



City Charter Elementary School Executive Summary of Charter Petition

The Board of Directors for the City Charter Elementary School (CCES), respectfully submits this charter petition to the Los Angeles Unified School District for a 5 year charter to establish a grades K-6 project-based, challenging elementary school program that will serve a diverse student population in the Hollywood Promise Neighborhood.

Our Mission

The mission of City Charter Elementary School is to provide an exceptional education to a diverse student body. Through individual attention in a supportive and dynamic learning environment, students become creative and critical thinkers who ask questions, debate, and express ideas fearlessly and respectfully. With a focus on civic responsibility, public speaking and the written word, City school prepares students for a lifetime of meaningful work and ongoing service to a cause greater than themselves.

Our Educational Philosophy

At the foundation of our educational philosophy is a belief that learning should be an active experience that involves a community of educators, students and families. We believe that effective schools create a culture of caring and respect that supports all members in achieving their potential academically, socially, emotionally, artistically, and physically. To enable all to work together toward these ends, we believe in explicitly expressing our learning goals – derived from academic standards and school-defined behavioral and attitudinal objectives. We expect all involved with the school to support these convictions and to endorse a constructivist learning environment that nurtures, challenges, and values every member of the community.

Current research shows that a constructivist approach to teaching and learning develops deep and long-lasting conceptual understanding in students. When coupled with data driven instruction, project-based learning and multiple assessments, constructivism is even more effective. We, therefore, embrace these three practices fully. Teachers continually assess each student's progress through observation, interaction, and testing, and then design lessons in response to student needs. Similarly,

teachers will assess their own pedagogy's effectiveness in promoting student learning by examining their practices through action research projects.

Our Founders

CCES is being founded by experienced educators and charter operators as well as former leaders from the Board of Directors of Larchmont Charter School (a K-6 project-based elementary school that opened in 2005) and Valley Charter School (a K-5 project-based elementary that opened in the fall of 2010). The Board members have experience in real estate, law, business, education, nonprofit organizations and charter schools in California.

Our educational founders include:

- **Dvora Inwood**, (Co-Founder) Founding Educator of Larchmont Charter School, Larchmont West Hollywood, Los Feliz Charter School of the Arts, Valley Charter Schools, et al; course creator for The New Teacher Project (designing courses to be used to credential teachers); former teacher at Los Angeles schools (Harvard-Westlake, Archer School, Aviva Center). BA, Harvard University; M.A. in Education, Stanford University.
- **Michelle Sorgen**, (Board Member) Teaching Artist at Street Poets, Inc., teaching poetry classes to at-risk youth, planning open mics for Los Angeles teens, writing curriculum and assembling an anthology of poems to be used in the Street Poets' workshops. Former high school English and poetry teacher at Los Angeles Schools (Campbell Hall, Polytechnic, and New Roads). Teacher of the "Writing and Imagination" class to gifted students through the John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. Published poet, whose work has appeared in *Let Me Tell You Where I've Been*, an anthology of writing from the Iranian Diaspora, and *Witness*, a CD compilation of hip hop and oral poetry. University of Michigan, BA. University of Maryland, MFA in poetry. Michelle is recipient of the Virginia Voss award for poetry, and scholarships to the Bread Loaf and Squaw Valley Writers' Conferences.
- **Valerie Braimah**, (Advisory Board) Vice President of Instruction at the Alliance for College Ready Public Schools. Formerly the Chief Learning Officer at Insight Education Group, responsible for training and supporting teachers and principals, and for conducting school-wide assessments that inform comprehensive plans for sustainable school reform. Previous positions include: Leadership and Staff Development Coordinator for Leadership Public Schools, helped to found Leadership's first school site in Richmond, where she coordinated testing and intervention programs, helped design the Staff Development Plan for the school, and authored the Leadership Advisory Curriculum which was based on best practices in youth development, project-based learning, and service-learning; Staff Research Associate at the UC Berkeley Service Learning Research and Development Center, conducted national and local evaluations of educational programs; regional Service-Learning Director at Youth Community Service, a non-profit organization based in Palo Alto, provided consultation, training, and technical assistance services to teachers, schools, and districts, and published the Service-Learning Leadership Development Training Guide to help educational and community-based organizations build leadership capacity for their service-learning programs; Oakland Unified School District elementary school teacher who also served as the school leader for professional development in Mathematics instruction. Valerie holds a Master's Degree in Education Policy from Johns Hopkins University. She is currently affiliated with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), the California Charter School Association (CCSA), and the International Reading Association.

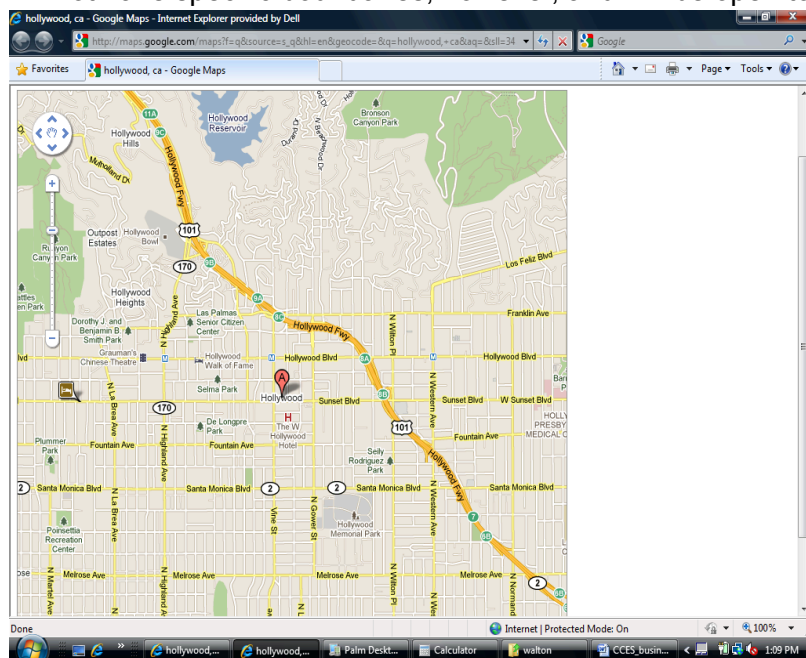
An additional co-founder of the school brings community-building, partnership-building, outreach and operational expertise:

Lindsay Sturman: Founder of both Larchmont Charter School and Larchmont West Hollywood, Founding Chair of LCS Board of Directors, Founding Board of Directors for Valley Charter School. She spearheaded LCS's charter authorization and implementation, ongoing assessment of school operations, and strategic growth. She has raised over a million dollars for LCS, developed

partnerships with CBOs across the city and state, and was honored last year by CCSA as Volunteer of the Year. Television writer/producer, Ms. Sturman holds a BA from Harvard and a Masters from Columbia.

Our Community: Target Student Population

CCES is partnering with Youth Policy Institute in their Hollywood Promise Neighborhood efforts in order to best recruit and serve students in the Hollywood community. CCES will recruit students from the Promise Neighborhood in zip code 90028, the Hollywood area of District 4, between La Brea Ave and N. Normandie Ave. North/South borders are Santa Monica Blvd. to the South, Hollywood Blvd as a northern border West of the 101, rising to Franklin Ave. as a northern border East of the 101. The school will not have specific boundaries, however, and will be open to all children in the State of California.



On the surface, Hollywood's economy appears to be thriving, however, the large majority of that wealth is earned by individuals living in the surrounding, more affluent communities. The average household income in the target area is \$26,027 with 35.07% of families living in poverty. There are 14,368 housing units in the area with 28% of households defined as overcrowded. With 16,528 persons in labor force and 25% of the adult population currently unemployed, Hollywood's population lives at considerable levels of economic distress. Yet, Hollywood provides unemployed individuals with easy access to quick money. Prostitution, drug dealing, tourist robbery, and pan handling are all easy (and criminal) alternatives to gainful employment in Hollywood. In fact, crime rates in the area are exceedingly high with 356 violent crimes, 1,429 property crimes, and 5 homicides reported in 2008 by the Los Angeles Police Department's Hollywood Division. Youth in SPA 4 (which includes Hollywood) are 1.8 times more likely to be arrested and detained in juvenile hall than youth in other parts of the city (2006 LA County Children's Planning Council). Gang activity and violence is high—compelling the LAPD to impose injunctions on the local Harpys gang.

Further troubling, is the Hollywood target area's poor health statistics for its residents. Child obesity rates are at 26% while 20.4% of the overall area population is classified obese and 31.6% are overweight. In combination with this, physical activity levels are low with 35.1% of residents reporting minimal to no physical activity, while 50% of children participate in less than an hour a day of physical exercise and 14.3% of them report no physical activity at all (LA County 2007). Sexual activity amongst the children and youth of this target area is disproportionately higher than in other areas of the County. The area reports that 8.3% of women who gave birth in 2008 were under the age of 20 (California 2008 Birth Records). Further startling is that this area leads the County in reported AIDS cases with 6,356 (37%), while other cases of sexually transmitted diseases represent 17% of the County's total reported cases (Los Angeles County Department of Public Health).

Ethnicity/Race for 90028

	2010
Hispanic	11,422 36.43%
White	13,414 42.79%
Black or African American	2,070 6.60%
Asian	2,595 8.28%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	45 0.14%
American Indian and Alaska Native	59 0.19%
Some Other Race	142 0.45%
Two or More Races	1,605 5.12%
	31,352 100.00%

Educational Attainment for 90028

	2010
Less than 9th Grade	3,062 13.20%
Some High School, No Diploma	2,144 9.24%
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	4,790 20.64%
Some College, No Degree	4,263 18.37%
Associate Degree	1,587 6.84%
Bachelor's Degree	5,401 23.28%
Master's Degree	1,238 5.34%
Professional School Degree	405 1.75%
Doctorate Degree	312 1.34%
	23,202 100.00%

Financial Data – 90028

	2010
Less than \$15,000	3,854 25.16%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	2,620 17.10%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	2,176 14.20%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	2,364 15.43%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	2,212 14.44%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	993 6.48%
\$100,000 - \$124,999	479 3.13%
\$125,000 - \$149,999	267 1.74%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	196 1.28%
\$200,000 - \$499,999	127 0.83%
\$500,000+	32 0.21%
	15,320 100.00%

Language Spoken at Home in 90028

	2010
Speak Only English at Home	10,359 34.78%
Speak Asian or Pacific Island Language at Home	1,966 6.60%
Speak IndoEuropean Language at Home	5,675 19.05%
Speak Spanish at Home	11,313 37.98%
Speak Other Language at Home	470 1.58%
	29,783 100.00%

	Ramona Elementary	Kingsley Elementary	Grant Elementary	Hollywood Primary Center	Selma Avenue Elementary
Enrollment	669	536	729	237	320
Grades	K-5	K-6	K-6	K-4	K-6
API	792	792	755	803	730
met schoolwide growth target	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
met all subgroup growth targets	yes	yes	no	no	no
Gr5 ELA CST	39%	61%	47%	n/a	51%
Gr5 Math CST	65%	83%	51%	n/a	31%
% White	12%	13%	20%	4%	7%
% Hispanic	77%	83%	69%	91%	87%
% Filipino	8%	2%	3%	<1%	<1%
% Asian	2%	<1%	3%	2%	1%
% African-American	1%	2%	4%	2%	2%
% eligible For Free or Reduced lunch	94%	94%	93%	91%	88%
% English Language Learner	64%	63%	52%	50%	43%

ELEMENT #1: Description of the Educational Program

In keeping with our respect for the ‘backward design’ technique¹ of developing an educational program, our educational philosophy begins with the end in mind. After reviewing research and schools that share similar learning goals to CCES, we have concluded that a constructivist approach to teaching and learning is the most effective way of developing student mastery of both state standards and habits of heart and mind described as learning outcomes in this charter.

1. **Model Schools.** The following table identifies schools with similar educational philosophies.

These schools approach teaching and learning in the same way as CCES and provide evidence that this approach is successful with diverse learners.

	API	Statewide/Similar Schools	Constructivist approach to teaching/learning	Project-Based	Multiple Intelligences
Larchmont Charter School	875	9/8	X	X	
North Oakland Community Charter School	850	8/NA	X	X	X
Open Charter School	883	9/3	X	X	
Edwin Rhodes	943	10/10	X	X	X
Country Springs	927	10/8	X	X	X
University of Houston Charter School	TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills): 89%-95% of 5th graders		X	X	
Discovery Charter School (NJ)	NJ Ask tests: 75%-100% of 4th graders exceed/meet expectations		X	X	
Enota Multiple Intelligences Academy (GA)	94%-99% of 5th graders exceed/meet expectations in Reading, Lang Arts, Math		X	X	X
New Visions Elementary School of Exploration and Discovery (NY)	98%-97% of 4th graders exceed/meet expectations on Math and Language Arts state tests		X	X	X

¹ *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, 1998) is a theory of curriculum construction that involves the following process: 1) Identify desired results – learning outcomes; 2) Determine acceptable evidence – assessment data; 3) Plan learning experiences and instruction.

2. Research. Evidence from research in the fields of cognitive science, brain function and education lead us to conclude that learning best occurs when educational programs:

1. Develop and implement curricula that is relevant, age appropriate and meaningful.
2. Create learning environments in which representations of world experiences and knowledge serve to invite students "...to experience the world's richness, empower them to ask their own questions and seek their own answers, and challenge them to understand the world's complexities" (Brooks and Brooks, pp. 5, 1999)
3. Ensure teachers continually strive to teach students at their instructional level (ZPD-Zone of Proximal Development) based on ongoing formal and informal assessments.
4. Articulate and establish high expectations. Engage students in rigorous academic studies to continually improve their capacity and performance, reaching beyond their own perceived limits.
5. Model and guide early learners in developing high level thinking skills.
6. Consistently provide a variety of modalities for access to learning, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic that inspire children to engage in ongoing practice of self-reflection and self-assessment, that facilitates their taking responsibility for their own learning.
7. Offer students a degree of choice in terms of what they read, what they write, and what they construct as evidence of having met learning objectives.
8. Incorporate language learning and multi-cultural education; celebrate and bring relevance to cultural and individual diversity with a commitment to equity, by providing open exchange of perspectives, talents, and ideas to include everyone and inspire educators, students, and their families to reach for the highest level of social, ethical and intellectual integrity.
9. Cultivate a caring community of learners, where teachers, parents, and students share dynamic interactions, build warm, trusting relationships and work together in a safe, stable, supportive learning environment where character development is taught and high moral/ethical behavior is recognized and celebrated.

Goals to Enable Students to be Self-Motivated, Competent, Life-Long Learners

- **Developing self-motivated learners:** CCES believes that self-motivation requires students to internalize the benefits of learning. CCES will, therefore, seek to connect students' personal interests and questions with curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. Students will be empowered to choose community service and academic projects that have personal meaning to them. By beginning with each student's interests and questions, CCES can provide students with the means of making connections between their studies, themselves and life beyond the school's walls. Furthermore, CCES's emphasis on Global Citizenship throughout the program will foster student appreciation for the many positive impacts their skills and abilities can have on the world.
- **Developing competent learners:** The "Backward Design" approach that teachers will take in creating all lessons and curriculum, coupled with Data Driven Instruction efforts that guide teachers in refining their pedagogy in light of student assessment information, will ensure that learning objectives are met by students. In addition, the constructivist and project-based teaching methodologies require students to reflect after formative assessments, a practice considered essential in improving student's understanding of the way they learn best. In these ways, students will develop a solid foundation of knowledge and a competence in learning upon which they can build in the future.
- **Developing lifelong learners:** A lifelong learner is one who has both the interest in and the ability to continue to learn outside a formal school setting. Our program as described above in the context of developing competent and self-motivated learners is also expected to inspire lifelong learning. CCES's emphasis on international understanding and responsible citizenship

throughout the program will further foster student appreciation for the many positive impacts their skills and abilities can have on the world.

Additional academic goals include mastery of the California State Standards, development of writing/speaking/debating skills and the school's definition of an educated person. All curriculum designs are directly aligned to the California State Standards, as indicated in the tables included in the Curriculum section of this Element. The standardized testing and benchmarking required by the district and the State of California will be just as much a part of our assessments as our faculty-constructed rubrics, project goals, student portfolios, and student exhibits. In addition, character development and social responsibility are inherent to our entire program and will be assessed through student and teacher evaluations.

A Sample Schedule

TIME	Daily Schedule for K & 1 Classes
8:30-9:15	<i>intensive reading/language arts group work, language/vocabulary development based play</i>
9:15-10:20	<i>Circle time (character education)... project-based work</i>
10:20-10:40	<i>Recess</i>
10:40-11: 45	<i>Math/science centers and instruction</i>
11:45-12:30	<i>Lunch and recess</i>
12:30-1:00	<i>Read Aloud/Rest</i>
1:00-1:45	<i>Literacy Centers/Project-based work</i>
1:45-2:40	<i>Arts (3)/ PE (2) – Close of Day</i>

K & 1 follow similar schedules but projects become more academically-oriented in 1. Students work at their own pace and are provided small group, whole group, and individualized instruction as is appropriate to ensure maximum growth of skills and understanding of concepts. Ideally, reading recovery or other research-based interventions would be provided for “at risk” students.

The first 45 minutes of the day is an intensive, targeted reading/literacy program for students who are developmentally ready for direct reading instruction. Students who are still developing readiness will participate in literacy activities in the library and specially-designed play area to develop vocabulary, auditory and visual skills required for success in reading instruction.

Targeted language arts instruction in the morning, projects that contain “real life” experiences, and GLAD² trained teachers who deliver whole group lessons will enrich the environment to enable all students to achieve end of year first grade standards before transitioning to 2nd grade.

TIME	Daily Schedule for 2 & 3 Classes
8:30-9:15	<i>PE (3)/ Directed instruction & Projects (2)</i>
9:15-10:30	<i>Reading/Writing/Language Arts Block</i>
10:20-10:40	<i>Recess</i>
10:40-11: 45	<i>Math</i>
11:45-12:30	<i>Lunch and recess</i>
12:30-1:15	<i>Arts (music, dance, visual arts on a cycle)/Science</i>
1:00-2:40	<i>Project-based science and social studies (4)/Community Service & Character Education (1)</i>

The 2 & 3 Daily schedule reflects a developmental leap from first grade. All students are expected to be “readers” and independent learners. The curriculum reflects more rigor, and art and music are specific

² Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) is an award-winning model of effective training for teachers in multilingual settings for both ELL and English only students, and is the recommended K-8 project for the California State Superintendent's Task Force on successful implementation of Proposition 227.

classes. Teachers continue to utilize GLAD strategies to teach academic language to ELL and English only students alike. Projects remain an important aspect of science and social studies but are more targeted on specific concepts and skills, and more incorporative of math and language arts, than are projects in the primary center. Projects, however, continue to provide “real life” applications that enrich and solidify learning for ELL, English only, and “at risk” students.

TIME	Daily Schedule for 4 & 5 Classes
8:30-9:15	Language Arts
9:15-10:00	PE (2) /Project-based work (3)
10:00-10:20	Recess
10:20-11:20	Mathematics
11:20-12:10	Social Studies/Project-based work
12:10-12:50	Lunch
12:50-1:40	Science (4) / PE (1)
1:40 – 2:40	Arts (music, drama, dance, visual arts on a cycle)/Social Studies

TIME	Daily Schedule for Grade 6
8:30-9:45	Language Arts and writing workshop
9:50 - 10:40	PE (3 days a week) Project-based Work (2 days a week)
10:45-11:45	Social Studies/Project-based Work
11:50-12:20	Lunch
12:25-1:25	Math
1:30 – 2:15	Science/Science projects
2:20 - 3:05	Cycle of arts/music/debate

The grades 4 - 6 schedule reflects a departmentalized approach in order that teachers can develop expertise and attention to student need in areas of science, social studies and math. Teachers continue to employ GLAD strategies as complexity of content language increases. Interdisciplinary projects that reflect subject-specific learning goals and our writing/speaking/debating goals are more essential than ever in these grades as learning and assessment tools. Therefore, in addition to subject-specific instruction time, project time occurs every day as students will always be in the process of completing an interdisciplinary project. Note the time assigned for Language Arts instruction is 15 minutes less than the time assigned to Mathematics because it is expected that components of Language Arts instruction (reading comprehension, writing, speaking, et al) form the basis of project-based instruction.

Instructional Design and Methodologies

CCES is dedicated to developing each student's potential and providing an intellectually challenging, experiential learning environment. Our project-based educational model focuses on a student-centered, constructivist approach to teaching and learning that is designed to:

- Educate the "whole child" by providing students with the tools for academic, social-emotional, creative and physical mastery.
- Enable each child to investigate, research and learn at his or her own pace, in a small group setting.
- Use diverse teaching strategies, that consider each child’s learning style and that vary in response to student assessment data.
- Empower and support teacher action research focused on improving student learning and developing engaging curriculum.

We intend to utilize a variety of instructional methodologies to ensure all students are achieving academic success and developing the qualities CCES deems essential for an ‘Educated Person.’ The fundamental strategies include:

- 1) Data Driven Instruction: Teacher inquiry and research to guide curriculum development and pedagogical choices
- 2) Backward Design
- 3) Family participation and community involvement in the educational process
- 4) Constructivism
- 5) Project-Based Learning (PjBL)
- 6) Problem-Based Learning

1. Data Driven Instruction

Our instructional program will be driven by student data gathered by the teachers themselves. All teachers will participate in collaborative action-research³ in their classrooms to make informed decisions about assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, and student services. Our definition of action research is “a process in which participants systematically examine their own educational practice using the techniques of research, for the purpose of increasing learning of students, their teachers, and other interested parties.”⁴

2. Backward Design

CCES teachers will plan all units of study with other departmental faculty using the ‘backward design’ guidelines described in *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, 1998). This strategy advises teachers to “begin with the question, ‘What would we accept as evidence that students have attained the desired understandings and proficiencies’ – *before* proceeding to plan teaching and learning experiences.” There are three steps to this process:

- 1) Identify desired results: Using educational standards and additional goals, teachers will determine a three-tiered hierarchical set of learning expectations:
 - a) Information and skills worth being familiar with
 - b) Important knowledge and skills
 - c) Enduring understandings

Teachers will answer four questions to help them select and prioritize these learning expectations:

- To what extent does the idea, topic, or process represent a ‘big idea’ having enduring value beyond the classroom?
- To what extent does the idea, topic, or process reside at the heart of the discipline?
- To what extent does the idea, topic, or process require uncoverage? (meaning, what parts of these concepts do students typically have difficulty understanding)
- To what extent does the idea, topic, or process offer potential for engaging students?

2) Determine acceptable evidence: Teachers will select forms of evidence that can be assessed throughout the unit of study and include: informal checks, observation/dialogue, quiz/test, open-ended prompts, performance tasks, projects and presentations.

3) Plan learning experiences and instruction: Now that the learning expectations (knowledge and skills) have been identified, teachers will work together to determine the most effective teaching methods and select the appropriate materials and resources to achieve their goals.

3. Prioritizing community and family participation

The participation of families and the surrounding community is critical in meeting the needs of the whole child; such participation is therefore a top priority. Meaningful learning can only take place if the objectives taught in classes are extended into children’s lives outside the classroom. We will incorporate:

³ Since the process of becoming National Board Certified for teachers is “similar to action research” according to the nbpts.org website, CCES will support teachers in every way possible in their pursuit of National Board Certification and will consider this pursuit to be the fulfillment of this instructional methodology goal.

⁴ Caro-Bruce. (2000). *Action Researcher: Facilitator’s Handbook* National Council of Staff Development.
CCES Charter Petition

- Family education

Teachers, Administrators, parents, and community members will conduct socioculturally sensitive, hands-on workshops with parents of current students and prospective parents of pre-school age children to enable them to develop early math and literacy concepts. As our school grows and matures, we intend to partner with community based organizations in order to build an adult education component that will serve the needs and desires of parents and community members in reaching their own academic and career goals.

- Parent/teacher/Student conferences

Students will co-lead, with their teacher, a conference 1-2 a year in order to demonstrate complete understanding of their academic achievements, challenges and plans. These conferences will be mandatory for every family.

- Parent volunteers

Parents will always be welcome and encouraged to volunteer in the office and at school events as arranged with the teachers and office staff. As part of the Family Agreement with CCES, a degree of parent involvement will be mandated. This arrangement will be made with respect to the family's members' abilities and schedules and could take the form of volunteering at the school or volunteering from a more convenient location, in a way that suits the skills and interests of the family.

4. Constructivism

CCES teachers will implement learning experiences grounded in constructivist learning theory, as described in previous sections of this charter. Numerous independent researchers have documented the success of the constructivist model of education with historically under-served populations, including at such schools as North Oakland Community Charter School in Oakland, University of Houston Charter School in Texas, Discovery Charter School in Newark, NJ, Enota Multiple Intelligences Academy in Georgia and the model schools identified above. These schools and countless others have long demonstrated that when children from disadvantaged neighborhoods, including recent immigrants and ELL, are given the opportunity to attend a school like CCES, their test scores and more importantly their self-confidence and whole development excel. (Amaral, 2002; Mester, 2008; Hollins, King, J. and Hayman, 1994; Mathison & Young, 1995; Thornton & McEntee, 1995; McCombs, 1994; O'Neil & Drillings, 1997; Freire, 1995.)

5. Project-Based Learning

CCES defines project-based learning (PjBL) as a curricular and pedagogical strategy that organizes learning around projects. In this framework, students are involved in planning, problem-solving, decision-making, and investigation; they work relatively autonomously as well as cooperatively over extended periods of time; they reflect on their work, receive feedback and incorporate the feedback; they are guided by teachers' facilitation, not direction, to develop skills; their final product represents the skills and knowledge they gained, which fulfill explicit educational goals (Jones, Rasmussen, & Moffitt, 1997; Thomas, Mergendoller, & Michaelson, 1999; Moursund, 1999; Diehl, Grobe, Lopez, & Cabral, 1999). The effectiveness of this approach has "led to recommendations for shifting the major portion of instruction in schools from teacher-directed, teacher-assigned 'schoolwork' with its emphasis on comprehension, to student-initiated, goal-driven, independent, 'intentional learning' models with an emphasis on knowledge building (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1991; quoting Thomas, 2000).

6. Problem Based Learning

CCES intends to infuse problem-based learning (PBL) experiences into the classroom as much as it is appropriate to do so because it is entirely consistent with a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. CCES accepts the definition of PBL advocated by the Project on the Effectiveness of Problem Based Learning (PEPBL). This consortium of educational researchers organized by professors at England's Middlesex University, established criteria for defining the PBL instructional model in 2000 as

follows:

- Curriculum is organized around problems rather than disciplines, with an emphasis on cognitive skills as well as knowledge.
- The learning environment uses small groups, active learning, and independent study, and it is student centered. Teachers are facilitators, providing knowledgeable structure for the learners.
- Outcomes focus on skills development and motivation, as well as abilities, for lifelong learning. (Newman et al., 2003)

Research thus far indicates that PBL is effective with diverse students in the K-12 context as well as in graduate schools of engineering, nursing, medicine, education and business. In K-12 science instruction, for example, research has supported that problem-based instruction benefits ELLs significantly (Amaral, Garrison, & Klentschy, 2002; Bredderman, 1983; Gibbons, 2003; Valadez, 2002).⁵

Curriculum – Scope and Sequence

A subject-specific, commercially-produced curricular program that is standards-aligned provides the foundation of CCES' educational program. In this way, teachers can utilize the "Backward Design" (Wiggins, McTighe, 2005) methodology of devising lesson plans, learning outcomes and assessments in broad strokes in advance. However, for instruction to be truly effective, lesson plans need to be constantly revised to accommodate new assessment information (Data Driven Instruction), and lessons need to be customized to suit the learning needs of individual students (Differentiated Instruction). In order to implement both Data Driven and Differentiated Instruction, teachers will receive professional development experiences and administrative guidance in designing artful assessment, making objective observations and adjusting instruction and curriculum to best serve student needs.

The following curricular programs have been chosen for the first two years of CCES' existence

- Math: Investigations in Number, Data and Space (TERC, Scott Forsman), Connected Mathematics (Pearson, Prentice Hall), and manipulatives described below.
- Literacy: The Balanced Literacy curriculum (authentic books, leveled) and form of instruction that is designed by CELL, which will provide professional development and ongoing guidance to CCES' faculty.
- Science: The FOSS learning modules created for California will form the basis of science-heavy interdisciplinary projects. Since they are already aligned with California's science standards and many social studies, language arts and mathematics standards, they will ensure students have an effective, hands-on education in the sciences.
- Social Studies: Houghton Mifflin as well as multiple resources referenced in curriculum maps in Appendix One.

CCES faculty will conceive projects (described in the charter) that cover social studies and science standards, incorporate language arts and mathematics standards, and integrate learning outcomes derived from our definition of an educated person. The broad topics for these projects will be teacher created, but the specific projects will be designed by students in answer to their own driving questions.

The instructional methodology for mathematics will be varied, in keeping with the constructivist educational philosophy, and will make use of research-based practices that have been shown to increase mathematics proficiency with similar students. The use of multiple representations and manipulatives, (a constructivist foundational approach) when used in the systematic ways described by experts in the field (Dienes, Lesh, et al), will be major components of mathematics instruction. The charter provides detailed tables describing manipulatives and their uses.

⁵ Despite these findings, effective PBL practices are generally lacking in schools that serve lower SES populations (Banks & McGee Banks, 1989; Chamot, 1983; Jones, 1985; Kessler, Quinn, & Fathman, 1992).
CCES Charter Petition

A balanced literacy approach to instruction provides students with daily opportunities to engage in various reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presenting activities to help them communicate more effectively. Teachers provide these opportunities in reading and writing across all content areas. In a balanced literacy framework, students participate in reading (shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading), writing (modeled writing, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and independent writing), word study (phonics, phonemic awareness, word analysis, syllables, and spelling), vocabulary (word meaning), fluency (automaticity or reading fluidity), and comprehension (understanding). Teachers model behaviors to be learned through read alouds (fluency), writing, and other observable behaviors/activities. Students are given many daily opportunities to read a myriad of texts for enjoyment.

The FOSS CA (Full Option Science System) modules were developed at Lawrence Hall of Science, UC Berkeley, and are aligned with California state standards and National Science Foundation education standards. This program provides hands-on investigations (inv), student resources (sr), laboratory experiences, and projects. The overall goal of this program is to develop a scientific literacy for students of all ages and backgrounds. Research has consistently shown that the constructivist approach to teaching and learning is the best way for students to appreciate the scientific enterprise, learn important scientific concepts, and develop the ability to think critically. The 'constructivist approach' in this case is defined as the active construction of through student's own inquiries, investigations, and analyses. These programs are created to engage students in these processes as they explore the natural world. The curriculum provides all students with science experiences that are appropriate to their stages of cognitive development. These experiences serve as a foundation for more advanced ideas that prepare students for life in an increasingly complex scientific and technological world.

CCES' teachers will utilize the Houghton-Mifflin Social Science curricular materials, created with California's standards in mind, for grades K-3. Fourth and Fifth Grade is being modeled on the multi-resource based Larchmont Charter School program. Assessments will take the form of traditional unit quizzes and tests as well as writing assignments, essays, research papers, presentations and projects.

CCES will encourage teachers to use the arts for enhancement, engagement and enticement as well as a primary tool for making learning accessible to a majority of students who need combined modalities of teaching and learning to make meaning of the content of any and all subjects. CCES will seek funding to support teachers in guiding students' active participation in the arts for the purpose of inspiring young learners to express ideas openly, consciously, and comprehensively while increasing their capacity to acquire information they otherwise could not grasp or comprehend. If funding is unavailable, CCES Board of Directors member, Patricia Hannum, who has conducted professional development for integrating arts in elementary school education to teachers throughout the country, has volunteered to meet with teachers each August and throughout the year to facilitate teacher training.

#2: Measurable Student Outcome

The measurable student outcomes for CCES are designed to reflect our dedication to educate children so that they can flexibly apply the skills and information they have learned in school to a variety of settings. Student outcomes are derived from the California State Standards, standards developed to reflect our emphasis on writing/speaking/debating, and our definition of an educated person in the 21st century. Students will demonstrate progress toward meeting and exceeding these learning goals through their completion of interdisciplinary, subject-specific and community service projects, as well as through their performances on embedded assessments in our mathematics and literacy programs.

Our students will take all standardized tests required by the state, and will participate in CST testing, which takes place in grades 2-6. By disaggregating the data and looking at individual students' results, faculty and staff will utilize test results to determine student's academic needs, and will create individualized learning plans to address these needs. Furthermore, school leaders will analyze test

results from the perspective of teacher education. Gaps in student knowledge will become the focus of teacher action research in the classroom and will help determine appropriate teacher professional development experiences. As a result of these efforts, it is anticipated that scores will rise gradually throughout the first 5 years of the charter. By year 5, CCES anticipates an API score of at least 850. These outcomes reflect our commitment to ensure that all of our students will grow to be literate, self-motivated, articulate life-long learners.

In Elements 1 and 2 and the appendices of the charter, every core subject for every grade is outlined in a detailed scope and sequence that includes the learning goals (state standards et al), the curricular resources, and the relevant assessments.

ELEMENT #3: Outcome Measurement Process

Assessment strategies

Students will be assessed by a range of qualitative and quantitative methods. The assessment tools used to determine students' progress toward achieving these outcomes will include, but are not limited to state testing measures, norm-referenced tests, criterion referenced tests, teacher observations, rubrics for projects and class work. CCES views assessment as a process which allows teachers, parents, administrators, and students to evaluate the quality of learning. The tables in the charter delineate the various methods of in-house derived assessments that will be used and the frequency of their utilization. It should be noted that teachers will be given the flexibility to assess more frequently and use additional methods, should the need arise. Assessment is an ongoing process needed to determine student progress, and when progress is not advancing at the expected pace, both curriculum, pedagogy and assessment must adjust to best improve student learning.

Authentic Assessment

Our use of authentic assessment will take two forms, the first of which is daily on-going documentation that observes students' progress in reaching outcomes defined in rubrics and checklists and observes students' progress in a more general, narrative manner. Through this type of qualitative and quantitative assessment, the teacher doesn't just assess a final result, but assesses all of the student growth along the way. This type of assessment becomes "embedded" in the curriculum and is considered formative. The second form of authentic assessment that we will use is portfolio assessment and is considered formative, and eventually summative. Portfolios are an important element for student assessment within our project-based format. The portfolio will be a highly organized collection of work carefully select by both student and teacher. It will be on-going throughout the year and it will be analyzed by faculty periodically in order to adjust curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to the students' needs. It provides a structure that encourages multiple indicators of student progress. It does not measure one student against another. Instead, it reflects the progress of students who learn through interaction with peers and teacher while encouraging their individual responsibility to be creative and reflective.

Formal Assessment

- CCES-created Writing Assessment grades 3 & 5
- CCES -created Math Skills Assessment grades 2, 4
- LAUSD Periodic Math Assessment
- State-mandated standardized tests in grades 2-6

CCES intends to demonstrate progress on the aggregate results of a standards-based report for each grade level. This report and standardized test data will be disaggregated to show how sub-groups; e.g. LEP, non-LEP, mobility, gender, etc., perform. Student, parent and employee satisfaction data will be handled in a similarly rigorous fashion as surveys will be designed and analyzed regularly to ensure the school maintains an inclusive, positive, stimulating community of learners.

CCES will meet the following API growth indicators:

- Annual API will meet or exceed the established growth target

- All subgroups will make at least 80% of the school target
- The CAT-6 participation rate will be at least 90%
- Target API is 50 points above the average API (774) currently in the alternative schools listed at the beginning of this charter: 824

ELEMENT #4: Governance

CCES is in the process of federal approval as a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation. The non-profit benefit corporation (501c3) for CCES will also be the non-profit benefit corporation for CCMS. Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws and the Board Handbook are included in appendices.

The Board of Directors is the governing Board of both the City Charter Elementary and Middle Schools. The Board of Directors is responsible for all legal and fiduciary matters involving both schools. The Board will also help ensure effective organizational planning by approving long range goals and annual objectives, and monitoring such issues as health and safety, and the use and maintenance of facilities. The Board will have the responsibility for hiring and evaluating the Executive Director/Head of School. The Board will create committees as needed to address issues related to fulfilling the mission of CCES. Possible committees include: Development, Governance/Nominating Committee, Finance, Strategic Planning and Assessment.

Stakeholders will have roles through:

- Advisory Board
- Family Committees
- Dean of Faculty
- Site Council

Families will be given a myriad of opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. All families will participate in elections of grade level representatives [GLR] (corresponding to the grade of their child) to the Site Council. All parents can also join any family committee in which they have an interest. These committees will be formed at the request of the Principal or at the suggestion of parents, pending the approval of the Executive Director. Possible committees include: Fundraising, Technology Support, Teacher Appreciation, Cultural Events, After School Program.

Faculty will elect a Dean of Faculty who will sit on the Site Council and up to two additional faculty members to also join the Site Council. These elections will take place each May for a term to run the following school year. The Dean of Faculty is the main line of communication between administration and faculty.

ELEMENT #5: Employee Qualifications

All personnel must commit to the mission and vision of CCES. Employees' job descriptions and work schedules will be reviewed and modified as necessary to meet the needs of the school and students. The job descriptions will be based on the job duties and work basis as outlined in the charter.

The administrative positions for CCES include:

- Executive Director (for both middle and elementary schools)
- K-6 Principal
- Dean of Faculty
- When the school reaches a student population of 200, an Assistant Principal may be added (job description to be created by Principal)

Evaluations will be performed twice a year. Performance measures will be used to evaluate all school personnel.

The Executive Director (leader of Central Administrative Team - only hired if two or more City Schools in existence) will be evaluated by the Board based on:

- Completion of required and enumerated (from job description) job duties
- Reaching objectives and benchmarks on the path to permanent school site, fundraising and financial sustainability
- Choice and oversight of school administration in regards to:
 - Implementing the charter and maintaining adherence to its guiding principles and requirements
 - Overall successful school academic program and achievement of educational goals
 - High parental and community involvement

The principal will be evaluated by the ED based on:

- Completion of required and enumerated (from job description above) job duties
- Implementing the charter and maintaining adherence to its guiding principles and requirements
- Overall successful school academic program and achievement of educational goals
- High parental and community involvement
- Creation of a school atmosphere of enthusiasm, warmth, and cooperation among all parties

Assessment tools will include staff and parent surveys, site visit, portfolio presentation and a rubric.

Teachers will be evaluated by the principal based on:

- Student progress as referenced from assessment measures
- Effectiveness of teaching strategies
- Performance of job duties

ELEMENT #6: Health and Safety of Pupils

We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, healthy, and protective atmosphere in which every member of the community will grow and prosper. CCES will ensure the safety of the students and staff by complying with the current LAUSD independent charter school standards and policies for health and safety as well as all state and federal laws, including Education Code Section 44237. Each new employee or non-parent volunteer who will work in contact with students must submit to a fingerprint scan for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. This requirement is a condition of employment. Also, employees hired by CCES will be required to have a Mantoux tuberculosis test per Education Code 49406.

The school health and safety policy will be annually updated and reviewed, in consultation with staff and the specified Sub-Committee. This policy will be distributed to all staff and parents.

The school is in early negotiations with several sites and is also applying through prop 39 to receive a potential LAUSD site.

At future sites, CCES will comply with the Uniform Building Codes, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), access requirements, and fire, health and structural safety requirements. The Certificate of Occupancy and other pertinent records will be kept on file by CCES.

ELEMENT #7: Means to Achieve Racial/Ethnic Balance

CCES is committed to making diligent efforts to recruit students from various racial and ethnic groups so as to achieve a balance that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district. CCES will maintain an accurate accounting of ethnic and racial balance of students enrolled in the school. It will also keep on file documentation on the efforts the school made to achieve racial and ethnic balance.

We are targeting the Hollywood Promise Neighborhood geographic areas for recruitment and leveraging our partnership with Youth Policy Institute to ensure we present school information to all the families in the community. In addition, founding parents and volunteers of CCES have been, and will continue to, conduct outreach events at parks, community centers, churches and pre-schools with a large percentage of ethnic and racial minority students.

We have designed an outreach plan that is expected to result in the creation of strategic working relationships with dozens of local organizations.

ELEMENT #8: Admission Requirements

CCES will actively recruit a socio-economically and ethnically diverse student population from the District and surrounding areas who are committed to the school's educational philosophy and instructional practices. Enrollment will be first come, first serve basis. CCES will enroll all pupils who wish to attend (Education Code Section 47605 (d)(2)(A)). If the number of students applying for enrollment exceeds the openings available, entrance shall be determined by random public drawing in accordance with Education Code §47605(d)(2) and all federal requirements. Enrollment to the school shall be open to any resident of the State of California.

Exemption from the lottery, in compliance with Federal law and non-regulatory guidance, will be offered to a small number of students who are children of school faculty and founding parents. The number of students receiving this exemption will not exceed 10% of the total seats. Exemption in the lottery will also be given to siblings of enrolled students, also in compliance with Federal law and non-regulatory guidance.

ELEMENT #9: Annual Audit

CCES's Board of Directors will select an independent auditor and oversee an annual audit of the school's financial affairs to be completed no later than 4 months after the close of the fiscal year. The audit will verify the accuracy of the school's financial statements as well as attendance and enrollment accounting practices. The majority of current Board members of CCES have sat on the board of charter schools that have all been deemed financially responsible by every measure. We expect CCES to be equally transparent and sound in its financial matters.

The audit will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Controller General of the United States. All auditors will report directly to the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors. To the extent required under applicable federal laws for audits of the major federal programs, the audit scope will expand to be in compliance with the requirements described in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133, audits of states, local governments, and nonprofit organizations. Should OMB Circular A-133 be rescinded, audits of the major federal programs will be conducted in compliance with standards and provisions approved by OMB.

ELEMENT #10: Pupil Suspension and Expulsion

Students learn best in an environment where there are clear expectations about behavioral and community norms that allow them to feel safe. In order to maintain a positive learning community, vcms will develop and maintain a comprehensive set of student discipline policies through the work of a committee that includes all interested parents, guardians, students, and staff and is in accordance with California Education Code Section 48900.

A student handbook that describes these policies and is currently in use at Larchmont Charter School and the Youth Policy Institute charter schools will be looked to in creating the first draft of this school's

policies. Each family will receive a copy of these policies and be required to verify that they have reviewed them with their children at the time of enrollment or at the beginning of the school year.

ELEMENT #11: Employee Rights

Staff at CCES will participate in the federal social security system and will have access to other school sponsored retirement plans according to policies adopted by the Board of Directors for the school's employees. The committee to recommend retirement plans to the Board of Directors must include representatives of the administrative, teaching, and clerical staff should members of these groups wish to be represented on the committee. CCES retains the option for its teachers to participate in the State Teachers Retirement System (or a similar program) and coordinate such participation, as appropriate, with the social security system or other reciprocal systems. Non-certificated employees will participate in the Social Security system. If the school should opt to participate in the STRS, or any other systems, CCES shall work directly with the Los Angeles County Office of Education to forward in a timely fashion any required payroll deductions and related data.

CCES has contracted with California CharterWorks to handle our payroll and accounting services. The on-site financial manager is responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements for coverage has been made.

ELEMENT #12: Student Attendance

No student enrolled in the LAUSD will be required to attend CCES. Students who reside in the attendance area but who choose not to attend CCES will have the option of attending another school within the district or pursue an interdistrict-transfer in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of the district.

ELEMENT #13: Description of Employee Rights

Job applicants for positions at CCES will be considered through an open process, and if hired, will enter into a contractual agreement with the school. Any district union employee who is offered employment and chooses to work at CCES will not be covered by his or her respective collective bargaining unit agreement, although CCES may extend the same protections and benefits in individual employee contracts. Unless the employees elect to be represented by an organization for bargaining purposes, all employees will be individually contracted rating in at a level competitive to the district's salary schedules. The individual contract will address, among other issues, salary, health and welfare benefits, work schedules and responsibilities, accountability measurements, and standards for performance evaluations. Employee contracts are year-to-year, renewable each March 1st.

ELEMENT #14: Dispute Resolution Process, Oversight, Reporting and Renewal

Public Comments: The staff and Board members of CCES agree to attempt to resolve all disputes regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section. Both will refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

CCES will adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging any action which would be prohibited by Title IX, or Section 504. The Family Handbook and Faculty Handbook, attached in the appendices of the Charter, provide a first draft for these procedures.

Disputes arising from within the school, including all disputes among and between students, staff, parents, volunteers, Board members, and partner organizations, will be resolved pursuant to policies and practices developed by the school. The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) will, as an initial

step, refer any complaints or reports regarding such internal disputes to the Board or administrative staff of CCES for resolution. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the person or persons complaining, LAUSD may, among other things, refer the complaining person or persons to the appropriate state or federal agency.

ELEMENT #15: Collective Bargaining

CCES will be the exclusive public employer of all employees of the charter school for collective bargaining purposes. Unless the employees elect to be represented by an organization for bargaining purposes, all employees will be individually contracted.

ELEMENT #16: School Closure

In event of school closure, the assets and liabilities of the school will be disposed of by the CCES Board of Directors to another charter school, non-profit corporation or educational entity in accordance with the asset disposition provisions of the school's bylaws. Only unrestricted funds will be used to pay creditors in respect to regulations stating that categorical funds including AB 602 funds from LAUSD must be returned to the source of the funds.

In the event of school closure, the Board of Directors will provide for the transfer of necessary pupil records to the LAUSD and/or attendance area district.