

While reading this application, please understand that the educational program we will create is rooted in our collective years of experience in classrooms with students, our reflections on teaching and learning, and our understandings of the research on brain theory. We also want to state clearly at the outset of this application that our primary goal is to provide rich, diverse, meaningful learning experiences that are ‘brain satisfying’ for children today as they grow. The by-product of this active and relevant learning will be a competent work force where these students will apply their creative and flexible thinking, interpersonal and communication skills, and habits of problem identification and solution-seeking. We are nurturing the whole person not just the future worker.

1. Give the long range vision (5-10 years) and the goals (of at least the first year) of the school.

“...the purpose of education is to allow each individual to come into full possession of his or her personal power.”

- John Dewey

All time, energy, and creativity brought to this project is done so with the expectation that the end result will be a place where all children and adults will recognize and use their personal power to achieve their full potential and in so doing improve the world around them. *This is our **vision***; the vision of what we would like to imagine education can be for all of us. As Carl Glickman (1993) states, *our **covenant** is “ . . . our sacred obligation to spend a life in accordance with it (the vision) . . . (Our covenant) is where a school plants its feet, the place from which it will not be moved.”*

We covenant to create learning places where all participants are challenged to discover, use, and increase their personal power. These learning places may be inside traditional classrooms studying traditional disciplines. These learning places may be out-of-doors, in parks, in wilderness camps, on a ropes course, or on a work-site for a new school building. These learning places may be in the world of work, in the graphic arts lab of an advertising agency, in the library of a law office, in the accountant’s office or in the classroom teaching music to preschoolers.

Physical location is only the beginning of the differences in the learning places we will create. The primary change will occur in our hearts and minds. By screening decisions through a filter which asks “How will this impact the learning of students? their ability to build personal power? the quality of their future learning and experience?” We will be proactive in creating and maintaining the desired learning place. Decisions regarding instruction, discipline, finances, hiring, and resources will be based on creating the most learning possible for each learner.

The parents, teachers, and students engaged in this endeavor have determined that the status quo is not good enough. Mediocrity is unacceptable. In order to have a positive impact on our society and our world, each of us must be a person of quality with a clear understanding of the reality in which we live as well as dream and a plan for making our world better . . . one human being at a time. We covenant to create a place where all children and adults are challenged to realize their personal power and accept responsibility for improving the world around them.

Specifically, we will:

- improve student learning;
- create a *collegial* school where all participants hold the learning of the students as the top priority;
- create a curriculum which enriches the learner's life experiences through the academic disciplines, the world of work, the world of service and the discovery of self;
- use instructional approaches which are research-based, varied, authentic, and build the personal power of each learner;
- provide parents, students and teachers with expanded choice, privilege and responsibility; and,
- build community and business relationships which strengthen the educational program, inform students, and build confidence and motivation for the world of work.

Long Range Vision (5-10 years)

Phase I: The focus of the project in years one through three will be:

- beginning the educational program for students in grades K-7,
- obtaining a permanent site, and
- constructing a new facility.

Enrollment rates will be set based on our ability to remain true to the purpose of the school. It is estimated that a 15-30% increase in enrollment each year will be manageable. A maximum enrollment of 600 (K-12) by the end of the term of the initial charter (2003) is feasible.

Phase II: Based on interest and need created through the advancements of middle school level students, grades 8-12 will be added one year at a time beginning in year two (2).

Phase III: Expanding faculty and programs will be the focus of years three through seven.

Program Innovations:

- II **Daily instruction will be based on on-going assessment of individual student need.**
- II **Student/teacher ratio of 15-1.**
- II **Student demonstration of mastery of the standards and benchmarks will determine**

movement from one instructional level to the next without regard to traditional units of time or student age.

II Evaluation is on-going and constant.

II Mentorships/internships will be created for all students in businesses and the community. (See attached list of business collaborations in Appendix).

- Agreements will be developed between students, parents, and teachers regarding learning goals, responsibility and accountability for their attainment.
- Students will develop skills of evaluating their work process and products based on the use of portfolios, rubrics, and exhibitions.
- Student-led three-way conferences will be held three times per year.
- Reports to parents regarding student progress will be:

Primary Level - Benchmarks on a continuum of skills in the core curriculum accompanied by a narrative.

Intermediate Level - Narrative report based on progress to learning goals supported by a portfolio.

Middle Level - Narrative report based on progress toward learning goals supported by portfolio and with student and teacher collaboration.

- Younger students will participate in community service projects within the school environment and the immediate neighborhood while older students will participate in service projects in the wider community.
- The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) will facilitate a recycling and composting program and certify our faculty in water quality testing. This will allow students to monitor the water quality index of an Austin tributary.
- Foreign language classes will be offered and encouraged beginning in kindergarten. We will be developing a Foreign Pen Pal Program with Motorola's European Sector.
- Regular parent sessions will be developed emphasizing parenting, helping with homework, and other topics of interest.
- Family nights will emphasize a curricular focus or unit of study each quarter.
- Regularly scheduled cookouts will be held during the school day for parents and business

partners to observe and engage with students and teachers at work.

- Casual uniforms with school logo will be adopted.
- Classroom teachers will be certified in gifted and special education (within the first 2-3 years).
- We will implement an “Explorer Program” offered by the Boy Scout of America for boys and girls over the age of 14 (beginning in year three).
- Our students will be hosting meetings, including preparing meals, for a local charity, The West Austin Lions Club. The proceeds will offset field trip expenses.

Quality Indicators

- 👍 95% of all students will score at or above state average on state assessment instruments with no significant differences between subgroups (i.e., gender, ethnicity, SES)
 - 👍 Student growth as measured by TLI on the TAAS will be a minimum of one year per school year.
 - 👍 Learning will be *child-centered* and *supported by teacher* direct-instruction as needed.
 - 👍 An integrated curriculum will be created based on brain research, Bloom’s Taxonomy, multiple intelligence’s theory.
 - 👍 Homework will be meaningful and purposeful.
 - 👍 **Daily assessment** of student work will drive decision-making for instruction.
 - 👍 Quality classroom interactions and community involvement experiences will be evidence that all learners (students, parents, and teachers) are coming into “full possession of their personal power.”
 - 👍 All teachers will participate in common training, developing like understandings and practices across all instructional levels in addition to obtaining TAG and SpEd certifications.
2. **Describe the governing structure of the open-enrollment charter, including board composition, selection process and responsibilities. Also describe the role of administrators, faculty, parents, students, and community members in the leadership and decision-making of the school.**

The Governing Council shall consist of:

- the school Principal who will serve as the Chair;
- three (3) Teachers, elected by teaching faculty;
- three (3) Parents, elected by the parent body of the school, and;
- two (2) Community/Business members, elected by the school membership.

(See Bylaws, page 2, Article IV, Section 4.01-4.09 for selection criteria, and page 6, Article VII, Sections 7.01-7.10 for election guidelines.)

The role of the Council shall be to represent the students, parents, staff, and community by bringing their expertise, experience and collective wisdom to the table solely for the best interest of all children enrolled at NYOS Charter School. The Council shall have the following responsibilities, (See Bylaws, page 2, Article IV, Section 4.08):

- 1 Make personnel decisions regarding the school’s Principal, including hiring and removal;
- 1 develop goals and objectives for the school;
- 1 establish school policies;
- 1 review and approve the budget;
- 1 negotiate with and be accountable to the Texas Education Agency; and
- 1 provide a listening, attentive ear to the school community.

Students will play an integral role on the Council through presentations and collective statements regarding the educational program. Eventually, students will serve on the Governing Council in an advisory capacity as the educational program is developed. The Governing Council will utilize committees comprised of school members to analyze options on different issues a report their conclusions for adoption of programs.

3. Describe the educational program to be offered, including the required curriculum under Texas Education Code (TEC) 28.002, and student attendance requirements.

In designing the educational program and its curriculum, teachers have reflected upon what adults do in their lives and what knowledge and competencies are required to be successful. The results of that discussion serve as the backdrop for decisions regarding curriculum development and instruction.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to discuss the curriculum outside of issues such as learning environment, instructional approaches and resources, personnel, and assessment. We will begin by stating that the state curriculum will serve as the minimum standard for the educational program. This decision is based on the realization that students will enter and exit educational programs over time. It is our responsibility to provide some consistent baseline of knowledge. All students will be given the opportunity and encouraged to take at least one foreign language. All students will receive keyboarding instruction. Beyond these minimums, the possibilities are completely open.

Decisions dealing with curriculum and instruction will be based on

- 1) student interests,
- 2) students needs as determined by assessment, and
- 3) the state minimum requirements.

Students will generate topics of interest, questions, and authentic problems which will guide curricular decisions. Early in the year, a three-way conference will be held including the parents, student and teacher. The purpose of the conference is to review assessments, identify student needs and interests, set learning goals for the year, and covenant together the shared responsibility for reaching those goals. Two follow-up conferences will be held over the course of the year to monitor progress.

Teachers will be trained in literacy development, reading instruction, process-writing, problem-solving, and assessment, as well as brain research. All teachers will have or seek certification in gifted education and special education in order to **meet the diverse needs of every learner in their charge**. Individual learning plans (ILP) will be developed throughout the year based on the goals of the conference and the current topic of study.

The educational program will be organized in a multi-age non-graded format with teachers looping with classes for a minimum of two years. Once mastery has been demonstrated, a conference will be held to determine the appropriateness of advancement to the next level. In the conference, participants will consider not only the student's level of mastery, quality of demonstration, and social development but will also review the general appropriateness of the advancement. Advancement may occur at any time during the school year and is not based on age, semesters, or other traditional units, but rather on the student's ability to demonstrate mastery of the benchmark knowledge and skills described in the standards. These standards and performance tasks will be developed by staff and presented to students and parents in the fall conference. *Advancement decisions will be made on a case by case basis with no intent to set or follow precedents.*

Primary Level

Traditional grade levels K - 3 will be considered primary. These levels will be viewed as fluid to allow each student the time necessary to develop and demonstrate mastery of the foundation curriculum.

The curricular and instructional focus for the early grades will be on reading, process-writing, concept development, and social skills. Through teacher and peer presentations, students will acquire background knowledge in the sciences, social studies and literature. The purpose of the early grades is to master the language in all its forms: reading, writing and spelling, listening and speaking. A second focus is problem solving in many different settings. The development of math concepts and reasoning, scientific thinking, and inter/intra-personal conflict will be central to the primary curriculum. Class groups will be given opportunities to create and run businesses which provide authentic settings for the application and integration of literacy, numeracy, planning

and organizing and development of social skills.

Students will be the primary players in this instructional setting. Teachers will be expected to watch their learners, notice strengths and approximations, identify teaching points and design instructional activities which will result in the mastery of the content and skills as well as develop the students' personal power and responsibility for learning.

Evaluation of performance assessments collected in a student created portfolio will be the basis for judging student mastery of the content, competencies, and personal development criteria. Teacher-made rubrics will be used for this evaluation. Formal assessments will be reviewed as well.

Intermediate Level

Traditional grade levels 4-5 will be considered intermediate. Multi-age grouping will continue at the intermediate level. Students will begin to apply their reading, writing, speaking, and problem-solving skills to conduct small group and individual research, experiments, and performance tasks.

Teacher modeling and classroom demonstrations will be used to expose students to a variety of presentation techniques which they in turn might use to demonstrate their own mastery of content and competencies. For example, a teacher will create computer slide shows to introduce a topic of study on the Civil War. After using this technology, students will learn how to create a slide presentation and later use it to demonstrate their understandings of electrical currents in a presentation for their peers.

Integration of the disciplines is central to this curriculum design. The sciences will be taught in and through geography, history, and literature. Pre-algebra concepts will be taught using manipulatives and concrete demonstrations. Teachers will be trained in Bloom's Taxonomy and multiple intelligence's so that instructional units of study include a wide variety of tasks that stretch students' thinking and present opportunities for creativity, practice in planning and organizing, and authentic application of knowledge.

As students demonstrate mastery of the content and skills necessary to function in the middle level, a conference will be held to review the student's portfolio, formal and informal assessments, and social/personal development. Students who are advanced or gifted in an area(s) of study will have special individual learning plans (ILP) developed to address their needs. These decisions will be based on parent and teacher observation, formal and informal assessments, and student input.

Middle Level

Traditional grade levels 6-8 will be considered middle level. Building on the integrated learning strategies used at the intermediate level, themes such as "power" will be used to focus the learning objectives at this level. Science, history, geography, literature, math all have elements which deal with power. Students will examine power in its many forms, identify power sources within their own experience, and reflect on their own power in life situations. Students will also learn and apply their understanding of power as they observe and as appropriate, assist in the construction

of solar power, water filtration, and landscaping at the permanent site. Applied learning should lead to solutions of problems which address an audience other than the classroom teacher, someone who will genuinely benefit from the solution or plan.

Authentic and integrated learning is the goal of learning at all stages of the curriculum but particularly at the intermediate and middle grades. Students will take responsibility for their own learning by writing their own goals, organizing their task selection and in some cases creating their own tasks. Students will also be responsible for self-evaluating the completed tasks. We will facilitate all phases of this learning, but the rule will be ‘don’t do for the student what he/she can do for him/her-self.’ This rule supports the development of the student’s personal power.

During this stage, students will also have opportunities to participate in mentorships or internships outside the classroom walls. These will be based on individual student need. For example, the student who demonstrates a high level of proficiency and interest in computer graphic arts might be interned to an advertising agency and work with graphic artists two afternoons a week. These experiences will serve to enrich past learnings, integrate and apply knowledge and skill, and to provide the ‘aha! that’s why I need to know how to...’ for future learning.

Resources may include traditional textbooks but will more likely be books, newspapers, periodicals, interviews, the internet and experts in the many fields of study based in our community. As adults in the world we rarely consult a text book to get useful information. We call an expert, read a book, use an atlas or make numerous contacts to find the right source. The instructional program provided at the intermediate and middle levels will reflect this practice.

Secondary Level

Traditional grade levels 9-12 will be considered secondary level. The instructional program for this level will be developed under the advisement of certified teachers with knowledge of the core discipline areas as we enter Phase III. The curriculum and instructional program will be submitted to TEA as required.

All Levels

While we haven’t written the curriculum in its entirety, it is organized as shown:

Language Arts (English and foreign): The curriculum is designed to give students opportunities for the authentic use of oral and written expression. We will encourage the development of habits of thinking and reasoning by providing experiences in reading response groups, writing conferences, and self-evaluation of student work. Readings of all genres will be included at all instructional levels to support the students' developing awareness of where various types of information can be found. Vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, spelling and grammar will be taught as tools for expression and will be seen by students and teachers as integral to effective communication. The language arts curriculum will develop the student's knowledge of the rules, patterns and structure of the English language thereby expanding the student's personal power and their ability to use this power. Instruction in reading will be based on developing strategies and comprehension. Communication skills will be expanded to include presentation skills, public speaking, debate, and use of multi-media tools. Foreign language will be offered as an enrichment curriculum.

Social Sciences: The curriculum develops the understandings that history and social science are about real people in real places. The history of sciences, math and technology as well as peoples and cultures will be taught through integrated units of study. Research and presentations will play a large part in this curriculum. Students will experience the benefits of our democratic society and learn to take pride in their country while exploring their status as 'citizens of the world'.

Mathematics: The curriculum is designed to develop mathematical thinking, concepts and factual knowledge. The major strands of mathematics (numeracy, operations, logic/probability, problem-solving, etc.) will be addressed at all levels. Instruction at all levels will include concrete and abstract applications as appropriate as well as authentic, practical daily uses.

Science: The science curriculum emphasizes scientific thinking, problem-solving, and functional knowledge of scientific phenomena while inspiring a sense of wonder and excitement for the world around us. Experiences with hands-on experiments, field trips, career scientists and applied learnings are basic approaches in this multi-sensory instruction. Environmental education will be emphasized.

Visual and Performing Arts: This curriculum will provide student experiences in self-expression, creativity, individuality, and group dynamics and will instill an appreciation for art, music, and drama from diverse cultures.

Wellness: The curriculum is designed to provide an atmosphere that encourages a healthy lifestyle as well as the enjoyment of physical activity. The program emphasizes individual choices regarding nutrition, exercise, and habits of healthy decision-making. Environmental education will be integrated into these topics as health concerns.

Community Service: The curriculum emphasizes personal, social and civic responsibility. Opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in authentic, problem-solving settings will be provided. Areas of service will be determined collaboratively between students and teachers early in the year and integrated into units of study.

Student Attendance Requirements:

The school will meet the state attendance requirements as outlined under TEC, Ch. ** Subchapter ** specifically Section **.**. - Compulsory School Attendance. We will provide at least 180 days of instruction. The school day will be at least seven (7) hours long including recess and lunch. Parent contact will be made after three unexplained absences.

4. Describe the accountability measures the school will use to evaluate students performance.

(a) Identify the specific levels of student performance on assessment instruments adopted under TEC Chapter 39, Subchapter B that constitute acceptable performance for the open-enrollment charter.

AEIS Measures:

- 95% pass all portions of TAAS
- 96% attendance (students)
- 96% attendance (teachers)
- Fewer than 10% disciplinary actions per year

(b) Describe any additional accountability provisions in addition to those required under, Subchapters B, C, D, and G, Chapter 39, by which the performance of the open-enrollment charter will be assessed:

Additional accountability measures:

- Clay's Observation Survey and running records will be used with emergent and early readers to determine baseline ability.
- Qualitative Reading Inventories (QRI) will be used to determine baseline reading ability for all students as appropriate.

A pre-/post- model will be used to monitor student growth each year, with informal reading running records taken on an on-going basis to direct instructional decision-making. Students who do not demonstrate progress resulting in a minimum of one year's growth will receive additional services. These will be documented in the student's ILP.

- TLI growth on TAAS will be monitored to ensure that all students are equipped to pass the exit test the first time.
- Parents, students, and teachers will be surveyed to determine satisfaction with their school experience. Should more than ten percent (10%) of the participants surveyed indicate dissatisfaction in any area, the Council will review and address the concerns.
- Ninety-five percent (95%) of all students will demonstrate at least one year growth as measured by TLI.
- Ninety-five (95%) of all students will master all objectives as indicated in the individual learning

plan (ILP).

Annual evaluation results will be reported separately for students who attend the school for a full year and those who enroll during the year. This same approach will be used in the five year evaluation as well.

Provide the deadline or intervals by which the performance of the open-enrollment charter will be determined for accountability purposes:

A mid-year report regarding student progress will be furnished to the Governing Council. Financial updates will be made regularly to the Council.

(c) Provide the timelines by which the report of the performance of the school will be submitted to the State Board of Education:

The Year-End Final Report will be submitted on or before June 30th while the charter is valid.

5. Provide a list of all districts within the geographical area that may be affected by the open-enrollment charter with the date the *Statement of Impact* form was sent to each affected district:

District

Austin Independent School District, Dr. James Fox, Superintendent
Ms. Kathy Rider, President, AISD School Board
1111 W. 6th Street, Austin, 78703 (512) 414-1700 Certified Mail 12-15-97

Eanes Independent School District, Dr. John A. Phillips, Jr.
Mr. Ladd Pattillo, President, EISD School Board
601 Camp Craft Road, Austin, Texas 78746 (512) 329-3600 Certified Mail 12-15-97

Georgetown Independent School District, Dr. Jim Gunn, Superintendent
Mr. Gene Lawhon, President, GISD School Board
603 Lakeway Drive, Georgetown, Texas 78628 (512) 930-3030 Certified Mail 12-15-97

Lake Travis Independent School District, Dr. Gloria Berry, Superintendent
Mr. Alan Thompson, President, LTISD School Board
3322 RR 620 South, Austin, Texas 78734 (512) 263-4400 Certified Mail 12-15-97

Leander Independent School District, Mr. Tom Glenn, Superintendent
Mr. Mark McHargue, President, LISD School Board
401 S. West Street, Leander, Texas 78641 (512) 434-5000 Certified Mail 12-15-97

Manor Independent School District, Mr. Noel Gett, Superintendent
Mr. Terry Kennemer, President, MISD School Board
P.O. Box L, Manor, Texas 78653 (512) 272-5591 Certified Mail 12-15-97

Pflugerville Independent School District, Mr. Robert Spoonemore, Superintendent
Dr. Jeffery T. Burnett, President, PISD School Board
1401 W. Pecan Street, Pflugerville, Texas 78660 (512) 251-4159 Certified Mail 12-15-97

Round Rock Independent School District, Dr. Tom Norris, Superintendent
Mr. Raymond Hartfield, President, RRISD School Board
1311 Round Rock Ave., Round Rock, Texas 78681 (512) 464-5000 Certified Mail 12-15-97

6. Describe the geographical area served by the program.

It is the desire of parents enrolling their children at NYOS Charter School to become engaged participants in their child's education. The primary hindrance to fulfilling this desire lies with our economy. While children attend schools near homes, parents are working in corporations miles away. By locating our school along major traffic corridors, we hope to provide parents the opportunity to participate more fully in their child's education. We further believe, that employers will benefit when their employees experience decreased anxiety regarding family/school issues. Parents may also be less likely to change jobs which would result in changing student school placement which is an added benefit to the employer. If a corporation's needs are being met, then the school will become a benefactor of its **resources**. This theory, coupled with an educational program that will create critical thinkers prepared for the world of work, then becomes a cogent solution for rejuvenating our public school system.

We have identified a 40 mile radius of our school location as our boundaries. (See attached Map). Our plans are to focus on the geographical location of the parent's workplace. We will begin our school at a temporary site, 8007 Gessner Drive. Gessner Drive is ½ block off the intersection of Interregional Highway 35 and Highway 183, both are major arteries for the influx of workers into the city. There are six (6) multi-level office buildings within 0.25 miles of the school location. It is minutes from downtown Austin. This location will house 133 students.

While the Gessner location is an excellent starter location, it will not meet our needs for the school we wish to create in the long term goals. A committee has already begun seeking a permanent site for NYOS Charter School. Preliminary talks have begun with a local charity regarding collaborative land use opportunities. The committee will use the following guidelines in scouting sites for parental approval:

- Our goal is to create a learning village. We do not envision a single building, but a series of buildings, set on five to ten acres of land. The buildings will include a library, science laboratory, computer laboratory, health center, greenhouses, mess hall, general store, as well as classroom buildings.
- The site shall allow the growth of the student population to 600 students, K-12.
- The site must be on or easily accessed from at least one of the three major arteries in the city; I.H. 35, Hwy 183, or Mopac. Both the routes of travel and work addresses will be utilized to ensure that our primary goal of geographic proximity to workplaces is met.

- The location must serve the needs of 70% of school membership, including teachers, parents, and community/business relationships. We must also be able to show support for the school within the proposed area.
- 7. Specify any type of enrollment criteria to be used. (For admission to an open-enrollment charter school, the person operating the school may require the students seeking admission to complete and submit applications not later than a reasonable deadline the school establishes.) Indicate whether the open-enrollment charter provides for the exclusion of a student who has a documented history of criminal offense, juvenile court adjudication, or discipline problems under TEC, Chapter 37, Subchapter A:**

The NYOS Charter School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, religion and gender. Students may make application for the 1998-1999 academic year beginning March 15th through May 31st. All applications will be time/date stamped upon receipt. Applications for subsequent academic years will be accepted beginning the first Monday of March in each calendar year for the following academic year. Enrollment for the 1998-1999 academic year will be on a “first come, first served” basis and a waiting list will be maintained should applications exceed enrollment capacity. Beginning with the 1999-2000 academic year, openings will be filled by students currently enrolled in the NYOS Charter School. Any remaining openings will be filled on a “first come, first served” basis. The maximum enrollment for year 1998-1999 is 133.

Upon receipt of the application and before enrollment, the student and parent/guardian will participate in at least one orientation meeting with members of the NYOS faculty. The meeting will be to review the purposes of the school, to discuss the educational history, desires, and needs of the student.

In the initial charter, we are choosing not to enroll students with a documented history of criminal offense, juvenile court adjudication, or other serious discipline problems listed under TEC, Chapter 37, Subchapter A. We believe that our program might benefit children in these circumstances and will review this policy at a later date when we have the opportunity and resources to provide for their needs specifically (i.e., crisis counselor, space, etc.).

- 8. Specify the qualifications to be met by professional employees (administrators, teachers, counselors) or the program. Will the school automatically run a criminal history check on all employees? Describe the teaching philosophy proposed by the school.**

Qualifications for Professional Employees

All professional employees will have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college. The general practice will be to hire teachers or persons working to obtain certification. It will be a priority to employ teachers who can articulate their personal beliefs and values regarding teaching and learning. In the interview process, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that these stated beliefs and values are congruent with practice by completing simulation tasks. *Teachers will be expected to participate fully in all staff trainings so that a unified, cohesive theory and practice of teaching and learning is developed across all instructional levels of the school.* Identified as priorities are:

- literacy learning
- talented and gifted education

- special education certification

The fundamental belief underlying this practice is that the regular classroom teacher is accountable for every learner.

Criminal History Checks

The school will run a national criminal history check on all employees.

Philosophy Good first teaching is essential for all future learning.

This foundation belief underlies all other assumptions about teaching and learning. Good first teaching is as important to the sophomore beginning a geometry course as it is to the kindergartner or first grader just beginning to explore the alphabetic code. Believing that **quality teachers** are the primary source of that good first teaching (outside the parents in the home), we covenant to employ teachers who *demonstrate* knowledge and understanding, skill in application, love for children and total commitment to student success. Teachers in the school will **share the common vision and covenant**. They will work from **common understandings and practices** about teaching and learning. They are themselves **learners for life**.

Essential understandings underlying our philosophy of teaching and learning include:

- the conditions for learning
- the teaching/learning cycle
- constant reflective practice.

The Conditions for Learning

Central to the daily operation of the school will be the conditions for learning. Described by Brian Cambourne in The Whole Story (1988), we have adopted these as basic assumptions about how we learn. It is essential that staff and parents understand these conditions and practice them in all teaching moments.

This model illustrates the conditions which must be in place for learning to occur. It is based on observing children in natural learning situations like walking and speaking. Engagement in the new learning occurs when the child is immersed in a context which uses the knowledge and skills naturally. Significant people in the child's life model and demonstrate authentic use of the skills in daily interactions helping the child draw distinctions about the new knowledge. The child imitates these demonstrations, receives feedback, practices and uses the skill, and learns from mistakes. All the while, these models fully expect the child to succeed and when mastery is attained, hold the child accountable to apply the new learning independently. These conditions are central to effective classroom environments. We believe that if a student is not making the expected progress or is experiencing repeated off-task behaviors, we must look at the conditions for learning and ask "Which condition is not in place for this child?"

Teaching/Learning Cycle

Using the teaching/learning cycle, teachers will focus instruction to the individual student's teaching point on a daily basis. The fundamentals in the instructional cycle are knowing the learner, the resources, and the approaches available. Focusing instruction becomes a matter of matching resources and approaches with the student's need. In a reading classroom, for example, the teacher might assess the student by conducting a running record or analyzing a writing sample. After evaluating the assessment and identifying student strengths and approximations (what the student does right most of the time), the teacher determines the next teaching point. The teacher now **knows the learner's need** and must match the appropriate resources and approaches to accelerate the student's progress. The teacher selects a book or any other resource which has the appropriate match of supports and challenges for the learner. The approach selected might be teacher directed or independent student discovery but will be appropriately balanced with the resources, supports and challenges and student need.

Reflective Practice

Quality instruction cannot occur without constant reflection upon where the child is today, what he or she knows and ‘almost’ knows held in tension with his/her potential for growth. Teachers must reflect on a daily basis about what worked with each child, what concerns still exist, and the ever present WHY? Why am I doing what I’m doing with this child? How do I know this is appropriate for this child? What strengths does this child have? What data supports my decisions?

We must go back into the professional literature on a regular (daily) basis to deepen our own understandings about the teaching/learning cycle, the reading/writing process, and the many other issues of instruction. Knowledge of current research, professional dialogue, and knowing the learners, the resources, and the approaches are essential to the skillful teacher who produces focused instruction on a daily basis.

We believe not only that all children can learn but that **all children do learn**. The question becomes “is the learning of such a nature that future learning is supported and enriched by what came before?” Good first teaching is essential. And because we believe ‘**the medium is the message’ the learning context we create must put children in contact with quality human beings who love children, who are knowledgeable and skillful, and who believe that teaching is not just a career, but a vocation...a mission...a covenant...a place from which they will not be moved.**

9. Describe how the following aspects of school support will be handled in the school: finances, budgeting, audits, PEIMS, facilities, food service, and transportation.

NYOS will have two administrative positions: a school Principal who will oversee the entire academic program of the school, the hiring of personnel, all personnel issues, and staff training and development, and a Business Administrator who will oversee the non-academic, daily operations of the school. The school Principal will report directly to the Governing Council. The Business Administrator will report to the Principal.

Most of the items in question nine will be handled by the Business Administrator, as directed by the Governing Council.

(a) Describe the process by which the governance structure of the open-enrollment charter will adopt an annual budget:

In accordance with our bylaws we will develop the annual budget as follows:

- The Business Administrator will notify all members of the school, teachers, parents, students, and community members of the upcoming budget preparation. This notification will appear on bulletin boards, newsletters, and through direct correspondence throughout the school year. Efforts to communicate the budget preparation will intensify in the 45-day period prior to March 30th which is the deadline for budget considerations.
- Two (2) public hearings will be held in which any person may present their budget considerations.

All budget requests will be screened through the same filter used for all decision-making at NYOS “How will this impact the learning of the students? their ability to build personal power? the quality of their future learning and experience?”

- The final budget shall be prepared by the Principal and the Business Administrator and submitted to the Council no later than four months prior to the start of the fiscal year covered by the budget. Council meetings will allow opportunity for any member of the school to voice support or concerns for the budget. The Council shall work with the Business Administrator to make any modifications necessary to:
 - ◆ Include suggestions agreed to by the Council;
 - ◆ Align the budget with the contract with the Texas Education Agency; and
 - ◆ Take into consideration changes in student body size, facility rents, and other items as determined by the Council.
- The Council shall approve the budget no later than two (2) months prior to the school year covered by the budget or as otherwise established by the contract. A copy of the budget shall be sent to all members of the school.
- The Business Administrator shall present any modifications of the budget to the Council at least once each month and all significant modifications of the budget at the next meeting following such modification. The Business Administrator shall also present a record of expenditures to date against the current budget at least once a month.

The movement of amounts of less than twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500) between similar parts of an adopted budget, the movement of amounts less than one thousand (\$1000) between dissimilar parts of the budget, and the assignment of moneys received in an amount less than twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500) shall be done by the Business Administrator with notification to the Council within one month. All other modifications to the budget shall be done only after consultation and agreement from the Council. If time is of the essence, the Business Administrator may request the Chair of the Council to call an emergency meeting of the Council.

(b) Submit a proposed budget as an attachment to this application using the budget template provided. Explain how the school will conduct its business office, with what personnel.

See attached budget.

The NYOS Charter School will have a full-time Business Administrator who will oversee the non-academic daily operations. A full job description for this position has not been developed, however, the key items the Business Administrator will handle are: financial operations including grant acquisition, external communications, school marketing, corporate mentorships/partnerships, after school care programs, intersession programs, and parental volunteers. The Business Administrator will also form a committee to obtain the permanent site and funds for the charter school.

Additional administrative functions such as the following: correspondence, PEIMS reports, deposits (after-school, lunch fees, and intersession program fees), internal communications, attendance records, phones, and the school infirmary, will be handled by existing staff and/or parent volunteers.

All employees will be bonded against improper handling of monies. The type of bond to be obtain will not require a felony conviction of a person(s), but will instead pay a benefit upon the loss of funds. The bond company will then pursue the legal recourse for recovery versus the school handling this matter.

Students will be utilized in the business office as well. The Primary Level students can do projects such as mail sorting and delivery, school tours for business or student prospects, and letters of thanks for parental volunteerism and community support. The Intermediate Level can assist in menu development for our lunch program, and assist in presentations for corporations for funding or mentorship requests. The Middle Level students will participate in some of the office responsibilities as appropriate. Parent volunteers will be highly welcomed as well.

With parent approval, students will share in the care and maintenance of the facility, performing such tasks as emptying trash cans, vacuuming, stocking toiletries, etc. We will have an after school clean-up club, which offers students incentives for being “active” members. The club will be underwritten by local businesses.

(c) Describe the manner in which an annual audit of the financial and programmatic operations of the open-enrollment charter will be conducted.

Financial Audit:

An audit of the financial records will be conducted annually by an independent accounting firm selected by the Governing Council.

Programmatic Operations:

The Governing Council will continually assess programs of the charter school and provide a bi-annual report to members of the school community through the school newsletter. Annual reports will be submitted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for review.

(d) Describe the manner in which the charter will participate in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) information, as required by the state statute or by the State Board of Education rule.

The NYOS Charter School will identify one staff person who will be responsible for PEIMS data collection and input. The school Principal will review and sign all PEIMS data reports and submit the reports as requested by TEA.

(e) Describe the facilities to be used: If the facility is not operated by a school district, attach a copy of the agreement, or pending agreement, signed by the entity owning and operating the facility and the chief operating officer of the proposed charter. The SBOE will not consider an application which does not have an agreement of some sort for a building.

Facility Description

Phase I (Year 1-2)

The initial location of the NYOS Charter School will be a 4,200 sq. ft. office building which will be remodeled pending approval of this application. A copy of the building layout and proposed design changes are attached. Classrooms will be open spaces with various levels created with the use of lofts. The current yard area is being expanded and fenced to allow for play equipment to be utilized. There is a 1200 sq. ft. covered porch that will be used for lunch service except in inclement weather. During inclement weather, students will enjoy lunch in their classrooms.

Classroom furniture will vary from classroom to classroom, and probably won't involve rows of desks. Cubicles or pods will be used to foster community and collaboration among students, especially in the upper levels. We are planning a "work day" this summer where kids can build and paint their own cubicle. This will also allow for photos of their friends and family or space for their "stuff".

Much of the remodeling in phase I will be cosmetic and will be completed with parental volunteers. This is planned to reduce the capital costs of opening the school and also to start the "community" building within our extended family.

Phase II (Years 3- and beyond)

The committee that is formed to complete phase II will include parents, faculty, the school administration, and architects, however, *the key players will be our Middle Level students*. We envision this group of students studying the trends of progressive schools, visiting alternative sites, working with architects, examining bids, selecting the contractor, and actually building the school along side a professional builder. The students will study the possibilities of solar power and a cistern water supply, and implement them to the degree the City's health department will allow.

The thought process behind the permanent site for NYOS Charter School can be summed up in one sentence. . . "Schools aren't brick boxes anymore". Recent neurological and cognitive research is providing laboratory evidence that bolsters the "active learning" theories. Thus the concept of our "educational village" was born.

Our "educational village" will be a series of buildings each with its own traditional purpose. For example, our science laboratory will be a separate building, constructed with grants from a science/technology foundation. The architecture may be in align with today's laboratories or perhaps a laboratory of the future, depending on how the student sees it. Classroom buildings will probably be unconventional as well, again opting for open spaces and workstations over rows of desks. Walls may be movable partitions to allow for team teaching opportunities, some may be glass to prevent feelings of isolation. And the ideas go on . . . computer center, mess hall, band hall, open-air amphitheater, greenhouses, art gallery, general store. . . an on.

Long term opportunities may include a daycare facilities for pre-school age children, a barber/beauty shop where kids can get groomed after school, swimming pools, a sports complex - all which operate as non-

profits and fund NYOS Charter School.

See attached facility use agreement.

(f) Describe the provisions for transportation, if any, for students served by the open-enrollment charter school.

There will be no transportation services provided at the NYOS Charter School. We will offer space, such as bulletin boards or newsletters for parents to organize car-pools.

(g) Describe the provisions for food service, if any, for students served by the open-enrollment charter school.

We are approaching food service with one intent: to get kids to actually *consume* the food! Many families who participated in the planning of this school all voiced their concern that ½ of their child's school lunch gets thrown into a trash can. Parents also seem willing to pay a little more in exchange for a more palatable fare.

We would like to see lunch time become a time of socialization. This may include small, round tables that encourage personal conversations versus bench seating. Eating should be a relaxed, enjoyable part of our students' day - a time when our community of learners share their ideas.

Phase I

Phase I of our food service program will be at our temporary location. A catered meal will be offered from a local lunch deli, The Carving Board. Menus will be developed by the students to ensure that meals are not wasted. The menu will be consistent, i.e., hot dogs on Monday, chicken nuggets on Tuesday, pizza on Wednesday, etc. This will allow students to plan if they wish to bring a lunch from home.

On a monthly basis, we would like to have a cookout on Friday afternoon and invite parents to join us for an all-school extended lunch. Grade levels will take turns hosting and preparing short programs in conjunction with a current unit of study.

Students will be expected to clean up after themselves at all meals. The Lower Colorado River Authority will be working with us to establish a recycling program, including composting lunch waste.

Phase II

At our permanent location, there will be a full kitchen where hot meals will be offered everyday to students. This service will probably be contracted out to a local catering service such as the Marriott's Catering Division. Students will still plan their menus based on their likes as well as exploring new items.

Clean-up and recycling programs will expand at the new location.

