

1. Abstract of Project and Project Goals

5%

A. Project Overview

General Educational Program. We propose to build on the educational success of the Inavale K-8 School in the Corvallis School District 509J (CSD509J) by creating a rural charter school that will deliver place-based, integrated arts and science education around the themes of living in an agricultural landscape and community service. Inavale School, which presently serves this area, is slated for closure due to financial reasons. As a consequence, innovative programs built around rural sustainability are compromised, and the rural community is robbed of its main unifying institution.

We request funds to design a charter school that will primarily serve the rural community in the Muddy Creek Watershed of Benton County, which adjoins parts of the Corvallis, Philomath, and Monroe School Districts. We envision a school comprised of grades 1-6 served in three classes of 20-25 students each. Our target enrollment is 60 students, not to exceed 100. Muddy Creek Charter School will (1) expand and deliver the excellent educational program already existing at Inavale School, including the afternoon academy that is designed to meet the needs of home-schooling families; (2) serve the rural community in an agricultural setting with place-based education built around the landscape and the social values of community; and (3) continue the education and research partnerships with Oregon State University (OSU) based on mutual commitment to rural sustainability.

Origin and Community of Inavale. Founded in 1950, Inavale School is located in a farming area approximately 9 miles southwest of the city of Corvallis. Initially its own school district, Inavale was annexed to CSD509J in 1955. In the ensuing years, Inavale

gradually added middle school grades 6-8, making it one of two K-8 schools in the district. For the 2005-06 school year, Inavale implemented an innovative learning program that integrates a place- and inquiry-based curriculum with a strong academic core. Additionally, Inavale has undertaken the 4-H Wildlife Stewardship program and is currently on track to become the only school in the district to receive a Level III status by year-end. In short, the program at Inavale has been lauded by all – students, parents, school district staff, and school board members alike. But on February 27, 2006, the Corvallis School Board voted to close Inavale, its only rural school, with the reasoning that the need for cost-efficiency district-wide outweighed the benefits of keeping this vital program alive.

Vision. It is our intent to form the Muddy Creek Charter School in order to continue Inavale's program in the place which is its taproot, keeping the partnerships that have been so carefully forged with the local landowners and OSU researchers. This will enable the children that live in the Inavale school area, as well as those from surrounding areas, to benefit from the rural place-based education it offers. In so doing, we hope to lead in the effort to sustain rural schools.

B. Project Goals

The Muddy Creek Charter School is projected to open its doors in September 2007. Our six main goals for the projected grant funding are as follows:

Planning Phase (final deadline January 2007)

1. Educate parents and community about charter schools;

2. Hire an educational consultant to design curriculum over the summer and select materials that will ensure students pass state-mandated tests (deadline June - August 30, 2006);
3. Hire legal and accounting services to a) secure the site at Inavale School and b) set up the non-profit charter;

Implementation & Continued Implementation Phases (final deadlines of August 2007 and August 2008, respectively)

4. Hire a program coordinator to organize ties to research, grant funding, and community partners that will become our service learning base (Jan. 2007);
5. Substantial purchases of equipment and materials for classroom instruction;
6. Pay for the professional development of our teachers.

2. Purpose of School

15%

As Richard Louv alarmingly documents in Last Child Left in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder (2005), American schoolchildren are rapidly growing up in fragile hothouses made up of video screens and junk food, insulated perhaps from crime but also from their own backyards. This can be true even in the predominantly rural state of Oregon. The Muddy Creek Charter School proposes to reverse this trend by using the surrounding natural environment as its extended classroom. We are comprised of families who value strong academic subjects, know that a small school is the most successful learning environment for their child, and are alarmed by the growing disconnection between children and the land. Above all, we value the natural resource of our rural setting and believe a charter school at the Inavale site is an ideal solution that integrates our educational and community values. In 2005-

2006 the Inavale School began this process by establishing partnerships with the neighboring farms and Oregon State University to promote learning through work on the local Muddy Creek Watershed. We want our students to understand the benefit of caring for their environment through service learning projects on functioning 7th-generation-held farms and wildlife habitats using the latest university research methods.

If our chief vision to develop and practice rural sustainability at Muddy Creek Charter School is to be realized, we must build on the foundation that has been started and strengthen the *working relationships among educators, parents, and other community members (4)*. Currently, our partners in education are our neighbors: over twenty local landowners, farmers, and foresters, including the Finley Wildlife Refuge, and Van Decker and Starker Forests. Our unique location in the Muddy Creek Watershed affords rich opportunities for wildlife and habitat study and management, but also our proximity to two universities, OSU and the University of Oregon, makes us an ideal research partner for faculty whose grant funding requires outreach in conjunction with a rural school.¹ Already partnerships with OSU investigators have supported equipment and programs used by Inavale staff to broaden students' knowledge of the surrounding land and community in authentic learning experiences. Since these relationships are already in place, they can continue to grow if the Muddy Creek Charter School proposal is approved.

Many diverse families have come to the Inavale School from desire, need, or

¹ Several years ago funding agencies such as the National Science Foundation inserted an outreach requirement into grant applications for all federal science funding. Since universities rely on grant funding for their own research and livelihood, they need partners to get their own grants funded. As a result of this shift, places like Muddy Creek School become an important partner to the researcher as its involvement increases the likelihood that they will get funded.

even as a last stop in the public school system. In one *small* package, it provided the real alternative of a true “traditional” school – small, rural, close-knit, and community-based while incorporating the best of modern educational methodologies and curricula (6). Inavale’s *innovative* inquiry- and place-based program was a very effective learning model which addressed high academic standards in a rich natural setting. It answers the need for strong science education in the world today with a well-rounded, integrated program that includes the arts. The *flexible* Afternoon Academy allows teachers and community partners to provide learning opportunities for students by combining academic inquiry with adventuresome and expressive hands-on experiences outdoors. Moreover, because of the opportunities afforded by our grant-earning potential, we believe that Muddy Creek Charter School *can be a model for other rural schools* in the state (or rural Northwest) to preserve their communities by channeling untapped money sources. Thus, through local partnerships, we propose to sustain and continue a vital *learning environment* that succeeds because it is *small and thus can remain innovative*.

3. Demographics/Need

15%

A. Description of Community and Local Schools

The proposed site for the Muddy Creek Charter School is the current Inavale School, located in a rural area between the towns of Corvallis, Philomath, and Monroe (9, 8, 15 miles away respectively). Nestled in a vale at the foothills of the coastal range and surrounded by fields and forests growing primarily Christmas trees and timber, the school is set in an agricultural community with local people working the land as well as commuting to Corvallis for employment. Corvallis is also home to Oregon State University and Hewlett Packard, two of the major employers in the area. The Corvallis

population of 50,000 tends to be well-educated, relatively affluent, and very involved in their children's education.

For 2006-07, there will be 8 primary schools in CSD509J, including 2 K-8 schools, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools, for a district-wide approximate enrollment of 6,791 students (Oct. 2005). Currently, the sixth grade at the elementary school level is not an option offered in our district. The two elementary schools closest to the proposed site are Adams and Lincoln (see map), with current enrollments of 467 and 292 respectively. Corvallis is also home to several private schools, including Ashbrook Independent (K-8, enrollment 97 in K-5), Zion Lutheran (K-8, enrollment 128 in K-5), Santiam Christian (K-12, enrollment 253 in K-5), Corvallis Waldorf (K-8, enrollment 100 in K-5), and Corvallis Montessori (K-6, enrollment @ 60 in K-5). Additionally, there are numerous church-based and other private kindergarten options.

The nearby towns of Philomath, population 4,300, and Monroe, pop. 650, are rural with agrarian-based economies. For some people in the Inavale area, the Philomath School District (enrollment 660 K-5 in four schools) provides a viable option because of its rural base and closer proximity to Inavale than 509J's schools. The Monroe School District (enrollment @ 200 K-5) is a similar alternative as well.

B. Demographics

Our intent is that the Muddy Creek Charter School would first serve the children that live in southwest rural Corvallis for grades 1 – 6. These students are underserved by attending a school in town away from the center of their family and rural community, which requires long transportation routes that can be detrimental to a successful school day. Of the 47 students who are presently enrolled from the Inavale School boundary,

half are interested in returning if a charter school is established at this site. Additionally, the children of Hispanic workers are also a part of the rural community who may be underserved in town. Finally, the smaller size of our proposed charter school is necessary for those with medically fragile and/or emotional needs. However, we also expect that other families may bring their children to Muddy Creek because its unique character makes it the best place for them, choosing our school as an alternative to home-schooling, private, or public options regardless of district residence. And, as seems to be frequently the case with charter schools in general, we also anticipate a slightly higher-than-present number of special needs students, possibly as high as 20%.

C. Sufficient Need

CSD509J announced on April 3, 2006 that Inavale community children will be bused to the Lincoln School, though for many Adams is the nearer of the two, necessitating long bus rides that already approach an hour for some Inavale children. The Muddy Creek Charter School will thus serve a rural community that has recently lost its social and educational center. It will preserve learning traditions by continuing the partnerships that have been forged among community members. As a rural community, the Inavale area has an organic connection to the land. It is upon the land – the *place* – that Inavale School’s *place*-based education program was founded and flourished. This tie to the land – its natural setting, agricultural uses, and community members – makes for a learning community that cannot properly go forward nor adequately be served without a school to center it. The families of about 60% of current K-5 Inavale students have already chosen this type of learning community over their own neighborhood—and in several cases, district—schools. This seems to suggest that

there is a serious need for a school with an outlook and size such as the one we propose for Muddy Creek.

Additionally, there is a need for a sustainable model of how a small rural school can exist since rural schools in fairly close proximity to larger population centers are jeopardized as school districts look to consolidate. In particular, those schools that do not fit the strict rural school definition cannot benefit from increased rural funding and recognition of need for support. Therefore, Muddy Creek Charter School can serve our larger, state-wide community by helping such schools find creative ways to preserve their communities as well as by educating potential academic, business, and landowning partners about the value and mutual benefits of joining with small schools.

4. Parent and Community Support 15%

A. Because the Muddy Creek Charter School is partially based on an existing program at Inavale School, the parents, community and CSD509J have already collaborated closely to develop and implement key aspects of the program we now propose. Parent advocates initially led the movement to save the school in 2004-2005 by establishing an innovative program in Spring 2005 with then District Superintendent Jim Ford, who provided funds and organizational support for the new design. Daily parental involvement now includes in excess of 15 regular volunteers weekly assisting in our 6 classrooms, those who create and maintain the habitat trail and butterfly garden through the Wildlife Steward program that is central to the place-based curriculum, and those who chaperone the many field trips our curriculum requires. And, historically, a very active PTO handles many fundraising and organizing duties. Additionally, we have one parent who created and voluntarily teaches a weekly “Messy Art” encounter for all

grades to augment the PTO-funded art program. Partnerships with local landowners for field study and with OSU faculty for research opportunities are already in place. We anticipate this type of community participation to continue in part because the school also serves as a community center for gathering and socializing.

B. The school shall be governed by a Board composed 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. Initial members of the Board shall be volunteers who have been approved by the Charter School Development Team. Thereafter, if a vacancy occurs, nominees will be assessed and approved by the remainder of the Board. The responsibilities of the Board include (but are not limited to) overseeing the smooth operation of the school through the following functions: to set policy in compliance with the charter or by negotiating changes to the charter, to set and approve a budget and expenditures, to hire a Director for the school and oversee the hiring of other staff, and to give accounting of fiscal, educational, and policy decisions through timely communication with the public. The Board shall have regularly scheduled public meetings with the Director of the school, which shall commence within one month of the acceptance of the charter.

5. Education Program

10%

Muddy Creek Charter School will provide a rigorous hands-on science education based on the philosophy of Authentic Learning. Our education plan will incorporate the Oregon standards, Common Curriculum Goals, and Benchmarks Oregon Standard into an integrated, place-based curriculum that exceeds the mandates of the Oregon Department of Education. It will generally be based on the current proven Inavale

methodology, which is aligned with the District Improvement Plan and state standards. However, during the year prior to the opening of the school, an educational consultant will begin developing the exact curriculum and identifying classroom materials needed to fulfill the dual mission of academic content mastery and place-based inquiry. During the summer before school opens, teachers will work as a cohesive team to finalize the curriculum according to state content standards, and together they will determine the appropriate assessments to document mastery of curriculum objectives. Several methods might be used: portfolios to show progress using performance scoring rubrics, formative and evaluative assessments of basic skills, and participation in state testing.

Students at Muddy Creek Charter School will have mixed-grade classes, and in addition to direct classroom instruction, they will also participate in a wide variety of cooperative and experiential learning, including field trips, ongoing projects, and “buddy learning” between younger and older student pairs. Students will build problem-solving and creative abilities, work collaboratively, assume responsibility for their own learning, and apply their learning to benefit their community to become high achievers and lifelong learners. Our intent is to teach that learning does not just occur at a desk during certain hours of the day, a central tenet of Authentic Learning. Described in detail below, Authentic Learning is characterized by applying academic subject matter in the real world through (1) integrated curriculum, (2) thematic instruction, (3) community partnerships, (4) service learning, and (5) citizenship.

Integrated curriculum. Vocabulary, math, art, communication, and research skills are addressed in multiple ways both within and outside the classroom. For example, students integrate writing, art, science, history, and math skills during on-site

work, such as conducting field studies of local habitats, researching the history of a century-old cemetery, or interviewing a local farmer about his business. When students learn past the four walls of the classroom, they can perceive the practical applications of learning multiplication and estimation when having to calculate, for instance, the impact of human feet on a trail or the stream flow in a spring. When they have an audience that wants to understand the results of their research, they recognize the value of communicating clearly in writing. In other words, when students connect with the community around them, the resulting knowledge gains both relevance and importance, and it is retained better. Basic skills are thus authentically incorporated into the curriculum through ongoing projects and fieldwork, which consistently establishes practical applications for classroom lessons.

Thematic instruction. Susan Kovalik's program of thematic instruction helps students "develop a deeper understanding of the instructional concepts they experience" by using a theme to coordinate studies throughout the year. As an example, a first/second grade theme might be *Who Lives Here?*, where students would focus on developmentally appropriate topics such as nearby plant life and wildlife, domestic animals, members of the human community, and local geography. Whereas fifth/sixth graders might work with the theme *Water*, studying water quality in Muddy Creek, how area geography and use affect run-off, the watershed as a system, and irrigation and water as a resource. The connecting themes help create a relevant format for students to examine, compare, and explore the world beyond their locale.

Community partnerships. A crucial part of the Muddy Creek Charter School education is each student's relationship to the surrounding community. Therefore, our

partnerships are a necessary component of our education plan in order to implement knowledge gained in the classroom. Off-campus experiences allow Muddy Creek students to study wetlands restoration, agricultural practices, and local history. Whereas community specialists in bee study, animal husbandry, crafts, gardening, and area history will bring their expertise *into* school classrooms, such as local author Judy Jurtenen who spoke at Inavale about her newly published book on the Kalapuya Indians, which devotes special anthropological sections to the Muddy Creek and Mary's River bands of the Kalapuya.

Service learning. The reciprocal side to community partnerships is service learning, which develops a two-way path for sharing. Students come to understand that they have a responsibility to give back to the community through stewardship. Throughout the curriculum and each day's work, Muddy Creek students are encouraged to consider how what they learn and do impacts others. Service learning requires that students participate in meaningful work, such as maintaining trails, assisting with data collection, hosting wildlife summits, and/or developing field cards for community education. Muddy Creek Charter School students thus become ambassadors for rural living and its community partners and could help maintain a proposed district-sponsored science center which will be a resource for all area schools and community members.

Citizenship. Susan Kovalik's Integrated Thematic Instruction Model also incorporates Essential Life Skills to nurture the citizenship of each student. Therefore, in addition to mastering grade-level benchmarks within the integrated curriculum, students are taught to recognize and practice the life skills of integrity, initiative, flexibility, perseverance, organization, sense of humor, effort, common sense, problem-

solving, responsibility, patience, friendship, curiosity, caring, courage, cooperativeness, and pride. Such traits are fostered in their buddy relationships as well as in becoming good stewards of the land and are hallmarks of a traditional “country school” education. In sum, our students will develop skills for lifelong learning, an integrated perspective on knowledge, and finally, a lasting mandate to serve community.

6. Accountability

10%

A. School Goals

- The school will provide an interactive, community-oriented learning environment that enables *all* students to show yearly progress on TESA examinations, 80% having scores that meet or exceed grade level requirements.
- The school will maintain existing community partnerships to provide service-learning opportunities and aim to develop at least one new relationship with local landowners every year of operation.
- The school will create a model to visit and provide literature for integrated rural and/or environmental education for Oregon school staff, both private and public, after 5 years of operation.

B. Student Goals

- Each student to achieve a minimum advancement of one (1) grade level each year, measured using both performance benchmark rubrics from September and May and TESA as indicators.
- 90% of students to create math problem solving work samples scoring an average of 4 or above at their grade level.
- 85% of students to read at grade level or above.

- Each student will participate in at least two service learning activities per year.
- Each student will meet with their buddy a minimum of ten (10) times per year.
- Students will help develop and maintain a classroom learning community where 100% of the learners feel included, safe, and productive, measured using a projective evaluation.

7. Staffing

10%

A. The school staff will consist of the following:

1. 0.5 Administrator
2. 0.5 External Funding Coordinator
3. 3 Full-time licensed teachers
4. 1 office professional
5. Contract janitor

B. The **Administrator/External Funding Coordinator** – One position will assume roles of both location administrator and funding coordinator. As administrator, the employee will perform duties of: 1) Staff supervision and evaluation, 2) Ensure curriculum alignment between teaching staff and maintain district and state standards, 3) Student supervision and disciplinary action, 4) Represent the school at district, state, and charter school administrative functions, 5) File reports to local, state, and federal education agencies, 6) Maintain administrative records in compliance with Oregon law, 7) Share responsibility with Charter School Board on strategic planning, budgetary issues, policy development.

As External Funding Coordinator will: 1) Prepare proposals, 2) Research grant opportunities, 3) Ensure accountability of funds, 4) Work with granting institutions and

community members to maintain and grow partnerships and programs, 5) Promote the school in the community to encourage community-wide relationships, stimulate enrollment, and establish outreach.

Teaching Staff – Educate students in an aligned curriculum which coordinates with the vision of the school. Initially, staff will be expected to teach more than one grade-level per class, as enrollment is expected to be supportive of three teachers for 6 grades. True to small-school roots, teachers will be responsible for Physical Education programs the first year of operation.

Office professional – Serves as primary contact during school hours; assists administrator; supports staff, performs routine office duties

Janitor – contracted professional responsible for maintaining cleanliness of building and playground

Muddy Creek, as an arts and sciences Renaissance school, will take advantage of the rich physical and artistic community surrounding it by receiving both contracted and volunteer instruction in arts, music, drama, including fiber arts, folk music, theater arts, and classical music.

C. Muddy Creek anticipates following Susan Kovalik's Integrated Thematic Instruction Model and teachers will be supported in their professional development by attending seminars and receiving instructional materials.

8. Project Budget Narrative (Plus Attachments) 10%

A. During the **Planning Phase**, grant funds will pay for legal and consulting fees to assist us in establishing our non-profit status, negotiating with CSD509J as to the

school site and charter proposal, to finalize the content of the charter, generate interest from parents, students, and community partners, and in initial setup of financial procedures and curriculum development.

Once the charter is approved, the **Implementation** grants will be used to purchase textbooks, instructional materials, computers, office machines, and school furniture, and provide for staff development, facility upgrades, and setup the program coordinator to ensure we have partnership and educational grants to sustain us in the years following startup for the future.

B. During Planning Phase Stages 1 & 2, we will need a legal consultant to help us setup our non-profit status and assist in making our charter contract a strong legal document.

A mediator with experience in charter school startup will be beneficial in negotiating with CDS509J in regards to site usage and in setting up agreeable terms for the charter proposal. Since we are transitioning our program from an existing school that will be closed and require re-starting, it will be necessary to allay District concerns and show that we are a complement rather than competition to their programs. The land for the school was leased to the District as a school site, and we hope to emphasize to CSD509J that allowing us to inhabit the building will be honoring the land-donation familys' wishes to support a school in our rural community.

To manage our growing finances, we will need to consult with an accountant to establish a bookkeeping system and train a financial officer. We will also need professional development for our Board members to learn how to manage a charter school.

An educational consultant will be key to developing our curriculum and ensuring that we both meet all required benchmarks and guidelines as well as aligning the program with our innovative strategies and partnerships.

Contracting a charter school consultant during **Planning Phase Stage 2** will greatly help I advising us in startup procedures as we move from planning to implementation, and help with understanding how best to market Muddy Creek to the community.

The **Implementation Grant** will establish a ground basis for the future of the school by providing textbooks, computers, instructional materials, A/V equipment, and furniture. It will pay the facility rent in the summer before we receive state student-based funds, enabling staff and program development and office setup.

A marketing program will serve to integrate us into the community by attracting students, community partners and financial supporters. At this time, hiring the program coordinator will assist in organizing our fund-raising with our curriculum.

The **Implementation Grant** will also establish a strong program in staff professional development so that our school has a powerful team of educators with an aligned program ready to deliver to our students.

And lastly, the **Implementation Grant** will permit us to perform some renovations of the facility that were planned but not effected by CSD509J to upgrade to current standards.

9. Business Capacity/Continued Operation **10%**

A. Business practices and policies will be based on current CSD509J practices for consistency.

B. Assumptions for the Three-Year Operational Budget are realistic, as they are based on the budget already in place at the currently operating Inavale School. Our goal is to keep teacher salaries commensurate with surrounding schools to attract high-quality licensed staff. During the years that we have the Implementation Grant, we are spending more on equipment, books, technology equipment, furniture, and staff development than we anticipate doing when the school is well-established.

We are very conservative in our estimates of partnership and donation funding, as we were able to easily reach this level without concerted effort through the PTO budget, or alternately, through OSU Partnerships for the Muddy Creek study.

It was assumed at this stage that Muddy Creek Charter would be a school of choice, so transportation would be the responsibility of parents, with the exception of children currently boundaried to Inavale, for whom a CSD509J bus could operate.

Custodial service will be contracted at half-time, as seems sufficient for the student population. Food service will not be provided in the early phases and will require bag lunches from home. We will provide a free bag lunch for those students in need.

We are assuming that our rent offering will be sufficient to CSD509J, and that we would take over maintenance and repairs increasingly over time, including renovations.

C. The estimate of enrollment for the first year is strongly rooted in several factors. Inavale's K-5 boundaried student population for 2006 was 63, capturing 75% for an enrollment of 47. Transfer students made up the remainder to just under 200 enrollment. An informal phone poll during the closure process indicated that out of 34 in-boundary parents polled, 44% would definitely be interested in a charter school. The poll was taken prior to the announcement of the new boundary school, which is very

unpopular with parents in the district as a whole, and is highly urban. Coupled with the strong sense of community and successful past history we feel safe in assuming the local community will support the school. Secondly, the large transfer population would likely net some return students to a program they have been familiar with in the past. Thirdly, the adjoining town of Philomath is undergoing significant growth and their schools will not be able to keep pace. We will be attractive to those who value stability and a small rural school environment. Last, Inavale School is well-known for its' historically high quality in large part due to involved parents committed to demanding high standards. We will attract students to our new school, but will control the growth to reflect our values and vision for our rural community.

10. Priority

20 points

A. Outreach

Inavale School currently meets the needs of at-risk and underserved students. Of the enrollment for the 2005-2006 school year, 23% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch prices. In order to ensure continued access to Muddy Creek Charter School, we will work with local businesses to fund busing to our location. Additionally, we will post bilingual literature about our school in community centers, public libraries, pre-school programs, and farms in the three rural communities surrounding the school (Corvallis, Monroe, and Philomath). At the elementary school level, the "at-risk" children who have come to Inavale from other schools in the district for behavior or disciplinary reasons become *students* at Inavale. These situations largely resolved themselves through two measures that Muddy Creek Charter School will be preserving: place-based instruction and an intimate atmosphere fostered by small size and tolerance.

Another way that Muddy Creek Charter School will reach out to underserved students is by continuing to provide the bridge between home-school families and public education begun at Inavale this year. The Afternoon Academy, which combines art, science, and hands-on environmental study, has drawn numerous children who were formerly exclusively taught at home. The flexibility of this program to accommodate these students has allowed them access to group projects, formal academic instruction as well as service opportunities in watershed and habitat management. With the charter school format, these opportunities will increase as our rural sustainability becomes established.

B. Parent choice

As previously described, our charter school initiative comes from a recent School Board vote to close the rural school at Inavale. Geographically speaking, rural communities cannot (and arguably, should not) yield high enough numbers of students per acre to compete with population-center-driven statistical models for cost-efficiency; yet those families still need a neighborhood school. Without a charter school at the Inavale location, rural students will have to leave their community in order to attend elementary school 6-10 miles away in town. Thus, establishing the Muddy Creek Charter School will not only reinstate a choice to keep children within their rural neighborhood but also continue to offer an alternative program to non-rural families who can benefit as well from its rural setting. In 2005, Inavale's K-8 configuration drew 65% of its students from non-rural areas, including other districts, thus showing the appeal of a rural school option for a wide variety of families.