

# Tree of Life Charter School

— A Montessori Public Charter School —

PO Box 966 (241 Ford Rd.)

Ukiah, CA 95482

707-462-0913; FAX: 707-462-0914

[treeoflifeschool@pacific.net](mailto:treeoflifeschool@pacific.net)

[www.treeoflifeschool.net](http://www.treeoflifeschool.net)



October 30, 2019

Members, Board of Education  
Debra Kubin, Superintendent  
Ukiah Unified School District  
511 S. Orchard Avenue  
Ukiah, CA 95482

Dear Board Members and Superintendent Kubin:

Tree of Life Charter School is requesting renewal of its charter from Ukiah Unified School District. The school is in its nineteenth year of successfully working with and educating children and their families with a Montessori learning environment and curriculum. Currently, it is the only Montessori school in our inland area that serves children of elementary school age.

Over the past five years, Tree of Life has continued to maintain a friendly and productive relationship with Ukiah Unified School District and its staff. The school has done its part to turn in reports and data in a timely manner. We've negotiated with the district in good faith when it wanted to change our Memorandum of Understanding by making reasonable concessions and changes to the agreement.

The school maintains a financial reserve in excess of the target stated in our Memorandum of Understanding and is on healthy financial footing. Though enrollment fluctuates each year and at various times of the year, the school continues to have a base of local families that support it.

As a Montessori-based school, Tree of Life offers a unique educational choice to families in our community. The families who participate in our school come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, and family constellations. They all share a common desire for an excellent education for their children in a small school setting that aids the development of the whole child. The Montessori educational philosophy, with its strong emphasis on developing respect, responsibility, creativity, and compassion, appeals to them.

The school's educational program continues to meet the needs of its diverse population. Over the past few years, the school has experienced an increase in students who have already had traumatic lives and need emotional support. We've put in place mental health services, social emotional learning instruction, and our own special education program to help them heal and grow stronger. We have seen much progress with our students academically and emotionally as they continue with the school.

Attached are the renewal charter petition and supporting documents. Thank you for consideration of the school's charter renewal. We look forward to continuing our work with children and families under the oversight of the Ukiah Unified School District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Celeste R. Beck".

Celeste R. Beck  
Principal

## **Required Affirmations (Education Code 47605(d)(1))**

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter for Tree of Life Charter School to be located at 241 Ford Road, Ukiah, California is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that this application does not constitute the conversion of a private school to the status of a public charter school; and further I understand that if awarded a charter, the school:

1. Shall meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code 60605, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools.
2. Shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Act of Division 4 of Title 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code.
3. Shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations.
4. Will not charge tuition.
5. Will admit all students who wish to attend the school, and who submit a timely application, unless the school receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case each applicant will be given equal chance of admission through a random lottery process. Except as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2), admission to the school shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or his/her parents/guardians within the State. Preference in the public random drawing shall be given as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B)(i)-(iv). In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the school in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(C).
6. Will not discriminate against any student on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).
7. Shall adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, that are applicable to it.
8. Shall meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary.
9. Shall ensure that teachers in the school hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools are required to hold.
10. Shall at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
11. Shall continually strive for a healthy, collaborative, synergistic relationship with the District without imposing a burden or liability on the District.
12. Shall, for each fiscal year, offer at a minimum the number of minutes of instruction per grade level as required by Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(1)(A)-(D).
13. Shall notify the superintendent of the school district of a pupil's last known address within 30 days if a pupil is expelled or leaves the school without completing the school year for any reason, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil. If the pupil is subsequently expelled or leaves

the school district without completing the school year for any reason, the school district shall provide this information to the school within 30 days if the school demonstrates that the pupil had been enrolled in the school.

14. May encourage parental involvement, but shall notify the parents/guardians of applicant pupils and currently enrolled pupils that parental involvement is not a requirement for acceptance to, or continued enrollment at, the school.

15. Shall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection.

16. Shall on a regular basis consult with its parents and teachers regarding the school's education programs.

17. Shall comply with any applicable jurisdictional limitations to the locations of its facility.

18. Shall comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment.

19. Shall comply with all applicable portions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized and amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act.

20. Shall comply with the Public Records Act.

21. Shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

22. Shall comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act.

23. Shall meet or exceed the legally required minimum number of school days.

24. Shall not discourage a pupil from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the school for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the following characteristics: academically low-achieving, economically disadvantaged, English learner, ethnicity, foster youth, homeless, nationality, neglected or delinquent, race, sexual orientation, disability.

25. Shall not request a pupil's records or require a parent, guardian, or pupil to submit the pupil's records to the school before enrollment.

26. Shall not encourage a pupil currently attending the school to disenroll from the school or transfer to another school for any reason, except for suspension or expulsion, including, but not limited to, academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the following characteristics: academically low-achieving, economically disadvantaged, English learner, ethnicity, foster youth, homeless, nationality, neglected or delinquent, race, sexual orientation, disability.

27. Shall post notice and complaint form and procedures regarding Education Code Section 47605(d)(4) requirements on the school's website and shall provide a copy of the notice and complaint form, and procedures to persons inquiring about enrollment, before conducting an enrollment lottery, and before enrollment of a pupil.

24. Shall follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the charter school.

Celente A. Beck

Authorized Representative's Signature

10-30-19

Date

**The Charter of Tree of Life Charter School**  
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## **Charter**

### **Our Vision**

Like parents everywhere, we care about our children, want what's best for them, and know that their experience in school can have a great impact on the quality of their life. We want them to have an education that is worthy of their beauty and potential. We want them in a place where they are known, not as part of a pack or faces in a crowd, but individually and personally. We want them in a school where they receive direct, high-quality attention, where their actual needs are met, where their potential is being realized. We want them in a classroom where they are engaged, interested, and happy – a place where they have a say about what they learn and how they learn it, where their education means something to them and to us, and where they have a vote and voice in class decisions. We want them in an environment where they are respected and where they are expected to respect each other, and held accountable for it. We believe these simple but far-reaching desires can be the basis of an education that helps them grow into creative, truthful, compassionate adults who contribute meaningfully to the society that made their education possible.

The school we have created to meet our goals is based in part on proven principles that have born fruit in situations as different as the slums of Rome and the suburbs of Silicon Valley. It is also based on an element we think is relatively new – a desire to co-develop with our children, to become better, more effective, more fully human people by learning with and from them, both inside and outside their formal school setting.

### **Our Mission**

Utilizing the Montessori philosophy, we will work and learn with our children, with our school staff, with each other, and with the community to develop confident, creative, fruitful citizens of a world made better by their having the opportunity to fully develop.

### **Element A: Educational Program**

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

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

*priorities, the goals for the school priorities, and the specific annual actions to achieve those goals.”*

## **1. Targeted School Populations**

Our school’s classes for children shall serve an elementary level age group between the ages of 4 3/4 and 12. The school plans to continue to serve a minimum of 50 students and currently has the facilities to serve a maximum of 120 students. Unlike traditional classes structured by grade/age, ours is organized by developmental levels. Admittance into a particular level or class is dependent upon a child’s emotional and social maturity, intellectual aptitude for the next level of work, and a consensus decision made by the child, the parents/guardians, and the staff. A child may be admitted prior to or after reaching a particular age depending upon these criteria. Generally, children ages 4 ¾ through 6 are in the Primary class. Children ages 6 through 9 are in the Junior Elementary and ages 9 through 12 are in the Senior Elementary. We will continue to seek diversity in our enrollment, to reflect our community and make our school a richer, more varied place for all. The school shall not discourage a child from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the school for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance of the child or because the child exhibits any of the following characteristics: academically low-achieving, economically disadvantaged, English learner, foster youth, homeless, neglected or delinquent, and any criteria protected by state or federal law. The school shall not request a child’s records or require the parent, guardian, or child to submit the child’s records to the school before enrollment. The school shall not encourage a pupil currently attending the charter school to disenroll from the school or transfer to another school for any reason (except suspension or expulsion). TOLCS does not discriminate in enrollment on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, creed, gender, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, immigration status, or any criteria protected by state or federal law. A parent or guardian may submit a complaint to the charter school authorizer in the event that the charter school discourages a child’s enrollment, requires records before enrollment, or encourages a pupil to disenroll by accessing the Charter School Complaint Form on the school’s Internet website or from the school office.

## **2. Attendance**

The school shall follow the traditional school year calendar closely aligned with the Ukiah Unified School District (District), yet allowing for minor variations. The school year shall consist of a minimum of 175 school days and shall meet or exceed the number of instructional minutes required for the grade levels it serves (currently 54,000 minutes/year). The school shall submit a school year calendar that includes the number of instructional minutes to the District prior to the beginning of each school year.

The school expects students to attend school unless they are ill, have medical appointments, are attending a funeral of an immediate family member, or are participating in an authorized religious activity. The school expects parents/guardians to notify the school each day that a student will be absent or tardy. If the parent/guardian fails to give this notification, the school staff shall attempt to contact the parent/guardian. In addition, Independent Study agreements and work are encouraged for students who will be absent for anything other than serious illness, in order to facilitate continuation of education during absences. These procedures have worked well for us in the past, and we have usually met our goal of keeping attendance at or above 95%.

The school has in place an Excessive Absences Policy and Truancy Procedure for Unexcused Absences. For students who have excessive excused absences or illnesses lasting five or more consecutive days, parents/guardians must have the student’s medical practitioner fax, mail, or deliver a note to the school office describing the illness and expected recovery time, as well as any precautions

the school should take in case of contagious disease. A maximum of 10 absences due to illness are excusable each year, unless a Chronic Illness Verification Form is on file with the school. Parents/Guardians of a student absent 10 days or over 5% of the school year shall receive a letter of notification about the absences and school attendance policy and an invitation to conference with their child's teacher about ensuring better attendance. When the absences exceed 20 days or over 10% of the school year, a second notification letter shall be sent and a meeting with the student's teacher and the Principal shall be scheduled, and further absences will need written documentation.

For students with three days of unexcused absences, a truancy notice letter shall be sent to the parent/guardian and a conference shall be scheduled with the teacher and Principal. After further unexcused absences, a second letter with legal citations shall be sent and another conference shall be scheduled. If unexcused absences continue, a letter of declaration of habitual truancy shall be sent and the family shall be asked to sign an attendance agreement. If the attendance agreement is broken, application for a School Attendance Review Board meeting shall be made to the Mendocino County Probation Department.

When any student is tardy for three or more times, the student's teacher shall arrange a meeting with the family to discuss ways of preventing future tardiness. A truancy notice letter shall be sent to the parent/guardian whenever the student has accumulated three unexcused tardies. After further unexcused tardies, a second letter with legal citations shall be sent and another conference scheduled with the goal to prevent future tardiness. If unexcused tardies continue, a meeting will be held with the family to make a formal, signed tardiness prevention plan agreement.

### **3. What It Means to Be an Educated Person in the 21st Century**

We feel that a truly educated person in any era is one who has developed the physical, emotional, and cognitive skills necessary for functioning as a creative, fruitful member of society. The person is independent, responsible, self-motivated, self-disciplined, self-reliant, respectful, compassionate, and creative – a person who not only has the developed skills needed to function in the world, but the ability to contribute positively to it. For this person, learning has become a life-long activity, motivated by deep interests that spring from an internal source and result in a willingness to participate actively in the present functioning and future direction of our society, the planet, and the cosmos. The educated person will have a mastery of the necessary academic tools or skills to pursue knowledge, to move confidently and productively onward to their next stage of development, and to participate effectively, creatively, and responsibly in the world. This person, in addition to academic mastery, has experience with and can demonstrate practical skills, decision-making, effective communication, analytical thinking, problem solving, and imaginative thinking.

We also see a special need in the world right now for people who can “think on their feet” and adjust to a future in which the rapid changes of the 20th Century are likely to seem leisurely. There is a need for rationally disciplined, self-motivated people with well-developed intuition, who will understand the fragility of the natural world and act on behalf of the web of life of which we are all a part. Children taught only to passively receive the approved knowledge of the day are likely to be at sea in this century. Those who instead are confident in looking for and finding answers on their own, who can understand and be comfortable with the way circumstances change, and who look for the underlying truth rather than just for the approved answer, will be an important center of gravity for society in the era ahead.

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

Over one hundred years ago, Dr. Maria Montessori began to demonstrate that the natural curiosity of very young children could be the center of an education that effectively explores, reveals, and develops their true capacities. The wonderfully flexible educational method she developed was based not on theories or dogmatic beliefs, but on actual observation of children's real nature and activities. She filled their educational environment with materials they could discover and work with to learn. And she supplied both the guidance needed to get a child started at the right time with the right activity and the direct personal supervision needed to help the child succeed. The careful, loving observation that is the key to her method has always focused on the individual child – not on age, or on peer group, or on preconceived standards of readiness, but on seeing and respecting each and every child. It is her discoveries, updated appropriately as she anticipated, that will continue to guide our program.

Our methods are centered on a self-pacing, sequentially organized curriculum, supplemented by experiential learning of many kinds. Instead of segregating children by age and grade, we employ multi-age groupings that resemble the groupings that occurred naturally outside of schools before our society became so fragmented and busy. These groupings correspond with demonstrated planes of human development, and give children a secure, inclusive setting for learning, as well as a sense of what's ahead for them and a chance to learn from and teach each other as they would in the larger world. The curriculum offers an overview of the development of the universe through present civilizations, to provide students a sense of how they got here and who they are. It includes a great deal of independent research and a variety of experiential projects and exposures. Community service, democratic group government, setting and evaluating one's own goals, and exchanges with children and adults in other communities and ways of life will continue to be important aspects of learning.

Three main observations of human development form the basis of our programs: (1) that human development does not occur in a steady linear ascent but in a series of formative planes; (2) that the complete development of human beings is made possible by their tendencies to certain universal actions in relation to their environment; and (3) that this interaction with the environment is most productive for an individual child's development when it is self-chosen and founded upon individual interest. Such human behavioral tendencies as exploration, orientation, order, imagination, manipulation, repetition, precision, perfection, and communication are present throughout life, but they don't operate uniformly in different developmental stages. This observation underlies Montessori's establishment of new divisions in education based upon the child's developmental stages, each of which requires different educational environments.

These educational environments contain three essential elements: a prepared physical environment, a prepared adult Guide, and freedom with responsibility. By changing the focus of each of these elements in the different planes of development, the educational environment allows for and supports the changing needs and interests of the child as s/he develops. The educational environment includes the family and the home environment as well as the school. What is especially striking is that as children grasp concepts and master skills in this prepared environment, they become not only more adept and confident, but more loving and peaceful as their inner lives unfold as well.

While our program works best as a site-based community of classes, home-based learning may be appropriate for some family situations. The home-based Long-Term Independent Study (IS) option shall not comprise more than 15% of the total number of students. Students enrolled in this program must reside in Mendocino County or an adjacent county. The school shall follow the procedures stated in its Independent Study Policy for Non-classroom Based Instruction, including a requirement that IS

students work on regularly scheduled school days according to the campus-based school calendar. If a student has a special education Independent Education Program (IEP), the IEP must specifically provide for his or her enrollment in Independent Study. This program requires, at a minimum, monthly meetings with a Guide (certificated Montessori teacher), documentation and work samples as with the Temporary Independent Study program, and an additional “Master Agreement for Long-Term Independent Study” that must be completed and signed each semester, and that lists the subjects to be studied, the options available to the student and student’s family, and the manner and frequency of reporting. The “Written Agreement for Independent Study” form shall be used as the assignment and evaluation form and must be completed with the learning objectives and verification at least once per month.

Long-Term Independent Study (IS) student families shall meet with their Guide at the beginning of each semester to review the California State Curriculum Standards and the Montessori Curriculum scope and sequence in order to decide upon the goals to be pursued during each semester. The Guide shall ensure that the educational objectives and work assignments for each IS student are comparable to the campus-based classroom instruction and would meet or exceed the school’s current number of instructional days and minutes for the student’s level. The Guide shall ensure that the student receives the necessary books, resources, and materials necessary to complete the assignments for each agreement period. Parents/Guardians of the IS student shall receive instruction from the Guide on how to use the materials and resources with the student.

The ongoing scientific research initiated by Montessori, and the educational method based upon it, have provided the foundation for more than 20,000 highly successful Montessori programs around the world, including more than 400 Montessori public schools across the United States. Recent educational studies in brain research have confirmed the effectiveness of Montessori programs.

Our charter school is the expression of a growing alliance of families intent on working together to help their children realize their potential and become creatively fruitful members of society. The families involved recognize that the present world is full of both opportunities and dangers to children, and we feel that coming together to pool interests, abilities, and perspectives on our children’s behalf can be an enjoyable and satisfying way to co-develop with them. We plan to continue to reach out both to others with children of the same ages and to expectant and new parents who are ready to think from early in their children’s lives about consciously sharing with others for their children’s well-being and development.

Learning of a kind that produces a balanced, effective human being best occurs with patient, personal guidance that recognizes and works with the innate curiosity and desire to learn in all of us. It also recognizes individuality, and the differing “internal clocks” with which children approach learning and succeed at it. The following considerations, and how we intend to respond to them, bear on the kind of learning needed to produce educated people for the time ahead.

1. The fundamental purpose of education is human development. Learning involves the enrichment and deepening of relationships to one’s inner self, to family and community members, to the global community, to the planet, and to the cosmos. Our program supports human development by providing the following instructional approaches and strategies: opportunities for self-reflection and developing intrinsic motivation, multi-age class groups, events that establish relationships with family and community, and learning activities and service projects that connect the learner with the global community and the universe.



2. Each individual is inherently creative, has unique physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs and abilities, and possesses an unlimited capacity to learn. Education that recognizes learners as unique and valuable honors students as individuals and helps them progress. Research supports the concept that children develop and learn at different rates, and Montessori education respects and supports these differences by helping children build a strong educational base at a pace that is appropriate for individuals according to their unique abilities.

Students learn to assess themselves and, with staff and parents/guardians, evaluate their strengths and progress as well as areas needing improvement. Conferences held five times per year are checkpoints when the staff, parents/guardians, and student meet together to plan, monitor, and modify as necessary each student's individual educational goals for the year, and they can develop and implement strategies to support students whose progress is not meeting specified pupil goals and outcomes.

The school will comply with all requirements pursuant to California Education Code 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii), including developing annual goals, for all pupils (i.e. schoolwide) and for each subgroup of pupils as identified in California Education Code 52052, for each of the applicable eight (8) state priorities identified in California Education Code 52060(d). Please refer to the table in Element B: Measurable Pupil Outcomes for the schoolwide goals for relevant subgroups and corresponding assessments. The school will comply with all elements of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) pursuant to regulations and templates adopted by the State Board of Education and reserves the right to establish additional, school-specific goals and corresponding assessments throughout the duration of the charter.

Special Accommodations to Support All Learners to Meet School Student Outcomes:

Our program is largely self-pacing and individualized for each student's needs and abilities. Because of this, students needing special accommodations, whether academically low achieving or high achieving, English learners, students with Section 504 Plans, or students with special education Individualized Education Plans (IEP), are continually facilitated with instructional support in the classroom that addresses their needs.

Accommodations in the classroom may include additional individual lessons or resource materials, work or behavior monitoring charts, modified assignments, support from highly qualified paraprofessionals and volunteers, and peer tutoring. The Montessori didactic materials allow for a wide range of learning styles and abilities, and the encouragement of cooperative learning in the classroom fosters peer tutoring relationships. Teachers develop a relationship with each student so that they know their particular interests and can utilize them to engage the student in practicing skills they might otherwise resist as too challenging or uninteresting. Staff may also use techniques such as check in/check out, individual visual schedules, structured breaks, inter-class passes, and preferred activities. In addition to implementation of accommodation strategies and plans by school staff, students may also receive services at school from special education teachers and therapists per their IEPs or 504 plans, as well as extended learning time through after school tutoring and extended learning programs.

English Learner Accommodations:

When a student's family indicates on the student information form for initial enrollment that a language other than English is spoken at home or is the child's first language, the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) to determine the child's English language proficiency shall be given within thirty school days. Results of the assessment shall be shared with the student's

parents/guardians within thirty days of receiving them, and a conference shall be held with the staff and the family. The assessment notice shall include the reason for the child's classification, the level of English proficiency, and a description of the school's program and strategies for English language development. The program description shall include information about how the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of the child, how it will help the child develop English proficiency and meet age-appropriate academic standards, expected outcomes and exit requirements, and how, for a child with exceptional needs, the program meets the requirements of the child's IEP. The notice shall also contain information regarding whether the child is a long-term English learner or at risk of becoming one, how the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of long-term English learners or those at risk of becoming long-term English learners, and how the program will help long-term English learners or those at risk of becoming long-term English learners develop English proficiency and meet age-appropriate academic standards. A student may be classified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) who has an overall score of Early Advanced or higher and a score of Intermediate or higher in the Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Reading sections of the test. In addition to the results of the ELPAC, CAASPP test results, if available, and observations about academic progress and language development from staff and family shall also be considered. Assessment of the student shall take place annually until the student achieves FEP level.

Our teachers have training in working with Limited English Proficient students and hold CLAD or EL Authorization credentials. They shall implement techniques for incorporating English language development based on proficiency with each lesson given to English language learners, including using the Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) model and the Montessori English Language Development curriculum. Teachers share strategies with each other at staff in-service days and staff meetings, and they are encouraged to participate in professional development programs, which the school pays for them to attend. The Montessori classroom contains multiple ways of supporting English learners. The Montessori curriculum and materials, including the concrete and hands-on lessons that use realia, nomenclature and definition cards, phonetic materials and activities, word study activities, and grammar activities, are especially useful for English language development. The lessons include specific activities to develop skills in listening, writing, reading, and speaking English. Montessori-trained teachers encourage peer teaching and cooperative learning, both of which are recommended strategies for English language learners. In addition, the school's small size and low student-teacher ratio allow for individualized and focused instruction for English learners.

TOLCS shall use State Board of Education identified criteria to determine Fluent English Proficiency (FEP) for English learners consistent with legal requirements regarding standardized testing and other required assessments. Reclassification procedures shall utilize multiple criteria in determining whether a pupil has achieved proficiency in English, including annual ELPAC score, annual CAASPP test scores, especially in English Language Arts, observations and evaluations by staff, and observations and evaluations by parents/guardians. The progress of students who are reclassified as FEP shall continue to be monitored as long as the student remains at the school. Meetings about the student's progress shall be held with staff and parents/guardians at least three times per year. If results of standardized testing, staff observations and evaluations, and parent/guardian observations and evaluations indicate that the reclassified student needs continued support to meet the school's student outcomes, strategies shall be discussed and implemented in the classroom to provide additional support to the student. These may include individual lessons, repetition of previous lessons, extra practice in areas of weakness, and use of Montessori English language development materials.

3. Learning is an active multisensory engagement between person and world. The central role of

experience is to engage and immerse learners in the natural and social world as well as their inner world. Instructional approaches and strategies are varied and often individualized according to particular student needs and interests. They include three-dimensional and multisensorial keys, which are used in group lessons as well as independently, that aid learners in the transition from concrete levels to abstract levels with understanding gained through experience. Teachers introduce students to the various learning activities in the classroom through individual or small group lessons. Through the use of performance, written, or naturalistic assessment, the teachers are able to determine when a student has mastered learning a concept and is ready for the next lesson or level of challenge. Teachers also lead large group lessons to introduce topics and provide a means for group work and large group social interaction.

4. Holistic education celebrates the full range of human potentials and multiple ways of knowing. It is not only the intellectual and vocational aspects of human development that need guidance but also the physical, social, moral, aesthetic, creative, and – in a nonsectarian sense – spiritual aspects. Our program fosters tolerance and appreciation of differences in human beings by using the following instructional approaches and strategies: direct instruction and modeling of skills in communication, direct instruction and modeling of conflict resolution and peace process, and direct instruction and modeling of respect for others. Without coercion, without rewards and punishments, and without separative forms of competition, students act cooperatively, from *internal* motivation and for the joy and satisfaction of learning and mastery. From this deep sense of fulfillment emerges a child capable of empathy and love.

5. The role of educators includes the facilitation of learning, which is an organic, natural process. When educators are open to their own inner being, they invite a co-learning, co-creating process with the learner. Our program employs educators who continue to work on personal inner growth and who have a deep respect for children as unique developing human beings. Weekly staff meetings facilitate discussion about the role of educators, as well as self-assessment about how well the staff is functioning in this role and means for continual improvement. We actively encourage parents/guardians, who are the child's first educators, to continue learning about human development, parenting skills, and preparation of the environment through our parent education programs, newsletter and post articles, and parenting lending library.

6. Genuine education can only take place in an atmosphere of freedom with responsibility. Freedom of choice includes freedom of inquiry, of expression, and of personal growth. Our program gives each student freedom to choose from many activities, freedom to work as long as necessary to accomplish a learning goal, freedom to research what is of interest to each individual, and freedom to progress in all areas according to personal learning style and needs. It is a function of the adult staff to guide each student toward completion of their specific learning goals and to direct them toward the source and use of resources that will aid that learning.

7. The learning environment must itself revolve around empathy, shared human needs, justice, and the encouragement of original, critical thinking. This participatory democracy is the essence of true education. Our instructional approaches and strategies include daily group meetings that include preventing and solving problems, sharing needs and celebrating successes, and a participatory democratic school government. The learning environment includes freedom of movement, which facilitates natural social relationships, cooperation, and empathy.

8. Human experience is vastly wider than any single culture's values or ways of thinking. Our program

promotes interest and awareness of the global community, the ecology of the planet, and the universe through the following instructional approaches and strategies: key stories and lessons given to large and small groups, research projects, cultural celebrations and events, and facilitation of relationships with students in other cultures and communities.

9. Our children require a healthy planet on which to learn and grow. Educating for earth literacy implies an awareness of planetary interdependence, the congruence of personal and global well-being, and the individual's role and scope of responsibility for living in harmony with the natural world. Through the multi-faceted, interdisciplinary curriculum structure our program provides, children will gain awareness of planetary and personal interdependence – the “big picture” of the cosmos and the child's place and cosmic function in that picture. Instructional approaches and strategies include: creating illustrated timelines of the development of the universe, the Earth, and life; geology and functional geography lessons with corresponding experiments; biology lessons with corresponding experiments, ecology lessons with corresponding experiments; study of biomes; student research reports and oral presentations; three part information cards.

10. The inner life of the person is the source of all genuine learning. Our program provides families with information they need to help their children continue their development in the home environment. It teaches parenting skills, preparation of the physical environment, health and nutrition, child development, and the need to include children in meaningful activities. The home environment is crucial to the child's inner development and the school environment is supplemental to it. These environments need to support and mesh with each other in order to provide the opportunity for the spiritual development of each person.

Parent/Guardian education and support are critical to the success of our program. Our families are taking on a new variation of the kind of co-responsibility for our children's education that existed in frontier communities in earlier times, and we plan to use our interconnection both to support each other's intentions and to help attract and influence others.

We know that the respect asked of children for adults and each other depends on the respect they themselves are given, and the sense of personal dignity they develop as a consequence. Both our staff and our Parent Council will continue to work to make sure that the children in our school will be seen as persons, and that their native intelligence and desire to learn are recognized and honored. In seeking diversity for our school, we view varying languages (and cultural angles on life) as advantages to be used and enjoyed, not as problems or burdens.

### **Our Curriculum**

In addition to becoming culturally literate, children need to learn to trust their own abilities to think and solve problems independently. Montessori encourages students to do their own research, analyze what they have found, and come to their own conclusions. The goal is to lead students to think for themselves and to become actively engaged in the learning process. Learning becomes its own reward, and each success fuels a desire to discover even more.

The Montessori curriculum is organized as an inclined spiral plane of integrated studies, rather than the traditional model in which the curriculum is compartmentalized into separate subjects with given topics considered only once at a given grade level. Lessons are introduced simply and concretely in the early years and are reintroduced several times over the years at increasing degrees of abstraction and complexity. The five “Great Lessons” of the Elementary level Cosmic Curriculum are repeated each

year with a variation of their complementary “key lessons.” Often additional unplanned lessons are added as the Guide observes the students’ particular interests and questions. The “Great Lessons” form the core of the integrated curriculum and their inspirational nature stimulates the children’s imagination and interest. The Guide begins the year with the Story of the Beginning of Earth, which is followed by the Story of the Coming of Life, the Story of the Coming of Humans, the Story of Writing, and the Story of Mathematics. In the students’ final year of Elementary level, they receive the lesson of The Great River, which addresses aspects of both biological and governmental systems and organization, illustrating how different departments must work together in cooperation for the good of the whole.

The Montessori course of study is an integrated thematic approach that ties the separate disciplines of the curriculum together into studies of the physical universe, the world of nature, and the human experience. Literature, the arts, history, social issues, civics, economics, mathematics and geometry, science, and the study of technology all complement one another in the Montessori curriculum. This integrated approach is one of Montessori’s great strengths, and it bears many similarities to the State of California’s Common Core Content Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. The school’s curriculum content meets and exceeds the California State Content Standards for grades K-6.

An overview of this integrated curriculum includes the following elements:

***Reading and Language Arts:*** a multi-sensory approach to phonetic reading and spelling, including word study activities such as contractions, noun gender and number, prefixes and suffixes, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, and etymology; dictionary, encyclopedia, Internet, and other resource use; reading for information; note taking and outline skills; interview and telephone skills; oral debate and discussion skills; punctuation usage; handwriting and calligraphy; function of the parts of speech through games, drama, parsing, symbols, written and oral exercises; sentence analysis; non-phonetic English words; creative and expository composition; literature comprehension, appreciation, and analysis; play writing and performance and readers’ theater; poetry; science experiment reports; book reports; research reports; oral presentations; debates; letters and thank you notes; computer literacy skills; and foreign language study.

***Mathematics and Geometry:*** mathematical operations using concrete representations of the decimal system; place value and estimation; dynamic whole number operations; memorization of basic math facts; factoring and solving algebraic expressions; abstract understanding of operations; skip-counting with chains of squares and cubes of numbers; study of common and decimal fractions, decimal and common fraction operations; practical application problems; money; interest; time; squares and cubes of numbers; square and cube roots; history of mathematics and geometry and their applications in science, engineering, technology, and economics; data gathering, graphing, and statistical analysis; plane and solid geometric forms; congruence, similarity, equality, and equivalence; theorem of Pythagoras; calculation of area and volume; operations with positive and negative integers; construction of geometric figures; bisecting angles and lines; tessellations, geometric design, and symmetry; metric and customary measurement systems, conversions, and equivalents; number systems; probability; binomial and trinomial squares and cubes.

***Geography and History:*** land and water formations; maps and compass; humankind’s search to understand how the Earth was formed; study of lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere; geography experiments; study of regions, cultures, and natural resources; natural resources; imports and exports; basic needs of humans through time and culture; migration patterns of humans; study of prehistoric time, study of ancient civilizations, study of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, study of the

Modern Age and current events; detailed study of one's nation and state and their governments; concept of time and historical time; evolution of the planet and its life forms; analysis of the needs, culture, technology, and social history of various periods, people, and places in history.

**Science:** study of the kingdoms of life; botany and zoology nomenclature and experiments; classification of living things; functional botany; functional zoology, internal and external parts; life cycles; habitats, food chains, adaptation to environment and climate, predator-prey relationships, camouflage, other body adaptations of animals; health and nutrition; human anatomy; genetics; skill development in careful observation, recording and describing, techniques of measurement, use of scientific apparatus; water, oxygen, carbon dioxide, and nitrogen cycles; states of matter; elements, compounds, mixtures; chemical periodic tables; basic atomic theory; physical and chemical changes; chemistry lab experiments; astronomy, geology, meteorology and accompanying experiments; physics of light, electricity, magnetic fields, gravity, and mass and accompanying experiments; preparing and analyzing graphs, data displays, basic statistics; study of great scientists and inventions.

**Practical Life:** caring for animals; needlework and sewing; cooking complex meals; making simple repairs; carpentry; using public transportation; self-defense; using a checkbook and balancing an account; consumer purchase decisions; mastering test taking strategies; gardening; fund raising; sports and games; physical fitness personal goals; dancing and movement; graces and courtesies; party planning; flower arranging and interior decorating; working carefully and neatly; housekeeping; applying for a job; caring for young children; wilderness survival; running a small business enterprise; nonviolent resolution of disagreements and hurt feelings; giving others thanks and acknowledgment for acts of kindness; friendship; caring for others through daily acts of kindness, assistance, and charity; identification and appropriate expression of feelings and needs; meeting one's needs through appropriate actions and requests.

**Sensory:** discrimination of dimension, volume, color, shape, size, intensity and nature of sounds, musical tones, texture, weight, temperature, scent; precise observation of the natural world; culinary discrimination; artistic appreciation; architectural appreciation; musical appreciation; musical instrumental and voice techniques; artistic methods and techniques using a variety of media.

## **Element B: Measurable Pupil Outcomes**

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

### **Individual Student Outcomes**

We acknowledge that each child is a unique individual in the process of creating an adult human being, and that adults continue this process as they work toward the goal of self-actualization. The goal of the school is to facilitate this natural process by providing developmentally appropriate opportunities for learning and growth for both the children and the adults of the school community. Since individuals progress at varying rates and according to their unique innate potentials, measurable student outcomes are individualized for each person. The school will accomplish specific educational goals and

objectives in accordance with each child's individualized education plan and innate potential.

According to individual capacities, key outcomes of our program will include the following:

- For each student, learning will become a life-long activity motivated by deep interests that spring from an internal source and result in a willingness to participate actively in the present functioning and future direction of our society and our planet.
- Students will become independent learners who have a mastery of the necessary tools or skills to pursue knowledge, to move confidently and productively onward to their next stage of development, and to participate effectively, creatively, and responsibly in the world.
- Each student will have experience with, and be able to demonstrate: practical skills, decision-making, problem solving, effective communication, goal setting and attainment, analytical thinking, and imaginative thinking.
- Each student will develop a good self-image and awareness of their own feelings, sensitivity and consideration of others, and awareness of their effects on others.
- Students will gain an awareness of the interdependence of humans and nature, with a responsible feeling toward the ecological whole of which they are a part, and an awareness of the interdependence of humans and nations, with a desire for cooperation and peace.
- Students will gain an overview of the development of the universe, the solar system, the Earth, life forms, and human civilizations.
- Growing children will develop healthy bodies whose movements are mastered and controlled to the best of their capabilities.
- Parents/Guardians will gain an understanding of stages of children's development and how they can best help their children in their unique, developmental process.
- Families will network to support and encourage each other in creating meaningful and enjoyable lifestyles.
- Adult staff will continually work on personal growth, observation, and communication skills in order to become sensitive and responsive to each child's needs and abilities.

The level of competence and expected growth in each of the outcome areas is a goal to be set individually for each student at the beginning of the school year. Progress toward achievement of these goals will be assessed quarterly by the student and the adult staff, with assistance from the student's parents/guardians. At the end of each semester, goals and objectives will be reviewed, and progress, which is continually assessed, will be summarized in a written progress report. Modification of the goals and objectives may be made at the semester review as needed.

In addition, parents/guardians will complete a survey and self-assessment at least once each year to evaluate their progress in parenting skills and child development, to evaluate their participation in school activities and volunteerism, and to provide feedback to staff and administration. A summary of this survey will be made available to parents/guardians, staff, and administration, and the results will be used for school improvement.

Staff will complete a self-evaluation with the Principal in April each year to evaluate their learning, teaching, communication, and management skills. A personal growth plan for the school year will be developed by educators and the Principal by October 15<sup>th</sup> of each school year. A copy of these goals will be kept in each educator's personnel file. Informal observations are done on a continual basis by the Principal and by peers using short written feedback forms. Formal observations and evaluations are completed at least once per year and include a post observation meeting with the Principal and/or Board and formal written evaluation. The results will be presented to the Board Cabinet and Board in

April of each year. The Board and Cabinet will give written notification to employees by April 30 about renewal or non-renewal of employment for the following school year.

The following benchmarks, aligned with the California State Content Standards, will be used to determine a student's completion of the elementary level program and readiness for an advanced elementary/secondary level program:

- **Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level Language Arts Curriculum activities, with an understanding of the functions of the parts of speech, sentence analysis, and punctuation usage.**
- **Ability to research and compose a written research project using different types of resources including encyclopedia, books, magazines, interviews, and the Internet.**
- **Ability to read and analyze literature including short stories, poetry, plays, and both short and longer books.**
- **Ability to write creative and expository compositions, poetry, plays, and reports.**
- **Ability to communicate information well in oral presentations as well as in conversation.**
- **Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level Geometry Curriculum activities, with an understanding of plane and solid figures and their parts, calculation of area and volume, equality, congruence, similarity, and equivalence, ability to construct figures, and appreciation for geometric design.**
- **Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level Mathematics Curriculum activities, with an ability to solve practical application problems involving all four mathematical operations, common and decimal fractions, interest, time, money, and measurement.**
- **Successful completion of introductory mathematics of square and cube numbers, square and cube roots, binomial and trinomial squares and cubes, factoring and solving algebraic expressions, the theorem of Pythagoras, positive and negative integers, probability, ratio and proportion.**
- **Ability to gather data, create graphs, perform statistical analysis, and make predictions based on available data and trends.**
- **Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level Geography Curriculum activities, with an understanding of the formation of our planet and solar system, basic astronomy, land and water forms, natural forces and laws, physics of the electromagnetic spectrum, gravity and mass, the elements of matter and how they combine, states of matter, physical and chemical changes, how energy is produced, movements of the earth and its consequences, geology, atmosphere and its phenomena, aeolic action, hydrosphere and its phenomena, plate tectonics.**
- **Ability to make careful observations, record and describe experimental results, use scientific apparatus correctly, and to make accurate scientific measurements.**
- **Understanding of interdependencies of human beings in society, knowledge of location of continents and countries, knowledge of location of individual states and land and water forms of the United States, completion of at least one in-depth study of economic geography of a country or region, knowledge of the fundamental needs of humans and how they are met in various cultures around the world.**
- **Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level History Curriculum activities, with an understanding of geological time, the development of life on earth, the development of human beings, ancient civilizations, Medieval times, Renaissance, modern times, inventions and inventors, migration patterns, and fundamental needs of humans and how they were met**



throughout human history.

- **Ability to analyze a civilization using the History Question Charts and completion of at least one in-depth study project of a civilization.**
- **Knowledge of American history including early humans, exploration, colonization, western expansion, presidents, social problems and solutions, California history, and government.**
- **Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level Biology Curriculum activities, with an understanding of classification of the kingdoms of life, functional botany, functional zoology, life cycles, habitats, food chains, adaptation to environment, human anatomy, and genetics.**
- **Ability to classify living organisms and to use a classification key.**
- **Completion of at least one in-depth biological research project.**
- **Demonstration of knowledge of good health and nutrition through adequate exercise, healthful nutrition choices, safety and accident prevention, first aid skills, stress-management techniques, awareness of own emotions and those of others, nonviolent resolution of disagreements and hurt feelings, and good communication skills.**
- **Demonstration of ability to responsibly care for animals and plants, ability to do simple sewing repairs, ability to plan and prepare a balanced meal, ability to perform basic housekeeping tasks, ability to use test-taking strategies, ability to cross the street responsibly, ability to use a map to get to a location in town.**
- **Knowledge and appreciation of famous artists, artwork, and artistic periods, including both two-dimensional and three-dimensional art, music, architecture, and performance.**
- **Ability to read music in order to play an instrument or to sing.**
- **Demonstration of artistic techniques in two and three dimensions using a variety of media.**

### **School-wide Goals**

The school's goals and outcomes, along with planned actions or services to help achieve them, are updated annually with input from all groups of the school's stakeholders in its Local Control Accountability Plan. Public meetings and Staff Council meetings, as well as parent/guardian and student surveys, help the school review its performance data and make recommendations for modifications of its plan. Thus, the school may make changes to its school-wide goals and exit outcomes based on a variety of factors, including changes in California State Content and Performance standards and accountability tools, changes in school subgroup population statistics, or advancement in technological and assessment tools. Listed below are the school's projected goals and expected outcomes for this charter renewal period.

Regular attendance at school is a key factor in successful learning; therefore, the school will aim to maintain an attendance rate at or above 95%, as well as a chronic absenteeism level at or below 10% or a California Dashboard rank of yellow or above, in at least two of three years. Suspension and expulsion remove the student from the learning environment and negatively impact a student's learning; therefore, the school will aim to maintain a suspension and expulsion rate under 5%.

Ideally, the school would like to help all students achieve proficiency in English language arts and mathematics as indicated by the CAASPP, local assessments, or authentic performance assessments. However, in a school as small as ours, this can prove to be statistically difficult, as we receive an influx of new students each year that is usually greater than 20% of our total population. Thus, our goal is to receive California Dashboard rank of yellow or above in at least two of three years, and/or show that the academic performance is at least equal to the academic performance of the schools pupils would otherwise have been required to attend or to the District in at least two of three years or the aggregate

of three consecutive years. Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, the school expects an outcome of a 1% increase per year in the percentage of students meeting California Common Core Standards and Montessori benchmarks at proficient or competent levels in all subjects measured by State and/or local assessments. Our expected student outcome for English learners is for each student to increase proficiency by at least one level each year.

The Montessori Elementary Curriculum is usually completed over a period of six years, and most students are age eleven or twelve when they have completed the key lessons and are beginning to think more abstractly. In addition, there are physical, social, and emotional changes beginning at this age. Students who are ready to bridge from the developmental level of childhood to adolescence are required to show their academic readiness by completing a set of bridging requirements that are tied to the school's Elementary Benchmarks. Our goal is to have 100% of students who have attended the school for three years or more to successfully complete the elementary program and bridging requirements, and for 100% of other students to complete their individual modified requirements.

Physical activity and good nutrition are important to growing bodies and minds. One measure of the results of physical activity and nutrition is the Physical Fitness Test (PFT). Our PFT goal is to have 75% of students taking the required state test to pass a minimum of 4 out of 6 Fitnessgram criteria in years when the school has more than ten students in the grade level taking that test.

The following chart delineates Tree of Life Charter School's school-wide and subgroup outcome goals and performance targets aligned to the state's priorities that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school, methods for measuring progress and the individual(s) with primary responsibility for each, all aligned with the state's priorities defined in Cal. Ed. Code Section 52060(d). TOLCS will work with the District to ensure that it creates and updates its plans and goals accordingly. The LCAP shall not be deemed part of the charter, and therefore, annual amendments to the LCAP shall not be considered a "material revision to the charter" as defined on section 47607. Actions intended to ensure that the school meets these goals and targets are delineated throughout this charter petition (e.g., Element A: Educational Program; Element D: Governance and parental involvement; etc.) See the following chart for specific actions, their corresponding assessments, and the school personnel responsible for their implementation.

**STATE PRIORITY #1— BASIC SERVICES**

*The degree to which teachers are appropriately assigned (E.C. §44258.9) and fully credentialed, and every pupil has sufficient access to standards-aligned instructional materials (E.C. § 60119), and school facilities are maintained in good repair (E.C. §17002(d))*

<b>School Action</b>	<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals (CTIP, Montessori, and others, as needed)	Course completion	Principal, support provider, trainer
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Highly qualified paraprofessionals in each classroom	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Paraprofessionals and teachers to provide after school tutoring and extended learning time activities	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, special education coordinator, paraprofessionals

Preparation and maintenance of beautiful, complete Montessori learning environments	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents
Up-to-date technology hardware and infrastructure	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Provide additional Common Core standards practice learning time and opportunities at school and at home through use of online learning platforms	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents

**STATE PRIORITY #2— IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**

*The implementation of Common Core State Standards, including how EL students will be enabled to gain academic content knowledge and English language proficiency*

<b>School Action</b>	<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Montessori and Common Core standard-aligned recordkeeping and family communication system	Standardized assessments, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents
Up-to-date technology hardware and infrastructure	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Highly qualified paraprofessionals in each classroom	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Paraprofessionals and teachers to provide after school tutoring and extended learning time activities	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, special education coordinator, paraprofessionals
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Provide additional Common Core standards practice learning time and opportunities at school and at home through use of online learning platforms	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents
Parents/Guardians will be reminded to read with their child for at least 15 minutes each day, and to read and sign the child's goalbook to share progress	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents

**STATE PRIORITY #3— PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

*Parental involvement, including efforts to seek parent input for making decisions for schools, and how the school will promote parent participation for all parents, including those of unduplicated pupils and pupils with exceptional needs.*

<b>School Action</b>	<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Montessori and Common Core standard-aligned recordkeeping and family communication system	Standardized assessments, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents
Parents/Guardians will be reminded to read with their child for at least 15 minutes each day, and to read and sign the child's goalbook to share progress	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents
Parents/Guardians will be reminded about school events, meetings, service	Surveys and questionnaires, attendance records, service records	Principal, teachers, parents
Parents/Guardians will be sent informational materials about human development, helping children at home, parenting, and Montessori education	Surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents
Provide child care during Parent Council meetings so that more parents/guardians will be able to attend	Surveys and questionnaires, meeting attendance records	Principal, paraprofessional

**STATE PRIORITY #4— STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

*Pupil achievement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:*

*A. CA Assessment of Student Performance and Progress on statewide assessment (as available)*

*B. The Academic Performance Index (API) (as available)*

*C. Percentage of pupils who are college and career ready (not applicable)*

*D. Percentage of ELs who make progress toward English language proficiency as measured by the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC)*

*E. EL reclassification rate*

*F. Percentage of pupils who have passed an AP exam with a score of 3 or higher (not applicable)*

*G. Percentage of pupils who participate in and demonstrate college preparedness pursuant to the Early Assessment Program (E.C. §99300 et seq.) or any subsequent assessment of college preparedness (not applicable)*

<b>School Action</b>	<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Part-time mental health professional to meet in consultation with staff about struggling students, to work individually and in small groups with struggling students who need more intensive work on social, emotional, or behavioral goals, and to give guidance to parents, making referrals to other agencies and resources when appropriate	Standardized testing, performance, scope and sequence, naturalistic, portfolio, performance, discipline referrals, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, special education coordinator, mental health professional
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Highly qualified paraprofessionals in each classroom	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals

For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Paraprofessional and teachers to provide after school tutoring and extended learning time activities	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, special education coordinator, paraprofessionals
Professional development for staff to implement social/emotional/behavioral curriculum schoolwide	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, discipline referrals, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers
Parents/Guardians will be reminded to read with their child for at least 15 minutes each day, and to read and sign the child's goalbook to share progress	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents
Parents/Guardians will be sent informational materials about human development, helping children at home, parenting, and Montessori education	Surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Provide additional Common Core standards practice learning time and opportunities at school and at home through use of online learning platforms	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents
Montessori and Common Core standard-aligned recordkeeping and family communication system	Standardized assessments, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents

**STATE PRIORITY #5— STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

*Pupil engagement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:*

*A. School attendance rates*

*B. Chronic absenteeism rates*

*C. Middle school dropout rates (EC §52052.1(a)(3))*

*D. High school dropout rates (not applicable)*

*E. High School graduation rates (not applicable)*

<b>School Action</b>	<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Part-time mental health professional to meet in consultation with staff about struggling students, to work individually and in small groups with struggling students who need more intensive work on social, emotional, or behavioral goals, and to give guidance to parents, making referrals to other agencies and resources when appropriate	Standardized testing, performance, scope and sequence, naturalistic, portfolio, performance, discipline referrals, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, special education coordinator, mental health professional
Professional development for staff to implement social/emotional/behavioral education schoolwide	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, discipline referrals, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals
School family communications	Surveys and questionnaires, attendance messaging and support	Principal, office staff, teachers

**STATE PRIORITY #6— SCHOOL CLIMATE**

*School climate, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:*

*A. Pupil suspension rates*

*B. Pupil expulsion rates*

*C. Other local measures, including surveys of pupils, parents, and teachers on the sense of safety and school connectedness*

<b>School Action</b>	<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Part-time mental health professional to meet in consultation with staff about struggling students, to work individually and in small groups with struggling students who need more intensive work on social, emotional, or behavioral goals, and to give guidance to parents, making referrals to other agencies and resources when appropriate	Standardized testing, performance, scope and sequence, naturalistic, portfolio, performance, discipline referrals, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, special education coordinator, mental health professional
Consistent discipline referral recordkeeping	Naturalistic, discipline referrals	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals
Professional development for staff to implement social/emotional/behavioral education schoolwide	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, discipline referrals, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals
Parents/Guardians will be reminded about school events, meetings, service	Surveys and questionnaires, meeting attendance records, service records	Principal, teachers, parents
Provide child care during Parent Council meetings so that more parents/guardians will be able to attend	Surveys and questionnaires, meeting attendance records	Principal, paraprofessional

**STATE PRIORITY #7— COURSE ACCESS**

*The extent to which pupils have access to, and are enrolled in, a broad course of study, including programs and services developed and provided to unduplicated students (classified as EL, FRPM-eligible, or foster youth; E.C. §42238.02) and students with exceptional needs.*

*“Broad course of study” includes the following, as applicable:*

*Grades 1-6: English, mathematics, social sciences, science, visual and performing arts, health, physical education, and other as prescribed by the governing board. (E.C. §51210)*

*Grades 7-12: English, social sciences, foreign language(s), physical education, science, mathematics, visual and performing arts, applied arts, and career technical education. (E.C. §51220(a)-(i))*

<b>School Action</b>	<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Montessori and Common Core standard-aligned recordkeeping and family communication system	Standardized assessments, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents
Professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals (CTIP, Montessori, and others, as needed)	Course completion	Principal, support provider, trainer
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Highly qualified paraprofessionals in each classroom	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals

For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Paraprofessionals and teachers to provide after school tutoring and extended learning time activities	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, special education coordinator, paraprofessionals
Up-to-date technology hardware and infrastructure	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Provide additional Common Core standards practice learning time and opportunities at school and at home through use of online learning platforms	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents

**STATE PRIORITY #8— STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

*All students will demonstrate appropriate developmental or age/grade level mastery of State and National standards (see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/> and [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)) and aligned with the state's priorities detailed in California Education Code Sections 51210 and 51220, as applicable. Individual performance goals will be established for each student at the beginning of each year based on his/her baseline benchmark assessments, past academic performance, special needs/IEP, and other available data.*

<b>School Action</b>	<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Provide additional Common Core standards practice learning time and opportunities at school and at home through use of online learning platforms	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Highly qualified paraprofessionals in each classroom	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals
For Low Income, English Learners, Students with Disability: Paraprofessionals and teachers to provide after school tutoring and extended learning time activities	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping	Principal, teachers, special education coordinator, paraprofessionals
Parents/Guardians will be reminded to read with their child for at least 15 minutes each day, and to read and sign the child's goalbook to share progress	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents
Parents/Guardians will be sent informational materials about human development, helping children at home, parenting, and Montessori education	Surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, parents
Part-time mental health professional to meet in consultation with staff about struggling students, to work individually and in small groups with struggling students who need more intensive work on social, emotional, or behavioral goals, and to give guidance	Standardized testing, performance, scope and sequence, naturalistic, portfolio, performance, discipline referrals, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, special education coordinator, mental health professional

to parents, making referrals to other agencies and resources when appropriate		
Professional development for staff to implement social/emotional/behavioral education schoolwide	Standardized assessments, performance, portfolios, scope and sequence recordkeeping, discipline referrals, surveys and questionnaires	Principal, teachers, paraprofessionals

## **ELEMENT C: Method by Which Pupil Progress in Meeting Pupil Outcomes Will Be Measured**

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

TOLCS has clearly defined schoolwide outcome goals in compliance with California Education Code sections 47605(b)(5)(B) and 52060(d). The school will pursue the following school-wide and subgroup outcome goals, as measured by multiple and varied benchmark assessments that are aligned to state and federal standards, as well as applicable state priorities detailed in California Education Code § 52060(d) that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school. For purposes of measuring achievement of these goals, a numerically significant pupil subgroup will be defined as one that meets both of the following criteria:

- “(i) The subgroup consists of at least 50 pupils each of whom has a valid test score.*
- (ii) The subgroup constitutes at least 15 percent of the total population of pupils at a school who have valid test scores.” Cal. Education Code § 47607(a)(3)(B).”*

As a small school with under 100 students who have valid test scores, TOLCS does not qualify as having subgroups as defined in Education Code sections 42238.01 and 52052 for State academic assessments. However, the school has locally identified subgroups that need extra support. TOLCS will increase the amount of support provided to students with learning disabilities, students from economically disadvantaged families, English language learners, and students new to Montessori by highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals.

Our assessment tools include testing mandated by the State of California and the federal government, including CAASPP, ELPAC, and PFT. We use the state’s standard, on-demand assessments to help monitor individual students’ and the school’s performance in comparison to others. Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 5 (5 CCR), sections 863(a) and (b), CAASPP student score reports shall be made available to each student’s parent/guardian within 20 days of receipt of the report at the school. However, if the reports are received after the last day of the instructional year, the reports shall be made available within 20 working days of the next school year. Such reports shall be delivered to families at orientation conferences held before the school year begins or shall be mailed to parents/guardians when received by the school. Pursuant to 5 CCR, Section 11518.15(b), parents/guardians shall be notified of ELPAC summative assessment results within 30 calendar days following receipt of the test results from the test contractor. If the test results are received from the test contractor after the last day of instruction for the school year, the LEA shall notify each student’s parent/guardian of the student’s results within 15 working days of the start of the next school year.

Staff shall review testing data, as well as records of other assessment measures, during their preparation



week before school begins each year to guide them in development of appropriate educational strategies and goals for each student. Staff may also elect to use other assessments in their classrooms, or Staff Council may decide to use other schoolwide assessments, such as the NWEA MAP Growth Assessment or the San Diego Quick Reading Assessment. The Montessori guides/teachers use the Montessori Compass recordkeeping system, which aligns the Common Core standards with the Montessori scope, sequence, and standards as one way of keeping track of each student's progress in meeting expected outcomes.

We believe that full assessment of each student requires further, more comprehensive and individually pertinent tools than standardized assessments alone. The purpose of assessing pupil progress is to monitor each individual's progress in human development. Standard comparative measurements do not fully meet the assessment needs of pupils, staff, and parents/guardians, nor are they designed to encourage students' self-reflection. Therefore, we are using authentic assessments consistent with our educational philosophy. They give students opportunities for choice, for showing their individual interests and talents, and for self-evaluation and goal setting. In addition, they enable us to assess those developmental objectives that are not measurable by standardized testing.

Three criteria of the authentic assessments we use are that they be *valid*, *fair*, and *enhance learning*. *Valid* assessment is aligned with the educational goals of the school, and measures the real, actual, or genuine thing, not simply the standards meant to represent it. *Fair* assessment evaluates a student's progress to her or his own past as opposed to comparison to others. Assessment that *enhances learning* promotes awareness of, and thoughtfulness about, the learner's individual strengths and weaknesses.

Pupil progress in meeting individual student outcomes will be measured throughout the academic year using a wide variety of methods which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Portfolio assessment** showing a collection of representative work, including writing samples, artwork, research project reports, mathematics and geometry work, individual subject notebooks, reflections on physical fitness and practical life work, and photographs of three dimensional work;
- **Daily goalbooks** and/or record sheets kept by the pupils which include monthly or weekly goals, record of daily work, and self-evaluation of progress toward goals;
- **Personal spelling dictionaries, notebooks, or boxes** and evidence of spelling test results;
- **Work record sheets and recordkeeping on Montessori Compass** showing completion of Montessori Curriculum activities including language arts, geometry, mathematics, history, geography, science, arts, and practical life;
- **Naturalistic assessment** documented with written observations by the staff which include anecdotal evidence of emotional, social, and cognitive development, record of lessons presented and spontaneous follow-up work by the pupil, and noting of lessons needed by the pupil;
- **Performance assessment and self-evaluation** based on completion of specially set, complex tasks or challenges, or as a result of real-life experiences, using rubrics or element checksheets;
- **Correlation of the pupil's work to the Montessori Curriculum scope and sequence and the Common Core standards**, used by staff to assess lessons needed and by students to assess their own progress, including Montessori Compass and NWEA Map Growth Assessment;
- **Surveys, questionnaires, and progress reports** completed by pupils, staff, parents/guardians, and community members providing feedback on both established and developing programs.

The following chart indicates the frequency of use and minimum standard, if applicable, for each assessment tool:

<b>ASSESSMENT TOOL KEY</b>	<b>FREQUENCY OF USE</b>	<b>MINIMUM STANDARD</b>
ST--Standardized testing	Annually	Determined by CDE
PO--Portfolio assessment	Quarterly	Complete according to directions, notes strengths and areas needing improvement, includes parent/guardian response
GB--Daily goalbook	Daily	Lists daily lessons and independent work in a way that is clear, yet concise
SD--Personal spelling dictionary	Weekly	80% correct on both spelling and vocabulary for competency
WR--Work record sheets	Daily	80% correct in order to check off a work as complete
NA--Naturalistic assessment	Daily	Comparison to previous work or behavior used to determine lessons needed, learning strategies, or development
PA--Performance assessment	Quarterly or more often	80% of point total on a point based rubric, or competency equivalent on non-point scale
SE--Self-evaluation	Quarterly or more often	80% of point total on a point based rubric, or competency equivalent on non-point scale
SS—Montessori, Common Core, and California Standards scope and sequence	Weekly	Guide reviews and uses to plan lessons and complete progress reports; student must complete 80% competently before bridging to secondary level
SQ--Surveys and questionnaires	Annually	Comparison to previous surveys and questionnaires used to determine strengths and challenges
PR--Progress reports	Semi-annually	Guide's observations of student progress including academic work completed with competency, work that needs to be completed, and behavior evaluation

The following chart indicates which assessment methods will be used to assess pupil progress for each key outcome:

<b>KEY OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
For each student, learning will become a life-long activity motivated by deep interests that spring from an internal source	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SQ, PR
For each student, learning will result in a willingness to participate actively in the present functioning and future direction of our society and our planet	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SQ

<b>KEY OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Students will become independent learners	PO, GB, SD, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Students will have a mastery of the necessary tools or skills to pursue knowledge, to move confidently and productively onward to their next stage of development, and to participate effectively, creatively, and responsibly in the world	ST, PO, GB, SD, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Each student will have experience with, and be able to demonstrate: practical skills, decision making, problem solving, effective communication, goal setting and attainment, analytical thinking, and imaginative thinking	ST, PO, GB, SD, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, SQ, PR
Each student will develop a good self-image and awareness of their own feelings, sensitivity and consideration of others, and awareness of their effects on others	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SQ, PR
Students will gain an awareness of the interdependence of humans and nature, with a responsible feeling toward the ecological whole of which they are a part, and an awareness of the interdependence of humans and nations, with a desire for cooperation and peace	PO, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Students will gain an overview of the development of the universe, the solar system, the Earth, life forms, and human civilizations.	ST, PO, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Growing children will develop healthy bodies whose movements are mastered and controlled to the best of their capabilities	GB, NA, PA, SE, PR
Parents will gain an understanding of stages of children's development and how they can best help their children in their unique, developmental process	GB, NA, PA, SE, SQ, PR
Families will network to support and encourage each other in creating meaningful and enjoyable lifestyles	NA, PA, SE, SQ
Adult staff will continually work on personal growth, observation, and communication skills in order to become sensitive and responsive to each child's needs and abilities	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SQ, PR

The following chart indicates which assessment methods will be used to assess pupil progress toward reaching the elementary level benchmarks:

<b>ELEMENTARY BENCHMARK</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level Language Arts Curriculum activities, with an understanding of the functions of the parts of speech, sentence analysis, and punctuation usage	ST, PO, GB, SD, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Ability to research and compose a written research project using different types of resources including encyclopedia, books, magazines, interviews, and the Internet	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Ability to read and analyze literature including short stories, poetry, plays, and both short and longer books	ST, PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Ability to write creative and expository compositions, poetry, plays, and reports	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Ability to communicate information well in oral presentations as well as in conversation	NA, PA, SE, SS, PR

<b>ELEMENTARY BENCHMARK</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level Geometry Curriculum activities, with an understanding of plane and solid figures and their parts, calculation of area and volume, equality, congruence, similarity, and equivalence, ability to construct figures, and appreciation for geometric design	ST, PO, GB, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level Mathematics Curriculum activities, with an ability to solve practical application problems involving all four mathematical operations, common and decimal fractions, interest, time, money, and measurement	ST, PO, GB, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Successful completion of introductory mathematics of square and cube numbers, square and cube roots, binomial and trinomial square and cubes, factoring and solving algebraic expressions, the theorem of Pythagoras, positive and negative integers, probability, ratio and proportion	ST, PO, GB, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Ability to gather data, create graphs, perform statistical analysis, and make predictions based on available data and trends	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level Geography Curriculum activities, with an understanding of the formation of our planet and solar system, basic astronomy, land and water forms, natural forces and laws, physics of the electromagnetic spectrum, gravity and mass, the elements of matter and how they combine, states of matter physical and chemical changes, how energy is produced, movements of the earth and its consequences, geology, atmosphere and its phenomena, aeolic action, hydrosphere and its phenomena, and plate tectonics	ST, PO, GB, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Ability to make careful observations, record and describe experimental results, use scientific apparatus correctly, and to make accurate scientific measurements	PO, GB, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Understanding of interdependencies of human beings in society, knowledge of location of continents and countries, knowledge of location of individual states and land and water forms of the United States, completion of at least one in-depth study of economic geography of a country or region, knowledge of the fundamental needs of humans and how they are met in various cultures around the world	ST, PO, GB, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level History Curriculum activities, with an understanding of geological time, the development of life on earth, the development of human beings, ancient civilizations, medieval times, renaissance, modern times, invention and inventors, migration patterns, and fundamental needs of humans and how they were met throughout human history	ST, PO, GB, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Ability to analyze a civilization using the History Question Charts and completion of at least one in-depth study project of a civilization	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Knowledge of American history including early humans, exploration, colonization, western expansion, presidents, social problems and solutions, California history, and government	ST, PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Successful completion of the Montessori Elementary Level Biology Curriculum activities, with an understanding of classification of the five kingdoms of life, functional botany, functional zoology, life cycles, habitats, food chains, adaptation to environment, human anatomy, and genetics	ST, PO, GB, WR, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR

<b>ELEMENTARY BENCHMARK</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Ability to classify living organisms and to use a classification key	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Completion of at least one in-depth biological research project	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Demonstration of knowledge of good health and nutrition through adequate exercise, healthful nutrition choices, safety and accident prevention, first aid skills, stress-management techniques, awareness of own emotions and those of others, nonviolent resolution of disagreements and hurt feelings, and good communication skills	ST, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, SQ, PR
Demonstration of ability to responsibly care for animals and plants, ability to do simple sewing repairs, ability to plan and prepare a balanced meal, ability to perform basic housekeeping tasks, ability to use test-taking strategies, ability to cross the street responsibly, ability to use a map to get to a location in town, ability to use public transportation	ST, PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Knowledge and appreciation of famous artists, artwork, and artistic periods, including both two and three dimensional art, music, architecture, and performance	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Ability to read music in order to play an instrument or to sing	GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR
Demonstration of artistic techniques in two and three dimensions using a variety of media	PO, GB, NA, PA, SE, SS, PR

#### Assessment of Independent Study Work

Home-based or long-term Independent Study (IS) students will be given assignments at least once per month and are expected to complete their assignments by the due date indicated on the Written Agreement for Independent Study Form. During meetings with the student, if assignments are missed due to unforeseen emergency or illness, the student has 30 additional days to complete the missed assignment, in addition to the regularly assigned work for that month. Students who do not complete missed assignments by the deadline or whose work is evaluated to be substandard will meet with the Principal to determine if continuing in the program is in the student's best interest. If the student is not making sufficient progress, the student may not continue as a long-term IS student and will be dropped from the program. A student dropped from the program has the option of participating in the Tree of Life Charter School campus-based classroom program if there is a space available in a classroom for that student's level, or the student may enroll in another school or program.

The Guide will ensure that the educational objectives and work assignments for each IS student are comparable to the campus-based classroom instruction and would meet or exceed the school's current number of instructional days and minutes for the student's level. The Guide will evaluate, initial, and date work samples, verifying that they are up to standard and meet the minimum amount of school days and minutes for the agreement period. Progress on goals will be reported in a written evaluation and orally during a conference at the end of each semester. The Principal will ensure that all Independent Study Policies are being followed and that educational and work requirements are being met. The school will retain student and teacher records, including work samples and forms and attendance records, for a minimum of 3 years.

### Class Placement

At the end of the Junior Elementary level, usually around age 9, students who have demonstrated competency in the core academic subjects for the grade level in which they are enrolled may be admitted to the Senior Elementary level. Exceptions may be made for students with special educational accommodations or specific learning disabilities on an individual basis. This decision is made jointly by the staff and the parents/guardians after reviewing the student's progress reports, work records, scope and sequence correlation, and standardized testing scores.

At the end of the Senior Elementary level, usually around age 11 or 12, students must complete bridging requirements that include demonstrating successful completion of a minimum of 80% of the work listed in the Elementary Benchmarks, demonstrating competency in performance skills listed in the Elementary Benchmarks, and completing an Imaginary Island Project with a minimum rubric score of 80%. Accommodations to the bridging requirements are made for students with special educational needs. Students who do not meet the minimum proficiency are offered additional, free tutoring after school or over the summer break to help them successfully meet the bridging requirements. Students who have not attended the school for the three years prior to their bridging time will not be required to meet all of the bridging requirements, as they have not had the opportunity to explore the full Montessori elementary curriculum. These students will have a specially modified set of bridging requirements based on the number of years they have studied in a Montessori learning environment, but linked to the California State Content Standards at a minimum. Our goal is to have 100% of students who have attended the school for three years or more to successfully complete the elementary program and bridging requirements, and for 100% of other students to complete their individual modified requirements.

### Analyzing and Reporting Assessment Data

Staff review and report weekly successes and challenges with student progress at their weekly staff meetings. These reports are based on the various in-class assessments used in each classroom. In addition, staff meet quarterly to review quarterly local assessments and plan extra supports for students whose score indicate need. Staff also meet toward the end of the school year to discuss placement for students the following year, also using a variety of in-class and formal assessments. When the standardized testing scores are received, including the CAASPP and ELPAC, either at the end of the school year or at the beginning of the next school year, staff review and analyze them together and discuss strategies for improving individual student as well as school-wide performance. The standardized testing reports, including the CAASPP and ELPAC, are then discussed individually with parents/guardians and students at the orientation conference in August, or sooner if received earlier in the year. Goals, objectives, and strategies to achieve them are individualized, and they include academic, behavioral, and practical life outcomes. The school also participates in the Physical Fitness Testing (PFT) and uses the data to adjust activities in the physical education curriculum. Information about school-wide testing performance data on-line and in the newspapers is made available to parents/guardians and the Board, and results are reported and discussed at a Board meeting after it becomes available.

## **ELEMENT D: Governance Structure**

Tree of Life Charter School (TOLCS) is a public school operated by The Beginning Project, a duly constituted California Public Benefit Corporation, and governed in accordance with applicable California Corporations Code sections. It is open to all children of appropriate ages.

The Board of Directors of The Beginning Project shall have fiduciary responsibility for the school's operation. It reposes its confidence in those governing the school as specified in the next section, and has a voting representative on the Charter Board Cabinet overseeing the school's operation.

TOLCS shall be non-sectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and shall not charge tuition, and shall not discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, medical condition, veteran status, marital status, or any criteria protected by state or federal law.

The school shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including the Ralph M. Brown Act, the California Public Records Act, Article 4 (commencing with Section 1090) of Chapter 1 of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code, and the Political Reform Act of 1974. It shall retain its own legal counsel when necessary. It maintains as necessary general liability, automotive liability, errors and omissions, property, worker's compensation, and unemployment insurance policies.

## **Governance**

Our school is governed by The Beginning Project Board and the Charter Board Cabinet (Cabinet). The Cabinet meets at least seven times during the school year and at least once over the summer holiday period to oversee the activities of the school staff, which shall be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school. The Cabinet shall have input from all concerned with the school, including a Student Council made up of student representatives elected by the entire student body, a Staff Council made up of all persons employed by the school, a Parent Council made up of all parents/guardians with children in the school, The Beginning Project, the school district, and the local community.

The governing Charter Board Cabinet shall have eight members:

- One representative appointed annually by the Board of Directors of the school's founding entity, The Beginning Project;
- The Principal of the school, representing the staff and school administration;
- One teacher elected semi-annually by the Staff Council, representing staff;
- One student elected semi-annually by the students, representing students, who will have a full vote on all issues not legally requiring the vote of an adult person;
- Two parents/guardians, representing parents/guardians, elected by an election held annually to elect one parent every two years by the Parents' Council;
- Two representatives of the community at large, appointed annually by the Cabinet (this representative will have no child attending the school, and no immediate family member employed by the school).

The school's bylaws shall make clear the rules of order, offices and officers, and the process for selecting Charter Board Cabinet members. The Cabinet shall meet at least seven times during the school year and will meet at least once over the summer holiday period. It shall support the educational mission of the school and oversee its day-to-day operations. The Cabinet shall make itself available to the Staff Council and shall seek input from the Staff Council in its decisions. The Staff Council, in turn, shall operate with the input of the Cabinet, and shall participate in the Cabinet's monthly meetings. Meetings of the Cabinet shall be open to everyone involved with the school, including students, and to the general public under the provisions of the Brown Act. The Cabinet shall elect, annually, a Chairperson, who shall strive for full consensus on all issues decided by the Cabinet,

but shall limit discussion when necessary and, if unanimity cannot be achieved, shall take and participate in a vote. At this point, a majority shall carry the motion, so long as a quorum is present.

The school staff, under the direction of the Principal, shall direct the school's day-to-day operations, including curriculum, scheduling, staff operations, and financial operations. The Staff Council shall meet as needed on all decisions that it does not delegate to individuals or to the Principal. The Principal shall strive for full consensus on all issues decided by the Council, but shall limit discussion when necessary and, if unanimity cannot be achieved, shall take and participate in a vote. At this point, a majority shall suffice to carry the motion.

The Parent Council shall meet at least five times during the school year. This body shall advise the Cabinet and staff. The Parent Council shall determine its own rules, including the date on which it will elect its representative to the Cabinet. It can vote to place items on the agenda of the next Cabinet meeting.

Students shall nominate and elect semi-annually, from the student body, a Student Council, which shall be comprised of representatives from each classroom of the school. Non-voting members of the Student Council shall include one or more staff advisors and the student Cabinet representative. The student Cabinet representative may vote when needed to break a tie vote on the Student Council. Members of the student body shall elect a representative who is at least age 11 to sit on the Cabinet. The Student Council shall have the authority to place items on the Staff Council and Cabinet's agendas, to make recommendations to the Staff Council and to the Cabinet, and (with the oversight of either the Staff Council or the Cabinet) to organize and carry out projects which benefit the school, and to make or recommend decisions on a range of disciplinary issues. The Student Council shall meet twice monthly.

All meetings of the Cabinet shall be operated in accordance with applicable provisions of the Brown Act. All meetings of The Beginning Project Board pertaining to Tree of Life Charter School shall be operated in accordance with applicable provisions of the Brown Act. These meetings shall be held at least once each quarter. All Cabinet meetings and Board meetings pertaining to Tree of Life Charter School shall be held within the physical boundaries of Mendocino County and a two-way teleconference location shall be established at the schoolsite.

Parent and student input are critical to the success of Tree of Life Charter School. Both the Cabinet and the Staff Council will maintain a strong commitment to obtaining broad-based parent/guardian and student input on school policies and issues, honoring all forms of communication from parents/guardians and students. In addition, they will conduct a parent/guardian survey and a student survey at the end of each school year for the purpose of obtaining input and assessing the past year.

We intend to maintain a school culture that will encourage and sustain meaningful and enjoyable parental involvement. While we recognize that parental participation cannot be forced, we plan to promote it strongly. Upon first expressing interest in the school, parents/guardians and students will participate in an in-depth orientation session with a staff member, during which school goals, philosophy, policies, and governance will be discussed, and parent/guardian participation will be stressed. An open meeting of parents/guardians and staff shall be held five times a year. The purposes of these meetings shall include, but not be limited to: discussions aimed at supporting parents' and children's efforts to extend the Montessori classroom into the home, and opportunities for parents and staff to get to know each other better and to support each other. Every effort shall be made to make



these meetings enjoyable, engaging, and stimulating. Parental attendance and participation in these meetings shall be strongly encouraged.

The Board of Directors of The Beginning Project, in reposing confidence in the Charter Board Cabinet to operate the school, shall reserve final approval on all capital expenditures exceeding \$5,000 and provide fiduciary oversight consistent with the Beginning Project Bylaws and the Memorandum of Understanding with Ukiah Unified School District. The Board of Directors of The Beginning Project shall hold all Real Property acquired by the school.

In the event that the charter granted to Tree of Life Charter School is terminated, real properties and other materials acquired by fund-raising activity of The Beginning Project and Tree of Life Charter School shall remain the property of The Beginning Project. Properties and materials supplied by the State of California, the County of Mendocino, and the school district shall remain the property of the District, County, or State as appropriate.

## **Element E: Employee Qualifications**

Tree of Life Charter School shall retain or employ teaching staff who hold appropriate California teaching certificates, permits, or other documents issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, a copy of which will be on-file at TOLCS and registered with the County. In addition, core teachers (Guides) of elementary level programs must have elementary Montessori Education training or be enrolled in a Montessori training program. Each student shall be assigned to a Guide or “teacher of record” who is responsible for overseeing the student’s academic progress and who monitors and is responsible for matriculation decisions.

The charter school may also employ or retain non-certificated instructional support staff in any case where a prospective staff member has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience, and the demonstrated capacity to work successfully in an instructional support capacity. Instructional assistants must have a high school diploma or equivalent, and some college education is preferred. Instructional support staff shall not serve as the “teacher of record” for individual pupils and may not approve student work assignments without the approval of the “teacher of record.” All non-instructional staff, such as the business manager/secretary, office assistant, and custodian, shall possess experience and expertise appropriate for their position within the school as outlined in the school’s adopted personnel policies and job descriptions.

Individuals employed by the school should be models of those characteristics we wish to nurture in our students. They will display a continuing love of learning and a striving for excellence in their chosen field. They will be intelligent, flexible, open to the process of personal growth, and skilled in communication. They will share the common vision and educational philosophy of the school. They must possess a willingness to work and communicate with parents. They must have the ability to “follow the child,” allowing the freedom of choice and independent discovery crucial to our program, and providing guidance when observation indicates it is needed. They must demonstrate the utmost respect and caring for students, parents/guardians, and fellow employees.

Our Business Manager will monitor background checks, credential expiration dates, TB test renewal dates, and First Aid and CPR renewal dates and submit monthly updates on the Employee Conformance spreadsheet to the District. Staff needing renewals of credentials or certifications are

notified prior to their renewal dates. The monthly update to District is the means used to notify the District when personnel are hired or leave during the school year, and it includes a comment section to highlight key changes and pending information.

Qualifications for employees are listed below:

## **HEAD OF SCHOOL/PRINCIPAL**

### **Description:**

***The Governing Board is the policy-making body of a charter school. It is responsible for fiscal well-being, for the philosophy and objectives of the institution as defined by its vision and mission statement, and for the effective implementation of the policies it lays down. To this end, it selects a Head to whom it delegates administrative functions.***

The Head carries out the broad educational policies established by the Board and acts within the limits of the financial policy set by that body. Within these basic guidelines, the Head performs the following general functions:

- Ensures that the day-to-day operations of the school are efficient and cost-effective.
- Is accountable for understanding and for successfully implementing the school's educational policies as defined in the mission statement.
- Ensures compliance with all relevant federal, state, and local regulations.
- Works with the Board, administrative staff, and faculty to ensure that the school has a long-range strategy that achieves its mission, and toward which it makes consistent progress.
- Is an active participant in the fundraising activities of the school.
- Determines the methods for carrying out Board policies.
- Oversees the business operation.
- Develops and evaluates student programs and services.
- Provides administrative and professional leadership for faculty and staff.
- Reflects the values of the school:
  - Demonstrates fairness, diplomacy, and integrity
  - Provides a sound rational approach to issues and problems
  - Appreciates the collaborative culture of the school and facilitates the decision-making process among constituents
- Is respectful of all the component populations of the school community: families, faculty, staff, board, alumni, and the public.

### **Basic Qualifications:**

- BA or BS minimum.
- Current first aid and CPR certification.
- Meet school/state education requirements, including TB test, immunizations, fingerprint clearance.
- Montessori training and minimum of 4 years teaching experience in a Montessori school.
- State of California clear multiple subject teaching or administrative credential.

## TEACHER/GUIDE

### **Description:**

*The Montessori Teacher/Guide is a guide who helps direct her/his students' activities academically, emotionally, and physically in a prepared Montessori environment that challenges each student to reach her/his fullest developmental potential in accordance with Montessori philosophy, techniques, and procedures.*

### **Basic Qualifications:**

- BA or BS Minimum.
- Meet school/state education requirements, including TB screening.
- Montessori training required.
- Minimum of 2 years teaching experience, preferably in a Montessori school.
- State of California teaching credential or enrollment in a teaching preparation program.
- Submission of necessary documents to complete personnel file, including 3 references, copy of diplomas, copy of transcripts, fingerprint and DOJ clearance.

## SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

### **Description:**

*The Montessori Substitute Teacher is a guide who, when the regular classroom Teacher/Guide is absent, helps direct students' activities academically, emotionally, socially, and physically in a prepared Montessori environment that challenges each child to reach her/his fullest developmental potential in accordance with Montessori philosophy, techniques, and procedures.*

### **Basic Qualifications:**

- BA or BS minimum.
- Current first aid and CPR certification.
- Meet school/state education requirements, including TB test and fingerprinting.
- Montessori certification preferred, but not required.
- Minimum of 2 years employment working with children.
- State of California teaching credential or emergency/substitute credential.
- Submission of necessary documents to complete personnel file, including 3 references, copy of diplomas, transcripts, fingerprinting, and DOJ clearance form.

## ASSISTANT TEACHER

### **Description:**

*The Assistant Teacher assists Teachers/Guides with directing students' activities academically, emotionally, socially, and physically in a prepared Montessori environment that challenges each child to reach her/his fullest developmental potential in accordance with Montessori philosophy, techniques, and procedures.*

### **Basic Qualifications:**

- BA or BS minimum.
- Meet school/state requirements, including TB test and fingerprint clearance.
- Current First Aid and CPR certification.

- Minimum of 2 years employment working with children.
- Submission of necessary documents to complete personnel file, including 3 references, copy of diplomas, transcripts, fingerprinting, and DOJ clearance.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT**

### **Description:**

*The Montessori Instructional Assistant assists the Teacher/Guide to help direct students' activities academically, emotionally, socially, and physically in a prepared Montessori environment that challenges each child to reach his/her fullest developmental potential in accordance with Montessori philosophy, techniques, and procedures.*

### **Basic Qualifications:**

- High school diploma or equivalent minimum; two years college education preferred and required for most positions.
- Meet school/state requirements, including TB test and fingerprint clearance.
- Current First Aid and CPR certification.
- Minimum of 2 years experience working with children.
- Submission of necessary documents to complete personnel file, including 3 references, copy of diplomas, transcripts, fingerprinting, and DOJ clearance.

## **BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL TUTOR AND CARE PROVIDER**

### **Description:**

*The Before/After School Tutor and Care Provider directs students in appropriate activities as recommended by the Teachers/Guides, and provides supervision, treating them with dignity and respect, and helping them to meet their needs.*

### **Basic Qualifications:**

1. High school diploma or equivalent minimum; two years college education preferred.
2. Meet school/state requirements, including TB test and fingerprint clearance.
3. Current First Aid and CPR certification.
4. Previous experience working with children.
5. Submission of necessary documents to complete personnel file, including 3 references, copy of diplomas, transcripts, fingerprinting, and DOJ clearance.

## **BUSINESS MANAGER/SECRETARY**

### **Description:**

*The Business Manager/Secretary is responsible for developing and maintaining an office environment that serves as an information center for staff, students, and families; assisting the administration with a variety of complex clerical and bookkeeping tasks.*

### **Basic Qualifications:**

1. Ability to interact with people in a professional manner using excellent communication skills.
2. Good secretarial and organizational skills.
3. Ability to use a computer for word processing, spreadsheet, and database work.

## OFFICE ASSISTANT

### **Description:**

*The Office Assistant assists with attendance reporting and intervention, student records, enrolling and registering students, and other functions as requested by the Business Manager/Secretary and Principal.*

### **Basic Qualifications:**

1. Ability to interact with people in a professional manner using excellent communication skills.
2. Good secretarial and organizational skills.
3. Ability to use a computer for word processing, spreadsheet, and database work.

## CUSTODIAN

### **Description:**

*The Custodian cleans the school restrooms and classrooms, maintains the yard, does light repairs, and other maintenance duties as requested by the Principal.*

### **Basic Qualifications:**

1. Physical ability to perform tasks needed to clean and maintain facilities and yard.
2. Good organizational skills to plan and perform all required tasks.
3. Ability to understand and follow directions and communicate information to other staff.

The school shall notify the district whenever personnel are hired or leave during the school year by means of written notification attached to its monthly staffing report. A list of current employees and their qualifications is attached as a supporting document to the Charter.

## **Element F: Health and Safety Procedures**

TOLCS shall implement a comprehensive set of health, safety, and risk management policies and procedures. These policies and procedures shall be reviewed annually in consultation with the school's insurance carriers and at a minimum shall address the following topics:

As stated in our Health and Safety Policies, a requirement that all enrolling students and staff provide records documenting immunizations and health screenings to the extent required for enrollment and employment in non-charter public schools, including tuberculin testing of staff at least once every four years, immunization records presented to school staff before a student's enrollment, a physical examination by a medical professional on or before the 90<sup>th</sup> day after a student enters first grade;

As stated in our Health and Safety Policies, screening of enrolled students for vision and hearing at least once every three years following procedures enumerated in Education Code Section 49450, et seq.;

As stated in our Health and Safety Policies, procedures to prevent spread of communicable,

contagious, or infectious diseases and head lice, including instruction in basic recommended procedures, as well as exclusion of students or staff from the classroom, if medically indicated;

As stated in our Health and Safety Policies and Emergency Response Plan, policies and procedures for response to natural disasters and emergencies, including fires, earthquakes, and bomb threats, and emergency procedures practice including monthly fire drills, quarterly earthquake drills, and biannual lockdown drills;

As stated in our Health and Safety Policies, procedures relating to preventing contact with blood-borne pathogens, including use of latex gloves, following the latest medical protocol, and disinfection procedures;

As stated in our Employment and Health and Safety Policies, requirements that instructional and administrative staff receive training in emergency response, including adult and pediatric CPR and First Aid, and maintain current certification; at least one designated staff member will be trained to administer epinephrine with an auto-injector;

As stated in our Health and Safety Policies, policies and procedures relating to the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines, including signed parent/guardian instructions and consent for staff to administer medication, container labeled with student's name and dosage, safekeeping of medication in locked container; at least one epinephrine auto-injector will be available on site for emergencies;

As stated in our Health and Safety Policies, a policy that the school will be housed in a facility that meets California Building Code requirements, as adopted and enforced by the building enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the area in which the charter school is located;

As stated in our Health and Safety Policies, a policy establishing that the school functions as a working and learning environment free of illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons, tobacco, and ENDS;

As stated in our Health and Safety Policies and Employment Policies, a requirement that each employee of the school submit to a criminal background check, which includes fingerprinting, and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Section 44237;

As stated in our Health and Safety Policies, the school provides feminine hygiene products to students without charge;

The school aims to create a healthy school climate through its Anti-Bullying Policy, Discipline Policy, social-emotional learning programs, and conflict resolution procedures;

The school aids families in providing adequate health and preventive care to children by distributing and posting information on how to initiate access to available student mental health services on campus and in the community at least twice per year to families, and it provides health care coverage information and human trafficking prevention information annually.

The school provides each needy pupil, as defined in Education Code Section 49552, one nutritionally adequate free or reduced-price meal, as defined in subdivision (a) of Education Code Section 49553, during each school day.

The school has a Comprehensive School Safety Plan that addresses the health and safety topics listed in Education Code Section 32282 and includes an Emergency Response Plan. The plan is reviewed and updated annually using information from school safety workshops and consultations with local law enforcement, insurance risk manager, and State Fire Marshall's office inspector. These policies and procedures shall be incorporated as appropriate into the school's family and staff handbooks, and they shall be reviewed in an ongoing basis in the school's staff development efforts and governing board

policies.

## **Element G: Means to Achieve Racial/Ethnic Balance Reflective of District**

TOLCS shall implement a student recruitment strategy that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following elements or strategies to attempt to achieve a racial and ethnic balance among students that is reflective of the district:

- An enrollment timeline and process that is scheduled and adopted to include a timeline that allows for a broad-based recruiting and application process, including two open enrollment periods in January and later in the year.
- The development of promotional and informational material that appeals to all of the various racial and ethnic groups represented in the district.
- The appropriate development of promotional and informational materials in Spanish as well as English.
- The distribution of promotional and informational materials to a broad variety of community groups and agencies that serve the various racial, ethnic, and interest groups represented in the district.
- Outreach meetings at several preschools and community events to reach prospective students and parents.
- Advertisement and announcements through a variety of local and regional newspapers, a parenting magazine, and radio.

Although our school enrollment has not reflected the racial and ethnic balance of the district's to date, especially with our Hispanic/Latino enrollment, school staff have been taking purposeful action to achieve this as noted in the section below. These differences in enrollment balance may be partially due to the school's location away from residential areas and its lack of school bus transportation. In addition, since the school is so small, having just one family of a particular race or ethnicity enroll or leave the school can greatly affect our percentage. The school will continue its efforts to enroll a more diverse student population and has a goal of increasing our Hispanic ethnicity enrollment by 1% per year over the next five years. In our previous efforts over the last five years, our Hispanic enrollment has increased from 17.1% in 2015 to 25% in 2019, exceeding our previous goal.

Our Spanish language brochure and information about our open enrollment periods and Open House events have been distributed to Head Start, local preschools, local stores and restaurants, as well as to some medical clinics that have Hispanic clients. We have native and bilingual Spanish-speaking staff and parents who are available on campus daily and at Open House to talk with Spanish-speaking visitors and parents/guardians, and we have a former staff member and parent/guardian working with North Coast Opportunities who is distributing brochures and flyers to local Head Start facilities. We continue to advertise our open enrollment periods and Open House by radio on Spanish-language music programs. Our new school communication app has translation capacity in several different languages, and parents/guardians can select the language they would like to receive their messages in. The school also has translation services for documents available from its subscription with Document Tracking Services. We will persist in our efforts and continue to brainstorm ideas for increasing our Hispanic/Latino enrollment.

## **Element H: Admission Requirements**

TOLCS shall actively recruit a diverse student population from the district and surrounding areas who understand and value the school's mission and are committed to the school's instructional and operational philosophy. Admission to the school shall be open to any resident of the State of California, but preference shall be given to continuing students, applicants residing in the district, and applicants residing in the Frank Zeek Elementary School attendance area. The school shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, creed, sexual orientation, disability, immigration status, or any criteria protected by state or federal law. Notice about Title IX non-discrimination practices, information resources, and uniform complaint processes is posted on the school's website. Prospective students and their parents/guardians shall be briefed regarding the school's instructional and operational philosophy and shall be given a copy or summary of the school's student-related policies.

Social security numbers or portions of numbers shall not be collected from students or their parents/guardians unless otherwise required to do so by state or federal law. Information or documents regarding citizenship or immigration status of students or their family members shall not be collected by the school.

After enrollment and prior to attendance, students and parents/guardians may be expected to satisfy the following, intended to create informed participants who are committed to the school's program and philosophy:

- Attendance at a group information meeting.
- Participation in an interview and family orientation.
- Completion of family and student information packet.
- Completion of a site-developed assessment to ensure appropriate placement.
- Signing of an acknowledgment that specifies the responsibilities of all parties involved.

In addition to enrollment preference for continuing students and those residing in the district, preference may be given to siblings of current students and children of staff, if space is available in the class for which they are eligible. Priority order for preferences is as follows: 1.) continuing students already enrolled and attending TOLCS, 2.) students who reside in Ukiah Unified School District, 3.) students who reside in Frank Zeek Elementary School attendance area, 4.) siblings of current students, 5.) children of TOLCS school staff. TOLCS will hold an open enrollment period each January. If during the initial enrollment period enrollment exceeds capacity for a particular level, final enrollment for each level that is over-enrolled shall be determined by a random lottery, open to the public, and held at the next Charter Board Cabinet meeting following the close of the enrollment period. If enrollment does not exceed capacity, TOLCS may choose to conduct a second enrollment period later in the year. In such a case, the enrollment of those children accepted during the initial period shall be safeguarded. During this second enrollment period, if enrollment for the remaining spaces exceeds capacity, final enrollment for these remaining spaces shall be determined by a random lottery.

Parental involvement is not a requirement for acceptance or continued enrollment at the school.



The school does not discourage a student from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the school for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance of the student or because the student exhibits any of the following characteristics: academically low-achieving, economically disadvantaged, English learner, foster youth, homeless, neglected or delinquent. The school shall not request a student's records or require the parent, guardian, or student to submit the student's records to the school before enrollment. The school shall not encourage a student currently attending the school to disenroll from the school or transfer to another school for any reason (except for suspension or expulsion). (Cal. Ed. Code Section 47605(d)(4)) If the charter school discourages enrollment, requires records before enrollment, or encourages a student to disenroll, a parent or guardian may submit a complaint to the charter school authorizer using the Charter School Complaint Form, which is posted on the school website and is distributed to families inquiring about enrollment, prior to a random lottery, and prior to disenrollment of a pupil.

## **Element I: Financial Audit**

The Beginning Project Board of Directors shall be responsible for contracting and overseeing the preparation and completion of an annual independent audit of the school's financial affairs each fiscal year. The audit will verify the accuracy of the school's financial statements, revenue-related data collection, and reporting practices, and will review the school's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school by an independent auditor who has experience in education finance and school auditing. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in any applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars. It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within six months of the close of the fiscal year and that a copy of the auditor's findings shall be forwarded to the chief financial officer of the Ukiah Unified School District, Mendocino County Office of Education, the State Controller's Office, and the California Department of Education by December 15<sup>th</sup> each year. The school's audit committee, composed of the Charter Board Cabinet and the Business Manager/Secretary, shall review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the school's Board of Directors with recommendations on how to resolve them. The Board shall report to the Ukiah Unified School District on how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved within sixty days of receipt of the audit. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies will be referred to the dispute resolution process contained in the school's Memorandum of Understanding with the school District.

## **Element J: Pupil Suspension and Expulsion**

The TOLCS Montessori environment encourages students to become self-disciplined. A helping approach to discipline is used to encourage volitional, social, and emotional development of each student by allowing choices to be made by the student and by teaching social and emotional skills. When a student's needs are not met, the student may show symptoms often termed "inappropriate behavior." These may include innocent behavior, volitional behavior, psychological outcomes, emotional expression, social need, rule testing, and rebellion. Some of these may be the result of conditions at the student's home or a medical or psychological issue, while others are a matter of developmental level. In any individual case, a student who is disruptive or violent will be removed from the situation and an adult will help the student to find an appropriate activity. Students will be

taught how to meet their own needs and how to handle their emotions in a non-violent way. Through the development of will, knowledge of appropriate behavior, and an environment suited to the student's physical, social, and emotional needs, the student learns to become self-disciplined.

TOLCS shall maintain a comprehensive set of student discipline policies, including a detailed, step-by-step process by which a student may be suspended or expelled. These policies shall be printed and distributed as part of the school's family handbook and shall clearly describe the school's expectations regarding attendance, mutual respect, substance abuse, violence, and safety. Children whose behavior continues to be violent or otherwise disruptive during class will be removed from the classroom, and parents/guardians will be contacted to remove them immediately from the school. Further actions per the following policies for suspension or expulsion will then be considered. The Principal may, pursuant to the school's adopted policies, suspend students who fail to comply with the school's policies at any time. When other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct, or when, due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the pupil causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the pupil or others, the student shall be recommended for expulsion. Students who habitually fail to comply with these policies and/or who present an immediate threat to health and safety may also be suspended and later expelled by the school's Board Cabinet upon recommendation of the Principal and/or Staff Council. The policies shall conform to applicable federal law regarding students with exceptional needs. Prior to expulsion, students shall be accorded due process unless the student's conduct presents an immediate threat to the health or safety of others. The school shall notify the district of any expulsions and shall include suspension and expulsion data in its annual performance report.

## **PUPIL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY**

### **I. Introduction**

This Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy (the "Policy") for Tree of Life Charter School ("TOLCS") has been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students. When the Policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. At the same time, TOLCS intends to provide effective interventions for pupils who engage in acts of problematic behavior to help them change their behavior and avoid exclusion from the school.

Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently amongst all students. A summary of the Policy will be printed and distributed to students and parents/guardians as part of the Family Handbook and will clearly describe discipline expectations, policies, and procedures. The summary shall state that the full Policy is available on request at the school office.

Discipline includes, but is not limited to, advising and counseling students, conferring with parents/guardians, community service, reparations, the use of alternative educational environments, suspension, and expulsion. Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student. For purposes of the Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of reasonable force necessary to protect the employee, students, staff, or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the school has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act ("IDEA") or

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

## **II. Suspension**

### **A. Definition**

Suspension is the temporary removal of a pupil from class instruction for adjustment or disciplinary reasons. Suspension does not mean any of the following:

- Reassignment to another education program or class at the school where the pupil will receive continuing instruction for the length of day prescribed by the school for pupils of the same grade level;
- Referral to a certificated employee designated by the Principal to advise pupils;
- Removal from the class, but without reassignment to another class for the remainder of the class period without sending the pupil to the Principal or designee.

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

The school shall consider suspension from school only when other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct or where the student’s presence would constitute a danger to persons or property or seriously disrupt the educational process.

### **B. Authority**

A teacher may suspend a student only from his/her classroom for the day of the suspension plus the following school day. The Principal or his/her designee may suspend a student from class, classes, or the school for a period not to exceed five days. The Principal or his/her designee may extend a student’s suspension pending final decision by the Board of Directors of TOLCS on a recommendation for expulsion. Such extended suspension should not exceed ten days, unless specific procedural safeguards are met. Those are identified below.

On a recommendation for expulsion, the Board of Directors may suspend a special education student being considered for expulsion in accordance with the laws relating to expulsion of special education students.

A pupil may not be suspended or expelled for any of the acts enumerated in this Policy unless the act is related to school activity or school attendance of Tree of Life Charter School. A pupil may be suspended or expelled for acts that are enumerated in this Policy and related to school activity or attendance that occur at any time, including, but not limited to any of the following:

- While on school grounds
- While going to or coming from school
- During the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus
- During, or while going to or coming from a school sponsored activity
- All acts related to school activity or school attendance occurring within the school

### C. Grounds

The Principal may use his/her discretion to provide alternatives to suspension or expulsion recommendations that are age appropriate and designed to address and correct the student's specific misbehavior. Alternatively, students may be suspended or recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts (whether completed, attempted, or threatened) when it is determined the pupil (Education Code 48900):

- Caused physical injury to another person or willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense
- Possessed, sold or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from an authorized certificated school employee, with the Principal's or designee's written concurrence
- Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of, any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code sections 11053-11058 (including, but not limited to, opiates, hallucinogenic substances, stimulants, depressants and narcotic drugs), alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind
- Unlawfully offered, arranged or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented the same as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant
- Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion
- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property
- Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property (as used in this policy, "school property" includes but is not limited to electronic files and databases)
- Possessed or used tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, betel, and e-cigarettes, whether or not they contain tobacco
- Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity
- Unlawfully possessed or offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 11014.5
- Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties

- A pupil enrolled in kindergarten or in grades 1 through 3 shall not be suspended for any of the acts enumerated in the previous bullet, and the previous bullet point shall not constitute grounds for a pupil enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12 to be recommended for expulsion.
- Knowingly received stolen school property or private property
- Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e., a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm
- Committed a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code sections 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a, or 289, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code section 243.4
- Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness
- Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma
- Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing. “Hazing” means a method of initiation or pre-initiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current or prospective pupil. “Hazing” does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- Engaged in an act of bullying. “Bullying” means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a pupil or group of pupils directed toward one or more pupils that has or can be reasonably predicated to have the effect of one or more the of the following:
  - Placing a reasonable pupil(s) in fear of harm to that pupil(s)’ person or property;
  - Causing a reasonable pupil to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health;
  - Causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance;
  - Causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
- An electronic act, for purposes of the immediately preceding paragraph, means the transmission, by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including but not limited to, any of the following:
  - A message, text, sound, or image.
  - A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
    - Posting to or creating a burn page. “Burn page” means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed above.

- Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed above. “Credible impersonation” means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.
  - Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed above. “False profile” means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile.
- An act of cyber sexual bullying.
  - For purposes of this section, “cyber sexual bullying” means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a pupil to another pupil or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described above. A photograph or other visual recording shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.
  - Cyber sexual bullying does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.
- An electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.
- A “reasonable pupil” means a pupil, including, but not limited to, an exceptional needs pupil, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with his or her exceptional needs.
- Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property
- Committed sexual harassment
- Caused or participated in an act of hate violence
- Intentionally harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder, and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment
- Discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, and/or bullied any person or groups of persons based on the following actual or perceived characteristics: disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, or association with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics
- A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, pursuant to this policy, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury may be recommended for expulsion.

The above list is not exhaustive, and, depending upon the offense, a pupil may be suspended or

recommended for expulsion for misconduct not specified above.

#### **D. Procedures Required to Suspend**

##### **Step One**

All requests for student suspension are to be reported to and processed by the Principal. The Principal shall investigate the incident and determine whether or not it merits suspension.

*Searches:* In order to investigate an incident, a student's attire,<sup>1</sup> personal property, vehicle, or school property, including books, desks, school lockers/cubbies, computers, and other electronic devices, may be searched by a Principal or designee who has reasonable suspicion that a student has violated or is violating the law or the rules of the school. Illegally possessed items shall be confiscated and turned over to the police.

##### **Step Two**

Unless a student poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, a suspension will be preceded by an informal conference between the Principal or designee and the student, in which the student shall be orally informed of the reason for the suspension, the evidence against him, the other means of correction that were attempted before the suspension, and be given the opportunity to present informal proof of his/her side of the story. (Education Code 48911) If the student poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, the informal conference will be held within two school days, unless the pupil waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason, including, but not limited to, hospitalization or detention in a correctional facility. In such case, the conference will be held as soon as the student is physically able to return to school. If a student is suspended without the informal conference, both the student and the parent/guardian will be notified of a student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the time of the suspension, a school employee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone, communication app, or in person to inform him/her of the suspension and the reasons therefor. The parent/guardian will be called to remove the student from the school immediately. The student will be appropriately supervised until the student leaves campus with the parent/guardian or designee. A suspended student will not be returned to class during the period of suspension without the approval of the teacher of the class and the Principal. A student suspended from class will not be placed in another regular class during the period of suspension. (Education Code 48910)

The teacher of any class from which a student is suspended may require the suspended student to complete any assignments and tests missed during the suspension. (Education Code 48913) The student may be placed on temporary Independent Study during the period of suspension.

##### **Step Three**

The Principal or designee determines the appropriate length of the suspension. When suspensions do

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<sup>1</sup> This does not include removing clothing to permit visual inspection of the under clothing, breasts, buttocks or genitalia of the pupil.

not include a recommendation for expulsion, they shall not exceed five consecutive school days per suspension.

#### **Step Four**

The Principal or designee fills out a Notice of Suspension Form, a copy of which will be sent or hand-delivered to the student's parent/guardian and to the student. A copy of this form is also placed in the student's cumulative file at the school. The Notice of Suspension Form shall state the fact of suspension, its duration, and the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may state the date and time when the student may return to school. (Education Code 48914) The notice shall also state that, if desired by the parent/guardian, a prompt meeting or hearing will be held at which the suspension may be discussed and at which the student may be present and afforded an opportunity to present informal proof of his/her side of the case. Additionally, if the school officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request the parent/guardian to respond to such requests without delay. The student may not be denied readmission solely because the parent/guardian failed to attend the conference.

#### **Step Five**

The Principal determines whether the offense warrants a police report. The Principal will report certain offenses to law enforcement authorities in accordance with Education Code section 48902.

When the Principal releases a minor pupil to a peace officer for the purpose of removing the minor from the school premises, the Principal shall take immediate steps to notify the parent, guardian, or responsible relative of the minor regarding the release of the minor to the officer and regarding the place to which the minor is reportedly being taken, unless the minor has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse.

#### **Step Six**

The Principal may require the student and his/her parent/guardian to sign a contract that states the conditions that the student is expected to meet while at the school. Copies of the signed contract are kept by the school and given to the parent/guardian.

### **Special Education and Section 504 Student Suspensions**

The Principal or designee may suspend a student with a disability for up to ten consecutive or cumulative school days for a single incident of misconduct, and for up to twenty school days in a school year, as long as the suspension(s) does not constitute a change in placement as defined in 34 CFR 300.536. (Education Code 48903; 34 CFR 300.530)

TOLCS shall determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a pattern of removals of a student from his/her current educational placement for disciplinary reasons constitutes a change of placement. A change of placement shall be deemed to have occurred under any of the following circumstances:



1. The removal is for more than 10 consecutive or cumulative school days; or
2. The student has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because of all the following:
  - a. The series of removals total more than 10 school days in a school year;
  - b. The student's behavior is substantially similar to his/her behavior in previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals; and
  - c. Additional factors, such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the student has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another, indicate a change of placement. (34 CFR 300.536)

If the removal has been determined to be a change of placement as specified in items #1 or #2 above, the student's IEP team shall determine the appropriate educational services to be provided. (34 CFR 300.530)

Any student suspended for more than ten school days in the same school year shall continue to receive services during the term of the suspension. School personnel, in consultation with at least one of the student's teachers, shall determine the extent to which services are needed as provided in 34 CFR 300.101(a), so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum in another setting and to progress toward meeting the goals as set out in his/her IEP. (20 USC 1412(a)(1)(A); 34 CFR 300.530)

TOLCS may unilaterally place a student with a disability in an appropriate interim alternative educational setting ("IAES") for up to 45 school days, without regard to whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, when the student commits one of the following acts while at school, going to or from school, or at a school-related function:

1. Carries or possesses a weapon. "Weapon" refers to a "dangerous weapon" as defined in 18 USC 930 and includes any device which is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. The term does not include a pocketknife with a blade of less than 2 ½ inches in length.
2. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs;
3. Sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance as identified in 21 USC 812(c), Schedules I-V; or
4. Inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person. "Serious bodily injury" is defined as bodily injury which involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. (18 USC 1365)

The student's IAES shall be determined by his/her IEP team. (20 USC 1415(k)(1)(G); 34 CFR 300.531)

On the date the decision to take disciplinary action is made, the parents/guardians of the student shall be notified of the LEA's decision and provided the notice of procedural safeguards pursuant to 34 CFR 300.504. (20 USC 1415(k)(1)(H); 34 CFR 300.530)

A student who has been removed from his/her current placement because of dangerous behavior shall receive services to the extent necessary to allow him/her to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in his/her IEP. As appropriate, the student shall also receive a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. (20 USC 1415(k)(1)(D); 34 CFR 300.530)

## **Manifestation Determination**

The following procedural safeguards shall apply: (1) when a student is suspended for more than 10 consecutive school days; (2) when a series of removals of a student constitutes a pattern; and/or (3) when a change of placement of a student is contemplated due to a violation of the school's code of conduct:

1. Notice: On the date the decision to take disciplinary action is made, the parents/guardians of the student shall be notified of the decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice pursuant to 34 CFR 300.504. (20 USC 1415(k)(1)(H); 34 CFR 300.530)
2. Manifestation Determination: Immediately if possible, but in no case later than 10 school days after the date the decision to take disciplinary action is made, a determination shall be made on whether the student's conduct in question was a manifestation of his/her disability. (20 USC 1415(k)(1)(E); 34 CFR 300.530)

The school, the student's parent/guardian, and relevant members of the IEP team (as determined by the parent/guardian and the school) shall convene a manifestation determination meeting and review all relevant information in the student's file, including the student's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents/guardians, and determine whether the conduct in question was either of the following:

- a. Caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability; or
- b. A direct result of the school's failure to implement the student's IEP, in which case the school shall take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies.

If, at the manifestation determination meeting, the team determines that a condition in either #a or #b above was met, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability. (20 USC 1415(l)(1)(E); 34 CFR 300.530)

3. Determination that Behavior Is a Manifestation of the Student's Disability: When the conduct has been determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, the IEP team shall conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless a functional behavioral assessment had been conducted before the occurrence of the behavior that resulted in the change of placement, and shall implement a behavioral intervention plan for the student. If a behavior intervention plan has already been developed, the IEP team shall review the behavioral intervention plan and modify it as necessary to address the behavior. (20 USC 1415(k)(1)(F); 34 CFR 300.530)

The student shall be returned to the placement from which he/she was removed, unless the parent/guardian and school agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan. (20 USC 1415(k)(1)(F); 34 CFR 300.530)

4. Determination that Behavior Is Not a Manifestation of the Student's Disability: If, at the manifestation determination meeting, the team determines that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of his/her disability, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the procedures for students without disabilities. (20 USC 1415(k)(1)(D); 34 CFR 300.530)

## **Due Process Appeals**

If the parent/guardian disagrees with any TOLCS decision regarding placement under 34 CFR 300.530

(suspension and removal for dangerous circumstances) or 34 CFR 300.531 (interim alternative placement), or the manifestation determination, he/she may appeal the decision by requesting a due process hearing. The school may request a hearing if it believes that maintaining the student's current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others. In order to request a hearing, the requesting party shall file a complaint pursuant to 34 CFR 300.507 and 300.508(a) and (b). (20 USC 1415(k)(3); 34 CFR 300.532) The party filing the due process complaint has the burden of persuasion by a preponderance of the evidence. (Schaffer v. Weast (2005) 546 U.S. 49, 56-62.)

Whenever a hearing is requested as specified above, the parent/guardian or the school shall have an opportunity for an expedited due process hearing. If the student's parent/guardian or the school has initiated a due process hearing as detailed above, the student shall remain in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the 45-day time period, whichever occurs first, unless the parent/guardian and school agree otherwise. ((20 USC 1415(k)(4); 34 CFR 300.533)

## **Readmission**

Readmission procedures for students with disabilities shall be the same as those used for all students. Upon readmission, the school shall convene an IEP team meeting

## **III. Expulsion**

### **A. Definition**

Expulsion means involuntary disenrollment from the charter school.

### **B. Authority**

A student may be expelled either by the TOLCS Board following a hearing before it or by the Board upon a recommendation of expulsion by an Administrative Panel or Hearing Officer. The Panel or Officer may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense. The Board may appoint an impartial Administrative Panel composed of three or more certificated personnel, none of whom will be members of the Board or on the staff of the school in which the student is enrolled. Alternatively, the Board may contract with the county hearing officer or with the Office of Administrative Hearings of the State of California for a hearing officer.

The Board, upon voting to expel a pupil, may suspend the enforcement of the expulsion order for a period of not more than one calendar year and may, as a condition of the suspension of enforcement, assign the pupil to a school, class or program that is deemed appropriate for the rehabilitation of the pupil. The Board will take into account the student's previous behavior, seriousness of the misconduct, the student's attitude toward the misconduct and willingness to follow a rehabilitation program. The rehabilitation program to which the pupil is assigned may provide for the involvement of the pupil's parent or guardian in his or her child's education in ways that are specified in the rehabilitation program. A parent or guardian's refusal to participate in the rehabilitation program shall not be considered in the Board's determination as to whether the pupil has satisfactorily completed the rehabilitation program. During this period, the student will be on probationary status. The suspension

of the expulsion order may be revoked by the Principal or designee if the student commits any of the acts listed in “Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion” or violates any of the school’s rules or regulations governing student conduct. When a suspended expulsion is revoked, the student will be expelled under the terms of the original suspension order. Suspension of an expulsion order will not affect the time period and requirements for the filing of an appeal of the expulsion order with the County Board. The Principal or designee will send written notice of any decision to suspend the enforcement of an expulsion order during a period of probation to the student and parent/guardian.

**C. Grounds for Expulsion**

**Category I Expulsions – Mandatory Recommendation for Expulsion**

The Principal shall immediately suspend, and recommend for expulsion, a student who has committed one or more of the following acts:

- Possessing, selling or otherwise furnishing a firearm when a school employee verifies firearm possession, unless the student obtained prior written permission to possess the firearm from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by the Principal or his/her designee
- Brandishing a knife at another person
- Unlawfully selling a controlled substance
- Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery
- Possession of an explosive

**Category II Expulsions – Recommendation for Expulsion Required, Unless Inappropriate Under the Circumstances**

A student who has committed one of the following acts of misconduct must be recommended for expulsion, unless the Principal determines that expulsion should not be recommended under the circumstances or that an alternative means of correction would address the conduct.

- Causing physical injury to another person, except in self-defense
- Possession of any knife, explosive or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student
- Unlawful possession of any controlled substance, except for the first offense for the possession of not more than one ounce of marijuana, other than concentrated cannabis or for possession of over-the-counter medication for use by the pupil for medical purposes or medication prescribed for the pupil by a physician
- Robbery or extortion
- Assault or battery on a school employee

**Category III Expulsions – Discretionary Expulsion Recommendation**

In the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee, any act that warrants suspension may warrant expulsion. Additionally, a student may be expelled for misconduct that is not listed above if the acts disrupt and/or present ongoing health and/or safety concerns, or the student has repeatedly engaged in the misconduct.

#### **D. Procedures to Expel a Student**

##### **Step One**

The Principal investigates the incident and determines whether the offense results in a suspension. If so, the Principal follows the procedures to suspend the student as outlined above. The Principal and/or Staff Council may recommend a student's expulsion to the TOLCS Board. A student may be expelled only by the Board. The Board will expel, as required by law, any student found to have committed certain offenses listed in "Mandatory Recommendation and Mandatory Expulsion." The Board may also order a student expelled for any of the acts listed in "Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion" based on finding either or both of the following (Education Code 48915):

1. That other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct;
2. That due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others.

##### **Step Two**

At the discretion of the Principal, a student's suspension may be extended pending expulsion. If such extended suspension exceeds 10 days, and for any suspension exceeding 10 days, the following procedures must be followed: 1) the Principal shall provide timely, written notice of the charges against the student and an explanation of the student's basic rights; 2) the school will provide a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer within a reasonable number of days at which the student has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil has the right to bring legal counsel. At this hearing, it will be determined whether the presence of the student at the school would cause a danger to persons or property or a threat of disrupting the instructional process.

If the proposed extended suspension is under 10 days, a meeting is held within a reasonable number of school days of the student's suspension to extend the suspension. The student and his/her parent/guardian are invited to attend this meeting with the Principal or his/her designee. The student's teacher and other school personnel may also be present.

At this meeting, the offense and the repercussions are discussed. An extension of the suspension may be granted only if the Principal or his/her designee has determined, after the meeting, that the presence of the student at the school would cause a danger to persons or property or a threat of disrupting the instructional process. (Education Code 48911) If the student has committed an offense that requires a mandatory expulsion recommendation, this is discussed so that it is understood by all parties. The purpose of the meeting is to decide upon the extension of the suspension order and may be held in conjunction with the initial meeting with the parents after the suspension.

##### **Step Three**

The school shall send a letter to the student and parent/guardian regarding the expulsion hearing. The expulsion hearing shall be held no later than 30 school days of the date that expulsion is recommended, unless a brief extension is requested by the student or his/her parent/guardian. (Education Code 48918) The student is entitled to one postponement of the expulsion hearing for a period of not more than 30

calendar days. The request for postponement must be in writing. If the Board finds it impracticable to comply with these time requirements for conducting an expulsion hearing, the Principal or designee may, for good cause, extend the time period by an additional five school days. Reasons for the extension will be included as part of the record when the expulsion hearing is held.

The letter shall be sent via certified mail to the student and his/her parent/guardian to the address reflected in the pupil's student file at least 10 calendar days before the date of the hearing. The letter shall notify the student and parent/guardian when and where the expulsion hearing will take place and the rights of the student with respect to the hearing, including:

- The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
- A statement of the facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
- A copy of the school's disciplinary rules relating to the alleged violation;
- Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at the school to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment (Education Code 48915.1);
- The opportunity for the student or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person and/or to employ and be represented by counsel or an advocate;
- The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
- The opportunity to confront and question witnesses who testify at the hearing;
- The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf, including witness testimony.

A student and parent/guardian may request a waiver of the expulsion hearing and expulsion timelines. If the waiver is granted, the student and parent/guardian accept the description of the incident as an accurate charge and agree that the offense is grounds for expulsion under the Education Code. The expulsion recommendation and waiver will then be submitted to the Board for review and final action. The student and parent/guardian retain their right to meet with the Board in closed session. The student will be notified in writing of the final Board action.

#### **Step Four**

The Principal shall maintain documents that may be used at the hearing and make them available for review by the student and/or his/her parent/guardian. These papers may include, but are not limited to, the following: A record of the student's attendance and grades, a record of previous infractions, a statement of the facts surrounding the case made by a school employee, a statement of the facts surrounding the case made by a witness, a law enforcement agency's report, and any other relevant matter.

#### **Step Five**

An expulsion hearing shall be held before the TOLCS Board in a session closed to the public unless the student or parent/guardian requests in writing at least five days prior to the hearing that the hearing be a public meeting. Whether the expulsion hearing is held in closed or public session, the Board may meet in closed session to deliberate whether the student should be expelled. If the Board admits any other person to the closed session, the parent/guardian, the student, and/or the counsel of the student will also be allowed to attend the closed session. A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained

by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and a complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made. (Education Code 48918)

While the technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Principal and/or Staff Council to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense. Findings of fact shall be based solely on evidence produced at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay evidence, although sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses whose disclosure of their identity or live testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm. In cases where a search of a student's person or property has occurred, evidence describing the reasonableness of the search will be included in the hearing record.

If, due to a written request by the expelled pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code section 48900, a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public. Alternative procedures such as a videotaped deposition or contemporaneous examination in another location communicated to the hearing room would be accepted. The complainant may request that the hearing be postponed for one school day in order to accommodate his/her physical, mental, or emotional needs. The complainant will receive notice five days prior to the scheduled testimony at the hearing. He/she will also be entitled to have two adult support persons of his/her choosing present during his/her testimony. All participants will be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Anyone being disruptive could be removed at the discretion of the presiding hearing officer. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness's prior sexual conduct is to be presumed inadmissible unless extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard, as determined by the presiding hearing officer. Whenever an allegation is made of sexual assault or sexual battery, the complaining witness and accused student are to immediately refrain from personal, telephone, or social media contact with each other for the duration of the expulsion process.

Before commencing an expulsion hearing, the Board may issue subpoenas for the personal appearance at the hearing of any person who actually witnessed the infraction at the request of the Principal, designee, or student. After the hearing has begun, the Board, the hearing officer, or administrative panel may issue such subpoenas at the request of the student, the County Superintendent of Schools, or designee. All subpoenas will be issued in accordance with the Code of Civil Procedures 1985-1985.2 and enforced in accordance with Government Code 11525. (Education Code 48918(I)) Any objection raised by the Principal, designee, or student to the issuance of subpoenas may be considered by the Board in closed session, or in open session if so requested by the student before the meeting has begun. The Board's decision in response to such an objection will be final and binding. A subpoena will not be issued if it would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of harm by testifying at the hearing. However, the witness may be compelled to testify by means of a sworn declaration.

### **Step Six**

The decision of the TOLCS Board of Directors shall be in the form of a written recommendation, with findings of fact, to the Board of Directors who will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The final decision by the Board shall be made within 10 days following the conclusion of the hearing,

unless the student requests in writing that the decision be postponed. If the Board does not meet on a weekly basis, its decision on whether to expel a student will be made within 40 school days after the date of the student's removal from the school for the incident for which the recommendation for expulsion is made, unless the student requests in writing that the decision be postponed. The final action to expel must be taken by the Board at a public meeting. If the Board decides not to recommend expulsion, the pupil shall be reinstated and permitted to return to classroom programs. The decision not to recommend expulsion shall be final.

### **Step Seven**

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

- Notice of the specific offense committed by the student;
- Notice of the right to file an appeal of the expulsion to the Mendocino County Board of Education within 30 days of the Board's decision to expel.
- Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status within the charter school

Within 30 days of the decision to expel, the Principal shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the student's district of residence, the Mendocino County Office of Education, and Ukiah Unified School District (if different than the student's district of residence). This notice shall include the student's name and the specific expellable offense committed by the student.

### **Step Eight**

Expelled students are responsible for seeking alternative education programs, including but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence. The Board will refer expelled students to a program of study that is appropriately prepared to accommodate students who exhibit discipline problems, is not provided at a comprehensive elementary, middle, or high school, and is not housed at the school site attended by the student at the time of suspension.

An expelled student with a disability will continue to be provided special education services in a different setting, as determined by the IEP team, to the extent necessary to allow him/her to participate in the general education curriculum and progress toward meeting goals set out in his/her IEP.

### **Step Nine**

The school shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the school site. Such records shall be made available for the District's review upon request, and it will report the data to the State Department of Education.

Prior to the suspension or expulsion of any student, the Principal or designee shall notify appropriate city or county law enforcement authorities of any acts of assault with a deadly weapon or possession of a firearm which may have violated Penal Code 245. (Education Code 48902) Within one school day after a suspension or expulsion of a student, the Principal or designee shall notify appropriate city or county law enforcement authorities, by telephone or other appropriate means, of any act by the student



which may violate Education Code 48900(d) or (d), relating to the possession, use, offering, or sale of controlled substances, alcohol, or intoxicants of any kind. When the Principal or designee reports a criminal act committed by a school age individual with exception needs, he/she is required to transmit copies of the student's special education and disciplinary records for consideration by the authorities to whom he/she reported the criminal act. When sending records for this purpose, the Principal or designee must comply with all FERPA requirements. (Education Code 48902)

The school is required to report to the County Superintendent of Schools when any special education student has been expelled or suspended for more than ten school days. The report shall include the student's name, last known address, and the reason for the action. The County Superintendent will review the reports and determine whether either the interest of the student or the welfare of the state may need further examination. If so, the County Superintendent shall bring the reports to the attention of the TOLCS Board and the County Board of

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

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school district or charter school shall be in the sole discretion of the Board of Directors or its designee following a meeting with the Principal and the pupil and parent/guardian to determine whether the pupil has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the pupil poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Principal shall make a recommendation to the Board of Directors following the meeting regarding his/her determination. The pupil's readmission is also contingent upon the school's capacity and any other admission requirements in effect at the time the student seeks admission or readmission.

## **Element K: Retirement System**

Staff at TOLCS will participate in the federal social security system and will have access to other school-sponsored retirement plans according to policies developed by the Board of Directors and adopted as the school's employee policies. The school has elected to participate in the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) and Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and coordinates such participation, as appropriate, with the social security system. All certificated staff must participate in STRS, unless they were previously employed in a classified position, contributing to PERS, and elect to remain with PERS.

## **Element L: Attendance Alternatives**

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

## **Element M: Description of Employee Rights**

Employees of TOLCS will have the right to bargain collectively, through the process described in State law AB 631. For purposes of collective bargaining and EERA, TOLCS will be the sole employer of the charter school's employees. As the employer, TOLCS has the right to establish the maximum number of hours its employees may be expected to work, as well as the maximum cost of employee benefits payable by TOLCS. The maximum number of employee work hours will be described in the personnel policies of the charter school and the employment agreements. Paid sick leaves, maternity/paternity leave, personal leaves, and other non-paid leaves available to employees are detailed in the employee handbook. The maximum number of unused days of sick leave that may be carried forward from one school year to the next and the policy for pay out of unused personal time are also detailed in the employee handbook. A maximum of ten (10) unused days of sick leave may be carried forward from one school year to the next. Sick leave time will not be cashed out upon termination of employment. Unused personal leave days may not be carried forward from one school year to the next, and will be paid out at the end of each school year. In the case of termination of employment before the end of the school year, personal leave time paid out will be pro-rated.

Any employees who were employed by the Ukiah Unified School District prior to employment with TOLCS shall have no return rights to the Ukiah Unified School District and do not continue to earn service credit with the District while employed at TOLCS.

## **Element N: Dispute Resolution Process**

TOLCS Board of Directors shall maintain policies and processes for airing and resolving internal disputes including Uniform Complaint Procedures and Conflict Resolution and Problem Solving Procedures.

Briefly, at the first level, any person expressing a complaint relating to a program activity, a possible violation of federal or state law, or the school's policies is encouraged to discuss the matter with the individual allegedly responsible for the inappropriate activity, or to discuss the matter with the Principal within three working days of the alleged act. If such a discussion does not resolve the matter or a discussion appears to be impractical, the complaint should be submitted in writing to the Principal with a copy to the school's Board within five working days of the alleged incident or knowledge of the incident. Within five working days of the receipt of the written complaint, the Principal will respond in writing with a copy to the school's Board. At the second level, if dissatisfied with the response, the complainant should contact the Board in writing with a copy to the Principal within three working days. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Board will investigate and determine if inappropriate activity has occurred. Within seven working days after receipt of the complaint, the Board will respond in writing to the complainant and will state whether or not inappropriate activity occurred and what steps will be undertaken to resolve the problem. At the third level, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution of the complaint by the Board, the complainant may wish to contact a state or national agency, and the school will terminate the internal complaint procedure.

In cases of alleged unlawful discrimination or failure to comply with state and/or federal laws, the school will follow its Uniform Complaint Procedures, which are posted in the office, on the school website, and are included in the school's family handbook.

All disputes between the charter school and the authorizing school district shall be resolved pursuant to the dispute resolution language contained in the Memorandum of Understanding between the parties, as it may be amended from time to time.

## **Element O: Labor Relations**

For purposes of collective bargaining and EERA, TOLCS will be the sole employer of the charter school's employees.

## **Element P: The Procedures to Be Used If the Charter School Closes**

While it is the intent of The Beginning Project to operate Tree of Life Charter School throughout the five-year renewal period, it is recognized that consideration of procedures for closing the school are required by law. It is the responsibility of the Board of TOLCS to make such a decision at a publicly-noticed meeting. The agenda item will include the reason for the school's closure and the anticipated date of the closure. Every effort shall be made to ensure that the closure occurs at the end of an academic year.

The California Department of Education, Mendocino County Office of Education, and all districts of student residence shall receive information including, but not limited to:

- Charter school name, charter number, and CDS code

- Date of closure action

- Effective date of closure

- Reason for closure

Parents/guardians and students of the charter school shall be notified as soon as possible when it appears that closure is imminent. The notification shall include information on assistance in transferring the student to another appropriate school and a process for the transfer of all student records. Parents/guardians shall also be provided with information about the closure notice, grade reports, discipline records, immunization records, transcripts, and other related information to support transfer to another school.

Representatives of the Beginning Project and TOLCS shall establish a process to transfer records to other agencies or schools as required, including provisions for the Beginning Project to maintain all school records, including financial and attendance records, upon the school's closure.

The Beginning Project shall be responsible for an independent audit of TOLCS to be completed within six months of the school's closure. The audit shall be used to determine the net assets or net liabilities of the school, including cash and accounts receivable and an inventory of property, equipment, and

supplies. It shall also include an accounting of the school's liabilities, findings or other investigations, loans, and unpaid staff compensation. The audit shall also assess the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to TOLCS.

The Beginning Project shall be responsible for submitting any required year-end financial reports to the California Department of Education and Ukiah Unified School District in the form and time frame required and as soon as possible after the closure action, but no later than the required deadline for reporting for the fiscal year.

Upon completion of the closeout audit, the Beginning Project Board shall develop a plan for the repayment of any liabilities or the disbursement of any remaining assets of TOLCS, including the liquidation of assets to pay off any outstanding liabilities and the return of any restricted assets to their source. The Beginning Project may transfer the school's net assets to another public agency.

## **Element Q. Likelihood Petition Will Successfully Implement the Program of the Charter**

TOLCS is a well-established school and has been implementing the program of the charter since fall of 2000 under the direction of a Montessori-trained administrator, a local school governing board, and a non-profit oversight board. The school currently is in administrator transition, with the future administrator receiving a full year of practical training before assuming her new position. Below is a description of the education, work experience, credentials, degrees, and certifications of the individuals comprising the administration and governance of TOLCS.

### **Current Administrators**

Celeste Beck, Principal

Education/training: B.S. Biology, University of California, Riverside; Montessori Primary, Elementary, Erdkinder, Administrator Training, Montessori World Education Institute and North American Montessori Teachers Association; Child Care Center Supervisor; CA Multiple Subject CLAD Teaching Credential with Supplemental Science; CSDC Leadership Institute; El Dorado Charter SELPA Leadership Academy

Experience: Founder/Director, Butterfly Montessori School (preschool and elementary), Mariposa, CA; Montessori teacher, Merced Montessori School, Merced, CA; director and teacher, New Morning Montessori School, Ukiah, CA, expanded preschool from half-time to full-time program, founded and taught elementary class; teacher/director, New School of Ukiah, Ukiah, CA; private piano instruction; infant/toddler observation class instructor, Ukiah, CA; Girl Scout Leader; co-founder, teacher, principal, Tree of Life Charter School, Ukiah, CA

Stacy Strauss, Assistant Principal

Education/training: B.F.A. Ceramics, Kansas State University; M. Ed., Montessori, Loyola College; Primary and Elementary Montessori Training, Montessori Institute Northwest, AMI, Montessori World Education Institute; CA Multiple Subject CLAD Teaching Credential

Experience: elementary teacher, Tree of Life Charter School, Ukiah, CA; preschool teacher, Rainbow Bridge Montessori School, Cotati, CA; substitute special education assistant, Multnomah Education Service District, Portland, OR; summer zoo camp program counselor, Washington Park Zoo, Portland, OR; outdoor school field instructor, Multnomah Education Service District, Portland, OR

### **Tree of Life Charter Board Cabinet**

Anthony Esserman Melville, Staff Representative

Education/training: B.A. Music with Education emphasis, Sonoma State University; Montessori Primary and Lower Elementary Certificates; CA Multiple Subject Teaching Credential; CA Single Subject Teaching Credential in General Science and Music

Experience: elementary and secondary teacher, Tree of Life Charter School, Ukiah, CA; teacher/principal, Black Oak Montessori Charter School, Ukiah, CA; preschool teacher, Casa Montessori School, Napa, CA; teacher, Melville Montessori School, Willits, CA; board member, KZYY&Z Radio Station, Philo, CA; co-owner and operator, Mentoring for Understanding and Support in Education, Ukiah, CA

Caitlin Etoh, Community-at-Large Representative

Education/training: B.A. Journalism, Lincoln University of Missouri

Experience: program director, Boys and Girls Clubs of Sonoma/Marin, Healdsburg, CA; therapeutic skills coach, Redwood Children's Services, Ukiah, CA; children's ministry director, Legacy Church, Ukiah, CA; instructional assistant and substitute teacher, Tree of Life Charter School, Ukiah, CA; substitute teacher, Ukiah Unified School District, Ukiah, CA; freelance writer, Ukiah Daily Journal, Ukiah, CA; youth director, Family Harvest Church, William AZ; substitute teacher, Williams Unified School District, Williams, AZ; staff, Lincoln Educational Access Program, Jefferson City, MO; staff, Youthrock712 Teen Ministries, Jefferson City, MO; copy editor, The Clarion, Jefferson City, MO

Linda Dawn Lukas, Parent Representative

Education/training: A.A. English, Mendocino College; B.A. English, San Francisco State University; M.A. English Composition and Rhetoric, Portland State University; SFSU certificate in teaching post-secondary reading

Experience: 14 years college teaching experience in English; parent of currently attending Tree of Life Charter School student

Autumn Johns, Parent Representative

Education/training: A.S. Child Development, Mendocino College; A.S. Business Management, Mendocino College; A.S. Business Office Technology: Administrative Assistant, Mendocino College; B.S. Business Management, Western Governors University

Experience: small business owner; staff assistant for Mendocino County Department of Environmental Health; preschool teacher for MCOE State Preschool and NCO Head Start; education specialist for NCO Head Start; revenue accountant for North Coast Opportunities; Tree of Life Parent Council Representative 2015-2017

Tonia Widler, Community-at-Large Representative

Education: B.A. Mathematics; M.S. Computer Science

Experience: 25+ years teaching at Mendocino College; served as Academic Senate President and attended Mendocino College Board meetings

Gideon Hupp, Student Representative

Education: student at Tree of Life Charter School for 7 years

Experience: student council representative 4 semesters

### **The Beginning Project Board of Directors**

David Smith-Ferri, President

Education/training: B.A. Philosophy, Boston College; M.S.W., University of Washington

Experience: social worker, St. Joseph's Children's Services, Brooklyn, NY; director of Carlson Leadership and Public Service Office, University of Washington, Seattle, WA; grantwriter, Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Healdsburg, CA

Tai Milder, Secretary

Education/training: B.A. Political Science, U.C. Berkeley; J.D., U.C. Berkeley; Member, California State Bar

Experience: trial attorney, Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice; other legal experience with law firms and state agencies; The Beginning Project Representative on Tree of Life Charter Board Cabinet

Tom Milder, Treasurer

Education/training: B.A. Social Science, California Polytechnic State University; Probation Office Core Academy; Supervisor Core Academy; PC 832 Peace Officer certification; multiple training certificates in a variety of areas, including childhood and adolescent development and pre-natal drug exposure

Experience: Supervising Deputy Probation Officer, San Luis Obispo County Probation Department; supervise multiple school-based probation officers; work with school district at-risk coordinators and foster care liaisons; part-time instructor for Center for Family Focused Practice through UC Davis Extension; Community Foundation of Mendocino County through Petite Scholarship Fund

Ben Milder, Board Member

Education/training: B.A., Willamette University

Experience: Senior Vice-President, Public Policy Director, Burness Communications, Bethesda, MD; chair, Burness Communications Charitable Committee; founder, Ryan and Collin Petite Memorial Scholarship (benefiting graduating seniors of Ukiah-area high schools); 20+ years professional experience working with leading national philanthropies, nonprofits, and federal and state governments

### **Element R. Geographic and Site Limitations**

TOLCS will operate a single charter school within the geographic jurisdiction of the Ukiah Unified School District. The school is located on property owned by the State of California and managed by the 12<sup>th</sup> District Agricultural Association at 241 Ford Rd. in Ukiah at the north end of the Redwood Empire Fairground. Facilities include a large building with two classrooms, two meeting rooms, a small kitchen, storage rooms, restrooms, and additional separate restroom building, as well as land leased from the 12<sup>th</sup> District Agricultural Association. Two modular classrooms are owned by the school, and a modular classroom and a modular office are leased from Mobile Modular. The yard includes lawn, garden beds, a fenced science pond, asphalt game area, fitness play structure, and game fields.

## **Element S. Grade Level Limitations**

TOLCS proposes to serve Primary and Elementary Montessori levels, equivalent to grades TK-6. It reserves the right to submit a material revision to the charter to expand through grade 8, if The Beginning Project Board and the Charter Board Cabinet approve expansion.

## Tree of Life Charter School

### Special Education Services:

TOLCS recognizes its responsibility to enroll and support students with disabilities who can benefit from its programs and who otherwise qualify for enrollment and pledges to work to ensure that a free and appropriate public education is provided to all students with exceptional needs. Therefore, no student will be denied admission based on disability or lack of available services. TOLCS will comply with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and any other civil rights enforced by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Furthermore, TOLCS will comply with AB 602, El Dorado Charter SELPA guidelines, and all California laws pertaining to special education students.

TOLCS is the Local Educational Agency (LEA) for purposes of Special Education and a member of El Dorado Charter SELPA. A change in LEA status or SELPA membership shall not require a material revision of this charter.

Funding for Special Education services is determined by the SELPA and allocated according to the El Dorado Charter SELPA Allocation Plan. The current year's plan is included in the appendix.

Per federal law, all students with disabilities will be fully integrated into the programs of TOLCS, with the necessary materials, services, and equipment to support their learning. The school will ensure that any student with a disability attending TOLCS is properly identified, assessed, and provided with necessary services and supports.

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

TOLCS will work with the Charter SELPA to make time and facilities available to meet the needs of the student's IEP. TOLCS staff will actively participate in all aspects of the IEP to enable the student to be successful, including the appropriate individual tutoring schedule and classroom modifications, strategies, and techniques. The school special education staff will review work products for analysis and evaluation of progress and will conduct and participate in the IEP reviews.

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



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

#### Search and Serve:

During the first quarter of the TOLCS school year, all students will be evaluated as a means of instructional placement. No assessment or evaluation will be used for admission purposes. Through collaboration between the faculty and Principal, TOLCS will work to identify any students, who do not currently have an IEP but may be in need of a pre-referral intervention plan. Students possibly in need of special education or intervention plans can be screened from already available data (i.e. school tests, teacher observations, progress reports, etc.) regarding student progress or lack of progress within the general program. Principal and faculty will then convene the Student Study Team for identified students.

Staff, parents/guardians, or anyone concerned about a student may initiate a Student Study Team process to identify and respond to students who are having any type of learning or behavioral difficulty. The process helps to clarify and identify the student's strengths and difficulties, and it assesses any strategies that have already been used. Additional strategies to help the child in the classroom and at home are recommended, tried, and assessed. A referral for special education, speech and language evaluation, hearing or vision screening, or other services might be deemed appropriate by the team.

For students who are identified as needing interventions, a Student Study Team composed of the student, the student's parent or guardian, the Principal, and TOLCS faculty members will be responsible for identifying the student's needs and developing a plan to enable that student to be successful, including, but not limited to, the appropriate individual tutoring schedule, classroom modifications and supports, behavior intervention plan, strategies and techniques to enhance that student's ability to be successful. If the Student Study Team finds that the pre-intervention plan is not sufficient to meet the student's needs, they will recommend that student for a formal special education assessment. TOLCS may also choose to refer a student for services through the provisions of a Section 504 Plan, if appropriate.

#### Referral for Assessment:

The referral process is a formal, ongoing review of information related to students who are suspected of having special needs and show potential signs of needing special education and related services. The TOLCS internal method for referral for assessment will be the Student Study Team. The parent of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for special education services may also make a referral or request for an evaluation. Any such referrals will be responded to in writing by TOLCS within 15 days. Parents will be informed that special education and related services are provided at no cost to them.

If TOLCS concludes that an assessment is appropriate, the parent will receive a written Assessment Plan within 15 days. The parent will be given at least 15 days to provide written consent to the Assessment Plan. Assessments will be done only upon receipt of written parent permission. The assessment will be completed and an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

meeting held within 60 days of receipt of the parent's written consent for assessment.

**Assessment:**

The Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for gathering all pertinent information and sharing such information with the IEP team. Information gathered will be used as tools to determine the student's disability, eligibility for services, and determining the nature and extent of required services. Assessment procedures will be conducted in the student's primary language, and an interpreter will be provided if needed. Assessments will address all areas related to the suspected disability, be conducted by a multidisciplinary team, including the parent, and include the following, as appropriate:

- Health and developmental history
- Vision and hearing
- Motor abilities
- Speech and language function
- General intelligence or cognitive level
- Processing skills
- Academic achievement
- Adaptive skills
- Orientation and mobility skills
- Career and vocational interests
- Social, emotional, and behavioral functioning
- Any other area of educationally related suspected disability

TOLCS will follow the El Dorado Charter SELPA assessment guidelines. Parents or guardians of any student referred for assessment must give their written consent for the school to administer the assessment. The assessment will be completed and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting held within 60 days of receipt of the parent's written consent for assessment. Assessments must be conducted by a person with knowledge of the student's suspected disability, and administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel and in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments. Individually administered tests of intellectual or emotional functioning must be administered by a credentialed school psychologist. Assessments must be selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally, or sexually discriminatory. Assessments will be delivered in the student's primary language, and a qualified interpreter will be provided if needed. Assessment tools must be used for purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable. Assessments will be adapted as necessary for students with impaired sensory, physical, or speaking skills.

Upon completion of the assessment, an IEP team will be assembled to review the results of the assessment and determine the student's need for special education. The TOLCS Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for scheduling, coordinating, and facilitating the IEP meeting. Staff qualified to interpret test results will present the assessment data at the IEP meeting. Parents/Guardians will be provided with written notice of the IEP meeting, and the meeting will be held at a mutually agreeable time and place. If such evaluation and the IEP team establish that the student is eligible for Special Education services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) shall be developed that lists goals and objectives for the student and details the Special Education services that will be provided by the School.

#### Development and Implementation of IEP:

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

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

Each student who has an IEP will have an IEP team that oversees the IEP development, implementation, and progress of the student. All decisions concerning the special education programs and services to be provided to a student with a disability are to be made by the IEP team. The IEP team must include all of the following members:

- Parent/Guardian of the student for whom the IEP was developed
- Student, if appropriate
- Principal or designee
- Special education teacher
- General education teacher familiar with the curriculum appropriate to that student
- If the child was recently assessed, the individual who conducted the assessment or who is qualified to interpret the assessment results
- Others familiar with the student may be invited, as needed

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

A copy of the IEP will be given to the parent/guardian in accordance with state laws and SELPA policies. Upon the parent or guardian's written consent, the IEP will be implemented by TOLCS.

Upon the parent or guardian's written consent, the IEP will be implemented by TOLCS. The IEP will include all required components and be written on Charter SELPA forms.

The student's IEP will include the following:

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

measured and monitored and when reports will be provided

- Accommodations necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the pupil on state and district assessments.

IEP meetings will be held according to the following schedule:

- Annually to review the student's progress and make any necessary changes
- Every three years to review the results of a mandatory comprehensive reevaluation of the student's progress
- After the student has received a formal assessment or reassessment
- When a parent/guardian or teacher feels that the student has demonstrated significant educational growth or a lack of anticipated progress (consistent with state and federal law, IEP meetings will be held within 30 days of a parent or guardian's request);
- When TOLCS seeks to suspend or remove the student for a period of 10 days or more for the same behavior, in order to determine if the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his/her disability.

#### IEP Review:

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

If a parent or faculty member feels the student's educational needs are not being met, they may request a reassessment or a review of the IEP by the IEP team at any time during the year via written notice to the school. Once the request is received, TOLCS will have thirty days, not including school vacations greater than five days, to hold the IEP meeting.

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

#### Staffing:

TOLCS will hold ultimate responsibility for providing Special Education services to its students and is committed to assuring all IEPs are properly implemented and all students requiring services are adequately taken care of.

The Special Education Coordinator and Principal will be the primary school representatives tasked with assuring that all aspects of the IEP and any possible 504 plans are properly implemented. All teaching staff at TOLCS will also be involved in assuring that all IEPs and 504 plans are properly implemented.

TOLCS will provide instruction and consultation from resource specialist teachers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, mental health therapists, and any other specialists included in the IEP by direct hire, contract with an NPA or NPS, or an MOU with an educational agency in the same manner as is provided to students in other District/County schools. TOLCS also reserves the right to contract with service providers outside of the District/County when appropriate.

#### Reporting:

TOLCS will collect and maintain the following information on disabled students as required by IDEA using the SEIS and School Pathways student information systems:

- Statistical information about all school-age students with disabilities being provided special education services by age, grade, category of disability, and the number of students with disabilities who are English Language Learners
- The number of students provided with test modifications and the types and the number of students exempted from State assessments
- The settings in which students with disabilities receive their services, specifically including the portion of the school day they receive services with non-disabled peers and time away from the regular classroom
- The number of students with disabilities suspended "in-school" and out of school, organized by disability and length of suspensions
- The basis of exit from TOLCS of students with disabilities (i.e., declassified, moved, etc.).

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

#### Procedural Safeguards:

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

Any concerns or disagreements raised by parents/guardians will be acknowledged by the school within five days, after which a meeting between the parent/guardian and school will be scheduled to seek resolution of the disagreement. If a disagreement or concern persists, parents or guardians have the right to initiate a due process hearing to challenge a decision regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of their child.

The school will provide the parent/guardian with a written Notice of Procedural Safeguards, which will include information on the procedure to initiate both formal and informal dispute resolutions, at least once per year.

#### Dispute Resolution and Due Process:

In the event that a parent/guardian files a request for a due process hearing or request for mediation, TOLCS and El Dorado Charter SELPA shall work together to defend the case. In the event that the school and SELPA determine that legal representation is needed, TOLCS agrees that it shall be jointly represented by legal counsel of the SELPA's choosing.

#### Complaint Procedures:

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

#### Special Education Strategies for Instruction and Services:

TOLCS will comply with the federal mandate of the "least restrictive environment," meaning that the school will make every attempt to educate special education students along with their non-disabled peers. TOLCS will mainstream all of its students as much as is appropriate according to each individual IEP, offering a comprehensive inclusion program that includes specialized individual tutoring through the TOLCS extended day program. Each student's IEP requires different kinds of modifications for instruction and services, therefore the educational strategies of the IEP will be built around the student's needs and how these fit within the general educational program of the school. The instruction outlined in each student's IEP will be delivered by personnel qualified to do so. In addition, the school staff will implement strategies in the classroom to support the student, based on the goals and objectives in a student's IEP and consultation with Special Education staff. These strategies may include use of special equipment, modified lessons, modified assignments, behavior modification strategies, or use of special resource materials.

#### Professional Development for TOLCS Staff:

The Principal, special education staff, and regular education teaching staff, as well as other appropriate faculty and staff members, will attend professional development and/or training meetings necessary to comply with state and federal special education laws, including those sponsored by the County Office of Education or the Charter SELPA. TOLCS also intends to seek professional development opportunities for its staff through potential trainings facilitated by colleges and universities, educational organizations, and private companies or agencies.

#### Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act:

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

TOLCS recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program of TOLCS. Any student, who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity, including but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodation by the school.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Principal and shall include the parent/guardian, the student,

a qualified staff member, and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations. The 504 team will review the student's existing records, including academic, social, and behavioral records, and is responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate. If the student has already been evaluated under the IDEIA, but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEIA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504. The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team who will evaluate the nature of the student's disability and the impact upon the student's education. This evaluation will include consideration of any behaviors that interfere with regular participation in the educational program and/or activities. The 504 team may also consider the following information in its evaluation: tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and are administered by trained personnel; tests and other evaluation materials that include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligent quotient; tests selected and administered to ensure that when a test is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

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

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

The 504 Plan shall describe the Section 504 disability and any program accommodations, modifications, or services that may be necessary.

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

Notification of Change and Interim Placement:

Upon enrollment or transfer of a student to TOLCS with a current IEP from another LEA, TOLCS shall give notification of the transfer to the student's district of residence and Ukiah

Unified School District, request records from the student's past LEA, complete the "Interim Placement" form, and meet with the parents/guardians to explain the interim process and have them sign the form. The special education services will begin on the first day of attendance. TOLCS will provide the student with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), including services comparable to those described in the previously approved IEP. Current information, records, and reports from the prior LEA will be reviewed and utilized to develop an Interim IEP. Prior to the Interim (30 day) IEP meeting, TOLCS will determine if any additional assessment is required in order to determine student's educational needs and make program recommendations. If additional assessment is required, an assessment plan will be developed and parent signature obtained. An Interim (30 day) IEP meeting is held to review the placement/offer of FAPE (including review of goals, accommodations & modifications, services and educational environment, etc.) within 30 days of the student's first day of instruction. At this Interim (30 day) IEP meeting the LEA/district will adopt the previously approved IEP or develop and implement a new IEP based on updated assessment results and/or review of records.

For students who were previously enrolled in the District, the District shall forward the student's cumulative file including all Special Education files to TOLCS within 5 days of notification. In addition, the District shall provide consultative assistance to TOLCS staff to help transition the student.

When a student with an IEP transfers out of TOLCS, TOLCS shall forward to the student's new LEA/district the student's cumulative file including all Special Education files within 5 days of notification. In addition, TOLCS staff will make the appropriate changes in SEIS to allow electronic transfer of Special Education records to the new LEA/district, and it shall notify Ukiah Unified School District.

TOLCS shall notify the LEA/district of the student's last known address and Ukiah Unified School District within thirty (30) days if a student is expelled or leaves the charter school without completing the school year for any reason (CA Education Code §47605(d)(3)). Additionally, upon request, the school shall provide the LEA/district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card and health information. The school shall also notify the LEA/district of the student's last known address and Ukiah Unified School District when a special education student becomes eligible or ineligible for special education services.