

**Mark West Union School District
Renewing of the Mark West Charter School:
A California Public Charter School**

WHEREAS the Governing Board of the Mark West Union School District received for renewal, a valid charter petition on March 13, 2018 duly signed by authorized parents or teachers and submitted pursuant to Education Code Section 47605, and;

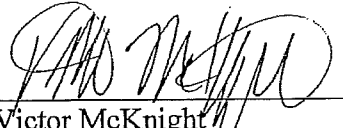
WHEREAS the Governing Board of the Mark West Union School District, after holding a public hearing on March 13, 2018, and considering the level of parent and staff support, has determined that the applicants have assembled and presented a valid and meritorious charter petition for renewal;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Governing Board of the Mark West Union School District hereby approves and grants this charter petition renewal for a period of five (5) years.

The resolution was passed on a vote of 4 to 0 on March 13, 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this charter constitutes a binding contract between the Mark West Union School District and the nonprofit public benefit corporation that supports the Mark West Charter School.

Witnessed:



Victor McKnight
President, Board of Trustees
Mark West Union School District

Petition for Renewal of the Charter for Mark West Charter School

We the undersigned believe that the attached Charter merits consideration and hereby petition the governing board of the Mark West Union School District to grant approval of the charter pursuant of Educational Code Section 47605 to enable the continuation of the Mark West Charter School. The Mark West Charter School agrees to operate the school pursuant to the terms of The Charter Schools Act and the provisions of the school's charter. **The petitioners below certify that they are teachers who are meaningfully interested in teaching in the charter school.**

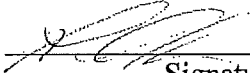
By the Lead Petitioner:

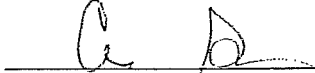
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|------------------------|---|----------------|
| <u>Michelle Franci</u> | <u></u> | <u>2-23-18</u> |
| Name (please print) | Signature | Date |

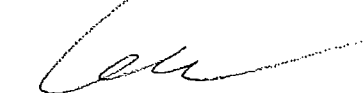
The petitioners authorize the Lead Petitioner to negotiate any amendments to the attached charter necessary to secure approval by the Mark West Union School District governing board.

By the Petitioners:

| | | |
|---------------------|---|----------------|
| <u>TRICIA WOODS</u> | <u></u> | <u>2-23-18</u> |
| Name (please print) | Signature | Date |

| | | |
|---------------------|--|----------------|
| <u>Lisa Chapman</u> | <u></u> | <u>2-23-18</u> |
| Name (please print) | Signature | Date |

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| <u>Crissie Sunde</u> | <u></u> | <u>2/23/18</u> |
| Name (please print) | Signature | Date |

| | | |
|----------------------|--|----------------|
| <u>Erin Earnshaw</u> | <u></u> | <u>2/23/18</u> |
| Name (please print) | Signature | Date |

**Charter
Of the
Mark West Charter School:
A California Public Charter School**

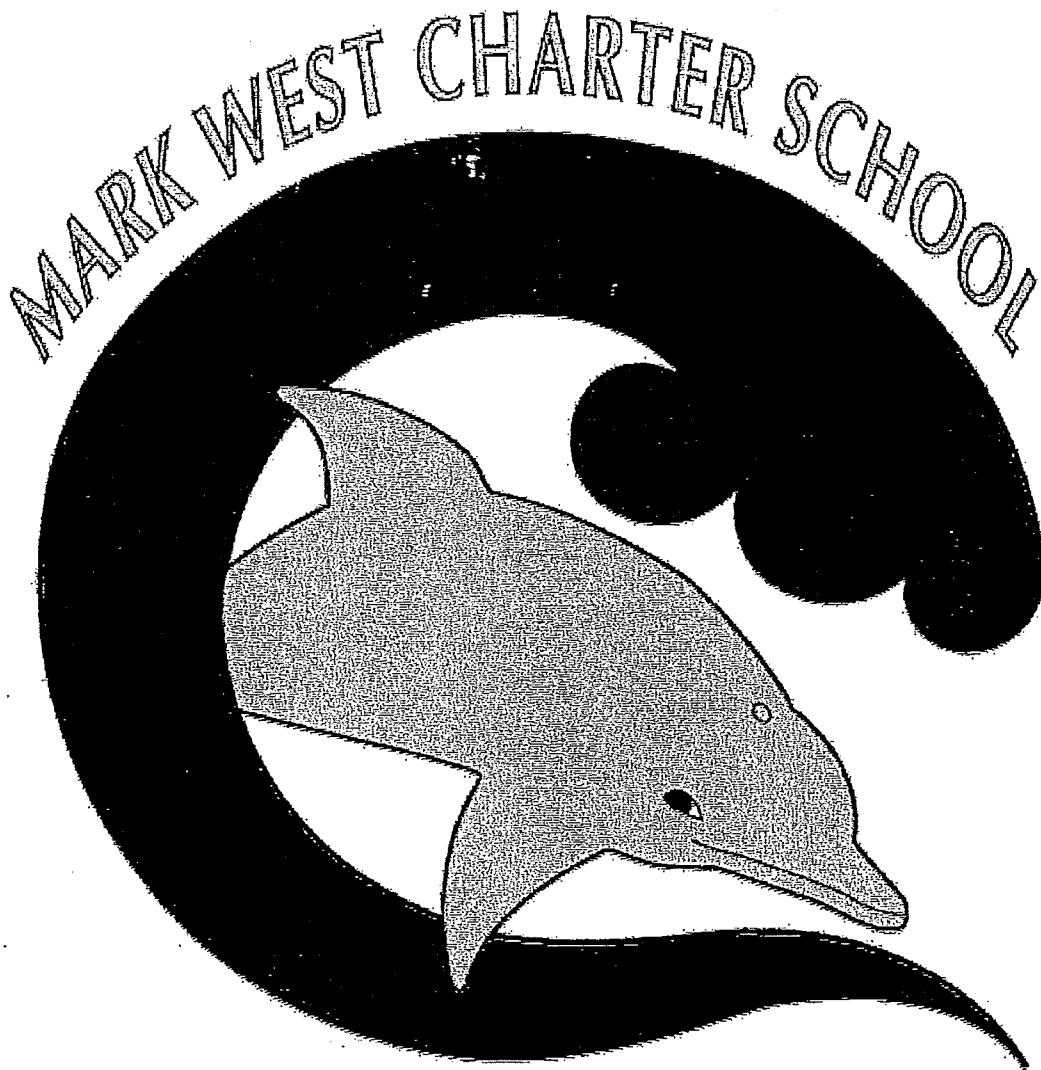


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Legal Affirmations

The Mark West Charter School is a non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, does not charge tuition, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability.

School Location

This charter authorizes the operation of the Mark West Charter School, which operates within the geographic boundaries of the Mark West Union School District.

Mark West Charter School
4600 Lavell Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

MWCS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mark West Charter School program has been designed to meet the needs of students whose families value high academic standards and foster their development into life long learners who are prepared to function as educated and responsible adults in the 21st century. The environment is academically demanding while remaining psychologically and physically safe, allowing the student to stay focused on the learning experience. A community connection is encouraged through family involvement in the support of academic goals and service learning requirements. A traditional classroom based program is offered for grades 7 and 8 and an independent home study program for grades K through 8 which includes activities and availability of resources on campus.

The school is committed to:

- ✓ partnering of staff, students, parents and community to create a unique, challenging and individualized learning environment with a rigorous, academically rich curriculum for all students
- ✓ providing a safe, nurturing environment located within district boundaries featuring a smaller teacher to student ratio
- ✓ developing self-motivated, self-disciplined and socially responsible students
- ✓ applying academic learning to real-life activities including project based learning
- ✓ providing integrated opportunities in math, science, technology, and the humanities
- ✓ building programs that foster thinking which is original, critical, collaborative and reflective
- ✓ respecting diversity and the developing student - cognitive, emotional, social and physical
- ✓ offer an educational experience that prepares pupils for successful learning opportunities after middle school
- ✓ creating a haven where students have the opportunity to build sustained, caring relationships with their teachers, peers and other community members

The Mark West Charter School program has components to support its vision and the fulfillment of this commitment. Each student is known and valued for their individual contributions and their unique needs are considered. High academic standards exist and students are expected to perform at their highest potential. Project based learning is utilized as knowledge is best retained when it is used in interactive activities, hands on experience, and community participation. Information technology is readily available and utilized in everyday lessons and self-expression. Families contribute to the support of the learning experience of their own student as well as all other students. Service Learning projects foster social responsibility and a connection to the

community. An appreciation of the diversity of language and culture is cultivated. All aspects of the program are enhanced by formal enrichment activities in the areas of language, art, music, performance, leadership, world cultures, STEAM, and athletics.

Mark West Charter School educates its students to think independently, forging meaning from personal experience. Students perform both text and web based research, learning to evaluate the integrity of sources and communicate the results as applied to complex problems. Students learn to value the unique perspective born of culture and language that each member of diverse teams will contribute.

The results of the best research in middle school education guided the design of the Mark West Charter School program and instructional strategies. The program blends independent home study and traditional classroom instruction in an environment that is safe, characterized by high academic standards, diversity, and supported by an excellent technology infrastructure.

The parents of the K-8 independent home study students receive the support of professional educators in collaboration on lesson plans and teaching strategies. They also receive all state approved teaching materials. Independent home study students are invited to participate in a day on campus with access to school resources including library, GATE program, electives (7th and 8th grade only), speech and language, study trips and reading specialist instruction.

Learning emphasizes direct and frequent interaction with real-life experiences and students are provided many opportunities to connect their classroom learning with “real world” applications through service learning and applied learning. Study trips and career exploration opportunities often support in class instruction. Service learning commitments strengthen the link to the community and global issues, preparing the student for successful citizenship.

Mark West Charter School gives consistent feedback in all areas and engages in proactive communication between parent, student and teacher to obtain the greatest success for each student. Interventions are provided as necessary and extra opportunities exist for students to meet or exceed grade level standards.

As a result of the excellent educational program and the component of parent support, students who are willing to focus and dedicate sufficient effort will be exceptionally well prepared for their choice of high schools.

A. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

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))

MISSION AND GOALS

Through strong family involvement, community interaction and project-based learning, Mark West Charter School will develop lifelong learners prepared to be innovative participants in the global community. Mark West Charter School fosters a school culture where every member of the school community is provided powerful instruction in 21st Century skills and common core academics. Progress will be measured by District Benchmarks, formative and statewide assessments, as well as performance tasks. We will use technology, project based learning, and a caring, dedicated staff to meet the social-emotional and academic needs of each and every student. We will provide differentiation during the instructional day to ensure students get the level of support they need to succeed. Students will participate in community service projects to find a connection to their surroundings and ways they can become active members in their community. Mark West Charter School offers an Independent Home Study program for grades K – 8 which includes a day on campus program and/or electives on campus (7th and 8th grade only) and a traditional classroom based program for grades 7 and 8.

The school is committed to:

- ✓ partnering staff, students, parents and community to create a unique, challenging and individualized learning environment with a rigorous, academically rich curriculum for all students;
- ✓ providing a safe, nurturing environment located within district boundaries featuring a smaller teacher to student ratio;
- ✓ developing self-motivated, self-disciplined, and socially responsible students;
- ✓ applying academic learning to real-life activities including project based learning;
- ✓ providing integrated opportunities in math, science, technology, and the humanities;
- ✓ building programs that foster thinking which is original, critical, collaborative, and reflective;
- ✓ respecting diversity and the developing student - cognitive, emotional, social, and physical;
- ✓ offering an educational experience that prepares pupils for successful learning opportunities after middle school; and

- ✓ creating a haven where students have the opportunity to build sustained, caring relationships with their teachers, peers, and other community members.

This mission statement reflects the vision developed by the Mark West Charter School Site Council, and approved by the Mark West Union School District Board of Site Administrators. This vision identifies three elements critical to developing educated children who are well prepared for the 21st century: strong academics, community interaction and family involvement. The result is an academically demanding, community-connected program with strong family involvement creating a unique learning community blending the strengths of both students educated full time in the regular classroom and students educated at home. Implementing this vision requires eight components that address one or more of these key elements.

- **Standards** – Students excel when standards are high and when academic achievement is valued. All students are expected to perform at their highest level and to excel in the content areas outlined in the state curriculum standards.
- **Family Participation** – Students understand the importance of learning when they experience their family investing time in supporting that effort. Families contribute in a variety of significant ways to support both their own children's efforts to excel and to enhance the learning environment.
- **Project-based Learning** – Knowledge is best retained when it is used. Students develop and acquire new skills by participating in interactive projects, hands-on learning activities and field trips into the community. Project oriented programs allow students to learn and apply academics to real-life activities so that knowledge is meaningful, long lasting and effective.
- **Technology** – In today's society, technology plays a significant role in everyday life and global affairs. Every student has ready access to technology and learns to use it for research, analysis, communication, organization, and self-expression.
- **Formal Enrichment Activities** -- All students benefit from regular exposure to a variety of programs such as foreign language, life skills, leadership, physical education, music, STEAM, and other fine arts.
- **Community Connection** – Public schools must produce knowledgeable and involved citizens. Students learn to understand their connection to the community and their responsibilities as members. The school community incorporates service learning projects and hands-on experiences.
- **Diversity** – Citizens of the 21st century need a concrete understanding of the diversity of language and culture in both their immediate community and the world.
- **Personalization** – At Mark West Charter School each student is well known and valued as an individual with his/her specific needs taken into consideration.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN “EDUCATED PERSON” IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Mark West Charter School program is dedicated to educating students prepared for the 21st century. A student who is prepared for the 21st century will exhibit the following characteristics.

- Be academically capable, able to think creatively, make sound decisions, solve problems, and know how to learn.
- Construct knowledge and personal meaning from new experiences.
- Have a deep understanding of the humanities, sciences and the arts.
- Use technology as a tool in the pursuit of learning.
- Be an exceptional communicator; one who possesses superb skills in many forms of communication.
- Be capable of establishing and completing long and short-term goals.
- Be accountable for their work product and produce the highest quality of work of which they are capable.
- Locate information from print and digital sources and validate the quality and integrity of its content.
- Participate, cooperate, and collaborate with members of their work team.
- Honor the richness of human diversity and the contributions of all ethnic, linguistic, and cultural traditions.
- Put their knowledge and skills to work in the world.
- Use complex reasoning skills to problem solve.
- Understand the uniqueness of individuals and value the learning and ability of others.
- Value honesty, fairness, equity, justice, integrity, civility, service to others, and citizenship.

DESCRIPTION OF WHICH STUDENTS THE CHARTER IS ATTEMPTING TO EDUCATE

Mark West Charter School is attempting to educate students coming from families who hold the values outlined below.

- High academic standards in an academically challenging environment, as has been the history of the Mark West School District.
- The use of technology as a part of learning, exposure to rich electives and the ability for their children to be involved in innovative programs using applied learning and service learning projects.
- Parental involvement, collaboration, shared responsibility and decision-making as a part of their students' education -- the success of all students, including those educated at home employ these strategies for successful instructional delivery.
- A desire for their children to attend a small safe school in an environment where their students will receive personal individualized attention and be better served than by other area middle schools.
- A school where learning, experimentation, and reflection are the norm.

- Students will be ethnically and economically diverse and will closely mirror the current demographics of the Mark West School District.

STUDENTS WILL BECOME SELF-MOTIVATED, COMPETENT, LIFE LONG LEARNERS

The Mark West Charter School for middle grades dedicates itself to its mission and providing the school experience as outlined by the State of California in its middle school document that will prepare students to be self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners. The Mark West Charter School for middle grades meets this goal by providing the educational program outlined in this document.

MARK WEST CHARTER SCHOOL EXEMPLARY UNIQUE AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

A unique school has been created with students from a traditional educational experience who have been blended with home-educated students to form a cohesive, powerful learning community. The Mark West Charter School offers an independent home study program for students K through 8, and a traditional school program for middle school with classes held five days per week on a public school campus. The blending of these two programs allows greater offerings for electives and a variety of teachers for implementation of differentiated instruction, extended student work time towards achievement of standards and the opportunity for service learning and applied learning projects. This unique-blended program offers a rich selection and opportunity for students to learn in the regular classroom program while providing an independent alternative for students to achieve competency and mastery of skills.

K- 8 Independent *Home Study Program*

Overview

We believe all students deserve an education rich with learning experiences that prepare them to be positive problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and future leaders in our community and beyond. For some families, that education can best occur through study at home providing the student with standards-based, yet individualized curriculum, supplemented to meet the independent home study student's strengths and weaknesses. Our K-8 independent home study program helps parents fulfill their dreams of the ideal educational experience for their child(ren) by providing frequent meetings with a highly trained certificated teacher to collaborate in the development of lesson plans and share teaching strategies, as well as providing all state approved teaching materials available to other students in the Mark West School District.

Other resources available to independent home study families include the school library, computer lab, counselor, school psychologist, speech and language specialists, and reading specialists. K- 8 students may choose to participate in the district's enrichment programs such as chorus and instrumental music programs taught by credentialed music teachers as well as the variety of grade elective classes offered to 7th and 8th grade students through the on campus charter school program. Those who qualify may participate in the district's Gifted and Talented Program. K-6 students are offered a day on campus each week to facilitate socialization and

allow direct instruction and project work with a credentialed teacher. All students are encouraged and expected to participate in benchmark testing and state standardized testing. Integration of the Independent Home Study program with the on-campus programs helps students transition successfully to traditional high school settings.

Program Goals

High standards for all students are an important part of the system. They are best achieved in a learning environment that actively engages students in a challenging program with a rigorous curriculum. The independent home study sessions, as well as on-campus learning opportunities, need to take place in a physically and emotionally safe environment that supports academic risk-taking, invites student participation, and structures cooperative learning experiences.

The day on campus for younger students and elective classes for older students (7th and 8th grade only) provides independent home study families with access to an excellent facility including a well-equipped and well-staffed school library, technological resources and instructional materials. It also provides students with opportunities for socialization and cooperative group work. Students are welcome to participate in before and after school programs, homework programs, intervention programs and summer school as needed. Finally, time on site gives the administrator a chance to get to know the students enabling him/her to better act as their instructional leader.

In an independent home study situation parents are able to fully assist their child(ren) in achieving grade-level standards. Through consistent meetings with highly skilled certificated teachers, parents are able to receive mentoring on students' development, subject matter, and research-based instructional strategies. Work samples are collected and compared to work of other same age students representing a range of performance levels. This enables the teacher, parent, and student to ascertain the degree to which the content standards are being met. Scoring the work as a group leads to articulation of their reasons for specific evaluations of student work and consensus building regarding the quality of the work in relation to the standard and other students' achievement. The goal of excelling is determined through comparing students' work to rubrics, anchor papers, and benchmark testing.

Standards-based curriculum emphasizes reading, writing, and mathematics while supporting the academic rigor of all other core disciplines. We aspire to the goal to have "every child a reader by grade three" and "every child prepared for algebra by grade eight". Our students are becoming individuals with the knowledge and skills to use the power of the printed word to become independent learners, finish school, and secure employment as adults. Curriculum includes multicultural concepts and points of view from a wide variety of sources helping students better understand cultures and behavior.

Assessment is an essential part of good instruction. In a standards based system, the assessment results are used to identify students' progress toward achieving standards and/or identifying needs for additional instruction or interventions. In an independent home study situation assessment results may identify the need for coaching or mentoring of the parent regarding

teaching a specific subject, or the need for individual tutoring in an area. This helps the parents and educators target resources to the areas of most need.

All stakeholders recognize and accept responsibility for independent home study students' achievement. A parent-school compact is required as part of the registration process. The teacher meets regularly with the parent(s) constructing lesson plans and reviewing work together. Administration reviews records for independent home study students and ensures that appropriate materials are being used for instruction. Students, parent(s) and teachers read and understand state standards with increased responsibility for achieving standards shifting to the student over time.

The parent is responsible for accurate completion of all time and attendance records. The charter school has developed applicable and appropriate policies regarding attendance accounting. The teaching staff, in coordination with the parent, verifies and appropriately records student attendance.

Middle Grades on Campus Program

Overview

The results of the best research in middle school education guided the design of the Mark West Charter School program and instructional strategies. The program blends independent home study and traditional classroom instruction in an environment that is small, safe, diverse, characterized by high academic standards, and supported by an excellent information infrastructure.

Learning emphasizes direct and frequent interaction with real-life experiences and students are provided many opportunities to connect their classroom learning with "real world" applications through service learning and applied learning. Study trips and career exploration opportunities support in class instruction. Service learning commitments strengthen the link to the community and global issues, preparing the student for successful citizenship.

Mark West Charter School gives consistent feedback in all areas and engages in proactive communication between parent, student, and teacher to obtain the greatest success for each student. Interventions are provided as necessary and extra opportunities exist for students to meet grade level standards.

The Mark West Charter School honors all applicable sections of the California State Education Code and local educational policies and regulations. The excellent instruction offered allows students, with their parents' support, who are willing to give the focus and effort necessary, to be exceptionally well prepared for their choice of high schools.

Academic Program Goals

The program includes academic learning, technology, and offers rich electives that may include foreign language and performing arts, study and life skills, global issues, applied learning projects, service-learning projects, STEAM, health and physical education. The school program

provides flexible scheduling, which enables students to engage in extended projects, hands-on experiences and gives students a variety of methods to show what they know and are able to do.

Academic Learning

The first priority has been to provide an accelerated standards-based academic program in the four core academic subjects of Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Math. Learning focuses on the most important knowledge and skills. The significance of the standards is made clear to students and they actively participate in the standards achievement process. Teachers collaborate to identify key standards and communicate standards to parents. Standards are visible in the classrooms. Such standards are in accordance with the Common Core State Standards.

Writing is emphasized in all curriculum areas and is assessed using rubrics. Students understand that writing is a universal form of communication and is a tool to communicate higher level thinking skills. Students are given examples of high quality work as it relates to standards helping to motivate each one to reach their own potential as a writer.

The academic program is presented in format and in content to allow students access to courses at the high school that would lead to AP classes and college admissions. A variety of assessment options are used that match students learning styles and that actively engages them in meaningful work. Authentic projects that demonstrate student knowledge helps them make connections, solve problems, and think critically and can be written, oral, visual, performances, debates, etc. Assessments are constructed to encourage and measure knowledge, comprehension and higher level thinking skills such as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. (*Taking Center Stage*, page 62.) Through differentiated instruction, students emphasize their strengths and are given additional time, direct instruction, tutoring, and support services through flexible scheduling to meet the grade level academic standards. Students are also given multiple opportunities to succeed.

Technology

There is an emphasis on technology and the use of computers for research, analysis of data, reading other than textbooks, and for use in solving complex problems. The National Educational Technology Standard for students in the 6th through 8th grade are guidelines for connecting the curriculum with technology.

The technology program includes, but is not limited to, the following.

- Use of content-specific tools, applications, and simulations to support learning and research.
- Application of productivity/multimedia tools and peripherals to support personal productivity, group collaboration, and learning throughout the curriculum.
- Designing, developing, publishing, and presenting products using technology resources that demonstrate and communicate curriculum concepts to audiences inside and outside the classroom.
- Demonstrating an understanding of concepts underlying hardware, applications, and connectivity, as well as practical applications to learning and problem solving.

- Researching and evaluating the accuracy, relevance, appropriateness, comprehensiveness, and bias of electronic information sources concerning real-world problems.

Elective Program

The program includes a rich elective program, which includes exposure to multiple foreign languages and/or a specific language instruction that will lead to a high school language requirement. The purpose of a foreign language program for students in the middle grades goes beyond communicating in a language other than English. It also incorporates the gaining of knowledge and understanding of other cultures; making connections with other disciplines and helps them make comparisons and develop insights into their own language and culture.

Other electives are in the areas of arts, music, STEAM, academic enrichment, and drama. The elective options are fluid and driven by individual students' strengths through enrichment activities that are meaningful, exploratory, and fun. This program capitalizes on the innate curiosity of young adolescents and exposes them to a range of topics such as intramural sports, leadership, technological arts, study projects, speech, careers, life skills, creative writing, etc.

Study and Life Skills

This includes a concentration on study skills and life skills. Students are instructed in time management, organizational skills, listening, note taking, and test taking strategies. Life skills such as money management and problem solving to solve authentic problems are provided and all of the above skills are imbedded in the content of courses being taught. The purpose is to prepare students for a smooth transition to high school.

Global Issues

This includes an emphasis on global issues imbedded in other curriculum areas such as geography, governments, and political issues in the news and science in the news. Technology is used to explore newspapers from other countries and to research geography and maps. Integrated and applied learning projects incorporate global issues when appropriate.

Applied Learning

This includes applied learning embedded in the teaching and learning process. Applied learning is a process of integrating one or more subject matter content areas with authentic learning experiences. It provides experience in problem solving processes, the manipulative use of tools, equipment, materials, and related techniques; personal skills, occupational awareness and safety, and employment literacy. Applied learning:

- is authentic, providing learners with tasks and situations that require higher-order thinking and include applications of knowledge, elements of career awareness, career exploration, and complex integrated (content) manipulative performances;
- provides multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skill;
- enables teachers to assess student growth in a cumulative, longitudinal fashion, incorporating many kinds of evidence; and
- is integrally tied to curriculum standards.

The applied learning standards directly relate to the knowledge and skills necessary for students to be prepared for the 21st century. Teachers, students, and parents are encouraged to use these standards in preparing authentic projects that teach students to solve problems through:

- project design, planning, and organization;
- teaching and learning;
- identifying client needs;
- improving a system;
- applying communication skills orally and in writing;
- using technology to collect, analyze, organize, and evaluate information;
- working on teams to achieve project objectives;
- exhibiting self-confidence, honesty, perseverance, self-discipline, and personal hygiene;
- being aware of safety considerations; and
- understanding career paths.

Service Learning

Students are growing young people who are seeking meaningful experiences that exhibit their personal power to impact their world. The Mark West Charter School incorporates service-learning opportunities, which are innovative instructional strategies that actively involve students in service to their community. Service-learning helps foster civic responsibility and individual development and allows the students to make meaning of the curriculum through participation in the design and implementation of a service-learning activity and by taking time to reflect on the experience.

Health and Physical Education

The curriculum includes health education for middle grade students and follows the Health Framework for California Public Schools, which involves students, school staff, families, and the community. Students engage in activities that foster the development of each individual's optimal physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, leading to healthy choices and lifelong good health. The curriculum will focus on:

- acceptance of personal responsibility for lifelong health;
- respect for and promotion of the health of others;
- an understanding of the process of growth and development as it relates to the science standards; and
- informed use of health-related information, products and services.

The health curriculum is structured to incorporate these unifying ideas and is implemented through a meaningful, student-centered approach, providing opportunities for participation, recognition and successful achievement. Physical education is incorporated into this curriculum.

Real Life Experiences and Study Trips

Learning emphasizes direct and frequent interaction with real-life experiences and students are provided many opportunities to connect their classroom learning with "real world" applications through service learning and applied learning. Study trips and career exploration opportunities will often support in-the-class instruction.

Student Leadership and Co-Curricular Activities

Each student is encouraged to develop leadership skills by rotating the leadership responsibilities on a quarterly basis. Students demonstrate their leadership abilities by designing co-curricular activities that are of interest to the individuals at the school.

Student Intervention Program

Due to block scheduling, students can have more time to learn the content, concepts, or skills if they need it. They have multiple opportunities to succeed and extra help time is planned into the schedule. Students are given extra help as needed through direct instruction, scaffolding, and tutoring from teachers, student teachers, volunteers and/or other students. The school continually adapts its curriculum, instruction, and assessment to better meet the individual needs of students. Parents are an integral part of the intervention program in assisting their students and/or identifying resources that help their student meet grade level standards. The school provides early feedback and engages in communication with the parent, teacher, and student in order to obtain the greatest success for each student.

Instructional Strategies and Methodology

The courses of study developed for the school are relevant, demanding, and taught through an interdisciplinary team-teaching approach. Based upon current research on how students learn, the interdisciplinary curriculum reinforces brain-based learning. It has been demonstrated that the brain appears better able to retain information when curriculum is presented as integrated rather than isolated.

The best instructional strategy in a standards based system is for the students to know and understand the standard that is being taught and then to be given systematic feedback on their knowledge of that standard. Students help write rubrics, project expectations, and complete self- and peer-evaluations as a part of their learning process.

Teachers use brain-based learning strategies such as Gardner's multiple intelligences, effects of learning styles, differentiated instruction, and the effects of cognitive diversity. Instructional strategies that help students use their time wisely, such as block scheduling, are incorporated in the school environment. Teachers also use strategies designed to practice and apply academic-language proficiency through complex writing experiences.

(See Taking Center Stage pages 138-143, 149-163)

Learning emphasizes the value of re-doing, polishing and perfecting work until it represents the highest quality of which students are capable. Teachers provide meaningful feedback that guides student progress.

The staff of Mark West Charter School continually seeks new and innovative strategies and materials to meet the needs of each student. The following instructional strategies are utilized in the classroom.

- **Project-based Learning:** Project-based learning is used to teach and to reinforce basic skills. Children learn by doing and the hands-on learning approach gives students an opportunity to take skills that they have learned and to apply them to meaningful projects. These projects give students an opportunity to develop and demonstrate critical thinking skills, problem solving skills and cooperative learning.
- **Cooperative Learning:** Productive citizens of the 21st century must be able to work cooperatively as part of a team to accomplish a task. Cooperative learning techniques teach students to work collaboratively with others and allow them to develop their social and communication skills. Students learn to share their knowledge and skills as well as acknowledge and respect the ideas and skills of others. Cooperative learning is a highlighted benefit of students enrolled in the blended model of independent **home** study instruction, as they are given opportunities to learn group problem-solving skills, brainstorming, and networking while in class on campus.
- **Flexible Grouping:** Teachers use flexible grouping to meet the needs of their students. Students are grouped and regrouped based on such factors as skills they need to master, knowledge they need to share, reading abilities, and the need to be encouraged to obtain the next level of understanding.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** Children have different strengths and styles of learning. The teachers use theories of multiple intelligences in the classroom to build on each student's strengths and to address diverse learning styles.
- **Technology:** Computers are used as a tool for teaching and learning. Students have access to technology for research, analysis, communication, skill building and self-expression.
- **Community Interaction:** Students are involved in a variety of activities to enhance their understanding of how a community functions. This includes service learning and establishing ongoing relationships with businesses, local government, and community organizations. Community members are invited into the school to share their knowledge and expertise. Emphasis is placed on students being connected to their community and becoming contributing members of society.

Resources

The Mark West Charter School uses text books and/or other materials that teach the Common Core State Standards for each core subject area as well as other resources to enrich instruction as necessary. Mark West Charter School staff has the opportunity to offer their input and expertise in selecting appropriate supplemental curriculum materials. The use of computers and the internet to supplement core adopted texts and to facilitate learning is a primary resource for this program.

The school welcomes and encourages the active participation of all its families as a resource for knowledge, community connections, and support for students and real world knowledge.

“Opt Out” Policy

Parents are given the right by California Education Code to request that their student be given an alternative assignment during a particular educational experience or subject that they prefer their student not study due to religious and/or personal/familial beliefs. The Mark West Charter School honors this parental right.

THEORETICAL EVIDENCE THAT SUPPORTS THE PROGRAM’S OBJECTIVES AND HOW LEARNING BEST OCCURS

K-8 Independent Study Program

Elementary Makes the Grade! (2000) and *First Class: A Guide for Early Primary Education* (1999) were developed by the Elementary Networks Office of the Education Support and Networks Division of the California Department of Education. A taskforce with multiple members consisting of leading California educators and community members charted the course for elementary education in the twenty-first century. The group provided its best thinking regarding education in this new era of standards and increased accountability. *It’s Elementary* (1992) is based on the work of numerous educators and scholars and was used as a foundation on which to build their recommendations.

The Mark West Charter Renewal Group used the previously listed documents along with CDE publication “Students Who May Benefit from Independent Home Study” as the center point for developing the K-8 Independent Home Study Program of Mark West Charter School. A standards-based system based on current research and best practices must have the following well designed components with linkage among the individual components.

Component 1: Rigorous Academic Content and Performance Standards – MWCS Independent Home Study Program, based on Common Core State Standards and rigorous academic content, is provided for all students. Work samples are particularly important for parents educating at home and are provided at regularly scheduled meetings between parents and the mentoring certified teacher.

- Recommendation 1: Create a Standards-Based Learning Environment
- Recommendation 2: Adopt Performance Standards That Specify, How Good is Good Enough? (Student work samples are collected and provided to independent home study students and parents on a regular basis, especially as the student normally does not work with peers every day and, therefore, may have little basis for comparison.)

System Component 2: Assessment and Accountability – In our program, students are assessed regularly from their daily work which guides instruction. The independent home study program with small group or individual instruction lends itself to this strategy. Supervising teachers coach parents educating at home regarding implementation of formative assessment. They also conduct trimester benchmark assessments and end of year summative assessments to ensure progress.

- Recommendation 3: Require that Ongoing Assessment and Analysis of Student Work Drive the Curriculum
- Recommendation 4: Communicate Performance Expectations and Results
- Recommendation 5: Hold Stakeholders Accountable for Their Part in Students' Achievement of Standards

System Component 3: Curriculum and Instruction – Reading, Writing and Math are integrated throughout the curriculum for our independent home study students. Writing is emphasized as a critical tool for effective communication. Intervention classes are available for students experiencing difficulty. Positive character traits are consistently modeled and reinforced through curriculum such as *Second Step*.

- Recommendation 6: Teach All Disciplines in the Curriculum While Emphasizing Reading, Writing, and Mathematics
- Recommendation 7: Actively Involve all Students in the Inclusive Core Curriculum
- Recommendation 8: Implement Aggressive Intervention Strategies
- Recommendation 9: Build Partnerships with other stakeholders to Meet the Needs of the Whole Child (regular meetings of various types are scheduled)
- Recommendation 10: Develop and Reinforce Positive Character Traits
- Recommendation 11: Select Effective Instructional Materials Resources, Including Technology (Computer labs and technology instruction are available to our students.)
- Recommendation 12: Engage in Purposeful Dialogue Between Grade Levels

System Component 4: Professional Development – Our certificated teachers, who mentor parents educating at home, have a range of professional development available to them including, but not limited to, mentors and coaching. They share their expertise, research, and strategies with parents who educate at home.

- Recommendation 13: Implement a Professional Development Plan Based on Student Performance
- Recommendation 14: Provide Mentors and Coaching to Improve Professional Skills

System Component 5: District-Level Leadership and Support – MWCS has strong leadership along with contracted administrative oversight from Mark West Union School District. We have a positive relationship and great support from our sponsoring district in addition to our own leadership and adequate resources.

- Recommendation 15: Provide Adequate District-Level Resources, Support and Leadership

Middle Grades On-Campus Program

The National Middle School association has published a set of characteristics of successful middle schools. An exemplary middle-level school addresses the distinctiveness of early adolescence with a variety of instructional and organization features. Developmentally responsive middle schools have:

- a shared vision;

- educators committed to young adolescents;
- a positive school climate;
- an adult advocate for every student;
- family and community partnerships; and
- high expectations for all students.

Schools that embody these characteristics provide:

- a challenging, integrative, and exploratory curriculum;
- varied teaching and learning approaches;
- assessment and evaluation that promote learning;
- flexible organization structures; and
- programs and policies that foster health, safety, and wellness.

(Taking Center Stage, page 99)

The California Department of Education, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development and the National Middle School Association parallel one another in significant ways. The Carnegie Corporation underwrote the most comprehensive middle school research project of the decade, conducted by Robert Felner and others. It concludes that high-quality middle-level schooling, based on the key themes of middle school reform, pays off in statistically significant ways. According to the research, middle schools reap major positive benefits when they provide:

- small communities of learners, including interdisciplinary teaching teams and advisory programs;
- a strong core academic program, including an emphasis on literacy;
- creative participation by teachers in school governance;
- teachers who are academically competent and knowledgeable about young adolescents;
- school wide assurances of students' personal health and safety;
- extensive involvement of families in the schooling of their children; and
- school-community partnerships in such areas as service-learning and health and social services.

The findings show that the higher the level of implementation of middle school philosophy and practice, the more dramatic is the positive impact on student achievement and behavior.

(Taking Center Stage, page 101)

In 1998, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Delaine Easton, convened the Middle Grades Task Force to affirm the relationship between a sound middle school philosophy and the goals of standards-based education. The document *Taking Center Stage*, published in 2001, includes more than two hundred references, including the work of major scholars and middle level educators in which it supports and builds on the student-centered middle school philosophy for young adolescents, speaks directly to the needs of teachers and administrators as they incorporate this knowledge into day-to-day practice and provides guidance in instructional and assessment practices that will help all students meet or exceed the academic standards set forth by the State of California.

The Mark West Charter Development/Review Group used this document as the center point for developing this middle grades charter school program. With its researched theoretical basis and experiential evidence of the best are neat, attractive, engaging, and inviting environments for students to learn. Spaces are organized for both quiet, individual learning, and active group involvement. Adults and students take pride in their school and in its classrooms by maintaining a clean appropriate environment. Positive rules and student-centered policies create a sense of caring. Students are supported emotionally and physically in a safe learning environment.

BEHAVIORAL CODE

Students of the Mark West Charter School are encouraged and expected to follow the highest standards of personal ethics, choices, and behavior. School rules are easy to understand, fair and communicated clearly to students with known consequences for not adhering to the behavior expectations. Citizenship skills, fostered through authentic input and dialogue on the part of the students, create a sense of pride and shared community. No forms of public displays of affection or situations deemed as "harassment" are tolerated. The school follows the California Education Code regarding the process and the grounds for suspension and expulsion and abides by the District's established policy. At any time, students can access the help of adult advocates as needed to both problem solve situations and receive encouragement and advice.

The Mark West Charter School encourages students to develop assets that help lower high-risk behaviors in all grades through the use of programs such as Life Skills and Safe Schools Ambassadors.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students benefit from instruction from teachers who have ongoing staff development that promotes and supports the school's vision. The staff development plan is designed to meet the needs of each staff member as well as the needs of the school. Professional development is an ongoing process in which teachers receive both training and follow-up support.

Professional development is seen as an ongoing necessary conversation about student learning in order to meet the individual needs of students in the program.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The Mark West Charter School complies with all applicable federal education laws in regard to services and the education of English Language Learner (ELL) students including appropriate credentialing for core teaching staff and daily instruction in English language acquisition as applicable. The charter school has developed, implemented, and maintains policies and procedures for the provision of services to ELL students in accordance with guidance published by the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education. At a minimum these policies and procedures shall ensure the following:

- Identify students who need assistance.

- Develop a program that, in the view of experts in the field, has a reasonable chance for success.
- Ensure that necessary staff, curricular materials, and facilities are in place and used properly.
- Develop appropriate evaluation standards, including program exit criteria, for measuring the progress of students.
- Assess the success of the program and modify it where needed.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS/SECTION 504/ADA

Public School of the District

The Mark West Charter School is a dependent charter school for special education and therefore has not provided verifiable written assurances that the charter school will participate as a local educational agency in a special education plan approved by the State Board of Education pursuant to Education Code Section 47641. Therefore, the Mark West Charter School shall be deemed a public school of the District.

A charter school that is deemed to be a public school of the local educational agency that granted the charter shall participate in state and federal funding in the same manner as any other public school of the granting agency. Further, a child with disabilities attending the charter school shall receive special educational instruction or designated instruction and services, or both, in the same manner as a child with disabilities who attends another public school of that district. The agency that granted the charter shall ensure that all children with disabilities enrolled in the charter school receive special education and designated instruction and services in a manner that is consistent with their individualized education program and in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

Non-Discrimination

The Mark West Charter School does not deny nor discourage any student from enrollment due to a disability or due to the charter school's concerns about its ability to provide appropriate services. The charter school complies with all provisions of federal law and implementing regulations related to the rights of disabled students and their parents (20 U. S.C. Chapter 33, IDEA).

The charter school facility does not present physical barriers that would limit an eligible student's full participation in the educational and extracurricular program offered by the Charter School.

Services

The Mark West Charter School works with the District to meet the legal requirements pertaining to special education services. These include, but are not be limited to, referrals, evaluations, and qualifications for eligibility and placements that best meet the needs of the special education students. The details of this partnership are outlined in the annual operating agreement between the charter school and the District.

Funding

The parties agree that, pursuant to the division of responsibilities set forth in this Agreement, the school has elected the status of any other public school in the District for the purposes of special education services and funding and the District has agreed to provide special education services for the school, consistent with the services it provides at its public schools. Consistent with this division of responsibility, The District shall retain all state and federal special education funding allocated for charter school students through the Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA). The details of the funding provisions will be included in the annual operating agreement between the charter school and the District. The Charter School s makes an equitable contribution towards the District's special education encroachment pro-rated based on attendance. This will be more fully described in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Discipline

The Mark West Charter School follows the requirements of State and Federal law in regard to the suspension or expulsion of special education students including, but are not limited to, the requirement that a manifestation determination be made prior to any change of educational placement.

Section 504/Americans with Disabilities Act

Since the Charter School is a dependent charter school for special education, the District shall be responsible for Mark West Charter School compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with respect to eligible students.

B. MEASURABLE PUPIL OUTCOMES

The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. "Pupil outcomes," for purpose 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)

In order to best serve our students and community, the school continues to examine and refine its list of student outcomes over time to reflect the school's mission and any changes to state or local standards that support such mission.

1. Core Academic Skills

Students of the Mark West Charter School will strive to have grade level mastery of core academic skills which includes, but is not limited to, the following.

Language Arts: Students will demonstrate strong reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in multiple forms of expression (e.g., written, oral, multimedia) with communication skills appropriate to the setting and audience. They will comprehend and critically interpret multiple forms of expression, including literature from various time periods and cultures.

Mathematics: Students will develop abilities to reason logically and to understand and apply mathematical processes and concepts including those within number sense and operations, functions and algebra, geometry and measurement and statistics, data analysis and probability.

Social Science/History: Students will understand and apply knowledge in the areas of history, geography, economics, civics, and government in order to serve as citizens in today's world of diverse cultures.

Science: Students will successfully utilize scientific research and inquiry methods to understand and apply the major concepts underlying various branches of science.

Underlying and utilized throughout each of the above subject areas will be other core skills as listed below.

- The development of critical thinking skills; e.g., problem-solving, analyzing, and applying knowledge.
- The development of knowledge of pertinent issues of health and the development of physical fitness.
- Creative expression through various forms of the arts, e.g., music, visual/studio arts, and drama.
- The ability to affectively use technology.

2. Life-long Learning Skills:

Students will develop skills, which will enable them to pursue their own path of learning throughout their adult lives, including the ability to:

- plan, initiate, and complete a project; and
- reflect on and evaluate one's own and others' learning.

3. Social/Interpersonal Skills:

Students will demonstrate the following skills:

- strong citizenship and leadership skills by planning and implementing a project in service to the school or greater community; and
- the ability to collaborate and work effectively with others in cooperative groups.

These student exit outcomes are further subdivided into a list of specific "classroom-level" skills required in each of the above areas at different grade and skill levels. These specific grade and skill-level standards incorporate those included in the Common Core State Standards.

4. Technology:

Technology will be integrated into the instructional program to improve student outcomes and prepare students for the future.

- Students will utilize grade level appropriate computer skills (word processing, multimedia presentation, spreadsheets, and use of the internet) to support their learning in core content areas as defined in our technology plan.

ATTENDANCE

The charter school shall strive, on average, to achieve student attendance comparable to other schools in the District in any given year.

C. METHODS TO ASSESS PUPIL PROGRESS TOWARD MEETING OUTCOMES

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

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

To measure the progress of the students at Mark West Charter School and ensure that the goals of the charter are being met, Mark West Charter School adheres to statewide standards with mandated standardized tests as well as the use of a diverse array of psychometrically appropriate, valid, and reliable assessments as illustrated in the following table. Student performance on these measures helps the school community make informed decisions about instruction and program modifications.

| Methods to Assess Student Progress Toward Outcomes | | |
|--|---|--|
| Outcome | Curriculum | Assessment |
| Proficiency in English/Language Arts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary projects • Skill-building classes • Creative and expository writing exercise • Reading comprehension passages • Cooperative group work • Literary analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Core State Standards (CCSS), English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) • Classroom-based tests, quizzes, and homework assignments • Portfolios of written work graded pursuant to school-developed rubrics • Public presentation of projects graded pursuant to school-developed rubrics |
| Proficiency in Mathematics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary projects • Skill-building classes • Integrated Math program exercises • Cooperative group work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Core State Standards (CCSS) • Classroom-based tests, quizzes, and homework assignments • Portfolios of written work graded pursuant to school-developed rubrics |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public presentations of math skill mastery graded pursuant to school-developed rubrics |
| Proficiency in History- Social Science | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary projects • Skill-building classes • Research paper • Field trips to local and state historical sites • Cooperative group work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Core State Standards (CCSS) • Classroom-based tests, quizzes, and homework assignments • Portfolios of written work graded pursuant to school-developed rubrics • Public presentation of research papers or projects graded pursuant to school-developed rubrics |
| Proficiency in Science | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary projects • Science projects • Science Labs • Skill-building classes • Cooperative group work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Core State Standards (CCSS) • Classroom-based tests, quizzes, and homework assignments • Portfolios of written work graded pursuant to school-developed rubrics • Presentation of projects or lab results graded pursuant to school-developed rubrics |
| Life-Long Learning Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary projects • Self/Partner evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project evaluation |
| Social/Interpersonal Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community service project • Interdisciplinary, cooperative group work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self/Partner evaluation following completion of community service |

All Mark West Charter School students will demonstrate “academic mastery” in all of the core academic areas. For non-special needs and English only students, “mastery” will be defined as a score of “basic” or above on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) or grades of C or better on benchmark academic assessments. Portfolios and exhibitions will be assessed according to school-wide rubrics with input from teachers across content areas. “Mastery” for special needs and LEP (Limited English Proficient) students will be defined appropriately according to their Individualized Education Plans, English proficiency levels, and Title I teacher assessment.

D. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL

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)

The Mark West Charter School will constitute itself as a California non-profit, public benefit corporation, pursuant to California law. As the charter school will constitute itself as a California non-profit, public benefit corporation, the charter school will be governed pursuant to the bylaws adopted by the incorporators, as subsequently amended pursuant to the amendment process specified in the bylaws, which shall be consistent with the terms of this charter, the Charter Schools Act and all other applicable laws.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), the District shall not be liable for the debts and obligations of the charter school, operated as a California non-profit, public benefit corporation. The charter school will be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices and all other operations; shall not charge tuition; and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability.

The charter school will comply with all federal, state and local laws that are applicable to public charter schools. It will retain its own legal counsel when necessary. It will purchase and maintain as necessary general liability, automotive liability, errors and omissions, property, workers compensation and unemployment insurance policies, in amounts commensurate with the recommendations of the District's insurers for a school of similar type, size and location.

MARK WEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD

The general oversight and support for the Mark West Charter School will be provided by the Mark West Union School District Board of Trustees. However, the District Board of Trustees will work collaboratively with the Charter School's School Site Council in order to provide as strong an academic program as possible. The District Board of Trustees' duties shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adoption of policies and procedures related to the charter school;
- ratification of the charter school budget;
- management of charter school personnel including, but not limited to evaluation, discipline;
- hiring, collective bargaining and grievances;
- all special education services;
- provision and management of charter school facilities;
- transportation of charter school students;
- food services for charter school students; and
- maintenance and operations for the charter school

The District Board of Trustees may delegate its authority to the Charter School's School Site Council or any other advisory committee as needed.

The District shall have supervisorial oversight of the charter school. Such duties may include, but are not necessarily limited to, review and renewal of the charter, review and approval of amendments, revocation, review of annual audits and STRS/PERS reporting.

The District shall manage all day-to-day administration of the Mark West Charter School through the charter school Site Administrator and the District Superintendent.

SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL

An essential tenet of the philosophy of the charter school is that students are best able to reach their full potential when there is a high level of involvement by their parents in their education. Moreover, research has shown that stakeholder involvement is important to the success of a program and to the satisfaction of the participants. Excellence in the Mark West Charter School can be better accomplished and maintained if the parents/guardians of charter school students participate in the governance of the school. To this end, the charter school parents are granted equal representation on and encouraged to participate in a School Site Council.

The School Site Council shall participate in the following activities:

- 1) Review of the Charter budget to be approved by the District Board of Trustees.
- 2) Annually review the goals/objectives of the K-6 charter school and the school's progress towards meeting those goals.
- 3) Annually review the assessment standards of the K-6 charter school.
- 4) Annually review the curriculum and supporting materials of the K-6 charter school.
- 5) Advise the District Board of Trustees through the Superintendent on any matter affecting the charter school.
- 6) Review policies and procedures related to the K-6 charter school and make recommendations to the District Board of Trustees.
- 7) Develop, adopt and annually review the School Site Council (SSC) Bylaws, which shall specify SSC membership, membership terms, voting procedures, replacement of members, and any other rules necessary to conduct school business in an orderly fashion.

Diversity in the parent population is a great strength that improves the educational program for all. Parents have different philosophies and approaches to their involvement in their children's education. Likewise, parents may contribute in many different ways to the collective responsibility of running the charter school and making its educational program a success.

Recognizing that each parent, like each child, is unique in terms of background, experience and ability, parents are encouraged to contribute to the charter school's success by volunteering their skills, time and resources to the extent that they are able. To that end, the Site Administrator of

Mark West Charter School meets annually with parents to determine what contribution they may make to the school given their individual time, abilities and resources.

Parents are asked to attend parent meetings throughout the school year, conferences, and parent/teacher/student evaluations.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The Mark West Charter School and the Mark West Union School District pledge to work in cooperation with all local education agencies (LEAs) and special education local plan areas (SELPAs) to ensure that a free and appropriate education is provided to all students with exceptional needs.

The Mark West Charter School functions as a "public school of the local education agency that granted the charter" for purposes of providing special education and related services pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b). During each school year during which the school operates as an arm of the district for special education purposes, the District shall determine its annual encroachment which is defined to mean the actual cost of providing special education services to all students of the district including charter school students minus the federal and state funding the District receives specifically for special education programs and services. The District shall then determine an equitable contribution the Charter School shall make toward the District's special education encroachment pro-rated based on attendance. This will be more fully described in the Memorandum of Understanding. In return, the district shall provide the school with all services reasonably necessary to ensure that all students with exceptional needs who attend the school are provided a free and appropriate education.

SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent of the District shall serve as a liaison between the charter school and the District and shall be available to support, advise and /or assist the Site Administrator in the day-to-day administration of the charter school.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Chief Financial Officer of the District shall also serve as the Chief Financial Officer of the charter school.

SITE ADMINISTRATOR

The Mark West Charter School Site Administrator will communicate directly with the School Site Council, as a permanent member of the council, the District Superintendent and District Board of Trustees as necessary. The charter school Site Administrator is fully responsible for the daily administration of the charter school.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The charter school shall use all centralized services of the District unless otherwise approved by the District Board of Trustees.

E. EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS

*The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the school.
- California Education Code Section 47605 (b) (5) (E)*

The Mark West Charter School will retain or employ faculty who hold appropriate California teaching certificates, permits, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other schools would be required to hold. These teachers will teach the core academic classes. These teachers will be responsible for overseeing the students' academic progress and for monitoring grading and matriculation decisions. Recommendations for hiring of employees shall be done by a committee appointed by the charter school Site Administrator. Employment of all certificated and classified staff members of the charter school shall be approved by the Mark West School District Board of Trustees.

The charter school may also employ or retain non-certificated instructional staff in any case where a prospective staff member has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience and the demonstrated capacity to work successfully in an instructional capacity. These non-certificated staff may be required to teach along with a credentialed faculty member as may be required by law. Teaching positions, for which flexibility may be granted, shall receive prior approval by the District Board of Trustees.

The Mark West Union School District Credentialing Officer will handle all credential checking and other personnel matters. The District's Credentialing Officer will also be responsible for verifying that teachers and paraprofessionals are "highly qualified" as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

The Mark West Charter School acknowledges that all employees, even if not public, are subject to state and federal employment laws.

F. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

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)

The Mark West Charter School complies with all health and safety policies as stated in the Mark West Union School District Board Policies 3513.3, 3515.6, and 4020 as well as Administrative Regulation 4112.5 which include at a minimum:

- the school functions as a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free workplace;
- the requirement that each employee of the school submit to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary;
- a requirement to seek the criminal background check of vendors; and
- District rules regarding volunteers

These policies are reviewed on an ongoing basis in the charter school and District's ongoing development efforts.

G. MEANS TO ACHIEVE RACIAL/ETHNIC BALANCE REFLECTIVE OF THE MARK WEST UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

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 Mark West Charter School strives to achieve a racial and ethnic balance amongst its student population that is reflective of the population of the territorial jurisdiction of the Mark West Union School District. The Mark West Charter School implements a student recruitment strategy, which includes, but is not limited to, the following elements or strategies.

- 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 materials that appeals to all of the various racial and ethnic groups represented in the District.
- The appropriate development of promotional and informational materials in languages other than English to appeal to limited English proficient populations.
- Outreach meetings in several areas of the District to reach prospective students and parents.

H. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Admission requirements, if applicable.

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

The District Board of Trustees determines the capacity of the charter school. With regard to both the independent home study program and the classroom based program, the determination of school capacity is based on the school's academic program, the school's fiscal viability, the educational needs of currently enrolled students, the capacity of the school site and the level of interest shown by students who want to attend the school.

Mark West Charter School actively recruits a diverse student population from the district and surrounding areas who understand and value the school's mission and are committed to the school's instructional and operational philosophy. Admission to the school is open to any resident of the State of California. Prospective students and their parents or guardians are briefed regarding the school's instructional and operational philosophy and informed of the school's student-related policies. The school has established an annual recruiting and admissions cycle, which includes reasonable time for all of the following: (1) outreach and marketing; (2) orientation sessions for parents and students; (3) an admissions application period; (4) an admissions lottery if necessary; and (5) enrollment. The school may fill vacancies or openings that become available after this process using either a waiting list or any other non-discriminatory process.

In the event that the number of students seeking admission to any grade or class exceeds capacity, the school shall have the right to grant priority in admissions to (1) siblings of current students of school (MWCS only), (2) children of employees of the MWUSD, and (3) resident students of the District. The school may also grant admission preference to school founders, as defined by the school's governing board, provided that students admitted under a founders' preference shall not constitute more than 25 percent of the school's enrollment.

Lottery Process:

Students falling in priority #1 will be placed until all spots are filled. If there are any remaining spots then:

Students from Priority #2 will be placed until all spots are filled. If there are any remaining spots then:

Students from Priority #3 will be placed until all spots are filled. If there are any remaining spots then:

All other students will be drawn in a lottery and placed until all spots are filled.

If additional students remain, after all school spots have been filled, they will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which their names were drawn in the lottery.

I. FINANCIAL AND PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT

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)

FISCAL AUDIT

The Mark West Charter School will utilize the external auditors of the District for an annual independent audit of the school's financial affairs if available or shall contract for the same from a third-party provider with District approval. If the Charter uses the same external auditor as the District, auditor fees are prorated on ADA of the Charter as compared to the ADA of the District schools. The Charter financial system (ESCAPE) is the same as the District's however all financial activity is held in a separate Fund 09.

The audit will verify the accuracy of the charter school's financial statements, attendance and enrollment accounting practices and review the school's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school and in accordance with the K-12 audit guide as it applies to charter schools. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in any applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars. The administration will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report these findings to the District Board of Trustees with recommendations on how to resolve them. The Board of Trustees shall determine the manner by which the exceptions and deficiencies will be resolved.

PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT

The charter school will compile and provide to the District an annual performance report. This report will, at a minimum, include the following information.

- Summary data showing students' progress towards the goals and outcomes from assessment instruments and techniques specified in Element 2. This data will be displayed on both a charter school-wide basis and disaggregated by major racial and ethnic categories to the extent feasible without compromising student confidentiality.
- A summary of policies and procedures established for the charter school during the year.
- Data on the level of parent involvement in the charter school's governance (and other aspects of the school, if applicable) and summary data from an annual parent and student satisfaction survey.

- Data regarding the number of staff working at the school and their qualifications.
- Information demonstrating whether the charter school implemented the means listed in charter Element 7 to achieve a racially and ethnically balanced student population.
- An overview of the charter school's admissions practices during the year and data regarding the numbers of students enrolled, the number on waiting lists and the number of students expelled and/or suspended.
- An analysis of the effectiveness of the charter school's internal and external dispute mechanisms and data on the number and resolution of disputes and complaints.
- Other information regarding the educational program and the administrative, legal and governance operations of the charter school relative to compliance with the terms of the charter.

The charter school Site Administrator and the District will jointly develop the content, evaluation criteria, timelines and process for the annual performance report.

J. PUPIL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

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

The Mark West Charter School follows the District's policies and regulations. Final action to expel rests with the District Board. These policies are distributed as part of the school's student handbook and clearly describe the school's expectations regarding attendance, mutual respect, substance abuse, violence, safety, and work habits. Each student and his or her parent or guardian is required to verify that they have reviewed and understand the policies. Students who violate the school's discipline policies, who cause serious disruption to the education process, and/or who present a health or safety threat may be suspended for up to five school days. The school notifies and confers with the student's parent or guardian as soon as possible regarding the suspension. If the violation of the discipline policies is a serious offense that merits expulsion, and/or if the student presents an ongoing threat to health and safety, the Mark West Union School District may take action to expel the student. In such cases, the school sends a written notice of the facts, allegations, and student/parent rights to the parent or guardian. A committee, designated by the Mark West Union School District governing board, holds a hearing regarding the offense. If the committee determines that the case merits expulsion, the student may be expelled or offered reinstatement, as appropriate. These processes are amended as required by law to protect the rights of students with disabilities or exceptional needs. This includes, but is not limited to, convening an individualized educational plan team if a suspension lasts beyond ten days or in the event that expulsion is recommended. The school includes suspension and expulsion data in its annual performance report.

K. RETIREMENT SYSTEM

The manner by which staff members of the charter schools will be covered by the State Teachers' Retirement System, the Public Employees' Retirement System, or federal social security.

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

The full-time non-certificated staff at Mark West Charter School participates in the federal social security system and the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). The certificated staff participates in the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS). The charter school also makes contributions for workers compensation insurance, unemployment insurance and any other payroll obligations of public school employers. The Mark West Union School District creates any reports required by STRS or PERS for charter school staff. The Mark West Charter School informs all applicants for positions within the charter school of the retirement system options for staff at the charter school

L. ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES

The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district that chooses not to attend charter schools.

-California Education code Section 47605 (b) (5) (L)

Students who opt not to attend the charter school may attend other schools within their school district of residence, or pursue an inter-district transfer in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of their district or county of residence.

M. DESCRIPTION OF EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

A description of the rights of any employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter school
-California Education Code Section 47605 (b) (5) (M)

All Mark West Charter School staff are employees of the Mark West Union School District with all the rights and benefits accorded such employees. Staff of the Mark West Charter School are covered by existing contract conditions and are members of the appropriate bargaining units in the same manner as other employees of the district.

N. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

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)

INTENT

The intent of this dispute resolution process is to: (1) resolve disputes within the school pursuant to the school's policies; (2) minimize the oversight burden on the district; and (3) ensure a fair and timely resolution to disputes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The staff and the Mark West Union School District agree to attempt to resolve all disputes regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section. Both shall refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

DISPUTES ARISING FROM WITHIN THE CHARTER SCHOOL

Disputes arising from within the charter school, including all disputes among and between students, staff, parents, volunteers, advisors, partner organizations, are resolved pursuant to policies and processes developed by the Mark West School Union School District.

The District refers any complaints or reports regarding such disputes to the site administrator for resolution pursuant to the school's policies. The District agrees not to intervene or become involved in the dispute unless the dispute has given the District reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this charter or related laws or agreements has occurred.

DISPUTES BETWEEN THE CHARTER SCHOOL AND DISTRICT

In the event that the charter school or the District has disputes regarding the terms of this charter, every effort will be made by both parties to resolve the issue in good faith cooperatively and informally. Both parties agree to follow the process outlined below.

The Site Administrator and the Superintendent, or designee, at the direction of the District Board, agrees to first frame the issue in written format.

The Site Administrator and Superintendent, or designees, shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute. If an informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the superintendent and Site Administrator shall meet to jointly identify a neutral, third party investigator. If either side does not agree with the findings, the matter shall be submitted to the District Board for a final determination per adopted board policies.

OVERSIGHT, REPORTING, REVOCATION, and RENEWAL

The Mark West Union School District may inspect or observe any part of the school at any time. While informal visits to the charter school by district representatives are always welcome, both parties may jointly develop a formal annual site visitation process and protocol to enable the representatives of the district to gather information needed to confirm the charter school's performance and compliance with the terms of this charter.

The Mark West School District will submit required fiscal reports on behalf of the charter school in accordance with the timelines stated in charter school law. The charter school and charter-granting agency jointly develops a timeline of other required ongoing monitoring documents, including deadlines of when the documents will be submitted, when reviewed, when feedback will be given to the charter school, and by when corrective action will occur. The charter school is provided with a reasonable amount of time to take appropriate corrective action, unless the alleged violation presents an immediate threat to health or safety.

The Mark West Charter School may request from the Mark West Union School District's governing board a renewal or amendment of the charter at any time prior to the expiration. The school should present renewal requests no later than 120 days prior to the expiration of the charter. The Mark West Union School district governing board agrees to hear and render a renewal decision pursuant to the initial charter petition review timelines and processes as specified in the Education Code Section 47605.

O. LABOR RELATIONS

A declaration whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act.

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

The Mark West Union School District is deemed to be the exclusive public school employer of all Mark West Charter School staff for the purposes of the Education Employment Relations Act.

Staff of the Mark West Charter School are a part of the collective bargaining unit representing all teachers in the Mark West Union School District (MARFAC). All staff are employed under the terms of the Mark West Union School District's collective bargaining agreement as it is annually negotiated.

P. SCHOOL CLOSURE

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)

The following procedures shall apply in the event the school closes and applies regardless of the reason for closure.

Closure of the school will be documented by official action of the Mark West Union School District Board. The action will identify the reason for closure. The official action will also identify an entity and person or persons responsible for all closure related activities.

The Mark West Union School District Board will promptly notify the Sonoma County Office of Education, the Charter School's SELPA, and the California Department of Education of the closure and the effective date of the closure.

The Mark West Union School District Board will ensure notification to the parents and students of the school of the closure and provide information to assist parents and students in locating suitable alternative programs. This notice will be provided promptly following the District Board's decision to close the school. 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 district of residence; and the manner in which parents/guardians may obtain pupil records, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements. As applicable, the Mark West Charter School will assist students in transferring to their next school. All transfers of student records will be made in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.

The Mark West Union School District will prepare final financial records on behalf of Mark West Charter School. An independent audit completed as soon as reasonably practical, the period of which will generally be no more than six months after closure. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant selected by the Mark West Union School District.

On closure of Mark West Charter School, all assets of the school, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property as well as all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by students attending the school, shall revert to the Mark West Union School District and shall be distributed in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation upon the dissolution of the nonprofit public benefit corporation.

On closure, the Mark West Charter School shall remain responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of the charter school.

As the Mark West Charter School is organized as a nonprofit public benefit corporation, closure of the school will follow the procedures set forth in the California Corporations Code for the dissolution of a nonprofit public benefit corporation and file all necessary filings with the appropriate state and federal agencies.

MISCELLANEOUS CLAUSES

AMENDMENTS

Any amendments to this charter shall be made by the mutual agreement of the charter school and the District. Material revisions and amendments shall be made pursuant to the standards, criteria and timelines in Education Code Section 47605.

RENEWAL

The charter school may submit its charter for renewal to the District any time during the final year of its five-year term, but in no case later than April 1st of that year. Renewals shall be governed by the standards and criteria in Education Code Section 47605. Any renewal shall be for a five (5) year term.