A California Public Charter School

Petition for Renewal
July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021

Respectfully Submitted
to
Ventura County Office of Education
November 24, 2015
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C. EVIDENCE OF MEETING CHARTER RENEWAL CRITERIA PURSUANT TO EDUCATION CODE SECTION 47607(b) AND THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5, SECTION 11966.5(b)(1)

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AFFIRMATIONS/ASSURANCES

As the authorized lead petitioner, I, Mary Galvin, hereby certify that the information submitted in this petition for renewal of a California public charter school named Ventura Charter School of Arts and Global Education (“VCS” or the “Charter School”) and authorized by the Ventura County Board of Education (“County”) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that this petition for renewal does not constitute the conversion of a private school to the status of a public charter school; and further, I understand that if awarded charter renewal, the Charter School:

- Shall meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessment tests pursuant to Education Code Sections 60605 and 60851, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)(1)]

- Shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the Charter School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O)]

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

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

- Shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]

- Shall admit all pupils who wish to attend the Charter School, and who submit a timely application, unless the Charter School receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case each application will be given equal chance of admission through a public random drawing process subject to the admissions preferences contained in the charter. Except as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2), admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or his or her parents within the State. Preference in the public random drawing shall be given as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B). In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the Charter School in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(C). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(A)-(C)]

- Shall adhere to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities including, but not limited to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education

Date of Submission:
November 14, 2005
Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEIA"), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA").

• Shall meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11967.5.1(f)(5)(C)]

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

• Shall require its teachers of core academic subjects to satisfy requirements for “highly qualified teachers” as defined by the State Board of Education.

• Shall not hire any person, in either a certificated or classified position, who has been convicted of a violent or serious felony except as otherwise provided by law.

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

• Shall, for each fiscal year, offer at a minimum, the number of minutes of instruction per grade level as required by Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(1)(A)-(D)

• If a pupil is expelled or leaves the Charter School without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the Charter School shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil’s last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card, and health information. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(3)]

• Shall follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to the Charter School including but not limited to:

  ➢ The Charter School shall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection. [Ref. Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(2)]

  ➢ The Charter School shall on a regular basis consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's education programs. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)]
The Charter School shall comply with any jurisdictional limitations to locations of its facilities. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47605 and 47605.1]

The Charter School shall comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47612(b), 47610]

The Charter School shall only serve California residents over the age of 19 if they are continuously enrolled in a public school and making “satisfactory progress” toward a high school diploma as defined in 5 CCR 11965.

The Charter School shall serve students with disabilities in the same manner as such students are served in other public schools.

The Charter School shall comply with all applicable portions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The Charter School shall comply with the Public Records Act.

The Charter School shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The Charter School shall comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act.

The Charter School shall meet or exceed the legally required minimum number of school days. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11960]


The Charter School shall adhere to the County’s reporting requirements including, but not limited to CBEDS, ADA, SARC, LCAP, annual audits and all financial reports and data as contained in Education Code Section 47604.33.

The Charter School shall meet the requirements of Education Code 47611 regarding the State Teachers’ Retirement System.

The Charter School shall meet the requirement of Government Code Section 3540-3549.3 related to collective bargaining in public education employment.
The Charter School shall, if applicable, meet federal requirements for qualifications of paraprofessionals working in programs supported by Title I funds.

The Charter School shall meet the requirements of Education Code Section 51745-51749.3 if it provides independent study, except that it may be allowed to offer courses required for graduation solely through independent study as an exception to Education Code Section 51745(e).

The Charter School shall identify and report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction any portion of its average daily attendance that is generated through non-classroom-based instruction, including, but not limited to, independent study, home study, work study, and distance and computer-based education.

The Charter School shall comply with the California Building Standards Code as adopted and enforced by the local building enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the area in which the charter school is located, unless the Charter School facility meets either of the following two conditions:

a. The facility complies with the Field Act pursuant to Education Code Section 17280-17317 and 17365-17374; or
b. The facility is exclusively owned or controlled by an entity that is not subject to the California Building Standards Code, including, but not limited to, the federal government.

The Charter School shall promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries from the County or the Superintendent of Public Instruction, including, but not limited to, inquiries regarding its financial records.

Authorized Representative’s Signature __________________________

Date: _________________________
INTRODUCTION

A. FOUNDING GROUP

Ventura Charter School of Arts and Global Education (VCS) was inspired by Open Classroom, a local magnet program with a successful thirty-year history in the Ventura Unified School District. The founders believed Open Classroom was not able to reach its full potential, nor had it been able to pursue its mission for innovative practices due to the lack of control over its educational program, daily operations, and resources. In response to a need for autonomy, Open Classroom founding teachers and key parents became VCS Founders. They began meeting with consultants in January, 2004 to design the School, and were dedicated to the creation and success of VCS. The Ventura County Board of Education approved the VCS charter petition on April 13, 2006 and the school opened in September, 2006.

Founder Goals
The following VCS K-8 school design goals are in alignment with the seven statutory purposes for charter schools:

- **Expand educational choices for parents and students within the public school system to improve student achievement**
  VCS provides Ventura residents and neighboring communities with an innovative K-8 school that has a unique progressive, whole child, project based, arts, 21st century, global education focus. VCS incorporates a student-centered curriculum that is aligned with the California State Standards, including the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards (hereinafter referred to as the “California State Standards”). It features multi-age groupings of students for instruction, team teaching and collaboration, and experiential learning activities within a supportive community of students, parents, and teachers to provide optimum success.

- **Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods**
  Our purpose is to engage the whole child within a success-oriented, supportive environment, using a variety of methods such as inquiry/project-based learning, collaboration, social emotional learning, multiple intelligence theory, integrated curriculum, and multi-sensory modalities to meet individual student needs. Through our focus on the arts and global education, and the fostering of interpersonal skills and community involvement, students become globally aware, competent, responsible, and caring human beings of the 21st century. The belief that the innate curiosity, joy, and enthusiasm of childhood should be deeply honored and protected continues to move VCS towards innovation.

- **Improve student learning through smaller class and school size and parent participation**
  VCS’s commitment to small school and class sizes provides more resources for individualized teaching and active learning. Research indicates that small K-8
schools are often superior to large ones in the areas of student attitudes, social behavior, attendance, sense of belonging, and often result in higher standardized test scores (New York Times, September 12, 2004). Active parent participation is crucial to our program design and community approach. Most of our parent volunteers work in the classroom weekly under teacher supervision, while others assist the teachers and support the program in other capacities, enhancing the community atmosphere and providing additional resources. With the assistance from parent volunteers, VCS teachers are able to provide more hands-on curriculum, small group instruction, and personalized attention to students.

- **Create responsible citizens in our democracy**
  VCS is committed to creating students who will maintain and nurture the attributes of a democratic society and who will be intelligent, caring, strong, resilient, imaginative, and thoughtful. Our goal is to cultivate students who will live productive, socially responsible, and personally satisfying lives, while also respecting the environment and the rights of others. VCS helps strengthen commitment to diversity, equity, and mutual respect. Citizenship in a democracy requires the skills and competencies to be well informed and compassionate--to read well, to write and speak effectively and persuasively, and to think creatively, critically, and independently.

- **Utilize comprehensive authentic assessments**
  In keeping with our instructional philosophy, we utilize performance-based assessments such as projects and presentations, narrative reports, exit tickets, check-ins and annual parent and student surveys in addition to state-mandated standardized and benchmark testing.

- **Provide new professional opportunities and responsibilities for teachers**
  VCS teachers have the freedom and resources to pursue innovation. Our teachers adjust their delivery based on student needs and integrate curriculum to address the student body as a whole. Ongoing professional development resources are available to support our highly qualified teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program. Furthermore, VCS teachers have an active role in governance through the Teacher Council, working in partnership with parents and students.

- **Stimulate continual improvement in all public schools**
  VCS is committed to offering progressive, high quality alternatives to public school children by pursuing and developing innovative curriculum and delivery methods. In doing so, it is our hope to inspire other schools to adopt and adapt the approaches that we have shown to be successful.

**B. SUCCESSES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PRIOR CHARTER TERM: 2011-2016**

The Ventura Charter School community is very proud of numerous successes since its last renewal in December, 2010. Some of them include the following:
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
In March, 2011 VCS received a full six year term of accreditation after a WASC team of three visited our campus for a week. The Visiting Committee Report noted the following:

**Schoolwide Areas of Strength**
1. Highly effective and visionary administrative staff
2. Qualified teaching staff committed to a common vision, continual professional growth, and community involvement.
3. Highly involved and competent Board of Directors.
4. Strong parent involvement in all aspects of the school operation.
5. Project-based learning
6. Social, Emotional Curriculum
7. Outdoor/Environmental Education
8. Looping of students and teachers
9. Flexibility in designing assessment methods that reflect student needs and the school’s ESLRs
10. Inclusive, nurturing and supportive environment
11. Successful Non-Violent Communication and Conflict Resolution program

Existing factors that will support school improvement
Ventura Charter School is comprised of dedicated, self-motivated individuals who willingly and knowingly aligned themselves to establish this school as an alternative, progressive learning community. New staff are carefully recruited, interviewed and integrated into the philosophy of the school and elect to remain because of the common vision and commitment to the unique approach to education. Consequently, the responsibility for implementing and monitoring the action plan is willingly shared by all staff, administration, board members and parents. (Exhibit A: Visiting Committee WASC Report)

Impact II Awards
Each year since 2009, VCS teachers have been awarded at least 20% of the project grants based on the projects they developed and submitted. This recognition program, sponsored by the Ventura County Office of Education is part of national curriculum-sharing network for innovating and motivating projects and lessons.

Student Surveys
Each of the last three years our students have been surveyed, over 90% report that they feel safe, that they feel that they belong, that they are treated with respect, that their teachers care about them and listen to their ideas, and that they know how to work out conflicts with their classmates.

Parent Surveys
Each of the last three years, our parents have been surveyed, over 90% report that their child is engaged in their learning, that the school meets their child’s social-emotional needs, that the school reflects a community atmosphere, and that the school communicates about important events.
Green School Award
The City of Ventura presented Ventura Charter School with the 2012 Green School Award. Given in conjunction with America Recycles Day, it is presented to a school in the City of Ventura that has demonstrated an exemplary effort to help the environment. VCS was commended for our Trash-a-Thon, Earth Day EcoFest, Green Club, recycling, healthy low waste lunches, reusable water containers, organic garden and composting, and our efforts to teach and practice good stewardship of our Earth. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVSc-v04L4w

National Wildlife Habitat
In June, 2015, the National Wildlife Federation Certified a New Wildlife Habitat at Ventura Charter School. The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) recognized that the Kindergarten classes of Ventura Charter School successfully created an official Certified Wildlife Habitat site. The Kindergarteners created a garden space that improves the habitat for birds, butterflies, frogs, and other wildlife by providing essential elements needed by all wildlife—natural food sources, clean water, cover and places to raise young. (Exhibit B)

Captain Planet Garden Grant
In May, 2014, VCS was selected as a Captain Planet Foundation Learning Gardens school. This award came with resources to develop and sustain garden based learning including professional development, installation of garden beds, lessons, supply kits, garden signs, and a fully-equipped mobile kitchen cart for preparing and taste-testing foods in the gardens and classrooms. (Exhibit C: Learning Gardens Letter of Agreement)

Community Partnerships
Earth Day EcoFest: The Ventura Charter School community plans, organizes, and oversees the City of Ventura’s Earth Day festival. This family-friendly event is attended by thousands, and features over 80 local businesses, environmental exhibitors, non-profits, and vendors. This event is aligned with the VCS fundraising policy which states that fundraisers should be consistent with the mission and values of the School’s charter, should develop and enrich the School community, should appeal to diverse populations in the larger community, and should demonstrate environmental awareness, activism, and responsibility. For almost eight years, this festival has brought the community together to have fun, connect with environmentally-minded organizations and businesses, and to enjoy Ventura’s spectacular natural world.

Trash-a-Thon: Another environmentally conscious fundraiser is our annual Trash-a-Thon. Students collect pledges and work to clean up several litter “hot spots” throughout Ventura, chosen on the basis of need, student accessibility, and safety. “The Ventura Charter School Trash-a-Thon transforms a traditional fundraising concept by raising awareness of our impact on the environment and beautifying it at the same time. It’s a win-win for the School, the City, and the community at large!” said Rosie Ornelas, Volunteer Ventura! Coordinator.
Professional Learning Community

Universities
The University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) and Antioch University have chosen Ventura Charter School to be a preferred partner school to place cohorts of their student teachers. VCS was chosen because its’ progressive whole child approach, its’ established educators with a record of success, and a shared vision of excellence. VCS provides a unique placement for teacher candidates to work in a professional learning community, to improve their practice, and to have the highest quality experience. Several VCS teachers have also taught Education courses at these Universities.

C. EVIDENCE OF MEETING CHARTER RENEWAL CRITERIA PURSUANT TO EDUCATION CODE SECTION 47607(b) AND THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5, SECTION 11966.5(b)(1)

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

1. Attained its Academic Performance Index (API) growth target in the prior year or in two of the last three years, both school wide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school.

2. Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API in the prior year or in two of the last three years.

3. Ranked in deciles 4 to 10 inclusive, in the API for a demographically comparable school in the prior year or in two of the last three years.

4. The entity that granted the charter determines that the academic performance of the charter school is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that the charter school pupils would otherwise have been required to attend, as well as the academic performance of the schools in the school district in which the charter school is located, taking into account the composition of the pupil population that is served at the charter school.

5. Has qualified for an alternative accountability system pursuant to subdivision (h) of Education Code Section 52052.

The following shall serve as documentation confirming that VCS exceeds the statutory criteria required for renewal as set forth in Education Code Section 47607(b)( Exhibit D: CDE DataQuest Reports):

• VCS has attained its most recent (2013) API growth target, both school wide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school, exceeding the requirement of
VCS has achieved a statewide API rank of 4 or higher in the last two years (2012 and 2013), exceeding the minimum threshold rank of 4 required in Education Code Section 47607(b)(2).

Over the prior charter term, VCS had the following API scores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>API Statewide Ranking</th>
<th>API Growth Scores</th>
<th>API Growth Target (Actual Growth)</th>
<th>Met School Growth Target?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>State testing and API calculation suspended; no data reported*</td>
<td>3-Year Average API: 820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>State testing and API calculation suspended; no data reported*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>A (-9)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>A (-1)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“A” means the school or Student Groups scored at or above the statewide performance target of 800 in the 2012 Base.

Source: CDE DataQuest, accessed November 12, 2015.

*Note on 2013-14 and 2014-15 Testing Data

Assembly Bill 484 amended Education Code sections 52052(e)(2)(F) and 52052(e)(4) to allow schools that do not have an API calculated in 2013–14 and 2014–15 to use one of the following criteria to meet legislative and/or programmatic requirements:

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

VCS clearly meets the charter renewal criteria established in Education Code Section 47607(b) by utilizing “the most recent API calculation” as allowed per Education Code Section 52052(e)(4)(A).

The California Department of Education (“CDE”) published the following chart, which summarizes available state level API data in order to analyze “the most recent API calculation,” including data for charter schools subject to renewal in the 2015-16 school year.

Ventura Charter School of Arts and Global Education
Charter Renewal Petition: 2016-2021

year and how such data shall be used in charter renewal determinations pursuant to Education Code Section 47607(b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>API Growth</th>
<th>Assessment Data</th>
<th>School Rankings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16 School Year</td>
<td>No 2015 Growth API; use 2013 Growth API as most recent, 3-year average API (2011/2012/2013), or alternative measures</td>
<td>Use 2015 SBAC scores for math and ELA; can compare results with local schools</td>
<td>No 2014 rankings; use 2012 and 2013 rankings for 2 of last 3 years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Charter Renewal Criteria – Schoolwide

As seen in the CDE chart above, in the 2015-2016 school year (the year that VCS’ charter renewal petition will be considered), the CDE directs us to evaluate VCS’ “2013 Growth API as most recent,” and “use 2012 and 2013 rankings for 2 of last 3 years.”

VCS’ API growth score in 2013 exceeds the statewide performance target of 800 in the prior year. In 2013, the API growth score was 814. Moreover, for the last two years, VCS had a statewide API rank of 6 in 2012 and 2013. Therefore, VCS has exceeded the charter renewal standards of Education Code Section 47607(b) by meeting not just one, but two of the charter renewal criteria, and should be granted a five-year charter renewal term pursuant to Education Code Section 47607(a)(1).

Additional Justification for Charter Renewal

Ventura Charter School has met API growth for all subgroups since it’s opening in 2006. Below is the detail on the last available two years of API data.

Analysis of Charter Renewal Criteria – Student Subgroups

Education Code Section 47607(a)(3) states:

> The authority that granted the charter shall consider increases in pupil academic achievement for all groups of pupils served by the charter school (defined as “a numerically significant pupil subgroup, as defined by paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 52052.” EC §47607(a)(3)(B)) as the most important factor in determining whether to grant a charter renewal.

In 2012-2013 and 2011-2012, VCS had two numerically significant student subgroups – Hispanic/Latino and White. Numerically significant student subgroup API performance data is demonstrated in the following tables:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Numerically Significant in Both Years?</th>
<th>2013 API Growth</th>
<th>API Growth Target (Actual Growth)</th>
<th>Met Student Group’s Growth Target?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>5 (+20)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>A (-17)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"A" means the school or student groups scored at or above the statewide performance target of 800 in the 2012 Base. (Source: CDE DataQuest, accessed November 12, 2015.)

In the last two years of API data both of the subgroups for VCS met their growth targets with “Hispanic or Latino” coming within six points of the statewide performance target of 800. VCS’ outstanding student subgroup performance further solidifies its renewal status under Education Code Section 47607(a)(3).

The VCS Teacher Council has discussed a number of strategies to continue to improve student achievement and eliminate the achievement gap of Social Economically Disadvantaged students and English Language Learners including:

- Identify students who could meet or exceed standards to provide more support;
- Close the gap between student classroom performance and performance on standardized tests;
- Spiral review of concepts, especially ones taught at beginning of year;
- Build student stamina for assessments;
- Consider pacing of tested concepts;
- Provide intervention support for students who did not meet standards.
I. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM

**Governance Law:** A description of the educational program of the school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom the school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)(i).

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

**MISSION**

As a progressive school, we educate the "whole child" by addressing the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical needs of K-8 students. We enable students to flourish through the use of innovative curriculum and instruction that empowers them to reach their innate intellectual, creative, and leadership potentials.

**EXPECTED SCHOOL WIDE LEARNING RESULTS**

Every Ventura Charter School graduate will be…

1. **An Effective Empathic Communicator**
   Reads, writes, speaks, and listens with confidence and compassion.

2. **A Critical Thinker**
   Creatively and collaboratively solves problems and conflicts using innovation, flexibility, resourcefulness, and reflection.

3. **A Responsible Participant in an Interdependent Global Community**
   Understands and respects diverse perspectives and interacts responsibly with others and the environment.

4. **A Creative Student of the Arts**
   Understands the role of the arts in society and explores the arts as a means of creative personal expression.

5. **A Lifelong Learner**
Engages and develops their unique gifts, strengths, and interests in a continual pursuit of intellectual and personal growth.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM/DATA
From 2006 until 2014, VCS met its AYP goals and it consistently outperformed Ventura Unified School District. In 2015, CAASPP results, the percentage of VCS students who met or exceeded standards in English Language Arts was on average 50% higher than VUSD students and in Math was on average 32% higher than VUSD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ventura Charter School</th>
<th>VUSD (Avg. 2nd-8th gr)</th>
<th>State of California (Avg. 2nd-8th gr)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>--</td>
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<td>2013-2014</td>
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<tr>
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### 2015 CAASPP English Language Arts Overall Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>VCS</th>
<th>VUSD</th>
<th>CA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>5th</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>56</td>
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### 2015 CAASPP Math Overall Achievement

<table>
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<th>VUSD</th>
<th>CA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th</td>
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<td>8th</td>
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</table>
WASC Accreditation History
Ventura Charter School applied for WASC Accreditation in the fall of 2006. VCS had an initial visit in May, 2008 and was granted initial WASC accreditation and approval for a three year self-study. The WASC team visited in March, 2011, and granted VCS a full six-year term of accreditation.

Professional Learning Community
VCS has a strong commitment to being a professional learning community. The Teacher Council has created structures to promote a collaborative culture. Nine student-free days of professional development/inservice are built into the annual school calendar: four before school begins in August, three during the year, and two at the end of the year to evaluate programs and begin planning the next year.

In addition, the staff "banks" time four days a week in order to collaborate each Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. This block of time is spent in whole group Inquiry and grade level meetings alternately. The staff also meets alternate Mondays after school for staff meetings. During the Inquiry Meetings, staff analyzes student work, assessments, data, and regularly discusses curriculum and best practices in methodology and pedagogy. Our staff engages with their colleagues to explore what they want their students to learn, how they will know when students have learned it, and how they will respond when a student experiences difficulty.

VCS professional development goals are mission and achievement data driven. Goals are set for professional development from the Local Control Action Plan (LCAP) goals and individual teacher needs. Professional development is planned using a variety of delivery means ranging from professional conferences, guest speakers, book clubs, relevant and current research, as well as VCS teacher leaders. Teachers are given opportunities and resources to seek outside professional development in areas they believe will advance their personal development as a teacher. They are also given the opportunity to submit a proposal for additional training in an area that they commit to bringing back to the staff.

With the support of the Director of Education, each teacher develops an annual Performance Plan that outlines SMART goals (Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) as well as specific strategies to ensure their success. These learning goals become part of the professional development that the teacher seeks out that year in addition to whole-staff professional development.

EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN EDUCATED PERSON IN THE 21st CENTURY

We believe that students entering the world of the 21st century need enhanced skills, knowledge, and attitudes to prepare them for a lifetime of learning, change, and transition. In addition to having the skills of reading, writing, reasoning, speaking, listening, and computing, students need to acquire the skills necessary to become
collaborative workers, effective communicators, community contributors, and complex, creative, and critical thinkers.

The vision for 21st century learning developed by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills offers a holistic vision for enriching 21st century minds. (Exhibit E: Framework for 21st Century Learning) Students need to be prepared to think, learn, work, solve problems, communicate, collaborate, and contribute effectively throughout their lives. They need to have a strong self-concept and see themselves as autonomous, cooperative, respectful, and productive lifetime learners. They need to be self-disciplined, intuitive, self-motivated and self-directed. They need to be able to work and live harmoniously with others and the environment and interact in a manner that is healthy, purposeful, and creative. Educated citizens of the 21st century must understand that life is interconnected and interdependent and will see themselves as active and responsible members of a diverse global community. With the increasing availability of massive rapid data-retrieval systems, the ability to memorize information has become less important, and success in today’s world requires creativity, flexibility, resourcefulness, and a readiness to see things in new ways.

Students will need a better understanding of and appreciation for global relations--other people, cultures, religions, and geographies--to bridge the cultural, linguistic, and historical divides that exist in our country and the world. They will need to understand the economic, political, social, and cultural interrelationships that will influence and determine their future. An educated person in the 21st century needs to understand the role of art in society and appreciate art both by others and as a means of personal expression. A heightened awareness of the fragility of ecosystems will be crucial along with a strong sense of responsibility for protecting, preserving, and restoring the earth for future generations.

Our students will need sophisticated, compassionate, and resilient social and emotional skills to actively develop and participate in deep and meaningful relationships and create rich and healthy families and communities. Peaceful conflict resolution skills are critical to their success in all aspects of their lives. They need the ability to navigate within competitive systems as well as cooperative ones to participate effectively in professional and civic lives within a democratic society.

The staff, students, and parents of VCS continually reflect upon, act upon, and adapt to an ever-changing world. VCS will evolve and continue to address what it means to be an educated person who is well prepared for healthy forms of self-reliance as well as interdependent.

**HOW LEARNING BEST OCCURS**

We believe that children learn best when:

- They are cared for in nurturing, safe, and supportive environments;
- They are actively involved in their learning, using hands-on, engaging manipulative materials, and constructing their own understanding;
Their learning is influenced by their curiosity, interests, needs, and desires, resulting in intrinsic motivation;

- They are free to learn at their own pace and in their own style;
- Their social and emotional needs are satisfied;
- They are valued for their unique learning abilities and styles;
- They take frequent field trips outside the classroom to explore new places and to experience different activities, people, and environments;
- They are mixed with other students of different ages and abilities and can learn from one another.

Our research and experience on how learning best occurs has led VCS to develop learning environments in which the following components are emphasized:

- **Positive Interpersonal Relationships**
  Through the use of Marshall Rosenberg’s NonViolent Communication strategies, students develop communication skills necessary to resolve social and emotional issues as they arise. Children learn to express themselves and connect empathetically with others in ways that support life enriching education; they are encouraged to examine the effects of their actions on themselves and others. VCS students apply the skills necessary to work collaboratively and cooperatively in group and community settings and communicate effectively to solve interpersonal problems. They have ongoing opportunities to learn to establish and maintain successful and satisfying personal relationships with other students, teachers, and adults.

  Resolving social issues and conflicts is important, not only to help children grow into healthy functioning adults, but to ensure that these issues do not preoccupy their attention and interfere with their learning. When we give students an opportunity to experience interpersonal relationships based on mutual respect and caring, we support the promotion of their well-being, learning, personal growth as well as supporting a shift to a less violent, more equitable caring and truly democratic society (*Life Enriching Education—Non Violent Communication Helps Schools Improve Performance, Reduce Conflict, and Enhance Relationships*, Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D., 2003).

- **Project-based Learning**
  Project or Problem-based learning is enriched in-depth work in which students investigate or simulate real-world problems that foster inquiry. Students are required to ask good questions, conduct purposeful investigations, think critically, draw conclusions, and reflect until they arrive at a meaningful solution. (J. Barell, 21st Century Skills, 2010). Projects incorporate California State Standards and are specially tailored to the learning needs and interests of students.

  A growing body of academic research supports the use of project-based learning in schools as a way to engage students, cut absenteeism, boost cooperative learning skills, and improve test scores. Because project learning is filled with active and engaged learning, it inspires students to obtain a deeper knowledge of the subjects.
they’re studying. Research also indicates that students are more likely to retain the knowledge gained through this approach far more readily than through traditional textbook-centered learning. In addition, students develop confidence and self-direction as they move through both team-based and independent work. Project work is also an effective way to integrate technology into the curriculum. A typical project can easily accommodate computers, handhelds, and the Internet, as well webcams, global-positioning-system (GPS) devices, digital still cameras, video cameras, and associated editing equipment. (http://www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning-research)

One of the most valuable aspects of project-based learning is that it teaches students how to research and how to analyze. Instead of becoming better memorizers, they become better thinkers. When projects intentionally develop students’ thinking and problem solving skills, they are more likely to develop learning skills and habits that will expand their motivation for learning, make them more efficient and effective thinkers, and prepare them for a lifetime of problem solving in challenging careers. (J. David, Educational Leadership, 2008)

- **Constructivist Learning**
  The research of Jean Piaget (*The Psychology of Intelligence*, 1947; *The Construction of Reality in the Child*, 1954) found that children learn by connecting new information to prior knowledge and by actively constructing their own understandings. Learning occurs when new information is used to deconstruct and/or reconstruct older understandings. To do this, younger students need to manipulate materials concretely through hands-on experiences. More sophisticated learners are capable of manipulating abstract information in their minds, yet they still require stimulation of concrete experiential learning opportunities to internalize new knowledge. During constructivist learning experiences, students explore ideas and phenomena, tackle familiar and unfamiliar problems, then reflect on and analyze their findings with one another. Teachers will closely facilitate this process, encouraging students to inquire and investigate, to analyze, create, develop, describe, reflect on, and finally disseminate understandings. Through these experiences, on a daily basis, students learn to make choices and experience autonomy. Students come to know that their interests, ideas, and abilities are respected and valued. These experiences are carefully integrated with the knowledge, skills, and conceptual understanding identified in the California State Standards.

- **Student Centered Learning**
  VCS utilizes methods of teaching that shift the focus from the teacher to the student. Student-Centered methods give students opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and participate more actively in discussions. The teacher facilitates student learning individually or collaboratively by asking open ended or driving questions, providing guidance and access to resources, and setting time limits. Cooperative learning groups provide opportunities for teamwork and collaboration as well as promote critical and creative deep thinking. Technology enhances an open-ended learning environment by providing students more tools and autonomy to explore
answers to individual questions, and requiring them to be self-directed, make appropriate choices, and manage their time effectively. Putting the responsibility for learning on students allows them to become independent responsible life-long learners.

- **Multiage Grouping**
  Just as Piaget taught that children learn by interacting with people and objects in their environment, the research of Lev Vygotsky (*Thought and Language*, 1962; *Mind and Society*, 1978) elaborated further on the critical social interaction component. In Vygotsky’s theory of “Zone of Proximal Development,” maturing or developing mental functions must be fostered and assessed through collaborative activities rather than through independent or isolated ones. He emphasized that what children can perform collaboratively or with assistance today they can perform independently and competently tomorrow. Through the social interactions and conversations of students in mixed-age groups, novice and advanced learners develop and share questions, information, thoughts, and ideas, thereby enhancing learning opportunities for all students in the group. Children learn higher-level cognitive and social skills from one another. Multiage grouping helps children develop a sense of community where older children act as models and teachers of younger children. This aids development of personality, collaboration, cooperation, and self-esteem. VCS fosters cross-age relationships through multiage classrooms, “buddy class” groups for classroom projects and school-wide events, and peer and cross-age tutoring. Multiage grouping also lends itself well to inclusion of children with special needs into classrooms with typically developing peers.

- **Visible Thinking**
  VCS has created a culture of thinking based on the work of Harvard University’s Project Zero and Ron Ritchhart and David Perkins (2011). Teachers help develop student thinking dispositions—broad intellectual behaviors that not only include skills but also attitudes, motivations, and emotions. By using "thinking routines"—simple protocols for exploring ideas, students are able to think through their ideas and thoughts and learn by engaging with others. Visible thinking fosters a deeper understanding of content, creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, and perspective taking.

- **Looping**
  VCS utilizes Looping—the practice of placing the same group of students with the same teacher for two years. Looping ensures that students move from one grade to the next with a minimum of anxiety and eliminates the transitional period that a new school year often requires thereby, providing more time for new learning. The practice also fosters greater relationship building for students and for parents. The Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University (1997) lists the following benefits of Looping:
    - Teacher knowledge about a child’s intellectual strengths and weaknesses increases in a way that is impossible to achieve in a single year. Long term teacher/student relationships improve student performance;
Students reap benefits from time spent on developing social skills and cooperative group strategies in subsequent years;
Looping permits students to get to know one another well, facilitating social construction of knowledge;
Long term relationships result in an emotional and intellectual climate that encourages thinking, risk-taking, and involvement;
English language learners adjust to their new school and become comfortable with their teacher, developing confidence in their newly acquired language;
Looping encourages a stronger sense of community and family among parents, students, and teachers.

• **Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation refers to the innate propensity for people to engage their interests and exercise their capacities to seek out and master optimal challenges (Reeve, 1996). VCS believes in fostering children’s “intrinsic motivation” to learn. According to Alfie Kohn, intrinsic motivation is significantly related to high academic achievement (*Punished By Rewards*, 1983). Our task is to provide an environment that cultivates students’ interests and their desire to participate in the educational program. Research further tells us that when students are involved in learning activities that are presented in meaningful and appealing contexts, they show significantly greater amounts of motivation, involvement, and learning. The benefits are further heightened when the activities are also personalized and when the students are allowed choices (Cordova & Lepper, 1996).

DeCharms (1976) conducted a large-scale research project on active education, which involved training teachers to be supportive of the children’s autonomy. The project also developed instructional materials that promoted constructivist educational practices, such as contextualization and autonomy. The children’s intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and achievement were assessed immediately following the project, then over one year, and finally over two years. Comparisons among the groups of children with different levels of exposure to the experimentally trained teachers were also conducted. The results showed that children in the experimental classrooms not only demonstrated increases in motivation, but also demonstrated increases in their standardized achievement scores in comparison to children in the traditional classrooms. The findings of this matrix of research support the argument for educational practices that are congruent with progressive education or what Decharms referred to as the “active-education” philosophy (DeCharms, as cited in Ames & Ames, 1985).

• **Educating the Whole Child**

VCS seeks to educate the whole child addressing the intellectual, social, emotional, creative, physical, and collaborative aspects of education. The mission statement of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) supports this goal:
Academic achievement is but one element of student learning and development and only a part of any complete system of education accountability. ASCD believes a comprehensive approach to learning recognizes that successful young people are knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, motivated, civically inspired, engaged in the arts, prepared for work and economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond their own borders (Educational Leadership, September, 2005).

VCS is committed to pursuing high academic achievement through the education of the whole child.

STUDENTS TO BE SERVED

VCS currently serves 427 Kindergarten through 8th grade students—376 classroom-based and 51 in Homeschool. VCS serves students who are interested in learning through integrated, student-centered curriculum and innovative, project-based instruction. VCS students are empowered to meet California content standards and reach their innate intellectual, creative, and leadership potentials.

VCS has adopted a school calendar with a minimum of 177 instructional days and meets or exceeds the instructional minutes required by Education Code Section 47612.5. (Exhibit F: VCS 2015-16 Calendar) Our goal is to maintain a 96% attendance rate (Exhibit G: VCS Attendance Policy).

<table>
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<th>VCS 2015-16</th>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander/Guamanian</td>
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<td>.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VCS attempts to achieve a racial and ethnic balance of students that reflects the general population of the local district. VCS’s outreach efforts include fliers and presentations in English and Spanish at various School, community, and city-wide events, presentations at various preschools and agencies, and online ads and postings. Each year, VCS schedules and advertises monthly informational meetings, tours, and other activities in a manner which assures, to the extent possible, that all interested families are able to attend. Monthly informational meetings are available in Spanish upon request. Historically, prospective parents learn about VCS from current parents while more and more are finding VCS through the internet. With this in mind, we have regular meetings for Spanish speaking parents to engage them in school programs and events and the VCS.
website has been updated to be completely translated into Spanish and 89 other languages through Google Translate.

**Targeted Student Population**

VCS attracts K-8 students and families who desire a progressive approach to schooling for a variety of reasons. We attract students whose families want a rich and multi-dimensional curriculum where their children will be challenged and motivated in multi-age classrooms to achieve above and beyond the confines of grade level instruction. VCS attracts parents who desire their children to have a positive attitude about school and learning and who value social emotional learning as well as academic achievement. VCS provides a rich learning environment, where multiple learning styles are embraced and love of learning is celebrated.

Many VCS students are artistically, musically, or dramatically inclined, preferring a school that celebrates and incorporates the arts as well as academics. By developing their talents through our arts program, a significant number of our graduates choose high schools that allow them to pursue their passion for the arts. Some of our students are attracted to our global education component, where other countries, cultures, beliefs, lifestyles, and languages are integrated into the curriculum. Other families are drawn to our environmental focus, outdoor learning environment, field trips, and community learning and service projects.

Families seek out opportunities where they can effectively participate in the design and implementation of their children’s schooling. Many students and their families are drawn to the “community” aspect of our school where lifelong relationships are formed.

VCS serves additional students through our homeschool program, a flexible short-term independent study program (Exhibit: H: VCS Independent Study Policy), and an on-site after school program. Enrollment at the Charter School is limited by enrollment to the number of students that can be accommodated within its facility or through the homeschool program.

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN**

**Curriculum Overview**

The VCS curriculum is driven by California State Standards with a specific emphasis on global education and the arts. Through interactions with their own and other cultures of the past and present, students find meaning in their world. The arts are integrated into the curriculum to allow students’ creativity to emerge and flourish. Issues of social and ecological justice are also interwoven throughout the curriculum. Educational goals include self-reliance, social responsibility, artistic expression, and critical and independent thinking, balanced with an awareness of interdependence. Creativity and curiosity are valued and encouraged, and learning is experiential and integrated.

VCS integrates course work across the curriculum as a regular part of instructional planning. When students see how knowledge is connected with real-world implications,
they can move away from viewing learning as the accumulation of disconnected isolated facts. Integration provides a vehicle for modeling life-long learning habits by encouraging students to look for the larger meanings in everyday events. It allows them to be open to new areas of inquiry by realizing that new information from other areas can often be helpful in making current understandings more profound. By integrating curriculum around big ideas and themes, students will come to understand the relationships among disciplines and how the interconnections of all the parts create “the whole.” Therefore, the curriculum at VCS is designed around specific themes developed by VCS teachers, based on social studies and science content standards. Units of study are interdisciplinary, incorporating reading, language arts, math, science and the arts. California frameworks and model curriculum guidelines also inform projects and lesson designs. Areas that receive special emphasis and provide an ongoing sub-structure for VCS curriculum are global and environmental studies; the fine, performing and applied arts; and interpersonal communication skills.

**Global Education**

Global Education at Ventura Charter School provides students with the knowledge, skills and awareness to think critically. We seek to transform our community’s local and global consciousness by teaching cultural diversity, nonviolent communication, respect for the Earth and others, and social responsibility. This process involves making connections, raising awareness, building respect, and providing opportunities for activism. It is our goal to prepare students to think, speak, and write about political, economic, environmental, social and cultural developments in the world with confidence and who will value democratic rights and responsibilities, freedoms and obligations. Learning about the history, cultures, and belief systems of people who share the globe engenders respect and understanding.

VCS ensures that all school events and fundraisers are in alignment with its mission and goals. Current fundraising events include an annual Earth Day Ecofest and a Trash-a-Thon organized in cooperation with the City of Ventura and the business community. Additionally, our middle school students are provided a number of service learning opportunities prior to graduation.

**The Arts**

The VCS Arts curriculum is an integral part of the general education program and includes frequent exposure to dance, drama, music, visual, and applied arts. VCS provides students with opportunities to view and experience the arts and to recognize their historical and cultural significance.

By studying the arts, students develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Brain research and Multiple Intelligence theory provide evidence to support the arts in a balanced, integrated curriculum. Work by Eric Jensen (*Arts with the Brain in Mind*, 2001), for example, shows that when children are exposed to music, critical neural pathways are developed in their brains. Students who play musical instruments develop strong pattern extraction abilities that are essential to higher brain functions in logic, math, and problem solving. Motor skills are enhanced when students dance or play...
percussion instruments; and when children sing, they further develop their language skills. The music program at VCS continues to evolve and grow with the offering of singing, beginning note reading, instrument play, and music/instrument lessons for garage band.

All students at VCS have frequent opportunities to engage in a wide variety of fine, performing, and practical arts. The school uses specialists to teach music, dance, drama, textile arts, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, graphic arts, sculpture, and painting. The arts are interwoven throughout the curriculum as artistic responses to literature, multicultural studies, and thematic instruction. Various electives are offered to middle school students such as woodworking, ceramics, photography, computer graphic design, filmmaking, drama, and garage band, depending on student interests.

**English Language Arts Curriculum**

In alignment with the California Reading/Language Arts Framework and Content Standards, VCS develops each student’s strengths as reader, writer, researcher, listener, speaker, and collaborator. Highly motivating and engaging literature and language arts lessons enhance learning, with reading and writing skills taught both through whole language and through phonemic awareness and explicit phonics instruction to create a balanced approach to literacy.

The language arts curriculum is a strong literature-based program that includes a balance of oral and written language. Reading instruction is meaning based and encompasses systematic and explicit emergent literacy skills including attention to the four cueing systems, spelling and vocabulary development, a wide range of comprehension strategies, and critical thinking skills to interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. Students with special needs are given ample opportunities to participate in communicative and interactive learning activities, which enhances their language acquisition, social, interpersonal, and academic skills in a language and print rich environment.

The strengths of the VCS language arts program lies in the integration of the literacy instruction across all areas of the core curriculum, incorporating informational text, multicultural literature and multimedia, building upon an abundance of life experiences and the reservoir of knowledge students of diverse backgrounds bring to school. In addition, all students are encouraged to read, write, and share their work daily through various practices. Finally, the language arts program is presented via a spiraled curriculum, offering students the opportunity to go both deep and broad over the course of their years at VCS.

**Reading Instruction**

At VCS we strongly believe that a balanced literacy approach best serves the needs of emerging readers. Using resource books by experts in comprehensive literacy instruction such as Lucy Calkins (*The Art of Teaching Reading*, 2000), Patricia Cunningham (*Phonics They Use*, 2004; *Classrooms that Work: They Can All Read and Write*, 2002), Gail E. Tompkins (*Literacy for the 21st Century: A Balanced Approach*, 1996), Donald R.
Bear, et.al. (*Words Their Way*, 1996), and Nancie Atwell (*In the Middle, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Edition, 2015*) we educate children in a meaning-based, print and language rich environment.

As students progress from “learning to read” to “reading to learn,” they are exposed to greater amounts of informational reading through nonfiction texts in content areas across the curriculum. Using the English Language Arts Content Standards as a roadmap, teachers will plan daily reading practice with a variety of instructional materials that support the VCS interdisciplinary approach. Students are involved in shared and guided reading, reading workshops, teacher read-alouds, partner reading, daily independent reading, reading buddies, and literature circles, which exemplify the following components:

- **Reading:** Students participate in a variety of modeled, shared, interactive, guided, and independent reading experiences using trade books, reading textbooks, informational text, content-area texts, and self-selected books.

- **Phonemic Awareness and Phonics:** Students have many opportunities to gain phonemic awareness through songs, poems, big books, rhyming, and word play. They learn to use the sound/symbol relationship and the alphabetic code to apply explicit phonics skills to decoding words. They also learn other reading skills such as sight word recognition, syllabication, prefixes and suffixes on base words, and use of reference materials.

- **Vocabulary:** Students learn the meanings of words through wide reading and context clues as well as by posting key words from books and thematic units on word walls and participating in vocabulary building activities.

- **Comprehension:** Students choose appropriate reading materials; activate background knowledge and vocabulary; consider the structure of the text; make connections to their own lives, to the world, and to other literature; and apply reading strategies to ensure that they understand what they are reading.

- **Literature:** Students read and respond to a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts, prose, poetry, and multicultural literature in numerous genres, as part of literature focus units, author studies, literature circles, and reading workshops.

- **Content-Area Study:** Students use their reading skills to learn about social studies and science topics in content-area units. They read content-area texts, primary sources, historical fiction, and factual information, learn to take notes and conduct research, and prepare projects to apply what they have learned.

- **Speaking and Listening:** Students participate in oral language development as they practice reading with accuracy, fluency, and expression. They develop speaking skills through choral reading, small group interactions, classroom discussions, and instructional conversations, as well as through presentations such as Reader’s Theater, plays, and oral reports. They learn listening skills through
Ventura Charter School of Arts and Global Education
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enjoying teacher read-alouds, participating in the give-and-take of peer interactions, receiving instruction through learning centers, lessons and mini-lessons, and observing a variety of oral presentations, performances, and projects.

In grades K-2, the Daily 5 model (Boushey & Moser, 2006) provides the structure for students to read to self, read to someone else, work on writing, listen to reading, and to practice spelling and word work. We use the Workshop model for reading in Grades 1-8. Reader's Workshop provides students with a supportive environment that involves students in authentic reading experiences that focus on the strengths and needs of each individual. Each workshop includes a mini lesson, shared reading, read aloud, conferencing, independent reading, paired reading, literature response, and Reader's Chair. The basic philosophy behind the Reading Workshop is as follows:

1. Learners need opportunities to read high-interest, accessible books of their own choosing;
2. Learners need explicit instruction in the process and skills of proficient reading;
3. Learners need opportunities to talk in response to texts;
4. Learners need assessment-based instruction, including feedback that is tailored specifically to them. Strugglers especially need instruction that is tailored to their specific strengths and needs, as well as extra time and extra help. (Calkins, 2010)

Readers' Workshop results in an improvement in students' decoding and comprehension skills. Findings revealed that students' attitudes towards reading improved considerably as well. (Colleen Hewitt, 1996) The ultimate goal of a Reading Workshop is always to develop life-long passionate readers.

Children are assessed throughout the school year using a variety of sound/symbol recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, sight word, running records, and reading comprehension formative assessments. Students who are struggling receive differentiated and small group instruction and/or direct intervention services designed for their literacy needs. We use Standards Plus, a supplemental program consisting of a series of direct instruction mini lessons, assessments, and lesson plans written to California State standards and essential skills to help students prepare for standardized tests.

Writing Development
VCS embraces the Writers' Workshop style of writing instruction, based on the teachings of Lucy Calkins (The Art of Teaching Writing, 1994 and Units of Study for Primary Writing, 2006) and Nanci Atwell (Lessons that Change Writers 2010). Using the California Language Arts Content Standards as a guide, teachers plan mini-lessons that teach writing strategies through connection with student needs, directed teaching, active engagement, writing strategy groups, and conferences. Teachers create writing assignments and projects that align with grade level standards and that are also a central part of many interdisciplinary studies. Students are involved in writing activities, such as journals, notebooks, functional/procedural writing, genre studies, quick-writes, guided writing, language experience, keywords, pen-pals, and individual and class book-making. As their writing skills develop, students receive instruction and practice in all
the writing genres, including descriptive, expository (report writing and essay) narrative, fiction, persuasive, poetry, journal, and letter writing. Students cycle through the writing process of drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. VCS’s Writing Workshops adhere to the following guiding principles:

- **Provide California State Standards-based Instruction in writing strategies, informational writing, writing applications, and written and oral language conventions.** Teachers use the standards to plan writing projects and lessons to teach explicit skills in writing conventions and strategies. The students demonstrate their learning in ongoing formative assessments of their daily writing and in benchmark writing assessments that will be tied to the interdisciplinary study.

- **Provide multiple times each week for children to work on their writing.** During each day’s Writing Workshop, children rehearse, plan, draft, revise, and edit writing on topics that are usually chosen by the child. During the year in a writing workshop, the children work on a variety of writing, including personal narratives, essays, or feature articles, short fiction, poems, procedural (or how-to) writing, and other nonfiction pieces of various sorts. During the writing workshop, children do not usually write about books, but, instead, they will write their own books. At the end of a unit of study, children’s writing is “published.” Publishing has been as simple as having a class of older children meet with younger children to read aloud their finished work or more formally, has been a public presentation reading for an authentic audience. However, it always incorporates taking a draft through the phases of the writing process until it is in keeping with standard English grammar and spelling as appropriate for the grade level.

- **Explicitly teach children habits and strategies of writing, and then coach them so they can apply those strategies during independent writing.** Explicit instruction is usually be provided through the ten-minute-long mini-lesson, which occurs at the start of writing workshops. Teachers are encouraged to design mini-lessons in which they demonstrate a strategy and provide children with assisted practice using that strategy.

- **Assess and coach writers through individual and, sometimes, small group conferences.** These conferences generally begin with research and assessment. Teachers move among children during the writing workshops, holding three-to five-minute-long conferences, or longer small group meetings, with them as they write and reflect on their writing. Teachers work one-on-one with student writers on the final editing of their work. In this way, instruction on the conventions/mechanics of writing is personalized and meaningful.

**Mathematics**

VCS students are provided a mathematics program that aligns with the new math standards and allows them to develop the necessary conceptual understanding, computation, application, and problem solving skills to meet expectations in the California State Mathematics Standards. It is our goal to help students develop a sense of confidence about their ability to understand and apply mathematics in their everyday life.
lives utilizing the eight Mathematical Practices to gain mastery of the Standards for Mathematical Content. We strive to address both the habits of mind that mathematicians engage in as well as the content knowledge and level of rigor necessary to compete in the global economy of the 21st century.

VCS uses Engage NY/ Eureka as its mathematics curriculum for both the site based program and the home school program respectively. In a Consumer Reports- style review, the independent nonprofit, EdReports.org found that Eureka (aka Engage NY) is the only current curriculum that meets all criteria for alignment to Common Core. [http://www.edreports.org/reports/series/eureka-math.html](http://www.edreports.org/reports/series/eureka-math.html). VCS also supplements this mathematics curriculum with Dreambox, an online interactive program that works with students at their personal level for each standard in math. These K-8 grade programs allow VCS to be at the forefront in educating our students for college/career and beyond.

**Social Studies**

Students in all grades study history and social sciences through integrated, literature-enriched projects that draw upon students’ interests and experiences and incorporate goals that promote cultural knowledge and understanding, democratic principles and civic values, and the academic and social skills necessary for effective participation in diverse societies. Teachers incorporate California State Standards and high yield instructional strategies in project work which allows students to engage more deeply in their learning. The teaching of history is integrated with geography, the humanities, and other social sciences through our focus on global and environmental education. Activities and lessons are correlated with language arts, science, and the visual and performing arts. Teachers build upon students’ curiosity about themselves and their world by presenting history as an exciting and dramatic series of events and issues. Students engage in problem solving as they acquire, evaluate, and use information in a variety of ways. Frequent opportunities exist for all students to share their language, cultures, customs, and heritage, thereby providing multicultural dimensions to the curriculum. The teachers provide equal access to the core curriculum for all students through a variety of appropriate instructional materials and strategies.

**Science**

Students discover and learn about the natural world by using the methods of science as extensions of their own curiosity and wonder in accordance with the Next Generation Science Standards. Students acquire knowledge of science concepts through a balanced curriculum, which includes building on their prior understandings to learn about the logic of the scientific method and the applications of science to the world around them. Students develop the critical thinking skills of science utilizing the Crosscutting Concepts of Patterns, Cause and Effect, Scale, Proportion and Quantity, Systems, Energy and Matter, Structure and Function and Stability and Change. Students are expected to engage, explore, explain, elaborate on and evaluate throughout their scientific studies. All students have access to the science core curriculum and are exposed to life, earth and space, and the physical sciences as well as engineering and technology in alignment with the State Framework and the California State Science Standards. VCS is currently adapting the Lawrence Hall of Science Full Option Science System (FOSS) and Carolina
curriculum for use with the new standards. The 5th – 8th grades are piloting STEMscopes science curriculum which is more in alignment with the new standards.

Outdoor field experiences are an integral part of our standards based curriculum and encourage students to make connections with their classroom learning and the larger world around them. Our role is to help students develop the skills, values, and attitudes that facilitate a scientific understanding of the natural world.

VCS has an outdoor garden learning environment in which students learn about vermiculture, composting, plants, and insects. Teachers and volunteer parents work together to link garden experiences with students’ science lessons for truly integrated experiential learning. Students plant seeds, nurture, and harvest a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, flowers and plants throughout the growing season.

Multi-sensory experiences in nature stimulate creativity and imagination. Immersion in a natural environment allows students to build cognitive constructs for intellectual development. When students interact with the environment, they become more attentive, less restless, and more engaged in independent, creative problem solving. At Ventura Charter School, students regularly participate in outdoor learning opportunities, field trips, and service projects that allow them to take their learning off campus.

Physical Education
VCS students develop an understanding of the importance of physical exercise and physical fitness, healthy nutrition and positive life choices for physical and mental well-being. Exercise, sports, dance, and games provide necessary physical outlets and athletic expression for VCS students. Physical fitness as a lifelong endeavor and the importance of recreational activity is stressed through the physical education curriculum. Cooperative games, skill instruction, and sportsmanship are emphasized in the younger grades. Older students enjoy learning competitive and non-competitive physical activities. Health is taught in a holistic manner. Cooking, especially with organic fruits, and vegetables from the VCS garden, provides a motivating vehicle for learning about health and nutrition. Nutritional whole food snacks are provided daily to encourage healthy eating habits. Knowledge of health, safety and life promoting choices for personal behavior will provide a foundation for positive lifelong habits. VCS employs a credentialed PE teacher that utilizes the SPARK physical education program among other resources. (Exhibit I: VCS Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy)

TEACHING METHODS
The principles, theory, and research of progressive education from the past, present, and future underlie VCS’s innovative and evolving instructional methods. Founding theorists of the past include John Dewey, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Influential theorists and researchers of the present include Howard Gardner, William Glasser, Carl Rogers, and Alfie Kohn. VCS staff remains informed about innovative progressive education practices throughout the world. Teachers seek opportunities to attend conferences, workshops, and seminars to learn from education leaders first hand.
Just as VCS students are provided with a variety of choices regarding interest areas in the curriculum, they are also exposed to a variety of teaching and learning methods. Hands-on, experiential learning is integral to our programs. Children learn best when they are actively involved with what they learn. Access to technology, project work, stimulating learning centers, engaging math activities, balanced literacy programs, with reading and writing workshops, integrated visual and performing arts experiences, outdoor gardening and hands-on science centers, and shared inquiry methods facilitate the “learn-by-doing” instructional focus.

Cooperative learning groups, social interaction, multi-age grouping, and cross-age tutoring assist students in learning from one another. VCS acknowledges that students learn by actively constructing knowledge, weighing new information against their previous understanding, comparing and contrasting, and coming to new understandings. VCS teachers, parents, and students continue to engage in a dynamic cycle of reflection and action. In constructivist classrooms at VCS, students are given numerous opportunities to explore ideas and phenomena, utilize manipulative materials, conjecture and share hypotheses with others, and revise their original thinking.

**Metacognition Skills**

Metacognition refers to learners' awareness of their own knowledge and their ability to understand, control, and manipulate their own cognitive processes. VCS teachers help students gain knowledge about when and how to use particular strategies for learning or for problem solving.

Our project approach shifts away from the classroom practice of short, isolated, teacher-centered lessons and instead emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary, student-centered, and integrated with real-world issues and practices (Dewey, Katz). Project based learning provides opportunities for students to pursue their own interests and questions and make decisions about how they will find answers and solve problems. This approach is focused on using and learning content as a means of developing an awareness of learning processes, information-processing, and problem-solving skills. It is student-centered, with the teacher serving as a facilitator or guide. Inquiry classrooms are open systems where students are encouraged to search and make use of resources beyond the classroom. Learning how to learn is emphasized at VCS. Higher order thinking skills are developed through well-designed inquiry learning activities. Metacognitive skills are important not only in school, but throughout life.

The Multiple Intelligence Theory (MI) of Harvard cognitive psychologist Howard Gardner is integrated into instruction. In addition to focusing on the linguistic and logical-mathematical domains, VCS’s teaching methods incorporate multiple learning styles. Students who have strengths in other intelligences—(such as the artists, architects, musicians, naturalists, designers, dancers, therapists, visionaries, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, historians, and others who enrich the world with their humanity and diversity of culture, thought, and expression) are acknowledged and valued.
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at VCS. Learning opportunities are presented in a variety of ways to allow students to study in ways harmonious with their own unique minds.

Exhibit J outlines some examples of several award winning projects our teachers have created with their students which demonstrate the comprehensive nature of project based learning. (Exhibit J: Examples of VCS student projects)

MATERIALS

The Teacher Council determines all instructional materials utilized at VCS. In addition to California State Standards-aligned instructional materials in the content areas, VCS also utilizes online curriculum and a variety of supplementary materials such as: a classroom library of picture books, informational text, trade books, big books, chapter books, anthologies, multi-cultural folk and fairy tales, and world mythology for shared and guided reading, independent reading, read alouds, and reading workshops; multiple copies of novels, historical fiction, biographies, and non-fiction at various reading levels for teachers to offer small groups during Literature Circles; writing materials, such as paper of all types, book binding materials, and a laminator for writing and displaying books composed by student authors; numerous reference materials, maps and globes, primary sources and books about various countries, cultures, ethnicities, and religions, along with stories of important men and women from all backgrounds for studying history, world geography, social studies, and science.

Technology

Ventura Charter School provides students with the essential learning skills needed in the 21st century. Our students develop information skills that will enable them to use technology as an important tool for learning, both now and in the future. We encourage students to inquire, think critically, and seek knowledge to make real-world connections in the global community.

Technology makes it possible for students and teachers to have access to information resources and learning experiences tailored to their prior knowledge and experience. It also adds value to learning by providing tools and information that make it easier for teachers to plan effective ways of motivating and engaging students. Students in grades K-2 use iPads to practice fluency in English Language Arts and Math as well as for intervention in both subjects. Students in grades 3rd-8th have one-to-one netbook computers as well as access to iPads. VCS has the necessary infrastructure in place to ensure a stable robust network.

In compliance with California legislation, E-Rate, and the Children’s Internet Protection Act, VCS addresses the appropriate and ethical use of information technology in the classroom so that students and teachers can distinguish lawful from unlawful uses of copyrighted works, including the following topics: the concept and purpose of both copyright and fair use; distinguishing lawful from unlawful downloading and peer-to-peer file sharing; avoiding plagiarism; providing for the education of students about Internet safety, including appropriate online behavior, interacting with other individuals.
on social networking sites and in chat rooms; cyberbullying awareness and response; protecting online privacy and avoiding online predators. (Exhibit K: Acceptable Use Policy)

VCS uses Google Apps for Education (GAFE) which provides a safe platform to explore and use the latest apps and presentation tools. GAFE allows for easy collaboration among students and staff from any device or location.

Technology is fully integrated and utilized in interdisciplinary projects and learning activities throughout the grades. In addition to becoming media literate, students learn the ability to scan, navigate, analyze and synthesize pertinent information. Students use digital tools to research, collaborate, innovate, and create content. VCS’ current Technology Plan will expire in June, 2016 with all goals having been met. A new Technology Plan will be written in compliance with the new criteria.

CHARTER SCHOOL GOALS AND ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE EIGHT STATE PRIORITIES

Please see the section “Goals, Actions and Measurable Outcomes Aligned with the Eight State Priorities” in Element II of the charter for a description of the Charter School’s annual goals to be achieved in the Eight State Priorities schoolwide and for all pupil subgroups, as described in Education Code Section 52060(d), and specific annual actions to achieve those goals, in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii). The Charter School’s goals, actions and outcomes may also be found in our LCAP, available in (Exhibit L: VCS LCAP).

Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)

The Charter School shall annually update and develop the LCAP in accordance with Education Code Section 47606.5 and shall use the LCAP template adopted by the State Board of Education. The Charter School shall submit the LCAP to the County Superintendent of Schools annually on or before July 1, as required by Education Code Section 47604.33.

The current LCAP is on file with the County and is also available on our website at http://www.venturacharterschool.org/index.php/about-us/public-school-reports.

The LCAP and any revisions necessary to implement the LCAP shall not be considered a material revision to the charter, and shall be maintained by the Charter School at the school site.
PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ACADEMICALLY LOW ACHIEVING

According to the School’s LCAP, students who are academically low achieving are offered a variety of programs for support. VCS runs a “Kickstart” program two weeks before school starts to help students who need extra academic support be ready for the new school year. An after school tutoring program taught by a credentialed teacher in the area of English Language Arts and/or Mathematics is offered throughout the school year. Priority is given to students who are economically disadvantaged or English Language Learners. Assessments are given before and after the tutoring to ensure the instruction is effective. VCS also employs a Math paraeducator to help students who are struggling with math during school hours. Students are given help to keep up with the class as well as help they might need to go back and fill in academic holes or mathematical misunderstandings.

VCS’s integrated curriculum is based on high interest content using a variety of teaching methods designed to bridge California State Standards and student learning in ways that are more effective for students who need extra academic support. Our small and flexible groupings, project based teaching methods, and differentiated instructional approaches are designed to support their success. For those who need more individual assistance, the Learning Center teacher provides small group help in basic literacy and math skills to improve achievement. Para-educators are employed to provide specialized math and English language support to students who need it. Parents of at-risk or low achieving students are contacted and included in a student study team meeting for the development of strategies to meet the specific needs of the student. Further support for at-risk students includes intervention programs beyond the classroom and school day.

If we believe a student needs to be retained, we hold a Student Study Team meeting. If the team agrees that this is in the best interest of the child, then all measures are taken to ensure that this is a positive experience for the student. These measures include: holding a meeting with the team and the student; creating an accepting environment in the class; creating many opportunities for success for the student; and ensuring that the student receives the necessary assistance and support to ensure future promotion. Specific times are allocated to provide the opportunity for teachers to discuss and share concerns related to student progress before students matriculate to the next grade.

After school, paraprofessional and peer tutoring is also utilized at VCS. Peer tutoring is an instructional strategy that incorporates research supported practices that consist of student partnerships, linking high achieving students with lower achieving students or those with comparable achievement, for structured reading and math study sessions. Peer tutoring gives teachers the capability to accommodate a classroom of diverse learners to improve academic achievement across ability levels and content areas (Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982; Cook, Scruggs, Mastropieri, & Casto, 1985; Johnson, Maruyama, Nelson & Skon, 1981).
PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ACADEMICALLY HIGH ACHIEVING

VCS’s workshop and project based curriculum provides ample opportunities for students above grade-level to be challenged. Individual and group projects allow self-directed learners to explore areas in-depth by providing an inquiry framework based on the following interrelated questions: What do we already know? What do we want and need to learn? How will we investigate our questions? What have we learned? How can we apply the results of our investigations to other subjects in our daily lives? And What new questions do we have now? Using this framework, students acquire and develop the skills necessary to conduct purposeful, constructive research that allows high-achieving students not only to develop critical and creative thinking skills, but also to support their natural curiosity and sustain their love of learning. Project based learning, embraced by VCS teachers, is open-ended which allows students to extend their learning to their highest ability levels.

Students are tested for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) in the spring of third grade. Those identified benefit from multi-age groupings, are clustered for peer support, receive qualitatively differentiated instruction and assignments, and are offered enhancements and extensions to the curriculum as needed. Our educational program offers many opportunities for students to take on leadership roles, to find resources in the larger community, and to explore areas of interest and make deeper connections with higher level content and concepts. Community service projects, mentorship programs with local organizations and businesses, and prospective career internships are utilized to provide expanded challenges and opportunities for GATE students.

PLAN FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

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

Home Language Survey

VCS administers the home language survey upon a student’s initial enrollment into the Charter School (on enrollment forms).

CELDT Testing

All references in the charter petition to the CELDT shall be understood by the Charter School and the County to mean the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (“ELPAC”), when it replaces the CELDT.
All students who indicate that their home language is other than English are California English Language Development Test ("CELDT") tested within thirty days of initial enrollment\(^3\) and at least annually thereafter between July 1 and October 31 until re-designated as fluent English proficient.

The Charter School notifies all parents of its responsibility for CELDT testing and of CELDT results within thirty days of receiving results from publisher. The CELDT shall be used to fulfill the requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for annual English proficiency testing.

**Reclassification Procedures**

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

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

- Participation of the pupil’s classroom teachers and any other certificated staff with direct responsibility for teaching or placement decisions of the pupil to evaluate the pupil’s curriculum mastery.

- Parental opinion and consultation, achieved through notice to parents or guardians of the language reclassification and placement including a description of the reclassification process and the parents’ opportunity to participate, and encouragement of the participation of parents or guardians in the reclassification procedure including seeking their opinion and consultation during the reclassification process.

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

The VCS reclassification process for English Language Learners involves multiple data points in the consideration of moving a student to the RFEP classification. The data points are changing as California reforms its ELD curriculum and assessments and VCS intends to reflect those changes as they become available. Currently we require an overall proficiency score of "early advanced" on the CELDT with no less than "intermediate" on

\(^3\) The thirty-day requirement applies to students who are entering a California public school for the first time or for students who have not yet been CELDT tested. All other students who have indicated a home language other than English will continue with annual CELDT testing based upon the date last tested at the prior school of enrollment.
the subtexts. We also require the student to be in the "met standard" range for ELA on the CAASPP, be at grade level in writing according to a teacher scored rubric, and have teacher recommendation and parent agreement. We hold a reclassification meeting with the data, the teacher, the parent(s) and the Director of Education present to discuss and finalize the decision.

Strategies for English Learner Instruction and Intervention
VCS teachers seek to improve the English proficiency of English learners. English learners receive instruction utilizing the techniques of phonics, sheltered English, cooperative learning groups, and experiential activities. VCS serves English Language Learners (ELL) at the school site through a sheltered English immersion program. Students are enrolled in an English-speaking classroom with a BCLAD or CLAD credentialed, highly qualified teacher. Teachers, paraeducators, parent volunteers, and other students provide primary language support. VCS, where possible, strives to hire personnel and recruit bilingual community support and services to meet the primary language needs of English Learners. VCS complies with all applicable state and federal laws in regard to services and education of ELL students. Many of the innovative features of VCS curriculum and instruction provide enriched learning opportunities for ELL students. Frequent social interactions in small group settings, peer collaboration and peer tutoring, oral expression during performances, reports, songs and presentations, and multi-sensory teaching methods and learning activities support English Language Development and Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English. VCS also employs a paraeducator dedicated to support English Learners giving explicit small group instruction.

PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Overview
VCS shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act (“IDEIA”), its amendments, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”). All students are given equal access to the School, regardless of disabilities, and the School does not discriminate against any student based on his or her disabilities. The School does not require the modification of an IEP or 504 plan as a condition of acceptance to VCS.

VCS recognizes the importance of providing education opportunities to all students regardless of physical challenges or special needs. To that end, VCS works in cooperation with the Ventura County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) to ensure that the students enrolled are served in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

VCS employs one full-time special education teacher, four special education paraeducators, a school psychologist, a speech and language teacher, an occupational therapist and a school counselor. The school operates a "Learning Center" model and students with IEPs or 504 plans are served in the learning center from 20 minutes per
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week to up to all day depending on current IEP needs. IEP and 504 meetings are held, at minimum, annually or on an as needed basis when initiated by any IEP team member including the students’ parents. Tri-annuals occur on time and initial IEPs and assessment plans always occur within the time constraints dictated by the State.

VCS operates a Student Study Team (SST) that meets at the teachers’ or parents’ request after known interventions has been tried in and out of the classroom. The classroom teacher fills out a SST form which describes the student’s strengths and challenges, strategies that have been tried and the type of help being requested. The Director of Education receives the form and directs it to the proper team member. At this point the student may be referred to counseling, speech and language or the occupational therapist for observation. The student may also be referred directly to the SST team which, at minimum includes the parents, the classroom teacher, the school psychologist, the special education teacher and the Director of Education. Other specialists are invited to the meetings as needed. The SST process allows us to discuss strengths, challenges, health history, and interventions that have been tried and to brainstorm other interventions. If the team deems it appropriate the student may also be referred for a special education assessment.

IDEIA
VCS is deemed to be a public school of the Ventura County Office of Education for purposes of special education pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b). A child with disabilities attending the charter school receives special education instruction and related services in accordance with the Individualized Educational Program (“IEP”) in the same manner as a child with disabilities who attends another public school within the County.

A special education agreement has been developed between the Ventura County Office of Education and the Charter School which spells out in detail the responsibilities for the provision of special education services by the School and the manner in which special education funding will flow through the County to the students of the School. (Exhibit M: Agreement for Special Education Services, MOU between VCS and VCOE)

Section 504/ADA
The School is solely responsible for its compliance with Section 504 and the ADA. All facilities of the School are accessible for all students with disabilities in accordance with the ADA.

Further, the School has adopted and implemented a policy, which outlines the requirements for identifying and serving students with a 504 accommodation plan. (Exhibit N: VCS 504 Policy) The School recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program of the Charter School. Any student, who has an objectively identified disability, which substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, is eligible for accommodation by the School and is accommodated.
II. MEASURABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

**Governing Law:** The extent to which all students enrolled in the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school’s educational program. Pupil outcomes shall include outcomes that address increases in pupil academic achievement both schoolwide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school, as that term is defined in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 47607. The pupil outcomes shall align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(B).

**GOALS, ACTIONS, AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES ALIGNED WITH THE EIGHT STATE PRIORITIES**

Pursuant to Education Code Sections 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii) and 47605(b)(5)(B), the Charter School has established goals, actions, and measurable outcomes both schoolwide and for each subgroup of pupils, which address and align with the Eight State Priorities identified in Education Code Section 52060(d). Each of these goals addresses the unique needs of all students at VCS including VCS’ only current numerically significant student subgroup, students who are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Meals and Hispanic students in 5th and 6th grade only. The metrics associated with these goals help the Charter School to ensure that these specific subgroups are making satisfactory progress, and are provided with necessary additional supports made possible by additional funds from the Local Control Funding Formula. Each of the Charter School’s goals are listed below, along with the specific metrics that are used to monitor progress toward achieving these goals.

Our LCAP is developed with the input of all stakeholders using surveys and multiple meetings in both Spanish and English which are held in the evening and during the day. The LCAP goals and annual measurable outcomes for the 2015/2016 school year are as follows:

**Goal 1. Improve academic achievement of English Learners and Low Socio-economic students.**

Goal 1 aligns with the following state priorities: basic services (#1), implementation of State Standards (#2), student achievement (#4), pupil engagement (#5), course access (#7) and pupil outcomes (#8)

**Applicable Sub Groups:** Low Income and English Language Learners

**Actions:**
- Continue after-school tutoring program by credentialed teachers with a focus on providing services to English Learners and Low Socio-economic students.
Continue to provide a quality low cost after school care program with a homework completion component; will contract with an outside agency.

Continue the “Kickstarter” program begun in 2014: a two-week summer refresher course for selected students before school starts in August.

Continue para educator support for English Learners and low socio-economic students.

Maintain small class size of 25:1 in all grades K-8.

Continue to offer online computer adaptive curricula such as Dreambox and Lexia.

Increase Kindergarten day from 225 to 385 minutes a day (M,T,Th,F) and hire Kindergarten classroom aides.

Provide additional math support for low socio-economic students.

Measurable Outcomes:

- An increase of one academic grade level in Mathematics and English Language Arts for all students is expected and will be measured by:
  - Performance on standardized tests
  - Performance on Charter School administered benchmarks
  - Guided Reading Levels
  - Score on Academic Performance Index of equivalent

Goal 2. Implement all California State Standards

Goal 2 aligns with the following state priorities: basic services (#1), implementation of State Standards (#2), parental involvement (#3), student achievement (#4), pupil engagement (#5), school climate (#6), course access (#7) and pupil outcomes (#8)

Applicable Sub Groups: All students

Actions:

- Provide professional development opportunities for teachers in the Next Generation Science Standards; continue training for teachers in Problem Based Learning, Provide opportunity for all teachers to attend ISTE in Los Angeles in June, 2016.
- Adopt Engage NY as our Mathematics curriculum K – 8th grade.
- Offer an accelerated track in Math to 7th graders who qualify.
- Purchase additional Netbooks and iPads for increasing population.
- Provide parent education on state standards.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Standards aligned curriculum acquired
- 100% of teachers receive professional development in Common Core instructional strategies
  - Staff meeting agendas
  - Professional development opportunities
Goal 3. Maintain and improve parental involvement.

Goal 3 aligns with the following state priorities: parental involvement (#3), school climate (#6)

Actions:
- Monitor reports of volunteers and solicit ways working parents can participate outside of the school day.
- Solicit advice and feedback from parents to increase satisfaction and participation.
- Conduct orientation tours in Spanish

Measurable Outcomes
- Increase parent volunteer hours by 5%
- KeepnTrack system reports
- Improve attendance at meetings and events
- 60% response on parent surveys

Goal 4. Increase Homeschool student achievement

Goal 4 aligns with the following state priorities: basic services (#1), implementation of State Standards (#2), parental involvement (#3), student achievement (#4), pupil engagement (#5), school climate (#6), course access (#7) and pupil outcomes (#8)

Actions:
- Hire two full time teachers instead of four part-time
- Adjust schedule on Enrichment days for teacher-student-parent support.
- Limit Math curriculum to only pre-approved standards-aligned options for all Homeschool families.
- Parent education offered by teachers and coordinator.
- Increase funds for curriculum.
- Offer online Mathematics classes for 6th – 8th grade.
- Implement Teachers specializing in specific academic areas.
- Professional development for teachers in their academic area.

Measurable Outcomes:
- Increase one academic grade level in Mathematics and English Language Arts for all students
  - Performance on standardized tests
  - Performance on Charter School administered benchmarks
  - Guided Reading Levels
VCS aligns curriculum, instruction, and evaluation with the California State Standards to ensure student success. The standards serve as a guide in developing school goals and in making decisions regarding expenditures of resources, allotment of budget, staff development, program priorities, and policy decisions.

To stay consistent with our goal of educating the whole person, VCS strives to create the following measurable student outcomes using formative and summative assessments that are age/grade/and developmentally appropriate, VCS expects students will:

- develop their abilities as readers, writers, researchers, listeners, speakers and collaborators;
- develop their math computation, application and problem-solving skills;
- develop their knowledge and understanding of history, social sciences and global studies that promote cultural understanding, democratic values, and social responsibility;
- acquire knowledge of science concepts through exploration, experimentation, application, research and utilization of the scientific method;
- develop an understanding of the importance of physical exercise and fitness, nutrition and healthy eating habits, and positive life choices for physical and mental well-being;
- apply the skills necessary to work collaboratively and cooperatively in group and community settings and communicate effectively to solve interpersonal problems;
- develop their artistic creativity and aesthetic appreciation for the fine, performing, and applied arts.

Academic Performance Index and State Standardized Testing

VCS administers all California mandated standardized assessments. While aggregate scores generated by these tests can be unreliable due to small sample size and the limitations of standardized testing, VCS uses these measures, as well as other formative and summative assessments, to identify student strengths and challenges, to determine progress toward educational goals, and to evaluate the effectiveness of our educational program and teaching practices. The Director of Education is responsible for scheduling the tests and reporting test results as required in the Education Code and also forwards results to the VCS Board of Directors for analysis and review. VCS staff works with parents to ensure that all parents understand the importance of their child participating in state tests. The School strives to meet or exceed targets for the State’s Academic Performance Index and for federal ESEA Adequate Yearly Progress and/or any new system that is developed under state and/or federal law.
III. METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

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

**Assessment of Learning Outcomes in VCS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Areas</th>
<th>Formative Assessment Measures/Benchmarks</th>
<th>Annual Progress Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LANGUAGE ARTS</strong></td>
<td>Guided Reading Level (GRL) assessments given, at minimum, in the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year. Writing samples collected at the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year, at minimum, and are scored using a four-point rubric. Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) given at least 3 times/year Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) given at the beginning of the year and at semester including performance tasks. Teacher-designed rubrics, assessments, learning targets, exit tickets and regular and purposeful checks for understanding. Portfolios for Project-Based Learning Teacher observations</td>
<td>Current state-mandated accountability measures (i.e., California Assessment of Student Performance and Practice (CAASPP). California English Language Development Test (CELDT) and California Alternative Assessment (CAA) when available from the State and as appropriate. IEP annual meetings and triannual meetings VCS Standards Based Progress Report, which documents achievement of specific grade-level standards according to classroom-administered assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MATH</strong></td>
<td>California State Standards-based content and skill assessment instruments given at the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year</td>
<td>Current state-mandated accountability measures (i.e., CAASPP Testing). California English Language Development Test (CELDT) and California Alternative Assessment (CAA) when available from the State and as appropriate. IEP annual meetings and triannual meetings VCS Standards Based Progress Report, which documents achievement of specific grade-level standards according to classroom-administered assessments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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| MATH (con’t) | Development Test (CELDT) and California Alternative Assessment (CAA) when available from the State and as appropriate.  
IEP annual meetings and tri-annual meetings  
VCS Standards Based Progress Report, which documents achievement of specific grade-level standards according to classroom administered assessments. |
| --- | --- |
| end of the academic year and within units of study.  
IAB Assessments given at least 3 times/year  
ICA Assessments given at the beginning of the year and at semester including performance tasks.  
Teacher-designed rubrics, assessments, checklists, exit tickets and regular and purposeful checks for understanding.  
Teacher Observations |  |
| HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCES | Applicable state-mandated tests  
VCS Standards Based Progress Report, which documents achievement of specific grade-level standards according to classroom administered assessments. |
| Research reports, group and individual projects, narratives, presentations, and exhibitions scored by teacher and student via rubrics created by teachers.  
Portfolios for Project-Based Learning  
End of unit assessments  
Teacher observations. |  |
| SCIENCE | Applicable state-mandated tests.  
VCS Standards Based Progress Report, which documents achievement of specific grade-level standards according to classroom administered assessments. |
| Assessments provided in California State Standards-based, School-adopted science curriculum given after each unit of study.  
Teacher observations.  
Project, reports, science journals.  
Portfolios for Project-Based Learning |  |
| PHYSICAL FITNESS/NUTRITION | State-mandated Physical Fitness Test (PFT)  
VCS Standards Based Progress Report, which documents achievement of specific grade- |
## PHYSICAL FITNESS (con’t)

| Teacher-selected checklists and student self-evaluations. | level standards according to classroom administered assessments. |

## CITIZENSHIP

Teacher observations and checklists of social/emotional and interpersonal skills.  
Various emotional development, conflict resolution and social skills continua, rating scales  
Magic Circle/Council Observations  
Student Reflections

VCS Standards Based Progress Report, which documents achievement of specific grade-level standards according to classroom administered assessments.  
Student Survey

## ART

Self-reflection  
Portfolios, presentations, and performances evaluated by teacher-selected checklists and rubrics.

VCS Standards Based Progress Report, which documents achievement of specific grade-level standards according to classroom administered assessments.

The Charter School affirms that its methods for measuring pupil outcomes for the State Priorities, as described in Element II of this charter, shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a School Accountability Report Card as required by Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(C).

**Non-Standardized Assessments**

In alignment with our vision and our teaching methods, VCS uses a variety of assessment tools for relevant, ongoing, and authentic evaluation. We assess complex thinking and problem solving skills using performance-oriented assessments. We also engage students in self-assessment, empowering them to evaluate their own learning, set appropriate goals, and make informed decisions regarding their education. Teacher observations, checklists and anecdotal records provide a powerful and ongoing tool for measuring student development and progress.

**Curriculum-Embedded Assessments**

Teacher judgments of student learning are a key element in performance assessment. In math, curriculum embedded assessment is closely aligned with problem solving discussions that are a regular part of our math program. We use the Problem Solver II curriculum which encourages discussion on multiple ways to approach a story/word problem. Students are frequently asked to share their methods for solving a problem and
to inquire as to why other students got different answers to understand whether or not their solution is true. Teachers in the younger grades hold "Number Talks" that allow students to start with where they are while being exposed to more complex ideas from other students in the room. Teachers get to know their students well through student work, assessments and discussions about what they are struggling with and what they know and understand deeply. The culminating event of a project-based unit of study is another example of curriculum-embedded assessment. Models, performances, research reports, docent tours, and artifacts serve as authentic products that indicate student understanding.

Formative Assessments
Students are assessed throughout the year in core academic content areas to measure progress. Reading, spelling, and math inventories, sight word, phonics and phonemic awareness assessments, diagnostic measurements, writing samples, IABs and the grade level ICA as well as other teacher-selected, age-appropriate tools are used, and records are kept documenting student achievement. Teachers consistently monitor individual student progress to guide curriculum and delivery methods in meeting students’ learning objectives. Notes are taken and kept on individual students’ growth, progress, and areas of difficulty. Classroom work and homework are evaluated daily. Self-evaluation/personal reflection assignments are given to students at least twice a year and at the end of each project. Anecdotal notes are kept bi-weekly in Writing and Reading Workshop through individual and small group conferencing. Quick-checks are conducted for on the spot assessment as well as informal scaffolding through probing and questioning.

Summative/Assessment of Learning
Research papers, reports, oral presentations, essays, art projects, dramatic presentations, digital presentations, tests, math unit and semester assessments, informal reading inventories, semester writing samples graded on a rubric, project performance rubrics, weekly math facts and word study tests, science assessments, science and writing journals, reading logs, eighth grade Project of the Heart’s Desire (Ph.D) panel presentations, and end of the year state standardized tests all indicate to the students and the teachers whether or not the unit of study was successful and give the teacher valuable information on how well individual students absorbed the information they were expected to learn.

Student feedback
The dialog teachers have with students is an important part of monitoring student progress over time based on standards and ESLRs. Students are encouraged to share their ideas and opinions at VCS. Teachers ask for student feedback about their learning often--some through weekly check-ins, others through end of project reflections, group discussions and check-ins during semester progress reports. VCS has also begun to survey current and alumni students annually.

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Progress Reports
Two progress reports per year are available to parents and those who will have future educational contact with VCS students. Progress Reports are standards based and describe students’ abilities in each content area, learning styles exhibited, and educational strengths and challenges, along with whether or not students have grasped expected grade level content. Progress Reports also comment on the students’ social and emotional growth and development and their participation and achievement in the arts. Students have sequential reports that trace educational and developmental milestones, allowing parents to assess the types of educational services that best suit their child.

Teachers use data from portfolios, formative and summative assessments, CAASPP testing, IABs, ICAs, and progress reports to design future lessons, gather new or additional instructional resources, and create new assessments to measure continued progress.

USE AND REPORTING OF DATA
Teachers work in grade level teams to develop appropriate assessments and to accurately assess student work. We are developing a system to analyze the IAB and ICA evidence for use as formative information. Teachers examine the results of school assessments and CAASPP assessments in order to make instructional decisions about what to re-teach, which students need small group instruction or intervention, or what to teach in a different way.

On a daily basis, teachers collect data from students’ class work and homework such as math worksheets, an essay, a poster, a dramatization, exit tickets, or a presentation. Teachers circulate during Writers’ Workshop and Readers' Workshop to conference with individual authors and readers. Students give direct feedback in group discussions which guides the teacher in designing lessons for the whole class, as well as for individual student needs.

One of VCS’s primary purposes for assessment is to provide meaningful and reliable data to teachers, students, and families. VCS informs parents/guardians of the assessment process. By the time students complete their studies at VCS, parents have an educational history of their child which provides them with the following information: learning styles, ideal working environments, strengths and challenges, the student’s social and emotional development, as well as the student’s progress toward meeting grade-level standards. The School's plan for collecting and analyzing data on student achievement is outlined above. Student achievement data is continuously monitored by staff to improve the Charter School's educational program and is reported to parents, guardians, and the Board through the following:

Parent-Teacher Conferences
Parents meet with their child’s teacher at least twice a year to formally identify educational goals and factors that may impact his/her learning and to review the student progress reports. Informal meetings are held when necessary. As students get older,
conferences emphasize planning for their future education and the preparation necessary for their next educational setting. Student-led conferences are the standard format for the spring conference in the third through sixth grades and encourage students to take ownership of their own learning while keeping them accountable for their progress.

**Annual Parent Survey**
At the end of each year, VCS sends families a survey to evaluate their children’s educational experiences. The survey asks parents to evaluate student readiness for future education, whether the school accomplished its mission, and their overall satisfaction with VCS. The results of this survey are tabulated and reported to the VCS Board, the Ventura County Office of Education as a part of the VCS School Annual Report Card, and to the Parent Council. Results also serve as a guide for the Teacher Council to use in their process of continual educational improvement.

**VCS Annual Report Card**
VCS will compile and provide Ventura County Office of Education an annual performance report to include:
- An overview of the School’s mission, profile, and learning climate;
- Summary data showing attendance, class size, and student achievement in California’s mandatory standardized testing;
- An analysis of whether the School is meeting its Academic Performance Index (API) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals (and/or any new system that is developed).
- A summary of major decisions and policies established by the VCS Board during the year;
- Annual parent survey results;
- Data regarding VCS staff and their qualifications;
- A copy of the school’s health and safety policies and/or a summary of any major changes to those policies;
- An overview of VCS’s admissions practices and student demographics.

VCS and the Ventura County Office of Education have developed a site visitation and reporting process and protocol to enable the grantor to gather information needed to confirm the school’s performance and compliance with the terms of this charter.
IV. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

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

**Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation**

VCS operates as a duly constituted California nonprofit public benefit corporation, (Exhibit O: Articles of Incorporation) and is governed in accordance with applicable California Corporations Code Sections and its adopted bylaws, as subsequently amended from time to time, which shall be consistent with the terms of this charter.

While VCS collaborates with the Ventura County Office of Education, it operates as a separate legal entity, independent of the Ventura County Office of Education. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), the County shall not be liable for the debts and obligations of the Charter School, operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation, or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by the Charter School, as long as the County has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law.

**Board of Directors**

As provided for in the California Corporations Code, VCS is governed by its Board of Directors, whose members have a legal fiduciary responsibility for the well-being of the School. (Exhibit P: VCS Bylaws)

The VCS Board is comprised of a minimum of five and a maximum of nine members with at least two parents of students currently enrolled in VCS. Ventura Charter School’s Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the School’s viability, focusing on financial, legal, policy and personnel issues. Each director shall hold office for two (2) years and until a successor director has been designated and qualified.

VCS uses a Board Selection and Nominating Committee which is made up of two (2) parents selected by the parent membership of the Parent Council; two (2) teachers selected by the teachers of the Charter School; and two (2) Board members selected by the Board of Directors.

The Board Selection and Nominating Committee recruits, interviews, and recommends prospective members, to ensure that the Board remains an expert and well-balanced one. The collaborative efforts of the parents, teachers, and the Board keep the focus on the needs of the students to ensure a viable, sustainable educational environment at VCS. (Exhibit Q: VCS Board Members)

It is the intention of the VCS Board of Directors to meet monthly, except during summer break, to ensure the School’s viability and academic success by focusing on financial, legal, policy and personnel issues. The VCS Board oversees the implementation of the Charter and approves necessary revisions to its bylaws, policies, and procedures. The

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VCS Board’s major roles and responsibilities include establishing and approving all major educational and operational policies, approving all major contracts, approving the School’s annual budget, overseeing the School’s fiscal affairs, and selecting and evaluating the administrative staff. Specific duties include but are not limited to the following:

- Hires and evaluates the Director of Education and Director of Operations of the School.
- Approves the hiring and dismissal of all employees of the Charter School after considering recommendations by the Director of Education and/or the Director of Operations of the School.
- Approves and monitors the implementation of general policies of the School. These include effective personnel policies for career growth and compensation of the staff.
- Develops and monitors an operational business plan that focuses on student achievement and personal development.
- Approves and monitors the School’s annual budget and fiscal and performance audits.
- Acts as fiscal agent. This includes the receipt of funds for the operation of the School in accordance with charter school laws and the receipt of grants and donations consistent with the mission of the School.
- Contracts an external auditor to produce an annual financial audit according to generally accepted accounting practices.
- Establishes operational steering committees of parents, educators, and other professionals.
- Regularly monitors progress of both student and staff performance.
- Involves parents and the community in the support of school programs.
- Executes all other responsibilities provided for in the applicable law.
- Develops, reviews, or revises the School's mission and strategic plan.
- Approves the school calendar and schedule of Board meetings.
- Develops Board policies and procedures.
• Reviews and approves requests for out of state or overnight field trips.

• Participates in the conflict resolution process when necessary.

• Approves charter amendments and revisions.

• Appoints an administrative panel to act as a hearing body and takes action on recommended student expulsions if necessary.

• Creates external or sub-committees as needed, including but not limited to, a compensation committee and an audit committee.

The Board may initiate and carry on any program or activity or may otherwise act in any manner which is not in conflict with or inconsistent with or preempted by any law and which is not in conflict with the purposes for which VCS has been established.

The Board may execute any powers delegated by law to it and shall discharge any duty imposed by law upon it and may delegate to an employee of the School any of those duties. The Board, however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated. Such delegation will be in writing; specify the entity designated; describe in specific terms the authority or its exercise and the beginning and ending dates of the delegation; and require an affirmative vote of a majority of Board members.

**Conflict of Interest Code**

VCS shall comply with Government Code Section 1090 and the Political Reform Act. The VCS Board has adopted and abides by a Conflict of Interest Code (Exhibit O: VCS Conflict of Interest Code).

**Brown Act and Board Training**

The VCS Board complies with the Brown Act (*California Government Code Section 54950 et seq.*). The Board holds an annual retreat for the purposes of Board development, training in effective board practices, and self-evaluation.

**Administrative Team (VCS Leadership)**

VCS’s administrative team is comprised of the Director of Education and the Director of Operations.

**Director of Education**

The Director of Education oversees the educational program and staffing for grades K-8. S/he supports teacher development, coordinates student services, reviews and revises curriculum with VCS teachers, facilitates teacher evaluations and peer reviews, supervises student assessments, and monitors student achievement. The Director of Education reports to the VCS Board of Directors and meets the minimum employment requirements as outlined in the Personnel section. His/her responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following duties:
Is an Instructional Leader;
Promotes and encourages a positive and nurturing learning environment;
Articulates clear goals and vision of the school and measures achievement against the goals;
Provides assistance and coordination of the development of curriculum;
Supervises selection and hiring of teaching staff;
Oversees Homeschool Program;
Oversees parent/student/teacher relations;
Oversees Special Education Program and attend IEP meetings;
Handles child protective services referrals;
Supervises student disciplinary matters;
Coordinates the administration of standardized testing;
Plans and coordinates student orientation;
Facilitates educational events and activities;
Administers enrollment procedures in cooperation with the Director of Operations;
Participates in budget process and decision making;
Supervises and evaluate all certificated employees and para-educators of the School;
Fosters collaboration among staff members and the school community;
Attends Board meetings;
Plans and coordinates tours and informational meetings in conjunction with the Director of Operations
Performs other duties as assigned.
Develop and monitor the annual Local Control Action Plan (LCAP) in conjunction with the Director of Operations;
Prepare and present annual Programmatic Audit for the Charter Authorizer in conjunction with the Director of Operations;
Prepare and present annual student achievement results and progress to the Board;
Monitor Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) reporting and compliance as needed;

Director of Operations
The Director of Operations has the responsibility for all operational functions of the School. S/he reports directly to the VCS Board of Directors regarding all committees and the charter school community at large. S/he ensures that financial functions are carried out within the guidelines established by the VCS Board of Directors.
His/her responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following duties:

- Correlate the Charter School goals with a strategic fiscal plan; create budget calendar and guidelines; review and revise budget assumptions; review and discuss multi-year financial projections with all stakeholders;
- Work with accounting services provider to develop and administer the budget in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and school goals;
- Develop and monitor the annual Local Control Action Plan in conjunction with the Director of Education and the input of all stakeholders;
- Supervise and evaluate clerical and custodial classified employees of the School;
- Communicate with the School’s legal counsel;
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- Stay informed on current school laws and regulations;
- Approve all purchase orders, pay warrants, and requisitions;
- Process all new employee paperwork; arrange orientations and staff health and safety training;
- Plan, coordinate, and conduct orientation tours and information meetings in conjunction with the Director of Operations;
- Oversee enrollment procedures in cooperation with the Director of Education;
- Supervise grant writing process;
- Attend meetings with the Board, Charter Authorizer and/or the School’s accounting services provider, on fiscal oversight issues as necessary;
- Prepare and present annual Programmatic Audit for the Charter Authorizer in conjunction with the Director of Education;
- Complete all necessary financial reports as required for proper ADA reporting;
- Ensure presentation of a quarterly financial report to the Board;
- Monitor site safety and supervise regular campus work days;
- Coordinate the financial compliance and internal control audit and related tax returns;
- Attend the charter authorizer and/or District’s administrative meetings as necessary;
- Develop VCS Board meeting agendas in conjunction with the Board President in compliance with the Brown Act;
- Propose policies and make recommendations for adoption by the Board;
- Ensure compliance with all Board and school policies and procedures;
- Handle crime reports, child protective services referrals, CBEDS, SARB, CCR and other state reports and legal matters;
- Monitor Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) reporting and compliance as needed;
- Participate in complaint and dispute resolution procedures;
- Attend VCS Board meetings;
- Maintain communication between the charter authorizer/District/Board of Education and the VCS Board of Directors;
- Ensure that all legal qualification requirements are met by all school personnel;
- Organize and facilitate Parent Advisory Committee meetings for school culture and organization issues;
- Manage the Information Technology (IT) systems of the school and supervise IT staff;
- Supervise and manage the After School Program in conjunction with the Director of Education.

Teacher Council
The Teacher Council is comprised of all full-time classroom based teachers and the Director of Education. VCS empowers its teachers and trusts their professional expertise to have authority over the creation and administration of the VCS educational program. Responsibilities include but are not be limited to:

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Generates and implements policies and decisions regarding curriculum design, educational methodology, and learning outcomes;
Selects resources and materials;
Aligns standards and curriculum across the grade levels;
Recommend expenditures that support the instructional program to the Parent Advisory Committee and the Board;
Collaboratively creates school calendar of events and activities;
Selects, designs, and implements on-going assessments and student evaluations in alignment with state standards;
Participates in Staff Selection process;
Participates in the WASC review process;
Engages in the Inquiry process to encourage professional growth and development;
Observes colleagues and provides feedback;
Conducts Parent Education training and workshops.

**Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)**
Parent participation is vital to the effectiveness of the VCS mission and the community atmosphere of the School. Parents are requested to volunteer and are able to participate in a number of ways during the school day, evenings, and weekends. VCS has developed an extensive list of after-hours participation opportunities outside the classroom. (Exhibit S: List of Volunteer Opportunities)

To serve the needs of VCS students and their families, and to ensure parental involvement and input, VCS has created a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). It is made up of parents/guardians of our students and its meetings are attended by VCS Director(s). The PAC serves as a forum to address topics of concern to parents in the areas of school organization and culture. The Committee makes an effort to come to consensus on policy recommendations to the VCS Board of Directors. More than a dozen parents serve on this committee and have made the commitment to come regularly to the monthly PAC meetings to encourage consistency. This is also the venue for parent input and feedback on the Local Control Action Plan. A parent liaison attends committee meetings and reports to the Board its activities monthly.

Through the PAC, the annual fundraising budget is discussed and appropriated.
**V. QUALIFICATIONS OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES**

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

All individuals employed by VCS possess the characteristics, knowledge, and qualifications identified in posted job descriptions.

**Director of Education**
Candidates for this position will possess:
- Teaching Credential and a minimum of five years teaching experience;
- Master’s Degree or higher;
- Administrative Services Credential;
- Background, knowledge, experience, and/or expertise in progressive/constructivist education methodologies;
- Knowledge of curriculum development;
- Collaborative leadership skills.

**The Director of Operations**
Candidates for this position will possess:
- A Bachelor’s Degree and a minimum of three years of administrative or management experience. Preference will be given to candidates with experience working for educational or human service agencies;
- Collaborative group process skills;
- Demonstration of leadership skills;
- Preference will be given to candidates with experience in school finance, budget, and/or business operations.

**Teachers**
The U.S. Department of Education recently released a study showing that the single most important thing that can be done to lift the level of student achievement in our classrooms is to support the development and retention of good teachers. We believe access to good teachers is critical and increases the likelihood that students will succeed. To ensure that the School employs highly qualified instructional staff, VCS selects teachers working in more than 50% positions via the Staff Selection committee. This committee is comprised of teachers and parent representatives and makes recommendations to the Board as outlined under the Governance Structure. All teachers possess the subject matter competence and are highly qualified as required under applicable provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The selection procedure does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or upon any of the characteristics prohibited in applicable state and federal law.

VCS complies with *Education Code Section 47605(l)*, which states in pertinent part:
Teachers in charter schools shall be required to hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold. These documents shall be maintained on file at the charter school and shall be subject to periodic inspection by the chartering authority. It is the intent of the Legislature that charter schools be given flexibility with regard to non-core, non-college preparatory courses.

Teachers (Certificated Personnel)
Candidates interested in teaching at VCS must possess the following:

- Bachelor’s Degree
- A valid California teaching credential
- CLAD or BCLAD certification

In addition, teachers who desire a position with VCS must:

- Have background, knowledge, experience, and/or expertise in progressive/constructivist education methodologies;
- Be willing to work collaboratively with parents in classroom and community; open to the concept of community as classroom;
- Show enthusiasm and ability to collaborate effectively with other teachers at classroom and school levels;
- Be willing to participate in professional development opportunities, and to engage in continuous reflection on the goals and methods of education;
- Be willing to work beyond the parameters of a regular school day to assure the success of the program;
- Be skilled at using project-based, structured cooperative learning strategies; integrated thematic units; multicultural education; conflict resolution; and an affective teaching approach;
- Be knowledgeable about educational psychology, particularly constructivist learning strategies and the work of Dewey, Piaget, Glasser, and Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory.

Part-time, temporary, or short-term personnel may be employed directly by VCS. The Board, based on the recommendations of the Directors and the needs to be filled, will determine the qualifications and educational experience for these persons.

VCS employs non-credentialed teachers and specialists to the extent permitted by applicable state and federal law. Educators in non-core classes, defined as those who are providing specialized learning opportunities, such as physical education, fine, performing, and applied arts, and foreign language, will hold either a teaching credential or have subject matter expertise and meet minimum qualifications contained in job descriptions and position announcements. Their role is to directly provide and/or provide for the means and the atmosphere that enable students to learn. Their relationship to one another is non-hierarchical in the sense that every staff person (with learners) shares in
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the responsibility for the educational process. The governing procedure is flexible, maximizing opportunities for consensus decision-making, and assuring that those most responsible for specific aspects have the authority and resources needed.

Substitutes  
VCS uses certified substitute teachers for teaching and qualified classified substitutes as substitutes to fill classified employee positions.

Paraeducators  
VCS employs paraeducators to work under the general direction of a classroom/special education teacher to assist in the education of students including management of student behavior. Paraeducators must possess a Bachelor’s Degree, an Associate Degree or passing of competency exam. Experience working with special needs students and Full Inclusion students is preferred. All paraprofessionals meet the qualification requirements of applicable provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
VI. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

**Governing Law:** The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall include the requirement that each employee of the school furnish the school record summary as described in Section 44237. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(F).

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

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

**Procedures for Background Checks**
The Charter School complies with the provisions of Education Code Section 44237 and 45125.1 regarding the fingerprinting and background clearance of employees prior to employment. New employees are required to assume the cost of all fees related to the fingerprinting process. VCS directs employees/volunteers to a site where “Live Scan” is utilized. This computerized fingerprinting system enables the School to receive reports from the Department of Justice in approximately 72 hours. Employees will not begin work at VCS until fingerprint clearance is received from the Department of Justice.

Volunteers who will volunteer outside of the direct supervision of a credentialed employee shall be fingerprinted and receive background clearance prior to volunteering without the direct supervision of a credentialed employee. Additionally, any parent/guardian volunteer that drives students on field trips or chaperones overnight trips must also have fingerprint background clearance through the Department of Justice and a DMV record with less than two points. The Directors of the School monitor compliance with this policy.

**Role of Staff as Mandated Child Abuse Reporters**
All employees (classified and certificated) are mandated child abuse reporters and follow all applicable reporting laws, the same policies and procedures used by the Ventura County Office of Education.

**Tuberculosis Risk Assessment and Examination**
The Charter School follows the requirement of Education Code Section 49406 and AB 1667 in requiring tuberculosis testing or a Certificate of Completion of the Adult Tuberculosis Risk Assessment Questionnaire of all employees prior to commencing employment. Employees will select the site for the tuberculosis risk assessment/testing and be responsible for all associated costs.
Immunizations
The Charter School adheres to all laws related to legally required immunizations for entering students pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 120325-120375, Title 17, California Code of Regulations Section 6000-6075, and SB 277. All rising 7th grade students must be immunized with a pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine booster.

Medication in School
The Charter School adheres to Education Code Section 49423 regarding administration of medication in school.

Vision/Hearing/Scoliosis
Students shall be screened for vision, hearing and scoliosis. The Charter School adheres to Education Code Section 49450, et seq., as applicable to the grade levels served by the School.

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

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

Emergency Preparedness
The Charter School adheres to an Emergency Preparedness Policy drafted specifically to the needs of the school site. This policy includes procedures and responses to fire, flood, earthquake, and terrorist threats. (Exhibit T: VCS Emergency Preparedness Policy)

Bloodborne Pathogens
The Charter School meets state and federal standards for dealing with bloodborne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials in the workplace. The Board has established an “Exposure Control Plan” designed to protect employees from possible infection due to contact with bloodborne viruses, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV). Whenever exposed to blood or other body
fluids through injury or accident, students, and staff should follow the latest medical protocol for disinfecting procedures. (Exhibit U: VCS Bloodborne Pathogen Plan)

**Drug, Alcohol, and Smoke-Free Environment**
The School maintains a drug, alcohol and smoke-free environment.

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

**Conflict Resolution and Investigation Procedure**
The Charter School has developed a comprehensive conflict resolution and investigation procedure to centralize all complaints and concerns coming into the Charter School. Under the direction of the Charter School Board, the Directors are responsible for investigation, remediation, and follow-up on matters submitted to the Charter School through this procedure. (Exhibit V: Uniform Complaint Policy and Exhibit W: VCS Internal Conflict Resolution Policy)

**Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policies and Procedures**
The Charter School is committed to providing a school that is free from discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as any harassment based upon such factors as race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. VCS has developed a comprehensive policy to prevent and immediately remediate any concerns about discrimination or harassment at the School (including employee to employee, employee to student, and student to employee misconduct). Misconduct of this nature is very serious and will be addressed in accordance with the Charter School policy.
VII. RACIAL AND ETHNIC BALANCE

_Governing Law:_ The means by which the school will achieve racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted. _Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(G)._ 

VCS abides by all applicable state and federal laws regarding admissions and enrollment procedures. VCS considers pupils for admission without regard to any of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220. VCS strives, through recruiting, to achieve a racial and ethnic balance of students that reflects the general population of the District in which it is located. VCS attempts to recruit students in impacted areas and provide assistance to families in completing and returning registration applications. 

VCS employs established marketing principles to inform local communities of the unique benefits of the School. This is accomplished through multiple venues to inform and motivate families to enroll. The School's Outreach Plan includes scheduled dates and times for informational meetings, tours and other activities in a manner which insures, to the extent possible, that all interested students are able to attend. 

VCS, in its annual report for the Ventura County Office of Education, shall include student enrollment indicating the racial and ethnic mix of students and the percentage of free and reduced lunch participation percentage, English Learners, and shall include the percentage versus total of those who applied and those who were admitted.
VIII. STUDENT ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

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

VCS actively recruits a diverse student population from the community and surrounding areas who understand and value the School’s mission and who are committed to the School’s instructional and operational philosophy. Before students are admitted, their parent(s) are required to attend an orientation meeting to ensure their understanding of and commitment to the School’s vision and policies.

The School is open to any student regardless of their district of residence and if the number of pupils who wish to attend the Charter School exceeds the School’s capacity, attendance, except for existing pupils of the Charter School, who are guaranteed admission in the following school year, shall be determined by a public random drawing. Preference shall be extended to pupils currently attending the School and the following preferences, which are listed below in order of priority:

1. Children of staff and governing board members (not to exceed 10% of the total student population);
2. Siblings of students currently enrolled in the school;
3. Children of Open Classroom or Ventura Charter School alumni;
4. Applicants who completed the pre-admissions procedures on time, who reside within the boundaries of the district in which the school is located;
5. Residents of Ventura Unified School District.

Parents will be notified of admission as soon as possible after the lottery. Parents whose children are selected by lottery to attend VCS will be given an opportunity to visit a classroom or attend a Kindergarten Orientation.

At the conclusion of the lottery, all students who were not granted admission due to capacity shall be placed on a waiting list, in the order in which their names were drawn. Applicants remain on the waiting list only until the following year’s lottery, until they are offered a spot in the school or express no further interest in attending the school. (Exhibit X: 2015 Enrollment Data)

The School has developed and adopted a comprehensive enrollment/lottery policy. (Exhibit Y: VCS Admissions and Enrollment Policy)
IX. ANNUAL INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL AUDIT

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

The VCS Board will facilitate an annual independent audit of the School's financial affairs as required by Education Code Sections 47605(b)(5)(I) and 47605(m). The Board will select and oversee an auditor with education audit experience who is on the State Controller's approved list of auditing firms.

The auditor will examine VCS’s financial statements, attendance, and enrollment accounting practices and will review the School's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to VCS and applicable provisions within the California Code of Regulations governing audits of charter schools as published in the State Controller’s K-12 Audit Guide. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars.

It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed four months after the close of the fiscal year. A copy of the auditor's findings will be forwarded to the Ventura County Office of Education, the County Superintendent of Schools, the State Controller and to the CDE by December 15th each year. The Charter School Board will convene an Audit Committee to review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report them to the Charter School Board with recommendations on how to resolve them. The Charter School Board will submit a report to the Ventura County Office of Education describing how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved to the satisfaction of the Ventura County Office of Education, along with an anticipated timeline for the same. Audit appeals or requests for summary review shall be submitted to the Education Audit Appeals Panel (“EAAP”) in accordance with applicable law. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies will be referred to the dispute resolution process contained in this Charter.

The independent financial audit of the Charter School is a public record to be provided to the public upon request.
X. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION PROCEDURES

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

VCS’s Suspension and Expulsion Policy ensures the safety of all students, staff, and families at VCS. Students who enroll in VCS are given a copy of the Student Behavior Guidelines and parents receive a handbook with all pertinent information, including the Suspension/Expulsion Policy. Expectations for students regarding attendance, mutual respect, work habits, safety, violence, weapons, and substance abuse are clearly described. Each student and his or her parent or guardian is required to verify that they have reviewed and understood the guidelines after enrollment. Any student who engages in repeated violations of the School’s behavioral expectations may be subject to suspension, and/or expulsion, and/or may be required to attend a meeting with the Director of Education, the classroom teacher, and the student’s parent or guardian. They will discuss strategies that have been tried and collaboratively create a specific written agreement, outlining expectations for future student conduct. A support plan to assist the student, timelines, and consequences for failure to meet the expectations will also be provided.

VCS’s Director of Education may, pursuant to the School’s adopted policies, discipline and ultimately suspend or recommend for expulsion students who fail to comply with the terms of a remediation agreement. Students who present an immediate threat to health and safety may also be immediately suspended, and/or later expelled by the School’s Governing Board upon recommendation of the Director of Education and in accordance with the School’s adopted policies. The Director of Operations may assume this role in the absence of the Director of Education.

The School’s policies provide all students with an opportunity for due process and are developed to conform to applicable state and federal law regarding students with exceptional needs. The School includes suspension and expulsion data in its annual performance report (Exhibit Z: VCS Suspension/Expulsion Policy).
XI. EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEMS

**Governing Law:** The manner by which staff members of the charter schools will be covered by the State Teachers’ Retirement System, the Public Employee’s Retirement System, or federal social security. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(K).

In order to secure and hold specialized and experienced staff committed to innovation, VCS recognizes the importance of an attractive compensation package, which includes salaries and health benefits. VCS strives to have Certificated and Classified salary schedules that are commensurate with that of the District in which the Charter School is located.

Certificated employees at VCS are covered by the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS). Classified staff is covered by Social Security.

VCS makes all employer contributions required by STRS, and social security, as applicable to the position. VCS also makes the employer contributions required for Workers’ Compensation Insurance, Unemployment Insurance, and other applicable payroll benefits. The Director of Operations is responsible for ensuring that arrangements for retirement coverage are made for all employees.
XII. PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES

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

Attendance at VCS is entirely voluntary on the part of the students who enroll and no student may be required to attend the Charter School. District of residence public schools continue to be an option for all students who choose not to attend VCS or students may attend another school district or school within the district through the district’s intra- and inter-district transfer policies. The parent or guardian of each pupil enrolled in the Charter School shall be informed that the pupil has no right to admission in a particular school of any local education agency (or program of any local education agency) as a consequence of enrollment in the Charter School, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency.
XIII. EMPLOYEE RETURN RIGHTS

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

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

All employees of the Charter School shall be considered the exclusive employees of the Charter School and not of the District. Sick or vacation leave or years of service credit at the District or County, or any other school district, will not be transferred to the Charter School. Employment by the Charter School provides no rights of employment at any other entity, including any rights in the case of closure of the Charter School.
**XIV. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES**

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

**Actions That Could Lead to Revocation: Charter School Due Process**

In the event that the Ventura County Office of Education determines that the School has engaged in an act that could lead to revocation of the charter, the Ventura County Office of Education and the Charter School shall have a face to face meeting within ten days of the Superintendent’s and/or designee’s determination that a violation has occurred. Present in the face-to-face meeting shall be at least the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools or designee and the School’s Directors. If after such meeting, the Ventura County Office of Education determines that a violation has occurred which requires a cure, the Ventura County Board of Education may send a formal written notification and follow all procedures pursuant to Education Code Section 47607 and its implementing regulations.

**Disputes between the Charter School and the County**

In the event that the Charter School or County has disputes regarding the terms of this charter or any other issue regarding the Charter School and County’s relationship, both parties agree to follow the process outlined below.

In the event of a dispute between the Charter School and the County, VCS and Ventura County Office of Education representatives agree to first frame the issue in written format and refer the issue to the Ventura County Office of Education Superintendent and VCS Directors in the “dispute statement.” The dispute statement shall set forth the essential facts and provisions of charter or governing law. Each party shall have five days from receipt of the dispute statement to respond. In the event that the Ventura County Office of Education believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter, this shall be specifically noted in the written dispute statement.

VCS’s Directors and Ventura County Superintendent of Schools or designee shall informally meet and confer within ten days of receipt of the dispute statement to attempt to resolve the dispute. If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the dispute statement the Superintendent or designee and Directors shall identify two members of each governing board to participate in a joint meeting to attempt to resolve the dispute. If this does not resolve the dispute, the Superintendent or designee and Directors shall identify a neutral, third party mediator to facilitate resolution of the dispute. The mediation shall be held within two months of the joint meeting. The Superintendent or designee and VCS Directors and mediator shall develop the format of the mediation session jointly. All timelines and procedures under this section may be revised by written mutual agreement of the parties. If the dispute is not resolved in mediation, both parties shall have any applicable right of recourse specified in law. The cost of mediation shall be split equally between the Charter School and Ventura County Office of Education.
XV. EXCLUSIVE PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYER

_Governing Law:_ A declaration whether or not the Charter School shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the Charter School for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O).

VCS is deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the Charter School for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act (“EERA”). VCS shall comply with the EERA.
XVI. CLOSURE PROCEDURES

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

The following procedures shall apply in the event VCS closes. The following procedures apply regardless of the reason for closure.

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

The Board of Directors will promptly notify parents and students of the Charter School, the Ventura County Office of Education, the Charter School’s SELPA, the retirement systems in which the Charter School’s employees participate (e.g., Public Employees’ Retirement System, State Teachers’ Retirement System, and federal social security), and the California Department of Education of the closure as well as the effective date of the closure. This notice will also include the name(s) of and contact information for the person(s) to whom reasonable inquiries may be made regarding the closure; the pupils’ school districts of residence; and the manner in which parents/guardians may obtain copies of pupil records, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements.

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

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

As applicable, VCS will provide parents, students, and the Ventura County Office of Education with copies of all appropriate student records and will otherwise assist students in transferring to their next school. All transfers of student records will be made in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”). VCS will ask the Ventura County Office of Education to store the records of the Charter School but will offer to transfer student records to the district of residence of each student with a copy to the family.

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

*Date of Submission:* November 24, 2015
As soon as reasonably practical, but no later than 60 days after closure, VCS will prepare final financial records. VCS will also have an independent audit completed as soon as reasonably practical, generally no more than six months after closure. VCS will pay for the final audit. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant selected by VCS and will be provided to the Ventura County Office of Education promptly upon its completion. In the case that VCS either does not pay for or have an independent audit completed within one month of the applicable timelines, the Ventura County Office of Education may, at its option, pay for an audit to be completed and subtract such payment from any funds due to the Charter School.

The Charter School will complete and file any annual reports required pursuant to Education Code section 47604.33.

On closure of the Charter School, all assets of the Charter School, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property and all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by students attending the Charter School, remain the sole property of the VCS nonprofit public benefit corporation and, upon the dissolution of the nonprofit public benefit corporation, shall be distributed in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation. Any assets acquired from the District or District property will be promptly returned upon Charter School closure to the District. The distribution shall include return of any grant funds and restricted categorical funds to their source in accordance with the terms of the grant or state and federal law, as appropriate, which may include submission of final expenditure reports for entitlement grants and the filing of any required Final Expenditure Reports and Final Performance Reports, as well as the return of any donated materials and property in accordance with any conditions established when the donation of such materials or property was accepted.

On closure, VCS shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of the School. VCS will file a final tax return before dissolution of the nonprofit corporation.

Since VCS is organized as a nonprofit public benefit corporation, the Board will follow the procedures set forth in the California Corporations Code for the dissolution of a nonprofit public benefit corporation, which may include bankruptcy, and file all necessary documents with the appropriate state and federal agencies.

As specified by the VCS budget in Exhibit 1, the Charter School will utilize the reserve fund to undertake any expenses associated with the closure procedures identified above.
MISCELLANEOUS CHARTER PROVISIONS

A. BUDGETS

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

Exhibit 1 includes the following documents:

- A projected 3-year budget and cash flow including a 5% reserve for economic uncertainties.

- Financial projections for the next three years of operation

These documents are based upon the best data available to the petitioners at this time and have been prepared by its back-office service provider, Ventura County Schools Business Services Authority.

B. FINANCIAL REPORTING

All governmental funds of the Charter School are reported using the modified accrual accounting method, measuring cash and all other financial assets that can be readily converted to cash. All reporting conforms to the requirements of GASB 34 and all other pertinent governmental accounting and auditing standards.

VCS provides financial reports in the manner prescribed by California’s Standardized Account Code Structure (SACS), for the required September 15 report to the Ventura County Office of Education and for the First and Second Interim Reports, Adopted Budgets, and Unaudited Actuals as required by Education Code Section 47604.33.

The Charter School also provides an annual audit, including financial schedules in the aforementioned formats to the Ventura County Office of Education, the State Controller, and the California Department of Education.

Annually, no later than December 15th, the Charter School shall supply the Ventura County Office of Education with an annual statement of assets and liabilities. This information will be included in the annual independent fiscal audit. However, in the event that it is not contained in the audit or the audit is not completed by this date, the Charter School shall submit a separate document to the Ventura County Office of Education containing this information.
The Charter School provides reports to the Ventura County Office of Education as follows in accordance with Education Code Section 47604.33, and may provide additional fiscal reports as requested by the Ventura County Office of Education:

1. By July 1, a preliminary budget for the current fiscal year

2. By July 1, an annual update (LCAP) required pursuant to Education Code Section 47606.5.

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

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

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

C. INSURANCE

VCS maintains general liability, workers compensation, and other necessary insurance. Ventura County Board of Education is named as an additional insured on all VCS policies. The amount shall be set forth in a separate memorandum of understanding between the Ventura County Office of Education and VCS.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

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

VCS procures its own administrative services, including financial management, accounting, personnel transactions, payroll, benefits, and instructional program development. Currently, Ventura County Business Services Authority is contracted to provide these services to the Charter School.

VCS has established a budget development and monitoring procedure. Budget development is one of the Director of Operations’ major responsibilities. The monitoring procedure will be a routine and regular process of comparing actual revenues and expenditures with the budget plan on a report presented at the monthly board meeting.

*Date of Submission:*

*November 24, 2015*
E. FACILITIES

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

VCS currently occupies a facility from the District under Proposition 39 located at 2060 Cameron Street, Ventura, California 93001. The Director of Operations has submitted a request for facilities annually under Proposition 39, and anticipates the maintenance of the facilities will continue to be done in accordance with state law and the Proposition 39 implementing regulations that were adopted by the State Board of Education. (Exhibit 2: Prop 39 Facilities Request). VCS has negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with the District to clarify any ambiguities in the responsibility of each of the parties relating to facilities maintenance.

VCS has developed a safety and disaster plan appropriate to the school site. This plan includes plans for seismic, safety, natural disaster and other emergencies that may occur at the school site. Annual drills are held to practice the plan.

VCS facilities meet all applicable federal, state and local building and safety codes and requirements, including without limitation zoning, handicapped accessibility, and fire safety requirements.

F. TRANSPORTATION

The Charter School shall not provide daily transportation to and from the Charter School, except as required by law.

G. POTENTIAL CIVIL LIABILITY EFFECTS

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

**Intent**

This statement is intended to fulfill the terms of Education Code Section 47605(g) and provide information regarding the proposed operation of VCS and its potential effects upon the Ventura County Office/Board of Education.

**Civil Liability**

VCS is operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. The corporation is organized and operates exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 23701(d). In accordance with the Charter Schools Act, California Education
Code Section 47600, et seq., one of the objectives of the corporation is to provide public education for residents of the State of California.

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

VCS and the Ventura County Office/Board of Education have entered into a memorandum of understanding, (MOU) which will provide for reciprocal indemnification. (Exhibit Y: MOU between VCS and VCOE)

The corporate bylaws of VCS provide for indemnification of the School’s Board of Directors, officers, agents, and employees, and VCS has purchased general liability insurance, Director’s and Officer’s insurance, and fidelity bonding to secure against financial risks. Insurance amounts are determined by recommendation of the insurance company for schools of similar size, location, and type of program. The Ventura County Office/Board of Education shall be named an additional insured on VCS’s general liability insurance.

The Board of Directors has instituted appropriate risk management practices, including employee screening, the establishment of codes of conduct for students, staff, and participating families, and procedures governing financial transactions and dispute resolution.

Date of Submission:
November 24, 2015
CONCLUSION

By approving this charter renewal, the Ventura County Board of Education will be fulfilling the intent of the Charter Schools Act to increase learning opportunities for all pupils; create new professional opportunities for teachers; and provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in education and following the directive of law to encourage the creation of Charter Schools. To this end, VCS pledges to continue to work cooperatively with the Ventura County Board and Office of Education to answer any questions regarding this document. The renewal term of the charter shall be for five (5) years commencing on July 1, 2016. Renewal of the charter shall be governed by the standards and criteria in Education Code Sections 47605 and 47607, and its’ implementing regulations.