

Muddy Creek Charter School

OREGON PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

DATE: October 1, 2006
REVISED RESUBMITTAL: April 30, 2007

Submitted to:
The Board of Directors
Corvallis School District

Copy mailed to Oregon Department of Education

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Preface

The Muddy Creek Charter School (MCCS) is an elementary school (K-5) designed to provide a place-based curriculum founded in its rural agricultural setting in south Benton County and with a commitment to community service. This approach to learning will provide a unique opportunity within the Corvallis School District. MCCS will have a class size of twenty students per teacher, in blended grades, which will help ensure the school's effectiveness and provide high potential for a positive impact on the district.

The place-based learning methods proposed for this school have been designed to stimulate student engagement and achievement. In place-based programs, students directly experience what they learn in a familiar context. Thus, their capacity to understand and communicate the subject matter increases. Studies of schools which have adopted social, cultural and natural features of local environments as the context for academic subjects report that students act more independently and responsibly, display more pride in and ownership of their education accomplishments, exhibit improved discipline and self control and academically outperform their traditionally instructed peers (Appendix A).¹ The place-based program will be the context for project-based learning where the students will help design, conduct, present and self-assess their work investigating a series of topics. Depending on grade level, projects will be designed to range from 2 weeks to several months. Projects will change from teacher to teacher and from year to year, so that over the course of several years students will be exposed to a large variety of projects. The projects, besides the place-based context, will be multidisciplinary with emphasis on integrating science and arts and will meet the state educational objectives. The project approach allows students to do integrated disciplines via making observations and collecting data, and presenting their interpretations, sometimes in artistic modes.

Our typical school day has a component of direct (traditional) instruction every morning for academic subjects such as mathematics, literacy, and humanities, followed by a large block of more than two hours of project time every afternoon for students to apply knowledge and integrate their education into their lives and community. At present, no school in the Corvallis district provides an integrated curriculum that is intrinsically place based or project based (see

¹ Lieberman, Gerald (2002). *CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning*. State Education and Environmental Roundtable. See Appendix A.

Appendix E), and few in the state do so. Emerson (Charter) School in Portland is an example of a highly successful program similar in structure to what we propose here, albeit in an urban rather than rural place (www.emersonschool.org). Our ability to provide such a comprehensive instructional program will be enhanced and ensured by the hiring of licensed teachers motivated to participate in this innovative school.

At the heart of MCCA place-based learning is using the agricultural and rural area, including farms, commercial forests and a wildlife refuge in the Muddy Creek watershed as part of the larger classroom. We here include a map of the Corvallis School District (see next page). The southern third of the District is the region in which the school will be set. The agricultural landscape, including tree farms, grass seed farms, orchards, grazing lands, streams, ponds, wildlife refuge and national forests of the Muddy Creek watershed are the place in which, and about which, projects will be developed.

This rural and agricultural place contains many elements that will allow integration of science and other disciplines with arts education. Support for this type of education was made evident by the number of students the former Inavale School was able to attract with an educational approach embracing some of these place-based components and by the success of field science activities in middle school grades at Lincoln School. Muddy Creek Charter School will employ a comprehensive, intensive place-based approach, making it unique in the district. The small size of MCCA, proposed for 60 students, make it an ideal incubation ground for innovative curriculum development and assessment methods that will benefit the district in general. Parents and community members have shown support in a local area blanket survey of 500 households.

The 500 households were chosen by a title company as those located closest to the old Inavale School. The response rate of 16% was above typical for a mail survey (5-15%, source: www.sba.gov).

Total responses	80
Number that endorse the school	76
Number stating they would send children	19 (Total of 31 students)
Number stating they were willing to help develop the school	22

These are a few of the comments received on the surveys:

"Great idea – hope it happens."

"I would love for this school to happen!"

"I know other people in this area who would use the charter school." (This from a woman that lives in Philomath and her children attend Clemens)

A web petition hosted on the Muddy Creek Charter School website also garnered community support. Quotes include:

"I believe children should be able to attend neighborhood schools in the early grades, not ride buses all day. Perhaps I could volunteer for science sessions."

"I am a middle school teacher in a charter school in Polk County, and am a witness to the unique opportunity a charter school can provide, not only to students but communities as well. I live in Corvallis and would like to see my tax dollars support an educational alternative within our community."

The Muddy Creek Charter School will benefit the Corvallis School District in the following ways:

- 1) MCCA will offer a unique education program, not offered elsewhere in the district. In accordance with the state law authorizing charter schools, it will provide a test of an innovative educational model.
- 2) MCCA will be a testing ground for developing curriculum that enhances learning outcomes and a proving ground for alternative assessment methods. The place-based project-learning educational model of MCCA is potentially transferable to other Corvallis Schools. Student-directed learning and assessment, including development of portfolios are aspects that are transferable to the district at large.

- 3) MCCC will serve the district by serving the rural community in the southern third of the district and will simultaneously help alleviate growing population pressure on school facilities in the southern part of the district (Adams and Lincoln) as well as recapture students lost to the district through closure of Inavale School (more than 30 moved to other districts, home school or private school). A number of these families have expressed strong interest in attending MCCC.
- 4) MCCC plans to build collaborative educational links with Oregon State University, such as through rural sustainability initiative. MCCC is also interested in building collaboration between the district and OSU researchers simultaneously to meet the missions of education and research outreach requirements and thereby garner federal and other grant funds.
- 5) Financially, the MCCC will make a contribution to the fixed costs of the district through the funds withheld by the school district from ADMw payments. The MCCC will operate on a smaller percentage of state moneys than other district schools, because under this proposal it would operate with only 90% of state moneys. The efficiency of the transfer of variable costs is difficult to assess. Likely a large portion of the variable costs in educating the students at the charter school students will pass from the district to the charter school.
- 6) Through MCCC the district will position itself for potential funding avenues available to charter and rural schools, including rural education research (Appendix L and K-8).
- 7) MCCC will attract some students from other school districts. All of the out-of-school-district students will make a contribution to the Corvallis School District as a percentage of their ADMw funds retained by the school district (shared with home district).

The exact costs associated with educating students at MCCC, rather than elsewhere in the district, is difficult to predict in detail. The financial analysis of the MCCC school provided in this application is conservative and sustainable because the budget is based on only ADMw funding. No grants or contributions are included in the budget figures, though this additional source of funding is one which MCCC will actively pursue and which would benefit the Corvallis School District as a whole. The federal incentive grant money for which the proposed school has qualified will provide a measure of safety and capital to implement our educational programs. The amount of money transferred to MCCC to educate children there rather than elsewhere in

the district is very small in the scheme of the larger total school district budget. Furthermore the school has great outside funding potential and student recruiting potential, and so stands to augment district funds. Also, charter schools have a less complex financial situation than do entire school districts. Salary rates are more flexible and financial information is more readily available for management decisions.

In Summary, Muddy Creek Charter School warrants approval because:

- The Muddy Creek Charter School will be implementing a highly effective, place-based educational model involving traditional instruction and project learning with attendant assessment innovations. This model can be tested in this small setting and is exportable.
- The daily project learning with science and arts emphasis provides an innovative education model and educational opportunity for students not available elsewhere in the district.
- The conservative budget shows the school is financially sustainable.
- There is significant community support including parents and community members, within the district and outside the district.
- There is a range of support for the place-based charter school for the rural community (see Appendix K).

The financial impact to the district is difficult to assess, but will be small (less than 1% of the district general fund revenue) and more likely positive than negative, particularly in light of outside funding opportunities.

1. The identification of the applicant

As required by ORS 338.035(2)(c), Inavale Community Partners (ICP) has applied to the IRS for a letter stating that the Corporation is qualified as an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Our application was acknowledged August 7, 2006 and was sent to an agent for review on February 26, 2007. Status is still pending.

The Inavale Community Partners are committed to the maintenance of the rural community outside the urban growth boundary in south Benton County. The ICP will operate the charter school under the name Muddy Creek Charter School.

The Corporation's current officers and board members are:

President	Anita Grunder 31459 Peterson Rd. Philomath OR 97370 541-929-5212
Vice President, Board member	Tanya Freeman 26078 Nicole Dr. Corvallis OR 97333 541-738-8992
Treasurer	Payton James-Amberg 6240 SW Trellis Dr Corvallis OR 97333 541-929-4432
Secretary, Board member	Kathleen Westly 31469 Peterson Rd. Philomath OR 97370 541-929-5443
Board Member	John Dilles 31459 Peterson Rd. Philomath OR 97370 541-929-5212

Corporation's contact person: Kathleen Westly (address above) email: kwwestly@peak.org

Inavale Community Partners, Inc EIN: 20-5111506; P.O. Box 271, Philomath OR 97370

Website: www.muddycreekcharterschool.org

Website: <http://www.muddycreekcharterschool.org/icp.html>

2. The name of the proposed public charter school

The Muddy Creek Charter School (MCCS)

3. The philosophy and mission of the school

Vision:

MCCS will offer an outstanding educational experience for the students in and around the Muddy Creek Watershed, with the purpose of educating citizens that can become effective stewards of the local rural and larger world community. In so doing, we hope to become a leading resource in the effort to sustain rural schools and their communities.

Mission:

Muddy Creek Charter School is being founded to provide an excellent and innovative public educational program for children in grades K-5 in the Corvallis School District. It is aimed at but not exclusive to children who reside in and around the Muddy Creek Watershed. The school will deliver a place-based curriculum founded in its rural agricultural setting and commitment to community service. Learning will take place through a combination of direct (traditional) and multidisciplinary, project-based instruction that also integrates art. MCCS will be supported in its efforts by forging and maintaining partnerships with local landowners and agencies, OSU researchers and the community at large. Our success will be our children. The students of MCCS will not only meet or surpass the state benchmarks but will also have a deeper understanding of their place in the world as measured by the portfolio of high quality projects, and will prove themselves well prepared to transition into other schools in the Corvallis School district for their continued education.

4. Description of any Distinctive Learning or Teaching Techniques

MCCS will provide a program of place-based learning. We envision this as an immersion program, akin to a language immersion model, but here *an immersion in the place*, that is, the agricultural and rural region of south Benton County. We believe this place-based curriculum, combined with direct instruction in mathematics and literacy, and with a focus on project based learning will connect the school's students with their surroundings and community to provide a sound basic education that is made relevant and engaging by using the farms, forests, streams and wildlife refuge around the school as part of the "classroom", both as a way of teaching in non-conventional settings and as subject matter. We believe that this program will enable MCCS students to maintain high educational achievement in line with the Oregon State standards in core academic subjects.

Place-based learning

A survey of the literature on place-based education reveals characteristic patterns to this still-evolving approach that make it distinctive.

- It emerges from the particular attributes of a place. The content is specific to the geography, ecology, sociology, politics, and other dynamics of that place. This fundamental characteristic establishes the foundation of the concept.
- It is inherently multidisciplinary.
- It is inherently experiential. In many programs this includes a participatory action or service learning component; in fact, some advocates insist that action must be a component if ecological and cultural sustainability are to result.
- It is reflective of an educational philosophy that is broader than "learn to earn." Economics of place can be an area of study as a curriculum explores local industry and sustainability; however, all curricula and programs are designed for broader objectives.
- It connects place with self and community. Because of the ecological lens through which place-based curricula are envisioned, these connections are pervasive. These curricula include multigenerational and multicultural dimensions as they interface with community resources.
- Placed-based learning is a starting point with all the senses and experiences to bring students along the path of global awareness.

In a study conducted on 150 schools in 16 states for 10 years, students in place-based learning programs scored 15% higher with respect to state benchmarks than in other schools. 93 percent of students from this study showed improved development in literacy skills. The study attributes this increase to the fact that students are reading, writing and speaking about topics in which they have a high interest. The study shows 92% increase in mathematics skills. The study claims that this growth is due to students working on authentic mathematical problems that arise from solving problems in their project work. See Appendix A, a study by Liebermann that documents the success of place-based learning.

Project-based learning

MCCS will use project-based learning methods as the means for providing experience and learning through place. Because project-based learning is inherently experiential, it is a natural pairing with this place-immersion. Given the rural/agricultural setting of south Benton County, we anticipate that MCCS projects will have a strong science component. Because project-based learning is also inherently open-ended (the project takes on a particular structure and life as the unique group of learners – teachers and students – develop a project), it will naturally incorporate other disciplines, as they are meaningfully integrated into the project. We expect art to be a strong component of these projects. Literacy and mathematics components will be used wherever appropriate, giving the students opportunity to put to practical use what they learn in the traditional instruction portion of their day. We expect each classroom will undertake two to three large multi-week projects during the year, with a number of other smaller projects and focused studies in addition, and as appropriate for the grade level. We intend to base our project development on the work of Chard and Katz on project-based methodologies (see Appendix B). See section 5 for information on curriculum.

Because of the integrative approach applied in place- and project-based learning, the MCCS program will also entail an organized, regular focus on service learning, as a natural outgrowth of these projects. Students will have many opportunities to be of service and benefit to the community, both natural and human, as they present and teach to others what they have learned, and as they enact change they identify as important through their projects (see service learning section below).

We envision a number of projects will involve presentations to the community, both as a benefit through education and as a means of assessing student learning. These presentations will become part of an extensive portfolio the students and teachers will develop to represent student work. As each project will have a life of its own, so each project will have assessments that are unique. These assessment rubrics will be formed with student input as the project is being studied and will be combined with teacher-developed benchmark tracking. As a result, portfolio compilation will be an important means of representing, and a large factor in assessing, student work. See section 6 and Appendix G for assessment information.

It is important to note that the learning model we are proposing for Muddy Creek Charter School is unique in the Corvallis School District (see Appendix E for comparison). While aspects of place- and project-based learning exist within individual classrooms in 509J, largely at teacher preference, no school uses place-based project learning as its framework. In M CCS, **every** (full time) **student, in every grade, on every afternoon, of every day** will participate in project learning based on our model of immersion in place. We applaud the work that some district schools are doing under the umbrella of the 4-H Wildlife Stewards program. The scientific inquiry studies they have undertaken in stream restoration and habitat trails are beneficial to the community and instructive to the students. They are not, however, the comprehensive, multidisciplinary, “projects are the program” approach that will characterize M CCS.

Likewise, service learning, while formalized by a smattering of teachers in the elementary and intermediate grades, is not a component of district curriculum as we propose it to be at M CCS, both as projects outright and as integrated into larger multidisciplinary projects.

Service Learning

Service learning will be an important component of the curriculum. One objective is to cause community members to consider not what society can do for us, but what can we do for society. This gives students a greater sense of self, and of responsibility for themselves and for the world around them. Service learning could be as simple as yard work for a senior citizen or handicapped person or as complex as habitat restoration and erosion control. Service learning integrates readily with the place-based and project-based approaches.

One aspect of community service at M CCS will be the development of projects, exercises, field trip guides and self-assessment tools that could serve other students at other schools. We anticipate that the school will also grow a community garden to serve simultaneously as a forum for learning and for service through donation of the produce. We are particularly interested in participating in projects such as with Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom (a nonprofit program hosted at OSU) and also in the school garden program presently being considered by the Oregon State legislature.

Community service will be included in the school culture at the individual, class, and school level. See section 5 for more on service learning. Elements of service learning will include establishment of a Buddy System. The pairing of students from different grade levels as buddies fosters community, encourages good behavior among role models and raises expectations of good behavior and a sense of belonging among younger children. It also facilitates smooth operation of multi-class expeditions. See curriculum section and Appendix C for more on service learning.

Integration of Arts

While place-based learning is the fundamental framework, the curriculum will also be designed to include art, not only as a subject in its own right, but also as a vehicle for observing and exploring the world. The integration of art into the study of other subjects enhances the understanding of both art and the other subjects. Arts integration into the place-based framework with project emphasis, a component of direct instruction and with attention to service learning, is part of our strategy to address cognitive, social, aesthetic, physical, communication and emotional aspects of nurturing the whole child.

Art will be integrated in a variety of ways, through project activities and through engagement of artists in the community. Integrating arts provides another creative way of integrating and understanding concepts. Our goals for art integration are to enhance learning and include: (1) careful observation and schematic rendition, for example as a part of science; (2) appreciation and analysis of aesthetics and composition, for example in the study of landscapes; (3) cultivate critical thinking skills through critiques of art works; (4) understanding of symmetry, for example

of arches, in conjunction with mathematics, architecture or science; (5) appreciation and understanding of colors and texture; and (6) experience in and appreciation of crafts making, for example in conjunction with native arts or wood working. Art may be individual, such as field journals or paintings, or collective, such as dramatic enactments or a mural. See Appendix D for pedagogical approaches to integrating arts and for an example of making connections through integration, modified from the River of Words, Watershed Explorer Curriculum: a multidisciplinary Approach to bringing Nature and Art to the Classroom by Robert Hass (riverofwords.org).

MCCS as incubator

In addition to the obvious direct impact the MCCS educational model will have on the students at MCCS, the innovations to be implemented at MCCS have potential benefits to the district as a whole. As an incubator on a small scale for place-based learning using a project approach, MCCS can be used as a model for other schools to incorporate more place-based focus and project-based methods in their schools, even though their place is “in town”. For example, Emerson School, a charter school in the Portland Public School District, uses a program very similar to the one we propose, but in an entirely urban setting. Like the MCCS program, Emerson School has direct, traditional instruction in the morning and project-based learning in the afternoons. Aspects of their program are transferable, regardless of setting, just as MCCS programs will be exportable to the District and beyond. One interesting example of exportability is that Emerson School engages in summer programs in professional development for teachers in project learning. See Appendix L for Outdoor Education ideas in collaboration with MCCS. We believe and intend that MCCS can be an asset to district schools. MCCS programs will also serve as examples to other rural schools throughout the state, particularly those near a larger population center and that are likewise struggling to sustain their rural nature and identity.

5. A description of the curriculum

Whereas the details of the curriculum and its implementation will be developed in the future by the staff of MCCS, place-based learning with components of integrated science and art, and service-learning will be unique to MCCS and will build on a solid foundation of basic primary education. We summarize some aspects of the curriculum here. Examples of detailed benchmarks are in Appendix M. MCCS teachers will be tasked with connecting student led activities to curricular objectives, service learning objectives and state bench marks.

The Curriculum is designed in two parts. Mornings will be dedicated to traditional instruction and basic educational programs in scheduled classes. Units will include Mathematics, Literacy Physical Education and Health, and Humanities. This class work will provide a solid, basic foundation, as expected of Oregon public schools. Our plans are to adopt as much as possible the 509J materials for direct instruction (Appendix F). We would hope to be part of district-wide piloting of curricular materials.

Typical Daily Schedule

8:15 - 8:25	BREAKFAST	
8:30 - 9:15	Math	
9:15 – 10:00	Literacy	
10:00—10:15	Recess	
10:15 – 10:45	Health and PE	
10:45—11:30	Literacy, Math or Humanities (grade K-2 and day dependent)	Humanities (grade 3-5; and day dependent)
11:30-12:00	LUNCH	
12:00—12:30	Recess	
12:30- 1:30	Project time	
1:30 to 1:45	Recess	
1:45—3:00	Project time	

Afternoons will allow flexible programming to address the special programs and projects envisioned for MCCS: a place- and project-based curriculum founded in the rural agricultural setting. The afternoons will allow for extended project time, including field trips and field

projects. As shown in the schedule above, the plan is for 2 hours and 15 minutes of daily project time for each student each day, i.e. more than 11 hours each 5-day week (excepting K). This project-based education is therefore unique to the Corvallis School District, where no K-5 grades in schools that we know of have more than 3 hours per week in dedicated project time and most have less (Appendix E). The afternoon programs therefore represent an innovative and unique approach to primary education, a primary criterion for a school chartered under Oregon charter statute law.

MORNING: BASICS

Mathematics

MCCS will provide traditional instruction using state adopted curriculum and teaching materials in accord with the district. Both the standard texts and the Saxon texts will be considered. The morning time 45 minutes, is less than the 1 hour recommended by the Oregon Department of Education, but this time will be supplemented by additional mathematics instruction. At grades K-2 the 45-minute time slot from 10:45 to 11:30 will allow additional instruction in mathematics and literacy. Furthermore, mathematics will be incorporated into project learning in the afternoons. Mathematics is a natural part of documenting observations (such as in biology by measuring plant growth and calculating growth rates, or in hydrology by measuring the amount of water in a pond or stream, and by estimating the amount of water moving through a stream) as well as in designing patterns such as for the planting of crops and plays important role in art and nature (the Fibonacci number series, for example).

Literacy/Language Arts

In grades K-2 the school curriculum will adopt a balanced approach to teaching literacy. At these grade levels MCCS will provide direct instruction, using state adopted curriculum. In grades 3 to 5 the school curriculum will adopt a more literature- and writing-based approach to teaching literacy. At these grade levels the MCCS will utilize some traditional instruction with state adopted curriculum. The majority of instruction will be the foundations of writing. The study of literature will become more prominent in grades 3-5. MCCS will use literature circles as the primary method to study literature and will draw, in part, from literature relevant to the rural focus. Writing is one of the declared instructional goals, as it is fundamental to a well-rounded education. As appropriate, the writing goals will be integrated into science-based project reports.

MCCS will focus on functional report writing as well as the writing of fiction as the vehicles for creating competent writers.

Physical Education and Health

The MCCS will mandate time every day for Physical Education. The focus of the physical education curriculum will be fitness for life. The MCCS will adopt all the Oregon State Benchmarks for relevant grade levels with a focus on consistency. We may emulate the model at Emerson Charter School in Portland where each teacher elects which kind of fitness to teach and students can rotate through the options over time. We will ensure very young student grades K-2 get instruction on important gross motor skills. State PE benchmarks will be implemented for this grade level. We do not want to commit to an intensive PE program as the school staffing may not have this expertise. Self-management and social behavior will be addressed with a curriculum such as Second Steps. The small class size is also an important factor in helping kids get the feed back from teachers to learn self-management and social behavior.

The state standards will be the guideline. Environmental health instruction as a focus has not been determined, but would certainly be addressed in the afternoon projects.

We also anticipate ample opportunity to enhance appreciation of fitness through outdoor activities. The frequent forays to field sites, farms, and the garden will also foster physical health through exercise and fresh air.

Humanities

At all grade levels MCCS will provide humanities instruction through direct instruction and hands-on, place-based projects. The projects will emphasize the local area environment to increase relevance, to raise interest levels of the students and to explore and build a sense of the history and influence of the people within the local area. In addition, focused studies as needed to meet state benchmarks by grade will be conducted, and included in the afternoon project time.

AFTERNOON: PLACE-BASED INTEGRATIVE PROJECTS

Science

At all grade levels M CCS will provide science instruction through hands-on, place-based projects. Students will achieve science knowledge through learning by inquiry and by producing records of scientific observations and brief reports. M CCS will also monitor state benchmark tests for demonstration of science knowledge. The projects will emphasize the local area environment to increase relevance and to raise interest levels of the students. Discovery learning in the community around the school will be the centerpiece for science and for integrating other essential academic and life skills, including writing, mathematics, art and physical health. In grades 1-3 the school curriculum will use the grade 3 standards and incorporate some grade 5 standards into the lower grades in order to accelerate students into a more rigorous science curriculum.

At all grade levels, M CCS will emphasize the following goals as an important aspect of the science focus of the school.

- Record scientific observations in notebooks and field journals
- Formulate hypotheses and strategies of inquiry
- Write brief reports:
 - Include observations and information from two or more sources.
 - Use diagrams, charts, or illustrations that are appropriate to the text and development of the student.

Arts

Integrative projects featuring arts, science and community service will mainly take place in the afternoon project time. Appendix D gives an example of using birds as a subject for integrating art with scientific inquiry. Students will show knowledge of art through the inclusion of materials into a portfolio (see assessment section).

The M CCS place-based curriculum will focus on in-depth multidisciplinary projects. M CCS school will have all students participate in 1 to 3 major, potentially school-wide projects per year and several others with a smaller number of students. The projects will change each year, so that after 6 years each student will have been exposed to a large variety of projects.

Examples of projects include:

Topic	Subject	Art component
Muddy Creek watershed	hydrology, hydrogeology, climatology, agriculture, ecology	map making
Wildlife/animals	zoology, ecology, agricultural pests, beneficial biota	field journal sketches
Weather	climatology, physics, ecology, clouds	watercolor or batik
Agriculture	botany, chemistry, fertilizer; economics; business	art of planting designs
Trees	botany, wildfire—chemistry and physics of combustion; ecology; economics	landscape art
Wood product industry	sustainability, processing; economics; global markets	art of woodworking, totems
Salmonids	biology, ecology, watersheds, economics, food role for native peoples	NW native art
Birds	zoology/ornithology, global migrations; physics of flying	art – feathers appendix D
Gardens	botany, cooking/food preparation; community service	flower art
Willamette Valley	geography, geology, history of settlement	native vegetation, dyes
Coast Range	geography, geology, earthquakes, topography, microclimates	perspective
Bridges	engineering & strength, math, construction methods; history of bridges	arches
Electricity	physics of electricity, lightning, hydropower, biomass/coal power	charcoal drawings

Service Learning

Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with academic study to enrich learning, to teach civic responsibility, and to strengthen communities. Students gain a "real world" extension to their classroom education, and at the same time, build a connection to their community. Some important objectives of the MCCC service learning projects are:

- Demonstrate social and civic responsibility in service settings.
- Demonstrate political effectiveness in service settings.
- Demonstrate proficient use of service skills.
- Demonstrate personal development through performing service.
- Demonstrate moral development by acting ethically in service settings.
- Practice basic academic skills in real life situations by engaging in service.
- Donation of products, such as vegetables from gardens, to the community.

At MCCC service learning projects will unfold from scientific observations of the local ecology as well as student led assessments of the communities needs. Students will be required to reflect on the connection of the activity to their academic goals and their personal lives. These reflections and other reports will be included in the portfolio created for presentations to parents. We note that service learning is not formally integrated in the K-5 curriculum in the district. Service learning is incorporated by some teachers into some classes.

Service learning will be integrated with projects. In these projects students will have a strong voice in the choice of activities and actions taken (see project method Appendix B). Appendix C-2 gives an example of a project integrating service and science called "Wild Life Tug of War". The project called "Wildlife Tug of War" was adapted from the SOLV (www.solv.org) website materials. SOLV has extensive service learning curriculum with science integrated fully. We anticipate using grant funds to secure examples of curricular materials and to provide relevant training to the staff.

Curricular Materials

As relevant and appropriate we anticipate participating with adoption of curricular materials adopted by the district for the direct instruction part of the program. (see Appendix F).

There exist a variety of sources of curricular materials that lend themselves to the MCCC place and project-based program. For example, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has a detailed Aquatic Educational Program that would readily be adapted to MCCC. The publication is entitled "The Stream Scene: Watersheds, Wildlife and People." It includes a myriad of integrative field-based and other exercises that are also carefully mapped to the Oregon Education Standards.

Another example, "Project Wet" (www.montana.edu/wwwwet), provides a manual for teachers complete with exercises, field trip ideas, and experiment and project designs covering topics from sedimentation to use of waterways by explorers. However, we anticipate developing and adapting materials as well as assessment methods to our educational program (see section 6).

The nonprofit organization "Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation" (<http://AITC.oregonstate.edu>), hosted at OSU, also has many resources that can be adapted to the MCCC vision. MCCC could collaborate in the testing and development of teaching modules in agriculture and nutrition (personal communication with program director Tami Kerr).

6. A description of the expected results of the curriculum and methods used to measure and report results

Student Performance Objectives

The MCCC intends to provide an excellent educational experience and recognizes the importance of assessing student performance to identify areas of needed improvement and show student progress. As stated by Joe Nathan and Nicola Johnson in their December 2000 report to the U.S. Department of Education, there are six vital features of effective student achievement assessment programs:

- The school identifies clear, explicit and measurable learning goals, outcomes or standards.
- Teachers, parents, students and community members understand the outcomes.
- The school uses multiple methods of assessment.
- Assessment is part of an integrated system of instruction, professional development and refinement of a school's operation.
- Assessment takes into account a student's language proficiency.
- All students are assessed, and the school reports the academic growth of all its students¹.

To this end, MCCC will use a combination of authentic and performance-based assessment tools. These assessments will be used both to describe and measure student achievement and as a planning tool to identify further student learning needs. These assessments will be used in student-parent-teacher conferences and for the purposes of informing and documenting teacher and school performance.

The MCCC will make a significant investment in assessing the Project Based Learning. We anticipate the development of new tools and the gathering of best practices in implementing projects and evaluating students. This effort can be the key link to extending this learning method into other districts schools.

¹ “What Should We Do? A Practical Guide to Assessment and Accountability in Schools” by Joe Nathan and Nicola Johnson, December, 2000. www.centerforschoolchange.org

Frequency of Assessment

Students will be assessed at the beginning of the school year to establish a baseline and set learning goals for the year. Continuous assessment will be made throughout the year using a variety of tools in academic and non-academic areas. Routine assessments in core academic subjects (to include math, reading and writing) will be held three times during the year – in November, March and late May/early June – and incorporate State mandated tests, as required. In this regard we will implement that same assessment as used elsewhere in the district for K-5. The MCCS will have the objective that 80% of students show improvement every quarter in literacy and mathematics and that 90% will show improvement in a year.

Methods of Assessment

Authentic Assessments:

MCCS will employ a variety of authentic assessment tools continuously to document student progress and achievements in state and district standards and benchmarks, as well as other academic and non-academic standards appropriate to the MCCS program. These will include:

- A. Informal observations
- B. Documentation of Project Work

This will include documentation of both the process and final product of the project. It may incorporate project planning webs, student writing, the actual project, audio/visual materials, photographs, artwork, etc.

- C. Review of Student Journals – Writing and Field

Journals will be used by students regularly for writing and field study. Review of these journal entries, to include such aspects as ideas development, writing drafts, reflections on literature circles and learning, field observations and drawings, questions about project work, will be incorporated in student assessment.

- D. Rubrics

Rubrics will be developed to assess project work. Teachers (in collaboration with students) will develop a rubric for each project to ensure clear expectations regarding skills and concepts to be included and tasks to be accomplished. Students and teachers will apply the rubrics to clearly and effectively assess performance, and assessment will be made both by the student herself and by the teacher. (See Appendix G-2 and G-3 for examples of a project rubric and project benchmark map, respectively).

E. Student Portfolios

The primary components of student portfolios will include, but are not limited to:

1. Goals and accomplishments
2. Drafts and revisions of work
3. Writing samples
4. Math samples
5. Project work, to include project documentation (above) and field journal pages, outcomes to be used for community service (e.g. a bound book which is a guide to a nature trail)
6. Audio/visual materials

The development of portfolios is more than collecting a body of work into a folder. Teachers and students will collaborate to choose between 2 and 5 pieces to add to the portfolio monthly. Students learning to self-assess what “good work” is, and to choose representative samples, will be an important part of this process. The student will choose the work to be included keeping in mind an array of skills and subject contents to be demonstrated. This will help develop constructive critical thinking and self-assessment skills. These portfolios will be shared with parents during student-parent-teacher conferences.

Portfolios can also be developed for group projects and might lead to the production of a booklet, field guide, a dramatization or other body of finished work. Such a portfolio requires constructive critiquing, critical thinking and cooperation and is a natural way to link assessment with learning and particularly with service learning.

Performance-Based Assessments:

These will come in two primary forms: tracking the progress towards and achievement of Oregon grade level standards and benchmarks, and testing at the appropriate grades in those subjects required by the Oregon State Assessment program. MCCS will participate fully to meet these state mandates. See Appendix G-1 for a table of these assessment tools.

In order to ensure consistent progress toward meeting Oregon Content and Performance Standards, each teacher will track benchmarks achieved by each student and document the form

of this achievement (e.g. informal observations, project work assessment, or specific performance assessments). (See Appendix M for examples of a benchmark tracking matrix).

MCCS will follow the state and district's lead in choosing a method for state-mandated testing. We recognize that the present method is under review, so we will wait until this has been resolved on the state level.

Reporting Methods:

A. Student-parent-teacher conferences

Our goal is that at least 85% of parents will attend parent-teacher conferences at least once per academic year. Teachers will record conference participants; this data will be included in the annual report. Conferences will be held three times per year, in November, March and at the end of the year. They will provide opportunity to review student portfolios, progress toward achievement of goals (to include those established by the teacher and student, rubrics, benchmarks and other standards) and to chart the course for the coming months.

B. Progress reports

These reports will be provided to parents twice per year, in January and at the end of the year, in line with district practices. In addition to the performance report forms used by the district, teachers will include brief narratives addressing project work, student portfolios and progress toward service learning objectives.

7. The governance structure of the school

Operations: Muddy Creek Charter School shall be operated by Inavale Community Partners (ICP), a duly constituted Oregon nonprofit public benefit corporation, in accordance with applicable Oregon Corporations Code Sections. ICP was created to promote rural sustainability in south Benton County.

Muddy Creek Charter School is the first project of the ICP. ICP has also supported the Corvallis High School Robotics team through a financial donation. Several members of the team are part of the Inavale community.

Board of Directors: As provided for in the Oregon Corporation Code, Muddy Creek Charter School will be governed by the ICP Board of Directors, whose members have a legal fiduciary responsibility for the well-being of the school. The size of the Board may vary from time to time, in accordance with the Bylaws and applicable law. The ICP board will have decision making authority and responsibility for: hiring the MCCA administrator, insuring MCCA meets all legal and financial requirements, acting as fiscal agent in cooperation with the Corvallis School District (this includes the receipt of funds for the operation of the school in accordance with charter school laws and the receipt of grants and donation consistent with the mission of the school), overseeing the MCCA vision and mission. Final budget approval and expulsion decisions rest with the ICP board, in concert with district constraints, and MCCA Governing Committee and Administrator recommendations.

Governing Committee: The Inavale Community Partners will delegate operations of the MCCA to a 5 member governing committee. The MCCA Governing Committee acts under article V of the ICP bylaws ("other committees"). The members will serve staggered terms and will be selected to represent the parents, the community at large and the school. Membership is to be drawn from a pool of volunteers and will be appointed by vote of the ICP board, in consultation with the current Governing Committee and the Administrator. The committee shall consist of at least five (5) voting members, including one (1) professional educator, two (2) members of the local business or agricultural community, and two (2) parents. These categories are not mutually exclusive. For this purpose, a "professional educator" is defined as a person who has

obtained a K-12 teaching certificate (does not have to be current) issued by any state in the U.S., or a person who has significant experience as a K-12 classroom teacher in a public or private school. This person does not have to be currently working as a teacher.

The Governing Committee will work closely with the administrator. The governing committee will make recommendations to the ICP Board for hiring and supervising the M CCS administrator; approving and overseeing the school policies; assisting with community outreach and fund raising; approving the hiring of staff (excepting the administrator); developing and approving a business plan; approving and monitoring the annual budget in cooperation with the Corvallis School District and executing all other responsibilities provided for in the Articles of Incorporation, bylaws, and the charter to ensure the proper operation of the school.

M CCS Administrator: The Administrator is responsible for day-to-day operations of the school and will work closely with the Governing Committee. The Administrator will make recommendations to the Governing Committee on hiring decisions, budget decisions and on disciplinary actions. The Administrator and Lead Teacher supervise the staff. Staff issues and parent concerns are first taken to the Administrator and then the Governing Committee (if warranted) for settlement.

Records: M CCS will comply with all record keeping requirements of federal and state law and will provide any reports, as necessary, to meet the District's reporting obligations to the Oregon Department of Education. Before the first year of operation, and from time to time thereafter as state requirements change, the District shall provide Muddy Creek Charter School with a list of records and information required for the District to meet its state reporting requirements. M CCS will work with the District to meet the District's requirements, and recognizes that it has the responsibility for the input of such data into District or state computer systems. Muddy Creek Charter School shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws concerning the maintenance, retention and disclosure of student records, including, without limitation, the Oregon Public Records Law. All records established and maintained in accordance with this application shall be open to inspection by the District.

Health and Safety Procedures: Muddy Creek Charter School will comply with all applicable safety laws. Muddy Creek Charter School will require that each employee have a background check as described in the Oregon Education Code.

Muddy Creek Charter School will develop further health, safety, and risk management policies in consultation with its insurance carriers and risk management experts in cooperation with the Corvallis School District.

Applicant recognizes that the District has a concern that any facility must reasonably provide a safe and secure environment for the students. Therefore, the charter agreement may provide that once the Muddy Creek Charter School has entered into an agreement for a facility, the District Superintendent [or the Superintendent's designee] will review the facility to be reasonably sure the District's concerns in this regard are satisfied.

MCCS will be responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and approvals relating to use of the facility, including land use approvals, building and occupancy permits, and any health and safety approvals. Building permits will have to be obtained enough in advance of the planned opening so that tenant improvements can be completed on time, and of course occupancy permits must be obtained before the school can open. MCCS will have full responsibility for all costs related to its facility and any playground equipment, other equipment, furniture, and fixtures; such responsibility will include purchase costs, rental, utilities, maintenance, repair, cleaning, and replacement.

Public Meetings: The ICP Board of Directors, when acting as the Governing Body of MCCS, will be subject to the provisions of the Oregon Public Meetings Law, ORS 192.610 to 192.690.

8. The projected enrollment: ages and grades

We present here a scenario where the initial projected enrollment is 60 students in grades K through 5. We request an initial enrollment of 65 students at the beginning of the school year to ensure an enrollment of 60 students throughout the school year. M CCS would not replace students leaving the school until enrollment dropped below 60. Students would be added off the waiting list to keep enrollment at a maximum of 60 students. The Kindergarten is a half-day program as presented here, but would be adapted to a full-time program should the parents prefer it (similar to how other kindergarten options are offered at many 509J schools) or if state statute and funding formulas are changed to mandate an expanded program.

We previously developed an alternative budget for 80 students. While we are willing to negotiate a larger number of students if the district prefers a slightly larger school, we do not present a separate budget for the scenario, as it changes little on a per student basis. If the initial projected enrollment is 80 students in grades K through 5. The M CCS would ask for a limit of 85 students to ensure an enrollment of 80 students through out the school year. The M CCS would start at the beginning of the school year with 85 students. Throughout the school year, M CCS would not replace students until enrollment dropped below 80. Students would be added off the waiting list to keep enrollment at a maximum of 80 students.

9. The target population of the students

While Muddy Creek Charter School will be open to all students who apply, the target population will be students who reside in or whose parents work in and around the rural communities of the Muddy Creek Watershed of Benton County covered by parts of the Corvallis, Philomath, and Monroe School Districts that are outside the urban growth boundary. The location of the school in the target region and the place-based curriculum will encourage students from the area to attend. We believe that the rural community of south Benton County is underserved by the present configuration of district schools. The attrition from the district of about half of the students from the former Inavale School boundary supports our contention. Many rural schools are at risk as financial pressures cause districts to close small schools. Rural schools are, however, at the core of a rural community because they provide a local center not available in other ways, such as a physical neighborhood in town. Although the target population of MCCA is the rural community, the school welcomes all District students, as well as out-of-district students, as space is available. The MCCA will use the state mandated lottery system to conduct enrollment and fill vacancies to ensure an equitable enrollment process.

10. The legal address, facilities and physical location of school

MCCS has not identified a facility to house the school at this time.

When such a facility is secured:

- MCCS will be responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and approvals relating to use of the facility, including land use approvals, building and occupancy permits, and any health and safety approvals.
- Building permits will have to be obtained enough in advance of the planned opening so that tenant improvements can be completed on time, and occupancy permits will be obtained before the school opens.
- MCCS will have full responsibility for costs related to its facility usage and any playground equipment, other equipment, furniture, and fixtures; such responsibility will include purchase costs, rental, utilities, maintenance resulting from use, repair resulting from use, and cleaning.

See Appendix H for sample facility statement.

A transportation plan will be formulated when the site is established. Transportation options will be included on enrollment papers. Coordination of transportation with established district routes may be appropriate.

11. Admission policies and application procedures

As prescribed by law, MCCA will be open to any Oregon student who applies. A student will be deemed admitted to and enrolled in MCCA when the student's application has been accepted by MCCA subject to the following conditions, listed below.

It will be a MCCA condition for enrollment that all forms needed to enroll a student at a district school be submitted.

The MCCA will ask but not require that the student and parent make themselves available for a tour of the facility and discussion of MCCA's unique program with the school director.

Lottery:

The Muddy Creek Charter School admission policy will adhere to the Oregon Charter School Law which provides for a lottery scheme for all enrollments.

If the number of applications received for any grade is greater than the maximum number of students allowed for that grade, then MCCA will conduct an equitable lottery, in a manner determined by MCCA and consistent with state law, to admit the maximum allowed number of students and to create a waiting list for subsequent admission should a space become available later. To illustrate, if the maximum number of students for a grade is 20, and if 40 applications are received, then 20 applicants will be accepted through the lottery process, and a waiting list of 20 will be determined [with order of priority on the waiting list also determined through the lottery process each time an opening occurs].

As provided in ORS 338.125(1), in the second and following years of operation, MCCA may give admissions preference to (1) students who were enrolled in MCCA in the prior year, and (2) applicants who have siblings who are presently enrolled in MCCA and who were enrolled in MCCA in the prior year.

12. The statutes and rules that shall apply to the public charter school

MCCS will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations (including Oregon Administrative Rules developed by the Oregon Department of Education regarding charter schools). As provided in ORS 338.115(1), although statutes and rules that apply to school district boards, school districts or other public schools shall generally not apply to MCCS.

It is the intent of the MCCS Board that the charter agreement be detailed and specific to protect the mutual interests of MCCS and the district. The agreement shall incorporate the elements not fully covered by law or the proposal that shall apply to MCCS including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Reporting of suspected child abuse (ORS 419B.045);
2. Sexual harassment (ORS 342.700, 342.704);
3. Pregnant and parenting students (ORS 336.640);
4. Special English classes for certain children (ORS 336.079);
5. Student conducts (ORS 339.250);
6. Alcohol and drug abuse program (ORS 336.222);
7. Student records (ORS 326.565);
8. Oregon Report Card (ORS 329.115);
9. Recovery of costs associated with property damage (ORS 339.270);
10. Use of school facilities (ORS 332.172)

13. The proposed budgets and financial stability

Muddy Creek Charter School accepts all fiscal responsibility including but not limited to payroll, contracts for services, other purchases and all liabilities associated with operating the charter school.

The resident district will withhold \$3,000.00 from the first ADMw payment for the purpose of ensuring the required municipal audit occurs. The MCCC will submit the invoice to the resident district for payment. Any amount remaining after payment will be paid to the charter school at the time of the next ADMw payment.

A proposed operations budget is attached as Appendix I. It is for an enrollment of 60 students K-5. It is structurally like the budgets in the previous proposal. We refer you to said document and ancillary documents in response to requests by the district review committee for alternative fiscal configurations (80 students, 25 students) deemed sustainable by the district review committee.

14. The standards for behavior and procedures for the discipline, suspension or expulsion of students

The Parent and Student Handbook, given out at the beginning of each year or when a student joins the school, will describe the rules governing discipline and conduct and will inform parents, teachers and administrators what is required of students. Every parent will be asked to sign an acknowledgement section, stating that each understands the rules of conduct and the consequences of unacceptable behavior by the student.

Severe discipline matters will be taken before the administrator. The administrator will hear allegations and make appropriate disciplinary decisions. Muddy Creek Charter School will consider suspension and expulsion only as a last resort. Criteria for suspension and expulsion of students shall be consistent with all applicable laws. Muddy Creek Charter School will develop policies in collaboration with parents, teachers and students that observe fair and lawful standards of due process. All related hearings will conform to the state and federal laws regarding discipline, special education, confidentiality and access to records and district policy.

Initially, a student suspension may only be applied with the approval of the administrator. Recommendation for expulsion will be done in cooperation with the Corvallis School District. The Muddy Creek Charter School Board reserves the right to modify these policies in the best interests of its students and the school, in cooperation with the Corvallis School District.

15. The proposed calendar, including the length of day and year

MCCS will follow the same calendar as the Corvallis School District. This facilitates scheduling for parents with children at more than one district school. We anticipate supplementing professional development days. In subsequent years we anticipate following the Corvallis School District schedule closely, but possibly not exactly.

Muddy Creek Charter School

2007-2008 Calendar

2007

August 29 Professional development
August 30 Professional development
August 31 Teacher preparation
September 3 *Labor Day Holiday*
September 4 Teacher preparation
September 5 First day of school
September 28 Professional development (no school)
October 11 Professional development (no school)
October 12 Non-contract day (no school)
November 7 Teacher preparation (no school)
November 8 Teacher preparation/conferences (no school)
November 9 Teacher conferences (no school)
November 12 *Veterans Day Holiday*
November 22 *Thanksgiving Day Holiday*
November 23 Non-contract day (no school)
December 24-28 Winter Break – non-contract days (no school)
December 31 Non-contract day (no school)

2008

January 1 *New Years Day Holiday*
January 2-4 Winter Break continues – non-contract days (no school)
January 21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – non-contract day (no school)
January 31 Teacher preparation (no school)
February 1 Professional development (no school)
February 18 Presidents Day – non-contract day (no school)
March 24-28 Spring Break – non-contract days
April 9 Teacher preparation/conferences (no school)
April 10 Teacher preparation/conferences (no school)
April 11 Teacher conferences (no school)
May 26 *Memorial Day Holiday*
June 7 Graduation
June 12 Last day of school for students (early release)
June 13 Teacher preparation

Summary:

Teacher Contract Days: 190

Student Contact Days: 170

Conference Days: 4

Teacher Preparation Days

Professional Development Days: 5

Holidays: 5

Non-Contract Days: 18

*If school closure occurs because of weather-related or other emergency conditions, the February 18 non-contract day may be used as make-up. If more make-up time is needed, additional days may be added to the end of the school year.

Typical Daily Schedule

8:15 - 8:25	BREAKFAST	
8:30 - 9:15	Math	
9:15 - 10:00	Literacy	
10:00—10:15	Recess	
10:15 - 10:45	Health and PE	
10:45—11:30	Literacy, Math or Humanities (grade K-2 and day dependent)	Humanities (grade 3-5; and day dependent)
11:30-12:00	LUNCH	
12:00—12:30	Recess	
12:30- 1:30	Project time	
1:30 to 1:45	Recess	
1:45—3:00	Project time	

The distribution of grades among blended classrooms will be determined by the distribution of grade level at enrollment. Afternoon distributions may differ from in the morning as the formal kindergarten, as configured at present, is half day. An afternoon kindergarten program is possible if parent interest is sufficient and funds can be secured.

16.A description of proposed school staff and qualifications of teachers

The MCCA is presenting two staffing scenarios. Please see Exhibit A for the FTE amounts. The general job descriptions are presented below. Staffing will be adjusted up and down as the budget requires or allows.

- Administrator - Assumes primary leadership in day to day operations, personnel management, district liaison, oversee student supervision and disciplinary actions, file reports to local, state and federal education agencies, maintain administrative records, share responsibility with charter school board on strategic planning, budgetary issues and policy development
- Administrative assistant - Answer phones and assists staff to insure efficiency and productivity. This person will be qualified as a Food Handler by the State of Oregon to deliver meals to the students.
- Teachers - highly qualified (having the appropriate licensing by TSPC), licensed to teach Grade K-1, 2-3, 4-5. One of these teachers will be a head teacher who will teach and coordinate curriculum among all the teachers/students; one will be a certified ELL teacher.
- Educational Aide. Provide remediation services and support teachers. Must meet the "No Child Left Behind" requirements, and will be supervised by the head teacher.
- Custodian. Clean facility and provide basic maintenance support.

The Administrator and Lead Teacher supervise the staff. Staff issues etc. and parent concerns are taken to Administrator and school governing committee (if warranted) for settlement. Additionally, the Administrator has to ensure the IEP goals are met in the same way that other district building administrator must.

Because the distinctive learning techniques at MCCA will require staff training, we plan for the staff and possibly some volunteers to attend professional development programs, such as the summer OSTA (Oregon Science Teachers Association) workshop for science leaders on scientific inquiry; the Globe program workshops, or workshops on project-based learning at Emerson School. Participants in the OSTA workshops have great experiences and come away with the

most current info nice organized into a binder for future use. There are also many local professional development opportunities, many of which occur more than once a year which would help to focus and empower MCCA staff, such as 4-H Wildlife Stewards, Creeks and Kids, Project WET and Project WILD, and OFRI (OR Forestry Research Institute).

17. The projected date the school would begin operating

The MCCS will start as reasonably possible. We intend to begin on Sept. 5, the Corvallis School District start date of 2007/2008 school year.

18. Arrangement for any special education services for students; including special education and related services for students with disabilities.

As per the provisions of ORS 338, the student's resident district shall retain responsibility for fulfillment of the requirements of IDEA and shall therefore provide appropriate Special Education services as per the typical existing practices of the district. A partnership between the faculty/staff and parents of MCCS shall work with the student's home school district to identify and provide services for students eligible for IDEA, Section 504, or other special consideration. See Appendix J for additional information on special services.

The MCCS intends to provide the following special education services:

- A. Classroom teachers will modify regular program curriculum with the consultation of the resident school district special education specialists.
- B. The MCCS will provide a minimum of one-half hour per day of small group remediation sessions for special education students. This service will be the service provided all students in need of remediation.
- C. The MCCS staff will implement behavior plans defined by resident school district special education specialists.

The MCCS administrator has to ensure the IEP goals are met the same as a district building administrator.

The MCCS will not be staffed to provide services for students requiring life skill programs or students with severe medical needs.

The MCCS cannot by law disinvite students with discipline issues or academic issues. However, possibly there will be students at MCCS that are identified through the Special Education process that cannot be served by the MCCS staff or by district staff at the MCCS site. Those students may be moved from MCCS in the placement portion of an IEP meeting.

TAG: Identifying Talented and Gifted students is not a requirement for charter schools. Parents that want their children tested will have to do so in accordance with district policy. The place-based program is intended to motivate and make education relevant for all levels of learners. Talented and gifted students that do not find the program suitable for their needs will likely choose another school.

19. Information on how community groups may be involved (in the planning and development process of the public charter school)

Prior to School Opening:

Community involvement is a cornerstone of M CCS. Parents and community members have been and will continue to be recruited to share their expertise in the development of the school, serve on the governing board and on operational committees. Responses to our survey indicate a high degree of interest and willingness to volunteer time to M CCS, both in the developmental and operational phases of the school (See Preface, and Appendix K). As has always been true of this community, these offers come not only from potential parents, but from a diverse group of community members.

In addition, M CCS will forge partnerships throughout the community, to include OSU faculty and students, local landowners, community business members and farmers with expertise and resources to share with the school. The Governing Committee will be primarily responsible for developing, supervising and maintaining these partnership and information sharing programs. But considerable outreach will likely be done by ICP board members, the Governing Committee, the administrator and parent volunteers.

After School Opening:

Parents and community members will share their expertise with students through a variety of volunteer opportunities and especially during project time, where they can be engaged as guest speakers, mentors, hosts, etc. The community will also be regularly involved in project presentations and beneficiaries of student service learning work. In order to engage the larger Corvallis community, M CCS will actively seek to be a resource to other district schools and representatives from the school will present monthly reports at district board meetings.

We believe that high parental involvement will lead to both high levels of parental satisfaction and higher student achievement. Volunteer hours will be tracked and reported quarterly. Our goal is to have 100% of families participate at school at least once per year and 50% of families to contribute 20 hours or more. School operations will be structured to encourage volunteers.

The volunteer program will provide a variety of opportunities to volunteer, such as for school field trips and field work, classroom assistance, library work, lunch time assistance, etc. Volunteers will be trained as appropriate. M CCS will follow district policy and state law regarding background security checks and abuse reporting training for volunteers and will implement a formal tracking system and a recognition program.

Parent surveys, advisory meetings and conferences will be held throughout the school year to provide a strong connection to what is going on in our educational program. M CCS parents will be surveyed annually for their opinion of the school and how well it is serving their children. Each spring a parent survey and a student (where applicable) survey will be conducted. The results will be compiled, recorded and retained, and they will be presented as part of the overall evaluation information that we provide to the District. The goals of the survey are to discern any areas that the parents and students feel should be addressed more thoroughly, areas that the parents and students feel are being adequately addressed, and those areas that the parents and students feel might make a more complete program if instituted. The overall goal of the survey is to ensure both student and parent satisfaction with M CCS program. Surveys as an accountability mechanism are inexact. This does not mean, however, that surveys do not reveal valid information necessary for school improvement. Because of the subjective nature of survey instruments, there will be no numerical benchmark such as an average satisfaction rating. Rather, the benchmark will be: Parent and student surveys will reveal a high satisfaction with M CCS program.

20. The term of the charter

The term of the Charter will be five years. A Charter Renewal Review process shall take place in the fourth year of the charter, which shall inform the school of the district's intentions with regard to renewal at the end of the fifth year. The charter shall be automatically renewed for additional five-year periods as long as no substantive problems are reported within the school's assessments and municipal audits.

21. The plan for performance bonding or insuring MCCS

Muddy Creek Charter School will obtain the following insurance:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| (a) Property Insurance | As required by landlord |
| (b) Comprehensive General Liability | \$2,000,000 |
| (c) Officers and Directors/ Errors and Omissions | \$1,000,000 |
| (d) Auto Liability (if vehicles are owned) | \$1,000,000 |
| (e) Worker's Compensation | As required by State |
| (f) Honesty Bond | \$ 25,000 |

The charter agreement will contain provisions whereby MCCS and the District each indemnify the other against various claims.

22. A proposed plan for the placement of teachers, staff and students upon termination or non-renewal of a charter

In the event of termination or non-renewal of the M CCS charter:

All students will be reassigned to their home district.

M CCS shall attempt to secure work for its teachers and employees in the field of education, whether in public or private schools within a region not to exceed 100 miles of Corvallis School District. This attempt to reassign the school's faculty/staff shall include appropriate letters of reference and a job search not to exceed six months.

23. Program review and fiscal audit

The Charter School will submit an annual report to the District and the State Board of Education in accordance with ORS 338.095(1) on the performance of the Charter School and its students. This report will include information necessary to make a determination of compliance with the requirements of ORS Chapter 338. The specific contents of the report can be agreed on in the charter agreement, and such contents may change from time to time as we better understand which types of data and measurements are most useful. However, initially, we anticipate that the annual report would include information about: the academic goals and evaluation described above in Section 5.

In accordance with ORS 338.095(2), the Charter School will have an annual audit of the accounts of the Charter School prepared in accordance with the Municipal Audit Law, ORS 297.405 to 297.555 and 297.990. The annual audit shall be forwarded to the District, the State Board of Education, and the Department of Education. The Charter School may be interested in having the District's auditor also conduct the Charter School audit, and in any case the Charter School will work with the auditor to keep and manage records and accounts in accordance with the auditor's recommendations.

The resident district will withhold \$3000.00 from the first ADMw payment for the purpose of ensuring the required municipal audit occurs. The MCCS will submit the invoice to the resident district for payment. Any amount remaining after payment will be paid to the charter school at the time of the next ADMw payment. Any short fall will be forwarded to the school district within 20 days of receipt of the invoice.

With respect to audits and compliance, a highly qualified community member has put her skills at disposal of MCCS to ensure the school complies with district and state requirements in a timely way (Appendix K).

24. Admission of expelled students for reasons other than a weapons policy violation

MCCS will not accept any students from outside the Corvallis School District who have been expelled from schools in their resident district.

MCCS will follow district policy and honor district expulsions in addition to out of district expulsions.

25. Potential benefits to 509J from MCCS

A. MCCS Helps Grow Place- and Project-based Learning (Methodology, Assessment, Experience) in 509J

PBL Learning option for all 509J families: – MCCS would provide a unique educational program choice for 509J families implemented in an equitable manner. Other programs, such as dual language immersion (Spanish at Garfield and Lincoln) and Core knowledge (at Wilson) programs are available at schools with boundaries and thus give attendance preference to neighborhood residents. As a charter school, all district students are eligible for the MCCS program and have equal chance of admission.

Feeding the Lincoln Middle School Program: – The Lincoln Middle School, serving grades 6-8, has an exciting, field-based natural sciences & art curriculum. The Lincoln School elementary grades however, excepting one third-grad class, are primarily focused on the dual-immersion curriculum, which continues to expand as its popularity grows. This leaves the middle school without a natural “feeder school” preparing its students for a field-based science program. MCCS students would most likely choose to attend the Lincoln Middle School, due to its alignment and continuation of the curriculum and some of the teaching methodology that we plan to implement at MCCS. This will help stabilize the population of Lincoln Middle School, and help assure the continued success of its program.

It is also important to note that the effect of MCCS on enrollment in the Lincoln K-5 program will not be large. The board and district have expressed concern that MCCS would compromise the Lincoln K-5 program. However, a Fall 2006 509J survey indicated that most Inavale families who now attend Lincoln School have a high level of satisfaction (3.9 out of 5) and thus we believe are unlikely to abandon that program. Most of the former Inavale boundary students who stayed in district went to Adams and Franklin Schools, both of which are oversubscribed. Furthermore, access to MCCS is by lottery so not all students will come from one school, and total enrollment at MCCS will be small. Last year, the district underestimated the number of students K-5 students approximately in the amount of projected enrollment at MCCS. The point is that the enrollment at MCCS is “in the noise” of the ability to forecast.

Incubator & Portability:

The principal way in which M CCS will serve the District is as incubator of innovative teaching, learning and assessment techniques that can be implemented and tried in a small setting before refining and formalizing and exporting to other settings. The size of the school allows for development and testing and implementation of ideas at a manageable scale before exportation and adaptation to other settings.

Building of Community:

M CCS will actively develop contacts at OSU and throughout the community with the intent of designing projects and assessment tools that other classrooms throughout the district could use. Although in theory any teacher or group could do this, evidence has shown that 509J has not taken advantage of these resources in the past, which is in part due to time and budgetary constraints on the staff. As a charter school, M CCS will be eligible for grants from agencies not available to other public schools, such as the existing charter school grant that has the potential to add more than \$190,000 to education in the district (beyond the \$50,000 for charter development). As a rural school, M CCS will be able to apply for additional funds or form partnerships with OSU researchers whose grants are dependent upon a rural outreach component. Such grants can be expanded to other district sites, as was the case for such grants raised initially at Inavale School. These types of additional funds will enable M CCS to continue to develop PBL projects and assessment tools that could be shared with other 509J schools without teachers in other schools having to “reinvent the wheel” and go out and find partners and develop projects appropriate assessments on their own.

The role of M CCS would be to:

- Identify Oregon State University Researchers who need community outreach partners and disseminate this information to other schools. This will be initially facilitated through the business contacts of ICP Board and officers, some of whom are science faculty at OSU.
- Identify and begin projects with local rural landowners, and cultivate their interest in working with other district schools. This will be initially facilitated through members of the ICP board and officers, most of who are long-time residents of rural Benton County. We anticipate parent volunteers will help with this task, and, since our target population is the rural community, we anticipate these volunteers will also already have strong personal knowledge of and perhaps ties to these landowners.

- Share teaching assessment methodology appropriate to PBL with interested teachers from other district schools. This could be accomplished through in-service day workshops and/or summer programs and would be facilitated by the M CCS Administrator working with 509J teachers and principals.

B. M CCS Increases Educational Services and Options to Rural Families in 509J

With the closure of Inavale School, 509J no longer provided a local school for children who live in the SW portion of the 509J school boundary. The former Inavale school boundary comprised about 1/3 of the total land area of the district. Being a large and sparsely populated area, many students living in this area must commute 8-12 miles to a school in town on a long bus ride. Many have chosen to attend closer schools in a neighboring district. M CCS would give rural families an option so that students would have more quality time in school, less time spent on transportation, and a curriculum that honors their community.

C. Increase in overall 509J attendance

We anticipate that since much of our target population is currently sending their children to a neighboring district for elementary education, it is likely that attendance in 509J will increase at the elementary level, and these students will remain in 509J at the secondary level. Restoring students lost to home school or other districts constitutes a financial gain for the district. The loss of more than 30 students through the closure of Inavale reflects a financial loss of at least \$81,000 (half this year's ADMw of \$5400 for 30).

D. M CCS Helps 509J Achieve the Goals Set Forth in the District Improvement Multi-Year Plan (DIP) and Students Achieve the 509J Learning Vision.

The 509J Student Learning Vision is that every student be engaged in relevant, rigorous and personal learning. PBL in general, and M CCS in particular, are dedicated to these same outcomes. Additionally, M CCS will help meet the district's #1 Goal (Learning for All – Literacy for All) through direct instruction in the morning session, small class size, and remediation strategies when appropriate. Goal #2 (Collaborative and Innovative Culture) specifically targets strengthening relationships that promote collaboration and community, the development of innovative projects, and the expansion of community and parent connections. The DIP also

specifies building self-directed learners through such skills as personal management, problem solving, communication, teamwork, etc, which are all learned and practiced through PBL.

E. A Vision For An Outdoor Education Center In Collaboration With Muddy Creek Charter School

Field-based, experiential learning is an important part of learning how to query and investigate the world around us. MCCA is committed to such deep and integrative educational experiences and we can envision extending the experience more broadly to other students in the district during the school year and possibly, in the way of summer programs, to students and teachers around the state. See Appendix L.

26. Financial Impact

We make three main points in this section:

- 1) The financial effect of M CCS on the district fixed costs is hard to assess, but is in any case very small.
- 2) The location and focus of the school is likely to recapture students lost through the closure of Inavale School and to gain some out-of-district students.
- 3) The M CCS has potential to uniquely add to district revenues because it is a charter school and because it is a rural school.

1) A very important point is that the total revenue paid over to the charter school is less than 1% of the total general fund revenue. We feel the potential for the district to gain a contribution to fixed costs and to have this innovative program within the district are good arguments for deciding the value of the charter school outweighs any potential hardships for the school district.

The arguments around a charter school's effect on district finances are formed around the fixed costs and variable costs of operating the district. Typical arguments focus on the inability or ability to transfer fixed and variable costs to the charter school on a per student basis. Staffing is a good example. The Muddy Creek Charter School will employ staff. The district will not employ those staff members. On one hand an argument can be made for the charter school that the district should save money because the cost of educating those students will be transferred to the charter school. The district will need to hire less staff. It is also pointed out that the district will save on other variables like the costs of student resources and the principal's office. On the other hand, on a per student basis the district cannot transfer those variable costs to the charter school with 100% efficiency. Therefore, not all the variable costs are transferred. In actuality, the ability to predict this efficiency is difficult. Thus, the ability to understand the effect of the charter school is difficult or impossible.

In our budget scenario, the M CCS will use 90% of the ADMw of 60 students to provide the educational program. $\$6017 \times 90\% = \5415.30 per student $\times 60$ students = $\$324,918$. This is 0.76% of the districts total general fund revenue of 42,916,000.¹

2) Another relevant factor is the positive effect of out of district students on district finances. Inavale School had some out of district students that did not transfer to the Corvallis district when it closed and many district students transferred out of the district. It can be inferred that establishing a rural program at M CCS will probably regain some of this enrollment and be attractive to others from outside the Corvallis school district. For in-district recoveries, the district will gain a percentage of ADMw without affecting fixed cost elsewhere in the district. In the case of out-of-district students, the home district and 509J will split the ADMw held back for each out of district student. The gain would be 5% ($\$300.85$) per student in the scenario presented here. Approximately 30 students transferred out of district schools with the final closure of Inavale and several transferred out before closure, as the process began. Although students who transferred to other district schools are broadly satisfied (based on a district telephone survey conducted in Fall, 2006 which reached parents of about 65% of K-6 September 2005 Inavale students) that district survey neglects those students who left the district, about half of whom live in the former Inavale boundary.

3) Grants: M CCS already has a grantsmanship record in that funds in the amount of approximately \$250,000 to be distributed over 3 years were obtained to develop, and if approved, initiate the charter school. This illustrates the will of the community to seek funds and support the school and also the access to funding avenues not available to other public schools. M CCS will continue to compete for public and private funds targeted for charter schools.

M CCS also anticipates working closely with the agricultural community and with researchers interested in rural sustainability (see Appendix K). Pursuit of rural sustainability grants as well as a variety of environmental learning grants will be a part of M CCS fund raising and will thereby augment funds to educate district students. Traditionally, parents of the M CCS area of the district have made large donations to the local school.

¹ District Budget Guide for Community; Corvallis School District website

To summarize, while it is hard to quantify the factors summarized above, overall financial impact on the district, if negative will be very small, but more likely will be positive, particularly in light of retaining rural students and grants. The unique program will be a great asset to the district without compromising existing programs.

27. Summary of how M CCS meets criteria of ORS 338.015

We summarize how M CCS meets all the State ORS 338.015 criteria below.

(1) "Increase student learning and achievement";

The place-based model has clearly shown excellent increase in student learning and achieving compared to students in conventional teaching programs (see Appendix A, preface, and sections 4 and 5). This is not an indictment of programs elsewhere in the district.

(2) "Increase choices of learning opportunities for students"

We have made clear that the place-based curriculum that employs integration of project learning is indeed unique in the district. The most intense project learning is presently at the Middle School level at Lincoln School and is not like the comprehensive program we propose. See sections 4 and 5, as well as the Preface. Our model is most similar to that at Emerson School, in Portland, a highly successful K-5 charter school in the Pearl District. While a different place, we have embraced many of the project attributes they find successful including actively engaging the students in selection of project topics and in self-evaluation through participation in assembling a finished project portfolio.

(3) "Better meet individual academic needs and interests"

The small class size (20 students) will be an important way to meet academic needs. The experiential, multidisciplinary project time will appeal to learners who have difficulty in the more conventional direct learning model. Students will have opportunity to develop understanding through interaction with their environment (place), thereby helping them make connections between subjects (enhance cognitive learning). The integration of arts in the curriculum will appeal to learners who tend to a holistic versus an analytical view of their environment. The program also includes direct instruction. Thus the program offers a range of teaching approaches to appeal to a range of learners. In addition, we have detailed some of the interventions we propose to employ, as necessary.

(4) "Build stronger working relationships among educators, parents and other community members"

This is a core value and mission of the proposed school. The level of community engagement in rural settings is high and was clearly the case when Inavale was active. We have numerous survey responses from community members willing to volunteer in a many capacities.

M CCS will particularly provide potential for linking the school and thereby the District to researchers and programs at Oregon State University (e.g., letter of support, Appendix X). The M CCS K-5 will foster ties between the landowners in the community that originated with Inavale School and will coordinate these ties with the Lincoln middle-school program that has similar interests. There is no doubt that links will be stronger across communities; within the rural community, with the district community and with OSU.

(5) "Encourage the use of different and innovative learning methods"

Different and innovative learning methods are not only encouraged at M CCS, they are at the heart of the program. While there are many teachers who undertake creative and

innovative teaching, neither place- nor project-based learning are intrinsic parts of the curriculum in any Corvallis School. The closest is in the Lincoln middle school grades. The small size of MCCC and of classes, plus the daily long block of project time (more than 2 hours daily) will encourage innovative learning methods. In addition, the integration of arts and service learning will provide wide scope for creativity for educators.

(6) "Provide opportunities in small learning environments for flexibility and innovation, which, if proven effective may be applied to other schools."

The small class size allows for development, testing, and refining of learning methods and assessment methods (9, below). Within the place-based framework, our goals are to develop:

- project-based learning, with substantial student participation in project selection and assessment
- ways of integrating arts into the curriculum
- formalization of service learning

These educational approaches, or parts of them, are exportable to other classes. The financial cost of implementing and testing innovations is far less when the school and class size are small. The school will provide an excellent incubation ground and we have expressed great willingness to formalize our cooperation and exportability to the district, including through the service learning component.

(7) "Create new professional opportunities for teachers"

The nature of the school clearly provides this. However, we readily acknowledge that the program will require a great deal of developmental support for the staff. The grant funds awarded to MCCC will help offset these costs in the first two years. We have had letters of support and inquiry from teachers interested in the program and who have helped craft this proposal. While we have not ventured so far at this point in the process, we note that Emerson School in Portland offers summer programs in place and project-based learning for teachers. MCCC could readily develop into a rural field-studies counterpart to such a program.

(8) "Establish different forms of accountability"

For academic accountability, the school proposes an incremental testing plan to help track student progress. Also the proposal spells out a parent and community satisfaction accountability geared toward keeping the school responsive to its community. The financial accountability is conventional in most aspects, though the proposal allows for a certain withholding of ADMw by the District until the accounts are in compliance.

(9) "Create innovative measurement tools"

The project emphasis of the program will require the development of assessment tools beyond conventional testing to track student achievement and progress toward benchmarks. The innovative teaching methods invite and require alternative assessment methods. In particular we aim to develop:

- self-assessment as part of assessment and learning
- formal portfolios as assessment and learning tools
- rubrics for assessment aspects of project learning and of service learning

The portfolios will be both individual and collective. They will include assessment rubrics uniquely developed within each project, as well as materials from the presentation of these

projects, where students will work to teach others – including the larger community – what they have learned. Students will have a high degree of ownership in the development of both of these aspects, as well as a large role in student-led conferences. These tools are also exportable to other schools and their development is part of the service emphasis of the school.