

A Vision of the San Carlos **Charter Learning Center**

Prepared by Members of the Charter Community
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A Vision of the San Carlos Charter Learning Center

I. PREFACE: WHY A NEW SCHOOL?

The granting of the San Carlos Community Charter is a gift the community has chosen to give to itself. Its implementation will create a new learning system that provides an opportunity to innovate and explore, to be at the cutting edge of educational reform, and to lead our schools and our community into the 21st century. Volunteers — parents, teachers, administrators, business leaders, representatives of public agencies and city government, and learners — are working to establish both the tangibles and the spirit of this new approach to learning.

Tangibles include site, equipment, curriculum and how learning takes place. **Spirit** includes commonly held values, beliefs and principles that guide all members of the Charter in the planning and operation of this new learning system. **Members** of the Charter Community are defined as all students, parents, compensated staff, volunteer staff, or project designers who willingly associate themselves with this endeavor. The product of their efforts will be known as the **Charter Learning Center (CLC)**.

The primary focus of the Charter Learning Center is on the well-being of the children of our community. It is the goal of the approximately 50 currently active members (project designers) to create a purposeful, living laboratory which will operate in a caring, supportive and closely watched environment. As an integral part of the San Carlos School District, the Charter's successful innovations will be transferable to other schools in the District and to the larger world community, thus benefiting all of our children. The CLC will also benefit adult members of the community. CLC members seek to make education a community passion.

The establishment of the CLC was made possible by Senate Bill 1448, passed by the California State Legislature in September, 1992. This legislation allows the creation of up to 100 Charter Schools in our state. Members of the San Carlos community, in close collaboration with District personnel,

wrote the Charter proposal. It was endorsed by more than the requisite number of our teachers and then submitted to the San Carlos School District Board of Trustees. The proposal was unanimously approved by the Board and, in February of 1993, the state named San Carlos the site of California's first Charter School. Members of the Charter Community are accountable to the Board of Trustees (grantors of the Charter) for meeting the outcomes specified in the Charter.

The gifts the Charter legislation granted and our community accepted are freedom and opportunity — freedom from the California code of education and opportunity to create a school under local control and designed to meet local needs. It is an opportunity to quickly and straightforwardly implement what the local citizens believe to be the best ideas, both new and old, about how to educate children.

Although the San Carlos public schools are rated among the best in California, we will use the freedom and opportunity the Charter gives us to:

- provide flexibility for learners who want to help direct their own education;
- challenge parents to be more deeply involved in their child's education;
- intertwine the community and the school;
- promote the ideal that education is a lifelong process
- extend school hours to enhance learning and meet the needs of families;
- really push the limit of what it means to prepare for the 21st century
- encourage educators and learners to be more innovative
- encourage educators and learners to take advantage of the diverse resources of the extended community

The mission described in the Charter is the following: *"Our mission is to create a learning system that develops students who are competent, confident, productive and*

responsible young adults who will possess the habits, skills and attitudes to succeed in high school, and be offered the invitation of a post-secondary education and satisfying employment."

This document is a statement of the evolving shared vision of the current members of the Charter Community. It attempts to articulate

how the Charter Learning Center will look, feel and function. It begins with a description of the shared values and principles of the project designers. The rest of this document covers the learning program, curriculum, location and participants and their relationships to each other.

II. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

As members of the San Carlos Charter Community, we share a set of values. We define **values** to be qualities and attributes that are worthwhile and that we seek to have present in all we do as members of the Charter Community. The first group of values relates to us as individuals and the second relates to how we interact.

Individual Values

Personal Responsibility — As Charter Community members we accept responsibility for ourselves as individuals, for how we act, express and react, and are accountable for the consequences of those actions, expressions and reactions.

Personal Mastery — We strive for personal mastery, the process of continual improvement. We continually seek to surpass our previous personal best.

Personal Integrity — As individuals, we seek to understand ourselves, we are clear about what we believe and live those beliefs. Our words and most importantly our actions are congruent with our beliefs. Children will do as we do, not as we say. We continually pose the question: "is this the behavior, activity, approach we want to model for others?"

Self-Esteem — Our self-image and vision of our future have a major impact on how we function throughout life. We seek to acknowledge individual achievements, validate personal goals, recognize each member's uniqueness and encourage interpersonal and intrapersonal skill acquisition in order to foster development of self-esteem.

Group Values

Shared Responsibility — The Charter Community is a collaboration whose members share goals, responsibilities and leadership. We seek our fair share of the work load, and view ourselves as accountable for the outcomes produced by the Charter. We acknowledge a global responsibility that is an extension of our personal responsibility. While each of us is responsible for our own actions and accountable for their consequences, we share a responsibility for the well-being of our group, our community, our country and our planet.

Community — Community is individuals coming together in a spirit of cooperation and fellowship for the purpose of creating something that is out of their reach if they function independently. As we seek to create and maintain community, we recognize the unique worth of each individual. We acknowledge our commonalities and work to understand and appreciate our diversities. Working together in groups, each member feels included, influential and valued by others. We value knowing how to make groups work well together through use of clear, open, honest communication and respectful resolution of conflict.

Principles

We consider **principles** to be guides to action. We agree to apply the principles of balance

and flexibility as we undertake the work of the Charter.

Balance — In all its activities, the Charter Community seeks to achieve a fair balance

between meeting the needs of the individual and the well being of the group, between the quality of the outcome and of the process that creates that outcome, between the need for satisfying work and rejuvenating play.

Flexibility — For the CLC to remain responsive to its members and the

community, it must be flexible. We view our values as constant, but we recognize our situation is continuously evolving. We strive to be both self-examining and self-changing while continuing to hold fast to the values set forth above.

III. THE LEARNING PROGRAM: WHAT AND HOW

Foundations

The Charter's **learning program** is built on the belief that all children can learn, but not in the same way, nor equally well from the same sources. It recognizes that children are variously gifted. Based on the work of Howard Gardner of Harvard, there are at least seven different capabilities or "intelligences":

- linguistic
- mathematical/logical
- intrapersonal (self)
- interpersonal (others)
- bodily-kinesthetic
- spatial
- musical

While retaining the traditional heavy focus on the linguistic and mathematical/logical areas ("the three R's"), the Charter's learning program recognizes the worth of and seeks to develop all these areas.

The centerpiece of the Charter's learning program is the **Personalized Learning Plan**. Working together, student, parent and educator seek to identify, for each learner, areas of greatest strength and weakness and to define individual learning styles. A plan is developed which allows for the presentation of new material and concepts in a way most likely to reach the learner. The plan encourages the learner to capitalize on strengths and shore up areas of weaknesses. Individual learning goals are set and are linked to personal interests and needs.

The personalized learning plan encourages learners to take personal responsibility for their own learning while encouraging teachers, parents and the community to share in that responsibility. Through the use of personalized learning plans, the CLC

ensures that children are not penalized for the rate at which they learn. The faster learner is continuously presented with new challenges, while the slower learner benefits from extra adult help, multiple approaches and multiple environments.

The learning program supports the Charter's goal of developing "**lifelong learners.**" It is designed to stimulate the desire to learn. It is based on the belief that all learners possess an innate and unique creativity that can be developed given the appropriate environment. It allows for the joy of knowledge and self-expression and the thrill of exploration. It is flexible to accommodate the individuality of learners and to evolve as the Charter Community learns and grows, and as the world around us evolves.

The Partnership Perspective

"*Interconnectedness*" and "*relevance*" are hallmarks of the Charter learning program, and find expression in the analogy of "building bridges over walls." Our challenge is to identify and surmount: a) the walls that separate people of all ages from a love of learning; b) the barriers that prevent them from preparing for and finding successful and satisfying employment; and c) the barricades that divide individuals from each other and from their local, national and international communities.

Bridges to Learning—A sustained love of discovery is the foundation of lifelong learning. The creativity and enthusiasm for discovery that is natural in young children is nurtured and expanded throughout the Charter educational experience. Real learning takes place when active participants make personal connections to the skills and knowledge available to them.

Motivation is the key to building this participatory, connected learning. The root of motivation is linking new skills and knowledge to personal interests and needs. Special emphasis is given to the relevance each subject has to the learner's own goals.

Unifying themes bridge various subjects and show the impact each has upon the other and the relevance of each to the real world. Sample unifying themes are: a) how mathematics is integrated into the sciences and the arts; b) the impact of science, the arts, agriculture, etc. on historical trends; c) comparing animal and human division of labor and social structures; or d) sharing scientific results through expository writing.

Bridges between Individuals—CLC members recognize that they are living in a cross-cultural and multi-religious global society. Appreciation of and respect for group and individual differences and similarities is encouraged. Learners develop their own social insights by examining the impact that racial religious and ethnic divisions have had on local and international communities. They understand the effect individuals can have in our increasingly interdependent world.

Bridges are more easily built when individual and group competitions in sports and other activities are free of hostility. We encourage competition based on personal mastery and a striving to improve one's own best performance.

Bridges to the Community—The Charter describes an alliance made up of a "seamless web of educators, parents, businesses, community services and local stakeholders - all dedicated to the learners". The Charter addresses parents' needs with extended school hours and evening and weekend family learning programs (computers, foreign language, ESL, parenting classes) in return for parental participation in the CLC.

The Charter supports interagency cooperation and the sharing of services. Community facilities and programs are used where possible to deliver learning experiences, for example, in physical education (Parks and Rec), health and safety (South County Fire Department),

performing arts (San Carlos Children's Theater). In return Charter students participate in required Community service programs.

Businesses will be important partners in the Charter Learning Center. Those that donate equipment, services and expertise to Charter learners have access to Charter Learning Center programs and facilities. Business partners provide guest teachers, mentors, or field trips, or help learners set up and run their own small businesses. They keep the CLC abreast of requisite marketplace skills and help develop a workforce prepared for the 21st century while establishing links with future customers and employees.

Local schools and colleges will partner with the Charter in cooperative learning programs. Colleges may use Charter sites for teacher training. Projects with area elementary and secondary schools and colleges bring learners of varying ages together in endeavors such as science fairs, foreign language dinners, field trips, etc.

The Charter considers the community to be its classroom. When learning takes place in the world beyond the classroom, the learners understand their connection to that world and their responsibilities as productive citizens. We share a commitment to develop in all learners a sense of responsibility towards the health of our planet and our cities. Learners will realize they can influence and improve the quality of their total environment.

Approaches

The Charter Learning Center is distinguished by the multiplicity of ways in which it seeks to ensure student learning. Some of these are highlighted in the sections that follow. Traditional schools tend to employ common means to achieve uncommon ends. Not all students have equally successful outcomes. The Charter uses uncommon means to achieve common ends. Through its multiple approaches, all students are successful, capable of fulfilling their potential.

The Subject Matter Approach presumes that an educated learner needs to know clearly

defined skills and concepts that can best be learned in an organized sequential fashion. Traditionally this approach has been predominately lecture based. The Charter aims to add computer-based learning to increase the efficiency of this approach and provide the opportunity for drill which is sometimes necessary.

The Inquiry and Problem Solving Approach suggests that learning occurs when individuals think critically and solve problems. The predominate premise of this approach is that it is important to know how to retrieve and use the information, not just to have instant recall and possession of the information.

The Individualized Learning approach attempts to personalize the learning process to the interests of the individual, allowing a self-directed selection of material to master. The reasons for learning thus become one's own curiosity and personal applicability of the information learned.

The Discussion Approach encourages learning through sharing of information and concepts within a group, with the thinking process playing an important role. A discussion leader is prepared to recognize each learner's level of understanding and can respond at the level most helpful to the learner.

Learning Opportunities

Multiple learning opportunities are afforded Charter Learning Center students. Some are familiar, some are novel, but all strive to make learning relevant and purposeful and to actively engage the learner. A number of these are outlined below.

Problem-solving groups assemble multi-age learners to apply knowledge they have acquired and to practice new skills by tackling both real world problems and problems simulated to model the current work-world. For example, the Charter's requirement for students to perform genuine community service not only informs students about real needs our community has, but encourages them, as a group, to decide which ones they can reasonably address, plan an approach, implement the plan and then evaluate the result.

Peer teaching provides an opportunity for learners to become educators and reinforce their own knowledge and mastery of new skills through presentations of their own work and "learning buddy" activities.

Business enterprises established within the Charter offer the opportunity for real-world experiences. Working in partnership with mentors from the business world, Charter learners apply new insights and skills directly to their own enterprises.

Research and development activities abound as students help design, create and field test new learning tools and methods in partnership with business, industry and institutes of higher education. In keeping with its principle of flexibility, whereby the Charter Learning Center strives to be self-examining, learners are tapped to provide a critical, internal analysis of the Charter.

Discipline is viewed in the CLC as training that develops self-control, character, orderliness and efficiency. Crises and conflicts serve as learning opportunities as we recognize the need to impose order on ourselves in order to achieve focus, meet our goals and live in harmony with others.

Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to support and guide the learning process. It is a tool to recognize accomplishment and certify that knowledge has been gained. Assessment also discerns those areas where understanding is still incomplete and enables students to focus their efforts where they will produce the greatest benefit.

Assessment in the CLC is a means of measuring each learner's progress according to clearly recognizable standards. It is a tool for helping students learn more about their own strengths and weaknesses without intimidation, fear, or feeling there are winners and losers. It is a source of motivation for the learners and a guide for helping them achieve personal mastery. It is carried out in a spirit of collaboration and provides positive reinforcement to the learner.

Standards, not standardization, are the basis of assessment. Learners are shown exemplary performances for given tasks. An assessment of their effort reflects how closely it matches this performance. The goal is not to give a grade, but to encourage students to do their personal best and to show them their own improvement throughout the year.

Self assessment is a unique learning opportunity for Charter students. As active participants in assessment of their own work, learners are encouraged to develop intrapersonal understanding of their strengths and deficiencies and an objective view of their accomplishments. In addition, a score on a piece of work can be improved if the learner is willing to accept the challenge for improvement put forth by the assessment.

Performance is assessed on at least three levels. Student progress relative to previous performance is assessed through portfolios of video taped oral presentations, written reports, individual and group projects and via computer learning packages. Performance is also assessed relative to locally developed standards using exemplars. Finally, CLC learners are exposed to some traditional examination methods. As required by the Charter, student performance is assessed relative to other learners of the same age through the CLAS (California Learning Assessment System) assessments given periodically. The CLC population must perform in the top 25% of California students from districts comparable to San Carlos.

Content (Curriculum)

The Charter Curriculum defines both the subject matter, the desired outcomes, and the methods of assessment in each learning discipline. The curriculum contains both traditional academic subjects and additional subject areas that make the Charter unique. The California State Frameworks serve as the starting point and are enhanced with unifying themes and other creative approaches.

The purpose of any school should be to help prepare the learner for later life. An explicit goal of the Charter is to prepare learners to

be functional citizens of the 21st century. Such preparation is more than the assimilation of facts. Proficiency in a discipline means that the learner becomes a capable practitioner and has a sufficient foundation to pursue advanced study. The charter emphasizes both the acquisition and application of knowledge. The curriculum defines the knowledge, skills, and achievement levels commensurate with proficiency.

The subjects that comprise the curriculum are listed and briefly discussed below. The traditional core curriculum areas — language arts, math, science, social studies — remain strongly emphasized. They are augmented by music, dance, theater, art, , health, physical education and environmental education.

Language Arts (English and foreign) —The goals are to develop learners who are effective communicators, who love literature, and are lifelong readers and writers. The curriculum is literature based. Comprehension skills, vocabulary and grammar are integrated within a literature program, such as the “Junior Great Books.” Writing includes a personal journal, and creative and expository writing. Communication skills include speaking and writing, and expand into presentation skills using modern technological tools.

Science—The Charter science curriculum is a multi-year sequence which emphasizes hands-on experimentation and functional knowledge of scientific phenomena. While the specific scientific disciplines are the same as presented in the California State Board of Education Science framework, the Charter curriculum differs in several areas. Its multi-year sequence facilitates experiments, field-trips and visits from guest scientists and local experts. Additionally, it permits a depth of understanding not possible when trying to present twenty-one scientific disciplines each year, as suggested by the framework. Major concepts are re-emphasized as appropriate and relevant to the interrelationship of disciplines.

The Charter curriculum diverges from the California framework in the use of themes. The interconnections and recurring concepts

between the scientific disciplines must be noted, emphasized and exploited. However, real-world problems do not respect academic boundaries between disciplines and the use of themes to cubbyhole different disciplines on the basis of superficial similarities, as done in the framework, has been eliminated.

The use of experimentation, problem solving and familiar technical examples (why is the sky blue? how does a car function?) is emphasized. Method of analysis is taught. It is essential that the student learn how to investigate scientific phenomena, and how to discriminate between scientific verity, scientific uncertainty, and pseudo-science.

Mathematics —The program is based on major mathematical ideas and concepts and those connections relevant to the learners' lives. Throughout all mathematics topics the concepts of numbers, operations, logic and graphics are sustained. The curriculum is based on instructional units, typically lasting from one to six weeks.

Social Studies —The curriculum develops learners who understand that history and social science are about real people, in real places, solving problems relevant to the learners' own lives. Students understand the interrelationships between the peoples of the world and study the past as the background and prelude to the present. Discipline integration includes not only history with English, but also the integration of history with both science and mathematics: both the historical significance and effects of scientific and mathematics advances, and the social and historical context which permit and encourage technical advances.

Visual and Performing Arts —A goal is that the learners embrace the values of arts appreciation, and self and group expression in the visual arts, music, theater and dance. The curriculum strives to instill confidence in the learner's artistic self-expression, and the appreciation of the artistry of others.

Each learner is encouraged to choose at least one musical instrument to study; participate in dance or movement activities; learn

various visual art techniques; and use art forms as a primary means of expression.

Individual learners have different learning styles and unique aptitudes. This becomes especially salient in artistic development. Every effort is made to recognize and encourage learners for whom one or more of the fine arts may be more appropriate for learning and expressing the results of learning than the traditional cognitive mode.

Artistic opportunities in the Charter Learning Center include pioneering new options, such as creating educational tools to share with others in live performances or on community access television. Professional mentors help learners with activities such as using computer programs to create animated videos or software, producing puppet or live action shows, and expressing concepts through dance, photography or visual art forms.

Health and Physical Education—One of the Charter's stated outcomes is 21st century citizens with a healthy lifestyle. The Charter Learning Center provides an atmosphere that encourages all learners to enjoy physical activity, and to incorporate it into their lives. The program emphasizes “lifetime” or “individual” activities as well as “team” sports to emphasize the concept of lifelong activity.

Environmental Education —The CLC emphasizes responsibility towards the health of our planet and our cities. Using such programs as the Built Environment Education Program (BEEP), learners will participate in hands-on projects intended to form an awareness of the critical relationships between the built and natural environments. Learners will study and debate real life issues such as coping with diminishing resources. Participation in projects such as Boomtown will show learners how they can affect the future quality of our cities and health of our green spaces

Unique Aspects

Relative to current California public education, the distinctive aspects of the Charter curriculum include required

proficiency in a second language, integration of community service into the learning process, and full integration of technology as a learning tool.

Foreign Language —Though a part of language arts with the same general concepts, study of a foreign language is an integral and distinguishing aspect of the Charter curriculum. An expected outcome is that learners will communicate and interact effectively in at least one language in addition to their native language.

To achieve this level of fluency, experience beyond the classroom is essential. This occurs through extensive outside involvement and the support and participation of a parent, peer, sibling or other associate as a “language buddy.” Participation of the “buddy” is facilitated through evening classes and homework. Entire families learn a language together.

Additional outside enrichment includes weekend camps, trips, internships, community service and pen pals. The Bay Area is an extraordinarily diverse area. The Charter uses local linguistic and cultural diversity to further the learners' development.

Technology —Technology provides learners with skills that prepare them for future employment. The term technology includes learning tools such as computers, interactive video equipment, audio-visual aids, scientific equipment and networks linked to local and nation-wide resources.

These tools help students guide their own education. They support a child's natural way of learning through individual and group discovery, and through seeking solutions to real life challenges. Students as young as fourth grade successfully learn programming and this option is available for interested Charter learners.

"Learning how to learn" is the real purpose of education. Those who succeed in this goal become lifelong learners. Interactive technologies properly used for this goal leap the barriers of time, space and limited attention span and bring the world to our fingertips.

Charter Learning Center computers are tools used for activities such as:

- **Research**—Access information via electronic reference books, databases, networks, etc.
- **Authoring**—Create and illustrate stories and reports to share with others in media such as printed documents videos and digital film
- **Drill, Practice, Remediation**—Computers take over tedious routines providing instant feedback on mistakes and how to correct them. It is possible to evaluate learning needs and take learners back to foundation knowledge they may have missed.
- **Computation**—Learning mathematical skills through spreadsheets and other software applications helps prepare learners for future careers
- **Simulation**—Many employees receive training through interactive electronic simulations of work tasks. Such simulations provided effective teaching tools for students.
- **Record-keeping and Storage**—Charter learners discover that computer databases are effective tools for tracking school and business records, schedules, inventories, etc.
- **Communication**—Networks link learners at school with their homes, other schools and national resource centers.

Community Service —Community service is a vital and distinctive element of the Charter curriculum. Learners reap the rewards that come from being active, contributing community members. They experientially discover the interrelationships of community members. They feel the satisfaction of seeing their activity produce positive changes in their community and their lives.

The community service requirement is designed to instill a sense of individual responsibility, social responsibility and civic responsibility. It enables learners to use newly found knowledge to solve community problems. Specifics of the program are determined by the learners and Charter staff

during the initial weeks of each school year, based on current community needs and

interaction with community and governmental leaders.

IV. PARTICIPANTS: WHO

Some Definitions

Participants —The enrolled student learner is the central focus of the Charter Learning Center. In its first year of operation, the CLC aims to address the needs of learners at the 4th to 6th grade levels. An invitation is extended to any learner currently working at this level and residing in San Mateo County to explore its learning opportunities.

The other participants comprise the "seamless web of educators, parents, businesses, community services and local stakeholders" described in the Charter. The graphic on page 13 emphasizes how the system is built around and is focused on the student learners.

Partnership —The system which defines the roles and relationships of these participants is evolving as members move from the design to the operational phase. The recurring theme in the evolving relationships is one of partnership. This is a natural result of the Charter community members' underlying values of shared responsibility and community.

Learning Team —The fundamental structural and relationship unit for the learner is the learning team. Learners join a multi-age (e.g., ages 9-12) group for an extended period of time (e.g., one year or more), made up of approximately 40 learners and two full-time adults. One of these two has a teaching credential and a minimum three years of experience. The other has significant, relevant expertise to implement the learning program. The team will be supported by regularly participating parent members, and others from the community and the business world working as volunteers and/or part-time compensated members of the Charter.

Roles and Relationships

In the Charter Learning Center "every teacher is a learner, every learner is a teacher, every parent is both and everyone is

a winner." This belief helps define the participants' roles and the relationships members have to one another.

Students, in their multi-age level learning teams, are afforded the opportunity not only to learn, but to help others learn. Each child has a learning buddy. Learning buddies work to enhance each other's understanding of information and concepts. The assessment process which stresses student presentation of projects, provides opportunities for students to learn from one another. Many learning activities are undertaken in cooperative learning groups creating additional avenues for students to teach each other.

Staff at the Learning Center includes credentialed, non-credentialed and community educators and support personnel. Their role is to directly provide and/or provide for the means and the atmosphere that enable students to learn. Their relationship to one another is non-hierarchical in the sense that every staff person (with learners) shares in the responsibility for the educational process. The governing procedure is flexible, maximizing opportunities for consensus decision-making, and assuring that those most responsible for specific aspects have the authority and resources needed to carry out their mandates.

Credentialed educators bring expertise in methodology, knowledge of effective teaching and presentation strategies, understanding of how children learn and capabilities to help identify student's learning styles. They play a lead role in the design of the curriculum and the coordination of learning activities. These professionals partner with community educators who bring content expertise and real-world experience to the learning arena of the CLC. The credentialed educator ensures that the community educators can effectively interact with the learners, while these community educators ensure a broader base of up-to-the-minute knowledge and

skills than might otherwise be possible. Thus the staff includes scientists as well as science educators, historians as well as history educators; authors as well as English educators etc. These educators partner with other staff members trained to guide and implement a variety of learning projects.

All staff partner with parents, who bring an in depth understanding of their children's personalities, learning styles and strengths and weaknesses, to create and revise at regular intervals, a personalized learning plan. Each student is paired with an adviser who serves as counselor and friend and who remains with that student on a long-term

basis. The adviser meets regularly with the student and his or her family to review the learner's progress.

The educators also work with parents to implement effective strategies whereby parents can support the children's learning efforts. Learning Center staff members work with parents to formulate a personalized contract which specifies the ways in which the student's family will support Learning Center activities. Training is provided to better equip parents to meet their children's learning-related needs.

V. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: WHERE AND WHEN

"It takes a whole village to raise a child." Recognizing the wisdom of this African proverb, Charter community members not only reach out to the community for educators, mentors and advisers as described in the previous section, but also view the entire community as the "class room". Learning activities are coordinated and orchestrated from a central site which also provides a "homeroom" for each learning team. Sites being considered are located in the heart of the downtown for easy access to the Public Library, City Hall, Burton Park, public transit, Senior Center, local businesses, School District offices and other local schools. Under supervision of staff, mentors or parents, learners are encouraged to take advantage of the diverse resources within the "extended" community, including other schools, institutions of higher learning, community service and cultural arts programs, and programs developed with local businesses and corporations; all with the intent of immersing the child in a culturally enriched and useful educational experience.

The Charter Learning Center intends to meet the needs of families imposed by their often

hectic schedules by eventually providing year-round, dawn-to-dusk learning opportunities. Certain times of day and periods of the year are designated to fulfill the Charter's obligation to provide students with the equivalent of the California-mandated minimum number of school days. These periods of time will serve to establish the basic organizational structure of the school year, to schedule all activities for participants, and to insure the personal and learning needs of all learners are met. Supervision for and transportation to activities remote from the Learning Center itself are coordinated by members of the CLC.

The child's home environment offers new opportunities including interactive video through cable interconnects within the San Carlos Community, and also through the use of available educational computer software. This not only allows a child to view and interact with fellow learners when sick, but enables parents and children together to benefit from evening telecourses in areas such as second language and technology.

VI. IN CONCLUSION...

The Charter Learning Center will open at a size appropriate for a pilot project. Initial target enrollment is 120 students between

fourth and sixth grade levels but the plan is to expand as rapidly as possible.

Healthy organizations have a vibrant Research and Development operation. The CLC will provide this R and D function for the San Carlos School District. By practicing and testing the ideas set forth in this document, we will develop new ways of educating youth and partnering with the community and provide a fertile ground for the growth and development of both new and experienced educators.

The Charter has been granted for a K-8 operation (the same as existing San Carlos schools) but the vision is for a K-12 learning center that serves the community as well as the enrolled students. Plans are being developed to provide both adult education and early childhood care and education.

THE PRINCIPAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE CHARTER LEARNING EXPERIENCES

