



New Mexico Public Education Commission

2015 New Charter School Application Kit Part C. Application & Rubric



School Information:

Name of Proposed Charter School: Desert Willow School

School Address (if known):

School Location (City/Town): Silver City, New Mexico

School District within which your school will be located: Silver City Consolidated Schools

Grades to be served: K-5

Projected Enrollment Cap: 120

Contact Information:

Primary Contact Person: Emily Aversa

Address: 2216 N. Cactus Street

City: Silver City State: NM Zip: 88061

Daytime Tel: 575-313-7305 Fax:

Alternate Tel: 575-534-4735 E-Mail: emilyaversa@gmail.com

Secondary Contact Person: Fiona Bailey

Address: 1822 N. Yucca Street

City: Silver City State: NM Zip: 88061

Daytime Tel: 575-654-3963 Fax:

Alternate Tel: 575-534-0849 E-Mail: fionamargretb@gmail.com

Founder (if different from above):

Address:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip:

Daytime Tel: _____ Fax:

Alternate Tel: _____ E-Mail:

Founder (if different from above):

Address:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip:

Daytime Tel: _____ Fax:

Alternate Tel: _____ E-Mail:

Academic Framework

- A. School size.
- B. Mission.
- C. Indicators/Goal(s) Related to the School's Mission.
- D. Curriculum, Instructional Program, Student Performance Standards.
- E. Graduation Requirements.
- F. Instruction.
- G. Special Populations.
- H. Assessment and Accountability.

Organizational Framework

- A. Governing Body Creation/Capacity.
- B. Governing Body Training and Evaluation.
- C. Leadership and Management.
- D. Organizational Structure of the School.
- E. Employees.
- F. Community/Parent/Employee Involvement in Governance.
- G. Student Policies.
- H. Student Recruitment and Enrollment.
- I. Legal Compliance.
- J. Evidence of Partnership/Contractor relationship. (If Applicable.)
- K. Waivers.
- L. Transportation and Food.
- M. Facilities/ School Environment.

Finance

- A. Budgets.
- B. Financial Policies, Oversight, Compliance, and Sustainability

Evidence of Support

- A. Outreach Activities.
- B. Community Support.
- D. Community Relationships
- E. Uniqueness and Innovation.

[F. Letters of Support.](#)
[Appendices and Attachments](#)

Directions: Please answer each and every prompt, if applicable (e.g., if you are an elementary school you will not answer questions about graduation), where indicated in red below. Use the rubrics following the prompts to guide your answers and responses. As you will see from those rubrics, it is best to provide clear, comprehensive, cohesive, reasonable, and at times, innovative responses. Too often, an applicant leaves something out (comprehensive) or does not explain how pieces in their proposal fit together (the educational program aligns with the budget—cohesive). The reviewers are also interested in reasonable answers; often applicants are excited to try many new things and this can be taken too far. Finally, remember to showcase the innovation in your charter school proposal whenever possible. Charter Schools are in existence for this reason.

Please note: The PEC has determined which questions are of greater importance than others. Therefore, certain scores are increased if your answers receive “Exceeds” or “Meets” score as indicated in the scoring rubric as set forth below.

Academics

A. School size. State the projected enrollment, grade levels to be served and student/teacher ratio.

Academic Year	Number of Students	Grade Levels	Student/Teacher Ratio
Year 1	120	K-5	12.4/1
Year 2	120	K-5	12.4/1
Year 3	120	K-5	12.4/1
Year 4	120	K-5	12.4/1
Year 5	120	K-5	12.4/1
At Capacity (Enrollment Cap)	120	K-5	12.4/1

	Included	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Not included
A. School Size	The applicant provides all of the required information.			The application does not provide the required information.
		Satisfied	Not Satisfied	

B. Mission. Note: The School shall report each year on implementation of its mission as set forth in the mission-specific indicator(s) as set forth in the Performance Framework, Academic Framework (see glossary).

B. State the mission or the driving force that guides this school proposal. The mission should answer questions such as: 1) what does your school seek to accomplish; 2) how will it accomplish that; and 3) what is innovative and unique about your school? The best mission statements are clear, cohesive, comprehensive, reasonable, and innovative, and have a focus on outputs rather than inputs.

Desert Willow School values children’s unique learning styles, builds self-awareness and a sense of belonging, inspires creative, flexible thinking, and cultivates engaged readers through a multisensory approach.

	Exceeds—8	Meets—6	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
B. School Mission	The mission statement incorporates all three questions above and therefore meets or exceeds the expectation by providing a clear, cohesive, comprehensive, reasonable, and innovative purpose for the school.	The mission statement answers most of the three questions above and therefore meets the expectation at an appropriate level by providing a clear and reasonable purpose for the school.	The mission statement does not adequately address the three questions above and therefore partially meets expectations.	The mission statement is inadequate or incomplete. --OR-- The application does not respond to this prompt.
Comments:				

C. Indicators/Goal(s) Related to the School’s Mission. The Amended Charter School Act **requires schools to identify at least two mission-specific indicators/goals in the application** that set targets for the implementation of the school mission. Mission-specific indicators/goals **MUST BE** provided within the application. If the application is approved, these indicators/goals will be used as the initial draft indicators during the negotiations with the Authorizer.

For the purposes of this application, the indicators/goals will show the capacity of the applicant to identify appropriate indicators/goals aligned with the mission of the proposed school. During the later contracting process after approval, these indicators/goals that are finally negotiated and put into the Performance Framework allow the school to demonstrate its achievements related to the school mission. The Performance Framework is assessed on an annual basis and may be revised yearly.

Mission-specific indicators/goals put into the application should:

- (1) demonstrate the school's ability to implement the school's mission;
- (2) be in format set forth below which is a SMART goal format (specific, measurable, attainable, rigorous, and time-bound—see below); and finally,
- (3) include metrics and measures using the following criteria: "Exceeds standards," "Meets standards," "Does not meet standards," and "Falls far below standards."

For instance, if a school's mission focuses on language acquisition, then a school may choose a mission-specific indicator/goal that measures student progress and performance in this special area. These indicators/goals are monitored on an annual basis and then potentially revised yearly.

Again, please note that **these indicators/goals are subject to change through the negotiation process as the school works with their Authorizer in the contract negotiation process during the planning year.**

Please note: The criteria for SMART Format is as follows:

- Specific. A well-defined goal must be specific, clearly and concisely stated, and easily understood. Educational goals should be tied to learning standards that specify what students should know and be able to do, for each subject or content area and for each grade, age, or other grouping level.
- Measurable. A goal should be tied to measurable results to be achieved. Measurement is then simply an assessment of success or failure in achieving the goal.
- Ambitious and Attainable. A goal should be challenging yet attainable and realistic.
- Reflective of the School's Mission. A goal should be a natural outgrowth of the school's mission, reflecting the school's values and aspirations.
- Time-Specific with Target Dates. A well-conceived goal should specify a timeframe or target date for achievement.

C.(1) Mission-Specific Indicators/goals *Required*

Identify and provide at least two mission-specific indicators/goals in the following section. Include the following key elements:

- First, ensure that the annual indicators/goals provided show the implementation of the school's mission.
- Second, for each indicator provided, use SMART format (specific, measurable, attainable, rigorous, and time-bound—see glossary). Your indicators should include all of these key SMART elements, be clear, comprehensive, and cohesive.
- Third, include measures and metrics in your mission-specific indicators/goals. Specifically, determine what percentage constitutes "exceeds standards," what constitutes "meets standards," what falls under "does not meet standards" and what it means to "fall far below standards." **NOTE: Please see examples in the glossary or in Part A of this application.**

Cohort 1: DWS students whose academic performance is at or above grade level

Cohort 2: DWS students whose academic performance is below grade level

Cohorts will be determined by fall testing in Reading and Mathematics.

Performance Indicator #1: Engaged Readers

Desert Willow School will cultivate engaged readers. By May of each school year, at least 80% of full academic year Desert Willow School students will demonstrate recommended benchmark goals for the phonemic awareness, reading accuracy and fluency subtest measures on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS-Next) assessment as taught through a multisensory reading program.

Exceeds standard:

90% or more of Cohort 1 students meet or exceed recommended DIBELS-Next benchmark goals

80% or more of Cohort 2 students meet or exceed recommended DIBELS-Next benchmark goals

Meets standard:

80-89% of students in Cohort 1 meet recommended DIBELS-Next benchmark goals

70-79% of students in Cohort 2 meet recommended DIBELS-Next benchmark goals

Does not meet standard:

70-79% of students in Cohorts 1 meet recommended DIBELS-Next benchmark goals

60-69% of students in Cohort 2 meet recommended DIBELS-Next benchmark goals

Falls far below standard:

Fewer than 70% of students in Cohort 1 demonstrated recommended DIBELS-Next benchmark goals

Fewer than 60% of students in Cohort 2 meet recommended DIBELS-Next benchmark goals

Performance Indicator #2: Creative, flexible thinking in mathematics

Desert Willow students who have been enrolled for the full academic year will demonstrate creative, flexible thinking in math through academic growth of at least 1 year as measured by NWEA MAP assessment between August and May.

Exceeds standard:

Over 85% of students in Cohort 1 demonstrate academic growth of 1 year or more in Math

Over 85% of students in Cohort 2 demonstrate academic growth of 1.4 years or more in Math

Meets standard:

80-85% of students in Cohort 1 demonstrate academic growth of 1 year in Math

80-85% of students in Cohort 2 demonstrate academic growth of 1.4 years in Math

Does not meet standard:

60-79% of students in Cohort 1 demonstrate academic growth of 1 year in Math

60-79% of students in Cohort 2 demonstrate academic growth of 1.4 years in Math

Falls far below standard:

Fewer than 60% of students in Cohort 1 demonstrate academic growth of 1 year in Math

Fewer than 60% of students in Cohort 2 demonstrate academic growth of 1.4 years in Math

Performance Indicator #3: Sense of belonging

Desert Willow School builds a sense of belonging in its students. At least 80% of classrooms will document at least 10 community experiences during a school year, with at least two in each of the following categories:

**Family activity (such as home visits, open house and parent-teacher conferences)*

**Classroom activity (such as picnic, field trip or class play)*

**School-wide activity (such as festival celebration or a seasonal activity)*

**Learning from leaders and/or experts in the community (such as a classroom visitor or field trip demonstration)*

Exceeds standard: *100% of classrooms have documented 10 or more community experiences*

Meets standard: *80% of classrooms have documented 10 or more community experiences*

Does not meet standard: *60% of classrooms have documented 10 or fewer community experiences*

Falls below standard: *Fewer than 60% of classrooms have documented 10 or fewer community experiences*

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—12	Meets—9	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet- 1
C.(1) Goals Related to the School	The applicant includes all key elements in the indicators/goals provided. As such, the indicators/goals reflect the implementation of the school's mission, are in SMART format, and include measures and metrics for	The applicant includes most of the key elements in the indicators/goals provided. As such, the indicators/goals may somewhat reflect the implementation of the school's mission, contain most elements of the SMART format, and attempt to include	The applicant includes some or a limited amount of the key elements in the indicators/goals. As such, what is provided may not reflect implementation of the school's mission, may not be written in SMART format, and/or the measures and metrics provided	The applicant's response to the indicators/goals are inadequate or incomplete. --OR-- The applicant does not state indicators/goals.

school's Mission	assessing the progress toward achievement of each goal/indicator.	measures and metrics for assessing the progress toward achievement of each goal/indicator.	are unclear.	
Comments: C.(2) Provide a clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable rationale for the indicators/goals developed. In that rationale, offer a detailed plan, and specific methods of assessment to be used annually for the indicators/goals listed above. It is best to use an assessment developed by experts outside of the school (i.e. Discovery short cycle assessment) rather than using grades provided by teachers in the classroom.				

Rationale for Goal/Indicator 1: DWS will use DIBELS-Next to measure early literacy for several reasons. First, DIBELS is a long-established, research-based and widely recognized measure of reading skills created and updated periodically by educational researchers at the University of Oregon. Second, DIBELS-Next offers the subtests needed to measure the skills that research shows young students need to be proficient in before they can successfully learn to read, as well as subtests that measure reading accuracy. These subtests include letter naming, identifying the first sounds of words, reading nonsense words, and oral reading fluency. The subtests come with recommended benchmark goals and cutpoints for risk that were calculated by educational researchers to be in line with the Standard Achievement Test. If students meet the recommended goals at each grade level for the various subtests, they are not considered to be at-risk readers. Third, since DIBELS is created by a non-profit entity, it is cost-free and the database reporting system is very inexpensive. This is helpful in the scheme of our budgetary considerations. Finally, DIBELS is an assessment that feels personal to the children. Teachers meet with them one at a time for about 10 minutes. The ease of personal connection and individual attention during this assessment is in keeping with our goals of building connections and engaged readers. Even though teachers meet directly with each student, it will only take one period to assess a class, so minimal instructional time is missed. There are two reasons why the student population is broken into cohorts in this indicator. One, we recognize that it is very likely that a segment of the student population will struggle with reading due to the nature of our target populations. Two, we want to disaggregate the data between the typically-progressing readers and those who struggle so we can monitor the effectiveness of our reading intervention efforts. We believe our goal of 80-89% proficiency for typically progressing readers and 70-79% proficiency for students with challenges to be ambitious yet attainable.

DIBELS-Next will be administered shortly after the beginning of each school year and again in the winter and spring.

Rationale for Goal/Indicator 2: *DWS has chosen to use NWEA's Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) to assess students' mathematical progress because this assessment yields detailed, clearly understood data and is relatively child-friendly. The level of difficulty shifts in response to each test taker's answers so that students are less likely to become frustrated and teachers can determine who has skills below, at, and above expected grade level performance. This gives a broader picture than criterion-referenced tests geared to just one grade level. Data is broken down into various areas of mathematics, such as number and operations, algebra, and measurement, giving a full picture of student skill levels. Once again, the student body has been separated into cohorts for the purpose of examining the progress of our students with special needs. The skill proficiency of any group of children of one age can be expected to range as much as three grade levels. We expect this to be particularly true with our population of students with special needs and giftedness. The bar for the students performing below grade level at the beginning of the year has been set a little higher than their at-grade-level peers in order to express our determination to work to close the gap over time with Enki curriculum and training and a higher student-teacher ratio than is found at most schools. Students will take the MAP in August, January, and May on a classroom set of laptops in the library.*

Rationale for Goal/Indicator 3: *Strong interpersonal connections are an important piece of the Desert Willow mission. All children, need to feel part of a community network that is supportive of their social, emotional, psychological, and cognitive development. We believe that the rising prevalence of anxiety, depression and disengagement seen in elementary-aged children is due at least in part to social disconnection. Desert Willow School is a place where students will find multiple positive adult role models and the inclusiveness of community in which to build their confidence. DWS values and nurtures connections within the family, classroom, school, and greater Silver City communities. Activities will occur throughout the school year to build those relationships. Teachers will record their students' various experiences in this realm, and reflect upon them. School-family ties will be fostered through several open house events, parent-teacher conferences, kindergarten home visits, and learning fairs. Ways to create and maintain the health of classroom and school-wide communities are intentionally built into the school year's program through the Enki philosophy of honoring the flow of the rhythm of the days, weeks, months and seasons. For example, teachers build their classroom communities through unique morning songs and often eat lunch together for the first few weeks, and it is common for Enki inspired schools to create and enjoy fall harvest and spring festivals together. Community connections will be fostered in several ways. One way is through visits to the classroom by local experts who can expand students' understanding of coursework. An example might be someone from Fish and Game speaking to the fourth grade class about our local ecosystem. Another way is through field trips. An example would be the fifth grade's attendance at the annual Apache pow-pow to aid their study of culture. Finally, a Desert Willow School innovation is weekly experiences connecting with local volunteers who share their areas of expertise in diverse areas. We call these Friday Explorer Clubs. They may include working in the garden, using construction toys such as Construx, and cooking with local bakers and chefs. Explorer Clubs are designed not only to foster multiple positive adult connections for students, but to expand students' awareness and experiences, which, according to our observation, tends to be quite limited. Teachers will*

be provided with log sheets upon which to record their community activities and reflections. (See Appendix Supplement A).

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet- 1
C.(2) Ra tio na le fo r G oa l(s) Re lat ed to Sc ho ol' s Mi ssi on	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable rationale , for their goal/indicators as related to their mission. The school provides a detailed plan , and specific methods of assessment to be used annually for the indicators/goals listed above.	The school provides a clear and reasonable rationale for their goal/indicators as related to their mission. The school provides a plan , and methods of assessment for the indicators/goals listed above.	The school provides a general rationale for its indicators/goals as related to their mission. The school provides a limited plan , and may or may not offer general methods of assessment for the indicators/goals listed above.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete rationale for indicators/goals as related to their mission. --OR-- The application does not provide a rationale for indicators/goals as related to their mission. The school provides an incomplete and inadequate plan and methods of assessment for the indicators/goals listed above.
Comments:				

D. Curriculum, Instructional Program, Student Performance Standards.

D. (1) Provide a description of a curriculum and instructional program with the potential to raise the achievement of the intended student population. The description provided must be research-based, clear, comprehensive, cohesive, reasonable, and innovative, and clearly align with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards, and the school's mission.

If approved, the PEC recommends one semester's curriculum to be fully completed by the charter school during the planning year and approved before commencement of operations is approved.

The mission of Desert Willow School (DWS) is to value children's unique learning styles, build self-awareness and a sense of belonging, inspire creative, flexible thinking and cultivate engaged readers. The population we serve includes students with dyslexia and other language-based reading issues, students who need hands-on learning experiences to remain engaged the classroom, and students who

are creatively and/or academically gifted who need to be met with appropriate challenges. These seemingly disparate groups share a common need for a holistic, hands-on curriculum that engages them in creative thinking and problem solving. Recent research and the dyslexia awareness movement have highlighted the greater than average creative capacity of individuals with the dyslexic neuro-signature (Shaywitz, Sally Ph.D.; Overcoming Dyslexia; 2003 and Eide, Brock L. M.D. The Dyslexic Advantage; 2012). Students who are restless and apt to seek attention in inappropriate ways in a traditionally organized school have been shown to thrive when taught with these methods, as well. (Taylor, L & Parsons, J. (2011) Improving Student Engagement) It is long established that gifted and talented students thrive in an academic climate in which they are encouraged to discover solutions to problems they encounter in a way that nurtures their great capacity for creative, flexible thinking (Robinson, Anne Ph.D. Best Practices in Gifted Education: An Evidence-Based Guide 2006). Desert Willow School's holistic curriculum and the multisensory reading instruction meets the academic needs of all three subsets of DWS's target population.

A. CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

I. Philosophy and Approach to Instruction

Desert Willow School is committed to meeting all students' needs through their unique learning styles. In the course of studying various curricula that will raise achievement for this population we discovered Enki Education, a holistic educational framework and curriculum that meets the needs of our students and can fulfill the mission of Desert Willow School. We are using the term "holistic" to describe education that takes the whole child into account, rather than just their academic progress. Holistic education aims to engender a passionate love of learning, and therefore seeks to make lessons meaningful. Teachers working from a holistic framework are knowledgeable about child development and want to provide instruction in various skills at the times appropriate for learning them. Enki Education takes its name from the Sumerian god of water. Water is life giving, reflects what it meets, and changes to explore and fit whatever it is contained by. When education provides what is needed for a life of vitality, reflects where children are in their developmental path, and changes to meet and explore the details of whatever it comes up against, students can thrive. They are internally motivated to be engaged in their learning. Enki Education pairs the heart and experiences of holistic education with traditional Western education's focus on mastery for a truly meaningful and powerful educational experience.

The concept of developmental stages, or core development, is very important in Enki Education, as it is in Montessori and Waldorf Education. It refers to the sequential movement through the stages associated with becoming an empowered individual. These states parallel brain development (Sutton, B; Mirroring Child Development; 1996). Rudolf Steiner, founder of Waldorf Education, identified three stages of child development that correlate closely with the four stages that most traditionally trained educators have studied when they read about Piaget's Theory of Development. Montessori called these stages "sensitive periods." Children naturally have a greater range in social, emotional, and intellectual growth than they do in their core development, which is always closely tied to chronological age. Therefore, the Enki curriculum is set up so that the class can come together to explore developmentally anchored material, followed by material that is easily adapted to individual interests, feelings, and skills at higher or lower levels of complexity. Anchoring learning in children's core development allows each class to work as a community and also meets each child's specific needs. When core development is reflected in the

curriculum and instruction, children remain engaged and feel relevant and empowered. Desert Willow School's mission is fulfilled as we create true learning for each student.

The Enki approach explores every topic through all learning styles through a three-fold learning process. This ensures that the rich variety of instruction offered is presented in a coherent manner that supports deep learning in a safe, yet individually challenging learning environment. In each subject area and topic listed in the following pages the children will work through a series of activities that call on different skills and present different opportunities and challenges. Each nurtures particular capacities needed for full and flexible thinking. As is now supported by research and expert opinion, each of these is a critical building block for deep learning. In the Enki approach this sequential multisensory teaching is also the foundation of Discovery Learning. To support Discovery Learning, Desert Willow School will use the three-fold learning process for every new skill. Each new skill is first introduced through immersion, continues through development and culminates in mastery. The immersion to mastery aspect of this process consists of a series of specific steps which parallel the process of physical nourishment:

I. Open Intake (Experience)

Eat/Experience a concept through story and movement

II. Digest/Assimilate (Engage)

Digest/Explore and assimilate the lesson concept through artistic exploration, manipulatives, and projects

III. Energy/Waste (Understand and Use)

Energy/Apply, perform, and demonstrate skills and concepts

(A more thorough description of the three-fold learning process is in section F.1)

Following are methodological details of this progression for each new topic or skill:

- 1. **Story** (emotional-auditory connection fostering image making capacities)*
- 2. **Recall** (active emotional verbal and spatial or sequential connection, exercising image making capacities)*
- 3. **Visual and spatial art work** (active emotional-visual, spatial, tactile connection)*
- 4. **Drama and poetry** (active emotional-auditory and musical)*
- 5. **Movement and music** (auditory, kinesthetic-spatial, and musical connection)*
- 6. **Manipulatives and games** (active visual-conceptual, mathematical-spatial, and tactile connection)*
- 7. **Pattern worksheets** (visual-analytic connection)*
- 8. **Written work** (visual-analytic, and kinesthetic connection)*

The Enki Approach, a Brief History and Overview (Sutton, B.; Enki Education, 2009), which will be utilized in full by Desert Willow School, begins with the understanding that a healthy school must have a strong backbone (mission and vision) that guides its program and decision-making process with precision. At the same time, it must remain flexible and creative in adapting the specifics of the program to a given child, location, community, and time in history while remaining true to our mission.

To meet this challenge, Enki Education works within the context of an educational ecosystem. Just as a plant grows in a natural ecosystem where its health depends on the interaction of several core factors, so

does the child. These ecosystems are quite different and each requires a focus on particular factors. Both farmer and teacher must be aware of and responsive to the factors that create a healthy and nurturing environment for their charges to grow, and they must understand how these elements impact one another. All classroom decisions are made in accordance with the Enki web (see diagram of Enki web in Appendix Supplement B). The factors we see as critical for a healthy educational ecosystem are listed below and are the strands of the Enki web and are tied directly to Desert Willow's mission. These are further described throughout this application.

- **Integration of Body, Heart, and Mind:** we teach **all** academics through the arts, (Lake, Kathy; Integrated Curriculum, 1995) inter-weaving the major modes of learning (each child's learning styles), and including a focus on (multi-sensory learning) sensory integration; (Ayers, Jean; Sensory Integration and the Child; 1997)
- **Unity and Diversity:** our Global Cultures Curriculum focuses on the inseparability of these principles not only in the global community, but also within the class, school, and local communities (sense of belonging);
- **Activity of Learning:** our Immersion-Mastery program works with a specific sequencing of teaching techniques to maximize engagement with learning and empowerment (creative, flexible thinking and engaged readers);
- **Mirroring Child Development:** a broad view of child development, incorporating brain science, guides our choices of content and method; (Sutton, B; Mirroring Child Development; 1996) (learning styles);
- **Rhythms:** dependable sequences of expansive, focused, and transitional activities spark engagement and provide the security needed for optimal growth; (cultivates engaged reading)
- **Environment:** attention to the immediate physical environment is a central support for learning. This includes the spatial, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic impact of the school environment; (learning styles/multi-sensory)
- **Essential Meaning:** we focus on the intrinsic meaning of the content or subject at hand; (cultivates engaged students)
- **Adult Models:** teachers model their own learning process as they teach in their own areas of strength and their areas of challenge. (self awareness and sense of belonging) Teaching together, they also model adult relationships; (Pearce, J.C; The Biology of Transcendence; 2002)
- **Teacher Health:** the teachers' sense of wellbeing is the fulcrum around which all else pivots.

At the center of the Enki web is the primary goal of the realization of the individual's potential – his or her particular expression of human vitality and wisdom, which includes understanding and skills, as well as ability to apply these wisely for the good of all involved. On the outer ring is connection to family, community, and the natural world. This connection is both the ground for the ecosystem, and the natural result of working with it. A flurry of articles, papers and books have been written in recent years advising educators of effective strategies used to improve the learning outcomes of disengaged students. The three suggestions with the most promising outcomes for engaging students are practices that involve inquiry-based interaction, exploration, and relevance. The Enki approach incorporates these to the fullest extent (Taylor, L. & Parsons, J. (2001). "Improving Student Engagement.")

Over the years, many situations and opportunities – both expected and unforeseen - will arise in a school. Each of these will be explored and considered through the lens of the Enki web as well as our mission

statement. Whether we are investigating a newly discovered approach to teaching reading, the implications of new brain research, the use of computers with young children, or questioning “tried and true” Enki curriculum and methodology, we will study it from all the angles described above to be sure that we are holding to the basis of our mission that each student’s uniqueness will be valued, multi-sensory approaches will be used in all our teaching, and students will understand who they are both as individuals and as part of the community.

Rather than simply asking if a particular approach “works,” is “well established,” “cutting edge,” “intriguing,” or “popular,” **we focus on how the approach in question will impact each of the critical factors that make up our educational ecosystem.** We ask if it contributes to integrating body, heart, and mind; we look at how it relates to child development, how it might impact the rhythms of learning and living, how it will impact the teacher’s well-being, and so on. We explore ways a new approach or an old one can be adapted to better meet all these needs. And we always do so with an eye to how any additions or changes to curriculum and methodology may affect the child’s overall experience and the life of the school.

Sequence in a Fully Integrated Program: The Enki Foundations Approach

Many people interpret the Common Core as an incremental system of instruction. In the typical incremental sequence, study of a given topic begins with focus on a small and simple section of the topic itself. Things as money, time, technology, and grammar are worked with from the earliest years on, progressing through the years at ever more complex levels. Enki Education views the Common Core strands from a foundational perspective. The sequence in which specific topics come into focus is somewhat different from many other models. It examines what ground is needed for the study of any given topic. For example, both money and time work with complex systems of nested sets – ones in which the criteria for nesting changes with the unit (10 pennies in a dime, 5 in a nickel, 2 dimes and a nickel in a quarter, and 4 quarters but 10 dimes in a dollar. Time works with a base 60 twice, then a base 24, then a base 7, then 4, then 12 – both are very complex nested sets!). Clearly, for this work to have real meaning, and for it to be part of a discovery rather than just rote learning, the children must first understand and work easily with the notion of sets and of place value (nested sets).

To describe the difference in these approaches another way, the analogy of building a house is useful. A house is **not** built a little of each part at the same time. At the time the basement, or foundation, is started, if work on part of the framing, or the plumbing, electricity, drywall, or part of the roof are begun—the house would not be structurally sound. A firm foundation is built in the early years by paying close attention to children’s core development. As children grow, the strands of the common core are woven together in a way that strongly supports the child’s ability and interest in learning.

Therefore, in a Foundations system, before we take up direct focus on these topics we build the foundational understanding of sets and place value in Kindergarten, Grade One, and Grade Two through sorting; visual pattern work; auditory, visual, and kinesthetic pattern work; multiplication and division; geometry; and place value work. We differentiate between direct focus and exposure because all along, children are exploring the principles of time and money in their play and in their daily lives, much as we would look at the lumber and drywall which we use to build the house, and we make framing plans long before we start the actual construction of the walls. This, too, is a necessary part of a foundations

approach. Together, the building of strong foundational skills and the open-ended exploration of the elements that make up their lives builds the ground needed to focus directly on time and money (and all measurement) in Grade Three. This makes the learning meaningful, empowering and far more effective – and, working in this way naturally keeps the learning synchronized with child development.

This same principle holds true in all subject areas and for all topics. Whether we are building the foundation for direct focus on grammar through storytelling, poetry and art work, or direct focus on the scientific process through stories and crafts, or direct focus on computer skills through exploration of sets and place value, we always work from the foundation up. By the time we bring the children's direct focus to the more complex work, they have the preparation to understand the new work in a meaningful and empowering manner.

Using the Enki Ecosystem, we explore how we can best build strong foundations for each topic and each subject. The result is that we frequently tackle aspects of the children's education in a different order than is done in traditional education. We find that this is most true in Kindergarten through Grade Two. However by the end of Grade Three, we have covered the same material and the children have a good grasp of both the material itself and of the learning processes needed to acquire that knowledge. Though content covered and skills acquired in Math and Language Arts, as well as in Sciences, Humanities, Social Studies, Civics, and Government may progress in a different order for both foundational and developmental reasons, by the end of 5th grade we will have covered all the traditional skills and contents and quite a bit more. We are confident that the Enki approach of immersion to mastery fully addresses the common core's goal for students to "retain and further develop skills and understandings mastered in previous grades."

The following descriptions of our subject area content are divided into the two bigger developmental sections: Kindergarten to Grade Two; Grades Three to Five. The Kindergarten program includes all the subject areas covered in the Grades but within a very different and more active and play based structure. Therefore, the Kindergarten program is described separately.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The Enki Kindergarten

All skills in Kindergarten are taught as part of a comprehensive story, movement, and play based curriculum, not as separate tasks or activities. The heart of Desert Willow School is to inspire learning while valuing children's unique learning styles. This play based, active curriculum allows for the foundation of excitement in learning and the sense of self-worth as a learner. The kindergarten experience sets the stage for engaged learning in all curricular areas. It builds a strong base in spoken language which encompasses correct grammar, phonics, logical sequencing for both creative and expository writing, and comprehension. It brings the children a sense of the relevance of math skills to all subject areas, and the confidence to approach, discover, and apply mathematical principles. It ignites the curiosity and careful observation and comparison that are the foundation of science. It develops imagination, which is the key to independent thinking – both creative and deductive. Most importantly, it ignites and strengthens the learning process so that the children will be able to focus fully on their studies in later years.

The following subject specific breakdown of skills learned in kindergarten demonstrates how much is happening in the course of play, storytelling, and the life activities of the kindergarten.

“Play is thought to support the development of such cognitive qualities as curiosity, exploration, divergent thinking, symbolic transformation, representation of physical, logical mathematical and social knowledge, temporal sequencing, conversation, spatial reasoning, seriation, classification and perspectivism.”

– Kohlberg ((DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987)

I) A Humanities Based, Global Cultures Curriculum

*Enki is a humanities based curriculum. In the Enki approach, this means that everything we bring the children begins with helping them feel the connection between the subject matter and their own experience. The key to this is **storytelling**. Parents and teachers, and many researchers, report the ease with which children are absorbed by story. (Groe, Robin; An Experiential Study of Elementary Teachers with Storytelling Process: Interdisciplinary Benefits Associated with Teacher Training and Classroom Integration). Storytelling has been a critical tool for establishing and maintaining culture across the globe and throughout history; (Greene, Ellin; Storytelling: Art and Technique; 1996) we believe this is because of the depth of absorption it inspires in listener and storyteller alike.*

This absorption allows children to stretch their horizons with “direct experience” rather than distant concepts or ideas. We say, “direct experience” because children engage in story so deeply that for them it is a personal and direct experience of worlds otherwise outside their reach. Therefore, at all ages, we introduce all studies with storytelling – the kinds of stories and the presentation of them changes, but story remains key.

*From there, if their learning is to be an engaged and empowered learning, the children need time to openly explore the new material. We believe this is best done through the **arts** (and many definitions consider the arts to be part of humanities because they so fully express and communicate human experience). From this point on, they move into the more specific skills and understandings of the subject area at hand through discussion, application, and practice. In this way, all the material has more meaning to the children. **The result is that Math, Science, Reading, and Writing come to life and the children are engaged and apply themselves.** As John Dewey states, “to feel the meaning of what one is doing, and to rejoice in that meaning; to unite in one concurrent fact the unfolding of the inner life and the ordered development of material -- that is art.”*

*Our humanities-specific, or social studies curriculum content is also the ground of our **Global Cultures Curriculum**, described in Section 3B: Rhythms: the seasons. It is in this context that over the course of their Desert Willow School years, the children gain an in depth experience of the peoples and cultures of the world. In each year, the children have an in depth experience of three world cultures. In the course of Grades Three, Four, and Five, three of these units are on local and U.S. history and geography. This allows the children to gain a firm ground in American history, geography, and government (including American Indian life), and still have a deep and meaningful experience of a couple of representative cultures from each of the other continents (less Antarctica).*

*Our Global Cultures curriculum is, in turn, the base of **teaching academics through the arts**. This is described more fully in the following section on the Arts, but warrants mention here because the primary arts focus is drawn from the culture in focus. (Sutton, B.; Multicultural Education: The Enki Global Cultures Curriculum; 2006).*

Humanities through the Grades

Kindergarten through Grade Two: Students work with developmentally appropriate stories from around the world. They experience the broad variety of ways people experience and describe their lives. As Desert Willow students learn of other people's lives, a connection to their own communities will grow. Grades Three to Five: Students work with developmentally appropriate stories from three cultures each year, with a focus on how people survive on earth and their belief systems or worldviews. The children are now ready to focus in on the unique qualities and outlook of a given culture. With three months to experience and explore the stories, arts, practicalities, and ideas of each culture, they can gain both a broad and deep sense of the people and their lives. At this time, DWS students begin to understand their place and sense of belonging in their world.

II) Language Arts – a Full Literacy Program

Language Arts is the central means for human beings to explore and express their own experience, and to communicate this experience to one another, i.e. these are the primary human means to understand and be understood. Therefore, full literacy must include reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Desert Willow School's program focuses on all four of these as critical parts of communication and works with them as four parts of one whole.

By the time the children come to school, most already have significant experience with listening and speaking, and some experience with letter and word recognition and creation (reading and writing). However, if the children are to develop strong communication literacy skills, these must continue to progress up a spiral staircase where listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are continually strengthened by and strengthening of one another. Therefore, throughout the years, we work with all four of these at ever increasing levels of complexity.

As is true in the initial acquisition of language in the infant, this begins with open listening. Direct work with language arts skills begins with stories, as described in the above section on humanities. In the Enki approach, this is an open listening, i.e. the children simply listen. They do not question or comment or make suggestions during the telling; they just listen. The ability to openly listen is a much-neglected skill in modern times. We feel this is a critical skill as it opens the first step in the learning process. This is the willingness and security to enter a new experience without answers or agenda, i.e. developing an appetite for Piaget's state of disequilibrium. Listening from this open state, the children have the opportunity to bring the context of the story and their other life experiences to bear on their comprehension. Then understanding becomes their own discovery, rather than information the teacher gave to or prodded out of them – they are empowered.

Throughout the grades, language arts skills (phonics, sight words, spelling, grammar, etc.) are taught primarily as an integral part of the humanities/social studies curriculum. The humanities stories are used

as the core material for developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. In turn, these skills become the means for the child to explore and express her own experience.

At all ages, Language Arts work begins with simply listening to stories. In the grades, a simple recalling or retelling of the story by the children reinforce the lesson. Here, both comprehension and confusion make themselves apparent and the teacher has the chance to work simply and directly with both comprehension and sequencing (logical progression) skills. In our modern “multitasking” world, direct work with sequencing skills is a must. This “listening-recalling-sequencing” progression happens in all subject blocks so these language arts skills (listening, auditory comprehension, speaking, and sequencing) are part of all studies all year. In a language arts block, the children then go on to use this material to work directly with both reading and writing (handwriting and creative writing) as appropriate to their grade level.

Relevant poetry and drama are also part of daily life at the Enki Community School. Whether bringing forth another aspect of the culture in focus, bringing attention to seasonal change, memorizing the work of great poets, or the creation of their own poems, poetry and drama are part of the children’s ongoing experience at school. Additionally, drama drawn from the core humanities or academic work is part of every year for every child. The inclusion of drama has a significant impact on comprehension, oral communication, and social skills. (DuPont, Sherry; The Effectiveness of Creative Drama as an Instructional Strategy to Enhance the Reading; Comprehension Skills of Fifth-Grade Remedial Readers; 2002).

The final aspect of our school literacy program is actually the base of the entire program: teacher modeling. The teacher’s ongoing modeling of accurate grammar and articulation, and artful use of the language will impact the children more than anything we intentionally teach them. Therefore, communicating clearly with the spoken word is a central part of the Enki Teacher Training Program. (Sutton, Beth; The Enki Teacher Training Program Course Syllabus and Pearce, J.C.; Biology of Transcendence; 2002).

Language Arts through the Grades:

Kindergarten through Grade Two: Listening comprehension and logical sequencing are the foundational skills and so receive our primary attention. In the course of hearing high quality stories the children are absorbing vocabulary, intonation, grammatical rules, and verbal imagery. As we know from observing the unparalleled pace at which children master language in their infant and toddler years, absorption is the fastest and most thorough way to “teach” the rules of language. (Pearce, J.C.; Biology of Transcendence; 2002).

In Kindergarten, children also become familiar with the alphabet and letter sound relationships through movement and music activities. Research has shown that music has a particularly strong impact on literacy. (Sousa, David; How the Arts Develop the Young Brain; 2006). Through play, the children work with the creation of stories and the retelling of their experiences that will become the content of their creative writing.

Working through the three-fold learning process, in Grades One and Two, we use an Orton-Gillingham, multisensory approach to work extensively with phonics, sight words, context cues, intonation, and spelling rules. Punctuation and grammar are worked with extensively through storytelling and recall. Descriptive and narrative writing are worked with extensively through recall, summarizing and creative writing games and activities. During small group and independent work time, the reading specials will be available

Grades Three to Five: We assume that by this time, the children have established high level listening comprehension, vocabulary, and speaking skills, and are at or above grade level in reading and writing. This means we have the ground to focus our attention on stabilizing both the more technical Language Arts skills (spelling, punctuation, grammar, report writing, and handwriting) and the more creative application of language arts (descriptive, narrative, and expository writing, and poetry writing). On this base, we can expand to include researching skills (library and internet).

The children are now developmentally ready to explore writing from the perspective of a particular character or creature in the stories they have heard or whom they have researched. All the while, we are strengthening reading skills and reading comprehension, and expanding vocabulary and listening comprehension. All this is still done using the three-fold learning process and largely within the context of the cultural focus. Together, these two approaches enliven the learning children engage with, material that would otherwise be dry and burdensome, with enthusiasm.

At DWS we understand that students with moderate to severe dyslexia will still need interventions and accommodations to meet their full potential. The reading specialists and special education teachers will be there to support the classroom teacher in meeting each student's specific needs.

III) Mathematics and Technology

The heart of mathematics lies in the recognition of the relationships in the world around us. It lies in the inquisitive eye that seeks patterns, the ear that hears them, the flexible mind that can imagine new patterns, and the willingness to question and imagine relationships unseen. This is the ground of mathematical thinking, and all the arts – particularly music - play a significant role in its development. (Sousa, David; How the Arts Develop the Young Brain; 2006). All too often, in our eagerness to see the children master mathematics and become adept with technology, we lose our focus on this critical foundation. But it is a real base in mathematical thinking that is the all important skill for the elementary school child to master. Rote skills, when learned as an active part of exploration and application, can support the discovery of algorithms and the development of mathematical thinking. When rote or mechanical skills – including use of technology - are viewed as an end in themselves, they undermine, and even shut down, real mathematical thinking.

Desert Willow School fosters mathematical thinking from the children's earliest days with us. Our entire program - regardless of the academic or artistic subject in focus – works with the core elements of mathematical thinking: imagination (through storytelling, all arts, and play); logical sequencing (through storytelling, recall, report and creative writing); spatial skills (through movement, music, and art); perception of pattern (particularly music and rhythm); and discovery learning (through the three-fold

learning process). At each grade level, these basic mathematical thinking skills are also applied to and taken further with specific mathematical activities and undertakings.

Technological skill is not only a requirement for success in today's world, it also opens up a world of possibilities. However, for technology to serve the children they must have the foundation skills and understandings to give meaning to their work with technology – otherwise it enslaves them rather than empowering them. For example, children who learn to use a calculator before they have a solid handle on both the meaning and the techniques of computation become dependent on the calculator – one need only be in a grocery store during a power outage to witness how pervasive this has become. Use of the internet for research without an understanding of both basic library skills and nested organizing principles is limited to simple one to one matching, i.e. the child can only look for the specific topic and does not have the means to expand and apply his questions to spark new insights and new directions.

To empower the children, strengthen the flexibility of their thinking, and help them build useful and meaningful technological skills, in the early grades we focus on the foundations that will make understanding possible (set thinking, place value, deductive reasoning, sequential thought, flexible thinking, and so on). On this base, in Grades 4 and 5 we begin work with Internet research and project organization (including word processing) – both of which include and require an understanding of nested and intersecting sets. Once the students are adept with mental calculations and estimation – towards the end of Grade Five or Six, we bring in the calculator as a means to check their projections – but not as a means to do the thinking for them!

In the middle school years we take up an introduction to the functioning of the computer, including initial exploration of the binary system and computer programming. We also begin to work more freely with calculators and some of the mathematical functions of the computer (graphing and the like), but are careful not to allow these to undermine the development of the strong independent mental math skills or real understanding that will give the children both power and freedom in adulthood.

Mathematics through the Grades

Kindergarten through Grade Two: In these grades we lay the groundwork for both mathematical thinking and mastery of basic computational skills. One of the most important parts of this is the movement from thinking in terms of one-to-one correspondence to thinking in sets and nested sets (place value). This is the all-important shift from mathematical thinking appropriate to early childhood and mathematical thinking that can carry the children into adulthood. Working with movement, music, arts, math manipulatives, and math games, we foster this shift and apply the new thinking to learning the basic computational processes – including fact families and place value.

The Enki approach places particular attention on building a “Manipulatives Bridge.” (Sutton, B; Discovery Learning: the Manipulatives Bridge; 1996). Enki states that many children who are quite at ease working with manipulatives to do computation are lost when computation is brought to the written form. Therefore, in the last stage of the three-fold learning process, the Enki curriculum includes very specific and innovative, original material to build a bridge between the activity, the concept, and the written form.

In Grades One and Two, the Enki curriculum also emphasizes the active learning of rote computation facts (addition, fact families, multiplication tables). This rote learning happens primarily through movement and recitation. In and of itself, it is pure rote learning. But in Enki, once learned, this is used within the discovery process to help the children. This active rote learning also gives the children the foundation skills to work independently with all higher mathematics.

Grades Three to Five: During these grades we strengthen and expand the basic computation and place value skills learned in the earlier years by applying this basic work to practicalities: measurement of all kinds; fractions; complex multiplication and division; an introduction to decimals; and basic geometry. As always we approach all these studies through the three-fold learning process and in the context of the cultural focus. For example, in a Dine' (Navajo) unit we might enter the topic of geometrical measurement by measuring out a Hogan in the way the Dine' would have – and, in turn, discovering the need for standardized measurement. Or, in the same unit, we might come take a study of tribes as the springboard to explore “place value tribes” to see how the base ten system remains stable no matter how large or small the number. In Grades Two and Three, having established a solid understanding of nested sets, in Grade Four we move onto basic use of the computer and internet research. The firm footing in base ten and the principles of place value also lay a strong foundation for work with the ever changing base systems of fraction: denominators

*In Grade Five we also focus on protecting the earlier learning, and this applies to math more than any other area. Brain research has shown that there is a pruning of unmyelinated neural connections in the child's 11th or 12th year, (Wolfe, Pat; *The Adolescent Brain: A Work in Progress*; 2003 and Restak, Richard; *The Infant Mind*, quoted in the Super Start Project; 2003) just before he moves into Piaget's stage of Formal Operations. Therefore, it is very important that all basic skills are firmly established by the end of Grade Five – firmly established/myelinated skills are immune from this preadolescent flush. These well established skills serve as the foundation on which the higher mathematical thinking and skills of formal operations can be developed. Most programs see this fifth grade year as the time to pile on a huge amount of new skill learning and information; this is actually counter productive as it is not neurologically possible to myelinate new information this quickly and the overload and loss of time to invest in shoring up the basics undermine the myelination of what is actually needed. Therefore, at Desert Willow School the main focus for fifth grade is on firming up basic computation skills with whole numbers, fractions, and decimal basics, including estimation as a means to independently access ones skills.*

In all grades the relationship of music and mathematical thinking is made more conscious, and extensive work with this relationship is undertaken in such things as the study of fractions.

IV) Science

Scientific thinking is, at its core, basically mathematical thinking applied to the natural world. Therefore, all of the ways we foster mathematical thinking are fostering scientific thinking as well. In each, it is the open ended observation, curiosity about what is observed, and the imagination to consider new possibilities that leads to new understanding.

Many of our great scientific discoveries have been by accident, made by scientists capable of profound observation, curiosity, and creativity. For example, penicillin was discovered by accident when it was observed that certain unintended mold cultures were destroying bacterial cultures in petri plates in a laboratory. Those early mold cultures 'messed up' the intended experiment. Had the scientist observing this phenomena not been both creative and curious, the petri plates would have been thrown away and we would not have antibiotics today. Instead, careful observation of natural (but unexpected) phenomena and derivation of a new hypothesis led to a revolution in health care - the age of antibiotics.

Imagination is an important aspect of scientific thinking - one that is often overlooked by nonscientists. The greatest scientists are those who 'think outside the box', who are highly imaginative and even intuitive. For example, Kekule struggled long and hard to understand the nature of carbon bonds. But it wasn't until he let all that he had worked through go and gave his mind free range that he saw the answer through his imagination as the snake eating its own tail – and there lay the Benzene ring. As Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." (Oddleifson , Eric; Developing a High Standard of Culture for All ; 1995).

Although the basic thinking is the same for math and science, its application is quite different. In science work, we have a unique opportunity and responsibility: to help the children develop a meaningful connection to and sense of responsibility for the natural world we share.

To this end, Desert Willow will create three main branches of the science program that are worked with at all grade levels: the Classroom Program, the Gardening Program, and the Community Care Crews. All three of these branches work as an independent whole, but do so in coordination with the science topic in focus for each grade level. All three of these branches grow from the belief that meaningful learning begins at home. Therefore, we begin with the studies and activities closest to home. This may mean learning of the full life of the caterpillar or lizard found right outside the door. Or it may mean working to clean up and beautify the neighborhood, or working in the school garden. Whatever the focus of a particular grade's science program may be, we always explore ways that that focus presents itself in the children's immediate world.

Throughout the grades, the Enki Science Program encourages children to see the world through their own eyes and stand in wonder at what they see. It is this sense of wonder that will keep their inquisitiveness alive. In turn, this will help them use all they learn to care for the world around them, whether they are studying in the classroom, or engaged in planting the street flower beds in the neighborhood, community clean up, or working in the school garden.

The Classroom Program: At each grade level, the children focus on a particular aspect of the natural world around us. These topics are chosen to meet the child's core development so that they are of particular interest to him. For example, the typically energetic and mischievous second graders study extremes in natural phenomena, such as hurricanes and blizzards, drought and earthquake – their interest is captured from the very start as their particular nature is explored and celebrated.

Each study begins with storytelling in which the phenomenon or creature in focus is brought to life from its perspective and within its ecosystem. For example, the fall webworm is not a destructive leaf eater,

but a living being, part of a community that is interdependent with its environment, making its way in the world with skill and tenacity. Or the children might first hear of a hurricane, not from the perspective of the places it destroys, but from the perspective of the water and wind cycle building in force. Then they might hear of how animals sense and prepare for storms. This approach connects the children to the sense of ecosystem as all pervasive, and to the living quality of all beings.

From this rich and vital beginning, the children work with the creatures or phenomena in focus. For little ones it may be as simple as making and flying kites after hearing a wind story. This gives the children a chance to interact with the wind, feel its strength and flow. In the middle elementary years, the stories come out of the humanities curriculum as the children focus on the ways the natural world determines lifestyles and culture. From there, the children explore the science in focus with hands on activities such as exploring gardening with different soils and climates, researching animals in their habitat, and so on.

The sequence described above is the base of our phenomenological approach to science study. As the children move into grades five, they take these experiences and do formal observations and recording. These are then compared and discussed and theories or hypotheses are proposed and tested. In this way, the children take their rich experience and apply the scientific process to understanding it. The scientific process, then, is directly tied to the children's own experience of the ecosystem, and responsible stewardship of our world is fostered.

The Gardening Program: All children in the school will participate in the garden program. Because of the children's differing core developmental levels, along with the basic garden tasks shared by all (planting, weeding, watering, harvesting), the role each class plays is quite different and is interwoven with their classroom studies. For example, the third graders' overall focus is on the practical aspects of living (food, clothing and shelter), and with that they focus on the role of soil and climate in growing food. Therefore, they will be the chief stewards of the garden. The Fourth graders' science focus is on animals, so they will be responsible to ensure that the animal life affected by the garden is considered in all plans and that humane ways to protect the garden from hungry animals are in place. Fifth graders' focus on botany and insects and their interdependence, so they will review the garden plans from this perspective. There are, no doubt, many more ways that each study in focus can play a part in planning and tending the garden and with each year, new ideas will be explored. What will remain a constant is that all children will be involved in the basic tending of the garden at their level, and each will also contribute specifically from the focus of their classroom science study.

Community Care Crews: Community Care Crews are a possibility for students to choose as their Friday Explorer Club. The neighborhood care and beautification program consists of small groups of children (approximately 10 per crew) made up of children from several different grades. These children gather in their crews once a week as part of our Friday Explorer Clubs for about two hours to work on neighborhood care and beautification. Each group will work with a faculty member and one or more members of the local community to literally "tend the community." The crews will do the jobs that must be done on an ongoing basis to uplift the neighborhood, including such things as school composting, school cleaning, tending "street planters" in the neighborhood, cleaning up the streets and local parks, and so on.

Science through the Grades

Kindergarten through Grade Two: In these grades, we focus primarily on strengthening observation skills and thereby building a connection to the natural world around us. We do this by working with a unique set of nature stories and craft activities. For example, after hearing a story about the wind the children may make and fly kites. This direct engagement with the wind gives the more conceptual information direct meaning. Another example might be a story about the process of autumn leaves turning colors and falling off. A walk to collect leaves will soon reveal that the oak – though deciduous – does not fully lose its leaves, and the children will notice. Now a story about the difference in the autumn process of Oaks and other deciduous trees will have direct meaning. For the kindergartner, the simple noticing is enough. The first grader wants to know what is happening and both needs can be met in a way that strengthens observation skills, through story and projects.

Kindergarten and first graders focus on the cyclic quality of the ecosystems of nature, and seasonal change. Because they are just beginning to be conscious of these phenomena, focus on the interdependencies within nature and the stable cycle of day and night and the seasons is reassuring to young children.

The second graders take up more challenging phenomena such as earthquakes and tornados and blizzards. It can be more difficult to see the cyclic quality of disruptive phenomena, but, like the second graders' wilder nature, these too have their place in our ecosystems.

Grades Three to Five: We shift to a more practical orientation during these years. Third graders' focus is on the overall ecosystems directing food, shelter, and clothing. Therefore, they focus on climate, soil, and crops of each of the cultures. A great deal of this work has a hand's on, practical element with building model houses, gardening, and making clothing. The third grader is greatly reassured to discover that he can work with the natural world around him to survive and create.

On this base, in the Fourth and Fifth Grades we take up particular in depth studies. In Grade Four that focus is on animals, investigating the particular gifts the animals use to survive. We also explore how human beings have found their own way to share in this particular gift (e.g. flight, sonar). In Grade Five we focus on the interdependence of plants and insects, and the importance of photosynthesis to us all. In fourth and fifth grade, we begin research studies learning and using both library and computer skills. The children then explore how to take this research back to its more living state – its place within the ecosystem – by writing short naturalist fiction stories using the information they have gathered.

V) Civics and Government

Civics and Government are first learned not as theory, but through the experience of being a meaningful participant in community. This happens through working constructively in a series of nested communities, each with its own responsibilities and privileges. From the earliest days, the children participate in the care of their classroom. All help set up and clean up the space, regardless of what part they may have had in creating any messes. All participate in cooking projects that the class or the school will enjoy together. All participate in setting up and cleaning up festivals. These mundane things may seem small, but we believe this is where the sense of being part of a community becomes meaningful.

Throughout their years at Desert Willow School, children will work with alternative dispute resolution at a developmentally appropriate level. In all cases, this begins with learning to listen openly to the experience of another – regardless of how upset we may be. Step one in this process is for the teacher to listen to each child’s version of reality with interest. Modeling genuine interest is step one, each and every time a dispute arises. From this point, just how the teacher models and teaches alternative dispute resolution will depend on the ages of the children and the issue at hand. But in each case, she is working to help the children build respect and care for one another, by modeling that same respect and care.

Project work is one place the day is specifically structured to work with positive collaboration – and that naturally invites disputes. In all grades, these projects may include any of the arts and academics described above, but project work is where the skill for independent peer work is being fostered. Beginning in kindergarten, a little at a time, children learn to work together in decision-making and in executing a shared project. By the time they are in our middle school, they are responsible for working together to design and implement their own major projects. The ability to listen to one another with interest and to find common ground (work with interest-based bargaining) are the all pervasive skills worked with in the projects time. Together, these personal experiences of government lay the ground for a meaningful exploration of systems of government in upper elementary and middle school.

Civics and Government through the Grades

Kindergarten through Grade Three: The primary way we work with civics and government is in the day-in-day-out care of the class community and through modeling alternative dispute resolution. The saying “Everything I needed to know I learned in Kindergarten” has real meaning when the teacher consciously works with bringing the children experiences of positive community building and dispute resolution.

In Kindergarten, the children also do a lot of creative play together. This seemingly simple and natural play actually involves a lot of listening and negotiating among children. This is a central place where independent working together becomes personal.

In Grades One and Two, the children continue with all the learning listed above, but they also have some very specific challenges and opportunities to work together. The most regular of these happens in the Humanities/Language Arts work. During these blocks, the children regularly work with writing story summaries together. This involves listening to one another, hearing what is important to others, compromising, and learning from one another. This seemingly small undertaking happens over and over and over and for that reason, it has a deep and lasting impact.

Grades Four and Five: In these grades, we build on the above work by having the children take a more active and conscious part in both decision making and dispute resolution. They have been experiencing methods of alternative dispute resolution under the teachers’ guidance since Kindergarten, but they are now old enough to take up this work more consciously. Whether deciding on a play to perform, a booth for a festival, or how to come up with a fair resolution to a social problem, the teacher supports the children as they find their way through a variety of different systems for decision-making and dispute resolution.

This is not only taken up in class meetings and the like, but also in the actual class work. For example, in Grade Four, the children each do a research report on a given animal. They then take this information and, working with others who have researched animals of the same ecosystem, they write a short naturalist fiction story. This requires navigating difficult decision making in a positive manner. The teacher will offer guidance and systems for positive decision making to help the children find their way. In Grades Four and Five, we take up the study of government directly. Our focus turns to the governmental structure of the culture in focus in each 3 month long unit. This focus includes the United States governmental structure in both fourth and fifth grade.

VI) World Languages

From an educational perspective, learning a second language is an important part of developing flexible thinking. Each language expresses a unique way of thinking – not something that can be translated, but something that must be experienced. We cannot learn all languages, but we can lay the ground for a flexible outlook just by opening the doors to one other way of thinking.

In the Desert Willow School, we also work with tasting many languages within the cultural units begun in Grade Three. In each cultural unit the children learn a spoken piece in the language of the culture in focus, and several practical or idiomatic phrases. While this is not the learning of language for practical use, it does offer the children an experience of the sounds and textures of many languages in their own context. For example, in the Haudenosaunee unit, in the course of learning the traditional stories, the children learn the Thanksgiving Address in the Mohawk language. Through picture books and their own painting, they come to understand that these words give thanks for all that the world provides. In teaching a second language, Enki uses a three pronged approach (each of these prongs is an experiential approach and none involve any translating): Immersion; TPR (Total Physical Response); and Living Pictures.

Immersion: For the immersion aspect of our approach we speak the language in its own right for ten to twenty minutes at a set time of day, as far as possible, every day. Movement time is an excellent opportunity for this as moving through gestures and activities is a natural part of this work. During this time, we work with the actual games, poems, and activities of the culture – the very things through which a culture passes on its perspective and its values. Like anything else we do, all learning takes place first in the body. Throughout this period of songs, poems, and games, the language is not in any way slowed down or broken down. The verses and songs are just spoken or sung as a native speaker would converse or play with a child. We use movement and gesture to clarify meaning, as we would for an infant, but we do not break the overall flow and rhythms of the language.

Total Physical Response (TPR): This approach emphasizes the active body learning in a more practical manner. In this part of our work, we give the children any instruction to which they can respond actively-physically. For example, when the children are complaining that it is too hot, the teacher might say, “¿Quien quisiera abrir la ventana?” (Who would like to open the window?). Then she would gesture to the window and wait. If no one volunteered to open the window, she might say, “De acuerdo, yo abriré la ventana.” (Fine, I will open the window.) The next time or so after that, someone will volunteer and she will say, “Muy bien, Juanito, vaya a abrir la ventana, por favor.” (Good, Johnny, go and open the window, please.) We continue this way throughout the day, when an opportunity for action arises. We have found

that using the foreign language throughout the day, when opportunities for responsive action arise, is very effective.

Living Pictures: When infants learn a language they have an enormous amount of exposure to it through all the senses, including the visual. In observing both foreign language learning and infants learning their native tongue, we have come to feel that there is a missing element in most immersion programs – a chasm into which much of the learning falls. This is the chasm created by the absence of visual information.

We do not bridge this chasm with standard pictures because the stillness of these would leave us basically pointing and doing a “visual translation.” Rather, we “speak” to the movement sense, through the vision. We do not point to anything, but through the living pictures (similar to active pop up books), we make it happen. As seen in the example on the right, the child’s hands actually clap, the windmill turns, the fish swims, and the butterfly flies. So as we sing of these things, rather than stepping back and doing either a verbal or a visual translation, the children are drawn into the action – it is a living of the meaning.

Working with these three approaches all woven into a coherent whole throughout the day, the child absorbs the language in all his senses. For some of the children attending the Enki Community School, English will be the second language. For others it will be Spanish. Working with both languages in an active, artistic, and imaginative way allows all children to join in the learning and use of both languages.

World Languages through the Grades

The descriptions below apply to children who are in Desert Willow School from Kindergarten on. With children who have not been at the school for all of their education, the following should be looked at as steps in progression beginning whenever the language learning begins.

Kindergarten through Grade Two: During this time, the children will work primarily with the approaches described above. In Grades One and Two, whenever possible, the children will also have a games period in the foreign language once or twice a week. This gives an additional opportunity for absorbing the language and using it actively. They also begin to have a “foreign language lunch” a few times a week, to expand the opportunities for vocabulary and application of the language. Second graders also hear picture books and illustrate verses and do short plays in the foreign language.

Grades Three to Five: In these grades, we continue as in the early grades, but shift the focus to conversation. The children have now had significant experience with the language and have a good vocabulary. Through interactive games in rhythmic verse the children explore life in the foreign culture at stores, in the playground, at the zoo and so on. Beginning in Grade Three, children do active work with conjugating verbs, and they work with reading and writing.

VII) The Arts

It’s been clear for some time that preparing students for the specific tasks they will have to perform in the 21st century is beyond the scope of education. Instead, schools must now aim to educate students so they will be versatile enough to learn new skills and apply what they know creatively to meet the changing demands of our world. Tomorrow’s successful adults must be capable of both flexible and

creative thinking, innovative problem-solving, of working both independently and in group contexts, and they must be adept at seeing the broad implications of their decisions and actions. (Lake, Kathy; Integrated Curriculum - B; 1995).

These new requirements for successful citizenship require that we make major shifts in the modern approach to education. In the Enki approach, we make these shifts through the three-fold learning process. The arts are critical to this process and make up the first two of the three steps in it. Why? Because the arts demand a personal and open-ended engagement with the material; it is this open-ended engagement that fosters all the skills needed for successful citizenship. This is the seat of empowerment.

As any parent or teacher knows well, children are not primarily rational. They do not make sense of the world through analytic dissection. Rather, they engage with the new in active, imaginative, and creative ways to discover meaning for themselves. Their feelings are captured; their interest peaked, and motivation soars. This full engagement is the realm of the arts, and clinical research now shows that teaching through the arts has significant impact on brain development, emotions, and learning. (Sousa, David; How the Arts Develop the Young Brain, 2006).

Therefore, as described in Section 2B: Philosophy of Learning, the Learning Process, in Enki all subjects are taught through the arts, this includes: storytelling, music, drama, visual arts (painting, drawing, textiles, sculpture, spatial-architectural arts, crafts, etc.), and movement-dance. As shown on the table below from The Arts and the Transfer of Learning, (Catterall, James S; The Arts and the Transfer of Learning; 2002) each of these arts has its own unique contribution to the child's brain development and to his or her skill and content learning.

Music

In recent years, research has shown that music has a significant impact on brain development and cognition, particularly in regards to language learning and mathematics, (Catterall, James; The Arts and the Transfer of Learning; 2002), and overall memory. (Sousa, David; How the Arts Develop the Young Brain; 2006). However, as has always been known in traditional cultures, music speaks to the heart - this is why music is central to the Enki approach. There is no culture on earth that does not have music, and few, if any, hearing persons who are not deeply touched by music at some time in their lives. This is true for all people, but so much more so for children. This can easily be seen in the singing of mothers to little ones, and the sing-song games of children throughout time and across the globe. The importance of music is clear, therefore, in Enki music is part of every child's day across all studies.

In Enki, we begin every day with song; song and rhythmic verse are part of seasonal and academic movement activities in all grades, song is central to all foreign language learning, song is part of any class quiet times, song and music study is taken up in separate music classes each week, and song is used to close the day. Because children respond so freely to song, song is used to guide transitions throughout the day. It will be a rare moment when there is not song or music found somewhere in Desert Willow School!

Throughout the program, we work to nourish and strengthen the natural music abilities of each child in both producing and receiving music. We work to have the children experience the textures of other times and places through music as the children work with music and dance from the culture that is in focus in each cultural unit. We rely on music to support the development and ongoing sense of community: shared songs not only bring children together in the actual singing, but they become part of a community culture that can be reawakened simply by hearing a shared song again.

Visual, Sculptural, and Textile Arts

What all of these arts have in common is the use of the hand to create. What the human hand can create is quite awe-inspiring, in and of itself. But along with this these arts also require and strengthen hand-eye coordination, crossing of the midlines, and establishment of dominance. These skills are critical to becoming an effective learner. (Pica, Rae; 10 Reasons to Promote Emergent Literacy Through Movement & Active Learning). Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner were among the first modern educators to highlight the importance of the hand to brain development; clearly traditional cultures had an intuitive sense of this, at minimum.

When visual, sculptural, and textile arts are approached as a means to explore and experience color, movement, and form, rather than tools to produce a given end, all children can succeed. Over the years, as children progress from rich experiences in color, intensity, and movement to work with more structured and planned forms, they do so with a deep knowledge of these foundational elements and are better able to express themselves effectively through these arts.

Sculpture offers unique opportunities to work in a three dimensional plane. This calls the children to look at a given creation from multiple vantage points – a clear support of flexible thinking. Sculpture is done with bees wax, clay, paper mache, and wood.

Architectural (or spatial) arts are a subset of sculpture and also require that the child look at a creation from many angles, increasing flexible thinking. These spatial arts include: creating worlds with stones, shells, logs, and silks (a mainstay of kindergarten and grade one); dioramas; building with furniture, brush or branches, and so on.

Textile arts have several unique benefits. The first is that they give the children an opportunity to make useful things – children knit hats and scarves, felt and sew vests and slippers, batik fabric for skirts and bags, and so on. Each time their artwork becomes a useful part of their lives, the children feel empowered. Additionally, the core textile arts – knitting and crocheting – are known to have a large impact on brain development through work with midline crossing and establishment of dominance.

Movement and Physical Education

At Desert Willow School, movement work is a critical and daily part of the education. There are many reasons for this, and we bring together many approaches to make movement education nourishing to body, heart, and mind. The vast majority of the time, our movement work is connected with the academic or seasonal study at hand through music and rhythmic verse. (Pica, Rae; 10 Reasons to Promote Emergent Literacy Through Movement & Active Learning). This makes it dominantly an artistic endeavor and, therefore, movement work is included in this section.

One population of students Desert Willow School educates is those who have become disengaged in the typical learning environment. This population is often seen as bored, fidgety, not trying. The human kinesthetic sense is a much ignored capacity in the modern world, but as human beings we are able to apprehend information, process it, apply it, and express ourselves through movement – in fact, since the dawn of time our nervous system has been set up to develop through movement first and foremost. We – and many other educators, sensory integration therapists, educational kinesiologists, and developmental movement specialists (e.g. Jean Ayres, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Paul Dennison, Carla Hannaford) - believe that the great rise in attention, emotional, and behavior problems is in large part the result of severely neglected kinesthetic nourishment and education. (Smart Moves, 1995; Bainbridge-Cohen: Sensing, Feeling, and Action; Ayres: Sensory Integration and the Child, 1979). Clearly, lack of meaningful movement is a significant contributing factor to many of the weight and health issues exploding among our youth today. (Masurier and Corbin; Top Ten Reasons for Quality Physical Education; 2006). Our daily movement program is designed to address these many kinds of needs for targeted movement, and to do so largely in the context of the academic material being studied.

In keeping with modern research on the role of aerobic activity in priming the brain for learning, (Carmichael, Mary; Stronger, Faster, Smarter; 2007), we start each day with a “warming up period” of about twenty minutes. Depending on the situation - age of the children, outdoor opportunities, and so on – we may begin with an outdoor playtime, sports, formal indoor aerobic dance and games, or the like. Whatever will best serve the children to get their breath and heartbeat engaged is what we do.

The first level of learning needed is the integration of the senses and the stabilization of dominance. Our next work will be more formal and targeted sensory integration, brain gym, and midline crossing activities. (Hannaford, Carla; The Brain Gym(R) Option for Hyperactivity, ADD, EH, Special Ed., LD and FAS). It is in this part of the work that we help the children release stress and bring their bodies into the wakeful and harmonious state needed for more the mentally focused activities of the day. (Koester, Cecelia; Summary of Brain Gym Research Project on Reading ; 2000). This will always have at least a seasonal connection and more often than not will also have an academic one. Now the body and brain are primed and organized for learning.

The second level of learning is the targeted academic movement activities. Here we work to bring a deeper knowledge of a particular study, through movement. For example, when clapping out the multiplication tables as part of rote recitation, the children clap and stamp in the rhythm of the multiplier. So the movement patterns for three tables (and any multiple thereof) are in a three beat, waltz pattern; for the fours in 4/4 time; and so on. In this way the children not only learn the rote facts with the support of the auditory and kinesthetic sense, they also map the basic motion of sets in their movement systems. Whether clapping out tables, stamping out syllables, or marching to different beats to explore fractions or base systems, the children gain a kinesthetic experience to support the more conceptual learning they will take up after the movement period. (Gilbert, Anne G.; Movement is the Key to Learning, 1997). (Hruska and Clancy; Integrating Movement and Learning in Elementary and Middle School; 2008).

The final level of learning is the foreign language movement work described in the foreign language section.

In the course of all of these activities, the children are working together as a group. Each activity has its own specific social opportunities and challenges. The children can't help but work with social dynamics and the forming of a healthy community – and the movement component provides opportunities to do this in a playful context.

When working with movement this way, the children have had significant work with P.E., Health, Music, Poetry, one or more academic areas, seasonal science, and civics/community building – all in the course of the first 30- 40 minutes of the day. This provides a strong base from which to focus in on their seat work.

Within each day the kinesthetic base established first thing in the morning is reactivated with short sensory integration and brain gym exercises at the end of recess or the start of each class. This has been shown to have a significant impact on the children's ability to refocus as they move from one type of activity to another. (Sousa, David; How the Arts Develop the Young Brain; 2006).

Along with the daily movement work, there are also traditional sports and game periods several times a week. Taking an economical approach (both as regards time and money), these sports and games periods are often taught in the foreign language being studied (Spanish).

All told, we work with the children's natural need for physical activity and harness it to support their other studies and to provide them with strong habits for healthy and successful learning and living. (Corzo, M.; Children Who Desperately Want to Read But Are Not Working At Grade Level: Use Movement). (Walonick, David; An Overview of Human Development Issues).

Projects

All of us, young and old, seek to create our own world. Therefore, in the projects classes children are given structured opportunities to do just that, taking what they are learning in their other classes and using it to create a world of their own. Project work can include any of the arts, including story writing, and math or science research as part of the creations they undertake.

This work gives the children an opportunity to work in small groups and learn the social skills needed to create together, with progressively less direction and assistance from the teacher in both planning and execution. The youngest children work with a lot of teacher guidance on such things as bees wax scenes, baking, dioramas, and nature projects. The older elementary children take on more responsibility for the choosing and designing of their own projects including such things as ceramic and textile arts, or the building of model houses, meals, or gardens from the culture in focus.

HOW DESERT WILLOW SCHOOL'S CURRICULUM MEETS THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS AND NEW MEXICO STATE STANDARDS

Language Arts

Common Core Standards Literature K-5

Enki's rich storytelling is right in line with Common Core Standards in Literature. By anchoring the recognition of the story elements to the story-telling that is such an integral part of the Enki curriculum, students then transfer the understanding of and ability to identify the story components in what they read on their own. The Enki curriculum is in keeping with Common Core Standards for literature due to its rich use of poetry, folktales, myths, and fables from around the world. Teachers will use the strands of literature outlined in the scope and sequence to target the skills needed to analyze literature read to them or read on their own. Vocabulary development is another integral strand in the Enki language arts curriculum allowing students to develop and practice the skill of determining word and phrase meaning as used in text.

Common Core Standards Informational Text K-5

Through our study of humanities, science, math, and government, students develop and use the skills outlined in the Common Core for informational text. Each new concept in these subject areas is introduced with story. Storytelling is the beginning of discerning fact from fiction. What is the information learned in the story? With this foundation, students will then use various print materials to determine the key ideas and details from the informational texts. Our curriculum in the subject areas will also be very hands-on and project-based. As students learn through experience, they will also be reading informational texts to support their new learning. Through their active experiences the text will be more meaningful and read with deeper understanding and clarity.

Common Core Standards for Foundational Skills K-5

The skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and print concepts will be introduced and practiced through story, movement, poetry, rhythm, and repetition as outlined in the Enki scope and sequence. Continued practice in sequential, multi-sensory ways will happen during individual and small group work time so that each child will receive instruction matching their unique learning style with the appropriate multi-sensory approach to build a self-awareness of their strengths and challenges as they learn to read. The basis for this small group instruction will come from three places: Enki curriculum used during whole group instruction, Orton-Gillingham phonics programs, such as Take Flight and Saxon Phonics and Spelling, and the practice and honing of reading and writing skills through Guided Reading and Guided Writing.

- By drawing from the storytelling that is taking place in the whole group setting students have a connection to the language needed while decoding or encoding words. The teacher uses the content from the Enki curriculum to do direct instruction on the common core standard on which that particular group of students needs direct instruction or practice.*
- Use of Orton-Gillingham phonics programs ensures that each student's needs are being met even when signs of dyslexia are demonstrated (HB 230, Section 2-B signed in to law 2010)*
- Guided Reading: The guided reading model allows teachers to differentiate and meet the needs of all their students. Guided reading helps to foster a love of reading because students are reading at their "just right" level, allowing confidence to flourish. Guided reading gives students an opportunity to practice reading strategies independently and with immediate teacher guidance cultivating each student's self awareness of her specific reading needs. The teacher integrates the common core standards that each child needs directly into their lesson.*

- *Guided Writing: During small group and individual work time the teacher and students will be able to apply the phonics skills and print concept skills the student has mastered in isolation to their own writing.*

Common Core Standards in Writing

Students at Desert Willow School will be given opportunities to write in a variety of genres to foster a love of writing. Learners will compose and write opinion pieces, informative texts and narratives, according to grade-specific goals and expectations. With guidance and support, each child will produce and publish their writing, utilizing critical thinking skills. Interacting and collaborating with others will cultivate each student's self-awareness. Writing routinely over extended time-frames will build on skills to effectively write for a variety of tasks, purposes and audiences.

Common Core Standards for Speaking and Listening

Spoken language is at the heart of meaningful interactions at home, in school and in the larger community. Research shows that, through plentiful opportunities to speak as well as listen, children gain the skills to become proficient readers and writers. Students at Desert Willow School will be given opportunities to participate in collaborative discussions across all subject areas. Because Stories will be an integral component of their educational experience, they will be making connections through all content areas, utilizing oral storytelling, experiential expression, in addition to dramatic and creative language experiences that recognize their unique learning styles. Engaging in meaningful conversations will develop skills in questioning, sequencing ideas and the ability to explain ideas clearly.

Common Core Standards for Language

Knowing that the acquisition of spoken language is a natural process, whereas the acquisition of the written language is learned; creating a strong foundation of the conventions of standard English through speaking will be the focus of kindergarten and first grade. Hearing and reciting rich language and proper English usage modeled through storytelling and poetry recitation and drama establishes the understanding of correct language. With this basis students will demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics in the speaking and in turn their writing. Grammar games, creating summaries, and formal instruction on identifying the parts of speech are introduced as students show readiness for these skills

As with their foundation skills continued practice in sequential, multisensory ways will happen during small group reading instruction so that each child will receive instruction matching their unique learning style with the appropriate multi-sensory approach to build a self-awareness of their strengths and challenges as they learn to read.

Vocabulary standards will be met through the vocabulary rich, language based curriculum so all activities in all subject areas will expand and strengthen the child's vocabulary.

- *Hearing stories (exposure to rich and broad vocabulary in context)*
- *Movement work (kinesthetic mapping of meaning for new vocabulary)*
- *Poetry recitation and drama (exposure to and absorption of rich and broad vocabulary in context)*
- *Creating summaries with the goal of using high quality vocabulary (first through modeling, then by sharing the experience, in guided instruction, and finally independently)*

MATHEMATICS

As we go through the Enki training during our planning year (fall, 2015 to fall, 2016) we will work to match the Enki stories and skill work with the common core standards in mathematics. The Enki approach to math teaches the skills in a series of blocks. After the introductory block, all skills are practiced on an ongoing basis and integrated into the next area of study at ever higher levels. The broad math concepts are first introduced in Main Lesson through the story cycle with a problem solving approach using inquiry or through a project. In this way, an immersion experience is provided before the skills are taught explicitly and practiced as skills. In addition to the auditory-visual nature of the introductory story, the Enki approach is very hands on, allowing for each child's unique learning styles to be acknowledged and cultivated.

SCIENCE

As we go through the Enki training during our planning year (fall, 2015 to fall, 2016) we will work to match the Enki stories and skill work with the New Mexico State Standards in science.

The Enki approach to science begins the immersion process by connecting the students to the major science concept through storytelling. The universal strands in Enki sciences are

- 1. Establishing a ground in the scientific process begins with sparking the desire to observe*
- 2. Experience of the principle of the cyclic nature of ecosystems*
- 3. Fostering application of the natural world*
- 4. Environmental stewardship*

The Enki curriculum is strong in the earth and life sciences. We will work to incorporate the New Mexico State Standards in physical science as they naturally fit in with the topics in earth and life science topics. The scope and sequence outlines the topics that are the main foci for each grade. These topics very naturally build on one another. In addition to the Enki Curriculum, students will have science experiences during our Friday Club times.

Social Studies/Humanities

As we go through the Enki training during our planning year (fall, 2015 to fall, 2016) we will work to match the Enki stories and skill work with New Mexico State Standards in social studies.

In the Enki curriculum, humanities form the foundation of all we do. Why? Because it is the human experience - whether in history or science, music or mathematics - that speaks to us all, that the humanities form the foundation of . Making this human connection not only fosters enthusiasm, it also leads the children to see the world as a whole and find a compassionate understanding for all that makes up their lives.

The Enki curriculum ties directly to our mission statement of building a sense of belonging, preparing to become a contributing citizen of their community (and the various levels of community. Immersing students through story and activity students will experience five major strands in Social Studies/ Humanities

- 1. Experience of the humanity in all people*
- 2. Experience of the universality of the human journey*

3. *Experience of the diversity of cultural expression*
4. *Experience the effects of climate/natural environment on life in each culture worked with in story*
5. *Learn of great leaders from around the world and in a wide variety of disciplines*

The scope and sequence outlines the various stories that will be used to introduce the social studies strands in the different grade levels. In addition to story, expressing learning through artwork is an important part of the Enki experience. The deep understanding of culture ties in with our mission's focus on building a sense of belonging and at the same time cultivating self awareness within the human experience.

THE ARTS

Through the integrated approach of the Enki approach used at Desert Willow School, the arts will meet the New Mexico State Standards. At Desert Willow School, the arts play an important role not only in their own right, but also as a tool for learning, exploring and mastering material to enliven the entire curriculum. Arts integration results in a curriculum that is interwoven with art to enhance learning, as a form of self-expression for students, and a way to exhibit students' understanding of material they have already mastered. As outlined in the scope and sequence, students at Desert Willow School will experience more of the arts than in a typical elementary school setting.

All subjects are taught through the arts, including: storytelling, music, drama, visual arts (painting, drawing, textiles, sculpture, spatial-architectural arts, crafts, etc), and movement-dance.

MOVEMENT/PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Desert Willow School will go beyond what is expected in New Mexico State Standards by incorporating movement into every aspect of their day. As outlined in the Scope and Sequence movement/physical education standards will be met both in the classroom and during our Friday Explorer Clubs.

Desert Willow School is committed through its curriculum to fulfill its mission and stay in step with Common Core and New Mexico State standards. With our multisensory, immersion to mastery process of learning, DWS students will have their unique learning styles valued. Their self-awareness and a sense of belonging will be built to help them see themselves as inspired, creative, flexible thinkers as they cultivate their reading engagement.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
D · (1) A c	The description provided has the potential to raise the achievement of the intended student population. What is provided is research-	The description provided is clear and reasonable and mostly aligns with CCSS, NM Content Standards, and the school's mission.	The description provided is limited and does not support or partially supports CCSS, NM Content Standards, and the school's mission.	The description OR the timeline provided is incomplete or inadequate. --OR-- The application does

a d e m i c p r o g r a m & C u r r i c u l u m	based, clear, comprehensive, cohesive, reasonable, and innovative, and clearly aligns with CCSS, NM Content Standards, and the school's mission. --OR-- If not fully developed, the applicant has provided a clear, comprehensive, and reasonable timeline and plan for its development, including identification of responsible staff and deadlines and assurances and plans for aligning with CCSS, NM Content Standards, and the school's mission.	--OR-- If not fully developed, the applicant has provided a clear timeline and plan for its development, including identification of responsible staff and deadlines and assurances and plans for aligning with CCSS, NM Content Standards, and the school's mission.	--OR-- If not fully developed, the applicant has provided a limited timeline and plan for its development, including limited identification of responsible staff and deadlines and assurances and plans for aligning with CCSS, NM Content Standards, and the school's mission.	not respond to this prompt.
Comments:				

D. (2) Substantiate how the curriculum and instructional program will help the school achieve high outcomes for students. (Required if a curriculum program is provided)

Research/Data

Desert Willow School values children's unique learning styles, inspires learning through a multi-sensory approach, cultivates self-awareness, and builds a sense of belonging. The learning environment is created and geared for student achievement and success at every grade level and in every subject. The curriculum design and delivery systems are innovative but successful.

Both the Enki (a holistic, arts-integrated, multi-sensory) philosophy and curriculum and the Orton-Gillingham (OG) methodologies are exactly what our target population need to succeed academically. Researchers have found that students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties, students with ADHD and other attention issues, and students who are bright, yet disengaged thrive in a holistic approach: a

method of teaching that activates the right side of their brain. Many of these students tend to be right brain dominant. Incorporating art, movement and other forms of learning stimulates both sides of the brain, creating new connections.

Multisensory Approach

Having all classroom teachers, instructional assistants, and reading specialists trained in the OG methodologies will allow the teacher to meet all levels of need whether in the regular classroom, small group pull-out, or individual interventions providing success for all students. Reading specialists will have complete training in the OG system and will provide training for classroom teachers for teaching students with dyslexia and other reading challenges. Frequent collaboration among teachers to instruct and help students before frustration begins and allows students to read with confidence and mastery. For students with moderate dyslexia to begin reading on grade level or to the level of their cognitive ability, programs such as "Take Flight," "Barton Reading and Spelling System," and "Wilson Reading System" recommend groups of one to four students with four hour-long sessions per week. In most public schools the ability to provide this intense, direct, consistent service is not available. At Desert Willow School it is our highest priority.

Dr. Samuel Torrey Orton and his colleagues began using multisensory techniques in the mid- 1920's at the mobile mental health clinic he directed in Iowa. Anna Gillingham and Bessie Stillman based their original 1936 teaching manual for the "alphabetic method" on Dr. Orton's theories. They combined multisensory techniques with teaching the structure of written English, including the sounds (phonemes), meaning units (morphemes such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots) and common spelling rules. The phrase "Orton-Gillingham approach" refers to the structured, sequential, multisensory techniques established by Dr. Orton and Ms. Gillingham and their colleagues." (Copyright 2000, The International Dyslexia Association (IDA)). Since children demonstrating signs of dyslexia often have weaknesses in phonemic awareness due to neuro-processing issues in visual and/or auditory processing, using a simultaneous, multisensory approach allows the child to see, hear, and feel the letters and sounds. Students of all ages benefit by using all three pathways to develop an fundamentals of phoneme association with letter forms.

"There is a growing body of evidence supporting multisensory teaching. Current research, much of it supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), converges on the efficacy of explicit structured language teaching for children with dyslexia. Young children in structured, sequential, multisensory intervention programs, who were also trained in phonemic awareness, made significant gains in decoding skills. These multisensory approaches used direct, explicit teaching of letter-sound relationships, syllable patterns, and meaning word parts. Studies in clinical settings showed similar results for a wide range of ages and abilities." (2000, The International Dyslexia Association (IDA)). Although the OG system is geared toward the dyslexic student, many other students with or without reading difficulties can benefit from these teaching strategies.

Literacy is critical to learning, therefore, the Language Arts component of DWS curriculum is one which builds a foundation for learning first, before adding to the framework. The focus on listening skills, language arts skills (including phonics, sight words, spelling, grammar, sequencing, etc.), and creative expression allow the teachers at every step to evaluate the level of mastery. Teachers will spend a great

deal of time with students in individual and small group settings (as described in the three-fold learning process) rather than large groups where some students' lack of mastery might not be easily noted. In small settings, teachers can address the learning differences and through collaboration with colleagues and student input find the best way to remediate any lack of progress. Classroom teachers will work closely with the reading specialists and the special education teacher to identify and address student learning styles and needs. These can be incorporated into individual, small group, or classroom setting instruction as appropriate. Close monitoring will ensure that all students meet their goals and move from immersion toward mastery without frustration.

Holistic, Integrated Curriculum

Integrated curriculum has its basis in brain research that shows how learning is best accomplished when information is presented in meaningful, connected patterns where multiple curricular areas are linked. Though the search for patterns and context may be true for all students, every child will still have a unique learning style; therefore, DWS will provide not only integrated learning but do so as it provides choice for students.

Research by Cromwell (1989) shows that the brain processes and organizes new knowledge by fitting it in with previous experiences and the meaning developed from those experiences. The human brain seeks pattern and searches for meaning. The human brain processes many things at the same time; therefore the holistic experience is recalled quickly and easily. Forming a solid foundation for basic literacy skills is essential to success in learning. Each afternoon students will be involved in peer-driven and self directed projects in differing art forms to show comprehension of material.

Multisensory teaching allows children to make more meaningful connections to material that, in turn, allow improved oral communication, comprehension, and integration of materials in projects. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the materials and teachers can assess their successful mastery of skills in an ongoing project addressing their needs as demonstrated. Teachers will stress that there are many paths to learning and that all methods are valuable. Individual skills will be maximized while students who strengthen weaker skills will be encouraged to continue their explorations into new fields.

Caine and Caine (1991) support the notion of the brain's search for patterns and meaning in the patterns as they connected neuropsychology and educational methodologies. They also state that the search for meaning and patterns is a basic process in the human brain. In fact, the brain may resist learning fragmented facts that are presented in isolation. Learning is believed to occur faster and more thoroughly when it is presented in meaningful contexts, with an experiential component.” (Lake, “Integrated Curriculum”)

Sequencing in stories is an example of pattern finding. “What happens first, second, and finally in conclusion” is a simple pattern. This same patterning is found in the sequencing of simple addition or subtraction in mathematics. “The initial number, then manipulating that number, and finally the sum or difference” has a pattern. If the strategies for learning sequencing in language arts are introduced at the same time and with similar terms as sequencing in mathematics then the skill is mastered more completely. Student success and flexible-thinking are at the core of the DWS curriculum.

Physical Health, Movement, and Learning

Movement is an integral part of the DWS day for the students. Starting the day with the “Movement Circle” 1) brings the students together as a community, 2) engages the physical body to carry the student through the day, 3) strengthens sensory and neurological integration by specific movements, 4) introduces academic and conceptual learning through movement and music and activates and integrates the body, heart, and mind, and 5) supports the body’s unique voice for expression, celebration, and communication. Movement continues throughout the day as students do tasks such as rearranging the desks to form different spaces and grouping for the various activities of the day.

Why is movement so important for our population of students; those who are seemingly disengaged with learning: seen as “lazy,” “hyper,” or “not paying attention”? It is important because “Movement activates myelination of fiber networks all over the brain. Myelination is the build up of the fatty layer around the nerve fibers, allowing for faster nerve transmission and protection against damage and dissolution. The more times a nerve network is activated, the greater the myelination, thus establishing base networks (patterns) of information on which to elaborate further learning. Research published in the New England Journal of Medicine, November, 1990, by Zametkin pointed to “decreased activity, development, and myelination of the frontal lobes of the brain in hyperactive adults.” Current evidence shows the frontal lobes are active with motor function, inner speech and formal reasoning (and therefore control of attention), and the development of altruism.

In children with (or thought to have) ADHD, it is common to see children act out or speak out spontaneously. These children have not yet developed “inner speech” or the ability to self regulate. The development of inner speech typically begins at age 7 or 8. Prior to the age of 7 or 8, children read and speak out loud to hear themselves think and therefore understand what connections they are making in controlling their behavior and attention and in understanding what they are reading. Children who do not develop inner speech, whose frontal lobes are not fully myelinated, cannot control their own behavior. These students are left to react with their “Reptilian Brain,” the sensory/motor reactions of the Brain stem. These children exhibit hyperactivity, attention difficulties, verbal communication difficulties, learning difficulties, and an inability to control their own behavior. Research now shows that movement that by stimulates motor activity in the frontal lobes, and brings attention away from the survival centers may actually help to activate, develop and myelinate these areas of the brain allowing for controlled attention, self-regulating behavior, and ultimately high-level formal reasoning.

Kinesthetic learning is one modality that many students use. (Smart Moves) The modern world with its many conveniences means that students can often live a fairly sedentary life. Singing and dancing in the large circle activities that start each day at Desert Willow School introduces gross motor movement, adds more oxygen to the young bodies and brains. Students are then more able to learn. As the day progresses, children will be working with solid objects of all types in math and science learning. They will be clapping out rhythms in mathematics and in poems or doing finger plays. These activities will be stimulating both sides of the brain, increasing myelination and allowing growing bodies to move. Sitting still for long periods at a desk or table is not a natural position for youngsters. Being actively involved in learning often means being physically involved. Playing a musical instrument is a physical activity that stimulates coordination, gross motor, and fine muscle control. Beating a drum or playing a kazoo while marching exercises the brain and the body. Adding a ¾ time waltz beat to the music promotes pattern

recognition in fractions and the use of fractions in nature, music, and science not in isolation in mathematics. Working in the garden increases aerobic activity in both the soil nurturing the crops and in the young bodies, while it stresses the need for healthy diet and exercise. Physical activity stimulates more than one learning experience with multiple skills sets. Children may elect to create a dance to explain the growth of a seed into a plant or to act out the rhythm of the seasons as the earth moves around the sun. There are many paths that lead to mastery of a concept. Physical activity and movement is one important pathway to learning, allowing greater connection to the concept at hand.

All of these activities from the small movements of a finger play to working in the garden appeal to different learning styles and inspire learning by sight, sound, touch, hearing and movement. Children become more aware of whom they are as learners when they express themselves through dance, instrument playing, or drama. Desert Willow's core value of enhancing children's unique learning styles through a multisensory approach embraces physical activity and movement.

Storytelling

Storytelling has a long tradition of orally communicating ideas, beliefs, personal histories and life-lessons. Most children begin hearing and telling stories before they enter school or learn to read and write. Oral languages experiences such as storytelling are a valuable key in addressing students' academic needs (Snowden, 1995). The integration of classroom storytelling has been linked to reading improvement by increasing children's comprehension and vocabulary development (Torstle & Hicks, 1998) The development of language and literacy skills are not confined to the language arts classroom, but are embedded in the school curriculum.

Storytelling, one of the oldest arts, is universal. It appeals to learners of all ages. In some cultures, like the Native Americans, stories are used to teach cultural values, history and familial connections. Storytelling used by all societies all over the world to teach and to illustrate lessons. It is "effective in creating interest and improving reading skills in activities associated with social studies, science, language arts, and bilingual education. (Groce) Since Desert Willow's Enki-based curriculum also stresses multicultural awareness, storytelling will be a useful tool to explain cultures and to practice different language vocabularies and structures.

At DWS, teachers will also be introducing most new concepts with a story that helps teach vocabulary and promote excitement. The student then re-tells the story in many ways, perhaps by creating a play or a painting. As the students tell the story, teachers will be able to ascertain whether the students really have grasped the essential concepts. As teachers and students talk about the project, it will be a moment to clarify or enhance the lesson as necessary.

The benefits of storytelling for comprehension and vocabulary growth are a part of the success of the Enki curriculum and DWS. (Torstle & Hicks) Part of the humanities curriculum for DWS focuses on the lives of important individuals in different cultures and eras of world history. In these stories, the teacher uses both explicit and implicit definitions or means of the new words. Explicit description means that the teacher explains the meaning deliberately and carefully both before the story and during the story. Implicit teaching includes the word in the story and students determine the meaning from context clues. "The largest gains were made when teachers provided both explicit and implicit instruction." (Newman

and Wright, 2014) Storytelling enhances vocabulary growth. Of course, the students retell the story using the new vocabulary. As the students create the project, singly or in a group, the teacher monitors the progress. Later the students share their project with their group. They demonstrate mastery of the content in their creative, multisensory projects. By sharing the project, the students are building a sense of belonging and sharing as part of the learning process. They are successful, engaged learners. The more students understand, the better they can express themselves. They value their own individual learning style and they share their mastery of the subject as reflected in the DWS mission.

Arts Integration

Art in all mediums are an important, integral part of the Enki Curriculum. These activities help students clarify vocabulary, master concepts and share mastery of information. Oddeleifson (2006) reported, "During the last 20 years cognitive psychologists studying how people really do learn have established that children do not absorb knowledge passively...the construct it actively. And with that process, they are able to make their buckets larger." These buckets of skills and talents are what define an individual. The mission at DWS to inspire learning and flexible- thinking through a multisensory approach enhances learning for many students. David Perkins of Harvard University describes this process of constructing knowledge as building and revising "relational webs" across subject matter and interests.

All of the arts are important in helping students to make connections. In *How Arts Develop the Young Brain*, Sousa (2006) found that there are many instances where the arts stimulate and benefit students' cognitive, social, and emotional development. Studies conducted with 4- and 5- year-old children revealed that the more music skills children had, the greater their degree of phonological awareness and reading development was. Music perception taps and enhances auditory areas that are related to reading. Perhaps this relatedness is because both music and written language involve similar decoding and comprehension processes and require a sensitivity to phonological and atonal distinctions. He also found that mathematics is closely related to music. Counting is fundamental to music because one must count beats, count rests, and count how long to hold a note. Several imaging studies have shown that musical training activated the same areas of the brain that were also activated during mathematical processing.

Arts integration creates flexible thinking. Students who create their own artwork requires a close connection to the material. Students demonstrate a mastery of the concepts with their own art. Demonstration of mastery may come in many forms, including storytelling, music, drama, painting, drawing, textiles, sculpture, spatial-architectural arts, crafts, and movement-dance. As shown on the table below from the *Arts and the Transfer of Learning* (Catterall, James S. 2002) each of these arts has its own unique contribution to the child's brain development and to his or her skill and content learning.

Visual Arts	Benefit/Skill Enhanced
Drawing	Content and organization of writing.
Visualization training	Sophisticated reading skills/interpretation of text.
Reasoning about art	Reasoning about scientific images.
Instruction in visual art	Reading readiness.

Music	Benefit/Skill Enhanced
<i>Early childhood music training</i>	<i>Cognitive development</i>
<i>Music listening</i>	<i>Spatial reasoning.</i>
	<i>Spatial temporal reasoning.</i>
	<i>Quality of writing.</i>
	<i>Prolixity of writing.</i>
<i>Piano/keyboard learning</i>	<i>Mathematics proficiency.</i>
	<i>Spatial reasoning.</i>
<i>Piano and voice</i>	<i>Long-term spatial temporal reasoning.</i>
<i>Music performance</i>	<i>Self-efficacy.</i>
	<i>Self-concept.</i>
<i>Instrument training</i>	<i>Reading.</i>
	<i>SAT verbal scores.</i>
<i>Music with language learning</i>	<i>English skills for ESL learners.</i>

Classroom Drama	Benefit/Skill Enhanced
<i>Dramatic enactment</i>	<i>Story comprehension (oral and written).</i>
	<i>Character identification</i>
	<i>Character motivation</i>
	<i>Increased peer interaction</i>
	<i>Writing proficiency and prolixity</i>
	<i>Conflict resolution skills</i>
	<i>Concentrated thought</i>
	<i>Understanding social relationships</i>

	<i>Ability to understand complex issues and emotions</i>
	<i>Engagement</i>
	<i>Skill with subsequently read, unrelated texts</i>
	<i>Problem-solving dispositions/strategies</i>
	<i>General self-concept</i>
	<i>Character identification</i>

<i>Dance</i>	<i>Benefit/Skill Enhanced</i>
<i>Traditional dance</i>	<i>Self-confidence</i>
	<i>Persistence</i>
	<i>Reading skills</i>
	<i>Nonverbal reasoning</i>
	<i>Expressive skills</i>
	<i>Creativity in poetry</i>
	<i>Social tolerance</i>
	<i>Appreciation of individual/group social development</i>
<i>Creative dance</i>	<i>General creative thinking--fluency</i>
	<i>General thinking: originality, elaboration, flexibility</i>

<i>Multi-arts Program</i>	<i>Benefit/Skill Enhanced</i>
<i>Integrated arts/academics</i>	<i>Reading, verbal and mathematics skills</i>
	<i>Creative thinking</i>
	<i>Achievement motivation</i>
	<i>Cognitive engagement</i>
	<i>Instructional practice in the school</i>

	<i>Professional culture of the school</i>
	<i>School climate</i>
	<i>Community engagement and identity</i>
<i>Intensive arts experience</i>	<i>Self-confidence</i>
	<i>Risk-taking</i>
	<i>Paying attention and persevering</i>
	<i>Empathy for others</i>
	<i>Self-initiating</i>
	<i>Task persistence</i>
	<i>Ownership of learning</i>
	<i>Collaboration skills</i>
	<i>Leadership</i>
	<i>Reduced dropout rates</i>
	<i>Educational aspirations</i>
	<i>Higher-order thinking skills</i>
<i>Arts-rich school environment</i>	<i>Creativity</i>
	<i>Engagement/attendance</i>
	<i>Range of personal and social developments</i>
	<i>Higher-order thinking skills</i>

Along with these very targeted results gained through work with specific arts, the arts in general also have significant impacts common to all.

- Because of their stage of development – including emotional, intellectual, social, and core development – children are naturally most able to take in, understand and engage with new information through the arts. (Spock, Marjorie; Teaching as a Lively Art—the work of Rudolf Stienner; 1978). (Brokman, John; FA talk with Howard Gardner—Truth, Beauty and Goodness; Education for All Human Being; 1997).*

- Working with a wide variety of arts gives the children an opportunity to both use and strengthen many learning styles. (ERIC Digest; *Multiple Intelligences: Gardner's Theory*). This way, all children have the opportunity to work in their area of strength and to tackle areas of challenge.
- Studies involving nearly two million children in the United States suggest that certain populations, including elementary-age school children, economically disadvantaged students, and students with learning disabilities, benefit in unique ways from learning in the arts and are able to apply these benefits to advancement and learning success in academics as well. **Students who participate in the arts stay in school longer; achieve higher test scores; are more likely to read for fun with greater fluency and comprehension; do better in mathematics; and exhibit higher self esteem. This higher self-esteem is particularly crucial for adolescent girls, a population statistically at high risk for poor self-esteem.** (Mountain Phoenix Community School; Track Records of Arts-Based Public and Private Schools; 2006; Oddleifson, Eric; *Developing a High Standard of Culture for All*; 1995).
- Because they have no one fixed goal, artistic undertakings offer the child practice in welcoming the state of disequilibrium (or ambiguity) that is mandatory for deep and empowered learning – and the arts do so in a supportive manner.
- Experience with any of the arts teaches divergent thinking. For example, there are several ways to interpret a musical passage, to paint a given scene, or to portray Hamlet – no one way more correct than another. This complexity nurtures engagement. (Catterall, James; *The Arts and the Transfer of Learning*, 2002 – selection 1). Students with this experience are more likely to look from many angles when solving a physics problem, interpreting an historical event, or resolving a conflict.
- The arts are easily interwoven with other studies, providing a less fragmented learning – one that is in keeping with how the brain naturally functions. (Lake, Kathy; *Integrated Curriculum*; 1995).
- The arts provide a natural context for working in groups. Artists who work together, must listen, respond, see from another's perspective, and assert themselves while keeping the overall purpose and product of the group in mind. (Catterall, James; *The Arts and the Transfer of Learning*, 2002 – selection 2). They must work as hard for the others as they do for themselves. By their very nature, the arts build and sustain community or school culture, within the classroom and beyond.
- Current research shows that the integrated arts and developmentally appropriate curriculum fully, actively, and continually stimulates higher learning centers of the brain. (Sylwester, Robert; *Cognitive Neuroscience Discoveries and Educational Practices: Seven Areas of Brain Research That Will Shift the Current Behavioral Orientation of Teaching and Learning*). These "higher" brain centers deeply support an individual's sense of community, and promote more advanced and positive social behavior, especially when compared to the potentially aggressive, fight or flight stress responses arising from stimulation of the "reptilian brain." Thus, arts-based learning offers a healing antidote to the stress and pressure of our contemporary culture.
- The arts provide a myriad of opportunities to explore self-expression and self-identification. A central part of becoming an adult is exploring possible identities. The arts offer the children many means to try on different personalities without a commitment to any one. So a shy child may find his voice in music or drama. An assertive child may find his quieter side in painting or sculpture. Those who have social struggles can find new way to relate as the children explore group projects.
- The arts are carriers of culture. Experiencing story, music, movement, and visual arts of other cultures helps the children develop an experiential relationship to other cultures. This supports a deep sense of world community.

In a program that teaches all academics through the arts, all students have access to all these benefits regularly. In addition, because the arts are inseparable from the academic curriculum, they are not vulnerable to budget cuts.

As Kelner said in her article “Miracle Moments” (2010), “....there really is no mystery about why the arts produce so many miracle moments in the classrooms. The students are actively participating in the lesson. They are learning through multiple modalities, making creative decisions, adding to the direction of the lesson and helping to sculpt its form and format. And they are learning in the way that children have always learned best...they are enjoying the process.”

The benefits of a multisensory program are numerous and reach across the spectrum of learning. All curricula is enhanced and solidified by incorporating the arts into classroom. Close personal interaction with teachers in small groups and as individuals enhances and facilitates learning. As a result of these programs, curriculums and devoted teachers, Desert Willow’s students will become inspired readers and creative, flexible thinkers.

	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
D. (2)) R e s e a r c h / D a t a	The applicant provides clearly defined research and data to substantiate how the curriculum and instructional program will help the school achieve high outcomes for students.	The applicant provides research and data to substantiate how the curriculum and instructional program will help the school achieve high outcomes for students.	The applicant provides some research and data that appears to substantiate how the curriculum and instructional program will help the school achieve high outcomes for students.	The school provided incomplete or inadequate research or data. --OR-- The application does not respond to this prompt.
Comments:				

D. (3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and reasonable** Scope and Sequence that **clearly** aligns with the description of the curriculum and instructional program and is aligned with the school’s mission. Insert Course Scope and Sequence as Appendix A. (Required if a curriculum and academic program are provided)

Scope and Sequence

See Appendix A

Scope in a Fully Integrated Program: Learning Styles

In the Enki program we explore every topic through all learning styles. To this end, the three fold learning process (introduced in D.1 and described in F.1) is used throughout the grades. This ensures that the rich

variety we offer is presented in a coherent manner that supports deep learning - not one that becomes overwhelming or chaotic.

In each subject area and topic listed in the following pages the children will work through a series of activities that call on different skills and present different opportunities and challenges. Each nurtures particular capacities needed for full and flexible thinking. As is now supported by research and expert opinion (see section D.1 and D.2; the arts), each of these is a critical building block for deep learning. In the Enki approach this sequential multi-sensory teaching is also the foundation of Discovery Learning (see section 2C). Rather than repeat the specific learning supported by each type of activity in the detailed scope and sequence that follows, we outline the core approaches here, each followed by the core capacity being nurtured by that work:

- 1) story (emotional-auditory connection fostering image making capacities)
- 2) recall (active emotional verbal and spatial or sequential connection, exercising image making capacities)
- 3) visual and spatial art work (active emotional-visual, spatial, tactile connection)
- 4) drama and poetry (active emotional-auditory and musical)
- 5) movement and music (auditory, kinesthetic-spatial, and musical connection)
- 6) manipulatives and games – including cooking (active visual-conceptual, mathematical-spatial, and tactile connection)
- 7) pattern worksheets (visual-analytic connection)
- 8) written work (visual-analytic, and kinesthetic connection)

Our Scope and Sequence is not currently as detailed for fourth and fifth grades. Though we have the overview of what will be taught in our fourth and fifth grade classes as written in section D.1, we have not currently spelled out exactly what content and skills will be taught in these grades during our first few years. Students in the fourth and fifth grades are further along in their schooling. Therefore, we feel the need to assess and direct their instruction based on their specific needs coming from their previous place of learning. Teachers will have Enki training during the planning year. During that year teachers will work on creating ways of writing the continuation of the specific curriculum scope matching it with the Enki Philosophy and the Common Core and New Mexico standards. So when the 3rd grade reaches 4th grade the curriculum specifics will be ready. During the planning year, not only will the specifics be fleshed out for future years, but determining how to meet the needs of potential students in our first year(s) of 4th and 5th grades. The founders and teachers will be responsible for writing this scope with support from Enki creator Beth Sutton. The founders along with Beth Sutton will assist the 4th and 5th grade teachers to be sure the needs of our students are met as they teach the Common Core and New Mexico standards using a modified Enki approach as suits the particular students enrolled. When DWS's younger students are in 4th and 5th grades, they will have “grown-up” in the Enki philosophy and at that time the founders and teachers will have the specifics of the curriculum scope set for those grades.

Kindergarten through Third Grade Scope and Sequence for all subjects areas is in Appendix A.

	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
--	-----------	---------	---------------------	-----------------

D. (3) S c o p e a n d S e q u e n c e	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and reasonable Scope and Sequence that clearly aligns with the description of the curriculum and instructional program and is aligned with the school's mission.	The school provides a clear and reasonable Scope and Sequence that aligns with the description of the curriculum and instructional program and school mission.	The school provides a limited Scope and Sequence that partially aligns or does not align with the description of the curriculum and instructional program or mission.	The school provided an incomplete and inadequate Scope and Sequence. --OR-- The application does not provide a description of the school's Scope and Sequence.
Comments:				

E. Graduation Requirements.

E.(1) Identify your school's proposed requirements for graduation, if applicable, and explain any additional requirements that vary from state minimum requirements. Provide high school graduation requirements that clearly articulate and meet state requirements. If you provide additional requirements that vary from state minimum requirement they are clearly explained. For further information please see the following link:

<http://ped.state.nm.us/GradReqs/Graduation%20and%20Course%20Offering%20Requirements.pdf>

If you are seeking any change from mandated minimum graduation requirements, identify the change and explain why you are seeking it. Clearly explain how the change supports the mission and ensures student readiness for college or other post-secondary opportunities.

Not Applicable

	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
--	-----------	---------	---------------------	-----------------

<p>E. (1)) (2)) G r a d u a t i o n R e q u i r e m e n t s / G r a d u a t i o n W a i v e r i f N e c e s s a r y – <i>Hi g h S c h o</i></p>	<p><i>Only applicable for high school proposals</i> High school graduation requirements are clearly articulated and meet state requirements. Any change proposed by the school that vary from state minimum requirement are clearly explained.</p>			<p><i>Only applicable for high school proposals</i> The application does not address graduation requirements.</p>
---	--	--	--	---

o l s O n l y				
Comments:				

F. Instruction.

F.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** overview of the instructional strategies and methods to be implemented that **clearly** support and align with your school's mission, curriculum, instructional program and performance standards.

Instructional Strategies and Methods

In keeping with Desert Willow School's mission statement, instructional strategies and methods implemented by our teachers will be multisensory and diverse in order to value each child's unique learning styles.

Daily Rhythms

A strategy that is an integral part of our school day is being sensitive to a child's need for routine and ritual by creating a natural rhythm to the school day rather than a strict schedule. If the day follows a rhythmic and dependable pattern or sequence, the child feels secure and remains flexible. In order to create this natural rhythm, flexible rituals and routines will flow in harmony with the three-fold learning process. To help create these natural rhythms students' school day will have minimal interruptions. Arts education and Movement education will be built into the daily curriculum led by the classroom teacher and assistant. Even for students needing specialized reading instruction will be done in conjunction within the rhythm of that class's day.

Three Fold Process of Learning

- Open intake
- Digestion/Exploration
- Understanding or Skill Mastery

1. **Open Intake:** *In order to really learn something new, we must suspend the world we know and just receive or take in the new. Open intake is quite natural for the young child, but can be shrouded as*

the child grows if they are taught that it is important to “know it all.” If we don’t continue to foster open intake, students are only re-learning what they already know. Being open to the new requires welcoming or at least accepting a time of disequilibrium. As humans we crave moments of disequilibrium (a love of roller-coasters or climbing a mountain). With open-intake we strive to develop a student’s self-awareness so they can trust their inherent wisdom and vitality: to set a child’s compass to trust his inherent nature and seek the experience of new learning through open intake.

*2. **Digestion/Exploration:** Students are then ready to actively engage with [the] new learning. Students will explore and relive [the] information in an artistic form or by demonstrating or discovering the concept through the use of manipulatives. With guidance from their teachers, this time of exploration allows students to discover and use their unique learning style while using a multisensory [approach], artistic approach of their choosing. (see F.3)*

*3. **Understanding or Skill Mastery:** At different developmental stages students show their understanding and mastery in different ways. For a kindergartner it may be reliving a story through creative play. In first through third grade the recalling and writing of stories, work with math concepts and skills, and spontaneous discussions are the output that shows mastery. For the older students the output begins to look like the concept as we know it. Now it is discussions and questions as well as written work and skill development that make up this final stage of the learning process. Having gone through the in-depth experience of working with the material openly, and having been guided through a discovery process, [the] children can take up a mastery of the technical processes and concepts with relevance and understanding.*

Imbedded in this threefold process is also an understanding of the gradual release of responsibility as established by Vygotsky. Students begin with direct instruction, work through guided instruction, until finally they are working independently at any given skill. As with three fold learning at any given time there will be skills and content being taught at all levels. As students are working on skills independently, new skills will be introduced, while others are being “digested” during guided practice.

Various Group Sizes for Learning

Hand in hand with the three fold process of learning is the dynamic nature of the group size in which students work. Most often open intake will happen in the whole group setting. Digestion/exploration and demonstrating mastery are done both in small peer groups and individually. Various group sizes are important for three main reasons. 1) Some students learn better individually, others learn better with peer interaction, and others learn best nestled in the whole class; 2) various types of lessons lend themselves to different size groups; 3) teachers can instruct and assess students in various ways to meet their specific learning needs. Various group sizes are another way in which we allow students to embrace their unique learning styles, more fully guarantee that instruction is multisensory, and create self awareness within that sense of community.

Multisensory Reading

The Orton-Gillingham (O-G) methodology is the best-researched direct, explicit, sequential, and multisensory approach to reading. (See section D.2) It is because of this wide research that we will have all teachers trained in the O-G methodologies and we will implement the strategies at all tiers of teaching reading. O-G methodology works for almost all students because it is simultaneously visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile (VAKT). At Desert Willow School knowing that our population of students in

particular benefit from a VAKT approach is the reason all teachers will be trained and all students will receive their phonics/spelling part of reading instruction using these methodologies. We are also committed to seamlessly moving students who need their reading instruction in smaller group or individually into the proper size group to make the most of their learning and to tailor their instruction as specifically as possible to their needs.

Movement and Sensory Integration

Movement and Sensory Integration are essential strategies integrated into each student's day at Desert Willow School. The base senses are the tactile or touch system, the vestibular or balance system, and proprioceptive or muscle/joint system. Unless the base senses are well nourished and are integrating, the higher senses (auditory, visual, taste, and smell) will struggle with processing the information they take in, and remain unsure as to whether to synthesize, analyze, or filter. Without the base senses integrating, the nervous system is left on alarm or in "survival" mode.

- 1. The Movement Circle is at the beginning of each day. A major reason is to create that sense of belonging and community so essential in our mission statement.*
- 2. Movement nourishes and engages the physical body. Neuroscience shows that movement is key to building and maintaining a healthy mind.*
- 3. Movement is essential in sensory/neurological integration.*
- 4. Movement will be a part of Open Intake.*
- 5. Movement work is connected with the academic study at hand through music, story, and rhythmic verse.*
- 6. Movement helps integrate the senses through such activities as brain gym and midline crossing. (Koester, Cecelia; Summary of Brain Gym Research Project on Reading; 2000) The kinesthetic base established first thing each morning is reactivated with short sensory integration and brain gym exercises during each transition time.*
- 7. Movement also targets the learning of academic material, bringing a deeper knowledge of a particular study through movement. For example, when clapping out the multiplication tables as part of rote recitation, the children clap and stamp in the rhythm of the multiplier (e.g. 3s, 6s, and 9s are in a three beat; whereas 4s and 8s are done in 4/4 time). (Hruska and Clancy; Integrating Movement and Learning Elementary and Middle School; 2008)*
- 8. Movement makes learning multi-sensory.*

Arts integration

Another integral methodology used at Desert Willow School is the integration of the arts in all that we teach. As described in our curriculum (See section D.1) in Enki all subjects are taught through the arts, this includes storytelling, music, drama, visual arts (painting, drawing, textiles, sculpture, spatial-architectural arts, crafts, etc.), and movement-dance. We outline the skills gained from arts integration in the table in the curriculum section D.1.

Because of their stage of development—including emotional, intellectual, social, and core development—children are naturally most able to take in, understand and engage with new information through the arts. (Spock, Margorie; Teaching as a Lively Art—the work of Rudolf Steiner, 1978; Brockman, John; A Talk with Howard Gardner—Truth, Beauty, and Goodness: Education for All Human Beings; 1997). As stated in our mission, we strive to both value children's unique learning styles and to

build self-awareness in each of our students. The first step is to understand where students are developmentally. The next part in our mission is to not only build self-awareness but a sense of belonging as well. Enki curriculum is carefully planned around developmental themes. Since children progress through distinct stages of core development (Sutton, B; Mirroring Child Development; 1996)—independent of their particular gifts and challenges or likes and dislikes—the curricular content as explored and expressed through the arts, brings children together and builds that sense of belonging.

The Manipulatives Bridge

Use of manipulatives is a huge part of making curriculum multisensory. In the teaching of both math and reading skills. For example, students use manipulatives with their fingers (tactile) as they listen to a math problem (for example) to compute the answer. Often teachers then jump from the auditory with manipulatives to the visual: the problem written on the board. We will be sure to make the bridge as the auditory, tactile, and visual are put together.

For example:

The teacher uses manipulatives as the teacher says, “Amy picked up 3 apples from a tall tree, and 4 more apples from a short tree. How many apples does she have?” If the teacher then jumps to the equation $3 + 4 = ?$, some children will not make that connection between the activity and story they just experienced and the visual of the equation on the board. So, instead we put in the intermediate step to create the bridge. Students use a chart to put the same manipulatives that they initially just picked up in the first step and placing them on the chart as they tell the story.

<i>Apples from the tall tree</i>	<i>Apples from the short tree</i>	<i>Apples all together</i>
<i>x x x</i>	<i>x x x x</i>	

Then they will pick them up and put them together in the final box and answer the question verbally. The next step is to put in the proper computation signs between the appropriate columns. Now they will redo the problem, but this time they will write the number over the apples as they go.

An example of using manipulatives for reading and spelling (phonological awareness) is to use letter or sound picture tiles to build the word. Students look and listen as the teacher says the word; they echo the word; and separate the sounds and bring down the tiles.

The intermediate steps are to work to manipulate the sounds in the words. For example “if this word is spoon” (student touches each tile and says the sounds separately) “make it spin” (students touches the tiles as she says the new word and then trades the digraph oo tile for the short i tile). Or “if this word is spoon” (student touches each tile and says the sounds separately) “make it soon” (student touches the tiles as she say the new word and realizes, she needs to take out the p tile). Other changes might be adding a sound or switching a sound.

The next step is to build the word with the tiles and then to touch and spell the word and name and write the letters, and read the word. The final step is to use those practiced words in dictated sentences that incorporate their “instant” words as well. (Avrit M.Ed., Karen; Take Flight: A Comprehensive Intervention for Students with Dyslexia; 2013).

Storytelling

Stories are the central teaching tool in the Enki approach, as they have been in traditional cultures since the beginning of time. Stories have stood the test of time because stories invoke a universal human experience. Not only do they tell us about people, place, and events, but more importantly because stories bring those other worlds to life, in our imaginations. We enter experience far more deeply when it comes to us in its whole, as it does in story. We remember and apply that which we have “lived” far more fully than that which we are “told” about. Story, movement, and imagination are the primary tools for taking in new experiences and information and digesting them as stated in the three-fold process.

Story has central goals:

1. *To bring the children an experience of life in a way which speaks to their hearts;*
2. *To expose them to high quality language; and*
3. *To introduce academics in a life filled manner.*

Storytelling (rather than reading a story) has two additional goals:

4. *To bring the children an experience of creating a world; and*
5. *To respond to the children rather than the written word.*

Total Physical Response (TPR) to teach Spanish

This approach emphasizes the active body learning in a more practical manner. As described in the curriculum section (D.1), TPR allows students to hear in Spanish instructions that they can respond to actively or physically, especially instructions/commands that recur regularly. For example, using Spanish for things like “¿Que quisiera pasar a papeles?” The teacher has the papers in hand, so the students have a clue to what the question means. Then a student can come take the papers. If no student responds then the teacher replies “Transmitiré a los papeles.” As students learn and respond to the question then the teacher responds, “Gracias por repartir los papeles.”

We continue this way through the day with requests like “Please, line up for lunch.” “Who will turn out the lights?” “Move your desks into a circle.”

←	Ranking			
	→ Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
F(1)) Str ate gie s/ M et	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive overview of the instructional strategies and methods to be implemented that	The school provides a clear overview of the instructional strategies and methods to be implemented that adequately support and align with the	The school provides a limited overview of the instructional strategies and methods to be implemented that partially or do not support and align with the school’s mission,	The school’s overview of instructional strategies and methods is incomplete or inadequate. --OR--

ho ds	clearly support and align with the school's mission, curriculum, instructional program, and performance standards.	school's mission, curriculum, instructional program, and performance standards.	curriculum, instructional program, and performance standards.	The application does not address instructional strategies.
----------	---	---	---	---

Comments:

F. (2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive and cohesive** explanation of how the proposed methods/strategies are effective with the target student population.

Effectiveness

Our target population consists of students with 1) dyslexia and other learning disabilities; 2) those who are disengaged learners often displaying characteristics of ADD, ADHD, or other sensory issues; and 3) students who are creatively or academically gifted.

These populations have many educational needs in common:

- *multisensory,*
- *arts integrated,*
- *holistic curriculum,*
- *right-brain style learning.*

It is with this knowledge that we know the following strategies and methodologies will work for our target populations.

Multisensory Instruction

Scientific, independent, replicated reading research supports the Orton-Gillingham sequence and methodology as “best practices” when teaching reading to students with dyslexia. When taught by a multisensory approach, children have the advantage of learning alphabetic patterns and words by utilizing all three pathways. “Current research, much of it supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), converges on the efficacy of explicit structured language teaching for children with dyslexia. Young children in structured, sequential, multisensory intervention programs, who were also trained in phonemic awareness, made significant gains in decoding skills.” (Henry, Ph.D., Marcia K.; The International Dyslexia Association; 2000). One O-G program that we might use is the Wilson Reading System. When 200 students in grades 3rd through 12th who had been receiving special education services for several years but were not improving were instructed for 1 school year with this program they made the following gains: a gain of 4.6 grade levels in Word Attack, a gain of 1.6 grade levels in Passage Comprehension, and a gain of 1.9 grade levels in Total Reading. Please note that these students received this instruction 2-3 times a week, whereas our students will receive it 4 times. This is the approach recommended by the International Dyslexia Association, therefore, fulfilling the requirements of HB 230.

Mathematics and other content areas will also use multisensory approaches, while encouraging investigation and flexible-thinking remaining sensitive to child developmental stages. A secondary benefit of this multisensory style of instruction is that it reinforces short-term memory, an area that is

typically weak in struggling readers, according to Dr. Sally Shaywitz of the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity.

Various Group Sizes

Small group instruction and individual instruction is especially important for students who don't fit the "typical school" mold. Small group instruction includes rich tasks that promote deep understanding; allows us to teach reading before and during the reading process (not only after the reading process); and allows the teacher to adjust instruction to meet the specific needs of each learner. In small groups everyone is engaged and everyone has a voice. Students can sometimes learn from each other as much as from the teacher.

Movement and Sensory Integration:

We—and many other educators, sensory integration therapists, educational kinesiologists, and developmental movement specialists (e.g. Jean Ayres, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Paul Dennison, Carla Hannaford)—believe that the great rise in attention, emotional, and behavior problems is in large part the result of severely neglected kinesthetic nourishment and education. (Hannaford: Smart Moves, 1995; Bainbridge-Cohen: Sensing, Feeling, and Action; Ayres: Sensory Integration and the Child, 1979) Movement is essential for all elementary students and even more so for our target populations. Movement is one of the central human tools for both learning and teaching: for taking in the new, experiencing others, communicating, creating, and connecting to the world.

For students to effectively take in new information and to assimilate into their framework of understanding, the child must be able to process the sensory information that continually flows to him from the world around. If he cannot do this adequately, his brain will activate a defense strategy (e.g. hyperactivity, aggression, attention deficit, withdrawal). In this defensive state, learning—and building confidence—will be severely hampered. Therefore, movement work targeted to support improved sensory integration is a part of every single day, several times a day, for every child.

Specific movement activities such as brain gym exercises during transition times has a significant impact on the children's ability to refocus as they move from one type of activity to another. This help in refocusing is proven especially important for students with dyslexia, ADD/ADHD, or are in other ways disengaged.

Manipulatives Bridge

Many of our students will need not only tactile, but the bridge from tactile to visual. The Orton-Gillingham methodology for reading and spelling as well as the use of manipulatives for math are what works best for students with dyslexia and other learning difficulties, such as ADD/ADHD. (The International Dyslexia Association; "Multisensory Structured Language Teaching"; 2009 and Sutton, B: Discovery Learning: The Manipulatives Bridge; 1996)

Storytelling as the Basis for Curriculum Integration

Many students in our town have limited vocabulary. According to a ground-breaking study conducted by researchers Hart and Risley at Rice University in 2003, the differences in language usage in the homes of children whose families receive welfare assistance versus families with high incomes results in the

economically advantaged children being exposed to 30 million more words by the time they are 4 years of age. Follow-up studies show that the differences in language exposure have lasting effects on a child's academic performance and life experience. It is due to this statistic that Desert Willow School has chosen a curriculum so rich in storytelling. As stated in F(1) storytelling helps children engage more fully when experiencing the story as a whole. Storytelling has always and still is a most effective way to bring experiences to life for children.

Arts Integration to Engage the Right Side of the Brain

"As far back as 2002, a unique consortium of arts organizations expressed in a report called "Authentic Connections," that such interdisciplinary work in the arts enabled students to "identify and apply authentic connections, promote learning by providing students with opportunities between disciplines and/or to understand, solve problems and make meaningful connections within the arts across disciplines on essential concepts that transcend individual disciplines." For this reason DWS sees arts integration as a way to develop flexible thinking.

The arts integration education initiative serves every K-8 classroom serving Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties, including the metro area of Portland, Oregon, and it's changing teachers as well as students. It is also making it easier for them to embrace the principles of the Common Core being adopted by schools districts around the nation. The results of this initiative showed students' reading and math scores increase at least 2.5 times more than the average annual rate of increase. The growth was even greater for ELL students whose scores grew 10 times more once the schools partnered with the Right Brain project. (Eger, John M.; "Arts Integration Works Says Portland's "Right Brain Initiative;" http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-m-eger/arts-integration-works-sa_b_5716221.html; 2014)

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
F.(2) Effective ness	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive and cohesive explanation of how the proposed methods/strategies are effective with the target student population.	The school provides a clear explanation of how the proposed methods/strategies are effective with the target student population.	The school provides a limited explanation of how the proposed methods/strategies are effective with the target student population.	The school provides an inadequate and/or incomplete explanation of how the proposed methods/strategies are effective with the target student population. --OR-- The school does not address the prompt.

Comments:

F. 3) Provide a **clear and comprehensive** description of how instruction will be differentiated based on identified student needs and provide **specific** examples.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiation is a cornerstone of philosophy at Desert Willow School as we strive to value students' unique learning styles, cultivate engaged readers, and build self-awareness. During individual work time and/or small group work time the teacher and an assistant will be available along with either the special education teacher or the reading specialist.

Having two (1.67) Reading Specialists, DWS makes differentiating for dyslexia and other brain-based learning differences a priority. At DWS we understand there are different types of dyslexia—visual, auditory, combined; therefore, students with similar needs will be grouped together for their Orton-Gillingham, small group instruction. Unlike in many public elementary schools, due to our weekly collaboration time each Friday, we more effectively identify students needing smaller groups and/or the O-G methodology tailored to their learning styles in a slightly different way. Then with our reading specialists we will be able to serve those needs most effectively.

Another time DWS will differentiate for students is during the three-fold learning design that moves students from immersion to mastery. As seen in section F.1 the 2nd phase is assimilation of learning. As stated in our mission we value different learning styles and recognize that different ways of assimilating information. Therefore, during individual and peer group instruction time the teacher and assistant will work to differentiate instruction. For example, one student might be solving math problems using base-ten blocks, another with a number line and a third by drawing pictures. The teacher's responsibility is to guide students to find the method or strategy that works best for them and to provide needed materials and guidance during practice.

The 3rd phase of the 3-Fold process is output. Two ways of differentiating student output are both in product and performance. Differentiating product allows students to demonstrate their learning in one of various ways. For example, in phonics a first grader may show what they learned about the difference between long and short vowel sounds by drawing pictures of a "cap" and a "cape," a "pet" and "Pete," etc. Another first grader might write a story using a list of words generated with short and long vowel sounds. Another student might demonstrate understanding by manipulating letter tiles to build short and long vowel words.

Differentiating performance might mean that one student writes a story using at least 2 pairs of short and long vowels, another uses 4 pairs, and another 6 pairs.

Teachers will create product and/or performance descriptors as necessary so that students understand expectations.

Also, as stated in our mission we will work to cultivate student's self-awareness as to which strategies work best for them so they can begin to advocate for their own educational needs. This will be accomplished as teachers guide students to try different types of products and helping them evaluate their successes and challenges. Then in future, students will use their successes to help become stronger in their areas of challenge.

Ranking				
		← Satisfied	Not Satisfied →	
F.(3)	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
Differentiated Instruction	The school provides a clear and comprehensive description of how instruction will be differentiated based on identified student needs and specific examples are provided.	The school provides a clear description of how instruction will be differentiated based on identified student needs and at least one specific example is provided.	The school provides a limited description of how instruction will be differentiated based on identified student needs and no examples or inadequate examples are provided.	The school provides an incomplete and/or inadequate description of how instruction will be differentiated. --OR-- The application does not address differentiated instruction.
Comments:				

G. (1) Special Education.

G.(1)(a) Provide a **clear, cohesive, and comprehensive** explanation of the practices and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services, and ensure students' in special populations access to the general education curriculum.

I. Assurances

Desert Willow School (DWS) is passionate about providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all of its students in their Least Restrictive Environments (LRE). DWS assures families that children in grades kindergarten through fifth may attend the school regardless of their educational exceptionalities, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-B), The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as applicable to Local Educational Authorities (LEAs). Desert Willow School is committed to fulfilling the mandates of House Bill 230, requiring specific interventions for students with characteristics of dyslexia, to the greatest extent possible. DWS does not discriminate in enrollment toward students based on their level of English proficiency and has practices in place to support English acquisition and fluency. Financial resources such as IDEA-B funds have been factored into the budget to support these requirements.

The inspiration to create Desert Willow School comes from the founders' observation that while basic services are available to support the needs of special populations in our area, so much more could be done to allow them to flourish and meet their true potential. Our target population consists of children who have not consistently met with success in traditional public schools. These populations include students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities, students who are chronically disengaged in traditional schools and are constantly being disciplined, and students who are creatively or

academically gifted and need to be met with appropriate challenges. As a public school, Desert Willow will be happy to enroll any student who wishes to attend. We strive always to have trained personnel, daily structure and curriculum, and best practices and strategies in place to support our students with special educational needs. Desert Willow School is designed to nurture the development of the whole child with a holistic design, with special attention given to students who require something different in order to thrive.

Referral and Identification Process for Special Education Service

Desert Willow School will use the NM PED “Student Assistance Team Manual” to establish the Student Assistance Team (SAT) for the school. The three tiered Response to Intervention method recommended by the manual will be implemented and tailored to meet the needs of students. This Response to Intervention process, however, cannot and will not be used to delay or deny a parent request for a special education evaluation. House Bill 230 states that the parents of a student referred to a Student Assistance Team (SAT) must be informed of their right to request an initial special education evaluation at any time during the SAT process. If DWS denies the request, the parent must be provided with the reason in writing that includes the parents’ right to challenge the decision.

Tier I *is the basic educational program, designed for all students enrolled at the school. Universal screening for all students through DIBELS, DRA and MAP testing occurs at this tier. Teachers at DWS will examine this data and their own observations of their students’ development to identify at-risk students and those in need of interventions.*

Tier II *support is designed for students at risk of academic failure whose development falls below expected screening benchmarks, or students whose performance surpasses expectations. A SAT composed of the student’s parents, teachers, and administrator will be convened to act as a support and a source of individual considerations through a SAT Intervention Plan. SAT support will be implemented at this tier in order to find solutions such as additional instructional time, small group intervention, or accelerated pace that will afford the student success. A SAT may also be convened for a child experiencing chronic social-emotional distress. The SAT implements frequent progress monitoring so that its tested solutions can be evaluated for effectiveness.*

DWS’s referral and intervention procedure follows state and federal laws as follows:

The classroom teacher notices signs of academic, neuro-sensory or social-emotional difficulty, or possible giftedness.

The teacher records the child’s progress with the Tier I general educational program and notes screening tool results (DIBELS, DRA, MAP, Enki neuro-sensory)

If the student continues to struggle or surpass expectations with the Tier I program, the teacher refers him or her to the SAT team by completing a referral.

The SAT studies and discusses the teacher’s observations and the data that has been collected, and proposes new solutions (interventions) which are put in place.

These solutions are tried for a reasonable period of time (6-9 weeks). The SAT continues to review student progress based on observations and data that are continually collected.

If a student continues to experience difficulties or has advanced performance with the general education program, the SAT team may consider making a referral for an educational evaluation to determine the presence of a disability or giftedness.

DWS requests consent to conduct an evaluation from the parents, who are given notice of proposal to conduct diagnostic testing at least 60 days before such testing commences, along with a copy of their procedural safeguards. Note: A parent may directly ask for an evaluation by indicating in writing to the teacher or administrator that he or she believes the child is in need of special education services. If a parent makes a referral for an evaluation and the school decides an evaluation is not needed, the school must give prior written notice to the parent of its refusal to evaluate. During the initial referral process, notice of procedural safeguards will be given to the parent and receipt will be signed.

Within 60 calendar days from the date of parental consent, the necessary evaluation(s) will be completed by an educational diagnostician and/or ancillary service providers.

Upon completion of the evaluation(s) an initial meeting to determine eligibility for special education and/or related services will be held by a multidisciplinary team. This team consists of the parents, general and special education teachers, educational diagnostician, administrator, and related service providers as appropriate.

Following a discussion with the parents of evaluation findings and their signature, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written

for students who qualify for services. Students who do not meet the conditions of eligibility are referred back to the Student Assistance Team. Note: If a parent disagrees with the evaluation results he or she has the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at DWS's expense. However, if DWS believes that its evaluation is appropriate, it can request a due process hearing.

*Students in **Tier III** qualify for special education and an Individual Education Program (IEP) under one or more of the 13 educational exceptionalities recognized by the state of New Mexico. Desert Willow School has budgeted full FTE for service contracts with an educational diagnostician and other ancillary support such as speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, health services and social work to meet these needs as they arise.*

Special Education Services and the Individual Education Program (IEP)

Desert Willow School will be responsible as a Local Educational Authority (LEA) to develop, implement, review and revise IEPs in compliance with all regulations and standards for each child who presents with an educational exceptionality. IEP multidisciplinary teams will make informed decisions to provide each student with his or her best opportunity for well-being and success.

Eligibility

Desert Willow School recognizes the 13 accepted exceptionalities that qualify a student for special education services in the state of New Mexico.

Creating an Individual Education Program

IEPs written at Desert Willow School will include all of the following elements as specified by New Mexico's Department of Special Education: Student profile and student/family vision, consideration of

special factors, present levels of performance, transition services to middle school when necessary, annual goals and objectives or benchmarks, extended school year plan if applicable, specifications regarding participation in mandatory testing, statements about the child's least restrictive environment, a schedule of services, consent for Medicaid when appropriate, levels of services, settings of services, accommodations and modifications, IEP progress documentation and Prior Written Notice of Proposed Actions. In keeping with Desert Willow School's mission to promote student's discovery of areas of strength and talent, this will be a highlighted feature of our IEPs.

Accommodations and Modifications

Accommodations are strategies that remove obstacles to learning without changing the content or outcome of a lesson. They may be made to lesson presentation, student response mode, setting, timing, or scheduling. Due to DWS's hands-on, arts-integrated curriculum, teacher's training in Enki methodology, and the structure of the school day, it will be easier to make accommodations seamlessly here than in a traditionally organized school. Following are some standard accommodations in various areas. Strategies for lesson presentation may include the use of audio or video recordings rather than text, working with fewer items per page, recording a lesson rather than note taking, lesson outlining, and word webs and organizers. Response accommodations include giving verbal responses instead of writing, dictating answers to a scribe and using a spelling dictionary. Setting accommodations include special lighting, seating a child where he or she learns best and working or testing in a different setting. Allowing frequent breaks and giving extra processing time are a few of the timing accommodations. In her book Overcoming Dyslexia research scientist Sally Shaywitz emphasizes the importance of permitting a student with dyslexia more time to complete a test or assignment since reading tends to be laborious. Scheduling accommodations allow a student to take a test in several timed sessions or over several days, take sections of a test in a different order, or take a test at a specific time of day. Students with ADHD and executive function issues benefit from organization skill accommodations such as the use of a highlighter, timer, planner, and study skill instruction. These are only a few standard strategies. Desert Willow School teachers will creatively respond to student's needs by coming up with meaningful and effective accommodations.

Modifications are changes to the lesson content and expected outcomes. Modifications to an assignment allow a student to complete fewer or different homework than peers, write shorter papers, answer fewer questions, or create alternative projects or assignments. Curriculum modifications are more far reaching, including being assessed using a different standard, being excused from particular projects or learning different material than one's peers. DWS's school day includes a period of time when students are working individually with guidance. It will be easier for students who need modified assignments or curricula to receive them at this time without standing out, as all students will be working at their own pace.

Practices and Strategies in the Classroom

Although the local school district offers special education services in the schools as required by federal law, we have made the following observations: One, special education teachers are spread thin with large caseloads, which means that in many cases, there is just enough time in a day to help students

keep their heads above water, so to speak, but not enough time to provide the intensive interventions that could close the gap between their potential and their current performance. Two, although there was a statewide effort to educate teachers in New Mexico to identify and provide interventions for students with dyslexia following the passage of HB 230, eight decades worth of research show that students with this brain-based difference should receive intervention from highly trained practitioners specifically educated to work with students with dyslexia for a minimum of four hours a week (Avrit M.Ed., Karen; Take Flight: A Comprehensive Intervention for Students with Dyslexia.) Three, we observe quite a few students with symptoms of disengagement, including restlessness, poor attention spans and inappropriate attention-seeking behaviors. We are concerned by the lost opportunity to ignite these children's natural inclination for learning and understanding of their own areas of brilliance. Four, the parents of students who have been identified as gifted and talented indicate that their children simply receive more assignments rather than being engaged and challenged in a different way.

The practices and strategies to be used at DWS are informed by the co-founders' careful research. After examining some of the local issues we visited six schools in three other states and New Mexico where there is a more effective paradigm for students with special needs. We encountered Enki Education at Mountain Mahogany Community School in Albuquerque, where we were impressed by its holistic integration of body, heart and mind, strong grounding in research-based child development, and the high degree of engagement in learning activities observed in students. The co-founders also furthered their education in the remediation of dyslexia, including continued yearly attendance at the Southwest International Dyslexia Conference. One of the co-founders is a special education teacher with sixteen years of experience with students with dyslexia and the other is completing training in Take Flight, a multisensory reading intervention program. The team visited three schools that specialize in educating students with dyslexia. Current research into child neuro-development has also been a part of the research process in designing this charter proposal.

*Desert Willow School envisions multiple layers of support for students, and hopes to address the needs of as many students as possible in the general education setting through research-based practices. The following innovations are written in terms of a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. We have come to believe that all students, especially the populations we have identified, will **thrive** with the following innovative practices and strategies:*

- 1. A differently structured day and school week*
- 2. A hands-on, holistic curriculum that honors the whole child*
- 3. Attention to children's neuro-development, especially sensory integration*
- 4. Multisensory reading instruction for all, with small-group, direct instruction for students with dyslexia and other language-based learning differences*
- 5. Multiple positive community connections with an emphasis on social-emotional learning (often called SE learning in literature)*

- 1. Extended school days Monday through Thursday with a block schedule*

Teacher-guided period Tier I: *Desert Willow School seeks to address the issue of insufficient time to work with students individually in part through an extended school day running from 8:30 to 4:00 Monday*

through Thursday that allows for large blocks of uninterrupted instructional time. Teacher-led classroom instruction would occur in the first block of the day, lasting 2 hours. Strategies for the education of all students in this period are to include differentiated instruction, the use of manipulatives, and multisensory delivery of instruction. Tier II: Another way that DWS seeks to provide more attention to its students is by increasing the student: teacher ratio. Our Enki Education curriculum design pairs a classroom teacher and an assistant during this block, which is ideal for providing additional support for students who might need pre-teaching or re-teaching in a small group before or after the main lesson. Tier III: This is a period of the day that lends itself well to the classroom teacher and a special education teacher co-teaching to meet the need of students with educational exceptionalities alongside their peers. Some frequently employed modifications and accommodations for children in a general classroom setting are listed in a section to follow.

Individual exploration period Tier I: The next block, lasting 2 hours, is a teacher-supervised period of individual student exploration of the topics presented earlier in the day and on previous days. This period of individualization is one of student immersion in activities of discovery that make learning meaningful. It is a time of deep engagement in the learning process that will benefit the otherwise disinterested student. This is also a time when DWS will implement small guided reading group instruction for all students. Tier II: It is especially important for the classroom teacher to design special instruction and to observe students in Tier II during this period. One of the innovations at DWS is employment of two reading specialists who have the training to provide language-based interventions for students who have dyslexia and similar issues. One or both of these positions may be filled by Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT). Such people have completed coursework plus 700 hours of supervised work with children with dyslexia, and passed the certification exam. Dyslexia occurs on a broad spectrum, and not all students who have it will qualify for special education services, but they need special attention nonetheless. (Shaywitz, 2003) This is where reading specialists can be of great assistance. Tier III: The second learning period of the day is one in which students who need pull-out instruction or acceleration in core subject areas may receive it from the special education teacher or reading specialist (CALT) as determined by the multidisciplinary IEP team. These are children who have not responded to extra attention to their neuro-sensory integration or to other Tier II strategies. This period is also ideal for ancillary service providers to work on sensory integration and speech and language skills either within or outside of the general education setting, as determined on an individual basis.

Group work period Tier I: The third block of the day, lasting 2 hours, comes after lunch, recess and regrouping as a class. It is the project period of the day, when students work with one another to further their understanding of lesson concepts. In the holistic view of Desert Willow, children are social and hardwired to collaborate. Many children, particularly extroverted ones, become disengaged when required to work alone. This period of the day will include activities such games to practice skills or a hands-on group project to leverage students' need to work together. Tier II: A classroom teacher might pair a child who is struggling with a certain concept or lesson material with a peer at this time, and observe the child's progress. Sometimes student peers can model or explain things in a way that is more relevant and therefore effective. This practice is also in line with DWS's mission to promote community belonging at every available opportunity. Tier III: This period of the day lends itself to a co-teaching model and strategies of peer teaching and peer assistance. Depending on hours of service needed as

determined by student IEPs, this period might also include pull-out time in small groups with a special education teacher or reading specialist where group work is continued under specialized guidance. If a child requires social work services and it is appropriate in his or her case for teaching social skills in the context of peers, this would be an ideal time. Gifted students, another segment of our target population, could also be encouraged to develop their leadership and collaboration skills during the peer work period.

2. A hands-on, holistic curriculum (Enki Education)

The term “special needs” describes a child who has a need that is unmet by a typical educational structure. Desert Willow’s program of study is informed by Enki Education, a holistic curriculum and philosophy that works so deeply with child development, sensory integration through movement, and exploratory learning, that many children who would have had an unmet need in traditional school situations will do very well within its framework. By introducing and developing a deep understanding of all subject matter through movement, music, and the arts, the Enki program is able to meet and remediate some special needs within the standard program, including those that normally lead to behavior and attention difficulties, e.g. those with ADHD and Sensory Integration Dysfunction. By design, Enki Education is a model of the practice of inclusive education in which students learn alongside their same-aged peers to the greatest extent possible. It is also a model of multisensory instruction, which is discussed in a section to follow.

3. Close attention to neuro-development, especially sensory integration

Research science continues to add evidence to what we know of the huge role that neurological and sensory-integration plays in optimal learning and child development. In order for students, particularly young children, to learn something deeply and efficiently, their neuro-sensory systems must be well integrated. A student without a well-integrated neuro-sensory system presents as either hyperactive or lethargic. The nervous system runs through every part of our body, and it is developed not by thought, but through the senses- first and foremost through movement. Enki Education understands movement to be the seat of neurological health and integration. (Enki foundation guide 2, p241) Tier I: Particular attention will be paid to ensuring the neuro-sensory integration of students through both the Enki sensory-neuro assessment (see Appendix) and through the specific movement aspects of core subject lessons. Tier II: When a student demonstrates neuro-sensory integration that is out of step with expected developmental milestones in the domains of tactile/touch, vestibular/balance or proprioceptive/muscle-joint issues, a classroom teacher or assistant trained in appropriate neuro-sensory techniques will work with that child. Grounding in neuro-sensory integration and techniques is part of Enki teacher training. Tier III: For students whose degree of neuro-sensory dis-integration is more severe, such as students on the further end of Autism Spectrum Disorder, or a student with Down Syndrome, and for whom the need for higher-level intervention is documented in an IEP, Desert Willow School will contract for services with an Occupational or Physical Therapist.

4. Multisensory reading instruction

Desert Willow School is passionate about reading. Part of DWS's mission is to cultivate reading proficiency, and even more, to instill a love of, and engagement with, story. Tier I: Desert Willow employs sound, research-based strategies to teach reading in a sequential, multisensory fashion that is in line with Common Core State Standards. The term "multisensory" is used to refer to any learning activity that includes the use of two or more sensory modalities to take in or to express information. This method is not only effective, but also enjoyable for the students. For example, alphabet letters and sounds can be learned by feeling and naming textured three-dimensional forms and sky writing, word construction can be taught by manipulating dough letters and children might use theater to experience and express understanding of a story. (Bursh, 1999) The possibilities are engaging and endless. Multisensory learning is integrated into literacy every day through Enki Education core lessons. Tier II: In 2000 The National Reading Panel stressed the importance of literacy and stated that reading failure has exacted a tremendous long-term consequence for children's self-confidence and motivation to learn, as well as for their later school performance ("Put Reading First," National Reading Panel, 2000). However, according to the International Dyslexia Association, as many as 20%, or 1 in 5 children struggle to learn to read because they have some degree of dyslexia. Struggling readers require a sequential multisensory reading program, as documented by over 80 years of research and practice (Bursh, 1999). House Bill 230 was passed to acknowledge that not all students with dyslexia have a severe enough case to qualify for special education services, but nonetheless require remediation. The bill requires general education teachers to employ research-based interventions with progress monitoring to all students who display characteristics of dyslexia. Desert Willow School understands and appreciates this bill and is committed to putting its mandates into effect with Tier II students. Since our curriculum is fully arts-integrated we do not need to hire art and music teachers. We will instead hire two reading specialists to help us fulfill our mission. Tier III: According to the International Dyslexia Association about half of all students who qualify for special education are classified as having a learning disability. Of those, about 85% struggle to learn to read. Special education teachers trained in reading interventions will work with students in Tier II in concert with classroom teachers.

5. Multiple positive community connections for social-emotional learning

Desert Willow School's holistic philosophy is that students are members of the communities of family, classroom, school, and wider world. Children spend so much of their time in school, and DWS views positive community building as part of its job. We seek to establish and maintain strong interpersonal connections as reflected in our mission statement. Tier I: Connections to the home, classroom, school and wider communities must be nurtured to ensure the children's present and future well-being. The portion of our target population who have been chronically disengaged are expected to bloom once in an educational environment that seeks to connect with them. DWS employs multiple practices to build a deep sense of connected confidence in its students. These include the Enki Education practices of classroom and school-wide community building, hosting visitors from the community who help to bring a real-world relationship connection to subject matter, and Friday Explorers Clubs. These measures are expected to will build resiliency in students and prevent the increasing incidents of anxiety that we see today. Tier II: Sometimes a child encounters events such as family disharmony, illness, death, or even the birth of a new sibling that causes emotional disequilibrium. Desert Willow School teachers and staff will be sensitive observers of changes in children's behavior and will share their observations with the family when inconsistencies appear. If understanding of the root of the issue or resolution of distress does not

come within a reasonable amount of time and the problem persists, the child will be referred to the Student Assistance Team (SAT). The SAT may examine practices used in the classroom, guide the family to counseling, or bring the perspective of a community health agency to the table. They may draft and implement a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP).

Tier III: Occasionally, a child presents with an issue such as depression or anxiety, or Autism Spectrum Disorder. A multidisciplinary IEP team may determine that he or she would benefit from social work services. DWS has budgeted for a social work services within its ancillary FTE in the event that it is deemed necessary in a child's Individual Education Program.

←	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
G.(1)(a) Special Education	The school provides a clear, cohesive, and comprehensive explanation of the practices and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services, and ensure students' access to the general education curriculum.	The school provides a clear explanation of the practices and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services, and ensure students' access to the general education curriculum.	The school provides a limited explanation of the practices and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services, and ensure students' access to the general education curriculum.	The school provides an incomplete and/or inadequate explanation of the practices and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services, and ensure students' access to the general education curriculum. --OR-- The application does not address Special Education.

Comments:

G. (1)(b) Provide a **clear, cohesive, and comprehensive** description of how the school will regularly evaluate and monitor the progress and success of special education students to ensure attainment of

IEP goals.

IEP Monitoring

Desert Willow School will regularly evaluate and monitor progress toward IEP goals in the following ways:

- *Special education teacher(s) and classroom teachers will collaborate at least weekly to discuss progress and to adjust instructional strategies as needed. General Ed teachers will take the lead in evaluating student progress based on grade-level expectations and standards, and the special education teacher will take the lead in suggesting recommended modifications and/or accommodations. The teachers will reflect together on the student's overall progress in light of Enki training in core development.*
- *The special education teacher will prepare a report for each student's family at least quarterly, describing progress and stating next steps on the path to meeting each student's IEP goals. The reports will indicate whether each goal has been met, is on track to be met by goal date, is expected to fall short of goal date, or whether there has been regression or no progress. The report will be shared with the parents and the classroom teacher and a copy will be kept in the student's permanent IEP record.*
- *Part of Desert Willow School's mission is to build students' awareness of their strengths, challenges and overall well-being. Classroom and special education teachers, along with ancillary service providers, will periodically engage students in conversations regarding this self-awareness. This will be done according to age appropriateness, as a fifth grader has far more metacognitive ability than a kindergartener.*

Ranking				
		Satisfied	Not Satisfied	
G.(1)(b) Special Education	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, cohesive, and comprehensive description of how the school will regularly evaluate and monitor the progress and success of special education students to ensure attainment of IEP goals.	The school provides a clear description of how the school will regularly evaluate and monitor the progress and success of special education students to ensure attainment of IEP goals.	The school provides a limited description of how the school will regularly evaluate and monitor the progress and success of special education students to ensure attainment of IEP goals.	The school provides an incomplete and/or inadequate description of how the school will regularly evaluate and monitor the progress and success of special education students to ensure attainment of IEP goals. --OR-- The application does not address the

				regular evaluation and monitoring of students with special needs.
--	--	--	--	---

Comments:

G.(1)(c) If applicable, provide a **clear, cohesive and comprehensive** plan for graduating students with special education needs that complies with federal and state regulations. (high schools only)

Not applicable

Ranking				
		Satisfied	Not Satisfied	
G.(1)(c) Special Education	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	<i>High Schools Only</i> The school provides a clear, cohesive and comprehensive plan for graduating students with special education needs that complies with federal and state regulations.	<i>High Schools Only</i> The school provides a clear plan for graduating students with special education needs that complies with federal and state regulations.	<i>High Schools Only</i> The school provides a limited plan for graduating students with special education needs.	<i>High Schools Only</i> The school provides an incomplete and/or inadequate plan for graduating students with special education needs. --OR-- The application does not address graduating students with special education needs.

Comments:

G.(1)(d) Provides a **clear, cohesive and comprehensive** plan that addresses how the school will provide ancillary staff support for special need students

Staffing Needs

All teachers are given tools to recognize developmental issues as they arise through their Enki training, and so know which children need to be referred to specialists. Desert Willow School will contract with local providers for occupational and physical therapies, social work, speech-language, health, and educational diagnostic services as needed according to

multidisciplinary IEP team decisions. DWS anticipates and has built a full FTE into the budget for these services based on the fact that our target populations frequently need ancillary services to make progress toward their individualized goals. Teachers will have the training to support the work of the specialists moment to moment in the general classrooms.

Ancillary support staff will have the same professional expectations as teachers at DWS. They will either work alongside teachers in the general classroom or provide pull-out services in a designated space as determined by students' IEPs.

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
G.(1) (d) Special Education	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, cohesive and comprehensive plan for budgeting and staffing to meet the identified needs and educational plans for students needing special education support/services. The plan fully addresses how the school will provide ancillary staff support.	The school provides a clear plan for budgeting and staffing to meet the identified needs and educational plans for students needing special education support/services. The plan adequately addresses how the school will provide ancillary staff support.	The school provides a limited plan for budgeting and staffing to meet the identified needs and educational plans for students needing special education support/services. The plan does not or minimally addresses how the school will provide ancillary staff support.	The school provides an incomplete and/or inadequate plan for budgeting and staffing to meet the identified needs and educational plans for students needing special education support/services. --OR-- The application did not address budgeting, staffing, and ancillary services.

Comments:]

G.(2) Students with Section 504 Accommodation Plans.

H.(2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of how the school will serve, evaluate, and monitor the progress and success of students with Section 504 Plans.

Monitoring 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law with which public schools are required to comply. It protects all qualified students with disabilities, defined as those persons having a physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. (29 U.S.C Sec. 706(8)) "Major life activities" is defined as: "...functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working." (34CFR Part 104.3) Essentially it mandates that students with and without disabilities are to be provided equal access to education. Children identified as having a disability that is not covered under IDEA require a plan for the provision of accommodations and services that may take the form of a written Section 504 Plan. Desert Willow

School will provide the full range of accommodations and services necessary for students with disabilities to participate in and benefit from programs and activities at the school.

There are no evaluation requirements in 504 as there are under IDEA. Desert Willow School will collaborate with parents, medical doctors and other health care workers to sufficiently evaluate the need for a 504 plan based upon data that they provide along with recommendations. The group will review the nature and presence of the disability, how it affects the student's access to the educational process, and whether accommodations are needed to prevent discrimination. The decision about 504 eligibility and services will be documented in the student's file, and a plan will be written that removes barriers to equal education. If services are provided, eligibility and the plan for services will be reviewed periodically, as determined by the group who developed the plan. All buildings will, by law, be ADA compliant.

A 504 plan will include accommodations that are designed to give the student ways to access and demonstrate knowledge of the material which his or her peers are also working. Accommodations do not change the content of what is learned, but remove barriers. For example, a child who has difficulty with the physical process of writing could be given an accommodation that allows him or her to give answers verbally. Frequently, accommodations are made to adjust the mode of presentation, response, setting and timing. Desert Willow School employs a holistic philosophy that values each child no matter what challenge they might be facing. DWS teachers and staff will extend the same care for building a sense of belonging in a student facing a disability it would any other student.

Ranking				
← Satisfied			Not Satisfied →	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
G.(2) Students with Section 504 Plans	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description of how the school will serve, evaluate, and monitor the progress and success of students with Section 504 Plans.	The school provides a clear description of how the school will serve, evaluate, and monitor the progress and success of students with Section 504 Plans.	The school provides a limited description of how the school will serve, evaluate, and monitor the progress and success of students with Section 504 Plans.	The school provides an incomplete and/or inadequate description of how the school will serve, evaluate, and monitor the progress and success of students with Section 504 Plans. --OR-- The application does not address Section 504 Plans.

Comments:

G.(3) English Language Learner (ELLs):

G.(3)(a) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** explanation of how English language learners will be identified.

Identifying ELL

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent federal and state mandates, all public schools must screen, identify and provide services to English Language Learners. A home language survey will be administered to all students within 20 days of enrollment at Desert Willow School to determine the presence of a Primary Home Language Other Than English (PHLOTE status). This survey will be kept in the student's cumulative file. If there are one or more responses confirming the influence of a language other than English on the Home Language Survey, then the parents will be informed within the first 20 days of enrollment in a language they understand that the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) will be administered to the student. Based on W-APT results, the student will be identified as either an English Language Learner (ELL) or a non-ELL student. If the student is an ELL, his or her parents will be notified that he or she is eligible for language services. If the parent does not wish for his or her child to participate in said services, they will inform Desert Willow School within 30 days of enrollment.

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
G. (3)(a) English Language Learners (ELLs)	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive explanation of how English language learners will be identified.	The school provides a clear explanation of how English language learners will be identified.	The school provides a limited explanation of how English language learners will be identified.	The school provides an inadequate and/or incomplete explanation of how English language learners will be identified. --OR-- The application does not address the identification of English Language Learners.

Comments:

G.(3)(b) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** explanation of how the school will provide services/supports to identified students.

ELL Services

English Language Learners (ELLs) face the double challenges of learning curriculum content while learning the language in which it is delivered. Desert Willow School will prepare its ELL students to speak and understand both conversational and academic English so that they may successfully engage in the life of the school community and classroom content in the following ways:

- *DWS will attempt to employ at least one teacher or other staff member who is fluent in Spanish who could pre-teach, re-teach and translate as necessary. (Spanish is the language most likely for ELL students to speak in our geographic region.)*
- *DWS will strive to build ELL students' sense of belonging just as it would any other student's. Experts in working with ELL students say that all are greatly helped when the school community learns about and values the ELL student's home culture and language, treating cultural and linguistic differences as resources rather than obstacles. DWS uses a curriculum that includes a multicultural framework that inherently values and learns from cultures other than our own. We intend to try to teach Spanish to all and that in itself lifts the ELL children's sense of belonging and lifts the other children's sense of the ELL student as having a strength not a weakness.*

Ranking				
		Satisfied	Not Satisfied	
G. (3)(b) English Language Learners (ELLs)	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive explanation of how the school will provide services/supports to identified students.	The school provides a clear explanation of how the school will provide services/supports to identified students.	The school provides a limited explanation of how the school will provide services/supports to identified students.	The school provides an inadequate and/or incomplete explanation of how the school will provide services/supports to identified students. --OR-- The application does not address how the school will provide services/supports to identified students.

Comments:

G.(3)(c) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of how instruction will be differentiated or sheltered based on identified ELL student needs. Please include relevant examples.

Differentiated Instruction for ELL students

Students in the process of acquiring English have varying proficiency levels. Therefore, instruction for students will be differentiated based on individual needs.

- *Enki Education has a language-rich curriculum, particularly in its storytelling. It also includes layers of activities meant to take students from an introductory phase all the way to mastery. This repetition of keywords and concepts can be useful to the English Language Learner. For example, a story might be pre-taught in Spanish, and then heard again in English. After hearing it in English the student will continue to be immersed in the concepts it teaches through follow-up art and other activities.*

- *Ease of access to concepts will be eased by DWS's multisensory and manipulatives-based teaching strategies. These will assist ELL students in understanding the content directly without the need for translation. For example, when students work with place value they use buttons to represent ones, small boxes of ten buttons each to represent tens, and stacks of ten boxes to represent hundreds. There is no need for English language to understand this concept.*
- *Desert Willow School uses Total Physical Response (TPR) throughout each day to teach Spanish to all students. TPR is a research-based language teaching method centered on the coordination of language and physical movement. (cite source) It could be used to great effect to help a student acquire English. For example, a classroom teacher might direct the ELL student to put her books away in English accompanied with a gesture and perhaps an action. Hearing the language coupled with the action is what gives TPR its effectiveness.*
- *DWS will employ best practices such as giving frequent, extended opportunities to speak about content material and to work through texts in English with small groups of classmates. ELL students need to be given ample opportunities to have extended interaction with peers who can apply models for how to use English words and structures appropriately. For example, in a language arts or writing activity, a ELL student could be paired in a small group with a bilingual student and a native English speaker, both who can assist the student as needed.*
- *Support for a ELL student should be scaffolded so that the student is moved in the direction of autonomy. Just as in construction, scaffold support is there only as long as needed, and is gradually removed over time as the student moves toward proficiency. Scaffolding can include graphic organizers, visual aids, and peer help.*

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
G. (3)(c) English Language Learners (ELLs)	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description of how instruction will be differentiated or sheltered based on identified student needs. Relevant examples are provided.	The school provides a clear description of how instruction will be differentiated based on identified student needs. Examples are provided.	The school provides a limited description of how instruction will be differentiated based on identified student needs, Limited or inadequate examples are provided.	The school provides an incomplete or inadequate description of how instruction will be differentiated based on identified student needs. --OR-- The application does not address differentiated or sheltered instruction for English Language Learners.

Comments:

G.(3)(d) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** to regularly evaluate and monitor the progress of English language learners.

ELL Monitoring

ELL student are best monitored by a TESOL endorsed teacher. DWS will strive to employ a teacher with this credential or will encourage staff to pursue it. All students identified by the W-APT as English Language Learners will be assessed annually to determine their English language proficiency and need for services.

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
G. (3)(d) English Language Learners (ELLs)	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan to regularly evaluate and monitor the progress of English language learners.	The school provides a clear plan to regularly evaluate and monitor the progress of English language learners.	The school provides a limited plan to evaluate and monitor the progress of English language learners.	The school provides an incomplete and/or inadequate plan to evaluate and monitor the progress of English Language Learners. --OR-- The application does not address evaluating and monitoring the progress of English language learners.

Comments:

G.(3)(e) Provides a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of how the school will budget and staff to meet the needs of ELLs.

Staffing for ELLs

Currently, about 3% of Silver City Consolidated School district students are identified as ELL, compared with about 17% of K-12 students statewide. While we do not anticipate the necessity of hiring a teacher whose sole job is to provide services to English Language Learners, we hope to hire at least one classroom teacher or assistant who is bilingual or fluent in Spanish. This individual or individuals would sometimes be called upon to translate notices home or directions on homework. Our budget is not affected by the addition of an ESL position since we hope to find at least one classroom teacher who can perform some of that function, hopefully with a TESOL endorsement. If Title III funding should become available to us in the future it will be used to support students who are acquiring basic and academic English skills.

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
G. (3)(e) English Language Learners (ELLs)	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description of how it will budget and staff itself to meet the needs of ELLs.	The school provides a clear , description of how it will budget and staff itself to meet the needs of ELLs.	The school provides a limited description of how it will budget and staff itself to meet the needs of ELLs.	The school provides an incomplete and/or inadequate description of how it will budget and staff itself to meet the needs of ELL students. --OR-- The budgeting and staffing does not meet the needs of ELLs.

Comments:

H.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** that identifies what measures will be used to indicate that students are making academic progress, the grade levels at which the assessments will be used, and frequency of assessing. Please provide **clear** evidence that the school has considered the common core standards, the state-mandated PARCC and SBA, the school's targeted student population, and how the assessments will be used to inform instruction.

Use of Assessments

Desert Willow School is committed to relevant, rigorous and reliable measures of its students' academic progress, and plans to use a variety of formative and summative assessment measures. Combined with teachers' Enki training in understanding child development, and trusting one's intuition about children with whom one has developed a sound working relationship, we are confident in our ability to assess student progress and to respond quickly and thoughtfully when difficulties surface.

Formative Assessments

All students in kindergarten through fifth grades will be assessed using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) to obtain information about reading readiness and proficiency that will guide instruction and intervention in literacy. These measures have both been chosen because they are reliable and easily administered in the classroom. Only DIBELS has been included as the school's official indicator of literacy (See C. 1 Goals and Indicators) in an effort to streamline and simplify the reporting process to the state. We believe that of the two reading measures, DIBELS is the more widely recognized.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) will be used to inform teachers' understanding of their students' mathematical skills. MAP is particularly useful for our target population, whose academic performance within each grade is expected to cover a wide range. Unlike criterion-referenced assessments that only include the scope of one grade level, the MAP adjusts the level

of difficulty of its test items according students' responses.

Teachers will also use rubric -based assessments in the classroom. The Enki Education curriculum guides come with rubrics for writing, language arts, science and social studies for every grade that will round out the picture of a student's academic profile. (See samples in Appendix X) The Enki rubrics have been thoughtfully developed and used successfully in other schools.

These four formative measures will be taken in the fall, winter and spring of each year. The formative assessments used at Desert Willow School have been chosen for their accuracy in reflecting the use of basic skills at the various grade levels in all subject areas. DIBELS, DRA and MAP give data that place each child in the context of what is typically expected academically of a child of that age. While we understand that all human beings have strengths and challenges that naturally fall on a continuum, and that it is normal for children to develop at different rates, this aspect of assessment can be helpful in the identification of students who require greater attention to their instruction and those who would benefit from more challenges. Furthermore, these assessment tools give the teacher some concrete guidance for further instruction. Following are some examples of how data can be used in the early detection of struggling students.

- A kindergartener begins school and her teacher uses DIBELS to assess his ability to isolate and produce the first sounds of various words that she hears. This is an important foundational skill for learning to read later on. He receives a score of 15. The teacher knows that this is very close to the cut-point score of 12 for being at- risk in phonemic awareness, and steps up her work with the child in that area.*

Unlike criterion--referenced assessments that only include the scope of one grade level, the MAP adjusts the level of difficulty of its test items according students' responses. The teacher can clearly see where the child is along a broad developmental spectrum.

- A second grader takes the MAP mid--year and her teacher sees that her math scores are typical of a child beginning fourth grade. The teacher adjusts instruction to offer developmentally-appropriate challenges in math.*
- A third grader who had been fairly average in her reading ability up until now seems to be having difficulty comprehending what she reads. Her teacher uses the DRA to look into the issue and finds that the child is stumbling on multisyllabic words and is missing meaning in informational text. Her teacher instructs the child in how to use text features to understand non-fictional literature and devotes extra instructional time to decoding long words.*

DIBELS, MAP and DRA have clear diagnostic components. Classroom rubrics can be used in a similar manner to give students and their parents specific feedback that is useful for informing instruction.

- A fifth grader finds writing to be a laborious process, and his written work is difficult to follow. His teacher uses an Enki language arts rubric to assess his latest piece of writing. They go over his work and the rubric together and they realize that there is issue is with vocabulary and word finding. They can now come up with a plan.*

Summative Assessments

Desert Willow School will use the PARCC as required of all schools as its summative assessment for Language and Math in grades 3 through 5 and the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment for Science in grade 4. Once test results are received the subsections of the tests will be reviewed to identify individual student needs. Teachers stay with their class for first, second and third and for fourth and fifth grades. This will have positive benefits for summative assessment. In the case of the teacher and students moving together through first, second and third grades, the students are likely to be less anxious about testing since they will be so well anchored in their class community. The teacher will see the outcome of his or her work with the children over the course of those three years and will be better informed once he or she goes to meet the next group of students when starting in first grade again. Fourth grade teachers will review the scores of their class to identify where additional instructional focus will be necessary as they guide that group in fifth grade, cutting out the need to explain all of that data and those observations to the next teacher.

Alignment with Common Core State Standards

All of the formative and summative assessments chosen for use at Desert Willow School align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The Common Core asks kindergarten teachers to work on isolating and pronouncing first sounds in three-phoneme words (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.2.D) One of the DIBELS subtests for kindergarteners is First Sound Fluency. In first through fifth grades the Common Core directs teachers to practice “Read(ing) with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.” (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.2.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.3.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.4.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.5.4) Students in these grades will be assessed with DIBELS subtests for oral reading fluency for accuracy and words read correctly (ORF-A and ORF-WRC).

The Common Core asks that elementary students demonstrate an understanding of the fictional and informational texts that they read. Depending upon their age, they are asked to identify or describe characters, settings and events, retell stories in their own words, compare and contrast stories, determine story themes and to describe key ideas and details contained in a text (CCSS-ELA-LIT RLK.1 through RLK.3; CCSS-ELA-LIT RL1.1-RL1.3; CCSS-ELA-LIT RL2.1-RL2.3; CCSS-ELA-LIT RL3.1-RL3.3; CCSS-ELA-LIT RL4.1-RL4.3; CCSS-ELA-LIT RL5.1-RL5.3; CCSS.ELA-RI.K.1-RI.K.3; CCSS.ELA-RI.1.1-RI.1.6; CCSS.ELA-RI.2.1-RI.2.6; CCSS.ELA-RI.3.1-RI.3.6; CCSS.ELA-RI.4.1-RI.4.6; CCSS.ELA-RI.5.1-RI.5.6). The DRA aligns with these standards very closely. A teacher using the DRA will glean diverse information from listening to a student read, including his or her grasp of phonics and fluency, and many clues about his or her comprehension skills. The final page of a DRA packet is a checklist of reading behaviors and responses noted during the reading that directly inform the teacher’s next steps with that student.

The MAP is now directly aligned to assess students’ progress with The Common Core. (See www.nwea.org/assessments/map/common-core-map/) The website states, “As state testing standards evolve you can have confidence in our thoroughness. Our alignment process ensures that every item reflects standards content precisely. Whether your state is adopting new standards or using current standards, we work with you to make certain that our assessments cover the content students need to master in your state.”

The Enki classroom rubrics are thorough and also match Common Core Standards. For example,

the Common Core asks third graders to “Use multiplication and division within 100 to solve word problems in situations involving equal groups, arrays, and measurement quantities, e.g., by using drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem”. CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.OA.A.3). Objective 2 for math in the third grade Enki curriculum includes “Student is able to perform simple long multiplication and long division independently and with reasonable accuracy.” Work with Enki materials is always made relevant to the child and taught in a hands-on fashion, so although the objective does not specify that the operation is performed within the context word problems, the lessons would be taught in this real-world manner. To continue with this small sample of alignment, Objective 1 for third grade, “Students will develop an interest in and a recognition of pattern- numeric, geometric, visual, auditory, kinesthetic” matches CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.OA.A.1, CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.G.A.1, CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.OA.D.9.

The purpose of the PARCC is to align with the Common Core State Standards, which New Mexico has adopted as its Language and Mathematics standards. New Mexico’s SBA aligns with state standards in Science. Our intention is to use the formative assessments to guide instruction in order to keep on track to do well on this summative assessment.

Guiding Instruction

Student skill and knowledge development is guided by teacher reflection on student observation and data from formative and summative measures. All forms of assessment at DWS are designed to guide instruction. DIBELS yields data on specific areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. The DRA gives precise details about students’ reading proficiency and behaviors that are then referenced to areas to work on, and the MAP is also designed to guide instruction. Teachers will be trained in how to administer each of these assessments with fidelity on in-service days before the school year begins.

On-going Professional Development and Instructional Refinement

Over time, as teachers get to know their students and become comfortable with the Enki curriculum and methodologies and the Common Core State Standards, formative and summative test data will become more meaningful and will be more effectively applied to instruction. Data will be used to refine the curriculum and instruction of the unique student body at Desert Willow School. Part of the director’s job will be to look at the data coming from the school as a whole, and to adjust professional development as needed. For example, if there is a school-wide trend in less-than-expected reading fluency, the director will discuss this with the staff and organize some form of professional development toward remediating the situation. Per our MOU with Enki Education, teachers at Desert Willow will have mentoring from Enki Education veteran teachers for the first five years.

Timeline for the Achievement of the School’s Mission

Assessment for each student will begin with an entry evaluation in the fall consisting of DIBELS, DRA and MAP. Throughout the school year students will be evaluated through formative assessment, including classroom-based rubrics, plus observations and student demonstrations. In spring of each school year students will take the PARCC, a summative assessment. The school’s director and the teaching staff will examine all of the formative and summative measures to rate the school according to our Mission

indicators. This will be accompanied by thoughtful reflection which will inform the school's forward planning.

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
H.(1) Use of Assessments	Exceeds—8	Meets—6	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive and cohesive plan that identifies what measures will be used to indicate that students are making academic progress, the grade levels at which the assessments will be used, and frequency of assessing. Clear evidence that the school has considered the common core standards, the state-mandated PARCC and Standards Based Assessment, the school's targeted student population, and how the assessments will be used to inform instruction is provided.	The school provides a clear plan that identifies what measures will be used to indicate that students are making academic progress, the grade levels at which the assessments will be used, and frequency of assessing. Some evidence that the school has considered the common core standards, the state-mandated PARCC and Standards Based Assessment, the school's targeted student population, and how the assessments will be used to inform instruction is provided.	The school provides a limited plan that identifies what measures will be used to indicate that students are making academic progress, the grade levels at which the assessments will be used, and frequency of assessing. Limited or no evidence that the school has considered the common core standards, the state-mandated PARCC and Standards Based Assessment, the school's targeted student population, and how the assessments will be used to inform instruction is provided.	The school provides an incomplete and/or inadequate assessment plan. --OR-- The application did not address plans for assessment or consider the common core standards, PARCC, and Standards Based Assessment.

Comments:

H. (2) Provides a **clear, comprehensive and cohesive** description of the corrective actions that will be taken if the school falls short of achieving student academic achievement or growth expectations or goals at the individual (remediation/at-risk student) **and** school-wide levels. A **complete** explanation of what would trigger such corrective actions, who would be responsible for implementing them, and how the school will assess effectiveness is provided.

Individual and School-Wide Corrective Action

Desert Willow School is committed to a prompt response should the school fall short of achieving its growth expectations as measured by the indicators attached to its formative and summative assessments.

Role of the Administrative Director in Corrective Action

The director of Desert Willow School must be committed to DWS's mission, understand and appreciate its holistic philosophy and curriculum, and have a good grasp of how to oversee and facilitate its implementation. Teachers will be working diligently to create their classroom communities and to pay attention to each student. The director must work to build a community of classrooms into a school, with an eye to how well the mission is being implemented.

Remedial Efforts for Individuals Not Meeting the Mission Indicators

A plan of action will be developed by teachers for students in Cohort 1 (performance typical or advanced for grade) who score a 1 on mission indicators (far from the goal) and students in Cohort 2 (performance atypical at the beginning of the year) who score 1 or 2 on a mission indicator. The plan may include extra help from the teacher, classroom assistant, parent volunteer, or reading specialist. The steps below detail the progression of strategies and interventions that will be offered:

1. Enki curriculum with Orton-Gillingham based reading strategies for all students

At this broadest level, inclusive of all students, children receive instruction during the whole class, teacher-led period, the individualized work period and the peer group period. Differentiated instruction is offered to meet students' diverse skill levels. Formative and summative assessment measures are monitored. Teachers are aware of their students' unique strengths and challenges and are working with them and their families to see that they blossom into their best selves.

2. Intervention for students with academic or interpersonal difficulties

Intervention in the form of small group and individualized lessons are provided based on assessment data. At this level reading specialists play a greater role, which may be either advisory or direct. Groupings will be flexible and will change based on students' need and progress. Referral may be made to the Student Assistance Team. Parents will always be informed when staff observe a child who is struggling more than expected and will be apprised of interventions and progress.

3. Specific remediation plan for student not meeting mission indicators

When the classroom teacher's efforts are not enough, a Student Assistance Team (SAT) meeting will be arranged with the parents and other staff members who will examine what has been tried and will come up with a new plan based on assessment data and observations. This remediation plan may include interventions carried out by the classroom teacher, the classroom assistant, or the reading specialist. If the area of weakness is reading, the reading specialist will provide direct instruction to the child. The SAT will meet regularly to examine the effect of interventions, which will be documented by those implementing them. If interventions do not have the desired ameliorative effect, the SAT may make a referral for diagnostic testing.

4. Educational diagnostic testing and possible qualification for special education

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed for students who meet the criteria for special education services. Alternative interventions will continue to be pursued for students who do not qualify for special education.

Remedial Efforts for School-wide Failure to Meet Mission Indicators

Desert Willow School is committed to a prompt response should the school fall short of achieving its growth expectations as measured by the indicators attached to its formative and summative assessments. When a school-wide trend in data is observed by the director, he or she has the responsibility of informing the staff and leading them in a proactive plan when needed. The administrative director will be responsible for initiating one or more of the following corrective actions, and for monitoring their effectiveness. Strategies may include peer modeling and collaboration with level III teachers, observations and counseling from seasoned Enki teachers from other schools, and school-wide professional development focused on a specific area. If, after a reasonable trial period, one or more strategies is not effective, the administrative director will examine the issue along with the teaching staff, and one or more different approaches will be tried.

Ranking				
← Satisfied		Not Satisfied →		
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
H. (2) In di vi du al an d Sc ho ol- wi de Co rr ec tiv e Ac tio n	The school provides a clear, comprehensive and cohesive description of the corrective actions that will be taken if the school falls short of achieving student academic achievement or growth expectations or goals at the individual (remediation/at-risk student) and school-wide levels. A complete explanation of what would trigger such corrective actions, who would be responsible for implementing them, and how the school will assess	The school provides a clear description of the corrective actions that will be taken if the school falls short of achieving student academic achievement or growth expectations or goals at the individual (remediation/at-risk student) and school-wide levels. An adequate explanation of what would trigger such corrective actions, who would be responsible for implementing them, and how the school will assess effectiveness is provided.	The school provides a limited description of the corrective actions that will be taken if the school falls short of achieving student academic achievement or growth expectations or goals at the individual (remediation/at-risk student) and school-wide levels. A limited or incomplete explanation of what would trigger such corrective actions, who would be responsible for implementing them, and how the school will assess effectiveness is provided.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete response for corrective actions. --OR-- The application does not address corrective actions.

	effectiveness is provided.			
--	----------------------------	--	--	--

Comments:

H.(3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan that explains how student assessment and progress will be appropriately communicated to parents, the school's Governing Body, the school's Authorizer, and the broader community. Please consider your selected community, their accessibility and communication options when answering this question.

Reporting on Progress

Strong connections to the communities of family, classroom, school and Silver City area are an integral part of Desert Willow School's mission. As such, student progress will be shared with each of these.

Communicating with families

Our first priority is to communicate student progress with parents, as they have entrusted us with the education of their children. In keeping with Enki philosophy and common professionalism, communications and meetings will be conducted with the utmost respect, and in a positive manner, and will take the whole child into account. During the planning year a communication outline will be created to use at parent-teacher conferences, IEPs, 504 and SAT meetings. This outline will guide meetings and always include positives and constructive suggestions for moving ahead. It will ensure that the teacher remembers to cover social-emotional health, academic progress according to observations and formative and summative assessments, and leaves room for parental comments and questions. At some point in the school year, students may lead one of their conferences. Desert Willow School will also develop its own skill-based report card aligned with Enki philosophy and curriculum and indicative of student progress on formative measures.

Communicating student progress within the school

It is important for educational professionals to share their successes and challenges for the benefit of their own practice and morale. This is especially true when learning to work within a holistic educational framework, when most of us have been traditionally schooled. Furthermore, we expect Desert Willow School to have a higher than average share of students with special needs, and this population can present with pedagogical challenges. On Fridays teachers will have time for collaboration. At some of these meetings teachers will share their strategies for success and be able to ask each other for constructive suggestions. Students will remain anonymous during these discussions.

Communicating student progress to the governing council, state, and to the community

Presentations from various classrooms or the school as a whole will be made at Governing Council meetings by the head administrator. Desert Willow School will share these presentations with the authorizing Public Education Commission in written form. Finally, DWS wishes to share the progress it makes with its innovations with the Silver City community on a website and in a newsletter. The website is to be updated after each governing council meeting to include the minutes plus data from school

progress presentations. The newsletter could be compiled with student collaboration and will be written and left in public places such as the library and The Commons on a quarterly basis. The public library in our community has a rich children's program, and draws parents and their children across from all socio-economic backgrounds.

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
H. (3) Re po rti ng on Pr og re ss	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan that explains how student assessment and progress will be appropriately communicated to parents, the school's Governing Body, the school's Authorizer, and the broader community.	The school provides a clear plan that explains how student assessment and progress will be appropriately communicated to parents and the school's Governing Body.	The school provided a limited plan that explains how student assessment and progress will be appropriately communicated to parents and the Governing Body.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete plan explaining how student assessment and progress will be appropriately communicated to parents and the Governing Body. --OR-- The application does not address the communication of student assessment and progress.
Comments:				

Organization

A. Governing Body Creation/Capacity.

A.(1) Summarize and incorporate **all** key components of your governance structure, **specifically** outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body members (number of members, length of terms, offices to be created, committees, grounds for removal from office, and relationship with your school's administration). Provide comprehensive "bylaws" or specifically explain how your governing body will develop its governing documents or "bylaws" if not submitted with application. If complete, attach governing documents as Appendix B.

Organization

A. Governing Body Creation/Capacity

A.1 Governance Description

A.1.a *Desert Willow School's (DWS) mission, vision and goals are created to provide a successful, empowering educational experience for both students and school personnel. The Governing Council ensures that the mission and goals remain the guiding force in charting the school's future. The Governing Council will adopt policies that will promote the mission, goals, and objectives of the school in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.*

A.1.b *The Governing Council and the Director of Desert Willow School will work cooperatively and effectively so students and teachers can succeed. The Governing Council defines the duties of the Director, advertises for the position, screens, interviews, and selects the Director based on his/her qualifications, experiences and best fit with the unique and innovative mission of DWS. The Director reports to the Governing Council on a regular basis and works with the Council for strategic planning and financial goals and implementation. Unlike some schools, an Enki school focuses on a “community of learning”. The Governing Council, Director, educational staff, students and parents are all integral parts of the community.*

A.1.c *The Governing Council and the Director create and support a strong, nurturing faculty, parent, and overall school community. Director and faculty work cooperatively to:*

- *Create strong and direct lines of communication to support the exchange of ideas and the constructive communication of concerns;*
- *Ensure each teacher’s success;*
- *Embrace and utilize the Enki approach to education both in regards to their own lifelong learning and that of the staff and students;*
- *Work with the teaching staff to review and rework curricular content and method to meet the particular children and families in the school.*

A.1.d *The Governing Council will comply with all laws and regulations, including the Open Meetings Act Resolution (Appendix B), in order to promote community awareness and cooperation. All Council members are required to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. All must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Each member of the Council will review and sign a conflict of interest policy (Appendix B).*

A.1.e *The Governing Council will review DWS financial statements monthly and financial audits will be conducted as required by law.*

A.1.f *The Governing Council is accountable for the financial stability and financial future of DWS and as such will engage in regular strategic financial planning, assuming primary responsibility for the preservation of capital assets and endowments, approving and overseeing the operating budget, and*

actively participate in fundraising. The Council selects, employs, evaluates, sets the roles and responsibilities and fixes the salary for the Director of the school.

A.1.g *The Governing Council will conduct long-range strategic planning and set annual goals consistent to these plans. The Council will conduct an annual written evaluation of the school, the Director and the Council itself.*

A.1.h *The Governing Council is responsible for keeping full and accurate records of its meeting, committees and policies. The Council will communicate decisions widely throughout the school community and the community as a whole.*

A.1.i *Council members are actively involved in the work of the Council and its committees. As leader of the school community, the Council engages proactively in partnership with the Director to cultivate and maintain good relations with school constituents as well as the broader community.*

A.1.j *Professional development is an ongoing commitment for the Governing Council. The Council will stress new member orientation, ongoing member education, evaluation and growth, and leadership training for all members.*

A.1.2 Desert Willow School Bylaws: please see Appendix B

A.1.3 Standing Committees

The Governing Council will have the following standing committees, unless determined by resolution of the Governing Council, one or more become unnecessary. These committees shall include at least one member of the Governing Council and/or DWS staff. Membership shall reflect an equitable balance between school employees, parents, and community members.

A.1.3.a Finance - *The operating budget shall be prepared under the direction of the Governing Council with consultation of the Finance Committee and the Business Manager. The annual budget will be in accordance with State statutory requirements. The Finance Committee will aid in establishing internal controls to safeguard assets, provide reliable financial information, promote operational efficiency, and ensure compliance with laws, regulations and established School policies and procedures. The Governing Council will also empanel an Audit Committee responsible for all duties associated with the annual audit.*

A.1.3.b Policy - *The Director will present requests for new policies or the review of existing policies, to include personnel, enrollment, and operations, to the Policy Committee who will study and review the request. The Policy Committee will submit a recommendation concerning the policy to either the Director or the Governing Council, depending on the nature of the request.*

A.1.3.c Nominating - *The Nominating Committee is responsible for the general affairs of the Council. Specific tasks include but are not limited to:*

- prepare priorities for Council composition*
- meet with prospective Council members and recommend candidates to the Council*

- *recommend a slate of officers to the Council*
- *conduct orientation sessions for new Council members and to organize training sessions for the entire Council*
- *suggest new, non-Council individuals for committee membership.*

A.1.4 Ad Hoc Committees

The Council may from time-to-time appoint any other committees if deemed necessary. These committees will consist of persons designated by the Governing Council and shall act in an advisory capacity to the Governing Council.

A.1.5 Duties of Officers

A.1.5.a Duties of Chair

- *Oversees board and executive committee meetings*
- *Works in partnership with the chief executive to make sure board resolutions are carried out*
- *Calls special meetings if necessary*
- *Appoints all committee chairs, and with the chief executive, recommends who will serve on committees*
- *Assists chief executive in preparing agenda for board meetings*
- *Assists chief executive in conducting new board member orientation*
- *Oversees searches for a new chief executive*
- *Coordinates chief executive's annual performance evaluation*
- *Works with the governance committee to recruit new board members*
- *Acts as an alternate spokesperson for the organization*
- *Periodically consults with board members on their roles and helps them assess their performance*

A.1.5.b Duties of Vice Chair

- *Attend all board meetings*
- *Serve on the executive committee if one exists*
- *Carry out special assignments as requested by the board chair*
- *Understand the responsibilities of the board chair and be able to perform these duties in the chair's absence*
- *Participate as a vital part of the board leadership*

A.1.5.c Duties of Secretary

- *Attend all board meetings*
- *Serve on the executive committee if one exists*
- *Ensure the safety and accuracy of all board records*
- *Review board minutes*
- *Assume responsibilities of the chair in the absence of the board chair, chair-elect, and vice chair*
- *Provide notice of meetings of the board and/or of a committee when such notice is required*

A.1.5.d Duties of Treasurer

- *Attend all board meetings*
- *Serve on the executive committee if one exists*
- *Maintain knowledge of the organization and personal commitment to its goals and objectives*
- *Understand financial accounting for nonprofit organizations*
- *Serve as the chair of the finance committee*
- *Manage, with the finance committee, the board's review of and action related to the board's financial responsibilities*
- *Work with the Administrative Director and the Business Manager to ensure appropriate financial reports are made available to the board on a timely basis*
- *Present the annual budget to the board for approval*
- *Review the annual audit and answer board members' questions about the audit*

A.1.6 Policies and Procedures

A.1.6.a Execution of Instruments

The Governing Council, except as otherwise provided in these policies, may by resolution authorize any officer or agent of the Governing Council to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of DWS, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized, no officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Governing Council or DWS by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable monetarily for any purpose or in any amount.

A.1.6.b Checks and Notes

Except as otherwise specifically determined by resolution of the Governing Council, or as otherwise required by law, checks, drafts, promissory notes, orders for the payment of money, and other evidence of indebtedness of the Governing Council shall be signed as follows: For purchases of \$1000.00 or less, the Director and the Business Manager. For purchases over \$1000.00, the Business Manager and the Governing Council Treasurer.

A.1.6.c Deposits

All funds of DWS shall be deposited in a timely manner to the credit of DWS in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Governing Council may select.

A.1.6.d Gifts

The Governing Council may accept on behalf of DWS any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the nonprofit purposes of DWS.

A.1.7 Records and Reports

A.1.7.a Maintenance of Records

The Governing Council shall keep at its principal office:

- Minutes of all meetings of Council members and committees of the Governing Council, indicating the time and place of holding such meetings, whether regular or special, how called, the notice given, and the names of those present and the proceedings thereof;
- Adequate and correct books and records of account maintained by the Business Manager, including accounts of its properties and business transactions and accounts of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains and losses;
- A copy of the DWS Charter, and Council policies as amended to date, which shall be open to inspection at all reasonable times during office hours or by appointment.

A.1.8 Policy Adoption and/or Changes

A.1.8.a Policy Process

It is the intent of the Governing Council to adopt policies so that they may serve as guidelines for its own operations and for the successful and efficient functioning of the School. Policy adoption is one of the Council's chief responsibilities. Suggestions regarding the content of policies may originate with a member of the Council, the Director, a staff member, a parent, a student, a consultant, a civic group, or any public citizen. A careful and orderly process shall be used in examining such proposals. The policy proposals shall be referred to the Policy Committee for detailed study prior to recommendation(s) being provided to the Governing Council. The Council may take action in accordance with the Policy Adoption policy after hearing the Director's recommendation(s). The policies of the Council are framed and intended to be interpreted within the context of applicable laws and regulations.

A.1.8.b Policy Adoption

Adoption of new policies or the revision or repeal of existing policies is the responsibility of the Governing Council. The Council shall adhere to the following procedure in considering and adopting policy proposals to ensure that they are fully studied before final action:

- *First meeting – the proposal shall be presented for review by council members as well as review by parents and community members as appropriate*
- *Second meeting – the proposal shall be presented for discussion and action.*

During discussion of a policy proposal, the views of the public, staff members, and the Council may result in changes. A change shall not require that the policy go through an additional review except as the Council determines that the change requires further study and that an additional review would be desirable.

Policies may be adopted or amended at a single meeting (called in compliance with the NM Open Meetings Act) of the Council in a Council-declared emergency.

A.1.8.d Administrative Procedure

Upon receiving a request for a new policy or the review of an existing policy the Director will provide a copy of the request to the chair of the Council's Policy Committee.

- *The Policy Committee will study and review the requested new policy or review of an existing policy.*
- *The Policy Committee will submit to the Director a recommendation concerning the policy.*

- The Director will discuss with the Council Chair placement upon a Governing Council agenda for consideration.

A.1.8 Council Members' Inspection Rights

Every Council member shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect and copy all books, records and documents of every kind and to inspect the physical properties of DWS.

A.1.10 Right to Copy and Make Extracts

Any inspection under the provisions of this Article may be made in person or by agent or attorney and the right to inspection shall include the right to copy and make extracts.

A.1.11 Periodic Report

The Governing Council shall cause any annual or periodic report required under law to be prepared and delivered to an office of this state to be so prepared and delivered within the time limits set by law.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—8	Meets—6	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
A · (1) G o v e r n a n c e D e s c r i p t i	The school incorporates all key components of their governance structure, specifically outlining the roles and responsibilities of the GB members. The school provides comprehensive “bylaws” or specifically explains how its governing body will develop its governing documents or “bylaws” if not submitted with application.	The school incorporates most of the key components of their governance structure adequately outlining the roles and responsibilities of the GB members. The school provides adequate “bylaws” or explains how its governing body will develop its governing documents or “bylaws” if not submitted with application.	The school incorporates some of the key components of their governance structure partially outlining the roles and responsibilities of the GB members. The school provides “bylaws” or somewhat explains how its governing body will develop its governing documents or “bylaws” if not submitted with application	The school provides an incomplete or inadequate outline of their governance structure. --OR-- The application does not address the governance structure.

o n				
--------	--	--	--	--

Comments:

A.(2) Provide a **compelling and relevant list** of all proposed, initial Governing Body members along with their experience, skills, and qualifications. Ensure that your **membership reflects (or will reflect)** the diverse experiences and skills necessary to oversee all aspects of the school. In your list of proposed initial governing body members, describe the expertise represented in order to demonstrate their capacity to initiate the opening of the charter school (i.e., assure student success, develop, implement, oversee the management of public funds, and oversee the school's compliance with legal obligations).

A.2 Description of Prospective Governance Expertise

A.2.a Governing Council Contact List (Current)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Area of Expertise</i>	<i>Term</i>
<i>Fiona Bailey</i>	<i>575-654-3962</i>	<i>fionamargaretb@gmail.com</i>	<i>1822 N Yucca Silver City, NM 88061</i>	<i>Elementary Ed and Orton Gillingham</i>	<i>7/1/14-6/30/16</i>
<i>Emily Aversa</i>	<i>575-534-4735</i>	<i>emilyaversa@gmail.com</i>	<i>2216 Cactus Silver City, NM 88061</i>	<i>Special Education</i>	<i>7/1/14-6/30/16</i>

<i>George F. Lundy</i>	<i>575-313-6502</i>	<i>gllundy@earthlink.net</i>	<i>3211 Chamise Rd Silver City, NM 88061</i>	<i>Facilitation and Collaboration</i>	<i>7/1/14-6/30/17</i>
<i>William Knuttinen</i>	<i>575-538-2750</i>	<i>william@silvercpas.com</i>	<i>608 N Bullard Silver City, NM 88061</i>	<i>Accounting</i>	<i>7/1/14-6/30/17</i>
<i>Alicia Edwards</i>	<i>575-313-3371</i>	<i>thunderstrucksilver@gmail.com</i>	<i>PO Box 416 Silver City, NM 88062</i>	<i>Fundraising and Grant Writing</i>	<i>7/1/14-6/30/17</i>

A.2.a Desert Willow School Governing Council Bios

Fiona Bailey

EDUCATION: MA in Outdoor/Experiential Education, BS in Elementary Ed with a minor in Biology. Working toward Academic Language Therapist license.

EMPLOYMENT: 1st grade teacher at G.W. Stout Elem, Silver City for 8 years, 1 year teaching 5th grade.

EXPERIENCE: 25 total years teaching experience in grades K, 1, 4 and 5. Board Member and Secretary of The Learning Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success; Parent of a 14 year old daughter with dyslexia

Emily Aversa

EDUCATION: MA in Special Education, BA in English

EMPLOYMENT: Currently teaching 1st and 2nd grade combined class at Down to Earth School (private)

EXPERIENCE: Previously taught special education for 15 years in two New Mexico public schools, grades K-7; department leader; trained and experienced in Orton-Gillingham based reading instruction and intervention

George Lundy

EDUCATION: MA in Political Science

EMPLOYMENT: Retired USDA Forest Service in 1999 after 30 years of service, served as a national asset for leadership training, strategic planning, and organizational development; 17 Service Awards.

EXPERIENCE: Founder and Chair of Board of Directors for The Learning Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success (501-c-3 corporation established, Dec. 2011).

William Knuttinen

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science and Business Administration

EMPLOYMENT: Certified public accountant (CPA) at Morones and Knuttinen in Silver City.

EXPERIENCE: CPA for 22 years; Owner of a CPA firm for 14 years; Excels in financial areas, including but not limited to projections, forecasts, taxes, and audits. Board of director in Life Quest, Inc.


Alicia Edwards

EMPLOYMENT: Executive director of The Volunteer Center of Grant County, a nonprofit that engages volunteers in fighting hunger and poverty in the county

EXPERIENCE: 25 years of C-level experience in for-profit and nonprofit organizations, fundraising, grant writing, board and organizational development

A.2.b Summary of procedure to ensure governing council capacity, experience and expertise

The Council shall appoint an ad hoc Nominating Committee to recruit candidates to fill expiring and/or vacant Council positions. The committee shall be comprised of people who represent the school community by including representation from parents, staff, administration, community members, and former Council members. All members shall have been actively involved with DWS for the year preceding service on the committee.

Ranking				
				
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
A.(2) Description of Prospective Governance Expertise	The school provides a compelling and relevant list of all GB members and describes their experience, skills, and qualifications. Membership reflects (or will reflect) the diverse experiences and skills necessary to oversee all aspects of the school.	The school provides a list of all GB members along with a description of their experience, skills, and qualifications. Most of the membership appears to reflect (or will reflect) the diverse skills necessary to oversee all aspects of the school.	The school provides a list of GB members. However, the GB membership description appears to lack appropriate and diverse experiences and skills necessary to oversee all aspects of the school.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete list of GB members; or the provided list fails to include descriptions of the members' experience, skills, and qualifications. --OR-- The application does not address the description of the GB members and their experience, skills, and qualifications.

Comments:

A.(3) Provide a **clear and appropriate process or plan** for selecting new Governing Body members that is focused on selecting **quality leaders** who have the identified skills necessary to govern the proposed school. Describe how future governing body members will be selected as vacancies arise.

Enumerate the qualifications desired for members that will assure your school's governance is competent to operate a public school.


A.3 Summary of procedure to select governing council members that have the capacity, experience and expertise as described in A.2.b

Nominating Committee members will advertise the position available through the school newsletter, local press and community groups as well as by personal invitation. Applicants may be any member of the community who does not receive compensation from the school and does not violate Nepotism rules. Governing Council membership shall strive to reflect the entire DWS community. Competencies considered but not limited to, will include educational administration, curriculum and instruction, business administration, finance, strategic planning, policy development, natural environment, law, community relations, and other areas of strategic expertise, resources, and perspective needed to achieve the mission and goals of the school. Candidates will submit an application and resume. The Nominating Committee will review each submission for qualifications. At the committee's discretion some, none or all of the candidates may be interviewed. The interview process will be standardized and rigorous to ensure candidates are well qualified and committed to the mission and vision of DWS. A sample interview is included in Appendix B. The Nominating Committee makes recommendations to the Governing Council at a regularly scheduled meeting for final consideration.

Demonstration of Council terms:

<i>Year 1</i> <i>7/1/14-6/30/15</i>	<i>Year 2</i> <i>7/1/15-6/30/16</i>	<i>Year 3</i> <i>7/1/16-6/30/17</i>	<i>Year 4</i> <i>7/1/17-6/30/18</i>	<i>Year 5</i> <i>7/1/18-6/30/19</i>
<i>Fiona Bailey</i>	<i>Fiona Bailey</i>	<i>Alicia Edwards</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>Emily Aversa</i>	<i>Emily Aversa</i>	<i>George Lundy</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Alicia Edwards</i>	<i>Alicia Edwards</i>	<i>Wm Knuttinen</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>G</i>
<i>George Lundy</i>	<i>George Lundy</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>H</i>
<i>Wm Knuttinen</i>	<i>Wm Knuttinen</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>I</i>
	<i>A</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>J</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>K</i>
	<i>C</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>L</i>

	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>M</i>
--	----------	----------	----------	----------

Ranking				
			Satisfied	Not Satisfied
Exceeds—8	Meets—6	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1	
<p>The school provides a clear and appropriate process or plan for selecting new GB members that is focused on selecting quality leaders who have the identified skills necessary to govern the proposed school. The school fully enumerates the qualifications desired for members and those qualifications clearly demonstrate how the school's governance will be well qualified to operate a public school.</p>	<p>The school provides a clear process or plan for selecting new GB members that is focused on identified skills necessary to govern the proposed school. The school somewhat enumerates the qualifications desired for members and those qualifications demonstrate how the school's governance will be adequately qualified to operate a public school.</p>	<p>The school provides a limited process or plan for selecting new GB members, but skill sets are not identified. The school provides a limited enumeration of the qualifications desired for members and those qualifications not clearly demonstrating whether or not the school's governance is qualified enough to operate a public school.</p>	<p>The school provides an inadequate or incomplete process or plan for selecting new GB members.</p> <p>--OR--</p> <p>The application does not address the process for selecting new GB members.</p>	

Comments:

B. Governing Body Training and Evaluation.

B.(1) Provide an ongoing **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** for Governing Body training that complies with state requirements, including the Open Meetings Act, and is **completely supported** by the budget you propose.

B. Governing Body Training and Evaluation

B.1 Training

As per SB-148, all DWS Governing Council members will receive at least five hours of training annually. The training may cover topics such as; Department of Education rules, policies and procedures, powers and duties of governing councils, legal concepts, finance and budget. The trainings must be sponsored by either the New Mexico School Council Association or the New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools.

Each new Council member will receive a personal orientation to the Council and school from the Director and Governing Council Chair. All new members will receive an orientation binder upon inauguration which will include: Contact list of all members, terms and officers, Governing Council Policies, Statement of Cooperation, Conflict of Interest Statement, recent minutes to include financial statements, School Charter, Administrative and Student Policy Manuals along with materials related to the DWS philosophy and unique educational innovations.

Additionally, new members will be required to attend an Enki specific orientation that will include viewing the film Enki Developmental Approach: Immersion to Mastery, visiting a classroom and a Q&A session to ensure the new Governing Council member understands the unique mission and vision of DWS and is willing and able to have their work as a council member reflect that understanding.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
B.(1) Governance Training	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan for GB training that complies with state requirements and is completely supported by the budget.	The school provides a clear plan for GB training that complies with state requirements and is supported by the budget.	The school provides a plan for GB training but it is not clear if it complies with state requirements and/or support in the budget is unclear .	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete plan for GB training. --OR-- The application does not address the training of GB members.

Comments:

B.(2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** for an annual self-evaluation of the Governing Body that reflects that body's effectiveness and focuses on continuous improvement.

B.2 Evaluation

The DWS Governing Council will establish and follow “best practices” in charter school governance in order to fulfill its obligation to the mission, vision and fiscal well being of the Desert Willow School. An essential part of sound governance is the practice of undertaking a Governing Council self-evaluation on a consistent basis.

The process will be initiated annually for the first five years and no less than bi-annually thereafter. At the Governing Council's discretion, a Governing Council designee, with staff assistance, may coordinate the Governing Council self-evaluation or a consultant may be retained to assist with this process. Copies of the evaluation form will be distributed to each Governing Council Member approximately four weeks before the scheduled self-evaluation. Governing Council members shall complete the forms and return them to the Governing Council Chair or Governing Council designee or the governance consultant within two weeks of receipt of the forms. A sample self-evaluation is included in Appendix B.

Results will be tabulated and analyzed prior to the meeting and presented in a summary report to include composite scoring. The individually completed surveys will also be preserved and presented to the Governing Council. Written comments will be attributed to individual Governing Council members to facilitate discussion. Input will also be gathered from the executive staff, and shared in aggregated form during the evaluation.

The Governing Council will discuss areas that are working well, and those that need attention. The Governing Council will then decide if changes in its governance practices and policies need to be made going forward. Staff and/or the governance consultant will work with the Governing Council or Governing Council designee to implement necessary changes.

The meeting will be held in accordance with open meetings requirements and in a manner that is most constructive and useful to the Governing Council.

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
B.(2) Governance Evaluation	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan for an annual self-evaluation of the GB that reflects that body's effectiveness and	The school provides a clear plan for an annual self-evaluation of the GB that reflects that body's effectiveness.	The school provides a limited plan for an annual self-evaluation of the GB.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete plan for an annual self-evaluation of the GB. --OR-- The application does

al ua tio n	focuses on continuous improvement.			not address the self-evaluation of GB members.
----------------------	------------------------------------	--	--	---

Comments:

C. Leadership and Management.

C.(1) Describe how the governing body will monitor organizational, financial, and academic outcomes on an ongoing basis to ensure that your school is successfully meeting its mission and providing a quality education.

Monitoring

It is the job of the Governing Council to ensure that the mission of Desert Willow School is fully implemented throughout the school community. It is the job of the Governing Council to provide the financial resources, policies, and practices to ensure that the mission of Desert Willow School is fully implemented throughout the school community. It is the job of the Governing Council to hire a highly qualified Administrative Director who is best suited to carry-out the mission of Desert Willow School. It is the job of the Administrative Director to hire highly qualified, motivated, and inspired teachers and instructional assistants who are best suited to implement the mission of Desert Willow School. The governing council and administrative director will provide the resources to ensure that faculty are receiving the training to become Enki certified and that Orton-Gillingham training is being provided. Enki certification and Orton-Gillingham training are essential components to carrying out the Desert Willow mission.

The governing council, director, faculty, and staff will work in partnership to ensure that academic standards are being met and/or exceeded, while holding true to a child's development stage and valuing a child's unique learning styles to bring about deeper learning in each DWS student. This is the heart of the Desert Willow mission.

The Governing Council and the business manager, working in partnership with parents, community leaders, agencies, organizations, and community members will provide a space and create the ideal environment for Desert Willow School's mission to be fulfilled. This is the body of the Desert Willow mission.

Desert Willow's curriculum, that immerses students in age-appropriate, multi-sensory learning, will lead to rigorous academic mastery. Desert Willow's creative, flexible thinkers will be more than ready to meet the immense challenges of the 21st century, valuing who they are as individuals and knowing what talents they have to contribute to making their community and the world a better place. This is the soul of the Desert Willow mission.

Desert Willow School (DWS) will apply sound fiscal practices that comply with Federal, state and local laws and regulations. Defined roles have been developed for the Governing Council, Director, Business Manager and other staff responsible for managing the school's financial assets. These roles will provide reasonable assurance of the school's financial picture. Pursuant to statute, the Governing Council will establish both Finance and Audit Committees.

The Governing Council will elect a Finance Committee and Audit Committee. The Governing Council will meet monthly at which time the financial reports will be reviewed and approved. The Governing Council will establish and approve the yearly budget, approve the audit firm, approve the director's contract and the staff salary schedule. Both the Director and Business Manager will be required to attend these monthly meetings. This is to ensure that the school is following sound fiscal management. The Director will have authority for all management and fiscal decisions. These decisions include but are not limited to hiring of employees, monitoring reporting of student data and applying oversight to the approved budget.

The Director will ensure that all reports to federal and state agencies are completed and submitted on time. The Director will work closely with the Business Manager. The Business Manager will report to the Director and be responsible for all fiscal activities of the school. DWS will provide the Business Manager with computerized accounting software to conduct all financial matters.

Student progress will be shared with each of Desert Willow School communities: family, classroom, school, and Silver City area. Each community is an integral part of Desert Willow School's mission. During the planning year a communication outline will be created to use at parent-teacher conferences, IEPs, SAT meetings, and other appropriate times. Fridays are designed for teacher collaboration and planning. At some of these meetings teachers will share their strategies for success and be able to ask each other for constructive suggestions.

The director will make presentations regarding the progress of various classrooms or the school as a whole at Governing Council meetings. Desert Willow School will share these presentations with the authorizing Public Education Commission in written form. Finally, DWS wishes to share the progress made by using its various innovations with the Silver City community on a website and in a newsletter. The website is to be updated after each governing council meeting to include the minutes plus data from school progress presentations. The newsletter could be compiled with student collaboration and will be written and left in public places such as the library and The Commons on a quarterly basis. The public library in our community has a rich children's program and draws parents and their children across all socioeconomic backgrounds.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—12	Meets—9	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
C(1) M	The school's descriptions of how the Governing Body	The school's descriptions of how the Governing Body will	The school's descriptions of how the Governing Body will	The school's description of how the Governing

o ni to ri ng	will monitor outcomes clearly demonstrate an understanding of, and capacity to, monitor the organizational, financial, and academic success of the school, to ensure the school is meeting its mission, and able to manage and sustain a quality school.	monitor outcomes adequately demonstrate its understanding of, and capacity to, monitor the organizational, financial, and academic success of the school, to ensure the school is meeting its mission.	monitor outcomes demonstrates a limited understanding of, and capacity to, monitor the organizational, financial, and academic success of the school, to help the school meet its mission.	Body will monitor outcomes is inadequate or incomplete. --OR-- The school does not address the prompt.
---------------------------	--	--	--	--

Comments:

C.(2) Identify and provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of the leadership characteristics and qualifications for the head administrator needed to run your school. In your description, take **into account the mission of the school**. Accordingly, include **evidence of a clear plan** (i.e., job search process, timelines etc.) to hire and evaluate a highly- qualified administrator.

If the proposed head administrator is a founder or already identified, provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of his/her leadership characteristics and qualifications for running your school and delivering its unique mission.

Finally, provide **evidence of a clear plan** to both hire and subsequently evaluate a highly- qualified administrator.

C.2 Administrative Director Selection

Given the understanding that the Administrative Director of a charter school must function as both a superintendent and a principal; and for Desert Willow School specifically, have a working understanding and passionate commitment to the DWS philosophy, the Governing Council will be well versed in and committed to using best practices for hiring an Administrative Director that has the skills and experience of both a superintendent and a principal such as:

- <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/what-makes-a-great-superintendent/>
 - http://www.learningpt.org/pdfs/HiringQualitySchoolLeaders_IssueBrief052009.pdf
 - <http://www.nmsba.org/SuptSearchDesc.pdf>
 - <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/what-makes-a-great-principal-an-audio-slide-show/>
- and have enough of a solid understanding of Enki Education and Orton Gillingham methodologies in order to evaluate any potential candidate's capacity to fulfill the Desert Willow School mission.*

Additionally, the Director of Desert Willow School will serve as the Director of Special Education, which requires a thorough understanding of special education law and an administrator's certificate. For application selection rubric, see Appendix B.

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate a high level of capacity in the following areas: articulating and acting upon a clear vision of what's best for all students, the ability to strategically hire, support and retain excellent teachers, effective management of resources and superb communication skills. The ideal Director will be an accessible, flexible, supportive, effective, instructional "leader of leaders". Because Enki curriculum is relatively new, we anticipate that most qualified candidates will not have Enki experience and so a significant part of the hiring process will be centered around how well a potential candidate has prepared for the Enki portion of the interview; i.e. did researching Enki light a fire of passion in them, are they willing to become Enki certified, do they have a working understanding of the Enki philosophy and what is their understanding of how DWS is a unique elementary school? For interview rubric, see Appendix B.

C.2.a Administrative Director Hiring Plan/Process

This checklist achieves the following four significant aims of successful administrative hiring:

Creates the performance target that details the leadership needs and strengths of the building or department that will be matched with a leader's talents, interests and aptitudes. (This goal is outlined in The Jossey Bass Academic Administrator's Guide to Academic Hiring, by R. Levin and J. Rosse.)

Creates multiple points of involvement for people other than the Governing Council, including faculty, staff and community members as deemed necessary.

Focuses on the skill sets and performance record of the candidates with multiple measures to clearly identify the candidate who best meets the leadership needs of Desert Willow School. (Douglas Reeves discusses this point in his article, —New Ways to Hire Administrators, in the May 2007 issue of Educational Leadership.)

Creates the transparency and a paper trail to build confidence, support and trust that the best available candidate was selected and recruited and meets the requirements for public disclosure and non-discriminatory hiring.

Step One: Preparation Prior to Posting a Position (3–9 months in advance)

·

Update the job application to include waiver of rights to damages for references and to penalize falsehoods with immediate dismissal.

· *Discuss and create an agreement with the Governing Council on roles and responsibilities in the hiring for faculty, staff, and community members if needed. Discuss and create an agreement regarding the budget for the selection process, role of a consultant and process for contracting with a consultant if needed.*

- Discuss a salary range if not determined by the principals' master agreement.
- Have the consultant (or a good facilitator who has no stake in this decision) facilitate in separate groups the faculty/staff, community/parents, board/administration to develop the vision, priorities and hard and soft skills desired in a head administrator.
- Organize and feed these back to all the groups.
- Revise the job description based on the visioning activity and any other administrative assignments included in the position.
- Create a brochure or web slide show highlighting the vision and priorities and include information from the visioning activity.
- Create a page on the district's website that centers on this particular hiring with all the relevant information: brochure or slide show, visioning activity results, job posting, job application and links to other websites of interest to candidates such as the chamber of commerce, local paper, state reports, or comparisons such as the school report card produced by the state department of education.
- Set dates for résumé review, e-mail question screening, and interviewing.
- Recruit applicants as needed or desired.

Step Two: Receiving Applications and Preparing the Selection Process (1 month process)

- Applicants complete an application and submit a letter of interest, a résumé, their transcripts and copies of any licensure.
- The administrative assistant logs all applicant information into a spreadsheet and begins e-mail correspondence with applicants, apprising them of the status of their materials.
- The administrative assistant uses a marker to create a "blind" copy of the letter of interest, résumé, and transcript (blocking out the name and address).
- Teams representative of the stakeholder groups are assembled for the résumé review, e-mail question screening and interviews.
- You and a small team of stakeholders consider the vision, priorities and hard and soft skills, and use the score sheet to rate the résumé on whether the candidates demonstrate a high, medium or low level of competence on those skills.
- The same or a different team creates a bank of 40–50 questions based on those visions, priorities and hard and soft skills. Four to six of the questions—each of which reflects a critical skill set—become the e-mail questions.
- Assuming one of your critical skill sets is using data to analyze student achievement data to guide instructional improvement, assemble the student data you want the candidates to examine.
- The other lists of 12–15 questions are for the board and for the staff/community interviews. Ensure that all major skills sets are probed on each question list and that each list has an appropriate opening and closing question.

Tip: As Douglas Reeves observed in his Educational Leadership article (May 2007), how well a principal analyzes student data is an important skill not readily observable in a standard interview. E-mail the data or the links to each candidate and ask, —What do you notice? The richness of the responses will tell you a lot about the candidates' ability to analyze data or to find a quick source for such analysis on short notice. A follow-up question in the face-to-face interview can identify the candidates who intimately understand the school's data and those who had some help.

Step 3: The Selection: Quarterfinals, Semifinals and Finals (1 month process)

Candidates with completed application materials have made the résumé review stage.

Tip: Because you want to attract quality candidates and because quality candidates are busy people with current responsibilities, make the application process easy by putting all the necessary information on one web page that is accessible by one click into your district website. Provide the application, hiring timeline, brochure or slide show about the district, a contact button to the administrative assistant handling the applications, and links to the state education department, local newspaper, city and chamber of commerce websites.

- *The résumé review team reads all résumés in one room on one day. All readers use the same score sheet and individually pick their 10 semifinalists (fewer if you have fewer than 40 quarterfinalists). You need as many score sheets as the number of completed applications times the size of the review team. In other words, a lot.*
- *Candidates chosen by 75% or more of the résumé review team are automatically semifinalists; those chosen by 25% or fewer are automatically eliminated. Discuss the semifinalists with respect to the skill sets and pare the number to 8–10 semifinalists.*
- *Some local candidates may not be in the final pool. Discuss whether for political reasons these candidates should be added to the pool.*
- *The administrative assistant e-mails the semifinalists the questions with strict rules about when their answers must be returned—usually within 36 hours. Each e-mail question asks that the candidate list a reference (with contact information) who can attest to the response. The administrative assistant organizes all the candidates' e-mail responses by question rather than by candidate. This lets the reviewers compare all candidates' answers to one question and thereby determine evidence of knowledge and skills in each particular area.*
- *The e-mail review team members read the e-mail responses on the same day and each uses the score sheet developed for the résumé review to determine the level of skill and knowledge in the skill sets demonstrated by the e-mail responses. Then, each chooses five finalists.*
- *Finalists chosen by 75% or more of the e-mail review team are automatically finalists; those chosen by 25% or fewer are automatically eliminated. Team members discuss the candidates with respect to the skill sets and end up with four to six finalists.*
- *Some local candidates may not be in the final pool. Discuss whether for political reasons these candidates should be added to the pool.*
- *The e-mail review team can call references on e-mail questions of each finalist to ensure the veracity of the candidates' answers. Divide up the calling, go over the reference check procedures, and tell the team members they can begin calling references 36 hours after the candidates' questions have been reviewed.*
- *The administrative assistant calls to inform the finalists of their status, schedules them for an interview and tour of the facility, and tells them when reference calls will begin.*
- *The administrative assistant creates folders for each interviewer with complete application materials (with names) of each finalist, the e-mail questions and responses and a question list and scoring sheet for each finalist. Each finalist's materials are color coded so interviewers can keep the information together easily. Interviewers may pick up these materials one or two days before the interviews so they can become familiar with the candidates.*

- Reference phone call results are compiled, color coded by candidate, and provided to the interviewers the day of the interviews. There should be at least three reference phone calls for each candidate. Instruct the callers to e-mail the responses to you so you can clean up the grammar and ensure each candidate has a minimum of three references.

Tip: Everyone involved in the search can be involved in reference calling, and in fact I have found it helpful because you get more candid responses from multiple levels of an organization when you have administrators, teachers, board members and education assistants calling. Provide everyone with a standard set of five questions as follows:

- How long have you known the candidate and in what capacity?
- What are the candidate's strengths?
- Would you hire or like to see the candidate hired (or rehired) as your principal? (Here you need to coach the callers to listen to how quickly and how enthusiastically the reference responds, as nearly all will say yes.)
- If we were to hire the candidate as principal, are there things we should be concerned about or watch for? (This is a way to probe for weaknesses without using the word. In —Challenges of Hiring Well, published in the June 2004 EduExec magazine, Lynn Little suggests the question, "What is the worst thing you can say about the candidate? "

- What should we know about the candidate that we haven't already talked about?

- The administrative assistant creates two summary sheets for each interviewer. One is an interview scoring summary and one is a forced choice score sheet. Let the collective wisdom work by letting the numbers do the talking rather than the loudest person or group.

- The administrative assistant creates a spreadsheet to track this information and to weight the board/superintendent interview team scores equally with the staff/community team scores, as normally that team is two or three times the size of the board/superintendent team.

- This information is rank ordered for "the reveal" to the combined teams at the conclusion of the last interview. All team members get their individual summaries back and a printout of all the summaries of all interviewees.

Tip: A flip chart works well to show the board and staff/community/student rankings side by side for both the interview scores and, on the next sheet, the forced choice rankings. Having the top sheet blank allows you to get everyone's attention before you flip that over and "reveal" the interview score rankings and then the forced choice sheet.

Step 4: Awarding the Trophy and Conferring the Prize (1-5 day process)

.

The "reveal" will eliminate 50%–75% of the finalists with no discussion, as they

- clearly didn't score as high as the top one, two or three candidates.

Often the reveal will surface a consensus candidate who was ranked #1 on both types of rankings. Then the question becomes, who are the #2 and #3 choices if

- the first or first and second choices turn down the financial offer or if they are no
- longer interested in the position?

Sometimes a #1 candidate will emerge, but the interviewer teams may have some

- nagging questions they want answered. If that is the case, a small team needs to have an extended conversation with the candidate about those issues. Then that team needs to be empowered to either offer the job or go to the #2 candidate.

- If there is no clear #1 choice, and if two to three candidates are generally acceptable, then you as superintendent thank everyone for their time and input and select one of these two or three candidates, maybe after an extended conversation with each and some more reference calls.
- When the finalist is chosen, you offer the job, send the contract or master agreement and negotiate salary and side issues (48–72 hours). Your board chair needs to be wired with you on the negotiations. Word to the wise: Do not be surprised if the candidate does not accept at once; in fact, you want someone who thinks this over carefully before saying yes. Usually the finalist needs to consult with a spouse and family. Sometimes the salary needs to be sweetened or perhaps moving expenses included.

When you have a faxed, signed agreement, you let the board know the terms.

At the board meeting, which if you timed it right is very soon, you introduce the new administrator and his or her family if possible, to the public and the board.

The board votes unanimously to approve the contract.

There are handshakes and smiles all around, as well as press photos and interviews.

Your job is not done: Add the newly hired administrator to your administrative e-mail distribution group and include him or her on all the administrative e-mails. Encourage colleagues to contact the new administrator to talk about transitioning to the new community. You should do the same, opening doors in the district and in the community when necessary and possible.

Adapted from *A Game Plan to Hire Principals* by Fred Nolan, Superintendent of Foley (MN) Public Schools, http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/Newsletters/New_Superintendents_E-Journal/January2008.pdf

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
C.(2) Head Admini- strator Selec- tion	Exceeds—8	Meets—6	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description of the desired or, if selected, the head administrator's leadership characteristics and qualifications and takes into account the mission of the school. The school provides evidence of a clear	The school provides a clear description of the desired, or, if selected, the head administrator's leadership characteristics and qualifications and may or may not clearly take into account the mission of the school. The school provided evidence of a plan to	The school provides a limited description of the desired, or, if selected, the head administrator's qualifications. The school provided some evidence of a plan to hire and evaluate an administrator.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete description of the head administrator's qualifications, and the plan to hire and evaluate an administrator. --OR-- The application provides no plan to address the head administrator's

	plan to hire and evaluate a highly-qualified administrator.	hire and evaluate a highly-qualified administrator.		qualifications and the hiring and evaluating of an administrator.
--	--	---	--	---

Comments:

C.(3) Describe how the governing body will convey and delineate the roles and responsibilities of your school's head administrator. Provide a proposed job description for the head administrator including responsibilities that are significant and unique to charter school leaders. Attach the job description as Appendix C.

C.3 Administrative Director Evaluation

Given the understanding that the Administrative Director of a charter school must function as both a superintendent and a principal; and for Desert Willow School specifically, have a working understanding and passionate commitment to the DWS philosophy, the Governing Council will be well versed in and committed to using a combination of best practices for evaluating both superintendents and principals such as:

- <http://www.nyscoss.org/img/uploads/Legal/Superintendent%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf>
- http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Council_Operations/Superintendent_Evaluation.aspx
-

http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/AASA_White_Paper_on_Superintendent_Evaluation.pdf

- <http://www.msbanet.org/Council-training/superintendent-evaluation.html>

and have enough of a solid understanding of Enki Education and Orton Gillingham methodologies in order to evaluate the Director's capacity to fulfill the Desert Willow School mission. Additionally, the Director will be evaluated on his/her skills as the Director of Special Education. The Governing Council is the highest-level decision-making body at Desert Willow School and is legally responsible for the school's compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. The Governing Council sets broad policies intended to steer the school toward the accomplishment of its mission. As it deems necessary, they may establish narrower policies to guide the school's operations. The Governing Council hires, oversees, and evaluates the Director, who serves as the Governing Council's authorized agent and has authority over all administrative functions at the school. The Director is responsible for the implementation of Governing Council policies; the establishment of more detailed administrative policies and procedures; and with hiring, setting the salaries of, evaluating, and terminating all staff. The Director may assign some supervisory duties to staff members who oversee assistants.

Although laws, regulations, and legal accountability all require the foregoing definition of responsibilities, to the greatest extent possible, DWS strives to involve the entire school community in the

drafting and approval of policies and procedures. Using a collaborative decision-making model is a natural extension of our mission to build a sense of community; it helps students learn leadership skills and puts into action the community-mindedness our curriculum endeavors to teach.

Collaboration on the development and implementation of policies and programs takes place primarily in two forums: the School Advisory Committee (SAC); and the staff as a collective body. The SAC includes staff, parents, students, and community members, and its duties include advising the school director on policies, curricula and budgets. They also focus on parental and community involvement. The staff operates as a collective body through weekly meetings at which consensus is sought using the Enki Structured Consensus Decision (ESCD) Process. For a description of ESCD, see Appendix B

(i) Except as the Director deems necessary, the staff is the lead decision-making body in the following areas:

- a. Curriculum;*
- b. School activities including Friday Explorer Clubs;*
- c. Master schedule; and*
- d. Staff training.*

(ii) Except as the Director deems necessary, the SAC is the lead advisory body in the following areas:

- a. Policies in the Student and Parent Handbook;*
- b. School-wide safety and wellness plans;*
- c. Parent volunteer policies;*
- d. Public relations; and*
- e. Making recommendations to the Council for large procurement decisions.*

(iii) The Director, taking into consideration input from both the staff and the SAC, decides all questions of staff hiring and scheduling, facility management, and relations with other schools and school districts. Further, the Director decides other issues with no expectation of input from staff or the SAC. These issues include: staff evaluations and contract terminations, student discipline in specific cases, legal cases (in consultation with the Governing Council), and any matter that may affect student or staff safety.

D. Organizational Structure of the School.

D.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable** organizational chart and narrative that **aligns structures with the mission of the school** and demonstrates a **clear** understanding of appropriate relationships between governance, administration, teaching, support staff, and external agencies that are essential to the school.

Organizational Structure

Organizational Chart (See Appendix B)

Our organizational chart shows the interrelatedness of all the groups that make Desert Willow School possible; shows the students in the center, reminding us what the core of our work is; and visually represents the philosophy of Enki, the ancient symbolism of water...flowing, surrounding and supporting the education of children.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—8	Meets—6	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
D. (1) Or ga ni za tio na l St ru ct ur e	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable organizational chart and narrative that align structures with the mission of the school and demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate relationships between governance, administration, teaching, support staff, and external agencies that are essential to the school.	The school provides a clear organizational chart and narrative that demonstrate an adequate understanding of appropriate relationships between governance, administration, teaching, support staff, and external agencies that are essential to the school.	The school provides a limited organizational chart and narrative of the relationships between governance, administration, teaching, support staff, and external agencies that are essential to the school.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete organizational chart and narrative of the relationships between governance, administration, teaching, support staff, and external agencies that are essential to the school. --OR-- The application does not include an organizational chart and supporting narrative.

Comments:

D.(2) Provide **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** job descriptions for all certified and licensed staff and any other key staff (if your charter requires non-traditional roles or positions, identify and describe here). In the job descriptions, clearly outline necessary qualifications and then **appropriate** reporting lines that are consistent with the organizational chart. Attach staff job descriptions as Appendix D.

D.2 Job Descriptions

We feel the most important of the teacher's many roles is the role of being a model for the children. We agree with child development expert J.C. Pearce who states that most of what children learn, they learn through modeling (Pearce, J.C; The Biology of Transcendence; 2002). Therefore, the teacher's first job is to model an ongoing, enthusiastic, and flexible learning process, and the determination to bring that process to mastery.

The basic structure of our program provides several built in opportunities for engagement with ongoing learning for the teacher in three main ways:

- Each teacher teaches many subject areas, and does so at a different grade level each year. In teaching both subjects that come easily and those that are hard won, and in teaching new materials each year, she must look for her own growing edge – this growth is what must be modeled first and foremost to empower the children’s own learning.*
- Teachers work with the three learning formats, described earlier (see Philosophy of Learning; Three-fold Learning Process). To do this, the teacher must stretch herself to move seamlessly between being an orchestra conductor for the whole class, a background facilitator for peer group learning, and one who is both a guide and a resource for individual pursuits.*
- Teachers work as part of an ongoing partnership of teachers, ideally for the full duration of their time with a given class. To do this well, the teacher must work intensively with the give and take of an adult partnership. This is a rarely modeled skill and, in this world of fractured families and tag-team parenting, most children grow up with no blueprint for working in a long-term, respectful, and supportive adult team.*

All three of these demands for ongoing learning require courage, stamina, and commitment to ongoing learning – not an easy task. The Enki Teacher Training Program (see Appendix B) works with the teachers on shifting their focus from being a “finished expert” in a given area, to becoming an expert learner. As well, the administrative and professional development procedures of the Enki approach are structured to support the teachers on a weekly basis as they undertake the challenge of being a lifelong learner.

As part of the Enki training, the teachers and Instructional Assistants (IA) will develop a deep understanding of each of the factors that make up our educational ecosystem. They will explore various manifestations of these factors so they are able to recognize when a particular one fulfills the school’s mission and goals. The teachers and IA’s will also be able to determine when a particular manifestation must be modified to ensure both the school’s mission and that the specific child’s needs are met. Additionally, Reading Specialists and the Special Ed teacher will have a strong understanding of both Enki philosophy and Orton Gillingham methodologies so they can work closely with classroom teachers to ensure both the school’s mission and that the specific child’s needs are met.

There is a unique emphasis of the Enki ecosystem that is both a central service to the teachers and a primary responsibility of each. That is “Teacher Health.” We feel it is critical to make the support for and preservation of each teacher’s personal health and wellbeing a conscious part of every program decision we make.

See Appendix D for individual job descriptions

Ranking				
Satisfied		Not Satisfied		
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1

D. (2) Job Description	The school provides clear, comprehensive, and cohesive job descriptions for all key staff, including qualifications and clear, appropriate reporting lines that are consistent with the organizational chart. The job descriptions are attached as Appendix D.	The school provides clear job descriptions for most of the key staff, including clear reporting lines that are consistent with the organizational chart. The job descriptions are attached as Appendix D.	The school provides limited job descriptions for some of the key staff, including reporting lines that are somewhat consistent with the organizational chart. The job descriptions are attached as Appendix D.	The school provides inadequate or incomplete job descriptions for key staff.] --OR-- The application does not address job descriptions for key staff.
---------------------------------	--	---	---	---

Comments:

Staff Evaluation

D.2.a Staff Evaluations

With learning as a central goal in the Enki approach, the Faculty Evaluation and Review (The Peer Review and Sponsor System, Appendix B) process, which is held at least twice a year, is approached with the intention to provide teachers with support and not to judge them. Each teacher, her/his peer sponsor, representatives of the Faculty Development Committee, and the Director complete the mid-year review collaboratively. Using the observation forms completed by the peer sponsor, the faculty, the Educational Director, and the parent and Council feedback sheets, this committee works with the teacher to develop a picture of her particular strengths and challenges. After developing this complete picture the committee works together to devise a support and training plan to help the teacher grow in the areas of challenge and to help her more fully share her strengths with the rest of the faculty.

In a follow up meeting with the Director, the teacher has an opportunity to express her/his concerns about the picture the team has developed and the kinds of growth recommended. She/he is also informed of any specific growth needed for renewal of the contract for the following year. If there are such areas, the Director will provide a written schedule of meetings and a timetable of growth needed for contract renewal, and recommended or required actions for the teacher.

Should a teacher not meet these benchmarks of growth her/his contract will not be renewed. Because the Director works closely with anyone having difficulty, unless there is a sudden abusive action by the teacher, this will not come as an unexpected event. Excepting in situations of sudden abuse, final decisions on contract renewal will be made in April so that both the school and the teacher have a chance to secure new employees and employment, respectively.

For all continuing teachers the end of year review is identical to the mid-year review. DWS will also use the NMTEACH 2014-2017 Educator Effectiveness Plan if/as required by law.

D.(3)(a) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** staffing plan that demonstrates an understanding of the school's staffing needs and is **reasonable and adequate** to support effective and timely implementation of the academic program/ curriculum.

D.3.a Staffing Plan

Our mission of providing a school environment where teachers value and encourage student's unique learning styles; builds self awareness and sense of belonging; inspires creative, flexible thinking; and cultivates engaged readers through a multisensory approach is exactly what determines are staffing plan.

In addition, Desert Willow School honors teacher health is by having a teaching team in each classroom with one full-time certified and one part-time instructional assistant per classroom. This lessens the teaching load, lowers the teacher to student ratio to a more manageable size, and allows two people to consider and be creative in meeting the needs of their students and working with parent concerns. In 2nd to 5th grades, the student to teacher ratio will be as low as one to ten during parts of the day and will never exceed one to twenty-two. In kindergarten and 1st grade the ratio is one to ten (or lower) at all times.

Teaching Staff

Keeping student-teacher ratio low is one of the most important innovations of Desert Willow School. In doing so DWS will be able to provide the style of education and the intensive, integrated curriculum that we see as most valuable for educating our specific student populations.

Our plan is to hire highly qualified general education teachers, reading specialists, instructional assistants, and a highly qualified special education teacher.

Our teaching staff will include:

- Two kindergarten teachers with 10 students each.*
- One 1st grade teacher with one Instructional Assistant (IA) with 20 students*
- One 2nd grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students*
- One 3rd grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students*
- One 4th grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students*
- One 5th grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students*
- One full-time and one 2/3 time reading specialist*
- One special education teacher with a focus in both reading and movement integration.*

Teachers will teach a fully integrated curriculum (including M.E., music, and art). We plan to have a classroom teacher with M.E. certification to oversee that the New Mexico M.E. standards and benchmarks are being fulfilled by classroom instruction. This teacher will be exempt from Friday meetings as needed to teach M.E. skills not part of the regular integrated instruction.

Another unique aspect to our staffing plan is in the way teachers will loop with their students. The first grade teacher will loop with her students through both 2nd and 3rd grade before returning to 1st grade to receive a new group of students. Likewise the first year's 2nd grade teacher will loop with their class to 3rd grade and then go to 1st grade to receive a new class with whom they will stay through 3rd grade. The first year's 3rd grade teacher will only be with that class for the one year, but then he or she will go to 1st grade to receive a class that he or she will teach for three years. Likewise, the 4th and 5th grade teachers will loop with one another, so the students have the same teacher for 4th and 5th grades.

We know looping is important for the continuity of instruction and to meet the first, second, and third parts of our mission statement (valuing unique learning styles, building self-awareness, and sense of belonging and inspiring creative, flexible thinking) as these qualities take time to develop. We also know that with looping teachers and students can begin right where they left off the prior year. Though teachers will have more curricula to learn and prepare, the great trade-off is that they will not have to re-teach and re-establish class routine and relationship. "September 1 of the second year of looping is the 181st day of school for those in the class," says Jim Grant, who directs the Society for Developmental Education and co-directs the National Alliance of Multiage Educators. (Rasmussen, Karen; "Looping: Discovering the Benefits of a Multiyear Program;" Education Update; March 1998, Volume 40, Number 2).

The benefits of looping are many

- A Richer Curriculum
- Meeting the Needs of Each Student
- Helping At-Risk Students Succeed
- Parent Involvement

These benefits coincide with Desert Willow's mission of valuing unique learning styles.

In our first few years, in the event that we have fewer than twenty students in each of two adjacent grades AND we have enough students on the waiting list to make an additional class at another grade level, the director can make the decision to do that.

For example:

Our teaching staff would instead include:

- Two kindergarten teachers with 10 students each.
- Two 1st grade teachers with two Instructional Assistants (IA) for ¾ the day with 20 students each.
- One 2nd grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students
- One 3rd grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students
- One 4th/5th grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students
- One full-time and one 2/3 time reading specialist
- One special education teacher with a focus in both reading and movement integration.

OR

Our teaching staff will include:

- Two kindergarten teachers with 10 students each.
- One 1st grade teacher with one Instructional Assistant (IA) with 20 students
- One 2nd grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students
- One 2nd/3rd grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students
- One 3rd grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students
- One 4th/5th grade teacher with an IA ½ the day with 20 students

- One full-time and one 2/3 time reading specialist
- One special education teacher with a focus in both reading and movement integration.

The needed adjustments will then be made in how the teachers loop through the grades.

Administrative Staff

- *Administrative Director: This position is a crucial, multi-faceted position. The person in this position acts as superintendent, curriculum director and academic leader, special education director, and principal.*
- *Administrative Assistant: This position requires someone who is an excellent communicator and is well organized. In addition, to typical administrative assistant duties, this person will act as volunteer coordinator for our Friday Explorer Clubs, an integral part of Desert Willow's mission.*
- *Business Manager (part time) to manage all financial tasks of running the school.*

Ranking				
Satisfied		Not Satisfied		
	Exceeds—8	Meets—6	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
D.(3)(a) Staffing Plan Needed	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive staffing plan that demonstrates an understanding of staffing needs and appears reasonable and adequate to support effective and timely implementation of the academic program/ curriculum.	The school provides a clear staffing plan that appears adequate to support effective and timely implementation of the academic program/ curriculum.	The school provides a limited staffing plan to support adequate implementation of the academic program/ curriculum.	The school provides a staffing plan that is inadequate or, incomplete. --OR-- The application does not provide a staffing plan.

D.(3)(b) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** staffing plan that is clearly aligned with the budget, projected enrollment, and implementation schedule.

D.3.b

Desert Willow School has a high percentage of its budget going to teaching staff. This low student to teacher ratio is important to the DWS mission; therefore, salaries and benefits are a large percentage of our budget, 93% to 65% of the budget. As shown in the budget in appendix K.

With the arts and movement integrated into the curriculum Desert Willow School accomplishes two things important to its mission. With the integrated curriculum separate “specials” teachers are not

needed, freeing up money for reading specialists and instructional assistants. The integrated day also allows for uninterrupted instruction Monday through Thursday allowing for Friday Explorer Clubs and Friday Faculty Collaboration Time.

Ranking				
Satisfied		Not Satisfied		
D.(3)(b) Sta ffi ng Pla n Ali gn m en t	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school's staffing plan is clearly aligned with the budget, projected enrollment, and implementation schedule.	The school's staffing plan is clear and complete and generally appears to be aligned with the budget.	The school's staffing plan is adequate and partially aligned with the budget.	The school's staffing plan is inadequate or incomplete and does not align with the budget. --OR-- The application does not provide a staffing plan.

Comments:

D.(5) Provide a calendar and schedule (length of school day and school year including total number of days/hours of instruction) that **completely comply** with **all** state requirements and ensure **effective, successful** implementation of the academic program/curriculum. Describe in detail how this schedule supports your school's educational program and how the calendar is optimal for achieving high outcomes for your target student population.

D.5 School Day/Year

The DWS school year will meet or exceed the minimum numbers of teaching days (180) and meet or exceed the minimum number of teaching hours required by the State of New Mexico. Unless there is a specific scheduling conflict due to professional development, parent/teacher conferences or community action opportunities, DWS will operate according to the vacation schedule of the Silver Consolidated School District. This policy will be reviewed and evaluated for changes annually. Desert Willow School will follow the Silver Consolidated School yearly calendar because we anticipate having more students whose siblings attend the middle school or high school of Silver Consolidated Schools than the schools following other calendars.

In the future, the Governing Council along with the staff of DWS may decide to follow Silver City's Aldo Leopold Charter School (ALCS) calendar if a majority of parents make the request due to siblings attending Aldo's middle or high school. ALCS follows Western New Mexico University's schedule. Our daily schedule will be Monday through Thursday from 8:30 to 4:00 with breakfast at the start of the day and lunch mid-day. Friday will be 9:00 to 2:00 (trusting the short day waiver is granted due to the extended hours Monday—Thursday), for Friday Explorer Clubs and Movement Education classes as needed with Faculty Collaboration time.

DWS believes this schedule is important to our mission so that students can become confident, engaged readers and can fully explore what it means to be creative, flexible thinkers within their community.

Overview: Rhythms

Throughout the DWS program, we work to have a healthy flow of more focused activities, more relaxed activities, and supportive transitions. This applies to the balance of all activities, from the smallest units within a given class, to the overall flow of the day, week, month, and year. The choices we make to achieve this balance take into account the times of day and the times of year that are naturally conducive to more active physical engagement, those more naturally suited to quiet focused work, and those times most conducive to creative work. Because we approach all content work through many learning doorways (arts, activity, concept, practice, etc.), we can honor these natural impulses of the children and still keep our focus on a given subject. For example, we can study place value through active movement work early in the day; do more focused sit down work later; and approach it through a group project when the social impulse comes to the fore. This allows us to give each subject area the time needed for in depth and empowered learning to occur. Therefore, each time unit has its own major focus, and it fits like a nesting block within each of the others. In this way, the children are given the time and support they need to enter into the work deeply and find real meaning.

The Year: Developmental Theme

In the Enki curriculum, each grade is focused on a developmental theme. As described earlier (Philosophy of Learning, Learning Process), we believe the children progress through distinct stages of core development— independent of their particular gifts and challenges, or likes and dislikes. (Appendix C4: Mortola; Peter; Sharing Disequilibrium; 2001 and Sutton; B; Mirroring Child Development; 1996). This is the principle around which all our curricular content circles. For example, the notoriously mischievous second graders will work with stories of tricksters and sages. This type of story invites the child to identify with the playful mischief so alive in them, and then to explore how that lively interest can become a useful order. So in math, it is the chaos of random counting that gives rise to an orderly system of place value. In science, our focus turns to the less predictable and wilder phenomena, such as tornadoes and earthquakes. In humanities and language arts, stories of mischief couple with stories of great leaders. Another example is the seventh graders who are naturally focused on finding their own way in the world; their developmental theme focuses on explorers. Their science program will focus on the early astronomers and their “status-challenging” work. Math will focus on the geometry so critical to the discoveries of the astronomers. Developmental themes steer the choice of both content materials and method throughout the year at all grade levels.

The Season: The Global Cultures Unit

In the earliest years, it is the season itself that steers our choices. All the work in these grades honors and celebrates the particular season at hand. As well, when the children become more conscious of time and place, we work with a cultural focus for each term (season) as the core of our Global Cultures curriculum. (Sutton, B.; Multicultural Education: The Enki Global Cultures Curriculum; 2006).

From Grade Two on, the year is broken into cultural units lasting approximately three months. For example, as described above, the second grade children will hear stories of tricksters and sages. From these stories will flow math and science, as well as humanities and language arts work. In the course of the year, the children will hear this kind of story from many cultures – they will work with the stories of Harriet Tubman and St. Francis of Assisi. They will hear of Jane Goodall and Stalking Wolf. They will hear of John Muir and Wangari Maathai, and so on. While a given set of stories is the focus of the academic work, the culture from which the stories are drawn is the source of the art, music, and dance during this several month period. As the children explore the lives of people of a given place, they explore the day-to-day life, natural environment, and all the arts that make up a culture.

Whether it is the mischievous second graders with their tricksters and sages, the community oriented third graders studying tribal life around the world, or the rebellious eighth graders studying revolutions, for each two to three month unit, the stories and arts creating the cultural mood are the mainstay of each day. So, for two or three months at a time, the children are immersed in the culture in focus – not as a study of “other,” but as an experience of life. In this way, rather than standing back to study “them,” the children are always studying or experiencing the humanity of which they are a part: the human heart, the human mind, and the human journey in its many expressions.

This lets the children experience themselves reflected in several cultures each year and gives them a chance to make a connection to all major cultural groups by the time they finish eighth grade.

The Month: Block Structure

For the grade school child (exclusive of Kindergarten), the season, or unit, is composed of academic blocks. The block is defined by the content that is introduced during the morning lesson time and worked

with through arts and projects throughout the day and week. This means that we spend about a month introducing, engaging with, understanding, and practicing a given focus, as shown on the attached Sample Block Schedules (see Appendix G). Whether we are working with the four computational processes in Grade One math, or the origins of the structure of the three branches of the U.S government in 5th grade humanities, we spend a full month working with the three fold learning process so that the children have time to engage with the material through many doorways and, with the teacher's guidance, discover meaning under their own power. The understanding that emerges brings with it a deep empowerment.

During the time we are doing in depth work with one subject area, it is also important that the children keep their other learning and skills alive. To this end, during the skill building time each day (See The Day below), the material introduced in previous blocks is practiced. This gives the children the necessary repetition to bring skills to automatic pilot without distracting them from their deep focus work. Then, when the subject area that has just been practiced comes back into being the main focus, it is with prior skills stabilized, and the children can move on to higher level learning. See diagram below:

The Week: Learning Process

The Three-fold Learning Process (see Philosophy of Learning, The Learning Process) is anchored in the rhythm of the week. Each week, the children move through a dependable sequence of active immersion, engaged exploration, and understanding/application in developmentally appropriate ways. Immersion and exploration happen through active engagement in the arts (storytelling, music, movement/ dance, visual arts, sculptural arts, drama, and crafts). In this way, we teach all academics through the arts, bringing the children a lively and engaging entry into their studies.

From there, we begin working with discussion, application, and practice. In this way, we ground the artistic exploration and bring understanding and skills to mastery.

This three-fold learning process is the heart of the Developmental Immersion-Mastery approach, which is the cornerstone of Desert Willow instructional process. Week in and week out, in all content areas, this learning process runs through all we do.

The Day: Learning Formats and Coherent Flow

Learning Formats: We believe that the child is best supported in his learning and overall wellbeing when the class community moves through rhythms of wakeful, focused, active, restful, social, and creative impulses that are in harmony with their natural, internal rhythms. Therefore, at DWS, we align ourselves with these natural impulses by structuring the grade-school day to:

- Begin with physically active and socially engaging endeavors. Once the children are physically settled, mentally awake, and socially settled, we move into the focused period of new learning. This is the **teacher led, full group** section of the day.
- Having worked together for several hours, the children move into individual pursuits. Sometimes these are assigned and sometimes they are child driven, but in either case, this is an **independent and individual work time, under teacher guidance**.
- The children come back together for a community lunch (we do not use cafeterias and see eating together as important social learning and community building) and a shared story time. This is the more **restful, community building time**.
- The day ends with peer projects where the children apply their other learning to projects and artistic endeavors, working in small, **peer-driven groups with the teacher as facilitator**.

In the kindergarten, all these types of learning are included, but the movement from one to the next is a more fluid movement within one unit – there are no separate classes. In the grades, this rhythmic

alternation of types of learning and learning formats is in harmony with the child's natural impulses, and allows us to ignite maximum engagement in the work at hand. Additionally, because we approach every content area through many styles of learning, we are able to work in harmony with the child's energetic rhythms and still help them deeply enter and explore the subject at hand.

Coherent Flow (teachable moments): Desert Willow's philosophy works with the child's entire experience throughout the school day. This is what makes it possible to teach a broad and deep curriculum effectively. Rather than spend a good deal of class time working with "management/behavior issues," we work with the non-content class times to build a safe and respectful community that in turn supports the children's ability to focus on content during content specific classes.

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
D. (5) Sc ho ol Da y/ Ye ar	The school provides a calendar and schedule that completely comply with all state requirements and ensure effective, successful implementation of the educational program/curriculum. The school provides a detailed description of how the calendar optimally supports high achieving outcomes for the target student population.	The school provides a calendar and schedule that comply with most state requirements and are sufficient to ensure successful implementation of the educational program/ curriculum. The school provides some detail regarding how the calendar supports high achieving outcomes for the target student population.	The school provides a calendar and schedule that comply with some state requirements. The school provides few details regarding how the calendar supports the target student population.	The school provides an incomplete or inadequate calendar and schedule that may or may not comply with state requirements. --OR-- The application does not address a school calendar and schedule.

Comments:

D.(6) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and compelling** plan for Professional Development that meets state requirements, supports the implementation of the school's educational plan, mission, and performance goals. Ensure that the plan is supported by the budget.

D.5 Professional Development Plan

To support the work of the teacher and her/his own well-being, teachers are specially trained in the Enki Teacher Training Program (see Appendix B), and receive ongoing training and support from their peer sponsors, the Administrative Director, and in teacher growth workshops included within collaboration

time each Friday. At the end of each school year, looping teachers will participate in a 3-day workshop to prepare for the next grade level. The Administrative Director also completes the Foundation Course of the Enki Teacher Training, an additional in-depth course in alternative dispute resolution and specific training in observation and evaluation.

Because the Enki approach sees the children's learning as inseparable from the teacher's learning, the teachers are trained in the process of ongoing self-reflection; as they interact with each other, the parents, and the students.. Additional professional development will be provided to employees as needed to address unforeseen faculty, staff, and school needs.

Fridays are set aside for faculty collaboration. While students are in Explorer Clubs with volunteers and the staff needed for appropriate supervision, remaining faculty will have planning time; faculty, SAT, and IEP meetings; and professional development. Part of professional development will be teacher growth workshops (similar to PLC's). Another part will be training and practice in Orton Gillingham and other multisensory methodologies. The reading specialists, the special education teacher, and other highly qualified educators will provide this training. Ancillary staff such as the speech language therapist and the occupational therapist may also be asked to teach strategies to DWS faculty. This weekly professional development is a time for teachers to collaborate and hone their skills to best implement the mission of Desert Willow School.

Ranking				
Satisfied		Not Satisfied		
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
D. (6) Pr of es si on al De ve lo p m en t Pl an	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and compelling plan for Professional Development that meets state requirements, supports the implementation of the school's educational plan, mission and performance goals. The plan is completely supported by the budget.	The school provides a clear plan for Professional Development that meets state requirements, supports the implementation of the school's educational plan, mission and performance goals. The plan is mostly supported by the budget.	The school provides a limited plan for Professional Development that meets state requirements and appears to be somewhat supported by the budget.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete Professional Development Plan. --OR-- The application does not address a Professional Development Plan.

Comments:

E. Employees.

E.(1) **Clearly describe** the employer/employee relationship and provide **clear terms** and conditions of employment for all classes of employees (administration, professional staff, and administrative staff). Please offer a **complete and appropriate explanation of** how you will address employees' recognized representatives.

E.1 Employees

Desert Willow School (DWS) will comply with the School Personnel Act, State Statute Sections 22-10A-1 et seq. NMSA 1978. DWS will comply with The New Mexico Public Employee Bargaining Act (PEBA), (§§ 10-7E-1 through 10-7E-26 NMSA 1978). Employees who work more than .25 FTE will contribute to the Educational Retirement Board, and non-exempt employees who work overtime shall be duly compensated.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
E.(1) Employer/Employee Relationshipship	The school clearly describes the employer/employee relationship and provides clear terms of employment for all classes of employees. The school completely and appropriately explains how it will address employees' recognized representatives.	The school describes the employer/employee relationship and provides the terms of employment for all classes of employees. The school explains how it will address employees' recognized representative.	The school provides a limited description of the terms of employment for all classes of employees and may or may not address how the school will address employees' recognized representatives.	The school's description of the employer/employee relationship is incomplete or inadequate . --OR-- The application does not address the relationship between the employer and the employee.

Comments:

E.(2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** set of governing body personnel policies and procedures **that are aligned** with the stated employer/employee relationship, and comply with all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations (attach as Appendix E). **OR** If you plan to develop

those governing body personnel policies and procedures later, state how and when they will be developed and how you will ensure that they comply with applicable federal and state statutes and regulations.

E.2 Personnel Policies

Desert Willow School personnel policies will be reviewed by the Governing Council and the Administrative Director as needed to ensure the policies are in compliance with all current state and federal rules and regulations. This version of the Personnel Policy Handbook should be considered a DRAFT that will be reviewed for accuracy and legal compliance after the charter is approved and before DWS opens for business. See Appendix E.

Ranking				
Satisfied		Not Satisfied		
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
E.(2) Personnel Policies	<p>The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive set of personnel policies and procedures that are aligned with the stated employer / employee relationship, and comply with all applicable state and federal regulations (attached as Appendix E).</p> <p>—OR—</p> <p>The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan that states how and when personnel policies will be developed and how it will ensure that they comply with all applicable federal and state statutes and regulations.</p>	<p>The school provides a clear set of personnel policies and procedures that mostly complies with all applicable state and federal regulations (attached as Appendix E).</p> <p>—OR—</p> <p>The school provides a clear plan that states how and when personnel policies will be developed and how it will ensure that they comply with most of the applicable federal and state statutes and regulations.</p>	<p>The school provides a limited set of personnel policies and procedures that somewhat comply with all applicable state and federal regulations (attached as Appendix E).</p> <p>—OR—</p> <p>The school provides a plan that states how and when personnel policies will be developed and how it will ensure that they comply with some of applicable federal and state statutes and regulations.</p>	<p>The school provides an incomplete or inadequate set of personnel policies and procedures.</p> <p>—OR—</p> <p>The application does not address personnel policies and procedures or plans to develop the policies.</p>

Comments:

E.(3) Provide a staff discipline process that is **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** and that is aligned with the stated employer/employee relationship, and follows an appropriate route ensuring due process.

8.09 PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE (From the School Personnel Policy Handbook DRAFT) The purpose of this policy is to state Desert Willow School's position on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. The best disciplinary measure is the one that does not have to be enforced and comes from good leadership and fair supervision at all employment levels. The School's own best interest lies in ensuring fair treatment of all employees and in making certain that disciplinary actions are prompt, uniform, and impartial. The major purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct the problem, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future. Except in the case of an employment contract, employment with DWS is based on mutual consent and both the employee and DWS have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause or advance notice, DWS may use progressive discipline at its discretion. Disciplinary action may call for any of four steps -- verbal warning, written warning, suspension with or without pay, or termination of employment -- depending on the severity of the problem and the number of occurrences. There may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed. Progressive discipline means that, with respect to most disciplinary problems, these steps will normally be followed: a first offense may call for a verbal warning; a next offense may be followed by a written warning; another offense may lead to a suspension; and, still another offense may then lead to termination of employment. If more than 12 months have passed since the last disciplinary action, the process will normally start over. DWS recognizes that there are certain types of employee problems that are serious enough to justify either a suspension, or, in extreme situations, termination of employment, without going through the usual progressive discipline steps. While it is impossible to list every type of behavior that may be deemed a serious offense, the Employee Conduct and Work Rules policy (8.01) includes examples of problems that may result in immediate suspension or termination of employment. However, the problems listed are not all necessarily serious offenses, but may be examples of unsatisfactory conduct that will trigger progressive discipline. By using progressive discipline, we hope that most employee problems can be corrected at an early stage, benefiting both the employee and DWS.

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
E.(	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1

3) Staff Discipline Process	The school provides a staff discipline process that is clear, comprehensive, and cohesive and aligned with stated employer/employee relationship, and follows an appropriate route that ensures due process.	The school provides a staff discipline process that is clear and follows an appropriate route that ensures due process.	The school provides a limited staff discipline process that partially follows an appropriate route that ensures due process.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete staff discipline process. --OR-- The application does not address a staff discipline process.
--------------------------------	---	--	---	---

Comments:

E.(4) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** employee grievance process that is aligned with the stated employer/employee relationship, and includes provisions for appropriate protections and appeals, and time frames that follows legal guidelines.

8.10 CONFLICT RESOLUTION/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE (From the School Personnel Policy Handbook DRAFT)

To ensure that this conflict resolution policy is applied consistently and to provide an effective procedure for non-supervisory employees to present his/her concerns to management while making every attempt to resolve such conflicts internally.

POLICY:

This policy provides a procedure to respond to employees' complaints or problems quickly and in a consistent manner.

Problems, misunderstandings, and frustrations may arise in the work place. Desert Willow School has established the following conflict resolution procedure for employees who may encounter a conflict while at work. The procedure outlined below shall be applied consistently and fairly, and at the same time encourage open and honest communication among employees.

A. Assurances

Employees will not be retaliated against for filing a good faith complaint under this procedure.

B. Conflict Resolution Procedure

It is our intent to be responsive to our employees and their concerns; therefore, the following conflict resolution procedure has been established.

Step One

A. The employee's immediate supervisor should be the first source of assistance to resolve the issue, if it involves another employee. If the issue is not resolved to the parties' satisfaction, or if the complaint is with the employee's supervisor, the employee shall request an appointment with the Management Team Conflict Resolution Member to discuss the problem giving rise to

the complaint. Such requests shall be made within two (2) working days in which the incident occurred.

B. Upon receipt of the request, the Management Team Conflict Resolution Member shall schedule an informal meeting with the parties within five (5) working days to attempt to resolve the issue.

C. The immediate supervisor and the Management Team Conflict Resolution Member shall respond in writing to the complaint within five (5) days of the informal meeting. Such responses shall contain a brief description of the issue and recommendations to resolve the complaint.

Step Two

If the informal discussion with the immediate supervisor, or the Management Team Conflict Resolution Member, does not resolve the problem to the parties' mutual satisfaction, or if the supervisor does not respond to the complaint, the employee may submit a written complaint to the Management Team. The submission of the written complaint is due within five (5) working days of the supervisor, or Management Team Conflict Resolution Member's response. The written complaint must:

A. State the problem and the date when the incident occurred;

B. Suggest ways to resolve the problem;

C. Include a summation of the verbal response from the immediate supervisor, or;

D. Submit a copy of the written response from immediate supervisor, if provided, and the date when the employee met with their immediate supervisor, or Management Team Conflict Resolution Member.

Employees may use the complaint form contained in the DWS Employee Policies and Procedures Handbook. Copies of the complaint shall be submitted to the Management Team, and to the Management Team Conflict Resolution Member.

Upon receipt of the formal complaint, the Management Team shall schedule a meeting with the employee within five (5) working days to hear the complaint.

Within five (5) working days after the discussion, the Management Team shall issue a final written decision to the employee filing the complaint.

At any time, the Management Team Conflict Resolution Member may call a meeting with the parties directly involved to facilitate a resolution. If the Management Team Conflict Resolution Member is of the opinion that the complaint raises serious questions of fact, or interpretation of policy, he/she shall forward the question to the DWS Governing Council for clarification. The Management Team may gather further information from involved parties.

Step Three

Should the situation still not resolve itself in a mutually satisfactory manner for all parties, before going before the Governing Council, the complainant employee(s) shall submit to the Neutral Mediator, designated in agreement by staff, administration, and Governing Council, written formal complaint and:

- a. Briefly state the source of the complaint including as much factual information as possible, such as the time and date the incident occurred, the persons involved and their professional/working relationship to one another;*
- b. Record the time(s) and place(s) that the complainant employee attempted to resolve the conflict through discussion, including any witnesses who may have been present at such discussion(s), and;*
- c. Suggest ways to resolve the conflict.*

All involved individuals will be charged with maintaining confidentiality regarding the conflict. If an employee fails to appeal a decision within the specified time, or if the employee has not requested in writing for an extension to file an appeal, the problem shall be considered settled on the basis of the last decision and the problem submitted by the employee shall not be subject for further consideration.

In consideration of the differences in human nature, DWS recognizes that problems are best resolved on an individual basis. Accordingly, DWS requests the problem solving procedure be initiated by individual employees and not groups of employees.

DWS reserves the right to impose appropriate disciplinary action for any conduct it considers to be disruptive or inappropriate. Appropriate disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to; written letters of reprimand, suspension from work with, or without pay, remuneration, behavior modification classes, or termination of employment.

The circumstances of each situation may differ, and the level of disciplinary action may also vary depending upon factors such as the nature of the offense, whether it is repeated, the employee's work record and the impact of the conduct on the organization.

Questions or issues which may arise among or between employees regarding classroom management, or established DWS policies, are outside the scope of this section and are more appropriately addressed within staff meetings, or brought to the DWS Governing Council for ultimate resolution.

Ranking				
Satisfied			Not Satisfied	
E.(	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1

4) Gr ie va nc e Pr oc es s	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive employee grievance process that is completely aligned with the stated employer/employee relationship, and includes provisions for appropriate protections and appeals, and time frames that follows legal guidelines.	The school provides a clear employee grievance process that mostly aligns with the stated employer/employee grievance process, and includes provisions for appropriate protections and appeals, time frames, and that follows legal guidelines.	The school provides an employee grievance process that partially follows appropriate legal guidelines.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete employee grievance process. --OR-- The application does not address the school's employee grievance process.
--	--	---	---	--

Comments:

F. Community/Parent/Employee Involvement in Governance.

F.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan that describes school structures that will provide meaningful parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance and operation of the school. The plan includes how **parental involvement will help to advance** the school's mission.

Please note that charter schools *may not require* community or parental support or involvement as grounds for accepting or not accepting a student.

Community Involvement

A significant piece of Desert Willow's mission is cultivating a sense of belonging in community. The governing council must therefore model belongingness by including students, educators, parents and other community stakeholders in advancing the school's mission.

Building awareness of DWS in the community

In order to build a culture of welcome and openness the Governing Council will publicize all meeting in compliance with eht NM Open Meetings Act. A calendar of DWS events such as parent-teacher conferences, dyslexia awareness workshops put on in conjunction with The Learning Center, and seasonal festivals held on campus will be published in the local newspapers. It is expected that parents and community members will want to become active participants in the governance of Desert Willow School once our mission and openness is communicated.

The Role of Parents and Community Volunteers

Community members and parents will be invited to serve on standing and ad hoc committees, and the Governing Council itself will be composed of community members who have experience in education, finance, or other areas crucial to the operation of the charter school. In addition, at the close of each

Governing Council meeting, parents and community members who are in attendance will have the opportunity to express comments, questions, or concerns. Each parent or community member in attendance will be given five minutes to speak. If a response is required, the Board may choose to respond immediately, or conduct research and provide the participant with a written response within 10 business days. The governing council will support Friday Explorer Clubs by hearing reports from the students. These reports may in turn inspire interest in new clubs or new participation on the part of parents and community members in attendance.

The Role of Educators in School Governance

Teachers and staff members at DWS are encouraged to take part in Governing Council meetings. There are two spots on the Council, one each for a teacher and a staff member as advisory, non-voting members. The involvement of educators in school governance benefits both the teachers and the school. Teachers have a venue to voice concerns, raise issues and invest themselves for fully in school operations. The school prospers from teachers' classroom-based perspective that keeps the focus of all discussions centered on the students. Furthermore, teachers have daily practice in facilitating creative, flexible thinking, a skill that will be useful at Governing Council meetings.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
F.(1) Community involvement.	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan that describes school structures that will provide meaningful parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance and operation of the school. The plan includes how parental involvement will help to advance the school's mission.	The school provides a clear plan that describes school structures that will provide meaningful parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance and operation of the school.	The school provides a limited plan that identifies opportunities for parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance or operation of the school.	The school provides an inadequate and incomplete plan or description of meaningful parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance and operation of the school. --OR-- The application does not address community involvement.

Comments:

F.(2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan to receive and process concerns and complaints from the community and parents. The plan is transparent, fair, accessible to the community, and assures a timely and meaningful response from school administration or the GB.

Complaint Resolution

The protocol for receiving and processing parental/community complaints is as follows:

- 1. If a parent/community member has a complaint/concern regarding a classroom teacher, an effort should be made to resolve the issue directly with the teacher.*
- 2. If the parent/community member is not satisfied with the resolution of the teacher or if the complaint does not involve a classroom teacher, he/she may provide a written complaint to the Principal outlining the problem, relevant dates and names, and a proposed solution. The date that the complaint was filed must also be included.*
- 3. The Principal must provide a recommendation/resolution in writing to the complainant within 10 business days of receiving the written complaint. The Principal may also meet in person with the complainant if such a meeting is requested.*
- 4. If the parent/community member is not satisfied with the resolution of the Principal, he/she may provide a written complaint to the Governing Council outlining the problem and the Principal's response.*
- 5. The Governing Council will conduct an investigation of the complaint and make a written recommendation to the complainant within 20 business days of receipt of the formal complaint. The Governing Council may also meet in person with the complainant if such a meeting is requested.*

Ranking				
		Satisfied	Not Satisfied	
F.(2)	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
Complaint Resolution	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan to receive and process concerns and complaints from the community and parents. The plan is transparent, fair, accessible to the community, and assures a timely and meaningful response from school administration or the GB.	The school provides a clear plan to receive and process concerns and complaints from the community and parents. The plan is somewhat transparent, fair, accessible to the community, and assures a timely and meaningful response from the school administration or the GB.	The school provides a limited plan to receive and process concerns and complaints from the community and parents, and assures a timely response from the school administration or the GB.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete plan to address community and parent complaints. --OR-- The school does not address complaint resolution.

Comments:

G. Student Policies.

G.(1) Provide and attach as Appendix F, **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** Student Discipline Policies (6.11.2 NMAC) that comply with the Student Rights and Responsibilities as set forth in the Public Education Department rules. The school provides a **detailed explanation** of how it will take into account the rights of students with disabilities.

Student Discipline Policy

In order to maintain a safe and high-quality learning environment, DWS staff, faculty, and administration will adhere to the proposed school discipline policy detailed in Appendix F of this application. The school will adopt fair, consistent discipline policies in order to ensure the level of behavior expected from the exceptional students who attend Desert Willow School. These proposed policies provide for the minimum actions, and discipline will be assigned according to the discretion of DWS staff and administration. In DWS's planning year and first school year during teacher training with Enki creator Beth Sutton, the teachers and director will firm up the discipline policy and put those policies into practice. At all times our discipline will hold true to our mission to value student's unique learning styles while building self-awareness and a sense of belonging.

As such, DWS disciplinary action, including both short- and long-term suspensions, will take into account the needs and rights of students with disabilities under IDEA which are documented through both IEPs and Section 504 plans. In compliance with NMAC 6.11.2, any time a DWS disciplinary action calls for a change of placement exceeding 10 consecutive school days (long-term suspension or expulsion), the school will determine through a review of the IEP file whether the student's behavior leading to the disciplinary action is a manifestation of the student's disability. If the behavior is determined not to be a manifestation of the disability, the administrator will apply the relevant disciplinary action. If the behavior is determined to be a result of either of the above conditions, the team will then act in compliance with 34 CFR Sec. 300.530(f) by either returning the student to his/her previously designated placement or removing the student to another placement according to the needs of the student. (See Appendix F)

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1

G.(1) Student Discipline Policy	The school provides clear, comprehensive, and cohesive Student Discipline Policies that comply with the Student Rights and Responsibilities as set forth in the Public Education Department rules. The school provides a detailed explanation of how it will take into account the rights of students with disabilities.	The school provides a clear Student Discipline Policies that comply with the Student Rights and Responsibilities as set forth in the Public Education Department rules. The school provides an explanation of how it will take into account the rights of students with disabilities.	The school provides limited Student Discipline Policies that partially comply with the Student Rights and Responsibilities as set forth in the Public Education Department rules.	The school provides incomplete or inadequate Student Discipline Policies set forth in the Public Education Department rules. --OR-- The application does not address student discipline policies.
------------------------------------	--	---	---	---

Comments:

G.(2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan for addressing alternative educational settings for eligible students who are long-term suspended or expelled. Ensure that the plan is consistent with the Students' Rights and Responsibilities rules.

Alternative Placements

Desert Willow School (DWS) is committed to providing a safe learning environment. If student behavior results in the need for long-term suspension or expulsion, students will have access to Interim Alternative Educational Settings (IAES). The IAES will be determined once the facility is chosen. As the school hires staff members and enters a facility, the staff will determine who, where, and how remediation (ISS) will be delivered.

In the event of expulsion of a student without an IEP, the Director will be responsible for referring the student to a school outside of DWS. The director will follow up in order to ensure successful enrollment in another institution.

Ranking				
Satisfied		Not Satisfied		
G.(2) Alternative Plan	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan for addressing alternative educational	The school provides a clear plan for addressing alternative educational settings for eligible students who are long-term suspended or	The school provides a limited plan for addressing alternative educational settings for eligible students who are long-term suspended or expelled.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete plan for addressing alternative educational settings for eligible students who are long-term

ce m en ts	settings for eligible students who are long-term suspended or expelled. The plan is consistent with the Students' Rights and Responsibilities rules.	expelled. The plan is consistent with the Students' Rights and Responsibilities rules.	The plan is somewhat consistent with the Students' Rights and Responsibilities rules.	suspended or expelled. --OR-- The application does not address alternative placement of students.
---------------------	--	--	--	--

Comments:

H. Student Recruitment and Enrollment.

H.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** outreach and recruitment plan that ensures equal access to the school and is likely to be effective in attracting students from the targeted population. The recruitment /enrollment timelines presented are **reasonable**. Ensure that the outreach/ marketing plan is supported by the budget.

Student Recruitment

Desert Willow School (DWS) welcomes all students eligible to attend school in New Mexico. In order to ensure equal opportunity to all those who hope to attend Desert Willow, the school will place newspaper advertisements for general circulation in the Silver City area, including the communities of Silver City, Bayard, Santa Clara, Hurley, the Mimbres, and Cliff/Gila. A link to our website will detail the lottery process. The lottery application will be posted on various sites such as "Grant County Goodies" and "GCCHC Calendar of Events." Lottery applications will also be [made] available at Desert Willow School and/or other community locations.

A number of public forums have been held at various sites in Silver City. Information was disseminated at several public events and local radio announcements were made to provide community information about Desert Willow School. Upon approval, Desert Willow School will post public announcements in the Silver City newspapers and on the local radio. From November 2015 to February 2016, Desert Willow School will host monthly information sessions at local community venues and community preschools and Head Start programs.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1

H.(1) Student Recruitment	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive outreach and recruitment plan that ensures equal access to the school and is likely to be effective in attracting students from the targeted population. The recruitment /enrollment timelines presented are reasonable . The outreach/ marketing plan is completely supported by the budget.	The school provides a clear outreach and recruitment plan that ensures equal access to the school. Adequate recruitment /enrollment timelines are presented. The outreach/ marketing plan appears to be supported by the budget.	The school provides a limited recruitment plan for ensuring equal access to the school. General recruitment /enrollment timelines presented. The outreach/ marketing plan is partially supported by the budget.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete outreach and recruitment plan. Or the plan/timelines are not reasonable or are not likely to be effective or ensure equal access to the school. The outreach / marketing plan does not appear to be supported by the budget. --OR-- The school does not address student recruitment.
------------------------------	---	---	---	--

Comments:

H.(2) Provide a **complete, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of your lottery process and procedures that comply with state statutes, and **support equal access** to the school (include how you will maintain a wait list). Please provide tentative timeframes or dates.

Lottery Process

Pursuant to the 1999 Charter Schools Act, should the number of applications received for enrollment be greater than the number of students allowed by the charter, or by the Governing Council limit(s), a lottery process for admission will be instituted for applicants. The first lottery will be held in the spring proceeding the academic year of enrollment. This lottery will be carried out one week after the closing of the enrollment period. Additional lotteries are held throughout spring and summer and the school year as needed. A notice will be placed in newspapers to announce the spring lottery. Said notice shall include the closing date and time of the lottery; date, time and location of the lottery drawing; and contact information for interested parents. This same information [about the lottery] will be placed on the school website.

Because the Governing Council may set enrollment limits for each grade, the instituted lottery may only apply to students applying for one grade. Interested parents must fill out an enrollment application for each child they wish to register. Applications must be received by the designated closing date and time for inclusion in the lottery. Applications can be hand-delivered, faxed or mail, and must contain the signature of the parent/guardian. No e-mailed applications may be accepted, unless they are scanned attachments and contain the signature of the parent/guardian. Attendance at the lottery is not required, though parents are welcome to attend.

For purposes of the lottery, each applicant will be assigned a number. These numbers will be written on their application packet and the corresponding number on individual cards that are placed in a box. These cards will be drawn at random by a municipal court judge, or another appropriate judicial official, and each student will be accepted for enrollment until the number of applications meets the maximum number of students allowed by the charter of the Governing Council. In the event we have fewer than twenty students in each of two adjacent grade levels, the director can make the decision to make a combined class of twenty students. If there are enough applicants at another grade level to make two sections of twenty each, the director may choose to do so in order to keep the total enrollment as close to 120 as possible. If this decision is made then staff adjustments will be made to meet these needs. Once the maximum number of students has been selected, additional names will be placed on a waiting list.

Children will be placed from the waiting list via the following methods:

- When the maximum number of students for each grade established by the Governing Council for the following year is reached, all students drawn after that maximum is met will be placed on a waiting list in the order their numbers are drawn. Those students will be enrolled in accordance with their assigned waiting list number. For example, if the school accepts 20 students per grade, and one drops out, the student with waiting list number 21 for that grade will then be enrolled. If he or she chooses not to enroll, number 22 will be enrolled, and so forth.*
- If that grade's waiting list is exhausted, the waiting list for the next lowest grade will be cycled through in the same manner and this process will be repeated until the opening is filled. This process is to keep DWS total enrollment at 120 students. Class limits are set at 10 kindergarteners per class and 20 students at each of the other grade levels. If we do not have enough students at a grade level, we may go up to 22 per class in the grade level below the class not at full capacity.*
- If an opening occurs within five business days prior to the 40th, 80th, and 120th school day, vacancies will be filled via selection of students on the waiting list at the discretion of the Administrator. The intent is to ensure full enrollment on days where enrollment is used to calculate school funding.*
- Desert Willow School will not enroll any new student after the 120th day of the school year. The waiting list will stand until the child is placed or the parents remove the child from the waiting list.*

Waiting List Information: If information on the waiting list is requested, Desert Willow School Administrators shall give the parent or guardian their child's place on that grade's waiting list. If the actual list is requested via a written request, DWS shall provide a list, with redacted personal information, per the New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act.

3. ENROLLMENT PRIORIT

1. Children who are currently attending DWS.

Children who are current students at Desert Willow and who have remained in attendance do not have to participate in any further lotteries, and will be enrolled in DWS for the following academic year as long as their parents return the "Intent to Re-enroll" form, distributed to all students each January, by the deadline given.

2. Siblings of those students attending who have completed an application form. These children are granted Sibling Preference in accordance with New Mexico State Law (22-8B-4.1. Charter schools' enrollment procedures). (A 6th grade student or alumnus of the school with a sibling applying for the following year does not qualify for sibling preference).

The intent of the law is to keep families together. Once a child attends their first day at DWS, the siblings of that child become eligible for Sibling Preference.

Sibling by definition is a:

- A. Biological/adoptive sibling*
- B. Stepsibling residing in the same household. Stepsiblings living in different households are not considered for a sibling preference*
- C. Foster children residing within the same household. Foster Parents must provide documentation showing they have legal guardianship.*

3. Children of DWS employees.

4. Children on the waiting list from the previous year.

5. All other children must go through the lottery process.

4. ENROLLMENT PROCESS

The following policy describes the procedures Desert Willow School personnel will use in determining admission to the school:

- a. All students who meet the State of New Mexico's eligibility requirements for attending elementary school will be allowed to apply for admission to DWS. The school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, age, gender, religious orientation, or disability in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, or other operations. Desert Willow School is a public elementary school that does not charge tuition or maintain admission requirements.*
- b. Each year at its January meeting, the Governing Council will determine by open vote the number of students to be admitted the following year. This number may be no greater than the limit established by the charter, but may be less. The Governing Council may also establish the total enrollment of students in each grade. This enrollment limit cannot be used to deny re-admission to a currently enrolled student or to the sibling of a currently enrolled student.*

c. By February 15, currently enrolled students must have their enrollment information and intent to return letter for the following turned into the school. Siblings of currently enrolled students who plan to attend Desert Willow School must have their application packet turned into the administrative office by February 15. Students enrolled by this date are automatically accepted. DWS staff will then determine the number of spaces available for new enrollees for the next school year. This number will be determined by subtracting the number of students who have filed letters of intent from the limit established by the charter, or the limit(s) established by the Governing Council.

d. Beginning January 15, eligible students may file an application packet for admission to Desert Willow School for the following school year. Applications received prior to February 15 will be accepted for enrollment or placed in the first lottery drawing to be held the following week.

e. If the number of applications received during this period is fewer than the number specified in the approved charter, or fewer than the limit(s) established by the Governing Council, all applicants would be accepted for admission.

f. If the number of students enrolled during the formal application period is less than the maximum number of students allowed by the charter or the Governing Council, Desert Willow School may choose to enact a second enrollment period, which will be held in March and April. If the sum of applications received during both enrollment periods is less than the number specified in the approved charter, or established by the Governing Council, all applicants will be accepted for admission. If the number of applications received during this second period of enrollment, in combination with the earlier enrollees exceeds the maximum number allowed by the charter, a lottery will be instituted using the methods described above. This lottery will apply only to students who applied during the second enrollment period.

g. If after both of these open enrollment periods the number of students enrolled in Desert Willow School remains below the charter-specified limit, or the Governing Council limit, Desert Willow staff may choose to continue to hold additional enrollment periods or accept students in accordance with 22-8B-4.1NMSA, students will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis or through a lottery selection process if the total number of applicants exceeds the number of spaces available at the school. Only those students applying during each enrollment period are subject to participating in a lottery, if one is instituted. All applications must be in the school office by 4:00 pm of the final day of each enrollment period. In the event we have fewer than twenty students in each of two adjacent grade levels, the director can make the decision to make a combined class of twenty students. If there are enough applicants at another grade level to make two sections of twenty each, the director may choose to do so in order to keep the total enrollment as close to 120 as possible. If this decision is made then staff adjustments will be made to meet these needs.

h. Students accepted for admission will be notified within a week of the lottery drawing and parents/guardians must confirm in writing their acceptance for enrollment by the date indicated on the written notification of admission that will be sent to each student. Students who do not confirm their enrollment by the date and time indicated in the written notification will be dropped from the admission

list and placed at the end of the waiting list. All accepted students will be notified by letter within 2-weeks of the last day of the enrollment period. Students and parents who confirm enrollment will be invited to attend an informational meeting in August prior to school starting to review curriculum, policy and procedures and preparation requirements for classes.

i. Parents or guardians of potential students are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information on the enrollment application, and are responsible for notifying Desert Willow School, in writing, of any changes in address, telephone number, or other contact information. DWS is not responsible for maintaining contact information with, or continuing a search for, an applicant who cannot be contacted within a reasonable time period and by reasonable effort. If DWS staff are not able to contact an applicant to either confirm enrollment or to notify the applicant that he or she is to be moved from the waiting list to the admissions list, then the applicant may be dropped from both lists.

j. Parents of students will be required to provide the following for enrolling students.

- Desert Willow School Enrollment Application*
- Proof of Age and Citizenship (Birth certificate or other acceptable documentation)*
- Emergency Medical Authorization*
- Emergency Contact Information*
- Authorization for Release of Information Form*
- Special Education Information (if applicable)*
- Immunization Records*
- Student Rights & Responsibilities Contract*
- Parents Rights & Responsibilities Contract*

k. Once admitted to Desert Willow School, students who remain in attendance and who meet the state's minimum academic and behavioral requirements will be automatically accepted for each succeeding school year. Additionally, siblings of current DWS students will be automatically accepted for admission to the school, and will not be required to participate in a lottery, if one is instituted.

l. Children who are admitted to Desert Willow School are expected to attend the first day of school. If a child is offered a space during the first two weeks of school, that child is expected to attend Desert Willow the following school day. If a student has an excusable absence on the day that is to be their first day at school, parents/guardians must notify the office; otherwise, that child's name will be removed from the enrollment list and the space will be given to the next person on the waiting list.

m. At all other times during the school year, when a child is offered a space at Desert Willow, parents have three school days to accept and have their child attend DWS. If parents do not notify the school of acceptance within three days and/or do not notify the office of an excusable absence during this period that child's name will be removed from the enrollment list and the space will be given to the next person on the waiting list.

n. Copies of this policy shall be made available at all locations where enrollment forms are distributed, and on the Desert Willow School website. Notice of the availability of this policy shall be included in all advertisements.

Ranking				
		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
H. (2) Lottery Process	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a complete, comprehensive, and cohesive description of its lottery procedures that comply with state statutes, and support equal access to the school. Tentative dates are provided.	The school provides a clear description of its lottery procedures that comply with state statutes. Tentative dates are provided for the most part .	The school provides a general description of lottery procedures that comply with state statutes. Some tentative dates are provided.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete description of its lottery procedures or what is provided does not comply with state statutes. --OR-- The school does not address the lottery process.

Comments:

I. Legal Compliance.

I.(1) Provide a **current, clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** Conflict of Interest Policy that demonstrates an understanding of, and **capacity** to, meet the requirements of the law (NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-5.2(2011)). Provide a sample disclosure statement of any real or potential conflict of interest.

Desert Willow School (DWS) Conflict of Interest Policy And Annual Statement For Governance Board and Committee Members with Board Delegated Powers

Article I -- Purpose

The purpose of this Board conflict of interest policy is to protect DWS's interests when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interests of an officer or director of DWS or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction.

This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace, any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

This policy is also intended to identify "independent" directors.

Article II -- Definitions

Interested person -- Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

Financial interest -- A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

1. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which DWS has a transaction or arrangement,

2. A compensation arrangement with DWS or with any entity or individual with which DWS has a transaction or arrangement, or

3. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which DWS is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the Board or Executive Committee decides that a conflict of interest exists, in accordance with this policy.

Independent Director -- A director shall be considered "independent" for the purposes of this policy if he or she is "independent" as defined in the instructions for the IRS 990 form or, until such definition is available, the director --

1. is not, and has not been for a period of at least three years, an employee of DWS or any entity in which DWS has a financial interest;

2. does not directly or indirectly have a significant business relationship with DWS, which might affect independence in decision-making;

3. is not employed as an executive of another corporation where any of DWS's executive officers or employees serve on that corporation's compensation committee; and

4. does not have an immediate family member who is an executive officer or employee of DWS or who holds a position that has a significant financial relationship with DWS.

Article III -- Procedures

Duty to Disclose -- In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Board or Executive Committee.

Recusal of Self -- Any director may recuse himself or herself at any time from involvement in any decision or discussion in which the director believes he or she has or may have a conflict of interest, without going through the process for determining whether a conflict of interest exists.

Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists -- After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the Board or Executive Committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Board or Executive Committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

1. An interested person may make a presentation at the Board or Executive Committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.

2. The Chairperson of the Board or Executive Committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

3. After exercising due diligence, the Board or Executive Committee shall determine whether DWS can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

4. *If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Board or Executive Committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in DWS's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.*

Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy

1. *If the Board or Executive Committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.*

2. *If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Board or Executive Committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.*

Article IV – Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the Board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

1. *The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Board's or Executive Committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.*

2. *The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.*

Article V – Compensation

1. *A voting member of the Board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from DWS for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.*

2. *A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from DWS for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.*

3. *No voting member of the Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from DWS, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.*

Article VI – Annual Statements

1. *Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with Board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:*

- *Has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy,*
- *Has read and understands the policy,*
- *Has agreed to comply with the policy, and*
- *Understands DWS is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.*

2. *Each voting member of the Board shall annually sign a statement which declares whether such person is an independent director.*

3. If at any time during the year, the information in the annual statement changes materially, the director shall disclose such changes and revise the annual disclosure form.

4. The Executive Committee shall regularly and consistently monitor and enforce compliance with this policy by reviewing annual statements and taking such other actions as are necessary for effective oversight.

Article VII – Periodic Reviews

To ensure DWS operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

1. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information (if reasonably available), and the result of arm's length bargaining.
2. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations, if any, conform to DWS's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement or impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

Article VIII – Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, DWS may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

Director and Officer Annual Conflict of Interest Statement

Name: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____

Are you a voting Director? Yes/No

Are you an Officer? Yes/No

If you are an Officer, which Officer position do you hold: _____.

I affirm the following:

I have received a copy of the DWS Conflict of Interest Policy.

I have read and understand the policy. _____ (initial)

I agree to comply with the policy. _____ (initial)

I understand that DWS is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of tax-exempt purposes. _____ (initial)

Disclosures:

Do you have a financial interest (current or potential), including a compensation arrangement, as defined in the Conflict of Interest policy with DWS? Yes No

If yes, please describe it: _____

If yes, has the financial interest been disclosed, as provided in the Conflict of Interest policy? Yes No

In the past, have you had a financial interest, including a compensation arrangement, as defined in the Conflict of Interest policy with DWS? Yes No

If yes, please describe it, including when (approximately):

If yes, has the financial interest been disclosed, as provided in the Conflict of Interest policy? Yes No

Are you an independent director, as defined in the Conflict of Interest policy? Yes No

a. If you are not independent, why? _____

Date: _____ Signature of
director

Date of Review by Executive Committee: _____

(initial)

(This policy is based on the IRS model Conflict of Interest policy, which is an attachment to Form 1023. It adds information needed to allow DWS to assess director independence in order to answer questions on Form 990).

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
I.(1) Conflict of Interest	The school provides a current, clear, comprehensive, and cohesive Conflict of Interest Policy that demonstrates an understanding of, and capacity to meet the requirements of the law. The school provides a sample disclosure statement of any real or potential conflict of interest.	The school provides a clear Conflict of Interest Policy that meets demonstrates an understanding of the requirements of the law.	The school provides a limited Conflict of Interest Policy. However, the school's response may raise questions or concerns about understanding or capacity regarding the requirements of the law.	The school provides a Conflict of Interest Policy that is inadequate or incomplete or does not meet the requirements of the law. --OR-- The application does not address a Conflict of Interest Policy.

Comments:

I.(2) Provide a **comprehensive and clear** explanation that demonstrates a **complete understanding of, and capacity to** comply with the Open Meetings Act in its several parts (agendas posted in advance, quorums, executive or closed session procedures, minutes, etc. NMSA 1978 Section 10-15-1 to 4), and Inspection of Public Records Act in its several parts (meeting minutes, accessibility to public records, etc. NMSA 1978 14-2-1 to 12) that meets the requirements of the laws. For further information please see the following link: <http://www.nmag.gov/consumer/publications/openmeetingsactcomplianceguide>.

DWS will comply with the NM Open Meetings Act at all times. DWS will use the following checklist as a guide to ensure compliance.

1.2 New Mexico Open Meetings Act compliance checklist

“Information is the currency of democracy.”

~Thomas Jefferson

To the citizens and public officials of New Mexico:

Government that is open and accessible to all citizens is vital to a free society and the democratic process. In our State, the Open Meetings Act is a law that requires public officials to conduct public business in public. It seems like a simple enough mandate, but sometimes laws can be confusing to public officials and to the people they serve.

The Open Meetings Act Compliance Checklist is designed to help New Mexico government operate the way it should, under full “sunshine” for the benefit of all. This checklist is offered by my office to anyone who is interested in participating in the practice of democracy by using the information herein to help ensure that we maintain what President Abraham Lincoln called, “government of the people, by the people, for the people.”

Thank you for your interest in open government.

Gary K. King

New Mexico Attorney General

Open Meetings Act

A meeting conducted by a public body must be open to the public, unless the subject of the meeting falls within the limited exceptions specified by the Act. Public officials have a duty to allow all members of the public to attend the public body’s meetings.

If a meeting is held or conducted in violation of the Open Meetings Act, any action taken by the public body during the meeting is void.

Compliance with the Open Meetings Act is mandatory. Public officials may not override the Act through adoption of local policies or procedures. Failure to comply with the Act may result in criminal prosecution.

Public officials should accommodate the public in open meetings. This means holding meetings in spaces that can accommodate all people wishing to attend and listen.

The following checklist is intended to help public bodies comply with the Open Meetings Act. For a more detailed discussion, please refer to the Open Meetings Act Compliance Guide available from the Office of the New Mexico Attorney General.

Does the Open Meetings Act apply?

Open Meetings (§ 10-15-1 (B))

The Open Meetings Act applies to meetings of public bodies :

_____ *At which a quorum of the members of the public body is present in person or by telephone; and*

_____ *During which the public body will formulate public policy, discuss public business or take action.*

If the Open Meetings Act applies, the following checklist will help you comply with its requirements.

Notice Requirements

Non-emergency meetings:

_____ *Reasonable advance notice of the meeting has been provided to the public (§ 10-15-1 (D)).*

_____ *The notice complies with the deadlines and procedures for meeting notices adopted by the public body under Section 10-15-1(D) of the Open Meetings Act.*

_____ *The notice includes the date, time and location of the meeting.*

_____ *The notice is published or posted in a place and manner accessible to the public.*

_____ *Notice has been provided to all FCC licensed broadcast stations and newspapers of general circulation that have provided a written request for notice of meetings (§ 10-15-1 (D)).*

_____The notice includes an agenda or information on how the public may obtain a copy of the agenda (§ 10-15-1 (F)).

Emergency Meetings (§ 10-15-1 (F))

Under limited circumstances, an emergency meeting may be held with little advance notice if:

_____The public body did not expect the circumstances giving rise to the meeting; and

_____If the public body does not act immediately, injury or damage to persons or property or substantial financial loss to the public body is likely.

Meeting Agenda (§ 10-15-1 (F))

The meeting agenda should:

_____Include a list of specific items the public body intends to discuss or transact at the meeting.

_____Clearly describe agenda items that the public body intends to discuss or act on during the meeting in order to give adequate public notice.

_____Except for an emergency meeting, the agenda is available to the public at least 24 hours before the meeting.

_____Except for emergency matters, the public body takes action only on those items specifically listed on the agenda 24 hours before the meeting.

Telephonic Participation (§ 10-15-1 (C))

If a member of the public body participates in a meeting by telephone :

_____There must be a law or a rule of the public body authorizing its members to participate by conference telephone or similar communications equipment; and

_____It must be “difficult or impossible” for that member to attend the meeting in person; and

_____Each member participating telephonically can be identified when speaking, all participants are able to hear each other at the same time, and members of the public attending the meeting are able to hear any member of the public body who speaks during the meeting.

Closed Meetings – Permissible Subjects (§ 10-15-1 (H))

If a public body wishes to hold a closed meeting, it may do so only to engage in one or more of the following:

 Deliberations about the issuance, suspension, renewal or revocation of a license. Section 10-15-1(H)(1).

 Discussion of the hiring, promotion, demotion, dismissal, assignment or resignation of a public employee, or the investigation or consideration of complaints or charges against a public employee. Section 10-15-1(H)(2).

 Deliberations in connection with an administrative adjudicatory proceeding held by the public body. Section 10-15-1(H)(3).

 Discussion of personally identifiable information about an individual student. Section 10-15-1(H)(4).

 Discussion of collective bargaining strategy prior to negotiations between a public body and a union representing employees of the public body; collective bargaining sessions involving the public body and union, Section 10-15-1(H)(5); and consultations and impasse resolution procedures at which the public body and the union are present. Section 10-7E-17(G) of the Public Employee Bargaining Act.

 Discussion of a sole source purchase that exceeds \$2,500 or of the contents of competitive sealed proposals during the contract negotiation process. Section 10-15-1(H)(6).

 Meeting with the public body's attorney pertaining to threatened or pending litigation in which the public body is or may become a participant. Section 10-15-1(H)(7).

 Discussion of the purchase, acquisition or disposal of real property or water rights. Section 10-15-1(H)(8).

 For committees or boards of public hospitals only, discussion of strategic or long-range business plans or trade secrets. Section 10-15-1(H)(9).

 For the Gaming Control Board only, a meeting that deals with information made confidential by the Gaming Control Act. Section 10-15-1(H)(10).

Closed Sessions – Procedures (§ 10-15-1 (I))

To properly close a portion of an open meeting, the following actions must be taken (§ 10-15-1 (I) (1)):

_____ A motion stating the specific provision of law authorizing the closed meeting and a reasonably specific description of the subject to be discussed.

_____ A roll call vote on the motion to close the meeting in the open session. The vote of each member is recorded in the minutes

_____ Only the matters stated in the motion to close are discussed in the closed session.

_____ Generally, action on an item discussed in a closed session must be taken in an open meeting (§ 10-15-1 (H))

_____ After a closed meeting is completed, a statement affirming that the matters discussed in the closed meeting were limited to those stated in the motion to close is recorded in the minutes (§ 10-15-1 (J)).

For closed meetings of a public body held separate from an open meeting, the above criteria apply except:

_____ Instead of a motion to close, appropriate public notice is provided that includes the specific provision of law authorizing the closed meeting and a reasonably specific description of the subject to be discussed (§ 10-15-1 (I)(2)).

_____ Following completion of the closed meeting, a statement is entered into the minutes of the next open meeting specifying that the matters discussed in the closed meeting were limited to those stated in the notice of the closed meeting (§ 10-15-1 (J)).

Meeting Minutes (§ 10-15-1 (G))

If the meeting is open, written minutes are required. Minutes must contain at least:

_____ The date, time and place of the meeting; and

_____ The names of all members of the public body attending the meeting and of those members who are absent; and

_____ A description of the substance of all proposals considered during the meeting; and

_____ A record of any decisions made and votes taken that shows how each member voted (voting by secret ballot is not permitted).

The following also apply to meeting minutes:

_____ A draft copy of the minutes is prepared within 10 working days of the public meeting.

_____ *The minutes are approved, amended or disapproved at the next meeting where a quorum of the public body is present.*

_____ *All minutes are made available for public inspection.*

Ranking				
Satisfied		NOT Satisfied		
I(2)	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
) Tr an sp ar en cy	The school provides a comprehensive and clear explanation that demonstrates a complete understanding of, and capacity to comply with the Open Meetings Act in its several parts (agendas posted 24 hours in advance, quorums, executive or closed session procedures, minutes, etc.), and Inspection of Public Records Act in its several parts (meeting minutes, accessibility to public records, etc.) that meets the requirements of the laws.	The school provides a clear explanation that demonstrates an adequate understanding of and capacity to how it will comply with the Open Meetings Act and most of its parts (agendas posted 24 hours in advance, quorums, executive- or closed-session procedures, minutes, etc.), and Inspection of Public Records Act in its several parts (meeting minutes, accessibility to public records, etc.) that meets the requirements of the laws.	The school provides a general explanation of how it plans to comply with the Open Meetings Act and Inspection of Public Records Act. However, the school's response may raise questions or concerns about understanding or capacity regarding all components and requirements of the law.	The school provides an incomplete or inadequate explanation of how it plans to comply with the Open Meetings Act and Inspection of Public Records Act. --OR-- The school does not address how it plans to comply with the Open Meetings Act and Inspection of Public Records Act.

Comments:

J. Evidence of Partnership/Contractor relationship. (If Applicable.)

J.(1) If there is /are third party relationship(s) (partner organization or a contractor etc.) that is essential to the existence of your charter school, governance, key instructional staff, or management functions, identify them (entity, person, contact information etc.). Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of all of those third-party relationships that are considered integral to accomplishing the mission of the school. In your description, please demonstrate that you have a **complete understanding** of the legal implication of the relationship to the school.

Third Party Relationships

Desert Willow School has worked out logistical and financial agreements with three third-party entities. The first of these, The Learning Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success (TLC), is a 501-(c)-3 non-profit organization that seeks to serve students with dyslexia and other issues that impede academic success. A major focus area is to support the founding and operation of a school equipped to provide high quality remediation for dyslexia. TLC raises funds to offset the cost of teacher training in Orton-Gillingham based instruction and other intensive training for the benefit of students with dyslexia. It is currently funding the training of several teachers interested in being Certified Academic Language Therapists who could be employed at Desert Willow School. The co-founder of TLC and an advisor to the Desert Willow charter group, George Lundy, can be reached at 575-313-6502.

The organization that will provide training and on-going support for Desert Willow School teachers in its research-based holistic curriculum is Enki Education, Incorporated. Teacher training in how to deliver this curriculum with integrity would begin for interested teachers upon approval of the Desert Willow School charter and continue throughout the planning year. Prospective teachers would have the responsibility for paying for classes unless money is raised by the community to help defray tuition. Desert Willow School will consider reimbursement for tuition if money becomes available at some point within the first five years. Classes would be taken on-line with other members of the Enki teaching and homeschooling community around the country, plus several local intensives. There are two sets of courses. The first is Foundations, which includes "Ecosystems of Education," "Movement and Story," and "Curriculum Content Overview." The second set is Professional, which includes "Brain Development and Movement," "Child Speak," and "Curriculum Development." A Memorandum of Understanding has been entered into between the two parties stating financial agreements with regard to training. (See Appendix H) Beth Sutton is the creator and director of Enki, and she can be reached at 401-228-7200.

The third relationship is with Guadalupe Montessori School (GMS), which has offered to lease some of its acreage and to share some other facility space with Desert Willow School. This arrangement has a number of benefits to Desert Willow school, access GMS's gardens and playground, and meals could be prepared in its commercially approved kitchen. A Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted and signed stating the two parties' intention to work together in the planning year. (See Appendix H) GMS is located at 1731 Alabama Street in Silver City. The school's interim director, Martha Egnal, and the president of the school board, Mattie Eagle, can be reached at 575-388-3343.

Once any formal relationships have been entered during the planning year a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed between Desert Willow School and the third parties giving evidence that nepotism and conflicts of interest will not be tolerated in accordance with the Policies segment of the Governing Council section.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet-1
J.(1). Third Party Relationship	<i>If Applicable</i> The school indicates that there is /are third party relationship(s), and the school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description of all third-party relationships that are considered integral to accomplishing the mission of the school. The school demonstrates a complete understanding of the legal implication of the relationship to the school.	<i>If Applicable</i> The school indicates that there is /are third party relationship(s), and the school provides a clear description of all third-party relationships that are considered integral to accomplishing the mission of the school. The school demonstrates knowledge of the legal implication of the relationship to the school.	<i>If Applicable</i> The school indicates that there is /are third party relationship(s), and the school provides some information about the relationships and how it/they will support the school. The school may or may not indicate a limited knowledge of the legal implication of the relationship to the school.	<i>If Applicable</i> The school's response is inadequate or incomplete . --OR-- The school indicates that there is /are third party relationship(s), but the application does not address the relationship.

Comments:

J.(2) If applicable, provide and attach as Appendix H, a proposed, **signed, clear, formal** agreement between the school and each third party relationship **OR** memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the school and each prospective third-party, delineating the appropriate responsibilities, activities, and costs of both sides.

Please see Appendix H for MOUs.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet-1
J.(2) Proposed Agreement	<i>If Applicable</i> The school indicates that there is /are third party relationship(s), and it provides a proposed, signed, clear, formal agreement between	<i>If Applicable</i> The school indicates that there is /are third party relationship(s), and it provides a proposed, signed formal agreement or MOU between the school for most	<i>If Applicable</i> The school offer and limited proposal of third party relationship(s), and it provides a proposed, signed formal	<i>If Applicable</i> The school provides an inadequate or incomplete response --OR-- Does not address

m en t	the school and each third party relationship OR memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the school and each prospective third-party, delineating the appropriate responsibilities, activities, and costs of both sides.	prospective third-parties, delineating major roles and responsibilities OR the school provides some formal agreements or MOUs and some signed letters of intent with strong evidence that the third party will enter into an agreement should the charter be granted.	agreement(s)/ (MOU s) OR signed letter(s) of intent between the school and prospective third-parties. Roles and responsibilities provided may be general .	the prompt.
--------------	--	---	--	-------------

Comments:

K. Waivers.

K.(1) Provide a list of statutes or state rules for which a waiver is requested, including a rationale for why the waiver is being requested. Ensure that the rationale clearly demonstrates how requested waivers align with the school's proposed autonomy, its mission, and the educational program and curriculum . For further information please see the following link: http://ped.state.nm.us/admin.personnel/waiver_requests.html .			
NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-5(C) Waiver	Requested?		Description of how waiver will support school's plan.
	yes	no	
Individual class load	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	Insert
Teaching load	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	Insert
Length of school day	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Desert Willow School is requesting a short school day every Friday: 9:00 to 2:00 with a 30-minute lunch (4.5 hours learning time). Since we will have extended hours Monday through Thursday, having a shorter day for students on Friday keeps the student and teachers' work week to the same length as the other public schools in town. We will have the same number of days as the local district, and we will have more than the state required 990 hours in the school year. This schedule is in the best interest of students and staff alike. We are designing our school week to best meet the needs of our specific target population.</p> <p>Each week Desert Willow School students will participate in Friday Explorer Clubs, designed in collaboration with community volunteers. Explorer Clubs are a way for students to find, explore, and build new areas of strength that will in turn increase self-confidence and motivation. These may include visual arts, weaving and textiles, gardening, cooking, dance, nature study, and</p>

			<p>archaeology, to name a few talents of our community and its member volunteers. Since Fridays are an active time with more free choice in lessons and are partially dependent upon community volunteers, we understand a shorter day will be sufficient to accomplish these goals. Teacher planning and collaboration will also take place on Fridays.</p> <p>We will have an extended school day Monday through Thursday: 8:30 to 4:00 with a 30-minute lunch (7 hours learning time per day). Extended time at school each day allows for the rhythms of a child's natural impulses. At Desert Willow School we believe that how we present the educational content to children is as important as the content itself. A longer school day allows for the time to support exploration, flexible thinking, and empowered understanding while supporting emotional and social health, thereby, supporting the development and health of community. Therefore, the longer school days support our mission to value student's unique learning styles, build self-awareness and a sense of belonging, inspire creative, flexible thinking, and cultivate engaged readers through a multisensory approach. In today's culture, children live too much in either the "go, go, go" or the "hurry up and wait" timelines that adults have created. Returning to their natural rhythms helps children learn in a relaxed way that provides greater results.</p> <p>Researchers have found that our target population—students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties, students with ADHD and other attention issues, and students who are bright, yet disengaged—thrive with a holistic approach, a method of teaching which activates the right side of their brain. Many of these students tend to be right brain dominant. Incorporating art, movement, and other forms of learning stimulates both sides of the brain, creating new connections.</p> <p>The extended school day on Monday through Thursday allows students to form the connections needed to allow true academic gains. The shorter school day for Friday Explorer Clubs provides a variety of activities designed to let students explore different activities and develop new areas of strength that will in turn increase self-confidence and motivation, building that self-awareness and sense of belonging that DWS finds so important.</p>
Staffing pattern	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	Insert
Subject areas		X	Insert
Purchase of	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	Insert

instructional materials			
Evaluation standards for school personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	Insert
School principal duties	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	Insert
Drivers education	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	Insert

K.(2) *Only for schools seeking local district authorization.*

Provide a list of Authorizer policies for which a waiver is requested (see NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-5(C) or elsewhere in the Public School Code), including a rationale for why the waiver is being requested. Ensure that the **rationale clearly demonstrates how requested waivers align with the school's proposed autonomy, mission and educational program/curriculum.** (If you require additional space, attach as an Appendix.)

Discretionary Waiver(s) Sought.	Description of how waiver will support school's plan.
Insert	Insert
Insert	Insert
Insert	Insert
Insert	Insert

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—3	Meets—2	Partially Meets—1	Does Not Meet—0
K.(1)(2) Waivers	The school provides a list of statutes or state rules for which a waiver is requested, including a rationale for why the waiver is being requested. The rationale clearly demonstrates how requested waivers align with the school's proposed autonomy, its mission, and the educational program and curriculum.	The school provides a list of statutes or state rules for which a waiver is requested, including a rationale for why the waiver is being requested.	The school provides a limited list of statutes or state rules for which a waiver is requested.	The application suggests that waivers from statutes or state rules will be used, but the school fails to identify the waivers in III.K.(1) and (2). Or, the application does not address waivers.

	Exceeds—3	Meets—2	Partially Meets—1	Does Not Meet—0 □
	<p><i>Only for schools seeking local district authorization.</i></p> <p>The school provides a list of Authorizer policies for which a waiver is requested, including a rationale for why the waiver is being requested. The rationale clearly demonstrates how requested waivers align with the school's proposed autonomy, mission and educational program/curriculum.</p>	<p><i>Only for schools seeking local district authorization.</i></p> <p>The school provides a list of Authorizer policies for which a waiver is requested, including a general statement is provided for why the waiver is being requested.</p>	<p><i>Only for schools seeking local district authorization.</i></p> <p>The school provides a list of Authorizer policies for which a waiver is requested.</p>	<p><i>Only for schools seeking local district authorization.</i></p> <p>The school provides and inadequate or incomplete list. The school does not provide a list of Authorizer policies for which a waiver is requested.</p>
Comments:				

L. Transportation and Food.

L.(1) *If Applicable*, state how your school plans to offer transportation to its students. Provides a **clear description** of how student transportation needs will be met that is supported by the proposed budget. For further information please see the following link: <http://ped.state.nm.us/div/fin/trans/index.html>.

Desert Willow School (DWS) does not provide students transportation to and from school unless a student qualifies for transportation services through an IEP. DWS will negotiate with transportation contractors if and when a student qualifies for transportation as a related service on his or her IEP. Otherwise, it is the responsibility of the parent to transport the student to and from school. During the organization year, the Interim Governing Body will develop a transportation policy regarding conveyance of students on field trips and for extracurricular activities.

Students will be strictly prohibited from riding in personal vehicles owned by Desert Willow School staff or faculty members unless staff or faculty is a parent or guardian.

In subsequent years, with a more comprehensive understanding of our student population and their needs, and in consideration of the school budget, DWS may choose to amend its charter to provide student transportation. In this event it will negotiate for these services with local school transportation providers who are recognized by the PED and will apply for state transportation funds as provided for by New Mexico State Statutes.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
L.(1) Transportation	<p><i>If Applicable</i></p> <p>The school states that it plans to offer transportation to its students. The school provides a clear description of how student transportation needs will be met that is supported by the proposed budget.</p>	<p><i>If Applicable</i></p> <p>The school states that it plans to offer transportation to its students. The school provides an adequate description of how student transportation needs will be met that appears to be supported by the budget.</p>	<p><i>If Applicable</i></p> <p>The school states that it plans to offer transportation to its students. Only a limited description of how student transportation needs will be met is provided OR the school has not fully addressed transportation in the budget.</p>	<p><i>If Applicable</i></p> <p>The school states that it plans to offer transportation to its students. The school provides an inadequate or incomplete description of how student transportation needs will be met.</p> <p>--OR--</p> <p>The school does not state whether or not it plans to offer transportation to its students.</p>

Comments:

L.(2) *If Applicable* Provide a plan to offer food services to students (i.e, contracting with approved/appropriate food services vendors, providing Free and Reduced Lunch). Provide a **clear description** of how food services will be provided that is supported by the proposed budget.

Food Services

Excellent nutrition is an essential part of preparedness to learn. Desert Willow School will apply for participation in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs as a School Food Authority (SFA). Based on demographic data we believe that DWS will have a high percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. Currently, all students who attend public schools in Grant County now qualify for this service.

Parents shall complete a Free/Reduced Price Lunch form when they enroll their children at DWS. In compliance with federal law, the school will have all the necessary records for the students eligible for free or reduced lunches available for review, and will follow all regulations as required of a School Food Authority.

Desert Willow School would like to keep student nutrition operations as local as possible. DWS plans to locate its facility on land adjacent to Guadalupe Montessori School's buildings. GMS has a commercial kitchen which they are willing to share with Desert Willow School.

Ranking				
Satisfied		Not Satisfied		
L.(2) Food Services	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	<i>If Applicable</i> The school plans to offer food services to its students. The school provides a clear description of how food services will be provided that is supported by the proposed budget.	<i>If Applicable</i> The school plans to offer food services to its students. The school provides an adequate description of how food services will be provided that appears to be supported by the proposed budget.	<i>If Applicable</i> The school plans to offer food services to its students. Only a limited description of how food services will be provided is included OR the school has not fully addressed food services in the budget.	<i>If Applicable</i> The school plans to offer food services to its students. The school provides an inadequate or incomplete response of how food services will be provided. --OR-- The school plans to offer food services to its students but provides no other information.

Comments:

M. Facilities/ School Environment.

Applicants must complete the required Facilities Master Plan Ed. Spec. Checklist form, referenced below as III M.(1), and submit it to the Public Schools Facilities Authority **no later than Friday, April 24th, 2015**. The Facilities Master Plan/Ed. Spec. Checklist form can be accessed on the PSFA website at: http://www.nmpsfa.org/pdf/MasterPlan/Applicant_Charter_School_EdSpec_FMP_Review_Checklist_3_8_2012.pdf.

M.(1) Describe in detail the charter school's projected facility needs and the desired school environment. **Complete, submit, and attach as Appendix I**, the Facilities Master Plan Ed / Spec Checklist to the Public Schools Facilities Authority (PSFA) for review and approval, and attach the **approved form** as Appendix "J."

Projected Facility Needs

Desert Willow School's facility supports its holistic philosophy and curriculum and serves its non-traditional student population. There is adequate space in each classroom to support movement and space is available for special education pull-out services and reading remediation. An outdoor learning space such as a garden or shady area, would be ideal. We would like to be in walking distance of either

the university or the downtown area to make community linkages easier. DWS would like to lease portable classroom buildings that we would eventually own through the Lease to Purchase Act. Classrooms and meeting spaces would be used for Friday Explorer Clubs.

The site that we favor at this time is land available to us behind Guadalupe Montessori School (GMS) 1731 N. Alabama Street in Silver City. We would arrange four double classroom portables and one single office portable in an open field near their garden. We would share some spaces, including the playground, soccer field, kitchen, large room for indoor meeting space, and garden with greenhouses. The learning and office spaces in portables would be arranged in a circle:

Building 1: Two sections of kindergarten with two bathrooms

Building 2: A first grade classroom and a reading and special ed sub-divided classroom with two bathrooms

Building 3: Administration/front office

Building 4: Second and third grade classrooms and two classrooms

Building 5: Fourth and fifth grade classrooms and two bathrooms

A large space inside the circle would be used for school-wide gatherings when weather permits. An alternate indoor meeting space exists in one of the Montessori school's vacant classrooms. GMS has also offered the use of its annex for ancillary services, such as occupational therapy and social work. We have discussed plans to share their commercial kitchen for school lunch preparation. Desert Willow School and Montessori students would share the following spaces: playground, soccer field, and garden with greenhouses. (See MOU agreement in Appendix H).

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
M .(1) Pr oj e ct e d F a ci lit y N e e d s	The school has clearly and comprehensively described its projected facility needs and desired school environment. The school completed and submitted the Facilities Master Plan Ed / Spec Checklist to PSFA for review and approval, and attached the approved form as Appendix "J."	The school has described its projected facility needs and desired school environment. The school provides evidence from PSFA that it has completed and submitted the Facilities Master Plan Ed / Spec Checklist to PSFA for review and approval, and though the review process has not been completed, the plan has received PSFA's tentative approval.	The school has provided a limited description of its projected facility needs and desired school environment. The school has completed and submitted the Facilities Master Plan Ed / Spec Checklist to PSFA for review and approval, but the review and approval process has not been completed.	The school has completed and attached the Facilities Master Plan Ed / Spec Checklist but has not yet submitted it to PSFA for review and approval. --OR-- The school does not address the Facilities Master Plan Ed / Spec checklist, i.e. has not attached the completed and approved Facilities master Plan Ed/Spec Checklist form as Appendix J.

Comments:

M.(2) Provide evidence that you have researched potential facilities/properties and **identified at least one appropriate, viable facility/ property in the targeted geographic location.** Include evidence of a **clear plan** to prepare the facility/property in time for the school's opening.

M.2 Facility Plan

Initially, Desert Willow School met with Peter Russell, Town of Silver City (TOSC), Planning Director, then subsequently met with David Lawrence, Town of Silver City, GIS Mapper, to explore what TOSC had available as potential locations for the school. Although there are no public buildings available in Silver City, there are two public building sites that have potential.

Option 1: Located at the corner of Cooper St and La Capilla is a 16 acre site that includes unused land on the north end and the Bosque Park on the south end. Two to five acres on the north end could potentially be developed for Desert Willow School.

Pros:

- *Public land that has no current plans for use*
- *Located adjacent to the Bosque Park*

- Located very close to the Silver City Senior Center which would provide opportunities for multi-generational interaction
- Located close to two, predominately Hispanic neighborhoods (location is one of the critical factors in encouraging Hispanic families to be interested in DWS)

Cons:

- Location is xx miles from the center of town
- Infrastructure such as sewer, water and electric is more than xx from site
- Raw land, would need everything

Option 2: Located south of 10th and Mountain View Rd in the Vistas de Plata housing development is an 11 acre site that TOSC would like to see neighborhood amenities such as schools, churches or parks located within.

Pros:

- TOSC has already discussed the potential for a school on the property
- Vistas de Plata is a mixed income, planned neighborhood that would include low-income housing and already has several Habitat for Humanity houses built.
- It's a very demographically mixed area with no elementary schools close by
- Infrastructure such as sewer, water and electric are close by

Cons:

- Raw land, would need everything

Option 3:

Two acres located just west of and owned by the Guadalupe Montessori School (GMS).

Pros:

- Initial conversations with the GMS board indicate an agreement with them would include the use of their certified kitchen, 1-2 classrooms, a large assembly type space, their gardens, play areas and chicken coop.
- The GMS board was willing to work out an agreement in a formal MOU

Cons:

- The GMS location is already creating significant traffic issues for the neighborhood
- The land is not located near any DWS target neighborhoods

Option 4:

LJ Lundy, Realtor, Enchantment Realty, Silver City, NM

DWS engaged Ms. Lundy to do a commercial property search for a suitable location. In the course of her property search, she discovered a long time client of hers was interested in a preliminary conversation to discuss developing a property for DWS. The landowner is not interested in any discussion until after the charter has been approved.

Additionally, we have an estimate from ModSpace in El Paso, TX for 24x60 mobile classrooms. Each mobile classroom would have a one-time delivery and set up fee of \$7033.92 and the lease payment per month per classroom would be \$1,178.66 (fees are estimates and subject to change).

Based on these conversations, we have four viable options, that once the Desert Willow School charter application is approved, the process of determining which option is the best and negotiating a lease arrangement to develop the land and infrastructure can start.

Ranking				
Satisfied		Not Satisfied		
M	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
(2) Facility Plan	The school provides evidence that it has researched potential facilities/properties and identified at least one appropriate, viable facility/property in the targeted geographic location. The evidence includes a clear plan to prepare the facility/property in time for the school's opening.	The school provides evidence that it has researched potential facilities/properties and made significant efforts to identify appropriate, viable facility/property in the targeted geographic location.	The school provides evidence that it has done some research on potential facilities/properties in the desired geographic location.	The school does not provide evidence that it has researched or begun a search for an appropriate facility/property. --OR-- The application does not address the school's facility needs.

Comments:

M.(3) Provide a **description** of the school's potential capital outlay needs, including projected requests for capital outlay assistance that are reasonable and sufficient to support the school program. Recognizing that facility needs may change in the future provide a **reasonable projection** for facility maintenance, repair, and equipment needs.

Projected Facility Cost

Based on our minimum space needs of 12,000 square feet and using an average local fair market value of \$7 per square foot for lease of a facility, we estimate the lease to be \$84,000 for basic space needs. Funding for lease expenses will be covered by Lease Payment Supplementation from SEG funding through the NMPSFA.

Upon approval of the Charter, the school will work with the NMPSFA to obtain an approved facilities master plan for E Occupancy. This will enable us to apply for SB-9 funds to suit our facility needs in the future. We anticipate using the capital funds generated through SB-9 and other grants for future purchase of portables that will fit the needs of DWS. Facility maintenance, repair, and equipment needs have been provided for in the budget.

Ranking				
Satisfied		Not Satisfied		
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1

M .(3) Pr oj e ct e d F a ci lit y C o st s	The school provided a thorough description of the school's potential capital outlay needs, including potential requests for capital outlay assistance that are reasonable and sufficient to support the school program. The school provided a reasonable projection for facility maintenance, repair, and equipment needs.	The school provided a description of the school's potential capital outlay needs, including potential requests for capital outlay assistance that are reasonable and sufficient to support the school program. The school provided adequate estimates for facility maintenance, repair, and equipment needs.	The school provided a limited description of the school's potential capital outlay needs, including potential requests for capital outlay assistance that are sufficient to support the school program.	The school provides only an incomplete or inadequate description of the potential capital outlay needs. --OR-- The application does not address the school's capital outlay needs and potential costs.
Comments:				

Finance

A. Budgets.

Please note that the PEC will ask the applicants to respond to questions on the budget during the Community Input Hearing. The applicants may have the personnel with the technical expertise with them at the table (and *should* have these people with them if these people were primarily responsible for drafting a section). However, the applicants themselves should demonstrate knowledge and understanding in all areas of the budget.

A.(1) Provide, and attach as Appendix J, a completed 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Computation Revenue Estimate Worksheet using appropriate values and computations for each year of the 5-year budget plan (use current unit value and for Special Education, please budget the state average of 15%). Ensure that your worksheet **clearly demonstrates your understanding of, and your capacity to implement** New Mexico public school funding.

Form 910B5 is attached as Appendix J.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—8	Meets—6	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
A(1) 910B5 Worksheet	The school provides a completed 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Computation Revenue Estimate Worksheet using appropriate values and computations for each year of the 5-year budget plan. The worksheet clearly demonstrates understanding of and capacity to implement New Mexico public	The school provides a completed 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Computation Revenue Estimate Worksheet using appropriate values and computations for each year of the 5-year budget plan. The worksheet may contain some minor errors, but demonstrates an adequate understanding of, and capacity to, implement New Mexico public	The school provides a completed 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Computation Revenue Estimate Worksheet for each year of the 5-year budget plan. The worksheet contains some errors that may raise questions about understanding of and capacity to implement New Mexico public school funding.	The school provides an incomplete or inadequate 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Computation Revenue Worksheet for each of the 5-year budget plan. --OR-- The application does not include a completed 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Computation Revenue Estimate Worksheet for each

	school funding.	school funding.		year of the 5-year budget plan.
--	-----------------	-----------------	--	---------------------------------

Comments:

A.(2) Provide, and attach as Appendix K, a proposed five-year budget plan based on the 910B5 SEG Revenue Worksheet, that clearly supports the school’s mission and aligns with the school’s five- year growth plan, including staffing, facilities, educational program, and services. Ensure that your draft budget clearly demonstrates the financial capacity and long-term sustainability of the school (consider your growth plan, including staffing, facilities, educational program, mission etc.).

Five Year Budget Plan is attached as Appendix K

Ranking				
Satisfied		NOT Satisfied		
A(2) 5-Year Budget Plan	Exceeds—12	Meets—9	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a five-year budget that clearly supports the school’s mission and aligns with the school’s five- year growth plan, including staffing, facilities, educational program, and services. The draft budget clearly demonstrates the financial capacity and long-term sustainability of the school.	The school provides a five-year budget that appears to support the school’s mission and the school’s five- year growth plan, including staffing, facilities, educational program and services. The draft budget adequately demonstrates the financial capacity and long-term sustainability of the school.	The school provides a five-year budget that generally supports the school’s five- year growth plan. However, the draft budget may raise some questions about the financial capacity or the long-term sustainability of the school.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete five-year budget. --OR-- The application does not include a 5-year budget.

Comments:

A.(3) Provide a clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable budget narrative that explains basic assumptions, how those were determined based on reliable sources, and identifies all priorities that are consistent with the school’s mission, educational program, staffing, and facility. The budget narrative demonstrates the school’s thorough understanding of the budget and of budgeting.

Revenue – SEG funding will be the only funding source for the budget because this source of funding is constant. Other potential revenue sources could include but are not limited to be a) Federal funding, b) grants, and c) fundraising. By using only SEG funding, the school is able to have a balanced operating budget. Any additional revenue streams will further enhance the school's academic goals.

Pre-Opening Expenditures – During the ten month period from approval to the school's opening, the school plans to spend some of the SEG funds (for the summer months) and any additional funds raised as stated above to assist in start up costs. These costs include but are not limited to teacher training, materials, equipment and supplies.

Facility Expenditures – The school will rely heavily on the lease-assistance funds that are provided by the New Mexico Public School Facilities Authority. We assume \$700 per student, as we feel that figure should remain constant or even increase over time. By using these funds, Desert Willow School (DWS) fully understands and expects to meet the requirements of the New Mexico Public Schools Facilities Authority.

Function 1000 Instruction Expenditures – The majority of Desert Willow School's budget will go toward teacher salaries. Desert Willow's mission is all about student engagement, building a sense of belonging, and inspiring creative, flexible thinking. Low student to teacher ratio is the way to achieve these goals. DWS is anticipating having on staff seven (7) teachers, one and two thirds FTE (1.67FTE) reading specialists, one (1) special education teacher and three (3) instructional assistants for the first five years. DWS is not projecting any growth during the first five years. DWS will be doing extensive teacher training in the first year in the Orton-Gillingham methodology and Enki curriculum; therefore, once the initial teaching staff is adept at implementation, we can look to grow and begin training new teachers for additional sections at each grade level in our sixth year and beyond.

Special education is a difficult area to assess based entirely on need. We anticipate one out of ten students will qualify for this type of education. Federal and state funding can potentially add to the school's revenue stream. Due to the uncertainty of need, Desert Willow School prefers a more conservative approach and did not include more than one (1) special education teacher in the school's budget, based on the percentage of special education students in Silver Consolidated Schools.

The budget assumption for teacher salaries is an average range of \$44,000 to \$46,000. Both level II and level III teachers will be paid more than the state minimum. The average was determined by using the Silver Consolidated Schools 2015-2016 Salary Schedule for Level II and Level III teachers and applying a small discount factor. This discount is justified by requiring and paying for additional teacher education in the Orton-Gillingham methodology and Enki curriculum. Also built into Classroom salaries is a raise of \$500 a year for all teachers. In year 5 most of the teachers will attain salaries competitive with the Silver Consolidated School District. Desert Willow School will be following a different type of education methodology and curriculum. We believe that various teacher levels will be hired. We will explore employment of Level I teachers if any meet the criteria that we are looking for in a teacher. Due to the integrated nature of the curriculum, we believe teachers with more experience and education will perform better at grasping the Orton-Gillingham methodology and Enki curriculum. All teachers will be trained in the Enki curriculum and Orton-Gillingham based methods. Reading specialists will have an in depth training, working toward certification in an Orton-Gillingham based program. Costs associated

with reading specialist's training have been and will continue to be funded by The Learning Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success (TLC).

Substitute teachers will be required. Based on an hourly rate of \$13 an hour, 270 hours of substitute teacher salaries in each of the first five years is budgeted. The total allowance can be seen in section 1000-55915 within the budget under "Other Contract Services".

Desert Willow School education is based on the Orton-Gillingham methodology and Enki curriculum. There is a need to budget training expenses for all teachers. The training will be local and trainers will be flown here at DWS expense. The training is intensive the first few years as can be seen under section 1000-55820.

General supplies and materials are also estimated at a higher initial rate because of the Orton-Gillingham methodology and Enki curriculum. The onetime cost of the Enki education curriculum is estimated at \$42,000 for all subjects in grades K-5. The expense is allocated over two years. This includes a lifetime curriculum license for the materials; therefore, the budgetary amounts drop considerably in the third year. With the Friday Explorer Clubs there is also potential need of purchasing different supplies depending on the variety of instruction being offered. These expenses can be seen under section 1000-56118. Supply assets listed under section 1000-57332 will be used to purchase computers for all students to use in the library. In future years, we anticipate updating and increasing the number of computers available for use.

Function 2100 Support Services – DWS will contract out ancillary services. We believe one FTE will be required. The positions and FTE projected are a) Diagnostician (.18 FTE), b) Speech Therapists (.30 FTE), c) Occupational Therapist (.18 FTE), d) Physical Therapist (.05FTE), e) Psychologist (.05 FTE), f) Visions and Mobility Specialist (.01FTE), and g) Social Worker (.23FTE).

Function 2300 General Administration - Our audit expense of \$12,000 was taken from a similar charter school in our area. There is mandatory training that DWS governing council must attend. This training is not offered in our local area; therefore, DWS has budgeted for nine council members at \$100 for travel and \$400 for the required course. The final administrative expense budgeted is for two desktop computers for administrative staff.

Function 2400 School Administration – There are two positions listed under this category. The Director will focus on administration and day to day activities of the school. We estimate this position at \$75,000 starting salary and an increase of \$500 a year similar to the teaching positions. We based this salary on the Silver Consolidated School District for an elementary principal with a similar small discount similar to the teaching salaries. The other position is a secretary or clerical staff. This position is estimated at \$19,000 based on the Silver Consolidated School District for this type of position. We feel DWS needs to remain competitive with the Public School District that is in our area.

Function 2500 Central Services - A business manager will be hired to oversee finances and meet data reporting requirements as required by the Public Education Department. This position is estimated to be .75 FTE based on a similar size charter school in our area. The starting salary for this position is budgeted

for \$37,500 with small raises every year. This position is based on the comptroller position of the Silver Consolidated School District.

Function 2600 Operation and Maintenance of Plant – All facility costs are estimated on buildings of similar size. Lease payment supplementation from SEG funding is sufficient to cover rent, property insurance and related real estate taxes. DWS will be responsible to pay all utilities, building/grounds maintenance and insurance. As there is no projected shortfall in this area, no additional cost is listed. Custodial services under “Other Contract Services” are budgeted at \$9,000 (50% of the Silver Consolidated School districts janitorial salary). DWS will contract this position out so no additional employee benefits are required.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
A(3) Budget Narrative	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable budget narrative that explains basic assumptions, how those were determined based on reliable sources, and identifies all priorities that are consistent with the school’s mission, educational program, staffing, and facility. The budget narrative demonstrates the school’s thorough understanding of the budget and of budgeting.	The school provides a clear budget narrative with some meaningful detail that explains basic assumptions, how those were determined based on reliable sources, and identifies most of the priorities that are consistent with the school’s mission, educational program, staffing and facility. The budget narrative demonstrates the school’s general understanding of the budget and of budgeting.	The school provides a limited budget narrative that explains some basic assumptions, how those were determined, and identifies some priorities. The budget narrative may raise some questions about the school’s understanding of the budget and of budgeting.	The school provides an incomplete or inadequate budget narrative. --OR-- The application does not provide a budget narrative.

Comments:

A.(4) Provide a **clear and meaningful** description of what budget adjustments will be made to meet financial budget and cash-flow challenges. Ensure that your explanations provide **clear evidence** that the adjustments are viable and realistic. The suggested budget control strategies demonstrate **capacity**

to manage the budget successfully.

Provide a narrative description of how your school will modify the budget when there are students with special education needs currently attending the school, but under the funding formula the school will only receive additional funding during the next school year.

Provide a narrative description of how your school will address the budget in the event that the school has budgeted for more students, based on early enrollment, than actually enroll in the school at the beginning of the school year.

If there is a decrease in the projected total number of students enrolled, there will a shortfall in revenue. DWS has looked into this issue and has several different strategies to implement if this issue arises. DWS main focus on classroom size is as follows:

<i>Classroom</i>	<i>Teachers in class</i>	<i>Student-teacher ratio</i>
<i>Kindergarten</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>10:1</i>
<i>First</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>20:1</i>
<i>Second</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>20:1</i>
<i>Third</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>20:1</i>
<i>Fourth</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>20:1</i>
<i>Fifth</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>20:1</i>

Looking at a potential scenario decrease of 20 students from the budgeted 120 student enrollment would yield roughly a revenue shortfall of \$120,000 from the SEG revenue source. This shortfall will be absorbed by eliminating a teaching position and reducing a reading specialist FTE. Using the lowest paid positions and their related benefit package and training costs will sufficiently absorb the revenue shortfall. This can be seen by adjusting the classroom size chart as follows:

<i>Classroom</i>	<i>Teachers in class</i>	<i>Student-Teacher ratio</i>
<i>Kindergarten</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>10:1</i>
<i>First</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>20:1</i>
<i>Second</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>20:1</i>
<i>Third</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>20:1</i>

<i>Fourth/Fifth</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>20:1</i>
---------------------	----------	-------------

We have some flexibility in classroom size; e.g. we can take an additional two extra students in a classroom and have a different classroom with two fewer students. Also, if there are two classrooms that are combined, an additional instructional assistant position can be eliminated.

Another option in attempting to keep enrollment at the projected 120 students would be to have a combined class (i.e. fourth/fifth grade) and an additional class for a grade where we have 20 students on the waiting list (i.e. two sections of first grade).

We have currently budgeted one special education teacher for an anticipated 12 students. Using a ratio of 20:1 we have built into the budget an additional 8 students that can be accommodated without an increase in instruction staff. Furthermore, we have budgeted 1.67 FTE of reading specialists that should be able to accommodate additional students. DWS has built into the budget a conservative approach to allow for such events of student enrollment increases or decreases.

For greater assistance to the school's financial picture, the school's Governing Council has already begun looking at obtaining various grants to provide for education assistance. This ongoing process will be passed along to the school's director and business manager to further pursue these grants. Upon discussion with other charter schools, these grants can be reasonably expected to be received, but once again the school's budget is only based on SEG funding as other revenue streams are not guaranteed. Any extra revenue that is derived from additional outside sources will further enhance the school's mission.

The final strategy that may be implemented would be a budget adjustment request (BAR). There are some line items that may not be fully used and can be moved into a line item that has a potential shortfall. Any BAR that goes into effect would need to be approved by the school business manager and the Governing Council.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
A(	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1

4) St ra te gi es fo r Bu dg et Co nt rol	The school provides a clear and meaningful description of what budget adjustments will be made to meet financial budget and cash-flow challenges. The explanations provide clear evidence that the adjustments are viable and realistic. The suggested budget control strategies demonstrate capacity to manage the budget successfully.	The school provides a description of what budget adjustments will be made to meet financial budget and cash-flow challenges. The explanations provide some evidence that the adjustments may be viable and realistic. The suggested budget control strategies demonstrate a general capacity to manage the budget successfully.	The school provides a limited description of what budget adjustments could be made to meet financial budget and cash-flow challenges. The explanations about the adjustments are too general to determine if they are viable or realistic.	The school provides an inadequate or incomplete description of budget adjustments. --OR-- The application does not address strategies for budgeting control.
--	---	--	--	--

Comments:

A.(5) Provide, and attach as Appendix L, a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** proposed salary schedule for all staff, including teachers, administrators, and other salaried / hourly staff that complies with state requirements.

Salary schedule is attached as Appendix L.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
A(5) Salary Schedule (Appendix)	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive proposed salary schedule for all key staff , including teachers, administrators, and other salaried / hourly staff that complies with state requirements.	The school provides a clear proposed salary schedule for most key staff , including teachers and administrators, that complies with state requirements.	The school provides a limited salary schedule for some key staff, including teachers and administrators, that complies with state requirements.	The school provides an incomplete or inadequate proposed salary schedule for key staff. --OR-- The application does not provide a proposed salary schedule for key staff.

Comments:

B. Financial Policies, Oversight, Compliance, and Sustainability

B.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** set of financial policies and internal controls that are sufficient and comply with requirements and financial best practices. The policies and controls **demonstrate capacity** to appropriately manage public funds.

Desert Willow School (DWS) will apply sound fiscal practices that comply with Federal, state and local laws and regulations. Defined roles have been developed for the Governing Council, Director, Business Manager and other staff responsible for managing the school's financial assets. These roles will provide reasonable assurance of the school's financial picture. Pursuant to statute, the Governing Council will establish both Finance and Audit Committees.

The Governing Council will empanel a Finance Committee and Audit Committee. The Governing Council will meet monthly at which time the financial reports will be reviewed and approved. The Governing

Council will establish and approve the yearly budget, approve the audit firm, approve the director's contract and the staff salary schedule. Both the Director and Business Manager will be required to attend these monthly meetings. This is to ensure that the school is following sound fiscal management.

The Director will have authority for all management and fiscal decisions with Governing Council oversight. These decisions include but are not limited to hiring of employees, monitoring reporting of student data and applying oversight to the approved budget.

The Director will ensure that all reports to federal and state agencies are completed and submitted on time. The Director will work closely with the Business Manager. The Business Manager will report to the Director and be responsible for all fiscal activities of the school. DWS will provide the Business Manager with computerized accounting software to conduct all financial matters.

The Governing Council will adopt and oversee the following financial policies:

- *Budget policies – fiscal year, budget compliance, budget maintenance and budget adjustment requests (BAR).*
- *Additional policies if needed to comply with the Public School Finance Act.*
- *Conflict of Interest Policy.*
- *Compliance with the annual school audit.*
- *Procedures for bank reconciliations, personnel and payroll policies.*
- *Cash disbursement.*
- *Receipt of funds.*
- *Cash management program.*
- *Internal controls.*
- *Segregation of duties.*

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		NOT Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet-1
B (1) (2) F i n a n	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive set of financial policies and internal controls that are sufficient and comply with requirements and financial best practices. The policies and controls demonstrate capacity to	The school provides a set of clear financial policies and internal controls that comply with requirements and financial best practices. The policies and controls appear to demonstrate capacity to appropriately manage public funds.	The school provides a limited description of financial policies and internal controls that comply with requirements. The policies and controls suggest some capacity to manage public funds.	The school provides incomplete or inadequate financial policies and internal controls. --OR-- The application does not address financial policies and internal controls.

c i a l P o l i c i e s a n d I n t e r n a l C o n t r o l s	appropriately manage public funds.			
---	------------------------------------	--	--	--

Comments:

B.(2) Provide a description of the internal control procedures your school will utilize to safeguard assets, segregate its payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information, promote operational efficiency and insure compliance with all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations, and rules relative to your school's procedures.

Internal Control Procedures – Procedures will comply with all appropriate laws and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). DWS will develop and adopt a formal internal control procedure guide, and the following will be addressed:

Segregation of Duties – No staff is allowed to have full control of all processing that are involved in receiving, expending, reconciling and reporting of funds. This procedure will help minimize the potential of any fiscal fraud. The policy will be approved by the DWS governing council during the planning year.

Purchasing – Procedures for issuing purchase orders when required will be adopted. The Director and Business Manager will both be required to approve all purchase orders and ensure there are sufficient funds in the budget. Once the purchase order is approved, a copy is given to an employee whom can then continue to make the purchase. The vendor will be provided a copy of the purchase order.

Receiving Purchases – Upon receipt of the purchase, the purchase will be compared to the packing slip and items will be inspected for accuracy. The packing slip will then be forwarded to the Business Manager. If no packing slip is available, the Business Manager will be informed and a note written on the purchase order as to the date the shipment arrived. If the purchase is not correct or damaged the vendor will be notified. At this time the Business Manager will try to rectify the problem.

Cash Disbursements – Invoices are to be date stamped and forwarded to the Business Manager. The Business Manager will input the transaction into the accounting system and issue a check for signatures. The check, purchase order, and invoice will be clipped together and forwarded to the director. The Director will then verify and approve the check by initialing and dating the purchase order. Checks will require two signatures. Checks less than \$1,000 will be signed by both the Director and Business Manager. If the check is \$1,000 or greater, one of the signatures will be from the Governing Council Treasurer. The checks will then be forwarded to the Business Manager for distribution.

Cash Receipts – A log book will be supplied to the Administrative staff. Any receipts that are collected will be recorded into the logbook. The logbook will contain the date, person received from, form of the funds (cash or check) and the amount. The funds will then be forwarded to the Business Manager. The Business Manager will then record the date of the deposit into the logbook and record the deposit into the accounting software. The deposit will be made within 24 hours. If there is a discrepancy of greater than \$5.00, it will be noted and investigated.

Payroll – The Governing Council and the Director will approve and sign all staff contracts. The Business Manager will assemble all personnel files. The Business Manager will input employee information into the accounting system and will prepare the payroll. A report will be given to the Director to review and approve via signature. This report will be filed with all the other payroll reports. The Business Manager will ensure that all reports relating to payroll will be submitted and paid in a timely manner. All the reports will be maintained so that a clear audit trail exists to ensure proper payment and approval has been maintained.

Bank reconciliations – The Business Manager will reconcile the bank statement within 5 business days of receipt. An account reconciliation report will be prepared and stapled onto the bank statement. The bank

statement reconciliation, along with the bank statements, will be reviewed periodically by the Finance Committee.

Inventory – The Business Manager will be responsible for maintaining inventory of all computers, furniture and equipment that belong to DWS. Physical inventories will be conducted on an annual basis. If any discrepancies are found, the Director will be notified and investigation will be completed.

Professional Development – Most faculty training will be conducted on site. The Director will be responsible for scheduling faculty training.

Budget – DWS will prepare and adopt an annual operating budget. The Business Manager will propose this budget with supervision from the Director. The finance committee will assist in making any decisions around the budget and provide any additional assistance with any financial decisions. The proposed budget then will be presented to the Governing Council for approval.

Financial Statements/Reports – The Business Manager will prepare monthly financial reports. These will be presented at the monthly meetings with the Governing Council. The Governing Council will the review and approve the reports.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet-1
B · (2) F i n a n c i a l P o l i c i e s	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description of the internal control procedures that will be utilized to safeguard assets, segregate payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information, promote operational efficiency and insure compliance with all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations, and rules relative to the school's procedures.	The school provides a clear description of the internal control procedures that will be utilized to safeguard assets, segregate payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information, promote operational efficiency and insure compliance with all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations, and rules relative to the school's procedures.	The school provides a limited description of the internal control procedures that will be utilized to safeguard assets, segregate payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information, promote operational efficiency and insure compliance with all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations, and rules relative to the school's procedures.	The school provides incomplete or inadequate financial policies and internal controls. --OR-- The application does not address financial policies and internal controls.

a n d I n t e r n a l C o n t r o l s				
---	--	--	--	--

Comments:

B.(3) Identify the appropriate staff to perform financial tasks, and ensure that the staff positions are **completely supported** in the organizational structure/chart and in the budget. Clearly provide the qualifications and responsibilities for those positions.

Desert Willow School has determined that a .75 FTE Business Manager will be on staff. This was determined by talking to other charter schools of similar student population size. The school is also exploring the opportunity to share resources with another local charter school to produce some synergy between both entities. The Business Manager's duties in the fiscal area will include but not limited to the following areas:

- *Preparation of financial statements and reports*
- *Preparation of annual proposed operating budget*
- *Preparation of budget comparisons*
- *Preparation of grant reports*
- *Preparation of bank reconciliations*
- *Preparation of all federal and state payroll reports*
- *Processing accounts payable, including payroll*
- *Processing accounts receivable*
- *Be readily available for any questions that the finance committee may have*

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
B · (3) F i n a n c i a l P e r s o n n e l	The school identifies the appropriate staff to perform financial tasks, and the staff positions are completely supported in the organizational structure/chart and in the budget. Qualifications and responsibilities for those positions are clearly provided .	The school identifies the appropriate staff to perform financial tasks, and the staff positions are adequately supported in the organizational structure/chart and in the budget. The school provides some qualifications and responsibilities for those positions.	The school generally identifies the appropriate staff to perform financial tasks.	The school's provides an inadequate or incomplete description of staff necessary and appropriate to perform financial tasks. --OR-- The application does not address identification of appropriate financial personnel for the school.

Comments:

B.(4) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description**: of how the Governing Body will provide proper legal and fiscal oversight, of the state-required audit and finance committees, and explain how these committees will operate in the schools overall governance and management. Clearly stated financial controls demonstrate a **sound** understanding of the required GB oversight and financial reporting.

DWS will empanel an Audit Committee. The Audit Committee will play a significant role in the annual audit process. Annual audits will be conducted based on guidelines set forth by the Office of the State Auditor and the State Audit Rule. The school will be responsible to pay for the audit and make all the requested information available for the auditor at the time and place designated by the auditor. We

anticipate that the audit will be conducted between July and November with the final report being submitted to the Office of the State Auditor by the November 15 deadline.

An audit finding is any deficiency found during the audit process. There is no materiality factor; therefore, any amount can become a part of the audit report. DWS will make every attempt to minimize the possibility of audit findings. The governing council will adopt a corrective action plan to address all audit findings.

Reports to the PED – DWS will prepare and submit quarterly financial reports to the PED as required by law. The Director and Business Manager will address the Governing Council on the timeliness and review the report.

DWS will also empanel a Finance Committee. On a weekly process, at least one member of the Finance Committee will be reviewing, approving and signing checks that have been prepared beforehand. This process will allow the finance committee to see the details of the school's fiscal obligations and question any discrepancies as they arise.

The Business Manager's responsibilities will include but not limited to the following legal areas:

- *Identify constitutional rights applying to individuals within the public education system.*
- *Analyze appropriate statutory and constitutional authority regarding administration of charter schools.*
- *Analyze significant statutory issues relative to financial resource management.*

See B.(3) for the financial controls that will be in place before the opening of the school. The Governing Council with the assistance of the finance and audit committees will provide oversight in the school's fiscal responsibilities.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
B · (4) F i n a n c i a l O v e r s i g h t	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description of how the GB will provide proper legal and fiscal oversight, of the state-required audit and finance committees, and of how these committees will operate in the schools overall governance and management. Clearly stated financial controls demonstrate a sound understanding of the required GB oversight and financial reporting.	The school provides a clear description of how the GB will provide proper legal and fiscal oversight, and of the state-required audit and finance committees. Clearly stated financial controls demonstrate an adequate understanding of the required GB oversight and financial reporting.	The school provides a limited description of how the GB will provide legal and fiscal oversight and of the state-required audit and finance committees. The limited description may lack clear details of how the committees will operate in the context of the school's overall governance & management. Stated financial controls demonstrate some understanding of the required GB oversight and financial reporting.	The school provides an incomplete or inadequate description of how the GB will provide fiscal oversight and of the state-required audit and finance committees. --OR-- The application does not provide a clear plan for financial oversight.

Comments:

B.(5) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description** of long-range goals and strategies that will help build the school's capacity in areas such as governance, finance/budget, facilities, community relationships, student enrollment, charter compliance, 501(c)3, mission and performance objectives. Please ensure that you consider the sustainability of the school in your description.

Desert Willow School's mission is to value children's unique learning styles, builds self-awareness and a sense of belonging, inspires creative, flexible thinking, and cultivates engaged readers through a multisensory approach. By providing an environment where each child's developmental and unique needs are nurtured, Desert Willow School's long-range goal for each of its students to be happy, passionate life-long learners, knowing who they are as they grow and contribute in their community.

The strategies that will ensure that the mission and long range goals are met are:

Governance – As outlined in a previous section, the Governing Council is committed to upholding DWS mission and long-range goals. The Governing Council is committed to having a stable financial position and hiring a well-informed Director.

Finance/Budget - The projected budget has sufficient areas that are flexible and can be adjusted if any shortfalls in revenues or over expenditures in certain areas occur. While starting teaching salaries are a bit lower than Silver Consolidated School District, they are higher than the state minimum. Every year, a raise has been budgeted so that in year 4 or 5 the salaries are right in line with the Silver Consolidated School District. DWS believes teachers will be attracted to this new teaching environment where their teaching skills will develop with the training and collaboration provided. Substantial investment is being made on the initial teaching staff in the first few years. Any new teachers will benefit from the experience and knowledge of the teachers that have been at Desert Willow School during its inception. DWS is committed to ensuring that teachers have the best training possible in order to implement the holistic curriculum central to the DWS mission. Bringing the Enki Education founder to DWS as the main instructor to train the faculty is the best way to ensure the highest quality of education for our students.

Facilities – Desert Willow School’s facility projection does not interfere with the SEG funding. This is evident in the five-year budget of not allocating any additional funds to rent/lease of building. Since the SEG funds won’t be contributing to the facility costs at all, those funds can be used to further enhance the classroom. A significant portion of the SEG funds is dedicated to classroom instruction.

Community Relationships - Some major community relationships that have already begun are with the Guadalupe Montessori School (GMS) and The Learning Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success (TLC).

- 1. GMS has proposed that DWS be located on two acres of land they own. The school currently operates as a pre-k with only a small number of students in grades one to five. The GMS board sees the opening of DWS as an opportunity for them to reevaluate their strengths as a pre-K program and partner with DWS to provide a high-quality K-5 elementary by providing space and some shared facilities to the advantage of both schools. GMS pre-K students can then potentially feed into the Desert Willow Charter School.*
- 2. DWS is creating a school that directly aligns with the mission of TLC: To provide resources and community information to enable children with Dyslexia to achieve academic and life success. Students with dyslexia are a part of the target population of Desert Willow School (DWS). DWS is committed to meeting the needs of students with dyslexia by teaching reading in small, groups with reading specialists who are trained in Orton-Gillingham (O-G) methodologies. TLC is already committed to providing training for teachers in the Scottish Rite Take Flight Reading Program, one of the premier O-G programs for using with students with dyslexia. TLC is already committed to providing scholarships for students to receive intensive, specialized instruction in an after-school one-on-one or small group setting. DWS will provide this instruction during the school day; therefore, providing intensive instruction for a greater number of students than TLC’s after school instructors currently can. Another common goal of TLC and DWS are to provide parents and other community members with support and information about dyslexia and other language-based learning problems. DWS is also providing teacher training in a holistic, arts-integrated curriculum called Enki, which is also shown to benefit students with dyslexia, by meeting their “right-brained” strengths, as well as strengthening their “left brain” skills.*

Student Enrollment - The biggest concern of any new charter school is not reaching the student enrollment figures. The consensus of the current Governing Council is that the community is fully supportive of and excited by the creation of this new charter school, demonstrated by the fact that the parents of 77 potential students have expressed their interest in writing.

The decision to have the same number of students for each of the first five years is a decision made primarily due to the cost and time to train teachers in the Enki curriculum and using Orton-Gillingham methodologies and ensure their proficiency. This strategy will optimize the learning environment for faculty and students alike. Creating a stable school environment in the first five is essential to long term success and sustainability. At the anticipation of the renewal process, DWS will evaluate how much and at what rate growth makes the most sense for a sustainable future.

If the school enrollment is not met in any given year, the most sensible compromise is to combine grades into a classroom. Reducing staff by one teacher and .5 Instructional Assistant is the most strategic way to assure that enrolled students' education and experience is not compromised. Desert Willow does not believe that by reducing or eliminating a classroom will affect the school's educational approach in any manner.

Charter Compliance – The Governing Council will ensure DWS compliance with all federal, state and local rules and regulations. The Governing Council understands their greatest initial responsibility is to hire the most highly qualified Administrative Director, oversee the hiring of the most highly qualified Business Manager and assure the best possible facility is created and ready for the opening of the school.

501(c)3 – Desert Willow School has a strong partnership with an existing 501(c)3, The Learning Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success, which will meet the fund-raising needs of DWS for the foreseeable future. See the MOU in Appendix H.

Mission and performance objectives – Through its innovative curriculum and teaching practices delivered by highly-qualified faculty, cultivated by a highly-effective administrator and support staff, overseen by a dedicated business manager and Governing Council, DWS will motivate and inspire children through activities that give them the confidence and personal connections essential to academic success. By providing such a learning environment with smaller student to teacher ratio, Desert Willow School will offer parents an educational option that is in contrast to the lack of success their children may have had in existing traditional public schools in Grant County.

Desert Willow School's curriculum, which immerses students in age-appropriate, multi-sensory learning, will lead to rigorous academic mastery. DWS's creative, flexible thinkers will be more than ready to meet the immense challenges of the 21st century, valuing who they are as individuals and knowing what talents they have to contribute to making their community and the world a better place. This is the soul of the Desert Willow School mission.

	Ranking
--	---------

	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
B · (5) S c h o o l S u s t a i n a b i l i t y	The school provides a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description of long-range goals and strategies that will help build the school's capacity in areas such as governance, finance/budget, facilities, community relationships, student enrollment, charter compliance, 501(c)3, mission and performance objectives. The description demonstrates the school's thoughtful consideration of school sustainability.	The school provides a clear description of long-range goals and strategies that will help build the school's capacity most of the essential areas such as governance, finance/budget, facilities, community relationships, student enrollment, charter compliance, 501(c)3, mission and performance objectives. The description demonstrates the school's adequate consideration of school sustainability.	The school provides a general description of long-range goals and strategies that will help build the school's capacity some of the essential areas such as governance, finance/budget, facilities, community relationships, student enrollment, charter compliance, 501(c)3, mission and performance objectives. The description demonstrates that the school has a limited understanding of long-range planning and school sustainability.	The school provided an inadequate or incomplete description of long-range goals and strategies that will help build the school's capacity and ensure the school's sustainability. --OR-- The application provides no information regarding the long-term sustainability of the school.

Comments:

Evidence of Support

A. Outreach Activities.

A. Provide **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** evidence that you have developed an effective and thoughtful outreach program. Provide **sound** evidence that you have addressed a broad audience to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to enroll. Provide clear descriptions of outreach activities demonstrating that the school is attempting to reach a broad audience and to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to enroll.

A. Outreach Activities

DWS volunteers have spent a significant amount of time doing grassroots outreach to potential supporters of the school. Activities were chosen based on the likelihood of the demographics being mixed Hispanic/White, children being present with their parents, and a broad range of socioeconomic status. Since April, 2015, we have handed out 1000 informational postcards, shown the film, Enki Education:

Developmental Immersion-Mastery five times, and tabled at a number of Silver City events; Silver City Blues Festival, Jump Into Summer, the Grant County Community Food Pantry, and Give Grandly. The postcards and all public information includes our Facebook page, contact names, a phone number and two email addresses that people can use to get information. The local newspapers have published three front page news articles about DWS; Silver City Sun News on Nov 19, 2014, Silver City Daily Press, June 8, 2015 and the Silver City Sun News on June 12, 2015. Presentations have been made to The Learning Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success board, Guadalupe Montessori School board and teachers, the Grant County Association of Retired Educators and the WNMU student teacher seminar students.

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
A · O u t r e a c h A c t i v i t i e s	The school provides clear, comprehensive, and cohesive evidence that it has developed an effective and thoughtful outreach program. There is sound evidence that the school has addressed a broad audience to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to enroll. Clear descriptions of outreach activities demonstrate that the school is attempting to reach a broad audience and to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to enroll.	The school provides clear evidence that it has developed an adequate outreach program. There is adequate evidence that the school has addressed a broad audience to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to enroll.	The school provides general evidence that it has developed an outreach program. There is some evidence that the school has addressed a broad audience to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to enroll.	The school provides inadequate or incomplete evidence that it has developed an outreach program. --OR-- The application does not provide a description of outreach activities, or evidence that the school developers have conducted any exploratory community outreach.

Comments:

B. Community Support.

B. Provide **sufficient measurable**, quantifiable and **qualitative** data-based evidence of abundant, broad-based support for the school among residents in the targeted community or student population (For instance, provide the total number of students interested in the charter by grade level. **DO NOT provide names or specific letters of interest from families or students.** If appropriate to demonstrate that the interested students meet the demographics of the students you are hoping to serve by the proposed

school, disaggregate the number of prospective students by zip code, school of attendance (current), gender or type of current school (home, private, public), or other pertinent data.)

B. Community Support

Our outreach survey collected the following data:

BBS	PS	PT	FECL	GCM
188	77	10	9	3

BBS=Broad Based Community Support

PS= Potential Students

PT=Potential Teachers

FECL=Volunteers interested in being Friday Explorer Club Leaders

GCM=Volunteers interested in being Governing Council Members

There are seven people signed up to attend the Rousing Intuition workshop, the first stage of becoming an Enki certified teacher. The workshop is being held in Silver City, NM July 24-26, 2015 and being taught by Beth Sutton, the founder of Enki Education. Five of the people signed up are people who have expressed interest in teaching at Desert Willow School, one of them is a Governing Council member and one is a charter writer/volunteer. Additionally, at our final showing of Enki Education: Developmental Immersion-Mastery, on June 20, 2015, we had five more people show interest and take applications for the Rousing Intuition workshop.

While initially it may seem like these are low numbers, they are actually very significant in the context of Silver City/Grant County's history and demographic statistics. Grant County has a 15.6% poverty rate, 6.7% unemployment, a 75% high school graduation rate and only 23% of adults have a secondary education. For generations, the primary employer in Grant County has been the copper mines. It is not uncommon for people working in the mines today to be the 4th or 5th generation of a family to be mine workers, especially in the Hispanic community. Over the years, this has contributed to a lack of commitment to education. Many children enter elementary school already assuming they are going to work in the mines. As mining technology has changed, significantly reducing the number of jobs available, there has been a growing awareness of the need for great education. We have had dozens of conversations with people who have never heard of a charter school, let alone Enki Education or Orton Gillingham. People are interested and willing to learn more but are very cautious and tentative in their willingness to voice support. In that context, we think having half of our enrollment target actually sign on to show their interest is monumental. Based on these many conversations, there is no doubt that if we continue our intensive outreach efforts we'll have 120 students ready to enroll in the fall of 2016.

Potential Students by grade:

<i>Kinder</i>	<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>	<i>5th</i>	<i>Total</i>
20	13	12	18	7	7	77

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
B.	Exceeds—8	Meets—6	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
Evidence of Support	The school provides sufficient measurable, quantifiable and qualitative data-based evidence of abundant, broad-based support for the school among residents in the targeted community or student population.	The school provides adequate quantifiable data-based evidence of broad-based support for the school among residents in the targeted community or student population.	The school provides limited measurable evidence of support for the school among residents in the targeted community or student population.	The school provides inadequate or incomplete evidence of community or student support for the proposed school. --OR-- The application does not provide evidence that there is community and student support for the proposed school.

Comments:

C. Community Relationships

C. Clearly demonstrate that you have developed **meaningful and strategic** networking relationships or resource agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals. (This differs from the formal partnership agreements that are integral to the school's operations, as described in Section III.J(1) of this application.)
Letters or other documentation of support are provided.

Two letters here, additional letters in appendices

June 25, 2015

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter of support for Desert Willow School as a mother of two prospective students, one of which will be starting Kindergarten this fall, 2015. I am also writing as a member of the Silver City, New Mexico community for most of my life.

I was fortunate enough to go to an alternative elementary school in Silver City that had a mission much like that of the proposed charter: "Desert Willow School VALUES children's unique learning styles, BUILDS self-awareness and a sense of belonging, INSPIRES creative, flexible thinking, and CULTIVATES engaged readers through a multi-sensory approach". The school that I attended closed shortly after I moved into the public school system. I truly believe that the holistic and hands-on schooling that I had for my elementary years fostered in me a life long love of learning that I carried through to get my bachelors degree from the University of Oregon in 2005.

I am now faced with the challenges that come with sending my child to a public school that I don't believe will support and inspire her. Desert Willow School, the proposed elementary school, (that if approved by the Charter School Division will open in Silver City for the 2016-2017 school year) will fill a gap and will truly meet the needs of the students of Silver City. Therefore, I strongly urge the Charter School Division to approve Desert Willow School.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaelin Bieg-Chvala". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Kaelin" and last name "Bieg-Chvala" clearly distinguishable.

Kaelin Bieg-Chvala

June 18, 2015

To Whom It May Concern

This letter is in support of the proposed Desert Willow elementary school. If approved by the Charter School Division, Desert Willow will open its doors in Silver City, New Mexico, during the 2016—2017 school year. Through the charter application process the founders of Desert Willow School have worked hard to create a school that will meet the needs of many elementary students. After reading their curriculum, philosophical stance, and intents and purposes statements it is clear that the focus is on meeting the needs of students who “fall between the cracks” in the regular educational system. Meeting the needs of all students who will attend, Desert Willow School is clearly supported through comprehensive and culturally responsive curriculum outline in those documents.

Focusing on meeting the needs of students who struggle in the regular classroom due to dyslexia, ADD/ADHD, or just needing a more holistic view of learning is something that many teachers are reflecting upon and trying to obtain answers to in the current standards based environment. The hiring of teachers who know the needs of students with dyslexia and the training they will provide for their teachers in Orton Gillingham methodologies will follow the intent of HB230 (the dyslexia law) and do so thoroughly providing interventions at all three tiers of student need. The explicit, multi-sensory approach to teaching reading is one way that students’ with characteristics of dyslexia will have their needs met. The other is in a holistic approach to curriculum. Those of you reviewing the curriculum will note the way languages, science, the fine arts and social studies (in addition to other core subjects) are being taught. This addresses the importance of students’ interests and inquiry along with preparing students to be a part of an informed electorate and a multicultural society.

The Enki curriculum that Desert Willow has chosen to use follows the developmental stages of children’s learning and teaches the curriculum in a very holistic way. The practice and theory connection is very strong in this curriculum and supports students’ academic success where they are at and is tailored for optimal and timely academic growth. Engaging students in the curriculum via many of the strategies outlined in the curriculum, such as story, naturally draws students in and engages them to be ready to learn. Those students with a more limited exposure to the world around them will be given the opportunity to learn more about this through the outlined curriculum and the school’s Friday enrichment clubs. This will augment their already growing knowledge about the world and support their background knowledge in other aspects they are unfamiliar with on a regular basis. The active, multi-sensory nature of the curriculum along with its fine-

arts enrichment, and exposure to foreign language will truly meet the needs of the students of Silver City.

As their mission statement indicates "Desert Willow School VALUES children's unique learning styles, BUILDS self-awareness and a sense of belonging, INSPIRES creative, flexible thinking, and CULTIVATES engaged readers through a multisensory approach". This positive view of educating children will be an addition to the local community that parents and families will appreciate. They will value the district for supporting their children to learn in this alternate way that will meet the needs of students whose needs are not as addressed in traditional methods of instruction. Therefore, I recommend the Charter School Division to approve Desert Willow School.

Sincerely,

/s/ Margarita P. Wulftange, Ph.D.

Margarita P. Wulftange
Associate Professor, Education
Western New Mexico University
575.538.6551
Margarita.Wulftange@wnmu.edu

	Ranking			
	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
C. Community Relationship Options	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
nc evidence of support	The school clearly demonstrates that it has developed meaningful, strategic networking relationships or resource agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals. (This differs from the formal partnership agreements that are integral to the school's operations, as described in Section III.J(1) of this application.) Robust letters or other documentation of support are provided.	The school demonstrates that it has developed adequate networking relationships or resource agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals. Letters or other documentation of support are provided.	The school provides limited descriptions of networking relationships or resource agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals. Letters or other documentation of support are not provided.	The school provides inadequate or incomplete evidence that it has developed meaningful working relationships or resource agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals. --OR-- The application does not address the school's networking relationships or other agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals.
Comments:				

D. Uniqueness and Innovation.

D. Provide **clear evidence** demonstrating the **uniqueness, innovation** and significant contribution of your educational program to public education through meaningful comparisons and contrasts with the educational programs of other public schools that serve the same grade levels in the geographic area in which you plan to locate. Ensure that the evidence establishes a compelling need for the proposed school's educational program.

Uniqueness of Proposed School

Desert Willow School (DWS) values each student's unique learning styles; builds self-awareness and a sense of belonging; inspires creative, flexible thinking; and nurtures engaged readers through a multisensory approach. To fulfill this mission Desert Willow School will use a number of innovative features that ensure all students meet their full potential.

1. Orton-Gillingham (O-G) methodology and small, flexible reading groups: O-G has been the proven intervention for over 80 years for students with dyslexia and other language-based reading differences.

Early, intensive intervention is optimal for preventing reading struggles and closing gaps between potential and actual performance. Desert Willow School will provide an Orton- Gillingham based reading program that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency practice and spelling. DWS will have one and two-thirds reading specialists per 120 students; as compared to the local district average of two Title 1 teachers per 360 students. Reading specialists will work closely with classroom teachers to more specifically identify and educate students most at risk. At DWS every child who shows signs of dyslexia will have access to small group reading instruction using Orton-Gillingham methodologies in accordance with state law requiring high-quality interventions no matter the tier of instruction.

By offering this “tried and true” methodology for reading instruction, especially for students with characteristics of dyslexia, we are optimizing each child’s success in reaching their full potential in reading, spelling, math, and writing. In our local district schools, even our students who are diagnosed with a specific learning disability in reading and/or dyslexia are not necessarily receiving Orton-Gillingham based instruction. DWS will provide all such students this instruction in a small group setting, making Desert Willow School unique in our area.

Anecdotal Evidence: One O-G trained special education teacher in the local school district had begun O-G instruction with a group of four students diagnosed with dyslexia, but had to stop when her caseload became too great to manage the intensive instruction needed.

We will increase both reading proficiency and enjoyment by providing intensive, small group Orton-Gillingham based instruction that will benefit all students. One O-G program that we might use is the Wilson Reading System. When 200 students in grades 3rd through 12th who had been receiving special education services for several years but were not improving, were instructed for one school year with this program. They made the following gains: a gain of 4.6 grade levels in Word Attack, a gain of 1.6 grade levels in Passage Comprehension, and a gain of 1.9 grade levels in Total Reading. Please note that these students received this instruction 2-3 times a week, whereas our students will receive it 4 times.

Two of the four elementary schools in Silver City currently use Saxon Phonics (Saxon is based on Alphabetic Phonics, an O-G Program) with their regular education first graders. None of the four elementary schools currently use the same phonics program consistently through the grades. For example, at two schools, students begin in kindergarten with Starfall, switch to Saxon phonics in first grade, switch to teacher-selected phonics in second grade on to no formal phonics instruction in third grade on up. In addition, if they receive Title 1 reading service, the program used is bits of Seeing Stars, DRA Word Analysis, and Read Naturally. Though each of these programs have their merits, this “Band-Aid approach” is exactly what research clearly shows hurts students in their learning. Without a consistent program, the sequence of learning is lost especially for our struggling and disengaged students.

2. Reading Specialists: DWS will hire reading specials who are working toward their certification as a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) and are trained in O-G methodologies. The reading specialists will provide Tier 2 interventions, oversee staff training in reading, and monitor program delivery for fidelity.

The Silver City School District trained some of their special education teachers and Title 1 reading teachers during a 3-day training in a Lindamood-Bell program. The program has been shown to have positive effects in helping students with dyslexia learn to read. However, it is a specialized program best learned in more than a 3-day training in order for teachers to become confident in its use. Follow-up training for new teachers (one elementary school has all-new special education teachers and one of two new Title 1 instructors) has not happened. In addition, the philosophy and methodology was not even “introduced” to classroom teachers; therefore, even if it is being used in small group settings it has no carry-over into the regular setting.

Desert Willow School is committed to collaboration, which is why every Friday includes collaboration and planning time, SAT meetings, and teacher training. All DWS teachers will understand the curriculum and methodologies being in used in the school. DWS is committed to providing education that is flexible enough to meet the individual needs of students, yet keeps the integrity of the research-based programs we are implementing.

3. Holistic Arts-Integrated Curriculum: The target population of DWS includes students with dyslexia and other brain-based learning difficulties, students who are disengaged in the typical classroom, and students who are creatively or academically gifted. Research shows that many of these non-traditional learners, including children with dyslexia, are right-brain dominant. They excel at connecting ideas, thinking “out of the box” and seeing the big picture. Therefore, DWS students will be instructed in a curriculum that integrates subjects on a common theme in line with age-appropriate interests according to developmental stages. Children’s natural abilities are thus harnessed and they are internally motivated. All teachers will be trained in Enki Education, a holistic curriculum that blends elements from Waldorf, Montessori, the United Nation School of Education, and Western education’s focus on skill proficiency on a path from immersion to mastery. (See Academics Section). The Enki Curriculum is being successfully used in schools alongside Common Core Standards in at least one other school in New Mexico and in other states and Canada.

Disengagement is an issue in public schools, where teachers are not necessarily paying attention to student’s core developmental needs. Because the focus in Silver City schools is all about the test scores, too many teachers have lost their confidence to listen to their intuition and stay true to what they believe is best developmentally for their students. Teachers working from a holistic framework are knowledgeable of child development and sensitive to providing instruction in various skills at the times appropriate for learning them. In this way, students are internally motivated to be engaged in their learning. A secure and caring relationship between teacher and child is another core holistic value. Montessori and Waldorf are two well-known examples of holistic education. At Desert Willow School, we pair the heart and experience of holistic education with traditional Western education’s focus on mastery for a truly meaningful and powerful educational experience.

Currently, the Silver Consolidated Schools have no scope and sequence or adopted reading curriculum beyond the Common Core Standards and New Mexico State Standards. Though the elementary schools have many talented teachers, there is no continuity as they move through the grades (or from school to school) in either content or how instruction is developed.

Last year, the five elementary schools had four “district grade level” meetings. However, there was no communication between grade levels. So even though some consensus was formed among the schools at one grade level, no continuity between the grades was established. This year when one elementary principal invited the other schools to continue discussions to create a scope and sequence through curriculum mapping; the other schools declined.

4. Low Student to Teacher Ratio: Class size will be 20 (10 for each kindergarten), as compared with an average of 26 in Grant County. Several studies cited by the School Improvement Network found increases in overall achievement, especially for younger, under-performing and disadvantaged students, when class size was kept small. In addition, our 1st grade will have a full-time Instructional Assistant assuring two educators per twenty students. The 2nd and 3rd grades will share an Instructional Assistant and the 4th and 5th grades will share an Instructional Assistant; therefore assuring two educators providing small group and individual instruction for half their day.

*5. Extended School Day: Desert Willow School will have an extended school day Monday through Thursday: 8:30 to 4:00 with a 30-minute lunch (7 hours learning time per day). Extended time at school each day allows for the rhythms of a child’s natural impulses. At Desert Willow School we believe that **how** we present the educational content to children is as important as the content itself. A longer school day allows for the time to support exploration, flexible thinking, and empowered understanding while supporting emotional and social health, thereby, supporting the development and health of the school community. The longer school days support our mission to value student’s unique learning styles, build self-awareness and a sense of belonging, inspire creative, flexible thinking, and cultivate engaged readers through a multisensory approach.*

Researchers have found that our target population—students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties, students with ADHD and other attention issues, and students who are bright, yet disengaged—thrive with a holistic approach, a method of teaching which activates the right side of their brain. Many of these students tend to be right brain dominant. Incorporating art, movement, and other forms of learning stimulates both sides of the brain, creating new connections.

In any program, one must ask: does a given program structure the day and the week, the month and the year, in such a way as to optimize focus and learning? Is the flow of time structured to support exploration, flexible thinking, and empowered understanding; or to move quickly over the surface accumulating information and mastering skills with little meaning? Does the structure support emotional and social health and, thereby, support the development and health of community?

At Desert Willow School the answer is yes. Throughout our program, we work to have a healthy flow of more focused activities, more relaxed activities, and supportive transitions. This applies to the balance of all activities, from the smallest units within a given class, to the overall flow of the day, week, month, and year. The choices we make to achieve this balance take into account the times of day and the times of year that are naturally conducive to more active physical engagement; those more naturally suited to

quiet focused work, and those times most conducive to creative work. Because we approach all content work through many learning doorways (arts, activity, concept, practice, etc.), we can honor these natural impulses of the children and still keep our focus on a given subject.

In today's culture, children live too much in either the "go, go, go" or the "hurry up and wait" timelines that adults have created. Returning to natural rhythms helps children learn in a relaxed way that provides greater results. The extended school day on Monday through Thursday allows students to form connections needed to allow true academic gains.

6. Friday Explorer Clubs: Each week Desert Willow School students will participate in Friday Explorer Clubs, designed in collaboration with community volunteers. Explorer Clubs are a way for students to find, explore, and build new areas of strength that will in turn increase self-confidence and motivation. These may include visual arts, weaving and textiles, gardening, cooking, dance, nature study, and archaeology, to name a few talents of our community and its member volunteers. Since Fridays are an active time with more free choice in lessons and are partially dependent upon community volunteers, we understand a shorter day will be sufficient to accomplish these goals.

Friday Explorer Clubs gives the children opportunities to work in small groups and learn the social skills needed to create together, with progressively less direction and assistance from the teacher in both planning and execution. The youngest children work with a lot of adult guidance on such things as baking, dioramas, gardening, and nature projects. The older children take on more responsibility for the choosing and designing of their own projects with assistance from adult volunteers. Their projects could include such things as ceramic and textile arts, building model houses, meal planning/preparing, or gardening in the ways of the culture they are studying. Older students will also have opportunity to work alongside and take on mentorship roles with the students.

7. Friday Collaboration Time: Professional Learning Communities are one of the big new things in education. At Desert Willow School we want to go beyond the typical grade level and faculty meetings. In order to truly collaborate to meet the needs of all 120 of our unique students, we are setting aside all day Friday for collaboration time. Each week the director and lead teachers will develop the Friday schedule to determine which teachers and IAs will collaborate and which will support Friday Explorer Clubs. Various collaboration styles that Desert Willow School will implement are 1) whole faculty; 2) all classroom, reading, and special education teachers; 3) classroom teacher with their specific IA; 4) reading specialist(s) with a subset of classroom teachers; 5) SAT team meetings. Teacher training, curriculum discussion, preparation, and practice will be a part of collaboration time; along with scheduling and preparation to meet the needs of specific students or groups of students. Fridays will also be a time for IEPs and Parent/Teacher conferences.

8. Family Enrichment: The success of any school program is dependent in large part on parental support, involvement, and enthusiasm – this is especially true of DWS's innovative program. Working with parents to support the children's school experience, we also want to support the parents. In this hectic world, parents rarely take time for their own enrichment, which in the end is the cornerstone of family life. To meet both these needs, we will offer parent evenings and workshops on an ongoing basis. These will include education in child development, experience in a variety of arts and academics taught through the arts, and exploration of ways we can work together to support both family life and success at school.

We also feel that the school and family must be mutually supportive in the day to day details of life. To this end, we structure homework such that it is primarily the work of being at home as a positive and contributing member of the family. We work with the families to find assignments appropriate to the family culture and the demands of school. For example, children might choose to write a report about a family camping trip or to graph participating in family chores or to convert (using multiplication or division) the measurements for a family recipe (and cooking it!) or preparing and writing about a favorite family recipe and sharing both story and culture with the class. Experts agree that a meaningful connection between family and school is very important to student success. (Novick, Rebecca; Developmentally Appropriate and Culturally Responsive Education: Theory in Practice; 1996) At Desert Willow School, we make this an active part of school life, looking for ways to support family life and have family life support learning in all subject areas.

Part of the DWS mission is to create true partnerships among child, parent and school to build a sense of belonging. Helping families understand their child's strengths, learning styles, and accomplishments so they are empowered to effectively support them also helps create a sense of belonging for the student and family. This could take the form of learning fairs, multiple conferences, and Explorer Club showcase events.

Conclusion:

The current situation is unacceptable. According to statistics, 15%-20% of students in Grant County show characteristics of dyslexia and need specialized instruction; most of whom are not receiving this instruction. Desert Willow School will give non-traditional learners what they need to thrive through a unique combination of reading intervention and holistic instruction. We will improve students' understanding of mathematics and content areas through a hands-on curriculum that encourages investigation and critical-thinking, is sensitive to child developmental stages and in accordance with the Common Core. A secondary benefit of this multisensory style of instruction is that it will reinforce short-term memory, an area that is typically weak in struggling readers, according to Dr. Sally Shaywitz of the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity. Desert Willow School is committed to preventing students from "falling through the cracks."

We will motivate and inspire children through activities that give them the confidence and personal connections essential to higher-order thinking. By providing such a learning environment with smaller student to teacher ratio, Desert Willow School will offer parents an educational option that is in contrast to the lack of success their children have had in existing traditional public schools in Grant County. Desert Willow School's curriculum, which immerses students in age-appropriate, multi-sensory learning, will lead to rigorous academic mastery. DWS's creative, flexible thinkers will be more than ready to meet the immense challenges of the 21st century, valuing who they are as individuals and knowing what talents they have to contribute to making their community and the world a better place. This is the soul of the Desert Willow School mission.

Ranking	
	
Satisfied	Not Satisfied

D · U n i q u e s s o f P r o p o s e d S c h o o l	Exceeds—8	Meets—6	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
	The school provides clear evidence of the uniqueness, innovation and significant contribution of its educational program to public education through meaningful comparisons and contrasts with the educational programs of other public schools that serve the same grade levels in the geographic area in which the school plans to locate. The evidence establishes a compelling need for the proposed school's educational program.	The school provides adequate evidence of the significant contribution of its educational program to public education through meaningful comparisons and contrasts with the educational programs of other public schools that serve the same grade levels in the geographic area in which the school plans to locate. The evidence establishes a compelling need for the proposed school's educational program.	The school provides unclear or general descriptions of the uniqueness, innovation, or significant contribution of its educational program. The evidence provided is limited or weak .	The school provides inadequate or incomplete evidence of the uniqueness, innovation, or significant contribution of its educational program to public education. --OR-- The application does not address the uniqueness or innovation of the proposed school's educational program.
Comments:				

E. Letters of Support.

E. **Optional**. Provide letters of support from community leaders, business people or elected officials. (If additional space is needed, submit a separate document as a supplement to the Appendices.)

Two letters here, see additional letters in the appendices.



SOUTHWEST | NEW MEXICO
GREEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
POWER UP YOUR BUSINESS

Date: June 24, 2015
To: New Mexico Public Education Department/Charter Schools Division
Attn: Public Education Commission
Jerry Apodaca Education Building
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM 87501 |

From: Southwest New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
Re: Letter in Support of Desert Willow School

Dear New Mexico Public Education Department/Charter Schools Division,

The Board of the Southwest New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce (SWNMGCC) as a professional civic organization supports the proposed elementary Desert Willow School. We know approval is needed by the Charter School Division for Desert Willow School to open its doors in Silver City, New Mexico, during the 2016—2017 school year. We hope that approval is expeditious.

The Desert Willow School has chosen the Enki curriculum. This innovative curriculum follows the developmental stages of children's learning. Using the curriculum is holistic and thoughtful – developing skills and innovative learning that we value as a community. As well, we are intrigued by the concept of the Friday enrichment clubs, bringing another aspect to learning. Many of our members are creative professionals, and we appreciate the active, multi-sensory fine-arts enrichment nature of the curriculum.

As a board, we encourage the Charter School Division to approve Desert Willow. If you have any questions, please feel free to call either the SWNMGCC Board President, Mr. Gordon West, at 575-537-3689, or me (SWNMGCC Board Secretary) at 575-519-1680.
Respectfully,

Lynda Aiman-Smith
NMSW Green Chamber of Commerce, Secretary/Treasurer
Box 2020, Silver City NM, 88062-2020

**The Learning Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success
3211 Chamise Road, Silver City, NM 88061**

June 10, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

Our Mission is to provide resources and community information to enable children with Dyslexia to achieve academic and life success. Approximately 500 Grant County school-age children are dyslexic or show signs of dyslexia. Our 501-c-3 organization raises money to support several interrelated areas of focus that serve students in Grant County who are struggling readers or need interventions because they have dyslexia or other language-based problems: 1) create a Charter School (Desert Willow School) which VALUES children's unique learning styles, BUILDS self-awareness and a sense of belonging, INSPIRES creative, flexible thinking, and CULTIVATES engaged readers through a multisensory approach; 2) train instructors in research-based methods proven to help students with dyslexia; 3) provide scholarships to help students who cannot afford intensive specialized instruction; and 4) provide parents and other community members with support and information about dyslexia and other language-based learning problems.

I am writing in support of this proposed elementary school. If approved by the Charter School Division it will open its doors in Silver City, New Mexico, during the 2016—2017 school year. Through the charter application process, the founders of Desert Willow School are working hard to create a school that will fulfill currently unmet needs of many elementary students. The focus on meeting the needs of students who "fall between the cracks" in the regular educational system is what draws me to support the creation of this school.

Focusing on meeting the needs of students who struggle in the regular classroom due to dyslexia, ADD/ADHD, or needing a more holistic view of learning fulfills a great need in our community. The hiring of teachers who know the needs of students with dyslexia and the training they will provide for their teachers in Orton Gillingham methodologies will not only follow the intent of HB230 (The Dyslexia Law) but also provide interventions at all three tiers of student need.

The Enki curriculum that Desert Willow School has chosen to use follows the developmental stages of children's learning and teaches the curriculum in a very holistic way. Engaging students through story naturally draws them in to a place ready to learn. Those students with limited exposure to the world around them will be brought to a more level playing field by what this curriculum and the school's Friday enrichment clubs will bring to them. The active, multi-sensory nature of the curriculum along with its fine-arts enrichment, and exposure to foreign language will truly meet the needs of the students of Silver City. As their mission statement indicates, Desert Willow School is a much needed vision in Silver City. I encourage the Charter School Division to approve Desert Willow School.

Sincerely,

/s/ George F. Lundy

Chair, Board of Directors
The Learning Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success

Appendices and Attachments

Appendix Number	Appendix Description (* indicates optional appendix)	Attached (Check if Yes)
A	Course Scope and Sequence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B	*Governing Documents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C	Head Administrator job description	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
D	Job Descriptions (of licensed and certified staff)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
E	*Governing Body Personnel Policies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
F	Student Discipline Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
G	Conflict of Interest Policy/Disclosure Statement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
H	*Proposed contract or agreement with partner or contractor (Required if you have one)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I	PSFA-approved projected facility plan documentation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
J	910B5 SEG Computation Revenue Estimate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
K	5-year budget plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
L	Proposed salary schedule for licensed staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Waivers	*Other Waivers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Founders	*Names and descriptions of qualifications/experience	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Ranking			
	Exceeds—4	Meets—3	Partially Meets - 2	Does Not Meet—1
App endi ces	The school provides all of the required appendices.		The school provides most of the significant appendices	The school does not provide the most significant appendices. --OR-- The application does not include all of the required appendices.