, beyond 7 hours of productivity in school, is ineffective as a learning tool. Teachers must take into account the developmental level of their students and the ability of their students’ parents to provide guidance when considering any independent task for that child at home, especially in grades K-2, where tasks (if any) should be limited to collaborative reading or games. To this end, it should be noted that a long day at school is enough for younger students. Tasks assigned beyond that day should be rooted in joyful collaboration, discussion, and active play.

Independent Work at the BRIDGES Charter School ***will not be assigned based on minutes, but based on relevance***. Each day and week, students will have independent tasks assigned that will serve to enhance, support and provide supplemental extra practice for activities and lessons they are doing in class. Students will be asked to develop weekly goals for independent practice and may seek guidance as to how best to reach these goals. Depending on the needs of the students, teacher or parent, guidance may be required for some tasks. Students will be given time during the class day and at the end of the day (“Indie Time”) to work independently, and ask for guidance as needed. They will be encouraged to utilize their time wisely and thus complete all or most of their independent work at school. Should students not use their time wisely during the

course of the day, a natural consequence would be the completion of their independent work at home (therefore, it becomes “homework”). Students may opt to skip Indie time, or choose to complete some tasks at home. In addition, some student-directed goals and learning styles may require that the completion of some independent work at home. However, *the Charter School’s goals as related to Independent Work are* to: preserve family time, allow for student direction and some control over their tasks, and assign tasks that build self-efficacy and foster a love of learning. To that end, we will encourage students to push through areas of difficulty or apprehension, in order to develop a greater sense of self-confidence and accomplishment.

If the teacher determines it is both valuable and necessary to assign additional work (extra practice, research, or study) to be done primarily at home, the following guidelines should be considered:

- The assignment will aid in the understanding and engagement of a class activity, such as data collection, script writing, or a student-delegated task for group work;
- The assignment will build upon skills the learner needs, such as reading with or aloud to an adult for additional minutes; rewriting or revising an assignment after given feedback and direction; practicing math facts; or studying a particular concept after given guidance in effective study skills and strategies;
- The assignment shall support the learning for enrichment classes or activities, such as practicing with a musical instrument, a language, or for an oral presentation;
- The assignment should be appropriate for the child’s grade level, developmental level, and learning style, and shall serve as a tool to promote confidence in skills, self-efficacy, and life long learning;
- The assignment will provide an opportunity for in-depth study, critical thinking, and/or the advancement of a child’s passions and interests;
- The assignment involves physical modalities which can be further practiced at home, like jumping rope, tossing bean bags, or juggling to enhance brain development while practicing a skill in rhythm or song (such as math facts).

F. Organizational Structure and Physical Environment

The BRIDGES Charter School is a community where students as well as families are integral to the fabric of the program. The heart and soul of BRIDGES Charter School lies within the commitment teachers and parents make to students: that of creating a *positive* educational environment with self-motivated learners who are excited to be at school and eager to invest in their own education. *That joy in the classroom is the first important step toward grooming adults who retain a life-long curiosity for and love of learning.* Cultivating that intensity of student enthusiasm, however, requires a level of involvement that is simply unachievable **without the direct support of parents in the educational process.** By bringing parents into the classroom and dropping the student to adult ratio dramatically, we can structure a much more personalized, hands-on, and exploratory approach to learning for the children, one which meets California

academic standards with greater flexibility, relevance, and creative freedom. The additional classroom guidance provided by this **active parent participation** enhances the children's opportunities to make learning choices based on their interests, pace, and style of learning, in an atmosphere that emphasizes social responsibility, teamwork, and community.

Expanded learning opportunities, though, are only half the foundation for BRIDGES Charter School. Equally important is the creation of a nurturing environment in which the children thrive as *balanced* human beings. This requires opportunities for growth in such crucial areas as self-esteem, confidence, personal responsibility, conflict resolution, commitment, and empathy. A collaborative and nurturing environment supports the children's educational exploration in a caring way, communicates the belief that mistakes are learning opportunities rather than failures, and provides the security in which our students can be comfortable undertaking the emotional and intellectual risk-taking that real growth demands.

Our students' educational environment will encompass a multi-dimensional curriculum founded upon **relationship and choice**, and on learning that emphasizes not only academic growth but also concretely addresses **social and emotional growth**. We believe that stress generated by fear of failure is one of the greatest barriers to enjoying school activities (thereby limiting achievement). Therefore, BRIDGES' educators will promote high expectations while simultaneously emphasizing a nurturing and encouraging approach, in order to assure every child that he/she is important, has intrinsic value, and is acknowledged for his/her individual progress and successes in his/her **process** of learning. This acceptance leads to greater satisfaction in both learning and interaction with others, resulting in a personal foundation of self-esteem that empowers each student to realize his or her highest potential. (Glasser; Goleman)

Parent Participation

All parents in the *classroom-based program* at the BRIDGES Charter School will understand that our philosophy, our vision, and an optimal learning environment are dependent upon **active parent participation** in the program. Thus, parents will be asked to participate **a minimum of 2.5 hours per week (on average), for each child they enroll in the program**, with a capped requirement of 6 hours per week for 3 or more children. In addition, parents will commit to attending at least two parent-education lectures per year, and/or demonstrating knowledge gained by their own ongoing research, reading, or active participation in a discussion group. Parents will be encouraged to join the Charter School's PAC (Parent Advisory Council, explained in Section 4, Governance), attend monthly meetings, and remain aware and involved with special school-wide events and Fund Raisers. ***It should be the goal of each participating family to understand and support the BRIDGES Charter School philosophy both at school and at home.*** Prior to enrollment in the Charter School, parents will be asked to attend a tour, information meeting, and/or meet with the Charter School's Director.

Pursuant to the achievement of a diverse and balanced student population, flexibility will be afforded families who meaningfully wish to enroll their children at BRIDGES Charter School, and who desire the opportunity to be actively involved in their child's education, but who cannot adhere to expectations outlined in the application process, nor meet specific time requirements

for volunteering. The Charter School's Director, educators, and active parent volunteers will assist and support families with limited means for involvement, as needed, in order to ensure that BRIDGES maintains fair and equitable practices toward maintaining a diverse student population. However, upon enrollment, parents will be expected to understand how our philosophy may differ from other public school choices, in its premise that active parent involvement is essential to the Charter School's success, and that BRIDGES Charter School is a choice *for families who wish to be actively involved in their child's education*. Beyond having philosophically aligned educators, the foundation of BRIDGES Charter School is built on the idea of a community coming together to educate all children, and that our community depends on active, passionate, effective, and ongoing parent involvement.

Parents who have children in the *classroom-based program* will be asked to commit, in advance of their child's first day of school (or soon thereafter), to being actively involved in **at least one** Parent-Managed Cohort (PMC) of their choice and strength. Each PMC should have at least 3 members, and might have as many as 15 depending on the need. (Please see Appendix D for an overview of Parent Managed Cohorts).

Physical and Observable Space

Though the classrooms may not appear structured to the casual observer, a well-thought-out framework will be in place to allow students both choice and the freedom to operate. This framework allows for:

- Frequent transitions
- Unassigned seating
- Varied group settings
- Working with others
- A highly stimulating environment
- Team teaching
- Flexible/multi-age groups of students
- Small group instruction
- Independent learning

A shared supply of classroom materials eliminates the "This is mine" mentality. Therefore, all classroom resources are encouraged to be shared and become "tools of the community." Classrooms will provide areas for each student to keep his or her personal belongings (such as a cubby or rack). The desks and tables will be shared and may, depending on the needs of the classroom, be moved around to facilitate larger areas for group activities.

Student Dynamics

Students will collaborate and mix with a variety of learners on a daily and weekly basis. Most classrooms will have two grades represented, but students may work with children who are in grade clusters above or below them. Cross-age groupings (K-6 or K-8) will be organized to occur on a regular basis, such as weekly or biweekly, dependent on the needs of the students and classrooms. Older students will mentor younger students in a variety of ways. By encouraging a dynamic mixture of ages, abilities, and interests, we will expand and build upon each student's

ability to empathize, demonstrate patience, and increase leadership skills. Each student will have opportunities each day to be both learner and teacher by the use of the following observable strategies:

- Peer teaching
- Collaborative groups and projects
- Mixed age lessons
- Circle
- Working with parent volunteers
- Classroom jobs

G. Program and Curricular Overview K-5 (classroom-based)

Sample Daily Schedule BRIDGES CHARTER SCHOOL Grades K-5¹³:

7:45 - a.m. physical movement time (Parent cohorts led): optional nutrition, warm up exercise routine, active free play

8:30 – Core subjects: mathematics, reading instruction, writing, social studies and science, with flexibility to schedule to support child’s diverse needs & learning styles

9:50- Nutrition break and recess

10:10- Continue with core subjects

12:00 –Healthy Lunch

12:20- Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) or story time

12:50- Recess

1:15 –Art, music, writing or project time incorporated with core lessons¹⁴

2:10 – PE, active play and/or creative project time.

2:40 - Circle

3:00 - Indie Time (Independent Work Time); actual start time dependent on grade level.

All students are strongly encouraged to attend Indie time, in order to reduce time spent completing course work at home, and be provided the support necessary to be successful in their independent work. Indie time is not included in the instructional minutes.

4:00 –Dismissal from Indie Time (may vary with grade level or student need)

4:00-5:00 — Optional childcare (parent cohort led)

Please note that exact times will vary according to the arrangement needed on our shared site, and may vary year to year.

¹³ Kindergarten will meet the required minimum of 36,000 instructional minutes; grades 1-3 will meet the required minimum of 50,400 instructional minutes; and grades 4-5 will meet the required minimum of 54,000 instructional minutes.

¹⁴ Kindergarten activities after lunch, and dismissal time, are to be proposed by the teachers and parents, then will be presented to the BRIDGES Charter School Board of Directors for approval.

English/ Language Arts

BRIDGES Charter School educators will create a balanced approach to literacy by instilling a love of literature from the start of a child's first exposure to the classroom all the way through the grades. A strong literature based program, which will include various genre, poetry, song, and other forms, will balance both oral and written language. By incorporating and connecting the stories children read and hear with their lessons in writing, and bringing in thematic lessons, children will develop a deeper level of understanding of the world around them. Overall, Language Arts instruction will be balanced with various "languages" (vocabulary, norms, styles, modes and mediums) found in art, music, drama, the media, film and other forms of expression. Therefore, the learning of reading and writing will move beyond semantics and grammar, and take on a more authentic and practical function: that of *communication*.

Reading and writing lessons have room to build upon a child's interests in order to develop his or her natural strengths, while providing a solid foundation of basic skills. Publishing, sharing, engaging in peer editing, and discussions of one's work will bring more meaning to lessons, as well as increase the child's motivation to produce work they are most proud of. We believe that writing is best when done with purpose. As children matriculate from one grade to the next, they will further develop their vocabulary and spelling skills, various comprehension strategies, critical thinking, collaborative skills, and a love of reading and writing.

A California Standards-based approach to reading and writing instruction at BRIDGES Charter School will be comprehensive, differentiated and interdisciplinary. We believe in building a solid foundation of basic skills and conventions, while helping children develop strong comprehension and communication abilities, and then providing children multiple opportunities each day to practice their skills. The goal of our educators will be to ensure that students are competent, confident and enthusiastic readers and writers.

Reading Instruction

BRIDGES Charter School will focus on California grade-level content standards by building upon students' natural interests and their desire to learn, ask questions, and engage themselves in literature. As emerging readers, children (grades K-2) will be guided into the process of "learning to read" by daily story time, shared reading, direct instruction, phonemic awareness, multi-sensory sound and sight word recognition, and whole language strategies. Patience and small group direct instruction will be afforded reticent and struggling readers; more advanced readers will have opportunities to move ahead. Varied levels and literature genre will be available in classroom libraries, and teachers will facilitate each child's desire to choose appropriately leveled books for independent, guided, literature circle, and buddy reading. Each day, teachers, parent volunteers, and even older buddies will strive to model effective thinking and discussions strategies as related to the literature.

As students progress to the "reading to learn" stage (typically, grades 3-4), they will be exposed to a greater variety of genre, including more in-depth expository text from which they will learn to research and summarize essential details. Children will learn strategies that allow them to analyze facts and opinions, and make inferences about passages and articles. Older students

(grades 4-8) in need of small group, explicit instruction will be provided intervention. However, students who have mastered the skills necessary to be at the “reading to learn” stage will engage in reading instruction that allows for flexibility, group discussion, and peer evaluation. As students mature and develop as readers, so will the level of flexible instruction, which will provide for students’ increasing needs to pursue their independent interests and research goals. Reading instruction will serve as a vehicle for probing questions, critical thinking, discussion, debate, public speaking, and formal presentations. Reading instruction will also be inextricably linked to writing instruction.

Written Instruction

By using multiple approaches to teach writing, a child’s ability to communicate will become intrinsically and authentically developed. Starting in grades K/1 with the webbing of ideas (or other scaffolding strategies) in order to learn how to write letters, then words, then sentences, students will see their own ideas begin to emerge on paper. In grades 2-3, children will learn to write articulate and organized paragraphs, and then build upon facts and details to construct essays and reports. By grades 4 and 5, students will be competent and confident writers, with their skill-based writing instruction becoming only as necessary as particular clusters or individuals need. In the older grades, written work will be seen as a critical form of self-expression, via such forms as essays, journals, blogs, research reports, letters and note taking. Students will continue to receive direct instruction in various writing formats, such as persuasive, research reporting, response to literature, and narrative, in as much or as little as they need in order to demonstrate competence and confidence in their writing.

A proven, powerful tool for developing writing proficiency is the **Communicator**, a daily/weekly journal from child to parent, which serves as a way for children to share what they learned in school. This process enhances relevance and improves the retention of information, as children revisit what they learned and, in effect, “teach it to others”. The entries in the Communicator will start simply in grades K-1, and graduate to a full synopsis of a child’s thoughts and feelings on more relevant lessons, including those learned outside the classroom. By the time children matriculate into grades 6, 7, and 8, the Communicator will have more personal value to each student, and will be modified in structure as they see fit.

Mathematics

BRIDGES Charter School will adopt a mathematics program which will closely follow California State Mathematic Standards, and which will allow students to develop the necessary computation, application, and problem solving skills needed to be proficient in all areas of math. A goal of our curriculum delivery will be to connect math instruction to the real world and to students’ everyday lives, enabling them to have a deep understanding of principles and concepts as they practically apply to global economic, interactive, and development systems. Concepts will be “spiraled” in all grades, allowing for continual review and mastery of essential standards, as well as the introduction to higher-level applications. Students will develop confidence in their ability to prove, discuss, explain, teach, and reflect upon their processes, in order to gain mastery of various concepts.

The following five strands will be incorporated into comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and appropriately leveled lessons:

- Number Sense: students will learn various ways of representing numbers, their relationships, and various number systems; they will understand various symbols and operations, and their relationship to one another; they will recognize patterns in building large and small numbers, and the powers of numbers; and they will learn to estimate and compute fluently.
- Algebra: students will learn to understand patterns, relationships, and functions; they will learn to use algebraic symbols and variables while recognizing and analyzing various mathematical unknowns; and they will use models to represent quantitative relationships.
- Geometry: students will learn to recognize, build and characterize two and three dimensional shapes; they will specify locations and describe spatial relationships using coordinate geometry and other representations; they will develop their spatial reasoning and visualization skills when analyzing mathematical situations.
- Measurement: students will become skilled in using a variety of measurement tools and units, and will be able to apply appropriate techniques and formulas, in order to understand size, shape, distance (of and between), and attributes of objects.
- Data Analysis and Probability: students will learn to collect, organize, interpret and display various data; they will analyze relevant data and construct graphs using appropriate statistical methods; and they will evaluate inferences, predictions, and trends based on data; and they will understand and apply various concepts of probability.

Social Studies/ Global Education

The study of history and social studies in all grades will closely follow the California content standards through an integrated, literature-rich curriculum. (Please see Appendix E, Integrated Curriculum Sample.) The understanding of social systems will not be simply a look at the past, but rather a deep study of how our lives have been, are, and will be interconnected with those around us. Students will also explore various types of communities, including the cultural norms, customs and heritage that make them unique, through a variety of instructional materials, strategies and modes, including art, music drama and dance.

Starting in grades K/1, students will learn about our place in time and their place in their neighborhood and local community, and will begin to understand the various roles all members of community take on in order to contribute to the society at large. In grades 2/3, students will learn about how their community developed, from past to present, including the study of Native people and how Native culture shaped who we are today. Students will begin to explore several themes that will be present throughout their global education in the BRIDGES Charter School, as related to the study of societal development, diversity, cultures, geography, and perspectives: the need for interdependence and independence amongst human beings, commonalities and differences, contributions, continuity and change, conflicts and resolutions, and governance. In grades 4-6, students will focus on the rise of society in our state, our nation, and our world, including ancient and modern history.

Frequent opportunities will be provided for students to collaborate, evaluate and discuss their

ideas and conjectures, as well as to utilize their skills in math, reading and writing when interpreting their learning. They will share findings via exhibitions, reports, presentations and projects involving art, music and drama. We will encourage our students to draw upon the resources in our own diverse School community, in order to share and celebrate various languages, cultures, customs, and heritages. Additionally, the dynamic of daily interactions with the community of parents, teachers and students, coupled with school-wide festivals, will provide a rich social tapestry that will give a *living context* to learning. In each grade level, we will strive to connect what we learn to a global perspective by asking: Where do we fit, and how can we affect our local and global environment based on what we know and how we choose to behave?

It is the goal of BRIDGES Charter School to enable students to become global citizens, so that they feel connected to themselves and the world around them. Through their study of local and global social systems, students will gain a deep respect for their natural world and the resources it provides, and understand how those resources are connected to the development of societies. BRIDGES Charter School students will thus become stewards of the earth and, in their every action, they will strive to demonstrate their belief that the natural world must be protected and sustained in order for human and animal life to thrive.

BRIDGES Charter School students will be exposed to additional themes such as those used in the Primary Years Programme (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2002):

- Who we are;
- Where we are in place and time;
- How we express ourselves;
- How the world works;
- How we share the planet

Science

All students will have access to the science core curriculum and will be exposed to life, earth, and physical sciences in alignment with the California state science standards. A balanced and integrated curriculum will allow students to build upon and apply what they already know about the world, and further develop necessary critical thinking skills: questioning, hypothesizing, observing, evaluating, comparing, organizing, inferring, relating, and applying. Students will utilize their skills in math, reading and writing in order to express their ideas and findings. Through hands-on engagement with materials (such as in FOSS kits) and tools, collaborative groups, and exploratory projects, students will develop respect and enthusiasm for how scientific principles fit into their lives. Students will apply their scientific knowledge to the challenges facing our planet, combined with their understandings in social studies, and begin developing innovative ideas that may help to address various global environmental issues, such as pollution, depletion of resources, food production, and climate change.

Physical Fitness And Health (Grades K-8)

Having a healthy body will enable our students to use their healthy brains for lifelong learning. However, according to the Center for Disease Control and the President's Council for Physical Fitness, children today spend up to four sedentary hours a day watching TV or playing video games, and it is predicted that 1 in 3 children born after 2000 will develop early onset juvenile diabetes (the statistic highest in low-income families). The limited time children have to be active during the school day combined with the increasing amount of processed, refined food they eat, is exacerbating this serious issue. BRIDGES Charter School, in teaching the whole child, cannot ignore the importance of teaching and promoting what is necessary for a healthy lifestyle: sound nutrition (at school and home), healthy choices, and regular physical activity. This will be combined with other activities that further our physical well-being and enhance optimal brain development, such as meditation, yoga, dance, and recreational, unstructured play.

BRIDGES Charter School students will develop an understanding that exercise, fitness, active play, nutrition and positive life choices are essential for optimal health and well-being. Families will be encouraged to start the day with a sound breakfast, and students will be encouraged to engage in supervised active movement and play before school, which will better prepare our children to be ready to learn. The School's physical education program will focus on four areas of fitness: cardiovascular, muscular, isometric, and flexibility. Cooperative games, skill instruction to develop fine and gross motor, and sportsmanship will be emphasized in the younger grades. Older students will further develop these skills, but have access to more team based sports and non-competitive activities. The Middle School (6-8th teachers, students and the Director) will develop policies for appropriate clothing, changing facilities, lockers and other considerations, in order to best support what older students need to participate in a sound exercise program. Fitness cannot be optimal without sound nutrition. Students will be asked to bring a healthy snack and healthy lunch to school every day.

H. Program and Curricular Overview 6-8

Sample Daily Schedule BRIDGES CHARTER SCHOOL Grades 6-8¹⁵:

7:45 - a.m. physical movement time (Parent cohort led): Activities may include yoga, meditation, Tai Chi, Aikikai, and/or a warm up exercise routine

8:30 – 6th/7th /8th grades in clusters loop to cores:

Math/Science, English/Social Science, Lab/track with scheduling flexibility to support child's diverse needs & learning styles

10:10- Nutrition break

10:25- Clusters loop in core subjects

12:00- Circle

12:30 –Healthy Lunch

12:50- SSR

1:20 - Electives/ Community Service (2-4 days per week); parent cohort led

Electives may include: Music, Technology, Art, Dance, Economics, Foreign Language, Drama

¹⁵ Grades 6-8 will meet the required minimum of 54,000 instructional minutes.

Service: Community Garden, Lunch Patch, Community onsite/offsite projects. On alternate days, students will engage in collaborative group projects that serve to support instruction, such as presentations, skits, and research.

2:15 -Active Play (Parent cohort led), competitive & cooperative games, developmentally appropriate guided activities; Physical Education (1-2 days per week) with instructor

3:00 - Indie Time (Independent Work Time)- *All students are strongly encouraged to the attend Indie time, in order to reduce time spent completing independent course work at home and be provided the support necessary to be successful in their independent work. Indie time is not included in the instructional minutes.*

4:00 – Dismissal

4:00-5:00 - Optional childcare (parent cohort led)

Please note that exact times will vary according to the arrangement needed on our shared site, and may vary year to year.

English/ Language Arts

BRIDGES Charter School will use an integrated, literature-based Language Arts program balancing oral and written language, world cultural discovery and exploration and student led interest. Using multi-cultural literature and multimedia, the Language Arts program will build upon students’ cultural diversity to expand critical thinking skills to interpret, evaluate and appreciate text-based literary artifacts.

In the Middle School Program, students will competently and confidently utilize their reading and writing skills to effectively communicate their creative ideas, opinions, arguments, and analysis across the disciplines. Reading and writing will be integrated with music, art, drama, and other exploratory venues in order to facilitate each child’s ability to fluently express him or herself.

Reading Instruction

BRIDGES Charter School will focus on California grade-level content standards by building on students’ natural interests and cultural backgrounds, and expand into those of their peers and beyond, in order to provide access to multi-discursive literature and literary artifacts as well as a plurality of media text-based forms: electronic, legal, public, news and periodicals. Emphasis will be placed on expanding and broadening content exposure while providing opportunities for cross-discursive and cross-media comparison and integration.

Written Instruction

By expanding on BRIDGES Charter School’s K-5 experience, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students will master California content standards and more by engaging in mini-lessons and workshops that enhance, broaden and build their written language and convention skills. By accessing literary analysis and composition skills, students will have a variety of opportunities to explore and

demonstrate mastery in writing.

Mathematics

BRIDGES Charter School will adopt a mathematics program that will allow students to develop the skills to be proficient in the California State Mathematics Standards. 6th- 8th grade math will include pre-algebra and algebra topics. Using a variety of methods and manipulative materials, our program will cover number sense, algebra, geometry, measurement, data analysis and probability.

The Whole Child philosophy will be reinforced through the frequent use of labs in science, in order to draw connections to math. BRIDGES Charter School will seek to balance skill instruction with conceptual learning and problem solving, as well as fostering an understanding and appreciation of math anchored in the “real world.”

Social Studies/ Global Education

In Grades 6, 7 and 8, students will study history and social sciences through an integrated, multi-disciplinary, literature-rich curriculum. California content standards will be met by stimulating students’ natural curiosity and presenting history and social studies as real global events with real stories by people with varying perspectives and points of view. Project-based and relevant learning strategies will be used to cover the core essentials for 6th-8th grade social studies. An example: Renaissance/U.S. History would be studied through projects, plays, and research, with an opportunity to study and present a key figure (artist, musician, or scientist) of their choice. In this manner, Language Arts standards (Listening, Speaking, and Writing Strategies) will be incorporated into the Social Studies curriculum.

Students will be encouraged to share their own language, culture and heritage to inform a pluralistic perspective of historical events and civilizations. Students will learn to inquire, evaluate and utilize information and stories in a variety of ways to promote a whole history approach grounded in ecological realities. The whole child instructional process will allow 6th-8th graders the unique opportunity to understand history and societies on a global level, grounded in ecological and historical context as opposed to a series of isolated incidents unrelated to each other.

BRIDGES Charter School’s whole child approach and global focus will allow students to integrate content standards in an inclusive anthropological way, as well as understanding the full variety of global civic and political realities, in order to find themselves as eventual full participating citizens with responsibilities to each other as a community.

Students in grades 6th-8th will be asked to complete an annual, independent, and extensive research project of their choosing. 8th graders will culminate their BRIDGES Charter School experience with a ***Global Recognition Project***, which will follow an outline students select and develop, and then carry out with the mission to bridge all of their content knowledge into one concrete demonstration of their learning, interests, and passions.

Science

Building on their sense of awe and wonder, students will learn about the world around them using the scientific method and the critical thinking skills of science. Balancing scientific concepts with discovery and investigation methods, students will follow an integrated approach to accessing the science core curriculum. Frequent hands-on, exploratory, or laboratory work will provide the students with ample opportunities to use the scientific method to investigate science concepts. Technology will be integrated into the science curriculum to enhance learning. Our curriculum will include the California state science standards for life, earth and the physical sciences.

Accessing resources in our community grounds students to learning in the real world. Field trips, guest speakers, ongoing projects and labs will enhance the whole-child experience. Labs will integrate the mathematics and science curriculum as a synthesized and comprehensive whole.

I. Homeschool Alliance (Independent Study Program)

The BRIDGES Charter School Homeschool Alliance is intended to support families who choose to homeschool their children, within the structure of a public school; who want to stay connected to and participate in a larger schooling community; and who support the educational philosophy of the Charter School. We will provide a credentialed supervising teacher who will consult with families and guide curriculum development, ensuring that children are meeting their academic goals based on California Content Standards. This onsite connection will also enable parents and children, if they choose, to belong to and socialize with the BRIDGES Charter School classroom-based community for special events (Harvest Festival, Art Festival, and more) and social times, such as lunches or picnics. Children will be afforded opportunities to participate in enrichment courses, such as band, music or drama, depending on the Charter School's available resources. In addition, there may be core courses that homeschooled children can sign up for, or field trips they can attend, arranged jointly between the parent, supervising teacher and the child.

Provisions

To serve our homeschool families, BRIDGES Charter School will provide a fully certified supervising teacher for those students enrolled in the Homeschool Alliance, in accordance with Education Code Section 51747.5. Homeschool students will meet with their supervising teacher onsite, or at another agreed-upon location, for at least one hour every month (every twenty school days or more frequently if needed) to monitor progress and establish educational goals. Students who need more guidance may have access to the teachers in the classroom-based program, to be arranged with the supervising teacher. All homeschool students will have an independent study Master Agreement, in accordance with the School's Board Policy on independent study, agreed upon and signed by the student, parent, and supervising teacher, as well as any other person(s) who has direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student. In order to develop the Master Agreement and each homeschool student's course of study, the supervising teacher will work collaboratively with the family to create the homeschool educational plan whose contents will be directed by the supervising teacher, and utilize the

Charter School's available resources, or suggested resources if not available on site. The supervising teacher will ensure that the course of study adheres to the educational program laid out in this charter. Additionally, our Homeschool Alliance will provide additional support in areas that homeschool families may need, such as specific advanced math and/or science instruction. BRIDGES' Middle School math director, in year one, will consult with the supervising teacher(s), assisting in curriculum development as much as possible.

BRIDGES Charter School intends to provide a Homeschool room, to serve as a meeting location for homeschool students and their teacher. In addition, this room will be used for a designated weekly "collaboration day," to be arranged by the Homeschool Alliance educator and participating parents, whereby home-schooled students, who voluntarily attend, will engage in Circle, story time, and collaborative activities/games. Parents of homeschooled children who plan to attend will help design the structure of the day with the supervising teacher, and sign up for a day to participate in the homeschool room, in support of the supervising teacher and students. In addition, homeschool parents can plan and present electives on site for other homeschooled students to participate in.

The supervising teacher will collaborate with the classroom-based educators, so that field trips or activities relevant to a Homeschool Alliance student's course of study are considered in the homeschool agreement. It will be expected that families in the Homeschool Alliance honor the classroom-based program students' needs for continuity, preparation, and consistency when choosing to participate in an enrichment course, field trip, or festival. Accordingly, participating homeschooled children, should they commit in advance to a classroom-based activity or after school course, will be asked to attend courses regularly and at the designated time(s). This includes being available for preparatory discussions and/or lessons leading up to festivals and/or field trips, so that the homeschool student has a vested interest in the culminating activity. Families will also be asked to practice and honor proactive methods of communication, including conflict resolution, both at school and at home. Integration of homeschool families into campus activities is intended to build community awareness and connection, and homeschool families are asked to commit to being as active in the Charter School inasmuch as their homeschool program will allow.

Parents in the Homeschool Alliance will be included in our ongoing parent education component, including Parent Talks, discussion groups, and workshops. They will also have onsite access to our Parent Education Resource Center with available books and information. Budget permitting, the Resource Center library will contain a variety of standards-based curricular books, including textbooks, accelerated readers, supplemental materials and tools, software, educational games, manipulatives, and recommended reading to support BRIDGES Charter School's educational philosophy. Funding received for our Homeschool Alliance students will be used in part to provide specifically designated educational materials for our homeschool families.

Requirements

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(1), the supervising teacher will maintain attendance records of BRIDGES Charter School's homeschooled children, to ensure that the

minimum requirement for instructional minutes is met. California public schools must provide 50,400 minutes of education per year to students in Grades 1 through 3, and 54,000 minutes per year to students in Grades 4 through 8. Attendance will be counted by work completed according to the child's Master Agreement, and the calculated value of that work in instructional minutes.

The Charter School shall comply with all applicable laws with regard to the implementation of its homeschool option, including but not limited to Education Code Section 51745 et. seq. and 47612.5. To the extent the home study ADA is more than 20% of the ADA of the Charter School, the Charter School shall file for a funding determination in accordance with the requirements of Education Code Section 47612.5 and its implementing regulations.

Homeschool students will be required to participate in all state mandated testing, unless the parent independently waives the testing requirement for their child, in writing, and in advance of the testing.

Commitment to the BRIDGES Charter School philosophy for homeschool families will be strongly recommended, including participation in the Charter School. It will be expected that parents volunteer on site at least **2 hours per month** for every homeschool child they enroll in the Charter School. Organizing activities for the on site collaboration day, chaperoning on a field trip, supervising at lunch, or assisting with a Charter School event could meet this requirement.

Conclusion

In summary, BRIDGES Charter School's Homeschool Alliance will provide for:

- A supervising teacher, who will meet with students and parents at least once per month to guide, assist, and monitor each student's progress toward their grade level content standards, as well as to review assignments given and work completed, in order to track attendance and student achievement.
- An optional on site weekly collaboration day, where homeschool students can participate in Circle, story time, and group learning activities and games.
- The opportunity for homeschool students to participate in enrichment courses, field trips, special events, and selected courses of study (classroom-based courses to be determined with the supervising teacher).
- Access to BRIDGES Parent Education Resource Center, including a variety of educational materials, and involvement with the Charter School's parent community.

J. Materials

All curriculum materials will be aligned with California State Content Standards. The Director and BRIDGES Charter School educators, along with members of a Parent Education cohort and the PAC, shall take into consideration effective and philosophically aligned materials, including those that proved successful in the Open Classroom Magnet Program, when deciding upon the curriculum needed for BRIDGES Charter School. A committee of teachers, parents and possibly

select professionals, shall review various materials and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors, who will then approve final decisions for the adoption of materials. Decisions on new adoptions and selections will be driven by the Charter School's pedagogical philosophy. The Charter School's Founding Group has formed a *Program Development Committee* that is currently researching various appropriate and preferred educational materials. We are currently looking at materials that:

- Are standards and research-based, and provide opportunities for hands-on, student centered, and stimulating engagement.
- Are high interest and relevant, and support thematic connections to other areas in the curriculum.
- Provide for a variety of learning modalities.
- Support a range of differentiated lessons and activities, from intervention to enrichment.
- Are flexible enough to be used in a multi-age classroom.
- Can be used in conjunction with alternative, whole child, and authentic assessments which are currently being developed.

Some of the materials currently being looked at by the *Program Development Committee* include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Everyday Math, grade K-6 (Mathematics)
- FOSS kits, K-6 (Science)
- Step Up to Writing, grades K-6 (English Language Arts)
- A History of US, grade K-8 (Social Studies)
- Glencoe-McGraw Hill, grades 6-8 (Social Studies/math)

K. Technology

Our students will have access to Internet resources in their classrooms, in order to integrate computer projects and classroom content into a context that has meaning for the students on a larger scale. BRIDGES Charter School will have computers in every classroom, although the number of computers per classroom will be based on grade level, need, and the availability of funding (particularly in our first year). It is our hope that our classrooms also have a wireless network so that students may bring their own laptops from home in order to work on their research projects in a monitored and guided environment.

L. Plan for Students Who Are Academically Low Achieving

For students in need of academic support, a variety of strategies will be implemented in order to help children meet the California content standards most effectively, while retaining a child's desire to learn. Small and flexible groups, with direct instruction by the teacher and with support by parent volunteers, will help children meet their academic needs in an environment that is both

accepting and nurturing when considering learning differences. For those needing extra practice, Tutors, big buddies or collaborative assistance may also provide intervention, especially in basic literacy and math skills.

In order to effectively identify and target low-achieving students, assessment data will be carefully analyzed, and student performance will be evaluated. This data will be collected through anecdotal notes of student effort and ability, recorded progress and achievement via ongoing formal and informal assessments in content standards, and annual assessment data from standardized tests. A Student Study Team, a general education function, shall be utilized to develop a plan for intervention regarding any student whom the teacher, another staff member, or parent has a concern. Specific support strategies for at risk students may include intervention programs, small group instruction, and tutorials.

Efforts will be made to have a credentialed Resource Specialist onsite to team teach with the general education classroom-based teachers in order to serve the diverse needs of our learning community, and with consideration of time needed to meet the needs of low achieving students. Budget permitting, the Bridges Charter School will provide additional remediation resources, such as Waterford or Successmaker software, as well as part-time math and/or reading specialists. Parents will also aid in our remediation efforts while meeting their volunteer commitment, as some parents will be specifically trained by educators to support small group instruction in the classroom in order to best meet the needs of our low achieving students.

Should additional intervention be needed, a Student Study Team will meet to further assess the needs of the student and establish practices and strategies that will ensure a students' optimal success. The Student Study Team, a general education function, may include but is not limited to: the child's primary teacher(s), the Director, the parents, and any other faculty members who may provide additional insights and strategies. A detailed plan with concrete objectives will be in place, and will be revisited at least annually to reassess that student's needs.

M. Plan for Students Who Are Academically High Achieving

A student-centered and thematically based curriculum will provide ample opportunities for high achieving and gifted learners to move ahead and be appropriately challenged. In order to effectively identify high-achieving students, assessment data will be carefully analyzed, and student performance will be evaluated. Gifted learners will be identified pursuant to Education Code 52202, which states that identification not be based on just one factor, but rather a combination of achievement, intelligence quotient (IQ), ability, and other test scores; motivation; recommendations by parent or teacher; observations; portfolio assessment; and other means of identification. It is not always the case that high achieving students are gifted, or that gifted students are high achieving. However, through careful assessment of a child's strengths and needs, and by using a variety of differentiated lesson plans and curricular materials, educators will strive to effectively meet the needs of both their high-achieving and gifted learners.

Independent and self-directed learners will be able to explore areas in-depth through both collaborative and independent projects. High achieving and gifted students will benefit from flexible multiage groupings, qualitatively differentiated assignments and instruction, and varied

enhancements, goals, and expectations as related to the California standards-based curriculum. Educators at BRIDGES Charter School will be ready to meet the needs of our gifted learners, as additional training in differentiation and brain development will be provided through staff development. Considering that the Open Classroom Magnet program has successfully served approximately 41%-46% gifted learners in grades 2-6 in years 2006-2009, it is likely to expect that the BRIDGES Charter School population will have a similar demographic and that our philosophically-based principles and strategies will continue to be highly effective.

Based on what we know accelerated and gifted learners need to succeed, BRIDGES Charter School will provide:

- Daily conflict resolution and communication training. Gifted learners are often highly sensitive, impatient, emotional, and dynamic within groups of peers, or can appear aloof and independent. Some gifted learners can struggle with peer relationships. Educators must consider the wide range of social-emotional issues that may impact the gifted learner's academic processes, in order guide a gifted learner to be a balanced individual. (Goleman);
- An environment in which creativity, active play, and out-of-the-box thinking is nourished. Gifted learners will be encouraged to ask questions, move ahead if needed, or revisit and research topics of interest. Gifted learners will also be encouraged to bring their natural talents, passions and skills to the classroom and School as a whole, through mentoring, community outreach, collaborative groups, and student-initiated activities and games;
- Unassigned seating, which will allow children, including gifted learners, to be able to get up and move around more often than in a traditional classroom, thereby stimulating their bodies and brains for better concentration and allowing for more control over their environment;
- Ample opportunities for art, music, drama, set design, cartooning, and other creative venues, the choices dependent on the Charter School's resources and cumulative parent volunteer talent. Many gifted learners desire and need extra enrichment in the arts. Tending to the creative passions of a gifted learner (or any learner for that matter) is often what keeps them most motivated to attend to tasks that may not be their favorite;
- Learning opportunities (in the form of enrichment and/or imbedded into the project-based activities) that will allow gifted learners to build upon and develop their understanding of complex and abstract concepts, including their creation of original systems (Tomlinson).

N. Plan for English Learners

BRIDGES Charter School will meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners ("EL") as it pertains to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, EL and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, reclassification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and

standardized testing requirements. The Charter School will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding ELs and the rights of students and parents.

Home Language Survey

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

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 enrollment¹⁶ and at least annually thereafter between July 1 and October 31st until re-designated as fluent English proficient.

BRIDGES Charter School 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.

Strategies for English Language Learner Instruction and Intervention

Teachers will be trained to use a variety of Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English ("SDAIE") techniques to meet the needs of English Learners. Heavy emphasis will be placed on differentiating instruction to meet the needs of English Learners based on their academic and language readiness. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, the following techniques:

- Total Physical Response (TPR). Using physical activity and the physical representation of objects to demonstrate the relationship between language and that which is concrete or hands on allows for greater retention and a more meaningful learning experience.
- Cooperative Learning. Working with others promotes positive interactions and deepens meaning through natural verbal and non-verbal communication with peers.
- Native Language Support. When possible, students in need of academic support in their native language will be provided it, via aide, teacher, mentor, peer, or parent volunteer. It's important that students develop pride in their native language and culture.

BRIDGES Charter School supports California's P-16 Council's initiative. The Council's mission is: "To develop, implement and sustain a specific, ambitious plan that holds the State of

¹⁶ 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.

California accountable for creating the conditions necessary for closing the achievement gap.” By providing all students’ access to a rigorous curriculum, a culture and climate that is nurturing, high expectations and standards, and research-based, effective strategies used by all BRIDGES Charter School educators, we can achieve this goal.

Our Program Development Committee is in the process of reviewing curriculum for ELD. We will provide the County with a copy of our preferred materials 30-60 days before the opening of our school.

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.
- To measure progress regarding comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar usage, teachers will use the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

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

- Adherence 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 resource

O. Serving Students with Disabilities

1. Overview

BRIDGES 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”).

BRIDGES Charter School shall be categorized as a local educational agency in a special education local plan area in accordance with Education Code Section 47641(a).

BRIDGES 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.

BRIDGES 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 may, 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 that substantially limits a major life activity including but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodation by the Charter School.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Director of the Charter School and shall include parents/guardians, the student (where appropriate), and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, such as the teacher, evaluators, and any other person deemed necessary, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations. The 504 team will review the student’s existing records, including academic, social and behavioral records and is responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate. If the student has already been evaluated under the IDEA, but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services 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:

- a. Tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and are administered by trained personnel.

- b. 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.
- c. Tests are selected and administered so as to ensure that when a test is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level or whatever factor the test purports to measure rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

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

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

The 504 Plan shall describe the Section 504 disability and any program modification and services that may be necessary to allow the disabled student access to the Charter School. The Charter School understands it is entire responsible for compliance with Section 504, including by way of implementing 504 Plans.

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 the 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. The student's 504 Plan will be reviewed regularly to determine the appropriateness of the Plan, continued eligibility or readiness to discontinue the 504 Plan.

Parents/guardians shall be notified in writing of all decisions regarding the identification, evaluation or educational placement of students with disabilities or suspected disabilities. Notifications shall include a statement of their rights to: examine relevant records, have an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parents/guardians and their counsel, have the right to file a Uniform Complaint pursuant to Charter School policy, and seek review in federal court if the parents/guardians disagree with the hearing decision.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the identification, evaluation or educational placement of a student with disabilities under Section 504, he/she may request a hearing to initiate due process procedures. The Section 504 Policy and Procedures shall outline the alternative dispute resolution process and the hearing process to deal with any such complaints.

Attached as Appendix G, please see sample 504 Policies, Procedures and Parent- Student Rights.

3. Services for Students under the IDEIA

BRIDGES 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 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. If the Charter School cannot gain membership in the Ventura County SELPA, it will pursue membership in the El Dorado County Charter SELPA.

The Charter School will adopt its own policies and procedures which will align with 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 agrees to promptly respond to all SELPA inquiries, and to comply with SELPA directives. The Charter School will be exclusively responsible for the provision of services (including but not limited to referral, identification, assessment, case management, Individualized Education Plan (“IEP”) development, modification and implementation).

Petitioners have met with the Ventura County SELPA Assistant Superintendent, Mary Samples, on September 17, 2009, 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. The following herein aligns with the SELPA policy, the information discussed with Ms. Samples, and aligns with State and Federal law.

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 in-service training relating to special education by the Charter School and/or the SELPA.

The Charter School will be responsible for the hiring, training, and employment of site staff necessary to provide special education services to its students, including, without limitation, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and resource specialists. The Charter School shall ensure that all special education staff hired by the Charter School is qualified pursuant to SELPA policies, as well as meet all legal requirements. Documentation of qualifications shall be maintained on site for inspection by the County.

Response to Requests

The Charter School shall promptly address 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 all applicable state and federal law prior to imposing discipline upon a student with a disability.

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 adopt and implement policies and procedures to align with 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 BRIDGES Charter School for special education only after the resources of the regular education program have been considered, and where appropriate, utilized.

The Charter School will follow child-find procedures to identify all students who may require assessment to consider special education eligibility and special education and related services in the case that general education interventions do not provide a free appropriate public education to the student in question.

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 Charter School will determine what assessments, if any, are necessary and arrange for such assessments for referred or eligible students in accordance with applicable law. The Charter School shall work to obtain parent/guardian consent to assess Charter School students.

IEP Meetings

The Charter School 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: the Director and/or the Charter School designated representative with appropriate administrative authority as required by the IDEIA; the student’s special education teacher; the student’s general education teacher if the student is or may be in a regular education classroom; the student, if appropriate; and other Charter School representatives who are knowledgeable about the regular education program at the Charter School and/or about the student. The Charter School shall also 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 its own, exclusively. Programs, services and placements shall be provided to all eligible Charter School students in accordance with the policies, procedures and requirements of the SELPA and State and Federal law.

IEP Implementation

The Charter School shall be responsible for implementation of IEPs and supervision of services. The Charter School shall provide 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. The Charter School shall also be responsible for providing all curriculum, classroom materials, and modifications and accommodations.

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 Charter School shall conduct an IEP meeting within thirty days. Prior to such meeting and pending agreement on a new IEP, the Charter School shall implement the existing IEP at the Charter School, to the extent practicable or as otherwise agreed between the Charter School and parent/guardian. With regard to its homeschool students, the Charter School shall comply with Education Code Section 51745(c) which requires that no student with exceptional needs participate in independent study unless the IEP specifically provides for that participation.

Non-Public Placements/Non-Public Agencies

The Charter School shall be solely responsible for selecting, contracting with, and overseeing all non-public schools and non-public agencies used to serve special education students. The Charter School shall immediately address 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 adopt policies and procedures in alignment with SELPA policies as they apply to responding to parental concerns or complaints related to special education services.

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

The Charter School will schedule timely meetings with parents/guardians or their representatives to address the parent/guardian concerns or complaints so that a representative of each entity may attend. The Charter School, as the LEA, shall be ultimately responsible for determining how to respond to parent concerns or complaints. The Charter School shall respond 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.

Due Process Hearings

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

SELPA Representation

The Charter School shall represent itself at all SELPA meetings.

III. MEASUREMENT of 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)

The state of California mandates formal, cumulative assessment through standardized testing. Beyond these requirements, the BRIDGES Charter School will emphasize assessment only as a diagnostic tool that aids learning, not as a judgment of student performance after the fact. Without genuine understanding, learning is often rote and quickly forgotten, so the emphasis, and in fact the goal, of the Charter School is on *mastery* rather than on test taking.

By utilizing several varied methods of evaluation, a clearer picture of on-going academic and social development emerges than is traditionally possible to obtain. This valuable additional insight, blended with their personal familiarity with an individual student, will enable BRIDGES Charter School teachers to determine where each child is in his or her learning.

A. Measurable Pupil Outcomes and Methods of Assessment of Pupil Outcomes

The Charter School will develop and create a unified system of assessment and “grade-reporting” that will more authentically communicate each child’s strengths, needs and weaknesses. This will include formalized reading assessment at least three times per year, until triennial assessments are no longer required. Students will be tested on math concepts to ensure that each standard is met or that progress is being made toward it. Mastery learning will be promoted, in that children will be given time and guidance in order to review, redo and study missed concepts and standards, rather than just “moving on.”

Table 6: Measurable Pupil Outcomes: The Charter School shall pursue the following measurable pupil outcomes as measured by the following methods of measurement:

<i>Pupil Outcome Goals</i>	<i>Proposed Assessment Tools and Methods</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Student will meet or exceed the grade level appropriate California academic content standards in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards-based pretests developed by the State, publishers and educators • Informal reading inventories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly, or as needed

English Language Arts	<p>throughout the year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing samples • Portfolios • Student projects, debates, and presentations • Observations and anecdotal notes • STAR testing • CELDT, if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Scored/ evaluated at least once per trimester, using a child-friendly rubric • Annually
Student will meet or exceed the grade level appropriate California academic content standards in Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards-based pretests developed by the State, publishers and educators • Standard-based content and skill assessments • STAR testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly, or as needed • Given at least 3 times a year. • Annually
Student will meet or exceed the grade level appropriate California academic content standards in History-Social Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards-based pretests developed by the State, publishers and educators • Research reports, group and individual projects, presentations, and creative involvement in demonstrating concept/content understanding, as scored by teacher and student created rubrics • Applicable state tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly, or as needed • Monthly, or as often as applicable
Student will meet or exceed the grade level appropriate California academic content standards in Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards-based pretests developed by the State, publishers and educators • Exhibitions, projects, research, presentations, and effective use of experimentation processes, as scored by teacher and student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly, or as needed • Monthly, or as often as applicable

	<p>created rubrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observations • STAR testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • When applicable per grade level
<p>Student will meet or exceed the grade level appropriate California academic content standards in Physical Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation of student participation in physical activity, health and lifestyle choices • Teacher-selected checklists and student self-evaluations • State-mandated assessment of physical fitness goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Annually, or when applicable per grade level
<p>BRIDGES Charter School's goal for meeting our API growth target is to meet or exceed the API growth target for similar CVUSD schools</p>		
<p>BRIDGES Charter School's goal for meeting our AYP target is to meet or exceed the AYP target for similar CVUSD schools</p>		
<p>BRIDGES Charter School's goal for meeting our EL subgroup growth target is to meet or exceed the EL subgroup growth target for similar CVUSD schools.</p>		

An *Alternative Assessment Committee will be formed as a sub-committee of the Program Development Committee* in order to, in the coming months, research and develop a more progressive assessment and grade-reporting tool than is currently used in the CVUSD, with a goal of implementation prior to the start of the first reporting period in 2010-2011. This may include, but is not limited to, a student-led conference and portfolio, frequent student-teacher conferences throughout the year, and a finalized overview of the child's performance and development that is not only specific and comprehensive, but also useful for both parent and child in order to plan forward. This Alternative Assessment Committee may also seek to eliminate the usage of letter grading in grades K-5.

B. Use and Reporting of Data

One of BRIDGES Charter School's primary purposes for assessment is to provide meaningful and reliable data to teachers, parents, students and the County. The Charter School will strive to involve parents in the process of assessment, as parents have much to offer in terms of their child's educational progress. The following is a framework for how BRIDGES Charter School teachers will collect, analyze, and report data on student achievement to school staff, parents and guardians, as well as how the data will be continuously utilized to monitor and improve the

Charter School's educational program.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Teachers will meet individually with parents in the fall to formally identify educational goals, optimal learning styles, and other factors that may impact student learning. Informal conferences may be scheduled as needed. Starting in grade 3 (or when determined appropriate by the teacher, parent and student), students will participate in their conferences to reinforce their participation in the learning process and establish mutually agreed upon goals.

Report Cards and/or Narrative Reports

It is the Charter School's goal to develop a report card that communicates a well-rounded picture of a child's academic strengths and weaknesses, with annual narrative accounts of a child's learning style(s), developmental milestones, and social emotional goals. Progress Reports will be sent out as needed; progress toward educational goals might also be informally discussed with parents and students and documented. Students' progress toward the California content standards will be made clear on the report cards.

School Accountability Report Card ("SARC")

In compliance with the California Constitution, the California Education Code, and NCLB criteria, the Charter School will publish student results annually through the School Accountability Report Card. The report includes pertinent facts and data about the BRIDGES Charter School and will be made available to the public as required by law.

We will publish this report on our website and will make hardcopies available in the Charter School office.

Annual Parent Survey

At the end of each year, BRIDGES Charter School will send families a survey to evaluate their child's educational experiences. The survey will ask parents to evaluate student readiness for future education, whether the Charter School accomplished its mission, and overall parent satisfaction. Results will be reported to the charter authorizer and published in the SARC. Results will also be used to support Charter School policy, matters of curriculum, and help identify future goals.

Annual Performance Report

The Charter School will compile and provide the County with an annual performance report, as requested by the County, and will include at the minimum:

- An overview of the Charter School's mission, profile and learning climate;
- Summary data showing attendance, class size, and student achievement, including reportable subgroups to the extent feasible without compromising student confidentiality;
- A summary of major decisions and policies set forth by the Charter School's Board of

- Directors during the year;
- Data on the parent involvement and summary data from the yearly parent satisfaction survey;
 - Data regarding the number of staff working at the Charter School and their qualifications;
 - A copy of the Charter School's health and safety policies and any major changes to those policies during the year;

An overview of the Charter School's admissions practices and student demographics will be provided to the County two weeks-one month prior to the Open Enrollment period.

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

County Visitation/Inspection

The Charter School will comply with a County requested visitation process to enable the County to gather information needed to validate the Charter School's performance and compliance with the terms of this charter. However, the Charter School agrees to and submits to the right of the County to make random visits and inspections or observations in order to carry out its statutorily required oversight in accordance with Education Code Section 47613.

Response to Inquiries

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

IV. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL

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

BRIDGES Charter School 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.

BRIDGES Charter School will operate autonomously from the County, with the exception of the supervisory oversight as required by statute and other contracted services as negotiated between the County and the Charter School. Pursuant to California Education Code Section 47604(c), the County 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 County has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law.

Attached, as Appendix H, please find BRIDGES Charter School's Articles of Incorporation, draft Corporate Bylaws, and Conflicts Code of the Charter School.

B. Non-Profit Board of Directors

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, will govern the BRIDGES Charter School.

The Board shall consist of at least five (5) and no more than nine (9) voting members. All directors are to be designated at the corporation's annual meeting of the Board of Directors. Except for the initial (Founding) 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. In addition, in accordance with Education Code Section 47604(b), the authority that grants the charter to a charter school to be operated by a nonprofit public benefit corporation shall be entitled to a single representative on the Board of Directors of the nonprofit public benefit corporation.

The Founding Group and Petitioners will designate a Founding Board of Directors that will include parents, teachers and community members. Each term for the Founding Board of Directors shall be either one or two year(s). The terms of the Founding Board of Directors shall be staggered, with three members serving for one year, and two members serving for two years.

The staggering of the initial directors' terms of service is intended to maintain continuity of the Charter School's development. The Founding Board of Directors and their terms are as follows:

Name	Office	Date of Term Expiration
Randall Witt	President /parent	June 30, 2010
Kathy Jonokuchi	Vice President/parent	June 30, 2011
Melissa Swanson	Treasurer /parent	June 30, 2011
Jim Floyd	Secretary /parent	June 30, 2011
Jennifer Kerr	Parliamentarian/parent	June 30, 2010

Attached, as Appendix B, is a list of the Founding Board of Directors, including biographical information for each.

Board Member Terms & Elections

Board members shall serve a term of two years. No board member may serve more than three consecutive terms. After serving three consecutive terms, an individual must take at least one year off if he or she wishes to run for election again.

Board elections will be held each June. Special elections will be called whenever necessary to fill an unexpected vacant board seat.

Upon the approval of the Charter petition, the board will transition to a "Permanent" Board. The Permanent Board shall include five to nine members, including at least two parent representatives elected by simple majority of the parent body (one vote per family) and two community members elected by a simple majority. The Charter School will seek Board members who believe in the Charter School's mission, and have experience in areas critical to school success, including but not limited to: education, the arts, government, law, business, finance/accounting, fundraising, facilities, or public relations. Every effort will be made to include two employee-appointed educators and the Director as consultants when issues related to instructional, philosophical, and/or organizational policies are discussed.

The Director 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. The Board will adopt a Conflict of Interest Code in accordance with the Political Reform Act.

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 will oversee the implementation of the Charter School's mission and vision, and approve any necessary revisions to its bylaws, policies, and procedures. The Board is fully responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of BRIDGES Charter School including but not limited to the following:

- Hire, supervise, evaluate, and dismiss the Director of the Charter School
- Approve the hiring, promotion, discipline and dismissal of all employees of the Charter

- School after considering recommendations by the Director of the Charter School;
- Approve and monitor the implementation of the Charter School’s general policies, including effective human resource policies for career growth and compensation of the staff
 - Approve all contractual agreements;
 - 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;
 - Develop, review or revise the Charter School’s accountability goals and mission with consideration of recommendations by the Director of the Charter School
 - 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 County for consideration;
 - Approve annual independent fiscal audit and performance report;
 - Appoint an administrative panel or act as a hearing body and take action or 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, inconsistent with, or preempted by any law, and which is not in conflict with this Charter or the purposes for which public schools are established.

Board meetings, and the Minutes from those meetings, will be posted on our website (www.bridgescharter.org). In addition, any community member wishing to be a part of our mailing list can do so via the website.

The Charter School will adopt 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 regulations¹⁷. As noted above, the Conflicts Code is attached within Appendix H. 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,

¹⁷ It is the understanding of the Petitioners that the State Board of Education is developing charter school specific conflicts of interest regulations.

and the adoption of Board policies. The Board however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated. Such delegation will be in writing; will specify the entity designated; will 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 will require an affirmative vote of a majority of Board members.

The Charter School's 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.

C. The Director

As the leader of the Charter School, the Director will understand fully the Charter School's educational philosophy, will oversee the educational program and staff for grades K-8, and will ensure that the curriculum is implemented in order to maximize student-learning experiences. The Director will report directly to the Charter School Board of Directors. S/he is assigned to perform assigned tasks directed from the Charter School Board of Directors and is required to undertake some or all of the tasks detailed below. These tasks may include but are not limited to the following:

- Assist with and coordinate the development of curriculum, and ensure that pedagogy is based on the Charter School's educational philosophy;
- Oversee parent/student/teacher relations;
- Ensure the Charter School enacts its mission;
- Supervise and evaluate certificated and classified staff;
- Attend IEP meetings;
- Manage student discipline, and as necessary participate in the suspension and expulsion process;
- Communicate and report to the Charter School Board of Directors;
- Oversee school finances to ensure financial stability;
- Facilitate Charter School educational events and activities, or appoint a designee to do so;
- Participate in and develop professional development workshops as needed;
- Serve or appoint a designee to serve on any committees of the Charter 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 County;
- 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 School's educational program in the community and promote positive public relations and interact effectively with media;
 - Encourage and support teacher professional development;
 - Attend County Administrative meetings as requested by the County and stay in direct contact with the County regarding changes, progress, etc.;
 - Attend meetings with the Chief Financial Officer of the County on fiscal oversight issues as requested by the County;
 - Provide all necessary financial reports as required for proper attendance reporting;
 - Develop the Charter School annual performance report and the SARC;
 - Present an independent fiscal audit to the BRIDGES Charter School's Board of Directors and, after review by the Board of Directors, present the audit to VCBE and the County Superintendent of Schools, the State Controller and the California Department of Education;

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 Charter School or other appropriate employee or third party provider.

An Organizational Chart, outlining the chain of command, will be submitted to the County 30-60 days prior to the Charter School's opening.

D. Parent Involvement

Parents are required to contribute a minimum of 2.5 hours per week per child (up to a maximum of 6 hours per week), per academic year to the Charter School. The Director shall maintain a comprehensive list of volunteer opportunities including but not limited to the following: volunteering in the classroom/school (including at-home assistance), and/or involvement in a Parent Managed Cohort (PMC); attending parent-teacher conferences; attendance at meetings of the following school bodies: the BRIDGES Charter School Board of Directors (as member or observer), or any applicable Parent group functions; participation in the planning of, or attendance at, fundraising or Academic/Arts Events; or, other activities.

Parents will be encouraged to join the **Parent Advisory Council (PAC)**. Elected or appointed parents will serve as leaders of this committee, which will serve under the BRIDGES Charter School's Board of Directors, and will be responsible for the oversight of the Parent Managed Cohorts, and the regulation and delegation of parent involvement in all Charter School activities, fundraising, and special events.

Parent participation will play a vital role in the effectiveness of our program, as is the case with the current Open Classroom Magnet Program. Volunteer time is required in order for families to fulfill their obligation to the Charter School's Mission, and is necessary for the Charter School to successfully operate under its planned Organizational Structure. Please refer to Appendix D for a list of proposed Parent Managed Cohorts (PMCs).

As is with the CVUSD's Open Classroom Magnet Program's parent volunteer commitment policy, should a family fail to meet its volunteer commitment and fail to make any attempt to do so, or fail to adhere to any of the agreed-upon requirements as laid out in the Application (to be submitted two weeks-one month prior to the opening the Charter School), the resulting action may be the receipt of a "**Letter of Non-Compliance.**" (Attached as Appendix I). After two Letters of Non-Compliance, the Charter School Director will meet in person with the family to discuss meeting the volunteer commitment, and/or that student's continued enrollment in BRIDGES Charter School.

V. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Qualifications Of School Employees

Governing law: the qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the school – California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(E)

All individuals to be employed by BRIDGES Charter School must possess the characteristics, knowledge and qualifications identified in posted job descriptions.

Staff Selection Committee

To ensure that the Charter School employs highly qualified and philosophically aligned educators and support staff, the BRIDGES Charter School Staff Selection Committee will conduct the employment interviews. This committee, which may change year to year, will be organized by the Director and be comprised of the Director, teachers and parent representatives.

- The Selection procedure shall not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Director

Candidates for this position will possess:

- Master's Degree or higher and a minimum of 3 years administrative or management experience;
- One or more of the following is required: A valid California Teaching Credential, an Administrative credential, a minimum of five years teaching experience, or the equivalent;
- Background, knowledge, and experience in progressive/constructivist education methodologies and a belief in the Charter School's educational philosophy;
- Current working knowledge of Best Practices in education;
- Management experience in educational settings or the equivalent, including staff development and training;
- Current working knowledge of curriculum standards, state mandated curriculum and testing requirements and curriculum development;
- Collaborative leadership skills;
- Preference will be given to candidates with experience in school finance, budget, and/or business operations.

The Director of Curriculum (to be determined based on need during the Charter School growth)

Candidates for this position will possess:

- A Bachelor's Degree or higher and a minimum of three years of administrative or management experience. Preference will be given to candidates with experience working for educational or human service agencies;
- One or more of the following is required: A valid California Teaching Credential, an Administrative credential, a minimum of five years teaching experience, or the equivalent.
- Background, knowledge, and experience in progressive/constructivist education methodologies, educational brain research, and a belief in the Charter School's educational philosophy;
- A strong mastery of California standards;
- Collaborative group process skills;
- Demonstration of leadership skills.

Teachers (Certificated Personnel)

Candidates interested in BRIDGES Charter School must possess the following:

- All core, college prep teachers will meet the highly qualified requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Accordingly, a teacher of core academic subjects must have:
 1. A bachelor's degree (or higher);
 2. A State credential or have an Intern Certificate/Credential for no more than three years while actively working toward completion of their State credential;
 3. 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").¹⁸
- BRIDGES Charter School shall comply with Education Code Section 47605(1), which states:

Teachers in charter schools shall hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold. These documents shall be maintained on file at the charter school and shall be subject to periodic inspection by the chartering authority. It is the intent of the Legislature that charter schools be given flexibility with regard to noncore, non-college preparatory courses.

¹⁸ 7th and 8th grade teachers will be teaching in a multiple subject format thus utilizing the same credentialing and NCLB requirements. In the future if 7th and 8th grade teachers are hired for a single subject concentration, they will be required to meet the highly qualified requirements for the subject area in which they are hired in the same manner as a high school teacher.

A valid California CLAD or BCLAD certification or equivalent recognized by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. In addition, teachers who desire a position with BRIDGES Charter School must:

- Have background, knowledge, experience, and/or expertise in progressive/constructivist education methodologies and a belief in the Charter School's educational, nutritional and global-stewardship philosophies;
- Be willing to work collaboratively with parents and open to the concept of community as classroom;
- Show enthusiasm for collaboration with other teachers at classroom and school levels;
- Be willing to participate in professional development opportunities, and to engage in continuous reflection on the goals and methods of education;
- Be willing to work beyond the parameters of a regular school day to assure the success of the program;
- Be knowledgeable and/or willing to learn and practice conflict resolution and effective communication skills with students, staff, and the community;
- Be skilled and comfortable using integrated and thematic learning techniques and structured cooperative learning strategies;
- Be knowledgeable and supportive of global (multicultural) education, non-violent conflict resolution, and an affective teaching approach;
- Be knowledgeable about educational psychology, particularly constructivist learning strategies and the work of behavioral researchers such as Dewey, Piaget, Glasser, and Gardner.

Homeschool Director

Candidates for this position must meet the requirements for the certificated teacher position, plus:

- Administrative skills and experience;
- Background, knowledge and experience and progressive/constructivist education methodologies;
- Current working knowledge of curriculum standards, state mandated curriculum and testing requirements, and curriculum development;
- Current working knowledge of Best Practices in education with emphasis on successful Homeschool implementation;
- Experience with public independent study programs in California; and
- Demonstrated collaborative leadership abilities.

Office Manager

Candidates interested in the Office Manager position for BRIDGES Charter School must possess the following qualifications:

- Experience and knowledge of office systems, including but not limited to: phone, fax, computer, and printer;

- Excellent organizational skill;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills;
- Excellent interpersonal skills;
- A willingness to promote the mission and the vision of BRIDGES Charter School, including participating in on-going education of effective communication and philosophical practices;
- A willingness to learn new things and be part of a learning organization.
- Basic or fluent Spanish language skills (a preferred skill, not required)

Part time, Temporary or Short-Term Personnel

Part-time, temporary, or short-term personnel may be employed directly by BRIDGES Charter School. The Board, based on the recommendations of the Director and the Staff Selection Committee and the needs to be filled, will determine the qualifications and educational experience for these persons.

Non-Credentialed Teachers: Non-Core, Non-College Preparatory

BRIDGES Charter School may employ non-credentialed teachers and staff to the extent permitted by state and federal law. Educators in non-core, non-college preparatory classes, defined as those who are providing specialized learning opportunities, such as physical education, fine, performing, and applied arts, and foreign language, will hold either a valid CA teaching credential or have subject matter expertise and meet minimum qualifications contained in job descriptions and position announcements. BRIDGES Charter School shall submit a list of courses deemed to be non-core and non-college preparatory, but which satisfy the educational needs for students in the Charter School (such as specific math or language instruction courses).

Substitutes

BRIDGES Charter School will compile a list of qualified credentialed substitutes to create a “pool” when a substitute teacher is required. All substitute teachers will need to demonstrate basic understanding of BRIDGES Charter School philosophy and be able to implement the primary teacher’s lesson plans with similar pedagogical methods.

B. Retirement 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)

All full-time certificated employees will participate in the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS). Employees will contribute the required percentage, and BRIDGES Charter School will contribute the employer’s portion required by STRS. All withholdings from employees and the Charter School will be forwarded to the STRS Fund as required. BRIDGES will submit all retirement data through the Ventura County Office of Education and will comply with all policies and procedures for payroll reporting. Employees will accumulate service credit years in

the same manner as all other members of STRS. Social Security payments will be contributed for all qualifying non-STRS members. The BRIDGES Board of Directors retains the option to consider any other public or private retirement plans for non-certificated employees and to coordinate such participation with existing programs, as it deems appropriate. Our back office services provider will handle retirement benefits.

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)(0)

BRIDGES Charter School will be the exclusive public employer of all employees of the Charter School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act (“EERA”). The Charter School recognizes the employees’ rights under the EERA provisions to organize for collective bargaining purposes.

D. Rights Of VCOE and CVUSD 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 right of return to the school district after employment at a charter school. – Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(M)

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

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

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, BRIDGES 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. ***A full draft will be provided to the County for review at least 30 days prior to operation of the Charter School.*** The safety plan will be kept on file for review and Charter School staff will be trained annually on the safety procedures outlined in the plan.

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

Fingerprinting/Procedures for Background Checks

Employees and contractors of the Charter School will be required to be fingerprinted and submit to a criminal background check and finish 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 Director of Operations 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 Director of Operations. Employees will not start work until results are received from the Department of Justice and the employee is cleared to begin work. 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.

Role of Staff as Mandated Child Abuse Reporters

All classified and certificated staff will be mandated child abuse reporters and will follow all applicable reporting laws, the same policies and procedures used by CVUSD and the County.

TB Testing

The Charter School will follow the requirement of Educational Code Section 49406 in requiring tuberculosis testing of all employees prior to commencing employment.

Immunizations

The Charter School will adhere to all law related to legally required immunizations for entering students pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 120325-120375, and Title 17, California

Code of Regulations Sections 6000-6075. All enrolling students and staff will provide records documenting immunizations to the extent required for enrollment in non-charter public schools.

Medication in School

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

Vision/Hearing/Scoliosis

The Charter School shall adhere to Education Code Section 49450, et seq., as applicable to the grade levels served by the Charter School.

Diabetes

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

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

Auxiliary Services

Charter School staff will conduct annual reviews to ensure all auxiliary services are safe (food services, transportation, custodial services, hazardous materials) by developing appropriate policies and awareness training.

Emergency Preparedness

The Charter School shall adhere to an Emergency Preparedness Handbook drafted specifically to the needs of the 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. If assuming a facility that was previously used as a School site, any existing emergency preparedness plan for the school site shall be used as a starting basis for updating the handbook for the Charter School.

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 workplace. The Board shall establish a written "Exposure Control Plan" designed to protect employees 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 body fluids through injury or accident, students, and staff should follow the latest medical protocol for disinfecting procedures.

Drug Free/Smoke Free Environment

The Charter School shall maintain a drug and alcohol and smoke free environment.

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 California Building Standards Code. The Charter School agrees to test sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms annually at its facilities to ensure that they are maintained in an operable condition at all times. The Charter School shall conduct fire drills as required under Education Code Section 32001 and in conjunction with CVUSD (if at CVUSD facilities).

Integrated Complaint and Investigation Procedure

The Charter School will develop a comprehensive complaint and investigation procedure to centralize all complaints and concerns coming into the Charter School. Under the direction of the Charter School Board, the directors shall be responsible for investigation, remediation, and follow-up on matters submitted to the Charter School through this procedure.

Staff Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for their own safety, as well as that of others in the workplace. The Charter School will rely upon its employees to ensure that work areas are kept safe and free of hazardous conditions. Employees will report any unsafe conditions or potential hazards to their supervisor immediately. If an employee suspects a concealed danger is present on the Charter School's premises, or in a product, facility, piece of equipment, process, or business practice for which the Charter School is responsible, the employee will bring it to the attention of their supervisor or Director immediately. Supervisors will arrange for the correction of any unsafe condition or concealed danger immediately and will contact the Director regarding the problem.

Employees will be encouraged to report any workplace injury, accident, to their supervisor as soon as possible, regardless of the severity of the injury or accident. If medical attention is required immediately, supervisors will assist employees in obtaining medical care, after which the details of the injury or accident must be reported.

On a periodic basis the Charter School may issue rules and guidelines governing workplace safety and health. All employees will familiarize themselves with the rules and guidelines, as strict compliance will be expected. Failure to comply with rules and guidelines regarding health and safety or work performance will not be tolerated.

Sexual Harassment Policies and Procedures

The Charter School 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 will develop 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 policy.

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 Charter School recognizes that it cannot bind the County to a dispute resolution procedure to which the County does not agree. The policy below is intended as a starting point for a discussion of dispute resolution procedures. The Charter School is willing to consider changes to the process outline below as suggested by the County.

Disputes Between the Charter School and the Charter-Granting Agency

The Charter School and the County will be encouraged to attempt to resolve any disputes with the County amicably and reasonably without resorting to formal procedures.

In the event of a dispute between the Charter School and the County, Charter School staff, employees and Board members of the Charter School and the County agree to first document the issue in written format (“dispute statement”) and refer the issue to the Superintendent (or designee) and Director or designee of the Charter School. In the event that the County 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 shall be noted in the written dispute statement. However, the Charter School understands and agrees that participation in the dispute resolution procedures outlined in this section shall not be interpreted to impede or act as a pre-requisite to the County’s ability to proceed with revocation in accordance with Education Code Section 47607.

The Director or designee of the Charter School 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 Director or designee 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 Director or designee 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 Superintendent and the Director or designee shall develop the format of the mediation session jointly. 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 County 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 County and the Charter School.

VI. STUDENT ADMISSIONS, ATTENDANCE, AND SUSPENSION/EXPULSION POLICIES

A. Student Admission Policies and Procedures

Governing Law: Admission Requirements, if applicable-Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(H)

BRIDGES Charter School will actively recruit a student population reflective of CVUSD community demographics, including parents who understand and value the Charter School's mission and who are committed to the Charter School's instructional and operational philosophy.

BRIDGES Charter School shall admit all pupils who wish to attend the Charter School; however, if the number of pupils who wish to attend the Charter School exceeds the Charter School's capacity, attendance, except for existing pupils of the Charter School, shall be determined by a pupil random drawing. No test or assessment shall be administered to students prior to acceptance and enrollment into the Charter School. Except as provided in Education Code Section 47605(d)(2), admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the pupil, or of his or her parent or guardian, within this State.

The Charter School shall be nonsectarian in its admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations, shall not charge tuition, and shall not discriminate against any pupil 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). The Charter School will not require any pupil to attend the Charter School. The Charter School will comply with all minimum and maximum age limitations for public school attendance.

The application process is comprised of the following:

- 1) Parent attendance at a Charter School orientation meeting (which includes a school tour after first year of operation): The purpose of the orientation meeting is to ensure parent/guardian understanding of and commitment to the Charter School's vision and policies. All families seeking admission will receive extensive information about BRIDGES Charter School's philosophy and educational program, including the parent volunteer commitment contract. Orientation may also include a tour of the Charter School's classrooms (once the school is operating).
- 2) Completion of an application form.
- 3) Proof of minimum age requirements, e.g. birth certificate

Applications will be accepted during a publicly advertised open enrollment period each late winter/early spring¹⁹ 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

¹⁹ In the first year, the Charter granting date will determine Open Enrollment period.

received more applications than it has availability. In the event that this happens, the Charter School will hold a public random drawing to determine enrollment for the impacted grade levels in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B).

Public notice will be posted regarding the date and time of the public random drawing and the Charter School will inform parents of all applicants and all interested parties of the rules to be followed during the lottery process, location, date and time of the public random drawing via mail at least two weeks prior to the public random drawing date. The Charter School will choose a date and time for the public random drawing (preferably on the weekend or after 6 pm on a weekday) so that most interested parties will be able to attend. The public random drawing will be held at the Charter School site if the facility can accommodate all interested parties. A waiting list will be developed from the list of students who do not receive admission in the order in which they are drawn and will be considered should a vacancy occur during the year. Students on the waiting list will be notified by mail immediately if space becomes available and they will have two weeks to return the enrollment forms. If the enrollment forms are not returned within two weeks, then admission for that student is forfeited, and an admission notice will be mailed to the next student on the waiting list. A new waitlist will be generated each year as necessary in conjunction with the public random drawing. BRIDGES Charter School will maintain auditable records of the above activities.

Currently enrolled students (2nd year forward) are guaranteed enrollment in the following school year and would not be subject to a public random drawing should it be necessary for their grade level.

Preferences in the case of a public random drawing for grades **K-8** will be given in the following order of priority:²⁰

- 1) Children of members of the Founding Group and Founding Committees (first two years of operation only)²¹
- 2) Siblings of currently enrolled students (2nd year forward);²²
- 3) Children of BRIDGES Charter School employees;²³
- 4) Students who applied but were not admitted in the prior year (2nd year forward), and
- 5) All other Students who reside in CVUSD.

²⁰ During any period of funding under the Public Charter Schools Grant Program, this public random drawing will be held as one single weighted lottery in accordance with the terms of the State Board of Education approved Request for Applications (“RFA”).

²¹ Founding Group members are defined as any family who has contributed 25 hours toward the creation of this charter before December 1, 2009 and shall be limited to 10% of total enrollment in accordance with the State Board of Education approved RFA.

²² During any period of Public Charter Schools Grant Program funding, this preference will be considered an “exemption” to the public random drawing in accordance with the terms of the State Board of Education approved RFA.

²³ During any period of funding for the Public Charter Schools Grant Program, this admissions preference will be limited to children of “faculty” and shall be limited to 10% of total enrollment in accordance with the State Board of Education approved RFA.

Parents will be notified of admission in a timely fashion following the enrollment process. The parent(s) whose children are selected to attend BRIDGES Charter School will be required to provide registration information, which includes the following:

- Parent signature of Parent/Student Responsibility Contract
- Proof of Immunizations
- Home Language Survey
- Completion of Emergency Medical Information Form
- Completion of a Student Registration Form

The Charter School shall develop a comprehensive enrollment policy and procedure for board adoption in order to implement the provisions herein.

A Parent/Student Responsibility Contract will contain agreed-upon volunteer hours (a minimum of 2.5 per week, per child, up to a maximum of 6 hours per week), but will not require that number to be absolute. No student will be expelled due to his or her parent/guardian's failure to meet the number of volunteer hours required.

Planned Application, Public Random Drawing, and Admission Schedule

- January – March: Application forms available at Charter 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 Charter 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 families of children whose names 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.
- These timelines are estimates based upon the current CVUSD 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 marketing and outreach campaign that includes, but is not limited to the following strategies to promote a racial and ethnic balance among students that is reflective of CVUSD demographics:

- 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 CVUSD.
- Direct mail, print advertising, and informational meetings directed toward targeted student populations to recruit students from the various racial and ethnic groups represented within CVUSD.
- A marketing plan with significant outreach activities in local newspapers, public libraries, community clubhouses and newsletters, local community groups, preschools and local businesses. The marketing plan shall include the preparation and distribution of recruiting materials in English and Spanish.
- Scheduling 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.
- Annual reporting which shall include enrollment statistics indicating the racial and ethnic mix of students, the percentage of students from CVUSD and steps taken to achieve 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.

A detailed Outreach Plan will be provided to the County 2 weeks-30 days prior to the Open Enrollment period.

C. Public School Attendance Alternatives

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 CVUSD who choose not to attend the Charter School may attend school within CVUSD according to CVUSD policy or at another school district or school within CVUSD through CVUSD's intra- and inter-district policies. Alternatives to the Charter School for these students living within CVUSD attendance area will be the same as those offered to all other students currently residing in CVUSD. 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 an 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 Charter School. In preparing this policy, the Charter School has reviewed other suspension and expulsion policies, as well as the Education Code. When the policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from the Charter School. This policy shall serve as 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 and as required by the District, approved as material revisions to the charter in accordance with Education Code Section 47607. This policy is written broadly to apply as needed to the Charter School students at school-sponsored activities or at school facilities.

Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This Policy and its Procedures will clearly describe discipline expectations, and it will be printed and distributed as part of the Student & Parent Information Packet which is sent to each student at the beginning of the school year.

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 otherwise comply with legal requirements regarding restraints.

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'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 Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ("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. Charter School will follow all applicable federal and state laws, including the IDEIA, Section 504,

implementing regulations and implementing state law and regulations, when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom Charter 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.

1. Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to 1) a school activity, 2) school attendance, or 3) a Charter School sponsored event. A Pupil may be suspended or expelled for acts that are enumerated below and related to school activity or attendance that occur at any time, including, but not limited to, and of the following:

- a) while on school grounds;
- b) while going to or coming from school;
- c) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

2. Enumerated Offenses

- (a) Students shall be immediately suspended pursuant to this policy and shall be recommended for expulsion if the Director or designee determines that a student has committed any of the following acts at school or at a school activity off campus grounds:
 - 1) If it is determined by the Board that a student has brought a fire arm or destructive device, as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, on to campus or to have possessed a firearm or dangerous device on campus, the student shall be expelled for one year, pursuant to the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994.
- (b) Students may be suspended or expelled for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
 - 1) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
 - 2) Willfully used force of violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
 - 3) 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 or designee's concurrence.

- 4) 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.
- 5) 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.
- 6) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- 7) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
- 8) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
- 9) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
- 10) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- 11) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11014.5.
- 12) 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.
- 13) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
- 14) 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.
- 15) 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.
- 16) 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.

- 17) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- 18) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this subdivision, “hazing” means a method of initiation or pre-initiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this section, “hazing” does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- 19) Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property. For purposes of this section, “terrorist threat” shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school property, or the personal property of the person threatened or his or her immediate family.
- 20) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this section, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- 21) Caused, attempted to cause, threaten to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- 22) 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. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.

- 23) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act, as defined in subdivisions (f) and (g) of Section 32261 of the Education Code, directed specifically toward a pupil or school personnel.

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 Director or the Director'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 Director. The conference may be omitted if the Director 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 suspension, the Director 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 Director or Director'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 Director 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.

4. Authority to Expel

A student may be expelled either by the Governing Board following a hearing before it or by the Governing Board upon the recommendation of an Administrative Panel to be assigned by the Governing 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 Governing Board. The Administrative Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense.

5. 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 Director 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 Governing 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:

- A. The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
- B. A statement of specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
- C. A copy of Charter School's disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;
- D. 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;
- E. 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;
- F. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
- G. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
- H. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

6. Special procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses

The Charter School may, upon finding a 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 that shall be examined only by the Governing Board, administrative panel, 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.

- A. 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.

- B. The Charter 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.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.
- E. 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.
- F. 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.
- G. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, the Charter School must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the Charter 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.
- H. 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.
- I. 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 not alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing by means of closed-circuit television.

J. 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 circumstances 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.

7. 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.

8. 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 Governing 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 accused 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 Governing Board who will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The final decision by the Governing Board shall be made within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The decision of the Governing Board is final.

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

9. Written Notice to Expel

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

- A. Notice of the specific offense committed by the student
- B. 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 Charter School.

The Director or designee shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the student's district of residence. This notice shall include the following:

- A. The student's name
- B. The specific expellable offense committed by the student

10. Disciplinary Records

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

11. No Right to Appeal

The pupil shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from the Charter School as the Governing Board decision to expel shall be final.

12. 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.

13. Rehabilitation Plans

Students who are expelled from the Charter School shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Governing 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 (1) year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to the Charter School for readmission.

14. Readmission

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school, school district or Charter School shall be in the sole discretion of the Governing Board following a meeting with the Director 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 shall make a recommendation to the Governing Board following the meeting regarding his or her determination. The pupil's readmission is also contingent upon the Charter School's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission.

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

A. Notification of SELPA

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

B. Services During Suspension

Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year and Students whose cumulative suspensions constitute a change in placement under the IDEA 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 or 504 Plan; 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 for up to 45 days.

C. 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 or Section 504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP or 504 Plan, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

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

- 2) 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.

D. Due Process Appeals and 504 Appeals

The parent of a child who qualifies under the IDEIA 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.

The parent of a child with a 504 plan who disagrees with any decision regarding the placement or the manifestation determination may utilize the dispute resolution process and hearing procedures as outlined in the 504 policies and procedures.

The Charter School shall be solely responsible for its representation at hearing and the related costs of this process and as described herein, shall fully indemnify the County for the same.

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.

E. 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 Director 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:

- 1) 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;
- 2) 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
- 3) 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.

F. Interim Alternative Educational Setting

The student's IEP team shall determine the student's interim alternative educational setting.

G. 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 Charter School'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:

- 1) 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.
- 2) The parent has requested an evaluation of the child.
- 3) 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 J, please find the following documents:

- A proposed first year operational budget, including start-up costs, and cash flow and financial projections for the first five years of operations This document is based upon the best data available to the Petitioners at this time.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604.33, BRIDGES Charter School will provide any necessary financial statements to the Ventura County Office of Education, and California Department of Education. The Charter School shall provide reports to the County as follows, and may provide additional fiscal reports as requested by the County:

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 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 County 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 Charter School's and the County's insurer based upon insurance amounts for schools of similar size, location and population. The County 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 County.

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 will remain open to discussing the possibility of purchasing administrative services from VCOE. If VCOE is interested, the specific terms and cost for these services will be the subject of a memorandum of understanding (“MOU”) between the Charter School and the County and subject to VCOE availability. Upon approval of the Charter School, if not completed during the charter process, the Charter School shall begin MOU negotiations with the charter authorizer over contracted services, if any. Should contracted services be unavailable, on or before May 1, 2010, and if no MOU has been executed between the Parties, then the Charter School shall seek to obtain its own administrative services, either in house or through a third party contractor.

The Charter School will be responsible for its own financial services (accounting, budgeting, and payroll) and personnel services. The Charter School will identify staff responsible for financial administrative functions and the qualifications of staff assigned to these functions, and will also provide assurance that the accounting systems adopted would adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Directors and describe the process of internal controls. The Charter School shall conduct all of its financial operations in a timely manner and for all programs (regular, categorical, and special education) through procedures established by the State of California and the Federal Government, as appropriate. For Federal programs, including Title I, the criteria for eligibility and fiscal guidelines will be as established by the Federal Government. The Charter School has elected to receive funding directly, and therefore is responsible for meeting eligibility and fiscal requirements established by the Federal Government and for completing the Consolidated Application. The Charter School shall provide the County with all financial and related reports, including enrollment attendance to enable the County to meet its requirements by law. Notwithstanding the petitioners' expectation to receive Title I funding under Federal guidelines, said funding may not be forthcoming until the Charter School meets established criteria for a determined school year. The Charter School's unaudited financial statements will demonstrate the Charter School's fiscal sustainability for the length of the Charter School's operation.

D. Facilities

BRIDGES Charter School will make a Proposition 39 facilities request in accordance with Education Code Section 47614 and its implementing regulations. The Charter School plans to locate at one site within CVUSD boundaries.

Our ideal space, which will serve our students at full capacity, will include a total of 15 classrooms (to include space for special education services), administrative office space, and an

additional room for our Homeschool Alliance component, to be used by the Homeschool supervising teacher in order to plan for and meet with homeschool students. This room should ideally be large enough for group activities with homeschool students. In addition, we will need:

- Access to an auditorium on site, with a functioning stage, or an adequate space to be used for performance arts.
- At least two additional rooms: one for music/band and one to serve as a lab (to be determined as a computer lab and/or science lab).
- One room to serve as our Parent Resource Center.
- One room to utilize for our Child-Care Co-op. This room would preferably be adjacent to a small, safe outside area, which will serve as a play area.
- An appropriately sized and sunny area for our school garden, with adequate drainage and access to water.
- Sufficient play space with appropriate equipment and/or room for both elementary and middle school students (black top and field sports).
- Sufficient parking for staff and parent volunteers.

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. Should the Charter School be granted facilities which are independent of any CVUSD classrooms, the Charter School agrees to test sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms annually at its facilities to ensure that they are maintained in an operable condition at all times. The Charter School shall conduct fire drills in accordance with Education Code Section 32001 and in conjunction with CVUSD if at CVUSD facilities.

E. Transportation

The Charter School will not provide transportation to and from school, 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 County and the Charter School.

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, Education Code Sections 47605(b)(5)(I) and 47605(m). The books and records of the Charter School will be kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and as required by applicable law 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 County Superintendent of Schools, the State Controller, and to the CDE by the 15th of December of each year. The Director, 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 VCBE and VCOE describing how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved to the satisfaction of VCBE and VCOE, along with an anticipated timeline for the same. All exceptions and deficiencies must be resolved to the satisfaction of VCBE.

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 BRIDGES Charter School 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.

Following the decision to close the school, the School's Board of Directors will promptly notify parents and students of the Charter School, the Ventura County Office of Education, the School's SELPA, the retirement systems in which the Charter 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, BRIDGES Charter School will provide parents, students and the County 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"). The School will arrange for the storage of original records of Charter School students by providing those records to the districts and schools who are receiving those students or, if appropriate, all records of the School shall be transferred to VCOE upon School closure. If VCOE 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 Charter School will prepare final financial records. The Charter School will also have an independent audit completed within six months after closure, and will pay for the final audit. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant selected by the Charter School and will be provided to the County 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. BRIDGES Charter School will complete and file any annual reports required pursuant to Education Code section 47604.33.

On closure of the Charter School, all assets of the Charter School, 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 California public educational entity. Any assets acquired from the County or County property will be promptly returned upon Charter School closure to the County. The distribution shall include return of any grant funds and restricted categorical funds to their source in accordance with the terms of the grant or state and federal law, as appropriate, which may include submission of final expenditure reports for entitlement grants and the filing of any required Final Expenditure Reports and Final Performance Reports, as well as the return of any donated materials and property in accordance with any conditions established when the donation of such materials or property was accepted. On closure, the Charter School shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of the School.

As BRIDGES Charter School is operated as a non-profit public benefit corporation, should the corporation dissolve with the closure of the Charter School, the Charter School's Board of Directors 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 J, 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)).

BRIDGES Charter School shall be operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 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. The Charter School shall work diligently to assist the County in meeting any and all oversight obligations under the law, including monthly meetings, reporting, or other County-requested protocol to ensure the County shall not be liable for the operation of the Charter School.

Further, the Charter School and the County shall enter into a MOU, where in the Charter School shall indemnify the County for the actions of the Charter School under this charter.

The corporate bylaws of the Charter School shall provide for indemnification of the Charter School's Board, officers, agents, and employees, and the Charter 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 VCOE and Charter School's insurance company for schools of similar size, location, and student population. The County shall be named an additional insured on the general liability insurance of Charter School.

The Charter School 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 the proposal for the BRIDGES Charter School, the County will be fulfilling the intent of the Charter Schools Act of 1992 to: a) improve pupil learning; b) create new professional opportunities for teachers; c) provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in education and d) follow the directive of law to encourage the creation of charter schools. We seek to establish sustainable, high expectations for what a charter school can and should be. To this end, the Petitioners agree to work cooperatively with the County in order to answer any concerns over this document and to present the County's Board of Directors with the strongest possible proposal for the approval of this Charter. The BRIDGES Charter School Petitioners and Founding Group are requesting a five-year term through June 30, 2015.

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