

Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School

Charter Petition



**Approved by the Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation
on November 14, 2012**

**Approved by the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District
on September 19, 2013**

**Effective Operation July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2018
Ammended June 29, 2014**

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CHARTER PETITION REQUEST

In accordance with the California Charter School law,

We, the undersigned, formally request the Board of Education of the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District (BLJUESD) to grant a charter to operate the Wawona Elementary School as a charter school from August 1, 2013, to July 30, 2018, with the opportunity to request a continuation of the Charter provided in relevant statutes. The requisite number of signatures required to submit this Charter are attached hereto as "Appendix B." Required financial and budgetary documents are attached hereto as "Appendix C."

The Wawona Elementary School is proposing to form and operate a community charter school. The National Park Service requires all emergency response personnel and most management employees to be "required occupants" within the Park District they serve. These employees and their families have no choice but to live within the community where the employee is stationed. It is the mission of the Wawona Elementary School to serve the children of these park employees and other local families that wish to have their children attend the school.

This school is necessary for the healthy, safety and welfare of our children so they do not have to travel over hazardous mountain roads to get to the next closest elementary schools, and to support the needs of this unique, rural, national park community and its citizens. Every attempt has been made to keep the school open and to collaborate this effort with the surrounding school districts, which have all declined to support this desirable and necessary educational program for the community.

The charter school will, henceforth, be known as The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School (Y-WECS) and will continue to be located at 7925 Chilnualna Falls Road, Yosemite National Park, Mariposa County, California.

The proposed Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School is a viable alternative to public school educational programs both within the Wawona Elementary School attendance area, the District, and throughout the state of California. The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will operate in a manner consistent with the school's educational philosophy and the definition of a 21st century student as defined herein.

Historically, parents have always been supportive and involved in their children's academic progress and success. Parents are key contributors to the well being of the school. Many parents, relatives, and community members volunteer in classrooms or behind the scenes in support of our students and staff. It is a goal of this charter to maintain parent involvement, and more importantly, increase parent engagement.

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and shall not charge tuition. Moreover, the Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School shall not discriminate against any pupil on the basis of the characteristics listed in *Education Code* section 220.

There is strong support for establishment of the Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School. A majority of staff, parents, and community members have voiced support and have committed

themselves to this endeavor. The following charter proposal is a reflection of the support expressed by the administration, certificated and classified employees, and parents in the school community.

ASSURANCES

- The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School (Y-WECS) shall be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. It shall not charge tuition and shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, 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).
- Y-WECS shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and court orders.
- Y-WECS shall admit all pupils (subject to capacity) within the State of California who wish to attend the school. Admission to the School shall not be determined by the place of residence of a pupil or his or her parent or guardian within the State except as provided by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2). If Y-WECS receives a greater number of students who wish to attend the School and who submit a timely application, then admission will be determined through a public random lottery process. (See Section H – Admission Requirements for details)
- Y-WECS will not charge tuition.
- All meetings of the Board of Y-WECS shall be held in compliance with the Brown Act.
- Y-WECS shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004.
- Y-WECS shall meet all state standards and conduct the pupil assessments required by California Education Code Sections 60605 and any other statewide standards authorized in statute or pupil assessments applicable to pupils in non-charter public schools.
- Y-WECS shall meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including but not limited to credentials, as necessary.
- Y-WECS will ensure that teachers in Y-WECS 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 law, flexibility may be given to non-core, non-college preparatory teachers.
- Y-WECS will, at all times, maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
- Y-WECS will comply with all laws related to the minimum age of public school admission.
- Y-WECS, a California non-profit corporation, shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act.
- 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.

- Y-WECS shall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection.
- Y-WECS shall on a regular basis consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's education programs.
- Y-WECS shall comply with any jurisdictional limitations to locations of its facilities.
- Y-WECS shall comply with the Public Records Act.
- Y-WECS shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- Y-WECS shall comply with all applicable portions of the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Y-WECS 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) for the Core Program. Both the Flex and Core Programs shall meet or exceed the legally required minimum of school days per year. Excellent attendance shall be expected of every student in the Core, Flex and Pre-Kindergarten programs with a goal of 80% or higher attendance rate for each child.
- Y-WECS shall comply with the Political Reform Act and Government Code 1090.

FOUNDING GROUP

The Wawona Elementary School has been in existence at several different locations in Wawona, the southern district of Yosemite National Park, since the 1890's. Over the years, there have been four different school buildings, three of them built in this small, rural community by the federal government to serve the local national park, property owners and concessionaire families. The latest one, a 4,500 square foot building, with 2 classrooms, a multi-media center, kitchen, and large multipurpose room, was completed in 1996. The school is physically located in Mariposa County, so the school was a part of the Mariposa County Unified School District until July 1992, when it was annexed into the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District in Madera County because of the closer proximity to the town of Oakhurst and the high school in that area. This annexation included an agreement that divided the large amount of education tax money (\$822,574 in 2010-11) generated by the national park community of Wawona and the neighboring Mariposa County resort community of Fish Camp into three parts, with 18.61% going to the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District, 35.45% going to the Yosemite Union High School District (now Yosemite Unified School District), and the majority of dollars (45.92%) going to the Madera County Office of Education.

During the 2002 state budget crisis, talk was started by the BLJUESD Board of Trustees to close this small school, even though the education tax money generated by the attendance area residents could more than support the costs. In 2004, a group of concerned parents and community members visited the Department of Education in Sacramento. One of the departments visited that day was the School Fiscal Services Division where our representatives met with some of the staff to discuss financial options for our small community school. The idea of becoming an independent school district was introduced at that meeting. The group also met with a gentleman from the Charter Schools Division and discussed the option of forming a charter school.

That fall, this same group of parents and community members came together and established the Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation (Y-WEF) to supplement the decreased school funding from the state. During the following two years, parents, concerned community members, and the school staff worked on becoming an independent school district, but in 2006, after the BLJUESD passed a bond, the district and county office no longer supported the option. Numerous meetings were then held with the neighboring school districts and county office officials as well as staff members from Senator Dianne Feinstein's and former Congressman George Radanovich's offices to look at other possible alternatives to keep the school open. Despite all of the efforts, and the community's strong outcry for a local school, the BLJUESD District Board of Trustees chose to close Wawona Elementary School in July 2010. Later that summer, the educational foundation made a commitment to keep this "necessary" small community school open for the health, safety and welfare of the students and to not waste the precious federal tax dollars that were used to fund the building of the school. The foundation then assumed responsibility for the majority of financial responsibilities to operate the school, figured out a way to enroll the students in the home school in Oakhurst and yet attend classes at the Wawona School campus, worked out an agreement with the National Park Service (NPS) to use the building, and continued to offer a local education to our community's students. Since that time, the foundation board members, several Wawona and Fish Camp parents and community members, and the former Wawona School staff have been working on long-term solutions to keep the Wawona Elementary School open so that our local children do not need to travel 40 minutes to 1.5 hours each way (depending on weather conditions) over a mile-high mountain pass to get to the next closest elementary school in Oakhurst. This committed group of individuals would be considered the founders of the charter.

Founding Group Resumes

Chad Andrews, Founder, Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation Board Member

B.S. in Business Administration from Colorado State University; U.S. Park Ranger, 2000-present - currently Supervisory Park Ranger in the Wawona District; has worked in Yosemite N.P./Wawona for 4 years and Yosemite Valley for 4 years; has served as YWEF Board Member for two years helping to support fundraisers and homeschool to charter transition; has supported the school as a parent volunteer for various school projects including the school garden, bike repair instruction, and the Planet Pluton outdoor education program; active participant in child's school activities, fundraisers, and sporting events.

Chad brings expertise in the areas of technology, fundraising, project management, public relations, community organizing, and health and safety issues.

Esme McCarthy, Founder

Educator; B.S. in Textiles from UC Davis; Colorado Multiple Subjects Teaching Credential from Western State College in Gunnison, CO; Montessori Teacher Training at the former Maria Montessori School of the Golden Gate in San Francisco; Taught first grade for 1 year in Colorado; Coordinated and participated in coop preschool for 3 years; Established and organized a Montessori inspired coop preschool in Hawaii - worked in the program for 2 years; Home schooled own children for 2 years; Volunteer coordinator for summer reading program at the Bassett Memorial Library in Wawona; K-8th grades teacher at Wawona School for 3 years – employed by the Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation.

Esme brings expertise in the areas of educational leadership, Montessori education, early childhood programs, student assessment, curriculum development, project management fundraising, public relations and community outreach.

Ed Mee, Founder, Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation Board Member and former Chair from 2005-2013.

B.S. Degree in Criminology from CSUFresno; A.A. Degree from Fresno City College; 33 years experience in federal and local law enforcement agencies - over 25 years as a supervisor and deputy chief of police; extensive training in crisis intervention, school/community violence and rapid intervention; Developed and supervised a Juvenile Liaison Program that placed deputies in schools and conducted after-school programs; coauthored several successful grants; Held a CA Community College Instructor Partial Fulfillment Credential; Past Chair of the following civic organizations: Fresno City and County Blue Ribbon Water Safety Task Force and Mariposa County Local Agency Formation Commission; Current Chair of the Wawona Town Planning and Advisory Committee (since 2002); Current member of the Wawona Area Property Owners' Association Board of Directors; Born in Yosemite National Park, and Wawona has been the family hometown of 111 years; Mother, uncle, cousins and daughter all attended Wawona School.

Ed brings expertise in the areas of public relations, community organizing and outreach, business management, leadership, grant writing, student safety issues, project management, public relations and networking.

Greg Royse, Founder, Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation Board Member

Associate Science Degree in Electronic Technology with an emphasis in Electronic Engineering; Associate in Applied Arts; US Marine Corps Aviation Electronics for 4 years; Captain of USMC Base Rugby Team; Bookkeeper for 18 years at 5-Start Luxury Resort; Worked for 30+ years on various construction projects and is proficient in all areas of construction; Has worked for 3 years as manager and bookkeeper for a 4,000 acre timber farm; Certified Ski Instructor for 6 years at various ski areas; Volunteer ski instructor for Yosemite Schools Ski Program; Active participant in child's school activities, fundraisers, and sporting events.

Greg brings expertise in the areas of technology, electronics, construction, bookkeeping and accounting, fundraising, sporting events and community outreach.

Max Stauffer, Founder, Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation Board Member/Treasurer

Owner and operator of the Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad in Fish Camp from 1981 until present – it is a steam train tourist railroad with three retail stores, food and BBQ service and group tour functions, serving 40,000 visitors yearly and involves all aspects of running a small business: accounting, marketing, advertising, rail maintenance, equipment maintenance, personnel management, federal and state regulatory compliance, grounds and building maintenance, equipment procurement, retail store and food service management; Served on the Madera County Grand Jury as chairman of the health and safety committee for two years; Director of the Mountain Area Ski School, serving over 300 children per year for twenty years; Volunteer firefighter serving as station chief for eight years, was EMT certificated; Member of the National Ski Patrol both alpine and Nordic - volunteer patroller for US Forest Service for six years; Board member for the Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau for past 20 years - last two years

as chairman; Member Board of Trustees, Bass Lake School District, for 22 years - serving as president for 12 years; Worked on successful federal funding bill with US Congressman George Radanovich and US Senator Dianne Feinstein through three sessions of Congress – testified on behalf of the school district before the House National Parks Subcommittee in December 2001, and the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks in September 2002; Board member for Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation - serving as Treasurer since inception; Attended Fresno City College earning an AA degree; Attended Fresno State College for three years, majoring in Industrial Technology and Business; Lived in the Yosemite area since 1956 attending elementary school and high school in the mountain area.

Max brings expertise in the areas of business administration, bookkeeping, accounting, marketing, public relations, leadership, governance, fundraising, project management, public relations, and community outreach.

Michelle Stauffer, Founder

Retired Educator; Teaching Principal of Wawona Elementary School from 1981-2010; Intermediate grades teacher (5-6) Coarsegold Elementary School from 1977-1981; B.A. in Liberal Studies from CSU Fresno; MA in School Administration from Fresno Pacific University; PhD in Religious Studies from Emerson Institute; Graduate of the California Schools Leadership Academy, Credentials and certification: multiple-subjects and administration; California Distinguished School Principal 1995; Worked on successful federal funding bill with US Congressman George Radanovich and US Senator Dianne Feinstein through three sessions of Congress; Honored in the US House of Representatives for Dedicated Service on July 30, 2010; NPS Community Service Award; Member of the CA Dept. of Education Multiage Task Force; Mentored student teachers from Fresno Pacific University and National University; Wrote successful technology grant; Presented at several national ASCD conferences on multiage as well as various state and local conferences and workshops; Presented multiple times at Year Round Association Annual conference on year round in a multiage school; Taught technology workshops several summers for students at the Mariposa USD Technology/Environmental Camp; Former member of the National Ski Patrol; Worked in Yosemite National Park for Yosemite Park & Curry Co. in retail and as a fee collector for the National Park Service.

Michelle brings expertise in the areas of educational leadership and school administration, curriculum development, student assessment, fundraising and project management.

Partner Organizations

Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School has partnered with outside experts in charter school development, law and finance for various services in the development of our petition and budget, as well as for continuing support and services after the charter is approved and operational. These experts include:

School Site Solutions, Inc.

Jim Bush, President and Founder, School Site Solutions, Inc.

Jim Bush founded School Site Solutions in 2003 – a company that specializes in the identification, acquisition and regulatory approval of K-12 sites, including charter schools in California. He was the Asst. Director for the CA Department of Education Facilities Planning Division from 1997-2003 and supervised staff and directed the approval process for all state-

funded K-12 school sites and charter schools; including plan approvals. He was the Director of Planning for the Placer County Office of Education for seven years and was responsible for school facility planning issues for the eleven school districts in the county. Prior to that he was the Director of Planning for Roseville City Elementary and Joint Union High School Districts for three years and was responsible for compiling and writing Facility Master Plans, working with developers in designating future school sites, acquisition of sites, funding, architectural and construction management, and completing the state Dept. of Education approval process for these sites. His experience also includes working as an Assistant Planner for Elk Grove Unified School District where he was responsible for compiling and writing Facility Master Plans, working with developers in designating future school sites, creation of the Mello-Roos Financing Program and completing the state Dept. of Education approval process for these sites. Jim worked for the City of Roseville as an Assistant City Planner; served five terms as an elected member to the Sierra College Board of Trustees serving Placer, Nevada and parts of Sacramento and El Dorado Counties; is a current instructor of the UC Riverside Extension Course for school facilities; Was elected to the Coalition for Adequate School Housing (C.A.S.H.) Board of Directors in 2005; Received the C.A.S.H. Distinguished Member of the Year Award in 1997 and Outstanding Service Award in February 2013. Jim received his A.A. from Sierra Community College, his B.A. from CSU Chico in Public Administration, and his M.P.A. from CSU Chico in Public Administration.

Michelle Collins, Planning Manager, School Site Solutions, Inc.

Ms. Collins brings 25 years of experience in planning K-12 school facilities and implementing education technology in the classroom. Her knowledge and skills include the identification and acquisition of new school sites, educational and facility master planning, the State School Building Program funding process, educational technology trends, and educational reform initiatives. Previous experience includes working as a consultant for the California Department of Education (CDE), School Facilities Planning Division. Her experience includes a regional assignment approving K-12 school sites in northern California, advising local educational agencies about the site acquisition and state funding process, and developing policies and procedures related to the school site approval process. In addition, Ms. Collins took the lead in developing and administering federal grant funding programs at the CDE Education Technology Office to reduce the student-to-computer ratio in classrooms, and assist teachers in using technology to support the curriculum and promote student achievement. Ms. Collins received her Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts from California State University at Fresno and a Masters Degree in Psychology from Goddard College in Vermont.

Disario and Associates – School Finance and Facility Consultation

Paul Disario - President

Paul Disario has recently worked as a fiscal advisor/fiscal expert for: John Swett USD, Byron Elementary, Knightsen Elementary, Antioch USD and Dixon USD. He is currently the acting CBO (Chief Business Official) for John Swett USD and has also held the position of the CBO for the following school districts during his career: Millbrae Elementary, Pittsburg USD, Woodland Joint USD, Stockton USD, Middletown USD, Fremont USD, Fresno USD, San Juan USD, Davis USD, Oakland USD and Sunnyvale USD. He has recently been a “Consultant on Facilities” for: Hayward USD where he helped resolve a major contractor dispute, Stanislaus Elementary where he oversaw a school construction project and Sierra College where he oversaw campus construction. He has also prepared and helped execute a negotiations plan that averted a state takeover with John Swett USD; led five tax election efforts – including the largest

school bond in the Central Valley of California for Stockton USD; and Chaired the Budget Review Committee for the Richmond Unified School District where he reported bankruptcy to the State Superintendent. He was the “Administrator of the Year” in 1998 for the Association of CA School Administrators; Adjunct Professor at the UC Berkeley School of Education; and Authored *Board and the Budget* which was published by the CA School Boards Association. Paul received his AB from Georgetown University and his Doctorate from University of Southern California.

Sage Institute, Inc.

Dr. Joel Kirschenstein, President, Sage Institute, Inc.

Dr. Kirschenstein is responsible for project management and operation of Sage Institute, a firm that has established expertise in school district organization studies, public policy planning, master planning and financial structuring, and is proficient in transaction negotiations with school district, developers, investors, lenders, and public agencies. He is a former public school educator and administrator and has had significant experience in both preparing studies and implementing school district reorganizations, including the approved reorganization of the Oakdale High School District, Kings River/Dinuba analysis, Val Verde Reorganization, Lakeside Reorganization Petition, and Twin Rivers Unified School District. He has worked in the development of public/private joint ventures and has personally been responsible for the alternative use or disposition of over \$300 million in public/private sector transactions related to comprehensive school planning endeavors. He has been requested from time to time to prepare legislative drafts, as well as assist with the drafting of OPSC and SAB rules and regulations. He has been responsible for analyzing the impact of reorganization criteria upon available resources and assessing property utilization options in order to maximize school district resources for educational facilities and programs. He has negotiated innovative joint occupancy asset management agreements, owner participation agreements, plus disposition and development agreements for public and private sector clients; pioneered the effective application of Mello-Roos, tax-exempt bond and other special assessment districts and General Obligation Bonds as financing mechanisms to mitigate demands on public infrastructure; had successful representation before the state legislature, other state agencies and various local governmental agencies; and established responsive working relationships with various public agencies, such as, Redevelopment Agencies, the State Allocation Board, State Department of Education, statewide County and City Planning Departments including County Counsels, the California Coastal Commission, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and other regional and local agencies throughout California. Dr. Kirschenstein holds a Bachelor of Arts from CSU Northridge; a Masters Degree in Political Science, Public Administration and Administrative Law from CSU Northridge; and a Doctorate in Administration & Organization, Employee Relations, Planning & Finance from Brigham Young University.

Barth Tozer & Daly LLP

Thomas W. Barth

Tom Barth is an AV[®] Preeminent peer-rated attorney and a founding partner of Barth Tozer & Daly LLP, a firm that represents private and public sector clients in a wide range of legal matters which include public entity transactions, public and private contract disputes, fiduciary duties, real property, corporate and partnership issues, insurance coverage, eminent domain and environmental compliance. He is an experienced litigator who has tried cases in state and federal courts and achieved trial victories on appeal. He has often won favorable outcomes for his clients in mediation and negotiations with opponents, and has served as a mediator/arbitrator

upon request of parties in cases not being handled by his firm. He is an appointed Associate Justice of the California Military Appeals Panel. Mr. Barth has tried cases for individuals, businesses and public agencies. He has advised clients on transactional matters, including commercial and private property sales, trusts, environmental compliance, foreclosures, scope of insurance coverage, public entity obligations, and private party applications for government approvals. Prior to co-founding Barth Tozer & Daly LLP, he was a shareholder, and served on the board of directors of the Kronick, Moskovitz Tiedemann & Girard law firm in Sacramento. Mr. Barth began as a U.S. Army JAG attorney, with more than 75 trials to verdict and continues his support for the California National Guard and military justice, appointed as one of three associate justices on the California Military Appeals Panel, with jurisdiction to hear and decide appeals from military courts-martial. Mr. Barth holds a B.S. from the United States Military Academy, West Point, 1979 and was a member of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. He received his law degree from J.D. Georgetown University Law Center and was the Assistant Editor of *The Tax Lawyer*, a publication that produces scholarly articles, student notes and comments on topics of professional interest to members of the American Bar Association's Section of Taxation and other readers.

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Wawona Elementary School is in Wawona, a small community in a mountain valley basin at an elevation of 4000 feet, situated off of Highway 41, between Yosemite Valley and the small town of Oakhurst. The school has been in existence in this rural mountain community as a multiage, one-room school since the mid-1890's. During the early days, before Wawona became a part of Yosemite National Park, the school was an independent school district (the Wawona School District) under the Mariposa County School system. It was open from mid-April through October, and served the children of private property owners, employees of the Wawona Hotel, and other small businesses in the area. Enrollment ranged from five to twenty-five students, depending on the year and what families with children lived in the area.

In 1932, the 8,783 acre Wawona Basin was purchased by the National Park Service, however some private owners refused the option to sell and so private acreage (in holdings) remain today within the national park.

From 1932 until the present, the one-room school has served children of Wawona private property owners, Fish Camp and Yosemite West residents, NPS and concessionaire employees. Within the various divisions of the National Park Service, the NPS requires all emergency response personnel (i.e. law enforcement and fire protection) and most management employees to be "required occupants" within the district(s) they serve. This means that these employees and their families have no choice but to live within the community where the employee is stationed. Wawona has 23 "required occupant" positions. The employees who fill these positions protect the park and its assets, which in turn draws in the visiting public who generate substantial revenues for gateway communities and the state of California. Therefore a local school is vital not only to the NPS and community residents, but also to the visiting public, gateway communities and, ultimately, the state of California.

Without a school in Wawona, the only other schooling options the residents have are to send their children out of town, or to home school. Home schooling is not an option for many families as either both parents work, are single parents, or don't feel they have the ability to home school. The next closest elementary schools are either in the town of Oakhurst, which is

22 miles and 40 minutes to 1.5 hours away (depending on weather conditions), or in Yosemite Valley, which is 26 miles and 45 minutes to 1.5 hours away (again, depending on weather conditions).

To travel from Wawona to either Yosemite Valley or Oakhurst, one must pass over a mile-high mountain pass. This entire region of the Sierra Nevada mountain range receives substantial snowfall potentially five months out of the year. During these times, the roads are sometimes closed due to dangerous conditions, including, but not limited to: icy roads, fallen trees, downed power lines, automobile accidents, etc. Several times each winter, the elementary and high school buses coming from Oakhurst cannot make the trip to Wawona because of the snow, so students are stranded and miss a day or more of school.

In 2010, the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District closed the Wawona School, leaving it unfunded and unavailable to the local community. In order to keep it open, the non-profit Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation temporarily took over the financial responsibilities and administration of the school so that local children could continue to have a community school. The students are enrolled at Mountain Home School Charter in Oakhurst, yet they come to the Wawona School campus three days a week for classes, have classes at the Mountain Home School campus one day a week, and “at-home” school on Fridays. The foundation’s financial resources come from fundraising events and donations that have taken place over the past several years. However, the yearly operational costs are exceeding the amount of funds raised each year, so the foundation cannot financially support the school indefinitely. Becoming a charter school will help remedy this situation.

The Wawona Elementary School facility was built in 1996 with funds from the federal Department of Education. It is on national park land, is owned by the National Park Service and is governed by the current school district under a special use permit. The Wawona School building complex contains two classrooms, a multi-purpose room with a kitchen, administration offices, and auxiliary facilities (see attached Site Plan in Appendix A.) The current capacity of the school is 52 students in grades K-8, based on State loading standards (25 students for grades K-5 and 27 students for grades 6-8.) Currently there are 14 students in grades K-8, and 9 students on a waiting list. Enrollment fluctuates, based upon the number of park employees with children that are stationed in the park. However we have to be ready to accommodate future enrollments to serve our community.

The staff currently consists of a teacher who is responsible for the education and curriculum for grades K-8, a volunteer administrator, a teacher's aide, a part-time secretary and a part-time custodian, plus multiple parent volunteers.

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will provide a K-8 community school in Wawona that will serve the children of the current and future generations of NPS employees, concessionaire employees, as well as other students in Mariposa County, and from Eastern Madera County mountain areas. The school will also accept students from families who are willing to volunteer and contribute to the education of the students at the school.

A. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The foundation of our academic program includes a multiage classroom where students work in large groups, small groups and individually, an integrated curriculum, project-based learning, visual and performing arts, and a well-equipped technology center. The staff strives to go

beyond simply correlating the curriculum - they work for integration of content across the subject areas. Students are encouraged to be active learners as they take risks, imagine, investigate, question and create. The role of the adults in the learning environment is to assist children in finding their own unique gifts and talents by challenging, remediating, accelerating, supporting and encouraging. Students, staff and parents are kept informed of students' progress through a variety of assessment tools. They are designed to enhance each student's ability to self-assess and adjust his/her own learning and guide the teacher in helping adjust the student's individual curriculum.

One of the greatest strengths of the school is the multiage situation where students and staff spend several years together, which truly creates a sense of affection and respect for one another. Open communication between the adults and children creates a comfortable atmosphere wherein learning becomes enjoyable. The children flourish in this caring environment, and have both respect and affection for the adults in return.

Wawona School is a place where all students at different grade levels are helping each other and learning together. Each day is an opportunity for creative discovery. The adults in the school are constantly looking for innovative ways to make each child's learning experience the best it can be.

Target Population

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will enroll K-8 grade students who are from the southern district of Yosemite National Park, Mariposa County, and from Eastern Madera County mountain areas. The school will also be open to any families who want their children to experience this unique multiage situation and who are willing to volunteer and contribute to the education of all the students at the school.

Academic School Year Calendar

In 2013-2014, our anticipated first year of instruction, Y-WECS expects to operate with a calendar similar to what is used in the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District, with similar start and end dates, as well as holidays. Teacher collaboration days will be scheduled prior to the start of the school year (dates to be determined), and periodically throughout the year to ensure a coherent program of instruction and time for planning all school activities and use of shared resources.

Within the Core Program, students will be provided with more than the minimum of 54,000 instruction minutes for all grade levels and will be expected to complete 175-180 days of instruction.

Under the Flex Program, students in kindergarten will be expected to complete a minimum of three hours of school work per day and first through eighth grades will be expected to complete a minimum of four hours per day Monday through Friday. The Flex Program students will also be expected to complete 175-180 days of instruction.

An Educated Person In The 21st Century

To be an educated person in the 21st century, one must have:

- The foundational skills - reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, and listening skills

- Thinking skills - creative thinking, making decisions, solving problems, being able to look at issues from different perspectives, knowing how to learn, reasoning/logic skills
- Personal qualities - individual responsibility, self-esteem, self-management, social skills, integrity

Concurrent with these foundational skills, a student must also learn how to:

- Manage resources - time, money, materials and space
- Develop interpersonal skills - work with teams, be able to teach others, lead others, and work well with people from different backgrounds
- Deal with information - acquire and evaluate data, organize and maintain files, interpret and communicate effectively, use computers to process information
- Use technology - select appropriate equipment and tools, apply technology to specific tasks, maintain and troubleshoot technologies
- Be an informed, productive and effective citizen in his/her community and be critically aware of local, state and global affairs
- Appreciate and respect the diversity of the different cultures in our world

How Learning Best Occurs

Learning best occurs when the following common elements of a powerful, involved and enjoyable learning experience are in place:

- The child is self-motivated
- The learning is personally meaningful/and enjoyable
- There is active involvement
- It is a safe environment
- The activity is hands-on
- There is value in the learning
- Learning involves a group activity
- The child has choice
- There is risk-taking involved/the student is challenged
- There is discovery-an Aha! moment
- Help is available
- The child feels cared for and supported
- The result has worth

Description of Learning Settings for Program Options

The Core Program will offer a multi-age, classroom-based educational program for students in grades kindergarten through eight. Students will attend the school campus five days a week and will receive, at a minimum, the number of minutes of instruction per grade level. The program will be a hands-on, project-based curriculum, where students will learn cooperatively and collaboratively through small groups, large groups, and/or individually and will be exposed to real-life experiences and learning opportunities whenever possible. The program will include integrated content across subject areas that will be academically challenging and aligned with the California content and common core standards. School attendance will be tracked daily by the teacher and will be collected and stored by the school secretary for official reporting to the state.

The Flex Program will be a home-study option for students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade allowing families and their children more flexibility in their schooling options. The family and the charter teacher will work together to create a personalized learning plan that will be catered to meet the needs and interests of the individual student. Parents will have access to a

credentialed supervising teacher who will assist in planning, implementing, assessing and adjusting the student's educational program. Parents and their students will meet with the supervising teacher at least once every 20 school days to turn in completed school work, record and establish learning objectives for the next learning period, provide any needed guidance and tutoring, and evaluate effectiveness and any needed supplementation or change to the student's program. Families will have access to all resource materials at the school. Flex Program students will also have the opportunity to join in on selective Core Program classes such as, but not limited to: instruction in mathematics, science, English Language Arts, social studies, art and field trips. Daily attendance will be recorded on an official attendance sheet by each parent for a set attendance period. Every Flex Program parent will sign-off on the attendance sheet for each day that instruction is given and will identify the subjects covered and/or taught. The parent will turn the attendance sheet in to the supervising teacher who will make a copy for the student's file and will then give the original to the school secretary for official reporting to the state.

The Pre-Kindergarten Program will be an on-site, private, self-funded pre-school program for children aged three years and nine months to school age. The program will offer an early childhood educational experience emphasizing a Montessori philosophy which includes: practical life skills, sensorial experiences, exposure to math and language concepts, art, music, fine and gross motor development, social skills and kindergarten readiness activities. The child must be 3 years old by September 1 of that school year, however we will accept students as young as two years of age through a "cooperative" option where the parent or guardian will be required to accompany the child for the entire time that the "co-op" child is in the classroom on any given day.

Goals and Objectives:

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School seeks to help students grow and develop in the following ways:

- Enable students to become self-motivated, competent and life-long learners.
- Help students to realize that learning is a life-long process that not only comes from school, but the community and constantly changing world around us.
- Help students to develop the necessary skills and academic paths so that they can choose fulfilling and enjoyable professions.
- Realizing that problems are a part of life, teach students healthy and constructive ways to develop problem-solving skills, and help them realize that mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn.
- Provide a warm, supportive, safe, and loving atmosphere for students.
- Encourage respect by modeling respect, and teach that all ethnic groups are important.
- Provide students with diverse experiences outside of our rural, homogeneous community through field trips.
- Teach thinking skills and the "how-tos" in all instructional areas, including:
 - How to get information and use resources to find their own answers,
 - How to socialize and get along with others
 - How to deal with conflict
 - How to gain independence, etc.

- Help each student to develop an accurate and challenging Individual Learning Plan to be carried out in a non-competitive, non-judgmental environment.
- Respect the different learning styles/multiple intelligences and teach accordingly.
- Adequately provide for the children who have special needs.
- Provide opportunities throughout the day to teach the children to work cooperatively in whole class, small, and multi-age groups that develop leadership capabilities.
- Provide an enriched learning experience for all children, emphasizing "real life" challenges whenever possible.
- Provide a well-rounded education in the arts for every child.
- Maximize each child's academic abilities by creating a greater awareness of personal strengths and limitations so that each child can reach his or her potential.
- Teach self-discipline and responsibility - students are responsible for their own actions and a large part of their own education.
- Continuously facilitate the development of a healthy self-concept in each child.
- View the teacher as a facilitator, counselor and team player - not as an information giver or dictator.
- Provide opportunities for the staff members to improve their professional skills.
- Continuously evaluate the programs at the Y-WECS and make necessary changes.
- Strengthen students' skills in self-assessment.
- Align the majority of our curriculum and teaching methods with the most current state and/or national curriculum standards.

Academic Philosophy

Mission Statement:

To produce self-motivated, competent, life-long learners in a local community school who have a sound academic foundation, create quality work, are group workers and problem solvers, show respect and consideration for others and choose the academic path to an enjoyable career as an adult.

Vision:

To provide a local school within Yosemite National Park that ensures the health, safety and welfare of our children. To offer a unique education that utilizes the incredible natural and human resources within the Park, fostering an environmental stewardship. To offer an educational experience in this setting that will emphasize reading, writing, mathematics, science and the social sciences, communication skills, and a broad-based exposure to other academic disciplines through projects, hands-on activities and real world experiences, whenever possible. This learning will be achieved in a respectful and supportive environment that enhances integrity, respect, responsibility, and compassion for others.

Academic Program:

The foundation of the Y-WECS's academic program is set in a multi-age classroom environment. The program is a hands-on, project-based curriculum, where students learn cooperatively and collaboratively. The program includes integrated content across subject areas, which is academically challenging and aligned with the California content standards. The academic program includes:

- Experiences and real-life learning opportunities
- A project-based learning environment where the activities:
 - Have real world relevance
 - Take days and weeks, instead of minutes and hours
 - Provide the students with opportunities to examine the tasks from different perspectives, using a variety of resources
 - Encourage interdisciplinary perspectives
 - Create authentic products that are authentically assessed
 - Have multiple possible outcomes, rather than a single correct response
- Positive Discipline with natural and logical consequences, and class meetings
- Frequent access to computers and other technology equipment for all grades
- Multiple Intelligences are recognized and honored
- Brain-based learning which purposefully engages the strategies that apply to how our brain works and applies them to student activities and tasks
- Montessori philosophies which lead children to ask questions, think for themselves, explore, investigate, and discover with the ultimate objective being to help students to learn independently and retain the curiosity, creativity, and intelligence with which they were born
- Character development and life skills that create responsible citizens
- Environmental and natural science curriculum in collaboration with:
 - UC Merced
 - National Park Service Education Department
 - Kingsburg High School AP Science Classes
 - NatureBridge (formerly Yosemite Institute)
- Community/ Parent Volunteer Program
- Home-school Option
- Adequate staffing for a K-8 multi-age school
- A merit badge program that includes all curricular areas and incorporates the multiple intelligences whenever possible

Curriculum Merit badges

Students have the opportunity to work on merit badges based upon the idea of the scout merit badge system. These merit badges provide hands-on, student-centered projects and activities in a setting where cooperation and collaboration are key ingredients. The children display their earned badges in the classroom. There are merit badges on all curricular subjects ranging from Ancient Civilizations to Monet. They are designed using the multiple intelligences, the California state standards and other curriculum documents as guides. The teachers and other authors of these merit badges strive to make every one revolve around a meaning-centered, thinking curriculum.

Some of the merit badges are done as a class. An example would be the Astronomy Merit Badge where students would read astronomy books, research the planets in cooperative multi-age groups and publish a class guide to the solar system, perform experiments, create a model of the solar system, write letters to astronauts, record the phases of the moon, and visit a planetarium.

Students are also provided with a choice of merit badges activities on which to work within certain academic areas. During a social studies period in the classroom, any number of projects may be under way at this time. Some students may be playing *Made for Trade* as part of a

Colonial America Merit Badge, while others are practicing a scene from a Greek comedy by Aristophanes to fulfill a part of the Ancient Greece Merit Badge.

Some merit badges are designed to help students master a specific academic skill, such as the Math Facts Merit Badges, while others are developed by students who are interested in learning more about a particular topic. A fifth grader who may want to know more about the human body, might use the help of several resources and the guidance of the teacher and design a Human Body Merit Badge.

Long-term projects are incorporated into many of the merit badges since there is the flexibility to allow students the time they need to successfully complete these projects. Students might spend an entire day preparing for the presentation or culmination of a project. The merit badge curriculum encourages a less rigid time schedule, providing the students with longer work periods for more meaningful learning experiences, and the ability to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Program Options:

Under the new charter, the Y-WECS will offer three programs:

- Core Program: The Core Program will offer a classroom-based educational program for students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade. Students will attend the Wawona School five days a week in a multi-age environment.
- Flex Program (Home School): The Flex Program is a home-study option for students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade. It offers support for home school families. Small group instruction is offered.
- Pre-Kindergarten: This is a pre-school program for children aged three years and nine months to school age.

Curriculum

Language Arts:

Primary-age students participate in a balanced literacy program that includes the following:

- Phonics and phonemic awareness
- Guided reading
- Individualized reading
- Silent sustained reading
- Stories read to the children
- Shared book experience
- Language experience
- Process writing
- Writing in the content areas
- Listening and speaking strategies
- Grade level grammar, punctuation, capitalization skills

All of the above skills help develop the necessary foundation for primary grade students to become fluent readers, writers, speakers and listeners.

Intermediate-age students participate in integrated language arts projects, such as:

- Author studies
- Information projects

- Research projects
- Theme-related Projects

To strengthen skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, intermediate students also participate in language arts activities that include, but are not limited to:

- Writing: journals, reading logs, research papers, computer generated pieces, creative writing, narratives, poetry, business and personal letters, responses to literature, persuasive compositions, summaries
- Rubrics, the writing process, reading out loud, reading a story to someone else
- Grade level grammar, punctuation, capitalization skills-learned within context whenever possible
- Oral presentations, group discussions, teaching lessons to younger students

Middle school students participate in integrated projects such as:

- Author studies
- Information projects
- Research projects
- Theme-related Projects

To strengthen skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, intermediate students also participate in language arts activities that include, but are not limited to:

- Writing: journals, reading logs, computer generated pieces, creative writing, narratives, poetry, business and personal letters, responses to literature, persuasive compositions, summaries, fictional and autobiographical narratives, biographies, short stories, job applications, technical documents
- Rubrics, the writing process, reading out loud, reading a story to someone else
- Grade level grammar, punctuation, capitalization skills-learned within context whenever possible
- Oral presentations, group discussions, teaching lessons to younger students

Math:

Students in all grade levels participate in a balanced math program, which includes:

- Developing a fluency in basic computational skills
- Units where mathematical concepts are explored so that students can learn to reason logically and develop an understanding of them in the abstract and in the real world
- Helping students become mathematical problem solvers who can recognize and solve routine problems readily and find ways to reach a solution
- Applying mathematical skills to problem solving in areas of:
 - Number sense
 - Algebra and functions
 - Measurement and geometry
 - Statistics
 - Data analysis and probability.
- Using manipulatives, at all grade levels, to learn and reinforce a concept
- Understanding numbers and their application within the real world
- Hands-on activities whenever possible, such as those from the AIMS (“Activities Integrating Math and Science”) Program developed at Fresno Pacific College

- Making connections between mathematics and other disciplines

Science:

Students participate in a balanced appropriate science program that includes studying at least one topic each year in each of the physical, earth and life sciences. These units of study include, but are not limited to, grade-level appropriate; instruction, hands-on activities, research, field exploration and presentations from experts when available.

Students are also given opportunities to demonstrate the ability to use the scientific method to investigate a scientific question. They critically evaluate data based upon sound scientific processes and knowledge.

The benefits of the school's location in a national park are utilized by participating in projects and activities within the national park.

Students also participate in environmental and natural science curriculum activities in collaboration with:

- **UC Merced** – the Sierra Nevada Research Institute (SNRI) is located in Wawona and students have the opportunity to partner with SNRI scientists and participate in scientific activities related to their research.
- **National Park Service** – rangers work with students on science projects related to the plants, animals and geology of Yosemite National Park, as well as protection of natural resources
- **Kingsburg High School (KHS) Partnership** – students from (KHS) AP Biology and Environmental Science Classes visit the Wawona School campus several times a year and work with students on life science investigations and activities. Students from Y-WECS also visit the KHS campus at least once during the school year.
- **NatureBridge (formerly Yosemite Institute)** – each month 4-6 grade students from the Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School and the other two elementary schools within the national park participate in monthly field trips to different areas in Yosemite studying the plants and animals, geology and the natural history of the park.

Students in the middle grades spend each year investigating the three areas of science in more depth. Sixth graders focus on the earth sciences, seventh graders on the life sciences and eighth graders on the physical sciences. Hands-on and lab activities, presentation from experts, and fieldwork all help students connect classroom learning with real world issues. The nature of a multiage setting fosters the need and the experience for the middle grade students to teach science concepts to the younger students, thus reinforcing what was taught to them at an earlier grade.

History/Social Science:

The goals for the history/social science program include:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to understand how individual ideas, values and actions have consequences on them and around them in both their small communities and in the larger world. In doing so, they will develop a sense of historical process.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to understand how physical geography impacts culture, especially in the development of civilizations and communities.

- Students will be able to comprehend and analyze diverse social studies resources, including traditional textbooks, non-fiction, newspapers and periodicals, audio and video recordings and interviews.

The students in grades K-8 study yearly themes in their individual grade levels, as well whole class units. These themes revolve around a time frame of a 100-year span of history in the world and include project-based activities. Students study what is happening locally, nationally and worldwide during these time periods. Students construct time lines for the different eras and the various world cultures are recorded and compared.

Each year students participate in an in-depth study of the geography of two to three continents. These activities give students the skills and the opportunity to ask and answer geographic questions, and acquire, organize and analyze geographic information.

Students participate in extended day and overnight field trips that are determined by the social science themes of the year. These may include, but are not limited to: the Gold Country, Wawona Pioneer History Center, California State Indian Museum, Sacramento, the State capitol, California Missions, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Civil War sites, Boston, Rosacrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose, various museums and national parks throughout the country, as well as exploring social studies themes abroad.

Fine Arts Education:

Students are exposed to a well-rounded fine arts education. There is an emphasis on discipline based art education where students: make art, gain an understanding of the cultural and historical context of art, describe, interpret, evaluate and theorize about works of art, and examine the nature, meaning and value of art. Students are also exposed to the performing arts through field trips to plays, Broadway musicals, the opera, symphony performances, the ballet and any other available live performances.

Physical Education:

Students participate in a balanced P.E. program, which includes individual strengthening skills and group activities. Good sportsmanship is emphasized.

The Wawona School has an outdoor basketball court and field area for physical education and after-school activities. The multi-purpose room is used for physical education activities in inclement weather. In addition, the school partners with the Delaware North Corporation and the Badger Pass Ski Resort to provide a ski program for the students in the winter months.

Balanced Curriculum:

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will have a balanced curriculum with students having access to all areas of the curriculum, as well as the fine arts and technology. It is a place where all students at different grade levels will help each other and learn together, and where older students will learn leadership skills as they teach lessons to the younger children and become role models for them. Each day will be an opportunity for creative discovery. The adults in the school will constantly look for innovative ways to make each child's learning experience the best it can be.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

General Philosophical Approach

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School aims to help students become self-motivated, competent and lifelong learners. Realizing these goals will require a school environment that is sensitive to individual and group differences among the children we serve. This is best achieved in a small, multi-aged classroom with project-based activities and real-life skills applications. Such approaches benefit *all* children, but are especially beneficial to the mainstreamed student with special needs. Most goals written into Individualized Educational or 504 plans can be met in the general classroom.

Below is a summary of our approach to several of the “special populations” of children that will contribute to the diversity in our classrooms in some way: English Language Learners, High-Achieving students, Low-Achieving students, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students, and Special Education students. And, although we will speak of different groups of children below, we will be prepared to deal with the true complexity of each child where, say, he/she has high-achievement in certain subjects, and yet can be accompanied by low-achievement in others (e.g., the twice exceptional student). So, while categories are convenient for discussion, in practice we will be concerned with the *profile of skills* (academic and social-emotional) that each of our students possesses.

General Approach to Assessment Data

Multiple measures and forms of assessment will be used to help guide each child’s individual instruction and assessment, by the teacher, school, parent and child. All assessment data will be held in a central school database for monitoring and reporting. Appropriate security measures will be used to guarantee privacy in accordance with state and federal laws. Students may also be referred to specialized consultants in cases where the needs of the child exceed the expertise of Y-WECS staff. These consultants may include psychologists, specialized educators, etc. At Y-WECS teachers will use ongoing and varied methods of evaluating student progress, adjusting teaching strategies and individualizing instruction as needed. The teacher will “intervene” if a student is not making adequate progress, collaborating with a Student Study Team if necessary, adjusting instruction appropriately and then reassessing (formally or informally). This approach benefits all students, but especially identified “special” populations.

English Language Learners

Y-WECS will comply with federal and state mandates regarding English Language Learner (ELL) education and re-designation of ELL students. Y-WECS will meet all requirements of federal and state law relative to equal access to the curriculum for ELL students. Most ELL students are expected to have Spanish as their native language. We will implement research-based instructional programs and strategies to meet the specific needs of our ELL students. Our ELL program will address the process for student identification, curriculum, assessments, reporting, and re-designation as well as professional development and teacher qualifications for working with our ELL students.

Y-WECS will be vigilant about timely identification and re-designation of ELL students. This data will also be used to help teachers plan curriculum and instruction that will support and develop each student’s ability to progress through the ELD levels. Upon enrollment into the charter school, the students’ parents will complete a survey indicating the languages spoken in

the home. This survey will be available in the language(s) spoken by the parents. We will then assess the English proficiency of students whose dominant language may not be English within 30 calendar days of enrollment using the CELDT. We will notify parents of the charter school's responsibility to conduct CELDT testing and will inform parents of CELDT testing results within 30 calendar days following receipt of test results from the test contractor.

Educational programs will be responsive to the specific needs of ELL students and will be in compliance with all state and federal guidelines. Y-WECS will report the number of ELL students attending the school to the District and the state. Parents or guardians will be informed of their rights, and they will be encouraged to participate in the reclassification process. The teachers will routinely meet with parents or guardians to discuss their child's progress toward English language proficiency. Y-WECS will hire CLAD and BCLAD credentialed teachers who have the skills and expertise to accelerate ELLs' academic and linguistic development. The teachers will utilize specific instructional strategies to develop initial communicative competence in English and will be trained in the use of Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies.

The inclusive multiage environment will give each ELL student an opportunity to learn from and with his or her English-speaking peers, rather than being segregated with others who are also struggling with the language. Because of the small classroom size, the core academic subjects will be taught in such a manner that a child who does not have a strong grasp of the English language will have various means of understanding the material. In addition, Y-WECS will provide necessary accommodations and a supportive environment and will also create volunteer opportunities for parents and community members to provide bilingual tutoring for ELL students. The small size of the school and low student to teacher ratio will allow for more focused instruction for ELL students and more opportunities for intensive interventions wherever appropriate. Language ability will be assessed at regular intervals, using informal and formal assessments, and the results will be made available to the teachers. The individualized learning plan for each English learner at Y-WECS will be organized according to each student's assessed level of literacy (reading and writing) in both English and the child's primary language, according to his or her proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in English, and based on the student's progress. Key features of our instructional program, such as cooperative and group projects, peer tutoring and cooperative learning, are recommended strategies for ELL students and have been designed to promote the academic success of all ELL students. The teaching staff will develop an intervention program, based on the needs of students and best practices. These interventions might include:

- Presentation of subject matter using multiple modalities to help ELL students access learning in the regular classroom setting
- Students grouped to support language acquisition
- Focus on developing vocabulary and skills needed to be proficient with the current area of study
- Build first language literacy skills to support English literacy skills
- Peer-tutoring to give advanced ELL students opportunities to strengthen their English skills by helping less advanced ELL students.

The goals of all programs will be for the students to learn English and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards for promotion and graduation. Students will be tested annually, as required by the state, using the CELDT to determine eligibility for reclassification and to assess progress.

High Achieving Students

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will be sensitive to the educational and developmental needs of High Achieving students and will take a proactive and dynamic approach towards their identification, assessment and continued growth. While curriculum and academics will be emphasized, the social and emotional aspects of the child will be considered as well, with particular attention to the child's need for peer acceptance and, when called for, extra attention to social deficits that are sometimes associated with the gifted child.

Once students are enrolled, parents and guardians will be given the opportunity to provide information on the child's prior academic performance, strengths, weaknesses, behavior, personality and health. The school will also conduct screening assessments very early in the school year for all students to prepare for individualized learning plans. Part of these assessments will include the child's self-report of needs, goals and interests, and these will be seriously considered when making decisions on each child's behalf. Ongoing monitoring of each student will routinely take place during the school year and will inform curriculum decisions. The student's work will be modified in accordance with the child's need.

Some varied program options for High Achieving students might include: honors strands in the designated subjects, advanced supplemental challenges, special projects, leadership opportunities, online courses and/or courses at the high school in the designated High Achieving areas.

Low Achieving Students

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will be sensitive to the educational and developmental needs of Low Achieving students and will take a proactive and dynamic approach towards their identification, assessment and continued growth. While curriculum and academics will be emphasized, the social and emotional aspects of the child will be considered as well, with particular attention to the child's needs for peer acceptance and, when needed, extra attention to social deficits that are sometimes associated with the academically struggling child.

Once students are enrolled, parents and guardians will be given the opportunity to provide information on the child's prior academic performance, strengths, weaknesses, behavior, personality and health. The school will also conduct screening assessments very early in the school year for all students to prepare for individualized learning plans. Part of these assessments will include the child's self-report of needs, goals and interests, and these will be seriously considered when making decisions on each child's behalf. Ongoing monitoring of each student will routinely take place during the school year and will inform curriculum decisions. The student's work will be modified in accordance with the child's need.

Some varied program options for Low Achieving students might include: instructional modifications in classroom materials, methods of delivery and activities, additional time, tutoring, specific self-paced interventions, and group or individualized interventions.

Socio-economically Disadvantaged Students

We believe that all students can learn and succeed – some just have higher hurdles to jump and need specific interventions to succeed. As a small, community based school, Y-WECS is in an ideal position to help address the underlying challenges that result in poor academic achievement for economically disadvantaged students. Our charter school’s multiage situation will support the success of all students by having caring, sustained relationships that allow the teachers to become better acquainted and develop deeper and long-lasting relationships with students. This will give them the ability to help address each child’s unique challenges on an individual level.

The charter school will help make families aware of social support services that are available to them and will strive to function as a community center, helping families network and share resources as needed. For economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth, having a community-based school will be instrumental to their success.

Special Education

Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School recognizes its responsibility to enroll and support students with disabilities who can benefit from its programs and who otherwise qualify for enrollment, and pledges to work in cooperation with the District to ensure that a free and appropriate education is provided to all students with exceptional needs. Y-WECS will comply with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any other civil rights enforced by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Furthermore, Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will comply with AB 602 and all California laws pertaining to special education students.

Initially and by default, Yosemite-Wawona Educational Charter School shall be considered a “school of the District” for Special Education purposes pursuant to *Education Code Section 47641(b)*. However, Y-WECS reserves the right to make written verifiable assurances that it may become an independent local educational agency (LEA) and join a SELPA pursuant to *Education Code Section 47641(a)* either on its own or with a grouping of charter school LEAs as a consortium. A change in LEA status or SELPA membership shall not constitute a material revision of this charter.

So long as Y-WECS operates as a public school of the District, solely for purposes of providing special education and related services under the IDEA pursuant to *Education Code Section 47641(b)* and in accordance with *Education Code Section 47646* and *20 U.S.C. 1413*, Y-WECS seeks services from the District for special education students enrolled in Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School in the same manner as is provided to students in other District schools. However, Y-WECS reserves the right to contract with service providers outside the District when appropriate. Y-WECS anticipates that a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) will be developed between the school and the District, which shall delineate the respective responsibilities of Y-WECS and the District with regard to the funding and delivery of special education and related services.

Per Federal Law, students with disabilities will be integrated into the programs of Y-WECS, with the necessary materials, services, and equipment to support their learning. The school will ensure that any student with a disability attending Y-WECS is properly identified, assessed and

provided with necessary services and supports.

Y-WECS will meet all the requirements mandated within a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). The school will seek to include all special needs students with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate according to their IEP. However, if the student's needs as documented on the IEP require a program other than inclusion, the school will work with the District and/or SELPA to provide an appropriate placement and services.

Y-WECS will work with the District to make time and facilities available to meet the needs of the student's IEP. Y-WECS will actively participate in all aspects of the IEP to enable the student to be successful. The school will make available student's work products for analysis and evaluation of progress and will participate in the IEP reviews conducted by the District.

If a parent or faculty member feels the student's educational needs are not being met, they may request a reassessment or a review of the IEP by the IEP team at any time during the year via written notice to Y-WECS, which will then forward such written notice to District within two school days. The school will encourage open communication between the parents and the District for any items related to the special education services. Students at Y-WECS who have IEPs will continue to attend the school, unless the IEP recommends otherwise and states why.

In order to comply with Child Find requirements as specified by law, Y-WECS will establish a referral and assessment process that brings together the parent/guardian, student, and school personnel to address any problems that interfere with a student's success at the school. This process will entail search and serve, a Student Study Team, referral, assessment and IEP review.

Search and Serve

No assessment or evaluation will be used for admission purposes. Through collaboration between the faculty and Principal, Y-WECS will work to identify any students who do not currently have an IEP but may be in need of a pre-referral intervention plan. Principal and faculty will then convene the Student Study Team for that student. Students possibly in need of special education can be screened from already available data (school tests, teacher observations, grades, etc.) regarding the student's progress or lack of progress within the general program.

For students who are identified as needing interventions, a Student Study Team composed of the student, the student's parent or guardian, the Principal, and a Y-WECS staff member will be responsible for identifying the student's needs and developing a plan to enable that student to be successful. If the Student Study Team finds that the pre-intervention plan is not sufficient to meet the student's needs, they will recommend the student for a formal special education assessment. Y-WECS may also choose to refer a student for services through the provisions of a Section 504 Plan, if appropriate. Parents will be informed that special education and related services are provided at no cost to them.

Interim and Initial Placements of New Charter School Students

If a student enrolls at Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School with an existing IEP, Y-WECS will inform the District within 5 days. An IEP meeting will be convened within 30 days to review the existing IEP, discuss the student's present levels of performance and needs, and offer an appropriate placement and services. Prior to such a meeting and pending agreement on a new IEP, Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will work with the District or SELPA to implement the existing IEP at Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School or as otherwise

agreed by the parent/guardian.

Referral for Assessment

The referral process is a formal, ongoing review of information related to students who are suspected of having special needs and show potential signs of needing special education and related services. Y-WECS's internal method for referral for assessment will be the Student Study Team. The parent of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for special education services may also make a referral for an evaluation. Any such referrals will be responded to in writing by Y-WECS within 15 days. Y-WECS will notify the District of the assessment request within 5 days of receipt. Parents will be informed that special education and related services are provided at no cost to them. If Y-WECS, in collaboration with the District, concludes that an assessment is appropriate, the parent will receive a written Assessment Plan within 15 days. The parent will be given at least 15 days to provide written consent to the Assessment Plan. Assessments will be done only upon receipt of written parent permission. The assessment will be completed and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting will be held within 60 days of receipt of the parent's written consent for assessment.

Assessment

The Principal will be responsible for gathering all pertinent information and sharing such information with the District. Information gathered will be used as tools to determine the student's disability, eligibility for services, and the nature and extent of required services. Assessment procedures will be conducted in the student's primary language. The types of assessments that may be used for determining eligibility for specialized instruction and services will include, but not be limited to: individual testing, teacher observations, interviews, formal and informal assessments, review of school records, reports, and work samples, and parent input.

Y-WECS will conform with the following assessment guidelines:

- Parents or guardians of any student referred for assessment must give their written consent for the school to administer the assessment.
- The assessment will be completed and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting held within 60 days of receipt of the parent's written consent for assessment.
- The student must be evaluated in all areas related to his or her suspected disability.
- Assessments must be conducted by a person with knowledge of the student's suspected disability, and administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel and in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments.
- Individually administered tests of intellectual or emotional functioning must be administered by a credentialed school psychologist.
- Assessments must be selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally, or sexually discriminatory.
- Assessments will be delivered in the student's primary language, and a qualified interpreter will be provided if needed.

- Assessment tools must be used for purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable.
- Assessments will be adapted as necessary for students with impaired sensory, physical or speaking skills.
- A multidisciplinary team will be assembled to assess the student, including a teacher knowledgeable in the disability.

Upon completion of the assessment, an IEP team will be assembled to review the results of the assessment and determine the student's need for special education. Y-WECS, in coordination with the District will be responsible for scheduling, coordinating and facilitating the IEP meeting. Educators qualified to interpret test results will present the assessment data at the IEP meeting. Parents will be provided with written notice of the IEP meeting, and the meeting will be held at a mutually agreeable time and place.

Development and Implementation of IEP

Every student who is assessed by the school will have an IEP that documents assessment results and eligibility determination for special education services.

Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School, in collaboration with the District, will ensure that all aspects of the IEP and school site implementation are maintained. Y-WECS will provide modifications and accommodations (outlined within each individual's IEP) in the general education environment taught by the general education teacher. Students at the school who have IEPs will be served in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Each student who has an IEP will have an IEP team that oversees the IEP Development, implementation and progress of the student. All decisions concerning the special education programs and services to be provided to a student with a disability are to be made by the IEP team. The IEP team must include all of the following members: the parent or guardian, the student, (if appropriate), the Principal, at least one special education teacher, a general education teacher who is familiar with the curriculum appropriate to that student (if the student is, or may be, participating in the general education environment), a District special education representative, the individual who conducted the assessment (if the child was recently assessed) or who is qualified to interpret the assessment results.

Others familiar with the student may be invited as needed. Y-WECS views the parent or guardian as a key stakeholder in these meetings and will make every effort to accommodate parents' schedules and needs so that they will be able to participate effectively on the IEP team. The school will provide an interpreter if necessary to ensure that all parents and/or guardians understand and can participate in the IEP process. If a parent cannot attend the IEP meeting, the school will ensure his or her participation using other methods, such as conferencing by telephone or meeting at the parent's home.

A copy of the IEP will be given to the parent. Upon the parent or guardian's written consent, the IEP will be implemented by Y-WECS, in cooperation with the District in which Y-WECS is a member.

Upon the parent or guardian's written consent, the IEP will be implemented by Y-WECS. The

IEP will include all required components and be written on SELPA forms. The student's IEP will include the following:

- A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
- The rationale for placement decisions
- The services the student will receive and the means for delivering those services
- A description of when services will begin, how often the student will receive them, who will provide them, and where they will be delivered
- Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives focusing on the student's current level of performance
- A description of how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and monitored and when reports will be provided
- Accommodations necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the pupil on state and District assessments

IEP meetings will be held according to the following schedule:

- Yearly to review the student's progress and make any necessary changes
- Every three years to review the results of a mandatory comprehensive re-evaluation of the student's progress
- After the student has received a formal assessment or reassessment
- When a parent or teacher feels that the student has demonstrated significant educational growth or a lack of anticipated progress (consistent with state and federal law, IEP meetings will be held within 30 days of a parent's request)
- When an Individual Transition Plan is (ITP) required at the appropriate age
- When Y-WECS seeks to suspend or remove the student for a period of 10 days or more for the same behavior, in order to determine if the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his or her disability

IEP Review: The IEP team will formally review the student's IEP at least once a year to determine how the IEP is meeting his or her needs. In accordance with IDEA regulations, the IEP team will also conduct a formal review of the IEP once every three years, in which the student is reassessed and the IEP is reviewed as part of an overall comprehensive re-evaluation of the student's progress.

If a parent or faculty member feels the student's educational needs are not being met, they may

request a reassessment or a review of the IEP by the IEP team at any time during the year via written notice to the school. Once the request is received, Y-WECS will have thirty days, not including school vacations greater than five days, to hold the IEP meeting.

Unless otherwise specified on the student's IEP, parents will be informed of the student's progress toward meeting annual goals and whether the student is expected to meet his/her annual goals with the same frequency as progress is reported to all students and parents. The Goals and Objectives section of the IEP will be an attachment to the general progress report. This will serve to document the method by which the student's progress toward achieving the annual goal is measured, the student's progress during the relevant period, the extent to which it is anticipated the student will achieve the annual goal prior to the next annual review, and where needed, the reasons the student did not meet the goal.

Staffing

Although the District will hold ultimate responsibility for providing Special Education services (so long as Y-WECS operates as a school of the District for purposes of special education), Y-WECS is committed to assuring all IEPs are properly implemented and all students requiring services are adequately taken care of.

It is the goal of Y-WECS to employ a full-time teacher who, in addition to having the proper credentials to teach a general education classroom, will also possess a Special Education Credential. This teacher will be the primary Y-WECS representative tasked with assuring that all aspects of the IEP and any possible 504 plans are properly implemented. All teaching staff at Y-WECS will also be involved in assuring that all IEPs and 504 plans are properly implemented.

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School also seeks related services from the District for special education students enrolled in Y-WECS in the same manner as is provided to students in other District schools (so long as Y-WECS operates as a public school of the District for purposes of special education). Y-WECS also reserves the right to contract with service providers outside the District when appropriate.

Reporting

All necessary procedures and practices to ensure confidentiality and accurate/timely reporting will be the responsibility of the Y-WECS Principal. The Principal will ensure that a central file with all special education evaluation material and IEPs is maintained and that this file is locked and confidential, in accordance with IDEA guidelines. The Principal will oversee access to these records, and will be responsible for ensuring that all providers responsible for the implementation of a student's IEP will have access to a copy of the IEP and will be informed of their specific responsibilities in implementing the IEP.

Procedural Safeguards

Parents or guardians of students with IEPs at Y-WECS must give written consent for the evaluation and placement of their child, be included in the decision-making process when change in placement, is under consideration, and be invited, along with teachers, to conferences and meetings to develop their child's IEP.

Any concerns or disagreements raised by parents will be acknowledged by the school within five days, after which a meeting between the parent and school will be scheduled to seek resolution

of the disagreement. If a disagreement or concern persists, parents or guardians have the right to initiate a due process hearing to challenge a decision regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of their child.

The school will provide the parent with a written Notice of Procedural Safeguards, which will include information on the procedure to initiate both formal and informal dispute resolutions, at least once per year. Y-WECS will utilize the Notice of Procedural Safeguards used by the District or SELPA in which it is a member.

Dispute Resolution*

In the event that a parent/guardian files a request for a due process hearing or request for mediation, the District and Y-WECS shall work together to defend the case. In the event that the District determines that legal representation is needed, the Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School agrees that it shall be jointly represented by legal counsel of the District's choosing.

The District may initiate a due process hearing or request for mediation with respect to a student enrolled in Y-WECS if the District determines such action is legally necessary or advisable. Y-WECS agrees to cooperate fully with the District in such a proceeding.

So long as Y-WECS operates as a school of the District for purposes of special education, Y-WECS understands that the District shall have sole discretion to settle any matter in mediation or due process. The District shall also have sole discretion to file an appeal from a due process hearing or take other legal action involving any Charter School student necessary to protect its rights.

Complaint Procedures

Parents or guardians also have the right to file a complaint with the District and/or California State Department of Education if they believe that the school or SELPA has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing special education.

Special Education Strategies for Instruction and Services

Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will comply with the federal mandate of the "least restrictive environment", meaning that the school will make every attempt to educate special education students along with their non-disabled peers. Y-WECS will mainstream all of its students as much as is appropriate according to each individual IEP, offering a comprehensive inclusion program that includes specialized individual tutoring. Each student's IEP requires different kinds of modifications for instruction and services, therefore the educational strategies of the IEP will be built around the student's needs and how these fit within the general educational program of the school. The instruction outlined in each student's IEP will be delivered by personnel qualified to do so.

Professional Development for Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School Staff

The Y-WECS Principal, teaching staff, as well as other staff members will attend professional development and/or training meetings necessary to comply with state and federal special education laws, including those sponsored by the District or SELPA.

So long as Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School operates as a "school of the District"

for special education purposes, the District agrees to allow Y-WECS staff access to all Special Education related professional development opportunities that are available to District employees. Y-WECS also may seek professional development opportunities for its staff through trainings facilitated by other appropriate entities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School shall be solely responsible for its compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. All facilities of the School shall be accessible for all students with disabilities in accordance with the ADA.

Y-WECS 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 Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School. Any student, who has an objectively identified disability, which substantially limits a major life activity including but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodation by the school.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Principal and shall include a District representative, the parent/guardian, the student, a qualified faculty member, and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations. The 504 team will review the student's existing records, including academic, social and behavioral records, and is responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate. If the student has already been evaluated under the IDEA but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504. The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team who will evaluate the nature of the student's disability and the impact upon the student's education. This evaluation will include consideration of any behaviors that interfere with regular participation in the educational program and/or activities. The 504 team may also consider the following information in its evaluation:

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

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

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

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

Special Education and Special Day Class Students:

Since the annexation agreement of 1992, the Madera County Office of Education has been collecting 45.92% of the education property tax dollars generated in Wawona and Fish Camp for the Mariposa/Madera SELPA. Since that time, the amount has exceeded \$5,000,000, and less than one tenth of one percent of that amount has been spent to benefit students of Wawona School. We would expect the Madera County Office of Education to fully fund any special education requirements that would be demanded of the charter. If there is no positive outcome in negotiating adequate special education funds from the Madera County Office of Education, then pro-rations will be used from the revenue source for special education services.

English Language Learners

English language learners (EL's) will have access to a quality education and receive appropriate instruction for English Language Development (ELD) and "primary language development" designed specifically for EL students to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English and to meet their linguistic and academic needs.

Students who are at a more developed level will receive Specially Designed Academic Instruction Delivered in English (SDAIE) - instruction that is in a subject area delivered in English, specially designed to provide EL students with access to the specific curriculum.

This instruction for English language learners will be based on information from the CELDT assessment that includes identifying students with limited English proficiency, determining the level of English language proficiency of those students, and assessing the progress of limited English-proficient students in acquiring the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.

Instruction will be delivered by teachers who have been authorized by the State of California to teach the essential skills and knowledge related to English language development, specially designed content instruction delivered in English, and content instruction delivered in the pupils' primary languages.

B. MEASURABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

In this section we identify measurable outcomes, which will demonstrate the extent to which our students have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in our educational philosophy. We will use these measurable outcomes to systematically review student progress and to identify how to improve the educational program.

School-wide student performance goals that all students, at their appropriate developmental levels will achieve include:

- Demonstrate written and oral communication that effectively conveys facts, opinions, ideas and emotions.
- Read and effectively interpret a variety of written materials including literature, poetry, reference materials, periodicals, newspapers, primary and secondary source documents.
- Access and interpret information and apply that knowledge to new situations.
- Apply mathematical skills, reason logically, think critically and use mathematical techniques to solve problems.
- Effectively use technology to access and communicate information.
- Demonstrate and acknowledge science as a part of everyday life through a variety of tasks, including hands-on, in the physical, earth and life sciences.
- Demonstrate a knowledge of relationships and connections that exist in real life through the study of world history, geography and social science.
- Observe and experience the performing and visual arts.
- Understand the responsibilities of citizenship and the importance of working as a team member.
- Participate in various physical fitness activities that include group, team and individual skills.
- Demonstrate the understanding that all peoples' actions and behaviors have a consequence that can affect themselves and others in a positive or negative way.
- Show one year's academic growth as measured by multiple assessment tools.

ACADEMIC GOALS

Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School has established academic goals, as reflected in the following Table, according to our mission. Performance goals will be aligned to state and national core standards and the proficiency measures assessed by the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) system, as well as the multiple and varied assessments described in Element C. Performance goals will be modified over time as needed.

In addition to these high level goals, our teachers will establish additional, specific “benchmark” skills and classroom-level skills and goals in order to monitor student progress and refine methods of instruction, as needed. Attainment of classroom and high-level goals will prepare all students for high school A-G courses required to gain entrance to the University of California and California State Universities.

At the beginning of each school year, annual individual learning plans for each student will be written collaboratively by the teacher, student and parent. These plans will include academic

standards and developmentally appropriate social skills. Learning plans will be modified, as needed, throughout the school year.

C. METHOD OF MEASURING STUDENT OUTCOMES

At the beginning of each year, or upon enrollment, each student will be assessed. These assessments will include, but will not be limited to, a reading inventory, spelling inventory, standards-based math assessment, and writing sample. These assessments will be the basis for determining academic objectives for each student's individual learning plan and will be used again at the end of the year to evaluate student growth.

Methods by which student progress will be assessed will include, but are not limited to, some of the following:

- Standardized State Assessments
- Portfolios
- Student Project Presentations
- Demonstration and Performance Tasks
- Rubrics
- Progress on Individual Learning Plans
- Report cards/progress reports
- Samples of student work
- Teacher observation - formal and informal assessments

School-wide Student Performance Goals, Objectives, Assessment Tools and Timeline

Goal	Objective	Assessment Tools	Timeline
Proficiency in English/Language Arts: • Ability to demonstrate written and oral communication that effectively conveys facts, opinions, ideas and emotions. • Read and effectively interpret a variety of written materials including literature, poetry, reference materials, periodicals, newspapers, primary and secondary source documents. • Access and interpret information and apply that knowledge to new situations.	Students will show individual growth in at least 60% of the strands on the English Language Arts CST's/ Common Core Standards Test OR an annual improvement of 5% per year until this objective is met.	CST and/or Common Core Standards Test In-class Assessments S.T.A.R. /Common Core Test Results Tracking Sheet Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan Portfolios Rubrics Samples of student work Student project presentations	Annually per state schedule Teacher Determined Schedule Weekly Teacher/Student Conferences
Proficiency in Math: • Apply mathematical skills, reason logically, think critically and use mathematical techniques to solve problems.	Students will show individual growth in at least 60% of the strands on the Math CST's/ Common Core Standards Test OR an annual improvement of 5% per year until this objective is met.	CST and/or Common Core Standards Test Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan In-class Assessments S.T.A.R. /Common Core	Annually per state schedule Teacher Determined Schedule Weekly Teacher/Student Conferences

		Test Results Tracking Sheet	
Proficiency in Science: • Demonstrate and acknowledge science as a part of everyday life through a variety of tasks, including hands-on, in the physical, earth and life sciences.	Students will show individual growth in at least 60% of the strands on the Science CST's/ Common Core Standards Test OR an annual improvement of 5% per year until this objective is met	CST and/or Common Core Standards Test Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan In-class Assessments S.T.A.R. /Common Core Test Results Tracking Sheet Student Project Presentations Demonstration and Performance Tasks	Annually per state schedule Teacher Determined Schedule Weekly Teacher/Student Conferences
Proficiency in Social Science: • Demonstrate a knowledge of relationships and connections that exist in real life through the study of world history, geography and social science.	Students will show individual growth in at least 60% of the strands on the History and Social Science CST's/ Common Core Standards.	CST and/or Common Core Standards Test In-class Assessments Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan Student Project Presentations	Annually per state schedule Teacher Determined Schedule Weekly Teacher/Student Conferences
Special Student Populations English Learners Special Education	ELL students will make progress toward fluency ELL students will achieve or make significant progress in the ELD levels Special ed. students will achieve or make significant progress in their IEP's or 504 plans	CELDT Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan IEP	Annually per state schedule Minimum of annually and as required in Special Education Section

Students Effectively Use Technology for their Age and Development

Goal	Objective	Assessment Tools	Timeline
Effectively use technology to access and communicate information: • incorporate technology across the curriculum • to encourage students to use technology • to orient students about the various forms of technology	80% of students will participate in strategies for using technology to improve academic achievement 80% of students will participate in an age-appropriate typing skills program to improve typing fluency	In-class Assessments Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan Student Portfolios and/or Project Presentations Samples of Student Work Teacher observation	Quarterly Assessments

	By 4 th grade, 80% of students will use technology to create a project		
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Students are Exposed to a Well-rounded Arts Education

Goal	Objective	Assessment Tools	Timeline
Performing and visual arts	80% of students will participate in art activities, discussions and critiques, and field trips to various art museums, performing arts events and venues	In-class Assessments Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan Student Portfolios and/or Project Presentations Samples of Student Work	Monthly Teacher Assessments

Students Achieve Physical Fitness for their Age and Development

Goal	Objective	Assessment Tools	Timeline
Physical Fitness: • Participate in various physical fitness activities that include group, team and individual skills	80% of students perform in the Healthy Fitness Zone on at least four out of six standards on the Physical Fitness Test	California Physical Fitness Test Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan	Annually in grades 5 and 7

Students are social and emotionally well and develop collaboration skills

Goal	Objective	Assessment Tools	Timeline
Students collaborate and cooperate on classroom activities: • Understand the responsibilities of citizenship and the importance of working as a team member • Demonstrate the understanding that all peoples' actions and behaviors have a consequence that can affect themselves and others in a positive or negative way.	Classroom and individual student assessments will indicate that 90% of the student body are demonstrating age-appropriate collaboration and cooperation skills	Teacher anecdotal notes Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan Authentic Assessments Teacher observation Rubrics	Teacher determined schedule Quarterly review of progress
High attendance levels	80% or above attendance or progress towards 95%	Attendance records Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan	Daily monitoring and compilation of records
High level of student and parent satisfaction	90% favorable results in parent and student surveys	Parent and student satisfaction surveys	Quarterly

		Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan	
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Y-WECS meets or exceeds API goals

Goal	Objective	Assessment Tools	Timeline
Y-WECS meets or exceeds API goals	95% participation rate in STAR Test or Common Core Standards Test	CST and/or Common Core Standards Test S.T.A.R. /Common Core Test Results Tracking Sheet	Annually per state schedule
Show one year's academic growth as measured by multiple assessment tools.	Students will show individual growth in at least 60% of the strands on the CST's/ Common Core Standards Test OR an annual improvement of 5% per year until this objective is met.	CST and/or Common Core Standards Test Continuous Improvement Student Learning Plan S.T.A.R. /Common Core Test Results Tracking Sheet Authentic Assessments In-class Assessments	Annually per state schedule Teacher determined schedule

D. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will be operated as a California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation. The school will be governed pursuant to the Bylaws adopted by Y-WECS' Board of Directors, and subsequently amended pursuant to the amendment process specified in the Bylaws. The Board of Director's major roles and responsibilities will include establishing and approving all major educational and operational policies, approving all major contracts, approving the school's annual budget and overseeing the school's fiscal affairs, and selecting and evaluating the top administrative staff. The school's Board of Directors will include qualified staff, parents and community members. This shall be the primary means of ensuring parental involvement in the governance structure of the charter school. Y-WECS' Bylaws will also permit one representative of the governing board of the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District to participate on the school's governing board as a full voting member of the Board of Directors. All meetings of the Board of Y-WECS shall be held in compliance with the Brown Act and the Public Records Act.

The number of directors shall be no less than three (3) and no more than seven (7), unless changed by amendments to these bylaws. The Board of Directors will be composed of representatives of the following constituencies:

- a. Two parents of the Y-WECS students
- b. One staff member
- c. One community member

d. One representative of the BLJUESD Board of Trustees

The incorporator of Y-WECS has appointed the initial Board of Directors, who will serve terms of two years. Thereafter, any Director shall be nominated and selected for a term of two years by a simply majority vote of the standing Board of Directors.

Each Director shall be a person who has demonstrated commitment to the education of the students in the Y-WECS and who understands the importance of the school to the community it serves.

Any person qualified to be a Director may be nominated by a Director. Nominations for the board of Directors shall be presented to the Board by any Director at any meeting of the Board of Directors.

Any Director may resign effective on giving notice to the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

A Director may be removed from the Board as provided in the Bylaws of Y-WECS.

The Board of Directors will evaluate the Y-WECS program annually. They will look at all aspects of the school program, its effectiveness, and its compliance with the charter. The Board of Directors will be responsible for recommending changes to the program and for recommending amendments to the charter. All recommended amendments to the charter will require a majority vote of the Board of Directors. All material amendments to the charter must ultimately be approved by the BLJUESD Board of Trustees.

The principal of the Y-WECS, or his/her designee, may report to BLJUESD Board of Trustees at its regular board meetings.

As the Y-WECS is a public entity and its officials are considered to be public officials with the state's public school system, the Y-WECS board will establish and adopt a Conflict of Interest Policy which will insure that school staff will make every effort to avoid conflicts of interest in all of its actions. Given that the unique character and purpose of charter schools often results in employees serving on governing boards, the charter school will not be expected to maintain an absolute ban on contracts between the charter school and any governing board members, which would preclude such service by employees. Rather, the Y-WECS agrees that, at a minimum, it shall comply with the conflict of interest laws governing California non-profit public benefit corporations. (Under the non-profit corporation standards, for example, up to 49% of the governing board may be "interested", although they cannot vote on those matters in which they have an interest. Thus, if a teacher serves on the Charter School Governing Board, that teacher may not vote on or participate in decisions on teacher salaries, benefits, raises or conditions of employment.)

Family Involvement

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School has an open-door philosophy to encourage family input in planning, teaching and organizing the school program. Furthermore, as part of their agreement with the school, parents (or the assigned responsible adult) will:

- Participate in parent/student/teacher conferences to discuss goals and the individual learning plan for the student.

- Attend an orientation parent meeting at the beginning of the school year to discuss the plans for the year.
- Demonstrate involvement by attending PTG meetings, participating in school committees, and attending parent education nights throughout the school year.
- Maintain contact with the child's teacher on a regular basis.
- Read the weekly school newsletter.
- Facilitate the child's learning at home by making time for school work and projects, reading with and to the child, and involving the family in extra-curricular enrichment activities such as, visiting museums, cultural exhibitions, the library, etc.
- Encourage parents to volunteer in various capacities for a minimum of 40 hours a year, as needed, in a variety of areas, such as:
 - school librarian
 - fund-raising events
 - teach a special project to a group
 - coordinate volunteers
 - technology repairs
 - classroom volunteer
 - field trip/activity chaperone
 - help with office work
 - participate in school activities

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary School is committed to partnership with all parents and students in providing quality education. By requesting that all parents and students participate by accepting the conditions listed in the Y-WECS Parent/Student Agreement, the school seeks to empower the parents to be actively engaged in the process of educating their children and thus improve academic performance.

E. EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS

Individuals employed by our school should be models of those characteristics we wish to nurture in our students. They **will** display a continuing passion for learning and strive for excellence in their chosen field. They will be intelligent, flexible, open to the process of personal growth, and skilled in communication. Their accomplishments and competence may be demonstrated by experience working with children under the guidance of recognized experts, or by reputation, and high regard in the community. In addition, all charter teachers will possess a valid California Teaching Credential and be NCLB highly qualified.

In addition to holding a valid California teaching credential, all Y-WECS teachers must have the knowledge base and experience identified on the teacher job description. Y-WEF may also employ or retain non-certificated instructional support staff in any non-core, non college preparatory course where a prospective staff member has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience, and the demonstrated capacity to work successfully in an instructional support capacity. Instructional support staff will not assign grades or approve student work assignments without the approval of an appropriately credentialed teacher. All non-instructional staff will possess experience and expertise appropriate for their position within the school.

Specialty instructors may be used to teach classes on a limited basis. These persons need not be credentialed teachers, they may be volunteers, or they may be paid as independent contractors on an hourly rate or flat fee basis. These specialty instructors will not replace any regular Y-WECS teacher positions or assignments and will accrue no teacher rights.

All personnel to be hired for Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School must be approved by the Y-WEF Board of Directors. All district employees that are assigned employment with the charter school must agree (volunteer) prior to assignment.

Employees of the Charter shall gain no rights or seniority with the BLJUESD and shall be deemed employees of the Charter School. As such, the BLJUESD will have no authority over personnel selection, evaluation or terminations. Such selection shall be at the discretion of the Y-WEF Board of Directors. Terms of employment shall be defined by the Y-WEF Board of Directors in agreements with the teachers.

F. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will comply with Education Code 44237 by having each employee complete a Department of Justice and FBI criminal background, which includes finger-printing and a criminal record summary, prior to working in the Charter School to insure the safety of all employees and students. Credentialed employees will be trained in first aid and CPR. All required health and immunizations standards and records will be maintained for all students and employees. The charter school shall adopt the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District's comprehensive set of health and safety policies, practices, and procedures.

G. RACIAL AND ETHNIC BALANCE

The Wawona Elementary School maintains a racial and ethnic balance among its students and staff that reflects the general population of the school district and the surrounding mountain area through an open enrollment policy. This policy will continue under the charter.

H. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations. Y-WECS will not discriminate against any pupil on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will consider admission for K-8th grade students without regard to ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability. Kindergarten students may be enrolled if they are at least five years old by September 1st of the current school year or as allowed by state education code. Admission will not be determined according to the place of residence of the students or parents, however, preference will be give to students who are from the southern district of Yosemite National Park, Mariposa County, and from Eastern Madera County mountain areas. The school will also accept students from any families who are willing to volunteer and contribute to the education of the students at the school.

The registration process will consist of a visit and a mutual interview with the student/family and parent/faculty representatives of the school. During this interview the school representatives will inform the family of the school philosophy to ensure that the needs and expectations of both parties will be met.

Prior to being admitted into any program, the Y-WECS, students and parents will be required to:

- Understand the Charter School's philosophy

- Select the student’s educational program (core, flex, pre-K)
- Sign and agree to abide by the Charter School Agreement
- Sign and agree to the Charter School Attendance Policy in the Charter School Parent/Student Handbook.
- Agree to abide by the guidelines set forth in the Charter School Parent/Student Handbook.

Prior to being admitted into the Y-WECS Flex Program, students and parents will be required to abide by all of the above, plus sign an agreement that must stipulate all of the following:

- 1) Parents, or other responsible adults, must be available to assist the student in reaching educational goals.
- 2) Parent, or other responsible adults, will be involved in academic support.
- 3) Parents, or other responsible adult, and student must attend scheduled progress meetings.
- 4) Parent will sign and promptly submit monthly attendance records to school supervising teacher and/or school secretary.

Within the first year of being admitted to the Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School, students and parents will be required to:

- Maintain the academic proficiency standards set for each grade level to remain in the Y-WECS.
- Demonstrate adherence to the Charter School Agreement to remain at Y-WECS.
- Participate and be involved in the educational program to remain in the Y-WECS.

In the event that applications for enrollment exceed the school’s capacity, a public random drawing for admission shall be held. Preference shall be extended in the following order:

- 1) Children of families with students currently attending the charter school
- 2) Students who live in the southern district of Yosemite National Park (Wawona) or the Fish Camp community
- 3) Students of parents who work for the National Park Service or the Concessionaire
- 4) Pupils who reside in the district

I. INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL AUDITS

Annual Audit and Programming Operation

The Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation, on behalf of Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will arrange for an annual independent financial audit. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant and will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school. The Y-WEF Board of Directors shall maintain authority to determine which accounting firm is most suited to serve its needs. The audit will verify the accuracy of the school's financial statements, attendance and enrollment, accounting practices, and review the school's internal controls. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in any applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars. It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within six months of the close of the fiscal year and that a copy of the auditor's findings will be forwarded to the President of the Y-WEF Board who, in turn, will provide that report to the Chief Financial Officer of the BLJUESD. A Y-WEF audit committee will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the Y-WEF Board with recommendations on how to resolve them. The Y-WEF Board will report to BLJUESD regarding

how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies will be referred to the dispute resolution process contained in Dispute Resolution.

Annual Performance Audit

The Bass Lake School District Superintendent, or a district designee, will visit the site annually and review the charter school program. The superintendent/designee will use the “Annual Performance Audit Form” (see in Appendix) and will include the following in his audit:

- Observe the instructional program
- Review each component of the Initial and/or Renewal of the Charter Petition for compliance
- Analyze whether the goals are being met
- Review all state and federal student assessment data and reports
- Discussion with Teaching Principal regarding the major decisions made and the policies established by the board for that year
- Look at the data regarding the level of parent involvement in governance and operation of the school
- Review a summary of the data collected from the annual student/parent satisfaction survey
- Review the data regarding number of staff, their qualifications and will verify their credentials
- Review the health/safety procedures and discuss any major changes with the Teaching Principal
- Determine the suitability of the facility in terms of health and safety
- Determine the suitability of the facility in terms of educational utility
- Review copies of all required documentation (e.g. budget reports, financial projections, leases, insurance, etc.)
- Review of any internal and/or external dispute resolutions
- Review admission practices, including:
 - Number of students actually enrolled
 - Waiting lists
 - Expulsions and suspensions

J. STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Suspension and Expulsion

Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will comply with the Ed. Code 48900 et.seq. regarding suspensions and expulsions of students and will be modeled on the BLJUESD's Board Policy on suspension and expulsion. Y-WECS students may also be suspended or expelled from the school for persistent non-compliance with the terms of the charter school agreement.

The Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy has been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students at schools operated by Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School (Y-WECS). When the policy is violated it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. This policy shall serve as Y-WECS's policy and procedures for student suspension and expulsion, and it may be amended from time to time without the need to amend a charter so long as the amendments comport with legal requirements.

Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently amongst all students.

This Policy and its Procedures will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook, which will be developed 90 days prior to school opening, and/or on Y-WECS sponsored websites and will clearly describe discipline expectations.

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

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

The Designee shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline policies and procedures. The notice shall state that this Policy and Procedures are available on request at the Designee's office.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) or who is qualified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to regular education students except when federal and state law mandates additional or different procedures. Charter School will follow Section 504, IDEA, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and all federal and state laws when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in according due process to such students.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR PUPIL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

A. Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students

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

B. Enumerated Offenses

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

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

2. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Designee or Designee's concurrence.
3. Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of, any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
4. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
5. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
6. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
7. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
8. Possessed or used tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel.
9. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
10. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11014.5
11. Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
12. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
13. Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e., a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
14. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a or 289, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code 243.4.
15. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
16. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
17. Engaged in or attempted to engage in hazing of another.
18. Aiding or abetting as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person.
19. Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property.
20. Committed sexual harassment.
21. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence.
22. Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder, and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.

The above list is not exhaustive and depending upon the offense, a pupil may be suspended or expelled for misconduct not specified above. Alternatives to suspension or expulsion will first be attempted with students who are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from assigned school

activities.

C. Suspension Procedure

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures.

1) Conference

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the Designee with the student and his or her parent and, whenever practicable, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the Designee.

The conference may be omitted if the Designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

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

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

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

2) Notice to Parents/Guardians

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

3) Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Expulsion

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

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

D. Authority to Expel

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

E. Expulsion Procedures

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

The expulsion hearing will be presided over by the Board President or the chair of the Administrative Panel. In the event an Administrative Panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the Board for a final decision whether to expel. The hearing shall be held in closed session unless the pupil makes a written request for a public hearing three (3) days prior to the hearing.

Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Upon mailing the notice, it shall be deemed served upon the pupil. The notice shall include:

1. The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
2. A statement of the specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
3. A copy of the Y-WECS's disciplinary rules, which relate to the alleged violation;
4. Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at the school to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;
5. The opportunity for the student or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel or a non-attorney advisor;
6. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
7. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
8. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

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

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

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

2. Y-WECS must also provide the victim a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to and during breaks in testimony.
3. At the discretion of the person or panel conducting the hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which he or she may leave the hearing room.
4. The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
5. The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours he/she is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the person presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The person conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany him or her to the witness stand.
7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, Y-WECS must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to Y-WECS. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising his or her discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom he or she believes is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.
8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.
9. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in the public at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have his/her testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are not alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing by means of closed-circuit television.
10. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the person conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstances can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

G. Record of Hearing

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

is made.

H. Presentation of Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

I. Written Notice to Expel

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

1. Notice of the specific offense committed by the student.
2. Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the School. The Designee shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the Student's District of residence and the State Board of Education or Designee.

This notice shall include the following:

- a) The student's name
- b) The specific expellable offense committed by the student.

J. Disciplinary Records

The School shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the School. Such records shall be made available for the Chartering Agency's review upon request.

K. No Right to Appeal

The Pupil shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from Y-WECS as the Y-WECS Board of Directors decision to expel shall be final.

L. Expelled Pupils/Alternative Education

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

M. Rehabilitation Plans

Students who are expelled from the School shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Board at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one (1) year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to the School for readmission.

N. Readmission

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

K. RETIREMENT BENEFITS

All certificated employees of the Y-WECS will continue with the STRS or PERS retirement system as appropriate. All classified employees of the Y-WECS will continue with PERS. Administrators may enroll in either STRS or PERS as appropriate.

It is the intention of the Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation to establish an agreement with an outside agency for the provision of business services. Through a memorandum of understanding with this outside service provider, Y-WEF will ensure that all employer contributions are processed as required by STRS, PERS, or as required by law. This MOU will also address and ensure that all other employee and payroll related matters including; workers compensation insurance, unemployment insurance, and any other payroll obligations of an employer will be processed appropriately.

L. PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES

All students who reside in the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District who do not wish to attend the Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School may choose to attend:

- other public schools within the district of their residence.
- other public schools outside their district of residence through an inter-district transfer.

M. EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Employees of the Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation will work at the pleasure of the Y-WEF Board. Certificated employees will be paid on a salary schedule as set forth by the Y-WEF Board. Employees of this Charter School will participate in STRS, PERS, or Social Security depending upon each individual's eligibility.

The employees of Y-WEF will work for the school under an annual, renewable contract. This contract will detail the basic rights and responsibilities of the school to the employee and the

employee to the school. The contract will include specifics as to employee work year, hours, salary, health and welfare benefits and leaves.

Employees of the Charter shall gain no rights or seniority with the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District and shall be deemed employees of the Charter School. As such, the BLJUESD will have no authority over personnel selection, evaluation or terminations. Such selection shall be at the discretion of the Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation (Y-WEF) Board. Terms of employment shall be defined by the Y-WEF Board in agreements with the teachers.

Contracted Employees

Charter School Contracted Employees are governed by their specific contracts. Such employees are those that are hired, usually for a short term, to perform a specific function or service after which their position ceases. Examples may be dance lessons, art lessons, etc.

Procedure for request of a leave of absence

Any site based half-time or more Charter School Certificated Employee may enter into an agreement with the Y-WECS according to the following specifications: This agreement specifies the dates for break in service and reinstatement with a future contract. Written notification requesting such an agreement must be received by the Y-WECS administrator prior to March 15th of the previous school year. The agreement would state when a break in service would occur and when a new contract would be issued if enrollment so warrants. Willingness to enter into this agreement is at the discretion of Board of Trustees of the BLJUESD based upon the recommendation of the Y-WECS Principal.

Right to work in a Charter School; Return Rights

Employees who leave the Bass Lake Elementary School District to work for Y-WECS, or who leave Y-WECS to return to the Bass Lake Elementary School District will have the ability to carry over accrued sick leave and vacation days. Any employee who leaves the employment of another school district to work at the charter school will not maintain his or her right to return to his or her previous school district after employment at the charter school.

N. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Intent

The intent of this dispute resolution process is to: (1) resolve disputes within the school pursuant to the school's policies, (2) minimize the oversight burden on the district, (3) ensure a fair and timely resolution to disputes, and (4) frame a charter oversight and renewal process and timeline so as to avoid disputes regarding oversight and renewal matters.

Disputes Arising from within the School

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

Disputes between the School and the Charter-Granting Agency

In the event that the School or Granting Agency has a dispute regarding the terms of this charter, both parties agree to follow the process outlined below. In the event of a dispute between the School and the Grantor, the staff and governing board members of the School and District agree

to first frame the issue in written format and refer the issue to the Superintendent of the District and Principal of the School.

The School Principal and Superintendent shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, both parties shall identify two governing board members from their respective boards who shall jointly meet with the Superintendent of the District and Principal of the School and attempt to resolve the dispute. If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the Superintendent and Principal shall meet to jointly identify a neutral, third party arbitrator. The format of the arbitration session shall be developed jointly by the Superintendent and Principal, and shall incorporate informal rules of evidence and procedure unless both parties agree otherwise. The findings or recommendations of the arbitrator shall be non-binding, unless the governing boards of the School and Grantor jointly agree to bind themselves.

O. DECLARATION: EXCLUSIVE EMPLOYER

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of its employees for the purpose of the Educational Employment Relations Act (“EERA”).

P. CHARTER SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCEDURES

Closure of the School will be documented by official action of the Y-WEF Board of Directors. The action will identify the reason for closure. The Principal of the school shall be responsible for closure-related activities.

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

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

The Board of Directors 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, the School will provide parents, students and the District with copies of all appropriate student records and will otherwise assist students in transferring to their next school. All transfers of student records will be made in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. The School will ask the District to store original

records of Charter School students. All records of the School shall be transferred to the District upon School closure. If the District will not or cannot store the records, the Charter School shall work with the County Office of Education to determine a suitable alternative location for storage.

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

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

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

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

On closure, the School shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of the School.

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

IMPACT ON THE CHARTER AUTHORIZER

The Yosemite-Wawona Elementary Charter School will be under the Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation, which is a non-profit, public benefit corporation incorporated in the State of California with a 501(c)(3) designation by the IRS.

The anticipated number of students to enroll is 30. Under the current community school situation, there are eleven students enrolled, so the impact of students leaving the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District to join the charter will be minimal.

The facility was built with federal funds on national park land and is owned by the NPS. Currently, there is a special use permit, for educational purposes, which was issued by the National Park Service. The Y-WECS will transfer the NPS Special use permit that currently exists with the Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District to the Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation.

The Y-WECS will meet with the BLJUESD to discuss any support services to be provided by the district and the terms and conditions of providing those services. If the district is unable to provide such services as the school requires, the school will continue to operate and will not be hampered in meeting the goals and objectives of this charter.

The Yosemite-Wawona Educational Foundation will maintain adequate property and liability insurance, and worker's compensation insurance for the Y-WECS, naming the Corporation, its officers, employees, volunteers, and agents, and the District as additional insured. Types and amounts will be agreed upon in an operational agreement between the District and the Corporation. Consistent with Education Code Section 47604 (c), the district shall not be held liable for the Y-WECS's debts or obligations, or for claims arising from the performance of the acts, errors, or omissions by the Y-WECS. Proof of insurance shall be provided to the District prior to the opening of school and thereafter each July 1st.