

**CHARTER  
OF THE  
NORTH OAKLAND COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL**

Charter Renewal Petition  
January 12, 2005

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since opening, North Oakland Community Charter School (NOCCS) has grown to become a vibrant, thriving community of learners comprising students in multiage classrooms from grades kindergarten-through-fifth, their teachers and families. This petition for charter renewal reflects nearly five successful years of operation.

NOCCS opened in September 2000 with a kindergarten/first grade classroom serving 20 students. The school added a second grade in 2001-2002, and a third grade in 2002-2003. Our kindergarten-through-third grade classrooms have a maximum of 20 students. During the 2003-2004 school year, a fourth grade was added; in 2004-2005 a fifth grade was added.

The school exemplifies the 10 core principles on which it was founded. All members of the community share in the vision of strengthening Oakland's public schools by providing rich choices for parents and engaging the enthusiasm and commitment of families for public education.

In the beginning, new schools are often driven by the energy and enthusiasm of their founders. Over time, a healthy startup school will transition from reliance on a few visionary individuals to cultivating a strong culture, identity, and organizational capacity. NOCCS has reached this milestone in its development. Our school operates smoothly, with a Director, Board of Trustees, teachers, and families who communicate well and learn from one another. Parent involvement is high, as demonstrated by the many volunteer hours logged by NOCCS families, community service projects such as feeding the homeless at monthly community dinners, and parents sharing their expertise in the classroom by leading or participating in field trips. Communication between and among faculty and parents is strong, and by reaching out to the community beyond our school, we have generated a long waiting list of families who are eager to join our community.

While there is always room for improvement, we are proud of what we have accomplished. We have hired well qualified and dedicated teachers. Professional development is a high priority. In Teaching for Understanding—our curricular framework that informs and unites our work—we have a common language for teaching and learning that helps us communicate our goals to parents.

We are refining and standardizing our student assessments. Our progress reports reflect our teaching philosophy and academic standards. We collect data, administer student assessments, and document teacher observations. The result is a comprehensive assessment system that serves all our students.

Our school is fiscally responsible, with a clear, achievable budget and a successful fundraising strategy.

Our academic success is evident in strong STAR test scores, and students who run into the building every morning, beg for more time at the library, and eagerly share their experiences with their peers and caregivers.

To best serve our students and community, we request that NOCCS be permitted to expand to 7th and 8th grades during the five years of its charter renewal (2005-2010). This recommendation follows a yearlong exploration by the NOCCS Board of Trustees and parent community into creating a middle school that would articulate with our K-5 program. NOCCS parents and Board members agreed to add a middle school if space becomes available (our current site does not allow for expansion). If the school moves to a new facility that can accommodate additional growth, a likely scenario is that NOCCS would grow its middle school one class at a time beginning with sixth grade. We would begin by adding non-NOCCS OUSD fifth graders to our matriculating fifth grade class.

We so strongly believe in our mission that we want to educate our students through the critical middle school years. This continuity, we feel, would better prepare our students for high school and beyond, while also instilling the confidence, skills, and compassion they need to be productive citizens.

## **A. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

### **1. Mission Statement**

The North Oakland Community Charter School is a public school dedicated to helping children become thoughtful, informed, and inquisitive citizens. NOCCS is a vibrant, diverse learning community driven by respect for each child's unique intelligence and history. The school's dynamic and challenging educational approach deepens the intellectual and social capacities of each child.

### **2. Population Served by NOCCS**

NOCCS seeks to serve the children of North Oakland, broadly defined as that part of the city north of downtown. Through this charter renewal petition, NOCCS requests to expand its charter from grades K-6 to K-8 in hopes of eventually serving up to 300 students in grades K-8 by the completion of its charter renewal period.

### **3. An Educated Person in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

An educated person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a life-long learner who has self-motivation, competence, and responsibility. Specifically, the NOCCS community

believes an educated person has the following knowledge, skills, and attributes, which all contribute to an ability to interpret and apply a body of knowledge that is continuously growing:

- Literacy
- Ability to communicate clearly, both orally and in writing.
- Ability to think creatively, analytically, and logically
- Ability to gather and organize information
- Understanding of mathematical processes and their applications
- Ability to critically assess data
- Knowledge of history
- Understanding of the scientific process
- Ability to use technology as a tool
- Sense of connection to and responsibility for the world
- Ability to work cooperatively with others
- Empathy for others and respect for differences among people and cultures
- Passion for learning
- Curiosity and wonder
- Concentration and perseverance
- Self-confidence and a willingness to take risks in order to learn

#### **4. How Learning Best Occurs**

Below NOCCS's approach to teaching learning is described in four sections: 1) Schoolwide educational program, 2) K-5 educational program, 3) Middle school educational program, and 4) educational program for academically at-risk students, English Language Learners, and special education students.

##### **i. Schoolwide Educational Program**

The North Oakland Community Charter School culture fosters a community of teachers, students, administrators, and families all working toward the same goal to attain powerful teaching and high achievement in every domain for every student. The cornerstone of our school's educational program is an approach to teaching and learning that emphasizes teaching rigorous and purposeful learning units, assessing their effectiveness and the quality of student work, and revising and improving them. Learning units culminate in projects and performances that take students outside of school to gather information and data, bring the outside world into the classroom, and engage students in real-world investigations. Standards for learning units are reviewed and refined each year. Assessment is woven throughout each learning unit, pushing students to higher levels of performance in pursuit of academic excellence. Our school promotes a strong culture of best effort, high expectations, and high quality work. Community and collaboration is stressed throughout the curriculum.

Below we describe the schoolwide educational principles, academic content, research-based instruction, and support for English language learners and special education students.

##### **ii. Schoolwide Educational Principles**

Teaching and learning at NOCCS across all grades is founded on the following principles and practices:

*Reflection and critique.* Assessment, critique, and reflection by teachers on their own work, as well as their students' work, drives continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Through examining student work, teachers discover what students know and are able to do. Through sharing and critiquing teacher work, teachers improve their craft in a collegial and respectful forum. Teaching students to critique their own and each other's work enables them to internalize high standards and produce higher quality work.

*High expectations.* High expectations for students' academic achievement, rooted in and tied to standards, are evident in rigorous demonstrations of student work. Students are regularly challenged and challenge themselves to pursue real-life standards of excellence and to produce results that go far beyond what they thought they were capable of producing. There is a culture of revision in which many drafts are the norm and nothing less than best work is expected. Student portfolios containing final work products and revised drafts are an important form of assessment.

*School organization.* Our school day is built around a schedule that provides longer and more flexible blocks of time for project-based learning, fieldwork, common planning by teams of teachers, and community-building activities. Heterogeneous grouping and differentiated instruction enhance student learning. Multi-age grouping strengthens relationships in the classroom and adds to academic success by allowing students to stay with the same teacher or team of teachers for more than one year.

*A community of learners.* Our school strives to establish a caring community of learners that cultivates in students a deep respect for each other's work, experience, contributions, and perspectives, where children and teachers alike are actively committed to creating stable, warm, and supportive relationships. The school is grounded in the belief that school communities are shaped through shared commitment. Powerful teaching and learning call upon learners to develop shared goals and outcomes that can best be accomplished by drawing upon the talents, interests, and efforts of all students. When teachers know their students well, they can design an individualized learning plan that includes students' goals, parents' and guardians' priorities, and the teachers' assessment of a student's academic needs.

### **iii. Schoolwide Academic Content**

In addition to satisfying the California Content Standards in the core academic areas NOCCS's curriculum will focus on the following:

**English language arts**—NOCCS's literacy curriculum will center on both the *how* of literacy—the skills and strategies necessary to competently navigate the written words—and the *why* of literacy—students are invited to become

members of a literacy community that supports students in finding meaning in what he or she is being asked to read and write. While no identical mix of instructional materials and strategies works for each student, our curriculum emphasizes reading, writing, public speaking, note taking, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, language usage, and research throughout all the disciplines. Teaching and learning reflects the notion that reading and writing are social action. Thus, students read and write for authentic purposes.

**Science**—Emphasis is placed on understanding the nature and process of scientific investigation (research, inquiry, observation, and so forth) and experimentation with strong connections to other disciplines. Current scientific findings and ethical debates and issues related to global ecology and the environment are included to encourage connections between science and the modern world.

**Mathematics**—Emphasis is placed on understanding mathematics and its applications in real-world contexts. Students master mathematical content by applying their knowledge of mathematical problem-solving, processes, and reasoning to other disciplines.

**Historical and Social Sciences**—Students analyze, research, and interpret major geographical and historical events and their relationship to the contemporary world.

**Service to the community**—At least once a year, each NOCCS student will engage in community service. Service-learning at NOCCS nurtures the following student outcomes: 1) Students' actions address authentic community needs and problems, while they improve the quality of life for those receiving services; 2) students become invested in their communities and become community minded citizens; students develop a sense of empowerment by engaging in community service where it is needed, valued, and respected; and 3) students understand how to apply academic knowledge and skills to real problems, and they become more motivated to learn based on the needs they experience while serving. Students who help feed the hungry develop concerns and questions about the causes of hunger and poverty and may want to know how they can affect social change.<sup>1</sup>

Technology is used as a learning tool across all disciplines, including keyboarding, production applications (word processing, statistics, and content organization and presentation), and using the Internet for research, guided searches, communication, and sharing ideas with experts and other communities of learners.

In addition, NOCCS has a vibrant program of performing and visual arts that includes painting, dance, music, drama, poetry, and storytelling, as well as foreign language (Spanish), and sports and cooperative games. To the extent

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<sup>1</sup> Carin, Rich W, and Kielmeier, James. C. (1991). *Growing Hope: A Sourcebook on Integrating Youth Service into the School Curriculum*. Roseville, MN, The National Youth Leadership Council.

possible, these content areas are used as vehicles for students to demonstrate and construct their knowledge across the disciplines.

#### **iv. Schoolwide Research-based Instruction: Teaching for Understanding**

The North Oakland Community Charter School uses Teaching for Understanding, a teaching framework developed by teachers and researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, including leading educators and cognitive psychologists such as Howard Gardner and David Perkins.<sup>2</sup> In Teaching for Understanding classrooms, teachers carefully design thought-provoking tasks that call on students to demonstrate a deep understanding of important subject matter. Using various forms of inquiry that engage their curiosity and interests, students ask probing questions, test their theories, make inferences, connect what they learn to the real world, and ultimately, apply their understanding on their own. While not a prescribed curriculum, Teaching for Understanding guides teachers in developing academically rigorous learning units that require students to engage in higher order thinking about important content matter in various disciplines. Teaching for Understanding is not curriculum or standards, rather it supports our teachers in organizing California's Content Standards into coherent lessons and units of study.

In Teaching for Understanding, teachers begin planning by asking four key questions:

- What topics are worth understanding?
- What about these topics needs to be understood?
- How can we foster understanding?
- How can we tell what students understand?

Next, teachers use this inquiry to organize the curriculum around four key ideas:

Generative topics: These topics of exploration have multiple connections to students' interests and experiences and can be taught in a wide variety of ways. They are central to the disciplines, draw on California State Standards, engaging to both students and teachers, and build on previous topics. The topic defines an area rich enough to support prolonged study but small enough to be explored in depth. The following are among the questions teachers consider when choosing a topic: What background knowledge and skills will students need to develop and use in order to produce strong work? What big ideas will students grapple with?

Understanding goals: Understanding goals are statements or questions that express what is most important for students to understand during a unit, project, or over a long duration such as school year. Projects are designed and planned with understanding goals. These goals are developed with California Content

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<sup>2</sup> Blythe, Tina, et al, (1998) *The Teaching for Understanding Guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Standards in mind, with an eye toward what students should understand and be able to do when they have completed the unit. Understanding goals are divided into three components:

*Content.* What knowledge, content, fact, and concepts will students understand and be able to apply in new situations? Content, which is based on the California Content Standards, allows for the curriculum to be organized around real-life problems and issues significant to both young people and adults. To the extent possible, students use content and skills from many subject areas or disciplines so they better grasp the possibilities for integrating disciplinary skills and knowledge to solve real-life problems.

*Skills and habits.* What skills and habits will students practice and be able to do? Skills and habits include the following:

- View issues, problems, and questions from a variety of perspectives;
- Distinguish between fact and inference, and use facts to test theories;
- Justify and defend ideas;
- Draw upon prior knowledge and creativity; use what they know in new situations; and
- Examine relationships between different ideas, people, concepts, phenomena, and make connections. Understand cause and effect.

*Qualities of Character and Community.* What qualities of character and service to others will students have practiced and demonstrated as individuals and groups? Students will:

- Seek to understand other people's ideas and look at their own ideas from other perspectives;
- Demonstrate compassion, caring, and service to others;
- Collaborate well with others and give and receive feedback and constructive talk; and

#### **Teaching for Understanding at NOCCS**

*Memoirs.* In a Teaching for Understanding unit on autobiography, second/third grade students were invited to write personal memoirs using writing process skills, such as pre-writing, peer feedback, revision, and publication. Throughout the unit students explored questions such as, what does it mean to be a writer? How do memoirs help us express ourselves? Why do we write memoirs? What stories do I have that I can share? In a culminating assessment, students wrote a self-reflection and read their piece to a partner, explaining their thoughts about the guiding questions.

*The Age of Exploration.* In the fourth/fifth grade class, students read about and discussed Christopher Columbus and the lives of other European explorers. To demonstrate their understanding, they chose from among three projects: 1) write a pro and con table showing all of the reasons why Ferdinand and Isabella should and should not have financed Columbus' journey; 2) write the dialogue between the king and queen of their discussion after Columbus requested their help, or 3) design an advertisement as if you were Columbus trying to recruit sailors and explorers to join your crew. Explain why you think the ad would be successful.

- Resolve conflict constructively.<sup>3</sup>

Performance understanding: Activities and projects develop and demonstrate students grasp of understanding goals by requiring them to use what they know in new ways. Learning in NOCCS classrooms is designed around projects and lessons that give students a compelling reason to learn and foster in-depth understanding by asking students to do real work that is meaningful and important. Projects confront students with real-world problems and dilemmas that require them to use the approaches, tools, language, and standards of professionals. Projects may include a series of smaller lessons or units, usually culminating in a final product or performance that demonstrates what they have learned.

Ongoing assessment is the process by which students get continual feedback about their performances of understanding in order to improve them. Assessment also provides feedback to teachers on the effectiveness of instruction and curriculum design. As teacher and students reflect on student work and assess it, they refer to understanding goals and California Content Standards and ask themselves if it meets their expectations. In ongoing assessment, students know the standards and criteria for projects and lessons before they begin. Often teachers and students create and revise them together. Assessment activities that draw on California Content Standards and classroom-based criteria take many forms. See Element C for a description.

#### **v. Schoolwide Instructional Support for Academically at-risk, English Language Learners, and Special Education Students**

Students entering the school with below-grade level skills are offered a number of instructional strategies to accelerate their performance and skills. Teachers devise an educational plan at the beginning of each school year for each student in collaboration with the student and family. The plan is based on an initial assessment and a review of students' records. This plan describes the skills that are below expectation and identifies an action plan that has clearly identifiable achievement benchmarks. The school's schedule provides flexibility during the school day for students requiring additional intervention and remediation. At-risk students receive additional instruction during school and after school at the frequency necessary to make progress towards achieving grade level skills in all core curricular areas.

#### English language learners

NOCCS complies with all applicable federal law in regard to services and the education of English Language Learner ("ELL") students. NOCCS has developed and implemented policies and procedures for the provision of services to ELL students in accordance with guidelines published by the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education. At a minimum, these policies and procedures shall ensure the following:

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<sup>3</sup> Campbell, Meg, et al (1998) *Guidelines for Planning a Learning Expedition*. Dubuque, IA. Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

- identify students who need assistance (through CELDT and OUSD's Home Language Survey);
- implement the NOCCS program which, based on research by experts in the field, has a reasonable chance for success;
- ensure that necessary staff, curricular materials, and facilities are in place and properly used;
- apply appropriate evaluation standards, including program exit criteria for measuring the progress of students; assess the success of the program and modify it where needed.

### Instructional Support for English Language Learners

Teaching for Understanding's focus differentiated curriculum and instruction is successful in helping English language learners (ELL) become English language competent. Project-based, assessment-driven instruction in which work periods are longer and students learn at their own pace provides both increased attention to student needs and the necessary targeted support for academic success.

Project-based learning and heterogeneous grouping in a multi-age classroom environment support language development because they encourage students to use language and to communicate. Teachers incorporate best practice strategies such as Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) and the Project GLAD training framework. Using a variety of approaches such as visual tools, storytelling, role playing, drama, nonverbal games, poetry, music, chants, kinesthetic physical response, spatial organizers, and reader's theater, teachers ensure LEP students can access the curriculum while increasing their English language skills. SDAIE instruction and the GLAD framework allow ELL students to master academic content while learning English through contextual clues. NOCCS complies with all applicable state policies pertaining to CLAD, BCLAD, and teacher credentialing. In addition, the school will use a professional training program to support its teachers in using research-based instructional methods for ELL students, such as Project GLAD.

A major focus of our professional development program will be ongoing training to modify and differentiate the curriculum and promote sensitivity to children with learning differences. Our professional development program also will include topics related to ELL students, such as the stages of language development, theories on second language acquisition, multiple measures of language assessment (including the CELDT), and cultural understanding.

### Special education students and students with disabilities

NOCCS complies with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including but not limited to Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. NOCCS intends to function as a public school of the local education agency that granted the charter for purposes of providing special education and related services pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b).

All students with disabilities attending NOCCS receive a free, appropriate public education, and are educated in the least restrictive environment, including maximum integration with nondisabled peers. The North Oakland Community Charter School does not deny admission to any pupil on the basis of disability. If after an eligible student enrolls in NOCCS, an IEP team determines that the charter school cannot provide the required services, appropriate services will be provided elsewhere. These services may not be denied by the school or the LEA responsible for providing services on the basis of cost or lack of available services.

NOCCS strives to meet the needs of all of its students, including those designated in need of special education. The following demonstrate NOCCS' commitment to policies that meet those needs:

- Strives to clarify in its MOU the responsibilities of each party for service delivery, including but not limited to, referral, assessment, instruction, DIS services, and due process;
- OUSD receives NOCCS's allocated share of AB 602 special education funds;
- NOCCS will additionally be responsible for a fair share of any encroachment on general funds;
- NOCCS will notify OUSD when a special education student enrolls, becomes eligible, ineligible, and/or leaves NOCCS.

## **b. K-5 Educational Program**

### **Curriculum and researched-based instruction**

NOCCS has adopted three sets of curriculum and teaching methods for its K-5 instructional program: California Early Literacy Learning/Extended Literacy Learning; Investigations in Number, Data and Space; and the Full Option Science System.

Literacy: CELL/ExLL. NOCCS has adopted the California Early Literacy Learning (CELL)/Extended Literacy Learning (ExLL) frameworks.<sup>4</sup> This research-based framework organizes oral language, phonological skills, reading, and writing into a comprehensive system of instruction. CELL/ExLL also has an extensive professional development program designed to help elementary and middle school teachers strengthen their teaching of reading and writing.

Using CELL/ExLL, NOCCS teachers, weave literacy throughout the curriculum including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Teachers draw on a variety of methods to model and demonstrate the skills, strategies, and knowledge that promote word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension. Skill development is also emphasized across each of CELL/ExLL's framework

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on California Early Literacy Learning/Extended Literacy Learning: 104 East State Street, Suite M, Redlands, CA 92373/909-335-3089-www.cell.exll.com

elements. Emergent readers develop phonemic awareness and practice phonological strategies and decoding skills. In the CELL/ExLL framework these skills are acquired through meaningful activities and are given extensive practice by reading quality literature and engaging in authentic writing activities.

CELL/ExLL's eight core instructional strategies are a research-based framework for teaching to the California English/Language Arts Content Standards, including concepts about print, decoding and word recognition, phonemic awareness, comprehension, structural features of texts, and vocabulary development.

Mathematics: Investigations. *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space* is a complete elementary mathematics program developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. *Investigations* is designed to help all elementary children understand the fundamental ideas underlying number and arithmetic, geometry, data, measurement, and algebraic thinking.

In each unit, students explore the central topics in depth through a series of investigations encountering and using important mathematical ideas. The mathematical problems in *Investigations* offer multiple ways into the mathematics accommodating the range of students found in any classroom.

The sequence of activities was carefully evaluated so that it helps students delve deeply into mathematical ideas. In each *Investigations* unit, students work through a series of in-depth investigations, encountering and using important mathematical ideas. Students engage in mathematical reasoning to solve larger mathematical problems. The investigations allow significant time for students to think about problems and to model, draw, write, and talk about their work with peers as they find ways to solve problems. Students represent their thinking, explain their reasoning, and use mathematical tools and appropriate technology as a natural part of their work.

History/Social Science Teachers design units of study which are based on California Content Standards, and which address students' interests and experiences. Students learn to distinguish fact from opinion and cause and effect through studying historical, economic, geographical, and social events and phenomenon. In grades K- 1<sup>st</sup>, students begin by connecting to their immediate environment and prior knowledge. From here, 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders move outward to develop important linkages with the larger social and geographic world. Units of study also reach back in time to connect students with people whose stories and deeds build an appreciation of the continuity of human experience.

Science: FOSS. FOSS (Full Option Science System) is a research-based science curriculum for grades K–8 developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California at Berkeley. The program is aligned with the National Science Foundation education standards and the California Science Content Standards in Life, Earth, and Physical sciences, as well as the standards for Investigation and Experimentation.

The overall goal of the FOSS program is to develop a scientific literacy for students of all ages and backgrounds. The best way for students to appreciate the scientific enterprise, learn important scientific concepts, and develop the ability to think critically is to actively construct ideas through their own inquiries, investigations, and analyses. The FOSS program is a complete, modular program created to engage students in these processes as they explore the natural world. The curriculum provides all students with science experiences that are appropriate to their stages of cognitive development. These experiences serve as a foundation for more advanced ideas that prepare students for life in an increasingly complex scientific and technological world.

The K–8 learning modules are organized under the strands of Life Science, Physical Science, Earth Science, and Scientific Reasoning and Technology. Most modules and courses are designed to be appropriate for two grade levels, which is beneficial for NOCCS multiage classrooms and looping curriculum.

#### Teaching for Understanding in middle school

*Neighborhood revitalization.* In a project focused on social studies and math, seventh graders survey the community around their school to find out how the community would like to see vacant lots used. They use the data to formulate proposals and write letters to public officials. Using actual measurements, students design plans to redevelop a lot and build a scale model of their design. Students present their designs before a community audience and city agencies, explaining the reasons why their design should be used to redevelop one of the vacant lots in the community.

*Ecosystems.* Students learn how to observe a local environment (a study site) holistically. They learn to consider the colors, smells, shapes, textures, tastes, and feelings evoked from the environment. As well, they study the natural cycles at work on their chosen ecosystem, the relationship between animals and plants, and the changes to the area over time. Further, students observe an ecosystem of their own creation. Students observe an environment of their choosing for two weeks then recreate it in a terrarium or aquarium. By creating, maintaining and observing their mini-environment for eight weeks, students learn about the water, oxygen and nitrogen cycles.

### c. Middle School Educational Program

#### Curriculum and researched-based instruction

*Young adolescents are asking some of the most profound questions human beings can ever ask: Who am I? What can I be? What should I be? What should I do? To respond to them effectively, we must forge a curriculum that frequently deals with their own questions – John Arnold*

Developmental psychologists of past 100 years, including Erikson, Piaget, Loveinger, and Kolberg, have described early adolescence as the beginning of the lifelong developmental tasks of forming a personal identity or self-concept, acquiring social skills, gaining autonomy, and developing values and social connection to peers and society that reflect their emerging character and values. Within a few years, young adolescents undergo rapid physical growth, changes in moral reasoning, the onset of abstract thinking, and the introduction of social and peer pressures. NOCCS's middle school pedagogy will support and nurture these intellectual, social, emotional, and physical developmental needs of young adolescents.<sup>5</sup>

Using Teaching for Understanding as its foundation, the NOCCS's middle school curriculum will promote young adolescents' development by making teaching and learning relevant to their lives while exposing them to enduring human problems and questions. Thus the centerpiece of the curriculum will be projects and performance understandings organized around the intersecting concerns of early adolescents and issues in the larger world.

Among the personal and social issues that emerge in early adolescence are:

- understanding and dealing with physical, intellectual, and emotional changes and their effects on how young people live their lives;
- developing a sense of personal identity; exploring questions of values, morals and ethics; and
- finding and securing a level of status in the one's peer group, and understanding how peer groups form and operate.<sup>6</sup>

NOCCS' middle school curriculum will help young adolescents connect their personal concerns to wider social issues and real-life problems, for example by exploring relationships between forming a personal self-esteem and the search for meaning and identity among various cultures, between the forming of peer groups norms and the development of customs and laws of the world's societies, between personal physical and mental wellness and efforts to improve the environment.

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<sup>5</sup> Muuss, Rolf E. (1996), *Theories of Adolescence*. New York, New York: McGraw Hill

<sup>6</sup> Beane, James A. (1993), *A Middle School Curriculum: From Rhetoric to Reality*. Columbus, Ohio: National Middle School Association.

In the core content areas, NOCCS will use several curricula and research-based teaching approaches to satisfy the middle school California Content Standards:

### **English/Language arts**

*Extended Literacy Learning* (ExLL) supports intermediate teachers in effectively teaching reading and writing to students with a wide range of levels in the intermediate grades. It is aligned with CELL and helps teachers learn how to integrate individual literacy elements into seamless curriculum of classroom instruction. ExLL stresses the active engagement of each child with reading and writing activities taught across the disciplines. Ongoing skill development at a higher level of phonological analysis is balanced with systematic, direct instruction of decoding and comprehension for struggling readers. The ExLL framework includes phonological skills, read aloud, shared reading, directed reading (i.e. guided reading), directed writing (i.e. writers' workshop), independent writing, and oral presentation.

*Second Chance*, a program created by CELL/ExLL, is designed for remedial, special education and ESL teachers, as well as regular classroom teachers working with struggling readers. *Second Chance* includes an emphasis on the struggling reader and the importance of balancing phonological instruction with the direct instruction of comprehension.

Additionally, NOCCS teachers will receive professional development from two language arts Bay Area programs:

*WestEd's Strategic Literacy Initiative* focuses on direct, explicit comprehension instruction. The Strategic literacy Initiative's program, called *Reading Apprenticeship* puts teachers in the role of content-area expert, and students are "apprenticed" into the reasons and ways reading and writing are used within a discipline, and the strategies and thinking used in that discipline. To accomplish this, teachers are encouraged to plan along four dimensions: social, personal, cognitive, and knowledge-building.

The **social dimension** focuses on establishing and maintaining a safe and supportive environment where all members' processes, resources, and difficulties are shared and collaboration is valued.

The **personal dimension** focuses on improving students' identities and attitudes as readers and their interest in reading. It also promotes self-awareness, self-assessment, and metacognition.

The **cognitive dimension** is where students are given concrete reading tools and strategies they need in order to read like experts in the discipline.

The **knowledge-building** dimension focuses on building content and topic knowledge and knowledge of a discipline's text structures and styles.

*Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP)*. Based at the University of California, Berkeley, BAWP's professional development programs are designed to include areas such as approaches to teaching writing as a process, developing confidence and fluency in writing, response and revision, the conventions of writing: grammar, punctuation and usage, publishing student writing, emergent writers and readers, writing across the curriculum, reading/writing connections, writing assessment, and writing workshop.

## **Mathematics**

NOCCS's middle school math curriculum will be based on *Connected Math*, which is NSF-funded curriculum based on the NCTM standards. It is a comprehensive middle school program that focuses on mathematical content goals, processes, and skills that are taught in eight units of study for each of grades 6, 7, and 8.

*Connected Math* develops five mathematical strands: numbers and operations, geometry, measurement, data analysis and probability, and algebra. Each of *Connected Math's* 24 middle school units develops a "big idea" that is an important cluster of related concepts, skills procedures and ways of thinking. For instance:

- Data About US (statistics)—focuses on formulating questions, gathering, organizing, representing and analyzing data; and interpreting results.
- Saying it With Symbols (algebraic reasoning)—focuses on equivalent expressions, solving linear and simple quadratic equations.
- Frogs, Fleas, and Painted Cubes (quadratic relationships)—focuses on recognizing and representing quadratic functions in tables, graphs, words, and symbols.

## **Historical and social sciences**

Drawing from the California Content Standards, the curriculum will help students analyze major geographical and historical events in ancient civilizations, medieval and early modern times, and United States history, and their relationship to the contemporary world.

## **Science**

Students will apply a range of scientific thinking and methods to earth sciences, physical sciences, and life sciences including:

- developing and testing an hypothesis
- communicating the steps and results from an investigation
- recognizing whether evidence is consistent with a proposed explanation

- Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology to perform tests, collect data, and display data

NOCCS middle school science curriculum will be based on the Full Option Science System (FOSS) described on page 11.

### **Middle school structures**

*Interdisciplinary teams.* NOCCS's middle school structure will include small partner teams of 2-3 teachers from different subject areas who share the same students and class schedule. Teacher teams will include at least one social studies/English language art teachers and one math/science teacher. Each team will be responsible for about 50 students. For teachers, teams will provide time for common planning and opportunities to share insights into individual student progress and difficulties. Teachers will use teams to coordinate and integrate curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Teacher teams will strengthen interdisciplinary teaching across curriculum and grade levels. For students, teams offer stable relationship with peers and teachers.

*Advisory.* To create a safe and nurturing environment, NOCCS will ensure that each student is well known by at least one adult. Our advisories, which will be smaller than core academic classes, will provide a setting where students receive social and emotional support while providing personal and academic guidance in developing work habits, resolving conflicts, establishing school norms, developing leadership skills, and discussing school culture.

## **B. MEASURABLE PUPIL OUTCOMES**

As noted, the Teaching for Understanding framework refers to student outcomes as understanding goals. Understanding goals are statements or questions that express what is most important for students to understand during a unit, project, or over a longer duration such as a school year. As noted, there are three types of understanding goals:

*Content:* the knowledge, content, fact, and concepts students will understand and be able to apply in new situations.

*Skills and habits:* the skills and habits students will practice and be able to do across the curriculum.

*Character and Community Service:* the qualities of character and service that students practice and demonstrate as individuals and groups.

Each of these understanding goals is described below.

**1. Core academic content.** Appropriate age or grade level mastery of:

Language arts—Students will demonstrate strong reading, writing, listening, speaking, and presentation skills using multiple forms of communication (written, oral, artistic, and multimedia). They will comprehend and critically interpret multiple forms of expression, including literature from various time periods and cultures, and other subjects aligned with California’s Content Standards.

Mathematics—Students will develop mathematical and problem-solving skills that help them reason logically and apply mathematical processes and concepts, including those within arithmetic, algebra, geometry, statistics, and probability, mathematical reasoning, and other mathematical subjects aligned to California’s Content Standards.

History / social sciences—Students will demonstrate their understanding of civic, historical, and geographical knowledge in order to serve as citizen’s in our contemporary society of diverse cultures. Students will appreciate multiple points of view, how they are informed by culture and society, and understand the value of participating in the communities where they live.

Science—Students will demonstrate their understanding of scientific research methods and apply major concepts of various branches of physical, earth, and life sciences, and other science subjects aligned with the California Content Standards.

## **2. Skills and Habits**

Students will demonstrate:

- Effective study habits and skills
- Ability to conceptualize, plan, effectively organize, and complete complex projects and performance understandings.
- Ability to use a variety “habits of mind”: including asking probing questions, justifying and defending ideas, answers and solution; use facts to test theories, and view problems, issues, and questions from a variety of perspectives.

## **3. Character and community**

Students will practice and develop qualities of character and service. They will demonstrate:

- Engagement with local communities to encourage positive change through service learning.
- Ability to engage in responsible and respectful peer relationships and resolve conflicts and differences constructively.
- Ability to collaborate and work effectively with others in cooperative groups.
- Ability to understand and apply the principles of health, nutrition, and physical fitness.
- Ability to persist in revising and redoing projects and assignments until mastery is obtained.

- Compassion, caring, and service to others
- Take risks, pursue high standards of craftsmanship and academic excellence, and learn from their mistakes.

NOCCS students will demonstrate their achievement of these learning goals in two ways:

- At least 50% of NOCCS students will show at least one grade level's progress each academic year, as evidenced by scores on STAR tests and successful completion of required work including performances of understanding in each content area. Standards and assessments for students with special needs or limited English proficiency will be adapted to their individual education plan (IEP) or English proficiency level (e.g. CELDT).
- In keeping with the emphasis on Teaching for Understanding, the school will augment the STAR system tests with a diverse array of *performance assessments* (described in the following section) that include psychometrically appropriate, valid, and reliable measures. Students will demonstrate proficiency in each of the core content areas.

### **Special Education and English Language Learners**

Special Education students will work toward achieving their IEP goals each year. An annual IEP meeting will review each special education student's progress and modify each individualized educational program to maintain high expectations and continuous growth within the context of each individual's needs.

English Language Learners (ELL) are subject to the same standards and benchmarks as other NOCCS students. Processes are in place to ensure the swift transition of our ELL students from their primary language to English fluency.

## **C. METHODS FOR ASSESSING PUPIL PROGRESS**

In addition to STAR tests, NOCCS uses a variety of performance assessments that measure how well students demonstrate Teaching for Understanding learning goals. Below are NOCCS's main forms of classroom and school performance assessments:

*Developmental Progress Reports* are the assessment cornerstone of our academic program. Our progress reports describe the level of development for each child. Each stage of development represents a cluster of skills, strategies, and behaviors that are necessary to meet the California Content Standards. The Developmental Progress Report is a continuum of learning stages, reflecting developmental overlap among a span of years. Developmental progress is measured in the following areas: reading, writing, conceptual math, applied math, social studies/history, science, visual/performing arts, music, physical education, Spanish, personal/social skills, and applications.

*Classroom and grade level rubrics.* NOCCS uses locally developed rubrics that align to grade-specific content standards. Sets of performance tasks at each grade allow teachers to assess students' understanding of core academic content.

*Spelling inventories.* Students are given dictation of different words with different vowel patterns. The patterns allow the teachers to quickly identify students' understanding of word families and patterns while noting spelling rules and exceptions.

*Observation.* Teachers record their observations about students' learning and thinking and use them in evaluation and instruction. Observations include both anecdotal records, where teachers take notes on what a student does, and systematic observation that allows teachers to observe a specific child or group of children at a particular time with a specific objective in mind. An example is the Work Sampling System which provides focused observations cross content areas, valid criteria for evaluation, and supports standards-based curriculum and instruction. In mathematics, NOCCS teachers use a Checklist of Mathematical Emphases for each curricular unit which allows for systematic observation.

*Leveled reading benchmarks.* This includes structured observations using miscue analysis or running records to assess student reading.

*The miscue analysis* measures students' ability to use reading cue systems and strategies. This information allows the teacher to develop strategy lessons appropriate for the individual reader. Miscue analysis evaluates the efficiency of the strategies that a reader uses and indicates where help is needed.

*Rigby benchmark for reading fluency and comprehension.* Students are assessed on fluency, reading strategies, and comprehension questions to find their instructional and independent reading level. Students are then grouped by levels and are provided instructional leveled books. Students read and discuss in small groups. Their leveled books are tracked over time to observe progress. Data tracking allows teachers to plan instructional groups and provides intervention if adequate progress is not made.

*Interviews.* Systematic interviews during student-teacher conferences at the beginning of the year and at various times throughout provide information to guide instruction.

*Projects.* Students engage in extended projects which allow for opportunities for assessment and provide valuable information about what a student knows and is able to do at a particular point in time.

*Performance Understandings* provide students with an opportunity to exhibit their work to an audience, which includes peers, parents and community members. These might be the culmination of a project and include some physical representation that allows students to integrate what they have learned into a coherent work product. Evaluators include teachers, classmates, and outside experts. Like projects, performance understandings involve in-depth, complex work leading to a final work product that can be assessed at many different stages.

*Schoolwide Exams.* Our assessment system includes “on-demand” activities such as writing prompts, essays, open-ended math problems, and experiments that are done under test-like conditions. Students complete these tasks at a specific time and under specific guidelines.

*Portfolios* are used as a record of learning that includes samples of work and students’ reflection on their work. Portfolios display the individual nature of children’s learning over time, and assist NOCCS’ teachers with targeted instructional planning. As a learning record, portfolios ensure teacher knowledge of student work from class to class.

The following table illustrates how these assessments are aligned with the NOCCS’s outcomes and the California State Content Standards and Frameworks:

<b>Methods to Assess Student Progress Toward Outcomes</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>California Content Standards/Frameworks</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<i>Proficiency in English/language arts</i>	<p>Appropriate to grade level...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Word analysis, fluency and systematic vocabulary development</li> <li>▪ Comprehension and analysis of grade level appropriate texts.</li> <li>▪ Student writes and speaks with a command of standard English conventions</li> <li>▪ Students listen critically and respond appropriately to oral communication.</li> <li>▪ Students demonstrate and understand different genres, conventions and traits of writing.</li> <li>▪ Students demonstrate and understand the different stages of the writing process.</li> <li>▪ Students read and respond to a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California State tests (CST, CAT-6, CELDT)</li> <li>• Portfolios</li> <li>• Published written works</li> <li>• Schoolwide on-demand writing prompt.</li> <li>• Miscue analysis</li> <li>• Spelling Inventories</li> <li>• Rigby benchmark for reading comprehension</li> <li>• Teacher observations/narratives</li> <li>• Student work sampling</li> <li>• Performance understanding records.</li> </ul>

Methods to Assess Student Progress Toward Outcomes		
Outcome	California Content Standards/Frameworks	Assessment
	<p>wide variety of significant works of children’s literature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students distinguish between the structural features of the text and literary terms or elements.</li> </ul>	
<i>Proficiency in history/social science</i>	<p><b>Historical Literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop research skills and sense of historical empathy.</li> <li>• Understand the meaning of time and chronology.</li> <li>• Analyze cause and effect.</li> <li>• Understand reasons for continuity and change.</li> <li>• Recognize history as a common memory, with political implications.</li> <li>• Understand the importance of religion, philosophy, and other major belief systems in history.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ethical Literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize the sanctity of life and the dignity of the individual.</li> <li>• Understand the ways in which different societies have tried to resolve ethical issues.</li> <li>• Understand that the ideas people profess affect their behavior.</li> <li>• Realize that concern for ethics and human rights is universal.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cultural Literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the rich, complex nature of a given culture: its history, geography, politics, literature, art, drama, music, dance, law, religion, philosophy, science, education, social structure, and economy.</li> <li>• Recognize the relationship among the various parts of a nation’s cultural life.</li> <li>• Learn about mythology, legends, values, and beliefs of a people.</li> <li>• Recognize that literature and art shape and reflect the inner life of a people.</li> <li>• Take pride in their own</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California State tests (CST, CAT-6, CELDT)</li> <li>• Portfolios</li> <li>• Published written works</li> <li>• Performance-based projects</li> <li>• Teacher observations/narratives</li> <li>• Performance understanding records.</li> <li>• Developmental progress reports</li> </ul>

Methods to Assess Student Progress Toward Outcomes		
Outcome	California Content Standards/Frameworks	Assessment
	<p>cultural heritages and develop a multicultural perspective that respects the dignity and worth of all people.</p> <p><b>Geographic Literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop awareness of place.</li> <li>• Understand human environmental interaction.</li> <li>• Understand human mobility.</li> <li>• Understand world regions and their historical, cultural, economic, and political characteristics</li> </ul> <p><b>Civic Values, Rights and Responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand what is required of citizens in a participatory democracy.</li> <li>• Understand individual responsibility for the democratic system.</li> </ul>	
<i>Proficiency in mathematics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students understand the relationship between numbers and quantities</li> <li>▪ Students understand basic operations at appropriate grade level</li> <li>▪ Students estimate, calculate, model and solve problems involving addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication</li> <li>▪ Students demonstrate an understanding of measurement and geometry concepts at appropriate grade levels.</li> <li>▪ Students collect numerical data and record, organize, display, and interpret the data on graphs and other organizational charts.</li> <li>▪ Students understand the place value of whole numbers and decimals and how they relate to simple fractions.</li> <li>▪ Students use and interpret variables, mathematical symbols and properties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California State tests (CST, CAT-6, CELDT)</li> <li>• Portfolios</li> <li>• Performance-based tasks</li> <li>• Teacher observations/ math skills checklists</li> <li>• Student work sampling</li> <li>• Classroom-based tests, quizzes, and homework assignments</li> <li>• Developmental progress reports</li> </ul>
<i>Proficiency in science</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students use science process skills such as observe, predict, measure and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California State tests (CST, CAT-6, CELDT)</li> <li>• Portfolios</li> </ul>

<b>Methods to Assess Student Progress Toward Outcomes</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>California Content Standards/Frameworks</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
	<p>compare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students use science tools and equipment to collect information.</li> <li>▪ Students design simple investigations to answer questions.</li> <li>▪ Communicates about science concepts orally and in writing.</li> <li>▪ Sequences and orders scientific information.</li> <li>▪ Identifies variables that affect an experiment.</li> <li>▪ Students predict how objects would behave if you change the conditions.</li> <li>▪ Use scientific vocabulary appropriately and accurately</li> <li>▪ Basic conceptual understanding of physical, earth, and life sciences of as appropriate to grade level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry-based projects</li> <li>• Performance-based projects</li> <li>• Teacher observations/narratives</li> <li>• Student work sampling</li> <li>• Performance understanding records.</li> <li>• Developmental progress reports</li> </ul>
<i>Character and Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students develop a relationship with community outside the school.</li> <li>• Students participate in collaborative community projects.</li> <li>• Students contribute to a caring community of learners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observations</li> <li>• Student community service log documenting successful participation and in community service projects/ reflective journal</li> </ul>
<i>Skills and Habits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students contribute to a caring community of learners.</li> <li>▪ Students demonstrate their understanding of personal qualities that contribute to individual responsibility, intellectual curiosity, respect for diversity, self-management, self-confidence, and integrity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observations/narratives</li> <li>• Developmental Progress Reports</li> <li>• Student self-assessments</li> </ul>

In order to best serve our students and community, NOCCS will continue to examine and refine its list of student outcomes over time to reflect the school’s mission and any changes to state standards that support our mission. NOCCS will submit to the district board at any time prior to expiration a description of any changes to the above student outcomes as an amendment to the charter. The district board agrees to hear and render an amendment decision pursuant to the timelines and processes as specified in education Code Section 47605(b).

*Special Ed and ELL Students:*

All students demonstrate academic proficiency in the core academic areas of reading/language arts, mathematics, social studies/history and science. For non-special needs and non-limited English proficient (LEP) students, proficiency is defined as making one year's worth of progress on the developmental progress report or better on all year-end assessments and passage of academic portfolio requirements. Proficiency for special needs students and LEP students will be defined appropriately according to their Individualized Education Plans and English proficiency levels as measured on the CELDT.

#### **D. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL**

At NOCCS, students, teachers, parents and school leadership are a collaborative community of learners engaged in an ongoing cycle of reflection, planning, and action to continuously improve teaching and learning. The school regularly collects and analyzes qualitative and quantitative evidence about student learning and instructional practice to assess progress toward its common goals, set priorities for improvement, and develop a comprehensive school improvement plan.

##### Governance structure

The North Oakland Community Charter School is a California Public Benefit Corporation pursuant to California law. The school is governed by the bylaws adopted by the incorporators, as subsequently amended pursuant to the amendment process specified in the bylaws. The governing board's major roles and responsibilities include establishing and approving all major educational and operational policies; approving all major contracts; approving the school's annual budget and overseeing the school's fiscal affairs; and selecting and evaluating the top administrative staff. The school's bylaws state that the number of Trustees will not be less than 8 or more than 16. Five members of the board are elected by school families. The school's bylaws also permit one representative of the governing board of the Oakland Unified School District to serve on the school's governing board. To prevent any real or perceived conflict of interest or incompatibility of office, this district representative may not be a district staff or board member and may sit on the board as a non-voting member who facilitates communications and mutual understanding between the charter school and the district. The school's governing board is comprised of parents, staff, an OUSD member, and community representatives.

The Board of Trustees complies with the Brown Act.

North Oakland Community Charter School's Articles of Incorporation are evidence of its status as a California nonprofit public benefit corporation.

The bylaws are evidence of the organizational and technical designs of the North Oakland Community Charter School's governance structure reflecting a seriousness of purpose to ensure that it remains a viable enterprise and that there is active and effective representation of interested parties, including, but not

limited to parents and guardians. The Bylaws clearly delineate authority, responsibility, and the technical mechanisms by which the Board conducts itself.

The school maintains general liability and board errors and omissions insurance policies.

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

NOCCS will comply with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities including but not limited to Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act.

NOCCS functions as a "public school of the local education agency that granted the charter" for purposes of providing special education and related services pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b).

The charter school and district will annually and in good faith negotiate and enter into a written agreement to more clearly specify the desired mix of special education funding and services to be provided. The school will enjoy reasonable flexibility to decide whether to receive services, funding, or some combination of both pursuant to Education Code Section 47646(b). The school and the district will work in good faith to document the specific terms of this relationship in an annual contract or memorandum of understanding.

## **E. EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS**

The North Oakland Community Charter School will retain or employ teaching staff who hold appropriate California teaching certificates, permits, or other documents issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. These teachers teach the core academic classes of mathematics, language arts, science, and history/social studies. These teachers are responsible for overseeing students' academic progress and for monitoring grading and matriculation decisions as specified in the school's operational policies. In compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002, NOCCS will continue to employ teachers with elementary, multiple subject teaching credentials or single subject credentials in the following core areas: mathematics, English/language arts, science, history, social science. Currently all NOCCS core teachers are fully credentialed in accordance with the Highly Qualified Teacher requirement of NCLB.

NOCCS may also employ or retain non-certificated instructional support staff in any case where a prospective staff member has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience, and the demonstrated capacity to work successfully in an instructional support capacity. Instructional support staff do not assign grades or approve students work assignments without the approval of a teacher except in non-core classes and activities. All non-instructional staff

possess experience and expertise appropriate for their position within the school as outlined in the school's staffing plan and personnel policies.

All school personnel are supervised and evaluated by the school's director. The director manages the day-to-day operations of the school. In turn, the director is supervised and evaluated by the school's board of trustees.

## **F. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES**

The school has a comprehensive set of health, safety, and risk management policies. These policies address the following topics:

- A requirement that all enrolling students and staff provide records documenting immunization to the extent required for enrollment in non-charter public schools.
- Policies relating to preventing contact with blood-borne pathogens.
- Policies and procedures for response to natural disasters and emergencies, including fires and earthquakes.
- A policy requiring that instructional and administrative staff receive training in emergency response, including appropriate "first responder" training or its equivalent.
- Policies relating to the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines.
- A policy that the school will be housed in facilities that have received state Fire Marshall approval and that have been evaluated by a qualified structural engineer who has determined that the facilities present no substantial seismic safety hazard.
- A policy establishing that the school functions as drug, alcohol, and tobacco free workplace.
- A requirement that each school employee to submit to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Section 44237.

These policies are incorporated as appropriate into the school's family and staff handbooks and are reviewed on an ongoing basis in the school's staff development efforts and governing board policies.

## **G. MEANS TO ACHIEVE RACIAL/ETHNIC BALANCE REFLECTIVE OF THE DISTRICT**

The school implements a student recruitment strategy that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following elements or strategies to ensure a racial and ethnic balance among students that is reflective of the district:

- An enrollment timeline and process that allows for a broad-based recruiting and application process.

- The development of promotional and informational material that appeals to all of the various racial and ethnic groups represented in the district.
- The appropriate development of promotional and informational materials in languages other than in English to appeal to limited English proficient populations.
- The distribution of promotional and informational materials to a broad variety of community groups and agencies that serve the various racial, ethnic, and interest groups represented in the district.
- Outreach meetings in several areas of the district to reach prospective students and parents.

## H. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

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

NOCCS will actively recruit a diverse community of families who understand and value the school's mission and are committed to the school's instructional and operational philosophy.

The school will be open to all students who reside in California and wish to attend, provided that the number of students who wish to attend does not exceed the school's capacity. If the number of applicants exceeds the school's capacity, admission will be determined by a combination of lawful preferences and a public random selection process. The NOCCS Board of Trustees shall establish Admission Procedures for implementing the school's preferences and public random selection process.

Admissions requirements are as follows:

- At least one responsible adult member of the applicant family must attend an orientation meeting, if offered by the school.
- The applicant family must sign a document saying that they have read the introductory materials provided to them as part of enrollment.
- The applicant family must submit an application form as provided by the school.

As stated in the core principles, NOCCS is committed to building a stable community of learners, representing the diversity of Oakland, and providing educational opportunities to underserved children. To reflect these values, admission to NOCCS will be granted in the following order of preference:

- a. Currently enrolled students: *To ensure educational continuity*
- b. Siblings of enrolled and admitted students: *To keep families together*

- c. Children of NOCCS staff: *To honor the work of those committed to public education*
- d. Students from underperforming schools within OUSD: *To serve academically at-risk Oakland students*
- e. Other prospective students residing within OUSD boundaries.
- f. All other applicants.

As of this 2005 renewal, NOCCS will abandon its original preference for children of founding families. The sole exception will be to honor a binding commitment made to exactly one family under the original policy.

NOCCS also reserves the right to offer a preference based on the demographics of the attendance area of the nearest public elementary school per California Education Code Section 47605.3.

Prior a lottery, the NOCCS Board may deactivate by public resolution any preference other than the preference for returning students and the preference for students residing within the borders of Oakland Unified School District.

NOCCS recognizes admissions as only part of an effort to build a diverse, equitable community of students. There is a permanent board-level committee charged with outreach and recruiting in underrepresented neighborhoods.

## **I. FINANCIAL AND PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT**

The school's trustees form an audit committee each fiscal year to oversee selection of an independent auditor and the completion of an annual audit of the school's financial affairs. The audit verifies the accuracy of the school's financial statements, attendance and enrollment, accounting practices, and review the school's internal controls. The audit is conducted in accordance with generally acceptable accounting principles applicable to the school. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit includes items and processes specified in any applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars. The annual audit is completed within six months of the close of the fiscal year and a copy of the audit's findings is forwarded to OUSD and other entities as required by law. The school's audit committee reviews any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report them to the school's board of directors with recommendations on how to resolve them. The board reports to OUSD regarding how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies are referred to the dispute resolution process contained in Element N.

The school and OUSD will jointly develop the content, evaluation criteria, timelines, and processes for the annual performance reports.

The school and OUSD will also jointly develop an annual site visitation process and protocol to enable OUSD to gather information needed to confirm the school's performance and compliance with the terms of this charter.

## **J. PUPIL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

NOCCS maintains a comprehensive set of student disciplinary policies and procedures, including appropriate due process to be followed in the event that a student violates school policies.

These policies are printed and distributed as part of the school's student handbook and clearly describe the school's expectations regarding attendance, mutual respect, substance abuse, violence, safety and work habits. Students and their parents or guardians are required to verify that they have reviewed and understand the policies prior to enrollment. Any student who engages in repeated violations of the school's behavioral expectations is required to attend a meeting with the school's staff and the student's guardian or parent. The school will prepare a specific written remediation agreement outlining future student conduct expectations, timeframes and consequences for failure to meet the expectations which may include, but are not limited to, suspension or expulsion. The school may, pursuant to the school's policies, discipline and ultimately suspend or expel students who fail to comply with terms of a remediation agreement. Students who present an urgent threat to safety or health may also be immediately suspended and later expelled. The school's policies provide all students with due process and have been developed to conform to applicable federal law regarding students with exceptional needs. The school will notify the district of any expulsions and will include suspension and expulsion data in its annual performance report.

The school accounts for suspended or expelled students in its average daily attendance accounting in relation to Federal, State, and OUSD attendance requirements and the revenues it anticipates receiving.

## **K. RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

All NOCCS' employees who qualify for membership in STRS or PERS are covered under the appropriate system. Employees contribute at the rate established by STRS or PERS. NOCCS makes all employer contributions as required by STRS, PERS and Social Security. The district or county will cooperate as necessary to forward any required payroll deductions and related data. NOCCS retains the option for its Trustees to elect to participate in other retirement or reciprocal systems in the future, should it find that participation enables the school to attract and retain a high quality staff.

## **L. ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVE**

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

### **M. EMPLOYEE RIGHTS**

The right to leave the District and take employment at the School, as well as the right to return to the District for School employees who were previously District employees, will be as specified in District policies, procedures or collective bargaining agreements addressing this issue with respect to charter schools operated as nonprofit public benefit corporations under Education Code Section 47604.

### **N. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS, OVERSIGHT, REPORTING, AND RENEWAL**

#### 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.

#### Public Comments

The staff and governing board members of the school and the district agree to attempt to resolve all disputes regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section. Both will refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

#### Disputes arising from within the school

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

The district will not intervene in any such internal disputes without the consent of the governing board of the school, and will refer any complaints or reports regarding such disputes to the governing board of the school and/or the director of the school for resolution pursuant to the school's policies. The district agrees not to intervene or become involved in the dispute unless: (1) the dispute as given the district reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this charter or related laws or agreements has occurred, (2) the governing board of the school has requested the district to intervene in the dispute, or (3) the district has cause to believe that there is an imminent threat to the health and safety of students.

### Disputes between the school and OUSD

In the event that the school or OUSD have disputes regarding the terms of this charter, disputes relating to the provisions of the charter resolution, or any other issue regarding the school and the district's relationship, both parties agree to follow the process outlined below.

In the event of a dispute between the school and OUSD, the staff and the governing board of the school and the district agree to first frame the issue in written format and refer the issue to the superintendent of the district and the director of the school. In the event that the district believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter, this will be specifically noted in the written dispute statement.

The director and the superintendent or his/her representative will 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 will identify two governing board members from their respective boards who will jointly meet with the superintendent and the director and attempt to resolve the dispute. If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the superintendent and the director will identify a neutral third party arbitrator. The format of the arbitration session will be jointly developed by the superintendent or his/her representative and the school director, and will incorporate informal rules of evidence and procedures unless both parties agree otherwise. The findings and recommendations of the arbitrator will be non-binding, unless the governing boards of the school and OUSD jointly agree to bind themselves.

### Oversight, reporting, revocation, and renewal

OUSD may inspect or observe any part of the school at any time, but will provide reasonable notice to the director of the school prior to any such observation or inspection. OUSD will provide such notice at least three working days prior to the inspection or observation unless the school's board or director agrees otherwise. Inspection, observation, monitoring, and oversight activities may not be assigned or subcontracted to a third party by the district without the mutual consent of the governing board of the school.

If the governing board of the district believes it has cause to revoke this charter, the board agrees to notify the governing board of the school in writing, noting the specific reasons for which the charter may be revoked, and grant the school reasonable time to respond to the notice and take appropriate corrective action.

NOCCS submits quarterly fiscal reports in accordance with the timelines stated in the charter school law. NOCCS and OUSD will jointly develop a timeline of other required ongoing monitoring documents, including deadlines of when the documents will be submitted, when reviewed, when feedback will be given to NOCCS, and by when corrective action will occur. NOCCS will be given reasonable time to take corrective action, unless the alleged violation presents an immediate threat to health or safety.

OUSD agrees to receive and review the annual fiscal and programmatic audit and annual performance report as specified in Element I. Within two months of receipt of this annual review, OUSD must notify the Trustees as to whether it considers the school to be making satisfactory progress relative to the goals specified in this charter. This annual specification will include the specific reasons for the district's conclusions. If, in its review of the school's annual report, the district determines that the school is making satisfactory progress toward its goals, this charter, and any mutually agreeable amendments, is renewed for a term of up to five years, as approved by the board.

## **O. LABOR RELATIONS**

The school is the exclusive public school employer to the employees of the charter school for the purpose of the Education Employment Relations Act.

## **P. SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCEDURE**

In accordance with the California Department of Education's suggested process for charter school closures, NOCCS shall adopt the following process in the event of school closure.

1. Document closure action: NOCCS' Board of Trustees will document with a formal action the closure of the school, identifying the reason for the action whether voluntary or revocation of the charter.
2. Notification to educational agencies: NOCCS will notify any school districts that may be responsible for providing educational services to the former students of the charter school. NOCCS shall also send notice of the school closure to the Charter School Unit at CDE.
3. Notification to students and parents: Parents and students of NOCCS shall be notified as soon as possible when it appears that the school closure will be imminent.
4. Transfer of Student and school records: NOCCS will establish a process for the transfer of student records and assist parents in the transfer of students to other appropriate schools. The school and OUSD will agree to a plan for the maintenance of all school records.
5. Financial Closeout: NOCCS will conduct an independent audit within 6 months of the closure of the school. The audit will include an assessment of all of the school's assets, liabilities, and accounts receivable. NOCCS shall also submit any required year-end financial reports as soon as possible after the close, but no later than the required deadline for year-end reporting.

6. Dissolution of Assets: NOCCS shall develop a plan for dissolution of assets and repayment of any liabilities as determined by the audit in conjunction with applicable law for a nonprofit corporation.

## MISCELLANEOUS CLAUSES

**Term.** The term of this charter will begin on the day of OUSD approval and expire five years thereafter.

**Amendments.** Any amendments to this charter will be made by the mutual agreement of the governing boards of the school and district. Material revisions and amendments will be made pursuant to the standards, criteria, and timelines in Education Code Section 47605.

**Severability.** The terms of this charter contract are severable. In the event that any of the provisions are determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the charter will remain in effect, unless mutually agreed otherwise by the district and the governing board of the school. The district and school agree to meet to discuss and resolve any issues or differences relating to invalidating provisions in a timely fashion and in good faith.

**Compliance with State and Federal Laws.** The school will comply with all Federal, State Constitution, court determined, and other laws applicable to its operation, and will comply with OUSD guidelines and requirements for charters.

**Student Records.** Student records will be maintained and used in the manner required by law. In addition, records will be maintained so as to conform to OUSD requirements for student records and record formats in order for student transfers to/from OUSD and the school to be facilitated. Student records will be transferred to/from the school and OUSD schools when students are accepted into either.

**Facilities.** The school does not currently use OUSD property or facilities to house its operation, nor does it use OUSD equipment, but it retains the option to do so in the future.

### **District Impact Report.**

*Facilities.* The school is located at 410 Alcatraz Street, Oakland, CA 95618

*Administrative Services.* NOCCS has an experienced administrative staff that is responsible for services such as payroll, accounting, and purchasing. NOCCS is responsible for its personnel salary and benefits, and other costs. No administrative services will be provided by OUSD.

*Potential Civil Liability Effects.* NOCCS, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, is responsible for all matters of civil and financial liability resulting from operation

of the school. OUSD will not be liable for NOCCS' debts or obligations, and the school will hold OUSD harmless from all matters of liability for its operation under this charter. NOCCS will be responsible for its own costs and attorney's fees during its operation under the charter, and will be fully liable for such costs, including those that extend beyond the term of the charter that result from any claims associated with the school.

NOCCS assumes these responsibilities and will purchase and maintain as general liability, property, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance. Insurance coverage will meet industry standards and amounts set forth in a certificate of insurance and other documents satisfactory to the District Risk Manager. NOCCS will be responsible for claims resulting from its operation that are made during or after the existence of the charter school.

The school will be responsible for all supplies and equipment purchased. In the event of loss by fire, disaster, or theft, OUSD will have no responsibility for such items. Further, OUSD will have no responsibility for the losses of student and staff property for any reason, and will hold the district harmless from any such losses.

*Financial Statement* (see Appendix VIII.)

## **Conclusion**

Today more than ever, school plays a crucial role in children's development. It has the power to provoke reflection, introspection, and imagination. It can inspire students to invent and explore new ideas. It can ignite their curiosity about the world and invite deep intellectual engagement with important subject matter. It can shape students' relationships to one another and how they understand their role in the wider community. It can bring them into close, sustained, caring relationships with adults. Thus it is an awesome and humbling responsibility to conceive of a school, for it situates between four walls so many of the expectations and aspirations we have for children and what they can become. A school can accomplish these things if it is founded on a compelling vision of teaching and learning that involves deep knowledge of students' learning, as well as ongoing opportunities for teachers to assess and develop their practice. Because we will not rest on past success, but strive to learn and grow, because we cherish each and every student, because we invite all on a shared journey of discovery, NOCCS is such a school.

## Appendix II

### **Assurances**

The North Oakland Community Charter School will meet all state standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code 60605, and any other state standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in on-charter public schools.

The North Oakland Community Charter School will be deemed the exclusive public school employers of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Act (Chapter 10.7 (commencing with 3540) of Division 4 of Title 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code.)

The North Oakland Community Charter School will be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations.

The North Oakland Community Charter School will not charge tuition.

The North Oakland Community Charter School will admit all pupils who wish to attend the School subject to capacity.

The North Oakland Community Charter School will not discriminate against any pupil on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, perceived sexual orientation, home language, or disability.

The North Oakland Community Charter School shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act.

The North Oakland Community Charter School will meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary.

The North Oakland Community Charter School will ensure that teachers in the school hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools are required to hold. As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to non-core, non-college preparatory teachers.

The North Oakland Community Charter School will at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.

The North Oakland Community Charter School will follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the charter school.

All meetings of the Board of Directors of the North Oakland Community Charter School shall be held in compliance with the Brown Act.