



**WILLIAM K. (KEN) LOWRY, Superintendent**

**WALLY NEWBERRY, Deputy Superintendent -  
Instructional Services / Student Programs**

**VICKI BARBER, Deputy Superintendent -  
Administrative Services**

**County Board of Education**

**DOROTHY EMERY, President**  
**ROBERT A. LAURIE, Vice President**  
**DONALD A. FRIER, D.D.S., Member**  
**DAVID W. LONG, Ph.D., Member**  
**JAMES B. NORTON, Member**

***EL DORADO COUNTY  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS***

**CHARTER SCHOOL  
PETITION**

Our world today is drastically different from the way it was even just a few years ago. In spite of all the incredible advances involving the technological, economic, social, and informational components of our lives, the traditional public school system has not kept pace with the changing needs of a large portion of our student population.

The El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools and staff recognize that as stakeholders in the educational community, it is time to develop a whole new approach to education. Therefore, we are submitting the following petition for Charter School Status for the Community School in El Dorado County, commencing in September of 1993.

**1. DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

The Community School in El Dorado County is an organization which has always been associated with a strong curricular and instructional base, while maintaining a flexible, accommodating response capability. The Charter Community School includes entrepreneurial programs. The balance of this document describes the Charter Community School program and is not applicable to the entrepreneurial programs except in those instances where specifically referenced. Academic skills are developed while working with individual students to promote a sense of personal significance. To be an "educated person" in the 21st century, from our perspective, requires:

- a. cultivating critical awareness;
- b. expanding the way individuals look at themselves and others;
- c. building a repertoire of problem-solving approaches; and
- d. engendering a global perspective.

This emphasis on the development of both academic and non-academic life skills has created the school's primary goal of developing a community of learners, which includes the students, teachers, and administration alike. A description of the educational program, therefore, must include both the curricular component as well as the overriding principles which form the foundation of the school. Together, these components clearly define what it means to be educated and how learning best occurs.

Curriculum. It is the philosophy of the Charter Community School to provide a rigorous program based on the adopted California State Frameworks. The curriculum and instructional leaders of El Dorado County have extended the frameworks by developing courses of study using a county-wide collaborative called SEEK-12 (Seeking Excellence in Education K-12). These courses of study will be used with each individual student as appropriate. However, the Charter Community School approach is unique in that the curriculum is implemented within a project-oriented, technology-based format. Academic skills and higher-level thinking skills are taught using thematic units based on singular, or cross-curricular subject areas.

Each student enrolled in the school will have a Differentiated Educational Plan which will address his or her needs in academic, social, and emotional areas. The development of each plan will involve the individual student, his/her parents, and staff of the Community School. Pre-assessment will occur in all areas, then target goals and objectives will be mutually agreed to by all individuals concerned. These plans will help to pace the student through expectancies at a rate which will allow for continual success. The progress of each student on completion of his/her plan will be closely tied to the measurable student outcomes (Charter Petition Element #2), and the Assessment Procedures (Element #3).

Guiding Principles. The Community School's foundation is the basic belief that in order to make a difference in the world and to turn ideas into action, we must all be pioneers in our field, contributors of knowledge, creators of solutions, explorers of ideas, and risk-takers on behalf of society through our students. In order to accomplish this task, students and staff must possess some very specific skills: they must have strong perceptions of personal capabilities, significance in primary relationships, personal power, inter- and intra-personal skills, the ability to respond to everyday life, and the wisdom to evaluate situations (H. Stephen Glenn and Jane Nelsen, *Raising Self-Reliant Children in a self-Indulgent World*, Prima Publishing & communications, 1992). There are four principles which serve as guideposts in the educational program on our journey toward developing these skills. These four principles apply to all individuals who are involved in the Charter Community School--students, teachers, administrators, and parents.

1. *Our school serves society.* We expect our learning, teaching, and work to make a difference in the world. To that end, we try to discover what is most important to do, and focus our resources for the greatest, most enduring benefit. In doing this we continually remind ourselves of the inherent worth of all of our students and each other.
2. *Our clients deserve our best.* We expect our service to our clients to be worthy, vigorous, resourceful, courteous, and reliable. In the pursuit of our mission, we intend to be a healthy, creative organization with the financial and inner resources needed to produce our best work. We require ourselves to abide by the highest professional standards and to look beyond the letter of professional guidelines to their spirit.
3. *We strive to make our organization a good place to live, learn and work.* To demand the best of ourselves, and to attract, stimulate and provide for our students and our staff, we believe we must create an environment that will support innovation, experimentation, and taking of appropriate risks. As a school we should prize the creative participation of each member of our student clientele and our staff. We should welcome the open exchange of ideas and foster the practice of careful listening. We have a duty to actively encourage the personal well-being and the development of each person who learns or works here. We should, therefore, maximize the personal significance and autonomy of each person so that we can all continue to make even greater contributions.
4. *We work with regard for one another--students and teachers alike.* We recognize the interdependence of everyone who learns and works here, and we expect ourselves to treat one another with respect, candor, kindness, and a sense of the importance of teamwork. We will foster a spirit of service among students and staff so that we may better serve the world at large.

Population served. The Community School in El Dorado County currently serves students who reside in any one of the fifteen local school districts. Specifically, Community School students are those who have not found success academically or behaviorally in the local traditional schools for any number of reasons. The Charter Community School would continue to draw from this population.

## 2. MEASURABLE PUPIL OUTCOMES

Given the nature of the educational program of the Charter Community School, measuring the extent to which the students, and staff, have demonstrated the attainment of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as our goals is an extremely important process. The

concepts of personal significance and the development of interpersonal skills are often viewed as difficult to assess; however, the measurable student outcomes related to these goals have been researched by staff of the Community School for the past several years, and include some very specific measurable behaviors for both students and teachers. The assessment process will begin with the establishment of a Differentiated Educational Plan (DEP) for each student, where specific goals in social, emotional, and academic areas will be defined. Measurable student/teacher outcomes for these goals would include the following:

- a. Academic improvement. Students will demonstrate increased skills and knowledge in academic areas at a rate commensurate with the students' abilities as established in the DEP.
- b. Increased awareness and use of technology. Students will demonstrate an increased ability to use current technology in school, in the work-place, and in their every day lives.
- c. Establishing and expecting a sense of community and belonging. Students and staff will evidence care or concern for each other, dignify each other, and establish, model and acknowledge "expected" behaviors.
- d. Reinforcing limits. Students and staff will demonstrate the ability to engage in meaningful and appropriate dialogue, will recognize acts of courtesy, and will eliminate the opportunity for "put downs" while encouraging the opportunity for recognition.
- e. Connectivity and bonding. Students and staff will use/display unqualified positive regard, love and respect for each other, will use personal experiences, humor, and analogies to increase the connectivity between and among students and staff. Students and staff will use positive tone and body language to communicate acceptance.
- f. Rewarding attempts. Staff and students will make a "special effort" to reward positive attempts toward the completion of individual goals and objectives.

### 3. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

An assessment portfolio for both students and teachers will be developed by the Charter Community School.

Students will meet the statewide performance standards and the Charter Community School will conduct pupil assessments that include authentic performance-based assessments developed by the California Department of Education pursuant to Section 60602.5, once they

are developed for community schools. The performance standards developed under this section will allow students to demonstrate their integration of knowledge across major subject areas.

Until these standards are developed and implemented, student growth will be measured by the progress of each student on the completion of his/her Differentiated Educational Plan. The pre-enrollment assessment which is used to develop the DEP will provide a baseline measure of a student's skills in social, emotional, and academic areas. Growth will be charted based upon completion of their performance-based goals.

In addition, the Charter Community School will develop instruments to be included in the portfolio which can provide empirical evidence of growth toward those goals and objectives which are of a more "non-academic" nature. These instruments will include data collection on the specific measurable behaviors discussed in Element #2 above, as well as data derived by using approach/aversion tendency methods (i.e., collecting observable evidence).

#### 4. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Director of the Charter Community School will report directly to the El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools and to the El Dorado County Board of Education. In addition, a Charter Community School Advisory Council will be selected to provide input into the operation of the school. This council will consist of students, teachers, administration, and parents. Meetings of this group will routinely occur once every two months to address goals, objectives, achievements, and the need for any redirection. Additionally, it is planned that this group will organize twice annually "Town Hall Meetings", which will be broadcast over the local community access channel. This format will allow for call-in questions from other Charter Community School parents as well as the community at-large.

Any amendments to the petition will first be discussed by the Charter Community School Advisory Council. The petition will be modified with an 80% approval vote from the County Board of Education.

#### 5. EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications of Charter Community School staff are described on the attached Organizational Chart.

#### 6. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

The Charter Community School will follow established standards of health and safety as commonly practiced in California public schools. In addition, in accordance with

California Education Code Section 44237, fingerprints shall be obtained on each new employee in order to obtain a criminal record summary from the Department of Justice.

7. RACIAL AND ETHNIC BALANCE

Every student who attends the Charter Community School does so on a voluntary basis. Therefore, the school is not designed to influence any racial or ethnic balances. It has been our five year experience that the Community School population closely reflects the total ethnic population of El Dorado County.

8. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In general, the Charter Community School will serve those students who have not found success in traditional schools. All students must meet at least one of the following requirements (California Education Code 1981, a-d):

- a. Students who have been expelled or suspended from traditional schools.
- b. Students who have been referred to the Charter Community School by the county School Attendance and Review Board.
- c. Students who are probation-referred.
- d. Students who are homeless.
- e. Students who are enrolled in the county Home Study Program.
- f. Any other student, as space is available, who has received an interdistrict agreement from the school district of residence.

In addition, students enrolled in the Charter Community School must be able to function autonomously in an environment where the adult-pupil ratio is 15 to 1. It would be the policy of the Charter Community School to not deny admission unless it was clear that a student's special needs could not be met within the parameters of the program as established. Generally, a trial period will be provided to determine whether the Charter Community School could appropriately and safely meet the needs of the student.

9. FINANCIAL AUDIT AND PROGRAMMATIC OPERATIONS

The Charter Community School will be contracting with the El Dorado County Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools to provide certain services, including the services of the Personnel Department, Data Processing Department, and the Business Department. The services to be included in the contract are those which are currently provided to the Community School, which include a yearly financial audit by the Business Department, utilizing commonly accepted standards and procedures. In addition, there will be

continuous monitoring of the fiscal status of the Charter Community School, with an ongoing audit which observes standards generally applied to the county's school districts.

The educational program, as broadly described above, will be audited on a regular basis both informally and formally. There will be ongoing informal evaluation by the Community School Advisory Council, using procedures which evaluate student and teacher outcomes. Formally, the Charter Community School will contract with an external auditor in order to evaluate program effectiveness on a yearly basis, beginning with the first year of operation. The focus of the audit will be to analyze the goals of the program against actual operations.

#### 10. SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

During the course of the last several years, the Community School staff has developed techniques and abilities to deal with student problems so that suspension and expulsion have never been necessary or even considered. This policy of no suspensions or expulsions will continue with the Charter Community School.

#### 11. STRS/PERS/SOCIAL SECURITY

Employees of the Charter Community School will participate in STRS, PERS, or Social Security depending upon each individual's eligibility. Enrollment in these programs will be monitored by the Business Department of the Superintendent of Schools office as part of the business service contract.

#### 12. ALTERNATIVES FOR STUDENTS NOT ATTENDING THE CHARTER SCHOOL

Attendance at the Charter Community School is entirely voluntary on the part of the students who enroll. District of residence public schools continue to be an option for all students who choose to not attend the Charter Community School.

#### 13. EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Any employee of the current Community School who wishes to work in the new Charter Community School will continue to have all employment rights and privileges specified in the Charter Community School individual employment contract issued. Employees will not be represented by a professional organization for the purposes of negotiating contracts, nor will they be able to earn seniority or tenure, nor will they be a member of any bargaining unit.

Employees wishing to leave their employment in the Charter Community School may ask for and receive priority consideration for a transfer into other programs operated by the County Superintendent of schools, given appropriate credentialing, employee qualifications and the availability of vacant positions.

### Additional Considerations

The Charter Community School of El Dorado County will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and will not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability.

The Charter Community School will not charge tuition. However, the Charter Community School is entrepreneurial in nature and may therefore extend hours of operation during the day and the days of operation during the week in order to accommodate the varied enrichment needs of enrolled students as well as other clients from El Dorado County. The enrichment programs offered beyond the regular school day may be fee-based.

---

### Summary Statement

The Charter Community School is committed to providing a quality education for our student clientele. Our goal is to facilitate life-long learning and healthy human development. The program, as presented in this petition, creates an environment that is optimal for learning: a student-centered educational program that emotionally and intellectually engages and challenges students.

To be "educated" in the 21st century, it is necessary that students be critically aware, have numerous problem-solving skills, have an acute global perspective, and be able to look at themselves and others in a variety of ways. It is essential that these skills be developed concurrently with academic skills. This development can and will occur when the human needs of the students have been adequately provided for to the extent that self-confidence, self-competence, and self-reliance are all fully achieved. This monumental task can be accomplished in an environment that is positive, stimulating, nurturing, supportive, dynamic, and engaging. The El Dorado County Charter Community School provides all of these essential elements.

PETITION APPROVAL

Community School Teachers

Jeanne Falkenstein  
Jeanne Falkenstein

Carrie McKay  
Carrie McKay

G. Randy Hill  
G. Randy Hill

Scott Morris  
Scott Morris

Judith Kennedy  
Judith Kennedy

Jeff Ray  
Jeff Ray

Carol Lipsmire  
Carol Lipsmire

Sue Streit  
Sue Streit

For the effective term 9/1/93 - 6/30/98 not withstanding the provisions  
of the revocation authority of the Board.

APPROVED BY: County Board of Education

David W. Long  
David W. Long, Ph.D.

Absent  
Donald A. Frier, D.D.S.

Dorothy Emery  
Dorothy Emery

Robert A. Laurie  
Robert A. Laurie

Absent  
James B. Norton

Superintendent of Schools

William K. (Ken) Lowry January 5, 1993  
date

For the effective term 9/1/93 - 6/30/98 not withstanding the provisions  
of the revocation authority of the Board.