

*Charter for the Establishment of the*

*La Vida Charter School:*



*A California Public Charter School*

*Submitted to  
Willits Unified School District*

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## INTRODUCTION

La Vida Charter School (“LVCS” or “Charter School”) was designed in order to offer an innovative program that supports independent study and home schooling programs, enriched with multiple optional on-site enhancement classes. LVCS offers academics in the morning and specialty classes in the afternoon such as Spanish, Games, Art, Music, Drama, Field Science, Handwork, and more. LVCS makes an effort to bring a social curriculum inspired by Waldorf methods in an atmosphere of respect and acceptance. LVCS is deeply committed to honoring and supporting home schoolers’ freedom to choose their learning pathways. By doing so, LVCS hopes to spark an undying flame of lifelong learning. LVCS does this within the guidelines created by the State of California, which is the rationale for many of the requirements outlined throughout this charter.

La Vida Charter School has developed a program where students thrive in a small, beautiful and supportive setting. Serving approximately 100 students from kindergarten through the high school level, LVCS offers small class size and a very beneficial student-to-teacher ratio of 15:1 for the independent study program, and 11:1 for the on-site classes program. A climate of respect and care is strongly nurtured throughout the school, and relatively few behavior problems are experienced. Between 8-20% of the students have special needs. School staff often hear that students are happier at LVCS than at any other school the student has attended in the past.

The independent study component of the school’s program allows each student’s learning style to be respected. Parents are given curriculum for the school year. Under the guidance of an Educational Coordinator, parents tailor the course of study to meet the students own interests, needs and abilities. Through the on-site program, a number of unique study opportunities are offered in addition to core academics. The school offers a field science program which is a direct benefit of being located on an amazing 5,000 acre preserved parcel of land. Students and parents may participate in a trip to visit our sister school in Mexico. In addition, students may participate in Orff Ensemble. Also, each year students are encouraged to participate in the year end performance, a grand production which incorporates a number of arts, as well as language and social studies. This is an opportunity to bring together many of the areas of learning during the school year and present them to the community.

LVCS has a history of a good relationship with the Ukiah Unified School District. Since its inception, nearly five years ago, LVCS has received full funding through the SB740 Funding Determination. LVCS teachers received the SELPA Winter Conference Incentive Award, a LVCS eighth grader achieved state finalist status in the National Geographic Bee, and the school received the Non-Profit Community Grant for the “How Does Your Garden Grow” project. A high level of parent involvement is found throughout the school, as parents are requested to give 4 hours per month to the school, sharing their talents and energy to keep the school strong. LVCS encourages student community service, one example being that each class takes its turn preparing bagged lunches for the hungry, as a natural outward extension of the care and respect that the students experience at school. Attached as **Appendix A**, please find a selection of newspaper articles demonstrating the excellence of La Vida Charter School program.

In October 2005, when preparing for its renewal with the Ukiah Unified School District, LVCS received notification from the District that an assessment of LVCS's location has been performed by the County Assessor's Office. The assessment revealed that LVCS was in fact located within the Willits Unified School District tax rate area, not Ukiah Unified School District. As such, La Vida Charter School now petitions the Willits Unified School District for a petition to operate its program within the boundaries of the proper district. LVCS looks forward to offering the same exceptional program through the Willits Unified School District and enjoying the same success with its students, parents, and the surrounding community.

### *School Location*

This charter authorizes the operation of La Vida Charter School, a charter which shall operate at one site within the geographic boundaries of Willits Unified School District at 16201 North Highway 101, Willits, California, 95490, as authorized pursuant to Education Code Section 47605.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Charter School may establish a resource center, meeting space or other satellite facility as needed and allowed in adjacent counties pursuant to Education Code Section 47605.1.

## FOUNDING GROUP

The founders of La Vida Charter School were a visionary group committed to providing students in Mendocino County choices in education. They conceived an innovative program that combines the flexibility of independent study with the academic enrichment and social environment of school-based courses. The group responded to the needs and desires of parents in our rural county: some parents wish to create and carry out learning programs with their children at home; others live at great distances from local schools and a five-day-a-week program is impractical. LVCS's Educational Coordinators and optional on-site courses provide a solid base of resources and guidance for independent study families. Many members of the founding group had positive experiences with Waldorf education and chose to ground the school's curriculum in Waldorf-based methods, emphasizing the arts, developmental readiness, and a hands-on approach to education.

Attached as **Appendix B**, please find the biographical information for LVCS's founders, key staff, and current Charter Board members.

## **AFFIRMATIONS/ASSURANCES**

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter for the La Vida Charter School to be located within the Willits Unified School District boundaries 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 Charter School is committed to the following affirmations:

- The Charter School shall conduct all required pupil assessment tests pursuant to Education Code Section 60605 or any other pupil assessments applicable to pupils in non-charter public schools.
- The Charter School shall meet all statewide standards applicable to non-charter public schools.
- The Charter School shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations.
- The Charter School will not charge tuition.
- The Charter School will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability.
- The Charter School will admit all pupils who wish to attend the charter school, subject only to capacity.
- The Meetings of the Board of Directors for the Charter School shall be held in accordance with the Brown Act.
- The Charter School shall comply with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004 (“IDEIA”), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (“Section 504”), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”).
- The Charter School shall comply with the Public Records Act and the Family Educational Privacy Rights Act (“FERPA”).
- Admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the pupil, or of his or her parent or guardian, within California. This is subject only to capacity, the admissions procedures and preferences stated herein, and Education Code Section 51747.3.
- The Charter School shall continually strive for a healthy, collaborative, synergistic relationship with the District without imposing a burden or liability on the District.

- The Charter School shall offer, at a minimum, the same number of minutes of instruction set forth in paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of California Education Code Section 47612.5 for the appropriate grade levels.
- The Charter School shall maintain written contemporaneous records that document all pupil attendance and make those records available for audit and inspection.
- The Charter School shall comply with all laws related to the minimum age for public instruction.
- The Charter School shall meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to, teaching credentials, fingerprinting and background checks, as required by law.
- The Charter School shall ensure that teachers in the Charter School hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools are required to hold. As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to non-core, non-college preparatory teachers.
- The Charter School shall on a regular basis consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's educational program.
- The Charter School shall at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
- The Charter School shall comply with the California Building Code as adopted and enforced by the local building enforcement agency.
- The Charter School shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws.
- The Charter School shall not exceed enrollment of 100 students.
- If a pupil is expelled or leaves the Charter School without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the Charter School shall notify the Willits School District and the Superintendent of the School District of the pupil's last known address within three (3) work days and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report cards and health information.

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**Ann Kelly, Director**

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**Date**

## **ELEMENT 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

*Governing Law: 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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. -- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)*

### **MISSION**

The mission of the La Vida Charter School is to broaden the educational choices and opportunities for children and families who live in Mendocino County and surrounding areas through independent study, home schooling, and Waldorf inspired teaching methods.

### **GOALS**

Our goal is to establish a school in which all children are respected and recognized for their individual gifts, and feel supported in developing these gifts. Students will be appreciated for their unique ethnic and cultural backgrounds and will be encouraged in their understanding of the individuality represented by the traditions and cultures of their peers, as well as members of the global community. Through a three-pronged approach focused on cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor skills, LVCS’s children will emerge with strong potential for academic excellence, a commitment to the enhancement of their community, and the ability to succeed amidst the challenges of today’s and tomorrow’s world.

### **WHOM THE SCHOOL IS ATTEMPTING TO EDUCATE**

LVCS’s target population is those interested in home schooling or independent study, as well as those interested in Waldorf Education. LVCS serves students from Kindergarten through Twelfth grade. LVCS offers two choices of independent study educational programs for student enrollment:

- A blended program using site based instruction inspired by Waldorf methods for students grades K-12 along with home study. The on-site program offers parents and children a variety of education choices, including part-time day classes and other specialty courses; and
- Home school program for students grades kindergarten through twelfth, where parents can choose to utilize Waldorf inspired methods, or other Independent Study curriculum in which parents collaborate with an Educational Coordinator to achieve teaching goals and objectives.

Attached as **Appendix C**, please find information regarding: 1) the percentage of LVCS students that qualify for free and reduced priced lunch; 2) the highest level of education completed by LVCS parents; and 3) the District of residence of LVCS students.

## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN EDUCATED PERSON IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills published a report in 2004 entitled “Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” that outlines students’ educational needs for the future. They identified six skill areas. Below are listed the skill areas and how La Vida Charter School has and will address those topics specifically as it shapes and defines the Educated Person in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

1. **Core Curriculum:** The curriculum at LVCS includes the areas of core subjects identified by No Child Left Behind, including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics, government, economics, arts, history, and geography.
2. **Learning Skills:** Learning skills are stressed at LVCS and are divided into three primary components of 1) Information and Communication Skills; 2) Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills; and 3) Interpersonal and Self-Directional Skills.
3. **Use of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tools:** LVCS emphasizes technology, or Information and Communication Technologies (“ICT”). At LVCS, the computer is viewed as a tool to attain desired educational outcomes, much as a painter uses a paint brush and paint to create a planned out painting.
4. **Teach and Learn 21<sup>st</sup> Century Context:** LVCS’s goal is to make context meaningful to students’ lives. Suggested formats are taking students out into the world or bringing the outside world into the classroom.
5. **Teach and Learn 21<sup>st</sup> Century Content:** Three primary areas have been identified: 1) Global Awareness; 2) Financial, Economic and Business Literacy; and 3) Civic Literacy.
6. **Use of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Assessments that Measure 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills:** The Partnership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century acknowledges that standardized tests are here to stay. They also recognize a need for more timely and immediately useful assessments. LVCS has designed a triangulated assessment model utilizing authentic student self-assessment, standards based formative assessment along with the standardized summative tests.

**Goal to be Lifelong Learners:** Today, a primary goal in education is that individuals will be motivated and able to continue their learning and self-improvement in order to keep up with the ever-changing world, including a constantly-evolving job market. Through independent study, students develop skills of self-direction and learn how to discover resources. At LVCS, students in all grades are encouraged to pursue some area of study that is meaningful to them and relevant to their lives. LVCS believes that by developing a series of independent projects, students will have been exposed to the routine of venturing forth on a self-designed course of study. It is LVCS’s goal that our students will remember their positive educational experiences and excitement for learning and maintain an openness to new areas of study throughout their lives, ultimately becoming self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners.

## **HOW LEARNING BEST OCCURS**

LVCS believes that learning best occurs when Waldorf methods are utilized through a balanced coordination of site based instruction and home study. LVCS also believes that learning best occurs when children are in an environment where they feel safe, happy and respected. The staff at LVCS successfully creates such an atmosphere, in combination with stimulating lessons, so the student's learning is optimized. LVCS also emphasizes creating and maintaining a strong, cooperative and mutually supportive working relationship with its sponsoring School District. This relationship builds upon the mutual goals of providing the best possible educational opportunities for all children in the Mendocino County area. In addition, LVCS finds that learning best occurs for its students when strong, collaborative relationships with professionals and other community resources are formed. An involved community of parents and teachers will actively and visibly support the children. Parents will be involved in governance, the school program, events and activities, the establishment, beautification and maintenance of the school facility, linkages with the larger community and the ongoing evaluation of the school program, and students are encouraged to have input and involvement in these areas. Periodic evaluations of student progress combining State and Waldorf-methods measurements, and of the curriculum and teachers will ensure the best possible educational program. Information gleaned from the evaluations will be used for ongoing planning of the curriculum and staff development process. LVCS will employ highly qualified teachers who hold a California teaching credential, in addition to a combination of Waldorf training, education, and/or experience which meets Charter Board standards.

## **Instructional Approach**

LVCS believes that learning best occurs when California State Content Standards are mastered through a mix of educational approaches. As an innovative model, LVCS's instructional approach is child centered and non-linear. Teachers seek to understand each student's learning styles and temperaments through observation and assessments. Through this process LVCS has discovered that a large percentage of students are kinesthetic learners and prefer a hands-on approach. Therefore, LVCS aims to emphasize that modality in its program.

LVCS believes that learning best occurs from the Waldorf model as well, where LVCS draws an understanding of developmental stages and readiness to learn academic and social concepts. The Waldorf curriculum supports the developmental capacities which build and manifest as the child matures. For example, LVCS uses myth and storytelling as a conduit for multiple content and skill development areas. This rich literature waters the child's deep fertile imagination, awakens an awareness of connection with the human family and develops an appreciation for world cultures that enhances a global perspective. Concurrently students are exposed to problem-solving and conflict resolutions options that allow for self-discovery and self-understanding that builds the capacity for empathy. Critical Thinking is also supported through the curriculum which requires frequent writing and expression of ideas and opinions.

LVCS also believes that learning best occurs from additional methods of education such as the Constructivist model of education, where lessons are posed to address the relevance to the student and learning is structured around primary concepts or the quest for essences. The

student's point of view is valued and sought. Curriculum is adapted to address the students' suppositions and assessment of student learning is done within the context of teaching. In math for example, LVCS has developed a "No Gaps" policy. As students enroll, a diagnostic test is given to identify the functional level and any gaps in understanding. These areas are addressed before the student moves on. Often blocks and inhibitions toward math must be overcome which challenge the teacher to develop and approach from what he or she understands about the student.

### **Teaching Methods**

LVCS believes that learning best occurs when LVCS teachers and parents, working together, focus on the development of the whole student. Learning plans and approaches address intellect, creativity, curiosity, self-awareness, character, values and relationships with peers, parents, teachers, mentors, younger children, and elders, at LVCS, at home, and within the larger community. The emphasis on individual attention and collaborative learning by LVCS teachers, parents and community mentors guides and encourages students to reach for their highest goals. By combining academics, creative projects and individual choices, La Vida Charter School's program enables its students to blossom into enthusiastic, responsible, and caring members of society.

A crucial component of a student's success is their ability to create and shape their own learning opportunities. To that end, LVCS has offered a course on critical interpersonal and self-managements skills needed to succeed in independent learning. Students learned how to set priorities, manage time, overcome procrastination, avoid peer pressure, develop long-term goals, and communicate more effectively. LVCS leverages its excellent student teacher ratio (15:1 for independent study, and 11:1 for on-site classes) to effectively tailor each class to the individual needs of the students. Located on Ridgewood Ranch, all students have access to traditional classroom space, a small computer lab and library, and a variety of outdoor learning areas. Additionally, students are actively engaged in the community and have the opportunity to explore museums, the community college, theaters, and a wide variety of other learning settings, dependent on the design of their unique learning plan.

LVCS teachers draw from a broad spectrum of teaching experience and training. All teachers are certified by the State of California. Many have a background in the Waldorf method. All encourage active student participation in discovery or experienced based projects. For example, a recent unit on computers included structured and free time working in LVCS's computer lab, short informative lectures, and an opportunity to actually build computers as a group project. Most students continued this unit by designing their own lessons on their home computers, tailoring their work through the feedback of their parents and Educational Coordinators.

Upon enrollment, each student is assigned an Educational Coordinator who serves as the supervising credentialed teacher of the student's independent study. In accordance with Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11700, the role of the Educational Coordinator as the supervising teacher shall be to provide general supervision of the educational program of the student. "General supervision" means the supervising teacher's

- (1) continuing oversight of the study design, implementation plan, allocation of resources, and evaluation of pupil or adult education student progress for any pupil's student's independent study; and
- (2) personal determination or personal review of the determination made by another certificated teacher of the time values for apportionment purposes of each pupil's work products.

### **TRANSFER OF COURSES/COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

*Governing Law: If the proposed school will serve high school pupils, a description of how the Charter School will inform parents about the transferability of courses to other public high schools and the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements. Courses offered by the Charter School that are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges may be considered transferable and courses approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the "A" to "G" admissions criteria may be considered to meet college entrance requirements. - California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii)*

LVCS will provide interested students and parents with a course catalog or its equivalent during the enrollment process, notifying parents about the transferability of courses to other public high schools and the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements. LVCS will consult with the District as to the transferability of courses to other District schools in order to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, a smooth transition from one school to the next. LVCS shall seek to offer a high school program that meets the requirements for admission to the California State University or the University of California A-G requirements. Students of LVCS will be required to pass the California High School Exit Examination before being granted a high school diploma.

LVCS has achieved University of California accreditation in the vast majority of its core high school courses, including recent approval of its Lab Biology course. Four years of English (English 9-12) and four years of Mathematics (Algebra I and II, Geometry and Calculus) are accredited, as are three years of Social Studies (U.S. History/Geography, World History and American Government), two years of Science (Biology with Lab and Chemistry with Lab), and one year of Foreign Language (Spanish I). All accredited courses are one year and 10 units except for the one semester 5-unit American Government Course.

LVCS also has two University of California A-G approved elective courses: Economics and Biology with Lab. For the upcoming school year, LVCS will be resubmitting the Visual Arts course for approval.

LVCS offers a full high school program. LVCS students must enroll in at least twenty (20) units per semester at LVCS. LVCS students have the option to take courses at community college to take courses beyond the LVCS twenty (20) unit minimum for elective credit.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The instructional method will emphasize the whole child, and frame its academic components within an artistic, creative and imaginative context allowing each child's full potential to unfold. LVCS Educational Coordinators and Teachers shall use natural developmental rhythms from which the Waldorf-methods curriculum has emerged.

The LVCS Educational Program offers an alternative to traditional instruction and is regulated for each student through a written Personal Education Plan ("Plan"). This document is developed by the student, parent, and supervising teacher, and may be reviewed by the Director. It is signed by all of the parties. The Plan provides an opportunity for collaborative learning arrangements and is tailored to the individual needs of each student within the framework of Independent Study guidelines supported in a curriculum-learning contract.

Each student will be evaluated upon entry into the school, to identify the appropriate grade level and curriculum. Each student will be evaluated throughout the school year to assess skill level, growth and the adequacy of the program in meeting the child's needs.

Generally, a student is advanced to the next grade level at La Vida Charter School if they have completed at least 75% of the grade-level curriculum, have accomplished 75% of the first and second semester goals as specified in the independent study agreement; and have met 75% of the State Content standards for that grade level or as adjusted in sequence for those students utilizing a Waldorf curriculum. A student not meeting these requirements shall be recommended by the Educational Coordinator to the Director for possible retention in accordance with Charter School policy regarding student retention. A retention policy shall be adopted by LVCS by August 10, 2006, and submitted to the District.

## CURRICULUM

Cumulatively, the LVCS curriculum will be aligned with the California State Content Standards for language arts, math, history/social studies and science. Attached as **Appendix D**, please find the sequencing of the LVCS Oak Meadow and Live Education curriculum demonstrating alignment with California State Content Standards. Families of students utilizing the Waldorf curriculum, where sequencing of State Content Standards is in different order than presented by the State, will be required to sign in acknowledgement of their choice in recognition of the different sequence, and the potential difficulties of moving the student into a different public school program until the fifth grade where the sequencing aligns.

LVCS shall comply with all applicable laws related to independent study. LVCS adheres to all applicable sections of the Education Code for Independent Study (Education Code Section 51745 et. seq.) and funding determination requirements of Education Code Section 47612.5 and 47634.2, and Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Sections 11963 - 11963.7 (SB740). As such, the provision of education through an independent study model shall be governed by the independent study policy adopted by the Charter Board of the Charter School after a public hearing and implemented in accordance with individual master agreements and work and

assignment plans for each student. Attached as **Appendix E**, please find the La Vida Charter School Policy on Independent Study and a sample Master Agreement.

LVCS also adheres to the requirements related to audit requirements for charter schools in accordance with Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Sections 19850 - 19854.

The Charter School's program complies with Education Code Section 51746 to ensure that the students have equal access to the existing services and resources that they would have received in a traditional school within the District. These services include a facility staffed on a full-time basis by credentialed personnel, ongoing tutoring on-site and regular meetings to go over assignments and assign new materials.

The following are descriptions of some of the elements of the Oak Meadow Curriculum for kindergarten through eighth grade. Oak Meadow is one of the popular options for general grade level curriculum which is presented to the children and is typically used as a building block for the student's individualized plan. Attached as **Appendix F**, please find a narrative of "A Home School Day in the Life of a First Grader" for La Vida Charter School, the Spring 2006 on-site class schedule, and a sample Oak Meadow curriculum for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Kindergarten:** The Oak Meadow curriculum uses an artistic and imaginative approach to introduce children to the alphabet and numbers one through ten. Nature stories and outdoor activities help students explore the scientific world. During this year, children establish a daily learning rhythm that includes singing, painting, drama, and crafts.

**First Grade:** Students expand their exploration of letters to include phonetic studies and beginning reading. The four processes of math are introduced, as well as counting to 100. Science studies continue with experimental activities and the use of textbook "Growing, Growing, Strong" to study health concepts. Music, poetry, fairy tales, painting, and drawing continue as useful tools to expand student's understanding of the world around them.

**Second Grade:** Expansion of math skills include multiplication and word problems during this year. In addition to approaches used in kindergarten and first grade, students study Nature through stories of animal life. Crafts are a continued focus, as are the building on existing reading skills and health studies.

**Third Grade:** Reading, spelling, writing original compositions, grammar, cursive writing, higher multiplication tables, carrying, borrowing, science studies and word problems provide increased mental challenges. Enrichment activities include cooking, recorder playing, singing in rounds, and carpentry.

**Fourth Grade:** This year children explore geometry and patterns of nature, geography, and writing in a journal. Also introduced are fractions, long division, word problems, astronomy, and Native American crafts. Lessons in Social Studies, health and nutrition, spelling, grammar, children's classics, and music are continued. Stories that reflect the cultural composition of the class and from California history are also included.

**Fifth Grade:** This rich, integrated, experiential approach connects well with students with a variety of learning styles. Math skills include: two and three digit multiplication and division, fractions, measurement, and graphs. Geography and History are explored through the American Civil War. Environmental Science is explored through projects and English focuses on classics in literature, and a continuation of grammar and spelling work.

**Sixth Grade:** Geography, arts, crafts, and the literature are explored this year through the lens of ancient civilizations. Scientific principles within the Life Sciences are discovered through hands-on activities. English skills from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade are taken to the next level. There is an emphasis on strengthening math skills, including: problem-solving, the metric system, percentages, ratios, multiple step word problems and basic geometry.

**Seventh Grade:** This grade includes an emphasis on American and World History from the perspective of the people of those times and historical literature. Earth Sciences encourage exploration of the scientific process. Composition of effective essays and creative writing give children an opportunity to clearly express themselves and their ideas. Math skills build on earlier knowledge and add concepts such as fractions, linear measurement, area, perimeter, volume, solids, angles, probability, money, and decimals.

**Eighth Grade:** Students consider economic and civic lessons during this year, including a study of federal, state, and local governments. Social issues are explored through community service projects. Students continue to utilize an experimental approach in Science, with a focus on the Physical Sciences. Classics in literature, composition, (including grammar and spelling) are a continued focus. The Math curriculum builds on earlier work and introduces beginning concepts in algebra and mixed and decimal numbers.

Special Subjects may include:

- Handwork: knitting, crocheting, sewing, weaving, toymaking and woodwork.
- Music: singing, pentatonic flute, recorder, percussion, and Orff Ensemble.
- Art: watercolor, form drawing, beeswax, clay modeling and perspective drawing.
- Movement: eurhythmy, dance, spatial dynamics, group games, and martial arts.
- Drama: presentations related to curriculum presented to the public each year.
- Nature: children learn about the circle of life and the seasons, planting and gardening. They are able to eat what they grow; they compost their scraps into the garden from the school meals and use environmentally sound practices whenever possible.

### **High School Curriculum**

LVCS offers high school students an alternative opportunity to fulfill the state requirements for a high school diploma and meet the needs of those students bound for community colleges or technical institutions, as well as those seeking enrollment in 4 year universities. Students have the opportunity to create and develop projects and presentations, and design some or all of their electives according to their goals, interests and capabilities.

LVCS offers two types of high school diploma: University Prep (requiring 235 credits) and General Studies (requiring 225 credits). Attached as **Appendix G**, please find the LVCS High School Catalog for further details on the high school program, including course descriptions and examples of typical student learning programs.

### High School Courses and College Accreditation.

In addition to many special classes, LVCS’s standard course offerings are denoted in the following chart. Courses for which LVCS has been granted University of California A-G accreditation status are noted with an asterisk. Courses in progress for approval are noted with two asterisks. All courses are for one year and earn 10 units of credit towards graduation unless noted as a one semester or 5 unit course.

<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>English</b>
U. S. History and Geography*	English 9 *
World History*	English 10*
American Government* - (1 semester – 5units)	English 11*
	English 12*
Economics (5 units)	
<b>Science</b>	
Environmental Science	<b>Foreign Language</b>
Anatomy and Physiology	Spanish I *
Biology with Lab*	Spanish II
Chemistry with Lab*	Spanish III
	French I
<b>Mathematics</b>	French II
Math Basics	French III
Applied Business Math	
Algebra I *	<b>Humanities</b>
Geometry*	Psychology (1 semester - 5 units)
Algebra II*	7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens
Advanced mathematics/Pre-calculus	(1 semester 5 units)
Calculus*	
	<b>Fine Arts</b>
<b>Physical Education</b>	The Study of Art
Possible site based courses available	Integrated Drawing
Individual student designed program	College Prep Visual Arts**
<b>Computer Science</b>	<b>Music</b>
Community College ROP or LVCS Specialty Classes	vocal and instrumental ensembles may be arranged according to students interests

Students are required to participate in 90 hours of community service over the course of 4 years. A student designed Economics Project is undertaken in the senior year. This is a major work that should reflect a genuine interest on the part of the student and is required for a high school

diploma. Students also have the opportunity to gain valuable life experience and earn high school credit through LVCS's work program.

LVCS on-site classes can function in two ways. They can be taken as a separate course receiving 1 to 5 units, depending on the course design. The on-site classes can also be taken in conjunction with, and be included as partial course load for, a 5 unit required class such as English or Algebra, etc. Regular attendance is important and affects the semester grade.

### **Materials**

LVCS has adopted four curriculum programs and a variety of supplemental materials for student and family use. The two primary programs, Oak Meadow and Live Education are Waldorf-inspired independent study curricula. Families have the option of selecting another curriculum, but it must be approved for use by the Charter School. LVCS also offers the Stech-Vaughn Modified Curriculum for Special Needs students and the Key Curriculum Press program in Mathematics. The Charter School provides students with supplemental materials including consumables such as art supplies and workbooks, and non-consumables such as books, compact discs, and software.

The Oak Meadow curriculum, approved by the California Department of Education, is a user-friendly program with a traditional syllabus and daily assignments. The Waldorf component offers experienced-based learning. Oak Meadow utilizes published textbooks, particularly at the high school level. In fact, the text-based high school program is aligned with California standards.

The Live Education curriculum is a beautiful and inspired program that focuses on the parent as teacher. It provides resources and ideas so that parents can design their own Waldorf program at home.

### **Professional Development**

LVCS provides the opportunity, and strongly encourages all teachers, to pursue annual training during the summer, as well as throughout the year. The Charter School values teachers with Waldorf training and experience and expects on-site classes to demonstrate Waldorf methods. Therefore, LVCS supports teachers in attending summer trainings at the Rudolf Steiner College near Sacramento. Teachers may also be supported in trainings of their own choice which will develop their knowledge and teaching repertoire. These are often subject specific such as math, reading, music or differentiated instruction. Collaboration time is dedicated at staff meetings and in-services for teachers to share what they have learned and discuss how to implement the newly acquired knowledge.

### **PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ACADEMICALLY LOW ACHIEVING**

Since LVCS has a child centered instructional method, the program is ideally positioned to adjust to the academic level of the student. A student who has been identified as academically low achieving will be studied as to learning styles and adjustments in their program can be made.

Students who are more than a grade level behind will often receive a Student Success Team to explore more options. Parents, teachers, the Director and others who are involved with the student's education are invited to discuss the strengths and strategies for growth. Accommodations and curriculum modifications are determined as well as dates to reconvene. From this process it may be determined that a student should be assessed for special education services or services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. However, curriculum modifications typically provide the student with enough scaffolding to achieve meaningful learning.

### **PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ACADEMICALLY HIGH ACHIEVING**

Sometimes a Student Success Team ("SST") is called for a high achieving student. It may be that the curriculum needs modification to challenge the student. However, it is more likely that a SST Team is called because the high achieving student has a low emotional quotient and needs support developing socialization skills in the classroom and on the playground.

By the nature of LVCS's student centered approach, meeting the needs of the high achieving student will come naturally through curriculum development for that child. An emphasis is placed on depth of understanding content in these cases rather than speeding ahead. Examples of curriculum modification for top performers have been: allowing the identified students to publish a school newspaper while other classmates are reviewing material that would not challenge the top student. This activity, besides completely engaging the advanced student, also allows for social engagement as schoolmates submit articles and as students work side by side solving editorial and layout problems. Another example of engaging the advanced students is allowing them to stage a debate about a topic that has emerged through class meetings. In this way, the entire class is focused on the same lesson and engaged at appropriate levels through differentiated instruction.

### **PLAN FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS**

LVCS shall comply with all applicable federal law in regard to services and the education of English Learner ("EL") students.

#### **Identification of EL Students**

The Charter School will administer the home language survey upon a student's initial enrollment into the school. All students who indicate that their home language is other than English will be CELDT tested within 30 days of initial enrollment and at least annually thereafter between July 1 and October 31 until redesignated fluent English proficient. The Charter School will notify all parents of its responsibility for CELDT testing and of CELDT results within 30 days of testing. The CELDT shall be used to fulfill the requirement under the No Child Left Behind Act for annual English proficiency testing. All EL students will take the California High School Exit Exam with legally appropriate accommodations along with other eligible students.

## **Program**

The Charter School shall provide services for English Learners in an English immersion setting that includes language development and access to core curriculum, and conforms to the California Department of Education's State Program for English Learners.

The major goals for English Learners at the Charter School shall be to develop proficiency in English and in the core curriculum, as rapidly and effectively as possible with curriculum designed for such students.

The goal for English Learners receiving special education services is to make substantial progress toward achievement of their individualized education program's academic goals.

## **Monitoring and Evaluating the Core Program**

The quality of the Charter School's English Learner program and student achievement shall be regularly monitored and assessed by review and analyzing data with the purpose of identifying areas for improvement.

## **EL Intervention**

When English Learners are not making adequate progress toward mastery of EL standards the teacher makes modifications to the course instruction to meet the students' learning needs. The student shall also be provided with extended learning opportunities and interventions including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Tutoring
- b. Supplemental instruction
- c. Special counseling

## **Qualified Teachers**

Each teacher providing specialized academic instruction for EL students at the Charter School must meet one of the following specifications:

- a. The teacher holds a teaching authorization issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing authorizing services for the English Learner.
- b. Whenever the student's primary language is a vehicle of instruction, the teacher must have a bilingual, cross-cultural, language, and academic development ("BCLAD"), or comparable authorization.

## **PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Overview**

The Charter School shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities including but not limited to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (“Section 504”), the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004 (“IDEIA”).

The Charter School agrees to adhere to the special education policies, procedures and requirements of the District and Mendocino County Office of Education Local Plan for Special Education.

### **Section 504 /ADA**

The Charter School shall be solely responsible for its compliance with Section 504 and the ADA. All facilities of the Charter School shall be accessible for all students with disabilities in accordance with the ADA.

The Charter School 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 the Charter School. Any student who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity such as learning is eligible for accommodation by the School.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Director and shall include the parent, the student, and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment. 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 and found ineligible, 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 will consider, at a minimum, the following information in its evaluation:

- a. Tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and are administered by trained personnel.
- b. Tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligent quotient.

- c. Tests are selected and administered so as 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 noticed 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 IDEIA, a referral for special education assessment 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 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 Charter School's professional staff. The parent or guardian shall be invited to participate in all 504 team meetings and shall be given an opportunity to examine in advance all relevant records.

The 504 Plan shall describe the Section 504 disability and any program modification that may be necessary. In considering the 504 Plan, a student with a disability requiring program modification shall be placed in the regular program of the Charter School along with those students who are not disabled to the extent appropriate to the individual needs of the student with a disability.

All 504 team participants, parents, and 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 Director will ensure that teachers include 504 Plans with lesson plans for short-term substitutes and that he/she 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, continued eligibility or readiness to discontinue the 504 Plan.

### **Services for Students under the "IDEIA"**

The Charter School shall follow the District and SELPA policies and procedures and forms in seeking out, identifying, and serving students who may qualify for special education programs and services.

LVCS anticipates that an agreement would be developed between the District and the Charter School which spells out in detail the LVCS responsibilities for provision of special education services and the manner in which special education funding will flow to the School. LVCS envisions an ideal relationship for special education as follows:

- The District transfers the special education funds for the students of the Charter School to LVCS;
- LVCS provides services to the students of the Charter School; and
- The Charter School pays any excess costs related to the provision of special education instruction or related services for LVCS students. This payment of excess costs shall constitute the Charter School's "equitable share" under Education Code Section 47646(c).
- The Charter School shall release the District from liability.

This method of funding and services is very common throughout the state. However, the Charter School is open to discussions with the District regarding any reasonable alternatives to this arrangement and as specified in the MOU.

### ***Attendance Accounting***

Attendance accounting in charter schools that provide their program primarily through independent study or home study has been the subject of debate for many years. There are two conflicting laws related to attendance accounting in charter schools, and due to the conflict in law, the California Department of Education has varied in its advice to charter schools as to which law applies or whether both apply. In short, the California Department of Education is now indicating that there is no inconsistency in the two laws and thus nonclassroom based charter schools must track their attendance in accordance with both laws.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47612.5(e), classroom based instruction occurs only when charter school pupils are engaged in educational activities required of those pupils and are under the immediate supervision and control of an employee of the charter school who possesses a valid teacher certification at least eighty percent (80%) of the time at the school site. Any charter school that does not reach that eighty percent (80%) requirement to be considered a "classroom based" school, falls broadly under the category of a nonclassroom based school, regardless of the number of site based classes that it might offer to its students and regardless of whether its mode of instruction is through independent study or home study or other method of distance learning. Nonclassroom based charter schools are subject to two sets of laws. First, under Education Code Section 47612.5, a nonclassroom based charter school must comply with Education Code Section 51745, et seq., and the implementing regulations adopted thereunder. Generally, this section of the Education Code deals with independent study. Within Education Code Section 51747.5(b), there is a statement that apportionment credit for attendance in independent study may only be claimed to the extent of the time value of pupil or student work product as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher. This attendance accounting method, used throughout the state in charter schools and school districts, is commonly referred to as "time value attendance accounting." La Vida currently uses time value attendance accounting to determine the apportionment credit for the attendance of all of its students.

In addition to independent study law, charter schools are also subject to the Charter Schools Act and its requirements. Specifically, Education Code Section 47612.5 states that charter schools

must maintain written contemporaneous records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection. Pursuant to Title 5, California Code of Regulations 11960, regarding “regular average daily attendance for charter schools,” “attendance” means “the attendance of charter school pupils while engaged in educational activities required of them by their charter schools on days when school is actually taught in their charter schools.” In accordance with this regulation, a charter school may only give attendance credit on days when a student is actually engaged in an educational activity required of them by the charter school and on days that the school is in session (not weekends and holidays). This provision is unique to charter schools. Here, at La Vida, a two-step process is required by law and followed. The assignment made by the supervising certificated teacher (referred to as the “Education Coordinator”) begins the two-step process. Then, parents are required to track attendance using a contemporaneous written record documenting the daily engagement of their student on the assignment on days when the school is in session (Monday through Friday and nonholidays). The assignment can include home study, independent work being done at home, or the site based classes that are offered at La Vida. Please note, no more than one day of attendance can be earned per calendar day.

When the child meets with their supervising teacher, the parent will show the supervising teacher the daily engagement log, along with the work product that was accomplished by the student during the assignment period. That work product may include the results of home study, independent instruction or the results of work done during site based classes offered by the charter school. Then, in accordance with Education Code Section 51747.5(b), the supervising teacher must make a determination as to the time value of the student work product generated in response to the assignment. If the time value of the work product is less than the daily engagement that was tracked by the parent, the teacher in his or her professional judgment must discount the attendance days claimed to reflect the time value.

La Vida Charter School shall continue to follow both the two-step process that is currently required and recommended by the California Department of Education unless the law clearly is changed to reflect one method over the other. The engagement log provided by parents must be signed under penalty of perjury.

Below, please find two examples of how this attendance accounting works:

### **Scenario #1**

Sally is a fifth grade pupil mainly instructed from home using the home study method during the twenty day learning period. Sally’s teacher has assigned her twenty days worth of work which included attendance at two on-site classes. During the twenty days, Sally does attend the two classes at La Vida Charter School, and the parent tracks each day, Monday through Friday, in which Sally either has engaged in the assignment, which may include attendance in site-based classes. As a result, the parent shows documentation that Sally was engaged in some daily engagement for all twenty days of the learning period. The supervising teacher reviewed the work and saw that even though Sally had in fact engaged in some daily work Monday through Friday, she only did half of what was assigned to her during the learning period. Accordingly,

the teacher only awards Sally ten days worth of attendance for that twenty day learning period and thus the school only receives ten days worth of apportionment credit.

## **Scenario #2**

Johnny is a high school pupil who meets on a weekly basis with his supervising teacher to receive a weekly assignment and review work completed. During the week, Johnny only attends one site based class and the rest of his work is done primarily through independent study. Johnny and his parent document whether or not Johnny has done work that is assigned Monday through Friday and/or attended a class at the La Vida Charter School site. During this particular learning period, Johnny only documented daily engagement on the day that he attended class at La Vida Charter School. The parent and Johnny explain that Johnny was very busy this week working at a community service project unrelated to the school and that he did all of his assignment on Saturday and Sunday prior to his appointment with the supervising teacher. The supervising teacher reviews the work and sees that the assignment is in fact completed and awards Johnny full academic credit for the work completed. However, due to the fact that the work was done on the weekend, the supervising teacher cannot award any attendance credit for those days and can only claim apportionment for the one day of instruction for which Johnny came on campus and tracked daily engagement and instructional activities.

## **ELEMENT II: MEASURABLE PUPIL OUTCOMES**

Governing Law: *The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the Charter School. “Pupil outcomes,” for purpose 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. -- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(B)*

## **ELEMENT III: OUTCOME MEASUREMENT PROCESS**

Governing Law: *The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is measured. -- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(C)*

### **PUPIL OUTCOMES AND METHODS OF MEASUREMENT**

The goal of LVCS, to develop compassionate and contributing members of community with skills to meet the world’s challenges, will be demonstrated through several measures. Student mastery of cognitive skills, social-emotional skills, psychomotor skills and core subject knowledge will be measured through LVCS’s triangulated assessment model. This model allows for the measurement of meaningful learning, as well as content standards and state compliance. The authentic student centered assessment of the student’s own meaningful learning will primarily be demonstrated through a student selected *portfolio and self-assessment* based on appreciative inquiry formats. California State Content Standards will be measured through the *MAP, Measured Academic Performance test*, published by Northwest Evaluation Association, NWEA. This formative test is designed to show what the student has mastered and is precisely ready to learn next. It is a tool for teachers and parents to focus instruction. LVCS shall offer the MAP short survey at the beginning of the year as a diagnostic, and the larger content area goals test in the fall and spring. The *STAR test* is the third point on the triangle as a summative test and provides additional information on California standards achievement and national norm reference data.

Below is a list of ongoing pupil outcomes and assessments which help support and track student growth throughout the year in addition to the three assessments listed above.

- ***The Learning Record:*** the key document and record of assignments and attendance for independent study. It represents a maximum 20 school days for elementary students and a maximum of 10 school days for High School students. Learning Records report work completed (such as books read, field trips, classes attended and lessons accomplished in curriculum), progress toward goals, parent and teacher evaluative comments along with samples in the four core area, plus arts and electives.
  
- ***Goals:*** the basis for pupil outcomes, are created as a focal point of personalized academic study for each semester. Parents are requested to follow the learning guidelines for grade-level requirements at LVCS and will be provided a copy of learning guidelines appropriate for the grade level of their student.

- **Main Lesson Books:** from site based classes or from home are created by the students and demonstrate knowledge of core content through illustrated essays, charts, maps etc.
- **Semester Written Evaluations:** document with written observations by the Educational Coordinator with specialty teacher and parent input for the elementary student. These evaluations include anecdotal evidence of emotional, social and cognitive development, and a record of lessons completed by the pupil. It will list the key outcomes for the semester and how well the goals were met. Statements about growth achieved and recommended areas for future focus are integrated.
- **Report Cards:** at semester end and mid term **Progress Reports** for High School students are issued with traditional grades, units and comments.
- **Quizzes and chapter review tests:** are incorporated as part of the curriculum. Educational Coordinators quiz the student on the periods work, either orally or written, during the regular meetings.
- **MAP:** Measures of Academic Performance published by NWEA, Northwest Evaluation Association, a non-profit corporation, is a California State adopted alternative standardized test for the ASAM schools which is aligned with California Content Standards. However, its purpose is to help focus instruction in Reading, English Language Usage, Math and Science.
- **Portfolios:** a year end presentation and discussion in which the student, parent, and teacher choose examples of the student's work based on certain criteria that demonstrate how and what the student has learned over the past year.
- **Student Self-Assessment:** a survey in which the student identifies the meaningful learning that has occurred through the year, as well as, if appropriate, a reflection on their own effort.
- **Performances and Open House:** performances in the music, drama, dance and all-school open houses are held once or twice a year, where parents and members of the community have the opportunity to observe student work. School district members, administrators, and teachers may attend these events, assessing the quality of work for themselves.
- **Surveys and questionnaires:** are completed by pupils, staff and parents providing feedback on both established and developing programs.

The Charter School shall meet the statewide performance standards and shall conduct pupil assessments required pursuant to Education Code Section 60605, including the STAR test. Progress is assessed by use of student work and portfolios. Included in these will be a sample of the child's main lesson books, various pieces of art, and practice papers.

Parent conferences occur regularly (at a minimum during both the first and second semesters), for younger students typically every 20 school days, and at least every 10 days for high school students. Furthermore, each class teacher, or Educational Coordinator, shall prepare at the end of

each school semester an extensive student report, which shall assess the student's progress during that time for the benefit of the student and parents. Attached as **Appendix H**, please find a sample student assessment report. These assessments shall be based upon a portfolio of student work, performance assessments, enumeration of subjects adequately completed, mention of areas needing additional focus, and shall make reference to attitudes, study habits and social abilities. Included in these will be a sample of the child's main lesson books, various pieces of art, and practice papers.

It is the responsibility of the Educational Coordinator to work with parents and students to document the regular periodic progress of each student. Various means of assessing student learning may be used, including, but not limited to, written or oral communication, performances and demonstrations, and projects using different media. Learning records recognize and include the student's participation in dance, music, drama, sports, field trips, family trips and community involvement.

Learning Records for each student must be submitted to the Educational Coordinator every 20 school days for elementary students and at least every 10 school days for high school students. The main purpose of the completed learning record is:

1. To document a student's school attendance.
2. To document a student's progress towards his/her goals and objectives.
3. To recognize and commend the learning achievements of each student.

An excellent Learning Record:

1. Is complete and well organized.
2. Reflects a student's progress toward his/her goals.
3. Salutes learning achievements, breakthroughs and insights.
4. Includes evidence of learning (e.g. activities and events, beyond a list of topics).
5. Includes parent and educational-coordinator comments.

Attached as **Appendix I**, please find sample Learning Records for both the elementary and high school programs.

Parents are requested to follow the learning guidelines for grade-level requirements at LVCS and will be provided a copy of learning guidelines appropriate for the grade level of their student.

All-school open houses shall be held once or twice a year, where parents and members of the community have the opportunity to observe student work. School district members, administrators, and teachers may attend these events, assessing the quality of work for themselves.

The following charts below indicate which assessment methods will be used to assess pupil progress for each key outcome and benchmark:

**ASSESSMENT TOOL KEY:**

- ST - Standardized Testing
- PO - Portfolio Assessment
- SA - Self- Assessment
- LR - Learning Record
- ML - Main Lesson Book
- WE - Written Evaluation
- RC - Report Card and Progress Reports
- MAP - Measured Academic Progress Test
- QT - Quizzes and Chapter Review Tests
- PE - Performances of drama, music, dance, oration, etc.
- EX - Exhibits of visual arts & projects
- SQ - Surveys and Questionnaires

LVCS’s Elementary Benchmarks will be measured as follows:

<b>ELEMENTARY “BENCHMARKS”</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Ability to research and compose a written research project using different types of resources including encyclopedia, books, magazines, interviews, and the internet	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, EX, ML
Ability to read and analyze literature including short stories, poetry, plays, and short stories and longer books.	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, EX, PE, ML,
Ability to write creative and expository compositions, poetry, plays, and reports.	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, EX, PE, ML,
Ability to communicate information well in oral presentations as well as in conversation.	PO, SA, LR, WE, PE
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, SA, LR, WE, MAP, EX, ML, QT
Ability to solve practical application problems involving all four mathematical operations, common and decimal fractions, interest, time, money, and measurement.	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, QT, ML, EX
An understanding of squared 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.	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, QT, ML, EX
Ability to gather data, create graphs, perform statistical analysis, and make predictions based on available data and trends.	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, QT, ML, EX
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	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, QT, ML, EX

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.	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, QT, PE, ML
An understanding of interdependencies of human beings in society, knowledge of location of continents and countries, knowledge of location of individual states 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, SA, LR, WE, QT, ML, EX
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 human and how they were met through human history.	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, PE, EX, ML, QT
Ability to analyze a civilization and completion of at least one in-depth study project of a civilization.	PO, SA, LR, WE, EX, ML
Knowledge of American history including early humans, exploration, colonization, western expansion, presidents, social problems and solutions, California history, and government.	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, QT, EX, ML, PE
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, SA, LR, WE, MAP, QT, EX, ML
Ability to classify living organisms and to use a classification key.	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, QT, EX, ML
Completion of at least one in-depth biological research project.	PO, SA, LR, WE, EX, ML
Demonstration of knowledge of good health and nutrition through adequate exercise and 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, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, QT, EX, PE, ML
Demonstration of ability to responsibly care for animals and plants, ability to do simple sewing repairs, to plan and prepare a balanced meal, to perform basic housekeeping tasks, to use test-taking	ST, PO, SA, LR, WE, MAP, EX, PE, ML

strategies, to cross the street responsibly, to use a map to get to a location in town, to use public transportation.	
Knowledge and appreciation of famous artists, artwork, and artistic periods, including both two-dimensional and three-dimensional art, music, architecture, and performance.	PO, SA, LR, WE, EX, PE, ML

LVCS's Secondary Benchmarks will be measured as follows:

<b>SECONDARY "BENCHMARKS"</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
For college-bound student, successful completion of the necessary studies to fulfill the "A-G Requirement" of the University of California and the California State University system.	ST, PO, LR, ML, RC, MAP, QT, PE, EX
Demonstration of communication skills using multiple forms of expression, such as gestures, tone and specific vocabulary appropriate to the setting and audience	PO, SA, LR, RC, PE, SQ
Demonstrate skills in analyzing characters in literature, and be able to discuss literary devices such as figurative language, imagery, allegory, and symbolism.	ST, PO, SA, LR, RC, MAP, QT, PE, ML
Is able to show organization and focus in writing, along with precise language, action verbs, sensory detail and appropriate modifiers.	ST, PO, SA, LR, RC, MAP, QT, ML
Understands and demonstrates research and supportive writing techniques such as focus on clear question, citing sources, synthesizing information, integration of quotations and other appropriate conventions as well as proper formatting	ST, PO, SA, LR, RC, MAP, QT, ML
Ability to comprehend, discuss, analyze and evaluate multiple forms of expression, including literature from various time periods, geographic areas, and cultures.	ST, PO, SA, LR, RC, MAP, QT, PE, ML
Understand and ability to apply mathematical processes and concepts, including basic arithmetic, algebra, and geometry.	ST, PO, SA, LR, MAP, RC, QT, ML
Understands business and consumer affairs, related mathematical applications and technology.	ST, PO, SE, LR, RC, QT,
Completion of at least one service project, initiated and organized by the student, that demonstrates concern and caring for others as well as good leadership and organizational abilities.	PO, SA, LR, PE, EX
Participation in "one bagged lunches for the hungry" Saturday per year.	PO, SA, LR, RC

Demonstration on a regular basis of positive self-image, and an awareness, sensitivity and consideration of others. In addition awareness on the impact of thought, word and deed has on others.	PO, SA, LR, PE, EX
Is able to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship and interdependence between human beings and nature through the various scientific disciplines. Is able to demonstrate through research and inquiry the balance of the ecological whole.	ST, PO, SA, LR, RC, MAP, PE, EX
Completion and presentation of at least one science project that demonstrates practical application of scientific method, research skills, in-depth understanding of a particular scientific concept, and good scientific technique.	PO, SA, LR, RC, PE, EX, ML, MAP
Completion and presentation of at least one social studies project that demonstrates knowledge and appreciation of another culture.	PO, SA, LR, RC, PE, EX, ML
Understanding of the history of the development of the universe through present day civilization and demonstration of knowledge about critically important events and people	ST, PO, SA, LR, MAP, RC, PE, EX, ML, QT
Understanding of how different forms of government functions with emphasis on United states government and the role of its citizens.	ST, PO, SA, LR, RC, QT, ML, EX, PE
Demonstration of complete understanding of participatory democracy.	PO, SA, LR, PE, EX, RC, QT
Completion and presentation of a large in depth project on economics whether a small local business economy or the largest world systems.	PO, SA, LR, RC, EX,
Knowledge of health, safety, and physical fitness through demonstration of good nutrition, accident prevention first aid, exercise plan and sports skills.	ST, PO, SA, LR, MAP, PE, EX, ML
Completion of at least one self-designed elective course which reflects meaningful and relevant learning for the student.	PO, SA, LR, PE, EX, RC
Ability for creative expression through music, visual art, writing, and performance as demonstrated through projects or performances	PO, SA, LR, PE, EX
Ability to speak, read, write and listen with comprehension in at least one language in addition to the student's native tongue.	PO, SA, LR, PE, EX, ML, RC, QT
Ability to perform practical life skills, such as project planning and implementation, cooking, personal financial management, housekeeping, safe driving, completing applications developing a resume, gardening, child care, peaceful conflict resolution, etiquette, the art of conversation, hosting a party or event, and animal care.	PO, SA, LR, PE, EX, SQ

The following Core Academic Skills for LVCS pupils will be measured as follows:

<b>CORE ACADEMIC SKILLS</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Language Arts: Students will demonstrate strong reading, writing, listening, speaking, and presentation skills in multiple forms of expression (e.g., written, oral and multimedia), with communication skills appropriate to the audience. They will comprehend and critically interpret multiple forms of expression, including literature from various time periods and cultures.	ST, PO, SA, LR, ML, WE, RC, MAP, QT, PE
Mathematics: Students will develop abilities to reason logically and to understand and apply mathematical processes and concepts, including those within arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and other mathematical subjects which staff and school governing board deem appropriate.	ST, PO, SA, LR, ML, WE, RC, MAP, QT
History/Social Studies: Student will understand and apply civic, historical, and geographical knowledge in order to serve as citizens in today's world of diverse cultures.	ST, SA, PO, LR, ML, WE, RC, QT, PE, EX
Science: Students will successfully utilize scientific research and inquiry methods to understand and apply the major concepts underlying various branches of science, which may include physics, chemistry, biology, ecology, astronomy and earth sciences.	ST, PO, SA, LR, ML, WE, RC, MAP, QT, EX
World Language: Students will gain a basic level of proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and listening comprehension in at least one language in addition to their native tongues. Students will understand key aspects of the culture, both past and present, of the second language.	PO, SA, LR, WE, RC, QT, PE

The following Core, Social, and Lifelong Skills for LVCS pupils will be measured as follows:

<b>CORE, SOCIAL &amp; LIFELONG LEARNING SKILLS</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Critical thinking skills (problem solving, analyzing, and applying knowledge)	ST, PO, SA, LR, ML, WE, MAP, PE, EX
Effective use of technology	PO, SA, LR, ML, WE, RC, SQ
Creative expression through various forms of the arts, e.g.: music, visual/studio arts, drama and movement	PO, SA, LR, ML, WE, RC, PE, EX
Knowledge of pertinent issues of health and the development of physical fitness	PO, SA, LR, WE, RC, MAP, PE, EX
Strong citizenship and leadership skills by planning and implementing a project in service to the school and greater community	PO, SA, WE, LR, PE, EX, SQ
Ability to engage in responsible, compassionate peer relationships	PO, SA, WE, PE, EX, SQ
Ability to collaborate and work effectively with others in cooperative groups	PO, SA, WE, PE, EX, SQ
Study skills and habits (e.g., note taking, library research skills,	PO, SA, LR, WE, RC,

studying strategies)	ML, SQ
Ability to plan, initiate, and complete a project	PO, SA, LR, WE, PE, EX
Ability to reflect on and evaluate one's own and other's learning	PO, SA, LR, WE, PE, EX

**SCHOOL-WIDE OUTCOMES AND METHODS OF MEASUREMENT**

Below are listed the primary areas in which school outcomes are reported, observed and studied. School-wide outcomes are supported by pupil outcomes as listed in the previous section. Attached as **Appendix J**, please find results of the 2005 California Standards Test and norm reference test. Standardized test results are posted on the school's website for public information.

- **State Content Standards:** The Charter School is dedicated to documenting student achievement of the state content standards each year in its core subjects, in the order in which the students are presented with the courses through state-mandated pupil assessments. The standards are achieved through the curriculum texts and on-site classes encompass the standards. Faculty and Parents review the standards in a check-off format at least four times per year
- **State Standardized Testing:** It is the goal of the Charter School to have its students show measurable growth each academic year, as evidenced by scores on standardized testing.
- **Attendance:** It is the goal of the Charter School to strive, on average, to exceed the District average for student attendance.
- **Academic Performance Index:** It is the goal of the Charter School to meet its Academic Performance Index ("API") growth targets on an annual basis.
- **Adequate Yearly Progress:** It is the goal of the Charter School to make adequate yearly progress ("AYP") as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act ("NCLB").
- **Parent and Student Satisfaction Surveys:** It is the goal of the Charter School to survey its stakeholders annually for program efficacy and directions for future programs and achieve an average score of 8 on a scale of 1-10 for each response.

The following school-wide outcomes will be measured as follows:

<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>METHOD(S) OF MEASUREMENT</b>
State Content Standards	ST, PO, LR, MAP, CAT6, CST, Internal and External Assessments, Teacher Records, Parent/Teacher Standards Review List, Work Samples
Academic Growth	PO, SA, LR, ML, WE, MAP, RC, QT, regular verbal feedback through EC meetings, CAHSEE, Teacher Records

“Whole-Child” Development	PO, SA, LR, WE, SQ, EX, PE, Verbal Feedback, Teacher Records, MAP
Standardized Testing Growth	CAT6, CST, CELDT, CAHSEE, SAT, MAP
Attendance	LR, Attendance Records
Academic Performance Index (“API”) Growth Target	API Score
Adequate Yearly Progress	As measured by State in accordance with NCLB
Program Efficacy	ST, PO, SQ, MAP, PE, EX, Curriculum & Program Review by Teachers, College Admissions

### **USE AND REPORTING OF DATA**

LVCS collects, analyzes and reports on a variety of data related to student achievement. The Charter School utilizes this data and analysis to continuously monitor and improve our educational program.

Upon enrollment, official student records and demographic information are collected and an initial set of diagnostic assessments is administered to students in grades 3-12. Covering Math and Language Arts, including research, spelling, vocabulary, and writing skills, these tests aid in creating an individualized course of study for the student and in matching the student with a curriculum level that is developmentally appropriate. The STAR and the CAHSEE provide an overall picture of student achievement year to year and guide curriculum choices and teaching methods. As a result of an analysis of recent STAR test data that revealed gaps in Math skills, LVCS opted to change its program to one that will better address students’ demonstrated needs.

Again, using STAR data, LVCS shifted Main Lesson content so that both Language Arts and Math are offered each school day. Recent analysis of CAHSEE results showed weaknesses in writing skills even among our best students. As a result, an improved writing program is being instituted to improve student performance in this area. As part of LVCS’s data analysis program, a consulting expert will examine results of all State tests and interpret the data. LVCS has been using the Pearson Developmental Reading Assessment (“DRA”), which has been an excellent tool but will be phased out in favor of the newly adopted MAP test of the Northwest Evaluation Association. MAP, or Measures of Academic Progress, is broader than the DRA and is tied to standards and instruction. This test, scheduled three times per year, will be given for the first time this spring. Reporting on student achievement to parents, staff, the District, and the public occurs in several ways. It is accomplished through the STAR teacher report; the La Vida Charter School Annual Report; the SARC, or School Accountability Report Card, known as the Fact Sheet, available online at the school’s website; and school newsletters.

Staff will receive data on student achievement and will use this data to help monitor and improve the School’s education program.

Parents and guardians will receive data on student achievements at least one time per semester through EC and parent meetings, progress reports, and report cards. Also, students and ECs discuss student progress during regularly scheduled meetings. Additionally high school students receive quarterly progress reports.

The Charter School will compile and provide to the District Board of Education an annual performance report. This report will, at a minimum, include the following data:

- Summary data showing student progress toward the goals and outcomes listed above.
- An analysis of whether general student performance is meeting the goals specified in above. This data will be displayed on both a school-wide basis and subject area categories to the extent feasible without compromising student confidentiality.
- A summary of major decisions and policies established by the Charter School Charter Board during the year.
- Data on the level of parent involvement in the Charter School's governance (and other aspects of the school, if applicable) and summary data from an annual parent and student satisfaction survey.
- Data regarding the number of staff working at the school and their qualifications.
- A copy of the school's health and safety policies and/or a summary of any major changes to those policies during the year.
- Information demonstrating whether the Charter School implemented the means listed in the charter to strive to achieve a racially and ethnically balanced student population.
- An overview of the Charter School's admissions practices during the year and data regarding the numbers of students enrolled, the number on waiting lists and the numbers of students expelled and/or suspended.
- Analyses of the effectiveness of the Charter School's internal and external dispute mechanisms and data on the number and resolution of disputes and complaints.
- Other information regarding the educational program and the administrative, legal and governance operations of the Charter School relative to compliance with the terms of the charter generally.

The Charter School and District Board of Education will jointly develop the content, evaluation criteria, timelines and process for the annual performance report. The Charter School will use the information compiled in the performance report to evaluate and improve upon its educational programming as necessary.

## **ELEMENT IV: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

*Governing Law:* The governance structure of the school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement. -- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(D)

### **NON-PROFIT PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION**

The Charter School shall operate as a separate legal entity, independent of the District. The Charter School will be operated as a duly constituted California non-profit public benefit corporation, and will be governed in accordance with applicable California Corporations Code Sections and its adopted bylaws which shall be consistent with the terms of this charter. As provided for in the California Corporations Code, the Charter School will be governed by its Board of Directors, whose members have a legal fiduciary responsibility for the well-being of the Charter School.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), the District, in performing its oversight of the Charter School as required by Education Code Section 47604.32, shall not be liable for the debts and obligations of the School or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by the charter school. Attached as **Appendix K**, please find the Articles of Incorporation and Corporate Bylaws for the Charter School.

### **CHARTER BOARD**

The Board of Directors for La Vida Charter School will be referred to as the Charter Board. The bylaws call for five (5) members to sit on the Charter Board. The bylaws provide for one additional representative of the Willits Unified School District as appointed by the Board to serve on the Charter Board, which would then result in a 6 member board

The Charter Board will be responsible for the proposal of all recommended modifications to the LVCS charter. Any modifications will require a majority vote of the full Charter Board. Any Charter Board recommendations for a material revision of the LVCS charter must be approved by the Willits Unified School District Board of Education prior to implementation in accordance with Education Code Section 47607.

The Charter Board will evaluate all LVCS programs annually. The evaluation will be used to determine the effectiveness of Charter School programs and provide direction for program improvements.

Attached as **Appendix L**, please find a list of the current Charter Board members and brief biographical information for each.

## **CHARTER BOARD DUTIES**

The Charter Board, with the assistance of the Charter School Director, will be responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of the school including, but not limited to, the following:

- Approval of the annual school budget, calendar, salary schedules, major fundraising events, and grant writing;
- Negotiation and Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) or other contracts with the School District;
- Approval of all contracts, contract renewals, and personnel actions (e.g. hiring, discipline, dismissal);
- Approval of bylaws, resolutions, and policies and procedures of school operation;
- Approval of all changes to the school charter to be submitted as necessary in accordance with applicable law;
- Long-term strategic planning for the School;
- Participation as necessary in dispute resolution;
- Monitoring overall student performance;
- Filling the position of School Director;
- Evaluation of the School Director;
- Monitoring the performance of the Charter School and taking necessary action to ensure that the school remains true to its mission and charter;
- Monitoring the fiscal solvency of the School;
- Participation in the School independent fiscal audit;
- Participation in the Charter School performance audit;
- Participation as necessary in student expulsion matters; and
- Increasing public awareness of the Charter School.

The Charter School will update the District of changes to the Charter Board.

The Charter Board may initiate and carry out any program or activity that is not in conflict with or inconsistent with any law and which is not in conflict with the purposes for which charter schools are established.

### **CHARTER BOARD MEETINGS**

The Charter Board will meet on at least a once monthly basis, except in July, to review and act on its responsibilities. All meetings shall be held in accordance with the Brown Act.

The State Board of Education is in the process of adopting regulations specific to conflicts of interest in charter schools. The Charter School shall comply with these regulations. Until such time as these are adopted, the Charter School shall comply with the Political Reform Act, the Corporations Code, and Government Code Section 1090 or any other applicable conflicts of interest laws.

The Charter Board meetings will be headed by a President, who will be elected by the Charter Board on an as-needed basis.

As long as quorum exists as defined by the corporate bylaws, measures voted on by the Charter Board may be passed with a simple majority of present members.

The Charter Board shall be provided with ongoing information and training regarding board governance, Brown Act, and conflicts of interest rules.

### **CHARTER SCHOOL DIRECTOR**

The Charter Board shall employ a Director who will be responsible for administering the school in all aspects of its day to day operations, working with the Charter Board, the School District, students, parents, and community members and the other governing bodies specified by local and state law. The Director's duties shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide instructional leadership to the Charter School;
- Stay in direct contact with the District to assist the District in its oversight duties;
- Develop Charter Board meeting agenda in compliance with the Brown Act; bring matters forward to the Charter Board for agendaing;
- Supervise all employees of the Charter School;
- Provide timely performance evaluations of all Charter School employees at least biannually;
- Proposals of policies for adoption by the Charter Board;

- Provide comments and recommendations regarding policies presented by others to the Charter Board;
- Communicating with Charter School legal counsel;
- Staying abreast of school laws and regulations;
- Approval of all purchase orders, pay warrants, and requisitions and upon approval, forward on for processing;
- Participation in the dispute resolution procedure and the complaint procedure when necessary;
- Grant writing;
- Attend meetings with the Chief Financial Officer of the District on fiscal oversight issues periodically, or as requested;
- Provide all legally required financial reports to the District;
- Make budget line item revisions when necessary and report changes regularly to the Charter Board;
- Development and administration of the budget in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;
- Presentation of at least three interim financial reports per year to the Charter Board;
- Provide assistance and coordination to the Faculty in the development of curriculum;
- Oversee parent/student/teacher relations;
- Attendance at IEP meetings when necessary;
- Student disciplinary matters;
- Coordinate the administration of Standardized Testing;
- Plan and coordinate student orientation;
- Attendance at all Charter Board meetings and attendance as necessary at District Board meetings;
- Site safety;

- Fostering an amicable relationship between District and Charter School and facilitate a sharing of resources between both entities;
- Establish a Communication Model to facilitate communication among all the groups within the Charter School, between the Charter School and the District, and between the Charter School and the community at large;
- Proposal of procedures to Charter Board designed to carry out Charter Board policies;
- Scheduling;
- Graduations;
- Manage communications between District and Charter Board;
- Develop the Charter School annual programmatic audit;
- Present performance audit to the Charter Board and upon review of the Charter Board present audit to the District Board of Education and the District Superintendent; and
- Facilitate open house events.

The above duties may be delegated or contracted as approved by the Charter Board to another employee, a parent volunteer (only in accordance with student and teacher confidentiality rights) or to a third party provider as allowed by applicable law.

### **PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

LVCS's goal of commitment to community is supported by strong interactions between the school and the surrounding community. Students are involved in the community in a number of ways such as 1) participation and collaboration with other schools; 2) work training; 3) in community study and action; and 4) organizing and participating in community events.

Parent and student participation in the operation of LVCS is key to its success. By the very nature of independent study, parents and students are active participants in student learning. They collaborate with Educational Coordinators in planning and fulfilling coursework. Parents also play a primary role in governance through their seats on the school's Charter Board. They are critical to the fiscal health of LVCS. Parents are involved at every level in fundraising programs. Beyond this, they have initiated a series of ongoing workshops on the challenges that parents face as primary teachers.

LVCS absolutely depends on parent involvement. The school asks that each family volunteer four (4) hours per month or forty (40) hours per year. Most families do at least that amount. The

Harvest Faire, which the school community hosts for the larger community in collaboration with the Butler Cherry Project, is entirely supported by the efforts of the Charter Board and parents. Other community events and fundraisers organized and staffed by parents were “Pastels on the Plaza” (sponsorship gathering), “Greetings From La Vida Charter School” card creation and promotion, and “Spring Into Life” community dance. Other parent participation activities include Charter Board membership, work in the classroom and on the playground, bringing snacks for the group, cleaning, maintenance, field trips, fundraising, and special services are donated by business and professional parents. No tuition or other fees are required of families enrolled in LVCS.

## **ELEMENT V: QUALIFICATIONS OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES**

*Governing Law: The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the School. -- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(E)*

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(1), La Vida Charter School will be non-sectarian in its employment practices and all other operations. LVCS shall not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender or disability.

In general, employees also are expected to possess sensitivity to individual student needs and flexibility in designing an evolving model alternative education program to address those needs.

### **TEACHERS/EDUCATIONAL COORDINATORS**

The La Vida Charter School will retain or employ teaching staff that hold a Commission on Teaching Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold. These documents shall be maintained on file at the Charter School and are subject to periodic inspection by the District. Flexibility will be given to courses that are both noncore and noncollege preparatory. Additionally, teachers at LVCS must satisfy the requirements for highly qualified teachers under the No Child Left Behind Act. All teachers are expected to maintain up-to-date credentials through pursuit of continuing education units. All requirements for employment under the law, including, but not limited to credentials, will be met and annually reported to the District upon request.

In addition, the Charter School will give preference to teachers who hold a teaching certificate from a recognized Waldorf teacher training institute or college, or completion of at least two years of successful teaching experience in a Waldorf methods School, or some combination of Waldorf training, education, and/or experience which makes the candidate qualified by Charter Board standards. Employees of LVCS are expected to have Waldorf training and/or experience and home school or independent study training and/or experience. At the very least, LVCS requires employees to demonstrate an interest in Waldorf methods and training, and home schooling and independent study.

Professional service agreements may be used to hire specialty noncore and noncollege class teachers on a limited basis. Specialty instructors must have the qualifications requisite for the task they are to perform. Persons employed through professional service agreements need not be credentialed teachers and will be paid on an hourly basis.

### **DIRECTOR**

The key characteristics required of the Director are leadership, administrative, and communication skills; experience and/or knowledge of education systems and legislation, including charter and independent study; an ability to collaborate with students, teachers, parents, Charter Board members, school district staff, and governmental representatives; and a commitment to and willingness to undertake shared decision-making processes in development of the school. It is desirable that the Director be credentialed with either a teaching or

administrative credential and have experience in teaching and/or education. Also, a Bachelor of Arts degree is required and a Master of Arts degree is preferred.

**ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY/ REGISTRAR**

The Registrar/Secretary position requires proficiency in office management, including technical skills, and in financial management, including accounting, payroll procedures and budgeting; and the capability to multi-task and work independently. A Bachelor's or Associate's degree is desirable, as is clerical experience in a school setting.

**BUSINESS SECRETARY**

The Business Secretary position requires knowledge and experience with book keeping, cash receipts, accounts payable, general office equipment, filing procedures, computer literacy. People skills and organizational skills are also necessary.

## **ELEMENT VI: HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS**

*Governing Law: The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall include the requirement that each employee of the school furnish the school record summary as described in Section 44237. -- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(F)*

La Vida Charter School has adopted and implemented a plan that addresses health, safety, and risk management policies for its site at Ridgewood Ranch.

### **Procedures for Background Checks**

The Charter School will comply with the provisions of Education Code Section 44237 and 45125.1 regarding the fingerprinting and background clearance of employees, contractors and volunteers prior to employment, volunteering, or contract services or any unsupervised contact with pupils of the Charter School. The Director of the Charter School shall review Department of Justice reports on prospective employees/ contractors; volunteers to determine whether an employee may be employed in accordance with Education Code Section 44237 or 45125.1, except with respect to her or himself, in which case the President of the Charter Board will review. The Director shall monitor compliance with this policy and report to the Charter Board on a quarterly basis.

### **Role of Staff as Mandated Child Abuse Reporters**

All classified and certificated staff will be mandated child abuse reporters and will follow all applicable reporting laws, the same policies and procedures used by the District.

### **TB Testing**

The Charter School will follow the requirement of Education Code Section 49406 in requiring tuberculosis testing of all employees.

### **Immunizations**

The Charter School will adhere to all laws related to legally required immunizations for entering students pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 120325-120375, and Title 17, California Code of Regulations, Sections 6000-6075. This requirement is applied to the same extent as it would be at a non-charter public school.

### **Medication in School**

The Charter School will adhere to Education Code Section 49423 regarding administration of medication in school. Medication is kept in a locked cabinet and is available to the student only if written instructions and approval from the physician and guardian are on file.

### **Vision/Hearing/Scoliosis**

The Charter School shall adhere to Education Code Section 49450 et. seq. as applicable to the grade levels served by the Charter School. This provision is to be applied to the same extent as it would be at non-charter public school.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

The Charter School shall adhere to an Emergency Preparedness Handbook drafted specifically to the needs of the school site. The Charter Board is currently working with the school's insurance carrier to draft an expanded site-specific plan. This handbook shall include, but not be limited to, the following responses: OSHA policy compliance, fire, flood, and earthquake, terrorist threats and hostage situations and shall be submitted for District receipt and review by June 30, 2006. This handbook also shall include an evacuation plan, and general school safety, injury and illness prevention. In addition, the school offers CPR training for its staff every two years.

### **Bloodborne Pathogens**

The Charter School shall meet state and federal standards for dealing with bloodborne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials in the workplace. The Board has established a written "Exposure Control Plan" designed to protect employees from possible infection due to contact with bloodborne viruses, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV).

Whenever exposed to blood or other body fluids through injury or accident, students and staff should follow the latest medical protocol for disinfecting procedures.

### **Drug Free/Smoke Free Environment**

The Charter School shall maintain a drug and alcohol and smoke free environment.

### **Procedures**

The Charter School shall adopt procedures to implement the policy statements listed above prior to operation, no later than August 30, 2006.

**ELEMENT VII:  
RACIAL AND ETHNIC BALANCE**

*Governing Law: The means by which the school will achieve racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted. -- California Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(G)*

The La Vida Charter School recognizes its legal and social responsibility to take all feasible and legal steps to attract a student population that is reflective of the racial and ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in the Willits Unified School District. La Vida Charter School will implement a student recruitment strategy that includes, but is not limited to, the following elements or strategies to ensure a racial and ethnic and socioeconomic balance of students, which reflects the diversity of the District it serves:

- The development of promotional and informational material that appeals to the varied racial, ethnic and socioeconomic populations represented in the community. LVCS has a beautiful brochure that is widely distributed throughout our county and contiguous counties. The name "La Vida" is Spanish for "life" and invites the Latino community due to the fact that the name is in Spanish. We always have an ad in the local family journal, a monthly, and run radio promotions at certain times throughout the year as recruitment for the LVCS program.
- The organization of, and participation in, outreach meetings that will include prospective students and parents of varied racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. LVCS gets out and participates in community events with booths, children's activities and promotional materials several times throughout the year in order to maintain a significant community presence. The Good Ol' Time Harvest Faire, LVCS's own event, is an inexpensive yet exciting day in the country full of old fashioned fun activities. This is attended by a cross section of the community. The Charter School also participates in Cinco de Mayo, Cherishing Youth Day (International celebration), Pastels on the Plaza, the Celtic Faire, Science Faire & Family Expo, and Scarecrow City. La Vida Charter School students also have a booth in the Holiday Faire at the Willits Community Center. LVCS exhibits student art work annually at the Willits and Ukiah Libraries, local cafes and health food store, and in the Art Under 20 exhibit at the Willits Community Center and more. This community presence activates interest in the Charter School from a diverse range of families that typically reflects the area. LVCS has fluent Spanish speaking teachers on staff who offer tours and informational sessions with the Spanish speaking community members.
- The distribution of promotional and informational packages to a broad variety of community groups and agencies that serve various racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups within the community. Translated promotional and informational documents will be made available. LVCS has a quality translation of its brochure in Spanish and has had other promotional materials in Spanish in the past. LVCS has an information exchange relationship with Nuestra Casa which is the cultural/educational focal point for the Latino

community. The Charter School shares flyers and information about classes and events back and forth. Brochures are displayed at the district office, other charter schools, libraries, public health center, regional center, hospital, numerous business and places where families and home schoolers may visit.

- Translation will be provided at school meetings as needed or requested.

## **ELEMENT VIII: ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS**

Governing Law: *Admission Requirements, if applicable. -- Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(H)*

La Vida Charter School will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, and all other operations, and will not charge tuition nor discriminate against any student based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability.

Admission to the La Vida Charter School will require a Written Contract (“Contract”) between the parent, student and the Charter School agreeing to the goals, objectives and mission of the school.

LVCS will actively recruit a diverse student population from Mendocino County and surrounding areas who understand the value of the school’s mission and vision and are committed to the school’s instructional and operational philosophy. Admission to the school shall be open to any resident of Mendocino County and contiguous counties. Pupils will be considered for admission without regard to ethnicity, national origin, gender or disability.

Upon admission to LVCS, the enrollment process is comprised of the following:

- Completion of a student enrollment form;
- Proof of Immunization;
- Home Language Survey;
- Completion of Emergency Medical Information Form;
- Proof of minimum age requirements, e.g. birth certificate;
- Demonstration of an understanding of the schools philosophy and expected outcomes;
- Selection of the student’s educational alternatives;
- Creation of Personal Education Plan (“Plan”) for the students learning; and
- Sign a Master Agreement which includes the definition of:
  1. The parent’s availability to be the primary teacher of the student.
  2. The parent’s involvement in academic teaching and support.
  3. Mandatory parent and/or student attendance at scheduled progress meetings.
  4. Agreement to take the Measured Academic Performance Test (MAP)

Upon acceptance and prior to admission to LVCS program, parents will be asked to sign a Contract that will request support of the following, as well as other requirements:

- Limit of electronic media influences such as television, movies, video games, etc.;
- Dress Code: for example, no advertising or violent insignias on clothes or lunch boxes;
- Commitment to provide a home environment that is nurturing and conducive to learning; and
- The willingness of the parent to gain understanding of the chosen curriculum and willingness of the parent to support and guide the education in the home.

If the number of students who wish to attend the school exceeds the school's capacity, attendance, except for existing students of the LVCS, shall be determined by a random public drawing. In the case of a public random drawing, the following will be given preference for admission to the school:

1. Children of the school's Charter Board;
2. Children of school staff;
3. Siblings of students currently enrolled in the school; and
4. Students who reside in the District.

The hierarchy of preferences listed are in the order of admission preference. If the capacity is exceeded within a preference, the public random drawing will occur within that preference until all spaces are filled. All applications drawn after reaching capacity will be placed on a wait-list.

**ELEMENT IX:  
ANNUAL AUDIT**

*Governing Law: The manner in which annual, independent, financial audits shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority. -- Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(H)*

LVCS shall retain an independent auditor using a request for proposals format and shall select and retain an auditor having significant education audit experience who is listed on the State Controllers Office list of education auditors. The audit will include items and processes specified in any applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars. The Charter School audit will include items and processes specified in any applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars and shall comply with Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 19850-19854. The annual audit will be completed within four months of the close of the fiscal year. A copy of the auditor's findings will be provided to the LVCS Charter Board Finance Committee, the Willits Unified School District, the State Controller, the county superintendent of Schools, and the California Department of Education by December 15<sup>th</sup> each year.

The governance structure for LVCS includes a Finance Committee, which operates as a subcommittee of the Charter Board. When the audit findings have been reviewed by the District fiscal office, a copy of the findings, as they pertain to LVCS, will be presented to the Charter Board, which will refer the findings to the Finance Committee for review and comment. If the audit includes exceptions or deficiencies, the District may provide the Charter Board Finance Committee with recommendations as to how the deficiencies can be resolved. The Finance Committee will review any exceptions or deficiencies and the recommendations of the District fiscal office and report them to the LVCS Charter Board. As directed by the Charter Board, the LVCS Director and/or Administrator/Business Manager will work with the District fiscal office to resolve the deficiencies to the satisfaction of the District. La Vida and its agents agree to implement all audit recommendations unless other terms are agreed to between the District and La Vida.

**ELEMENT X:  
STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

*Governing Law: The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled. -- California Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(J)*

LVCS shall provide due process to all students prior to acting to suspend or expel in accordance with an adopted Student Suspension and Expulsion Policy. Attached as **Appendix M**, please find the Charter School's Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedure.

**ELEMENT XI:  
RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

*Governing Law: The manner by which staff members of the Charter Schools will be covered by the State Teachers' Retirement System, the Public Employee's Retirement System, or federal social security. -- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(K)*

The retirement plan includes participation by teachers working at least 20 hours per week in the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS). Teachers may opt to also participate in the federal social security system. Non-certificated staff working at least 20 hours per week will participate in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and the federal Social Security system. Staff at the La Vida Charter School will have access to other school sponsored retirement plans according to policies developed by the Charter Board and adopted as the school's employee policies. All staff who work less than 20 hours per week will participate in the federal Social Security System.

**ELEMENT XII:  
STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

*Governing Law: The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools. -- Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(L)*

All students in the Willits Unified School district who do not wish to attend the La Vida Charter School may choose to attend other district schools or pursue an interdistrict transfer in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of the District or potential receiving school districts.

**ELEMENT XIII:  
RETURN RIGHTS OF EMPLOYEES**

*Governing Law: A description of the rights of any employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter school. -- Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(M)*

La Vida Charter School employees will not be covered by existing Willits Unified School District employee agreements, or by laws relating to school districts or school district personnel. All LVCS employees shall be considered employees of the Charter School and not the District.

Employees of the District who chose to leave the employment of the District to work at LVCS shall have no automatic right of return to the District after employment at LVCS unless specifically granted by the District through a leave of absence or other agreement of the District as aligned with the collective bargaining agreements of the District.

Hiring, supervision/evaluation, and termination practices for La Vida Charter School employees will comply with all applicable laws, as further outlined in the Charter School's employee handbook and personnel policies. Attached as **Appendix N**, please find a draft copy of the La Vida Charter School Employee Handbook, which is currently being updated to reflect all applicable laws and regulations. This will be submitted to the District by June 30, 2006.

**ELEMENT XIV:  
DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

*Governing Law: The procedures to be followed by the Charter School and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter. -- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(N)*

In the event of a dispute between the District and LVCS, staff representatives of both the District and LVCS shall meet to review, discuss and attempt informal resolution. If no resolution is reached, representatives will inform their respective boards in the event that it is an issue that needs to go to the Board level. If the District staff believe it is an issue that may lead to revocation, the District will so notify LVCS in writing.

On significant issues that are not related to possible revocation, either LVCS or the District may request the other party to jointly use the services of a facilitator or mediator to assist the parties in working on a possible resolution. If both parties agree to such process, the expense of the facilitator/mediator shall be split between the parties. At such mediation/facilitation, each party shall select their own representatives to attend and participate.

**ELEMENT: XV**  
**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION**

*Governing Law: A declaration whether or not the Charter School shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the Charter School for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. -- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O)*

The La Vida Charter School shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employee of the Charter School for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act (Cal. Govt. Code Section 3540 et. seq.).

## **ELEMENT XVI: CLOSURE PROTOCOL**

*Governing Law:* A description of the procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the charter school, including plans for the disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records. -- California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(N)

The following procedures shall apply in the event the School closes. The following procedures apply regardless of the reason for closure.

Closure of the Charter School will be documented by official action of the Charter School Charter Board. The action will identify the reason for closure.

The Charter Board will promptly notify the District of the closure and of the effective date of the closure.

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

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

As soon as reasonably practical, the Charter School will prepare final financial records. The Charter School will also have an independent audit completed as soon as reasonably practical, which period is generally no more than six months after closure. The Charter School will pay for the final audit. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant from the State Controllers list of education auditors selected by the Charter School and will be provided to the District promptly upon its completion.

On closure of the Charter School, all assets of the Charter School, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property and all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by students attending the Charter School, remain the sole property of the Charter School and shall be distributed in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation upon the dissolution of the nonprofit public benefit corporation. On closure, the Charter School shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of the Charter School.

As the Charter School is organized as a nonprofit public benefit corporation, the Charter School Charter Board will follow the procedures set forth in the California Corporations Code for the dissolution of a nonprofit public benefit corporation and file all necessary filings with the

appropriate state and federal agencies. Dissolution of the corporation shall occur no later than sixty (60) calendar days from the completion of the audit, closing of the books, payment of debts, distribution of assets, and appropriate distribution of files.