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**ROSS VALLEY**  
**CHARTER**  
A TK-5 PUBLIC SCHOOL  
**Be Curious**

## CHARTER RENEWAL PETITION

Submitted to the Ross Valley School District

For the term from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2026

Submitted August 10, 2020



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## **AFFIRMATIONS AND DECLARATION**

Ross Valley Charter (“RVC” or the “Charter School”), located within the boundaries of the Ross Valley Elementary School District (“RVSD” or the “District”) will follow any and all federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to the Charter School, including but not limited to:

- The Charter School shall meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Section 60605, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- The Charter School declares that it shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of Ross Valley Charter School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)(6)]
- The Charter School shall be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(1)]
- The Charter School shall not charge tuition. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(1)]
- The Charter School shall admit all students who wish to attend the Charter School, unless the Charter School receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case it will hold a public random drawing to determine admission. Except as required by Education Code Section 47605(e)(2), admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or of that student’s parent or legal guardian within the State. Preference in the public random drawing shall be given as required by Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B)(i)-(iv). In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the Charter School in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(C). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(A)-(C)]
- The Charter School shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(1)]
- The Charter School shall adhere to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title

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II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

- The Charter School shall meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11967.5.1(f)(5)(C)]
- The Charter School shall ensure that teachers in the Charter School hold the Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document required for the teacher's certificated assignment. The Charter School may use local assignment options authorized in statute and regulations for the purpose of legally assigning certificated teachers, in the same manner as a governing board of a school district. Teachers employed by charter schools during the 2019–20 school year shall have until July 1, 2025, to obtain the certificate required for the teacher's certificated assignment. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47605(l) and 47605.4(a)]
- The Charter School shall at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
- The Charter School shall, for each fiscal year, offer at a minimum, the number of minutes of instruction per grade level as required by Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(1)(A)-(D).
- If a pupil is expelled or leaves the Charter School without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the Charter School shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil's last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including report cards or a transcript of grades, and health information. If the pupil is subsequently expelled or leaves the school district without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the school district shall provide this information to the Charter School within 30 days if the Charter School demonstrates that the pupil had been enrolled in the Charter School. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(3)]
- The Charter School may encourage parental involvement, but shall notify the parents and guardians of applicant pupils and currently enrolled pupils that parental involvement is not a requirement for acceptance to, or continued enrollment at, the Charter School. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(n)]
- The Charter School shall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection. [Ref. Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(2)]

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- The Charter School shall, on a regular basis, consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's educational programs. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)]
- The Charter School shall comply with any applicable jurisdictional limitations to the locations of its facilities. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47605 and 47605.1]
- The Charter School shall comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47612(b) and 47610]
- The Charter School shall comply with all applicable portions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ("ESEA"), as reauthorized and amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA").
- The Charter School shall comply with the Public Records Act.
- The Charter School shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- The Charter School shall comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act.
- The Charter School shall comply with Government Code Section 1090, *et seq.*, as set forth in Education Code Section 47604.1.
- The Charter School shall comply with the Political Reform Act.
- The Charter School shall meet or exceed the legally required minimum number of school days. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11960]

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This petition seeks authorization to renew the charter petition for the Ross Valley Charter school. RVC was developed by parents, teachers, and supporters of Ross Valley School District's nineteen year old Multi-Age Program ("MAP"), was authorized by the California State Board of Education on January 14, 2016 and opened in August 2017. Over the past three school years Ross Valley Charter has expanded from six classes led by the original MAP teachers to eight classes. We are adding a ninth classroom and new teacher in the 2020-21 school year. This renewal petition is supported by current staff, families, and other community members.

### Mission

Ross Valley Charter provides a public school option that leverages a progressive education model emphasizing deep inquiry and exploration, hands-on, immersion-based experiences, and active learning-by-doing approaches to prepare students to collaborate effectively in teams, think critically, seek information to solve problems, and be lifelong learners and culturally competent members of our diverse global community.

### Core Beliefs

- Students learn best when constructing knowledge in a social context that offers rich and challenging content, collaboration with fellow students and adults, and teachers acting as facilitators of this process.
- Student voice, choice, and engagement are critical to supporting student agency and knowledge construction.
- A thriving and joyful learning community has inclusive decision-making structures that foster teacher and parent engagement, collaboration, and shared ownership of the committed work of graduating students who are critical thinkers and creative problem solvers prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

This RVC charter petition describes the following practices that are emphasized at the Charter School:

- **Multi-age Classes**  
Two grade levels learn together in one class, allowing teachers and children to enjoy a two-year relationship, and giving students the opportunity to alternate being the younger and older student in their class
- **Inquiry Based Curriculum**  
Curriculum relies heavily on inquiry-based learning, long-term units of study integrating many curricular areas, going in depth and examining a topic from many angles, and driven by student curiosity, which increases engagement and interest.
- **Deep Learning Through the Gift of Time**

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Students are given long blocks of time to work on projects. Teachers have long weekly meetings in which they collaborate, discuss student progress, and engage in professional development.

- **Educating the Whole Child**

The focus is not just on student academic growth, but also physical and social-emotional development.

- **Connected Community**

Students, teachers, staff, and parents are all considered integral parts of the school community. Teachers focus on developing a strong community within the classroom, as well as within the whole program, and encourage students to see their role as a member of the larger community as well.

- **Authentic Assessment**

Students' ongoing classwork and projects are assessed to show academic growth and progress toward Common Core State Standards, which reflect the importance of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills such as problem solving, collaboration, and communication.

- **Collaboration and Collective Responsibility**

Students have many opportunities to work with a partner or small group. Teachers spend time working together weekly to plan curriculum and events. Parents and teachers work together on the school's Community Council for the benefit of the school community.

- **Differentiation**

With two grade levels in one classroom, teachers focus on individual learning progress, customizing instruction and guidance to accommodate individual students' needs.

- **Cultural Competency**

Students learn about people from different cultures and backgrounds throughout history and contemporary society. Teachers and students model appreciation for differences and inclusion of all members of the school community.

- **Choice**

Students have many opportunities to make choices about what they learn, how they learn it, what materials they use, and how they present their learning.

- **Service Learning**

Each class does at least one service learning project per year that the students help to identify, plan, and carry out.

## RVC Graduate Profile

RVC values skills that motivate students to be lifelong learners. We strive for RVC graduates to be:

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- **Independent and confident**  
RVC students approach situations with confidence and drive. They are self-motivated and take initiative for their own learning. They are comfortable taking risks. They understand themselves as learners. They take responsibility for their own learning, develop curiosity about the world, and know how to find information to satisfy their curiosity.
- **Collaborative problem solvers**  
RVC students possess interpersonal skills enabling them to work productively with a partner or group. They are perceptive listeners and consider others' ideas. They integrate multiple perspectives. They apply what they've learned, and seek new information, in order to solve unfamiliar problems.
- **Effective communicators**  
RVC students read, write, speak, and listen with confidence and compassion. They have strong skills to express themselves accurately and clearly. They know that different situations call for different behaviors and modes of communication.
- **Creative and adaptive thinkers**  
RVC students know that there are many ways of approaching a situation. They explore multiple possibilities and go beyond seeking a single right answer. They apply what they've learned, look for patterns, exercise their imaginations, and develop innovative solutions. They have confidence to try something, have it fail, learn from it, then try something different. They remain curious.
- **People who persevere**  
RVC students embrace challenges. They are willing to work through difficult situations and problems. They recognize the benefits that come from persisting, and experience satisfaction from working hard and achieving their goals. They understand that learning is a lifelong pursuit. They are motivated to be lifelong learners.
- **Caring community members**  
RVC students take responsibility for their behavior. They are kind and compassionate to others in the concentric circles of their world: themselves, their families, their friends, their classmates, their school, their community, and the world beyond them. They have a sense of belonging and recognize our interconnectedness.
- **Solid in foundational academic skills**  
RVC students are strong readers and enjoy reading for pleasure and information. They write well for purposes of conveying information, expressing their opinion, and telling a story. They have excellent math and science skills and are able to apply them appropriately in novel problem situations.

**The motivations of Ross Valley Charter in its renewal are to:**

- Enroll approximately 222 students in nine classes to meet the continued demand for progressive, multi-age education in our community.
- Ensure autonomy so teachers can focus on working together to develop innovative curriculum and instruction.
- Encourage parents and teachers to take clearly articulated responsibility and authority in the school's governance.
- Enable the adults in the school to model for students the philosophy of owning their learning and solving problems, valuing collaboration in the process.
- Maintain a culturally diverse program that provides children and the community with a rich and positive cultural diversity experience that is part of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century education.
- Provide a strong academic alternative that welcomes a diverse community of learners.



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## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

This petition seeks authorization to renew the petition for the Ross Valley Charter School, which was initially authorized by the California State Board of Education on January 14, 2016. This renewal petition is supported by current RVC staff and families, along with other community members.

### **History**

More than two decades ago, the Ross Valley School District created an Alternative Education Program, organized under Ed Code 58500, known as the Multi-Age Program (“MAP”). The program, which was the vision of a group of parents, grew and matured over the years, providing a progressive education alternative to the students of Ross Valley.

By 2015, MAP had six classes serving about 130 students in kindergarten through fifth grade, and a waiting list of about 100 students throughout these grade levels. The MAP teachers were a stable, experienced, and committed staff, each with 5-19 years of experience teaching in the program. The teachers, along with parents and other program supporters, sought to add more classes to accommodate demand and to establish independence from the District. The group submitted a charter petition to the District in July 2015.

On January 14, 2016, Ross Valley Charter School was unanimously authorized by the California State Board of Education. The school’s opening was delayed for a year as school leaders attempted to secure a location without utilizing Proposition 39, however no suitable site was available. The only option remaining was to request space through a Proposition 39 facilities application to RVSD. RVC was allocated space at White Hill Middle School and opened in the 2017-18 school year. At the end of the 2018-19 school year, RVC secured its own facility on the St. Rita campus in downtown Fairfax.

### **Present and Future**

Ross Valley Charter is now a thriving elementary school. During its three years of operation, the school has expanded from six classes of about 120 students to nine classes totaling approximately 220 students enrolled in 2020-21. This steady growth has enabled the original six MAP teachers to maintain a high-quality educational program while adding staff with new energy and ideas.

RVC has succeeded in its goal to enroll a diverse student body. In 2018-19, on a percentage basis, RVC had 4.2 times more English Learners and 2.9 times more students who qualify for Free and Reduced-Price Meals than the local district. We support these students and their families with a Spanish-speaking Family Outreach/Support Coordinator, an EL teacher, free and reduced priced lunches, newsletters and other information translated into Spanish, and a welcoming and inclusive environment.

RVC students have outperformed students in the local district, county, and state in all subjects on standardized tests. Our low income and English Learners have shown especially strong

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academic growth, more than doubling the percentage of students showing proficiency in English-Language Arts in one year. While RVC is proud of its students' academic achievements, we are equally delighted to watch them embody our "Be Curious" motto. RVC students engage in creative and original inquiry projects, perform in plays, practice mindfulness, and support one another. They consistently report high engagement on student surveys and are enthusiastic about coming to school.

Both the student and parent survey results from 2018-19 are similar to those from the 2017-18 school year. Because of COVID-19 mandated distance learning in the spring of 2020, not many students or families responded to the 2019-20 survey.

### **Highlights from our 18-19 Student Survey Results**

- 91.7% of students agree that they have strong, safe, and healthy relationships with other students at school.
- 96.5% of students agree that they have strong, safe, and healthy relationships with their teacher.
- 96.5% of students agree that they learn about subjects that are important to them in their classes.

### **Highlights from our 18-19 Family Survey Results**

Parents at our school also give RVC high praise. Parents and teachers work together with the School Director on RVC's Community Council, collaborating to continually improve the school. Parents learn together through parent education evenings and create social bonds during school events such as picnics, camping trips, and student performances and expositions.

- 87.2% Agree with the following statement: "RVC welcomes parents' contributions and actively seeks the input of parents before making important decisions."
- 96.4% of parents report that their children have a strong sense of belonging at the school.
- 98.2% report that the school values the diversity of children's backgrounds.

As a school community, RVC seeks to keep open lines of communication, be responsive to students' and families' needs, and continually improve teaching and learning. We are dedicated to build upon our successes in the next five years.

### **Financial Sustainability**

RVC's Board of Directors, which includes current parents, has chosen to budget prudently in an effort to grow a financial reserve. After receiving grants in its start-up phase, RVC is now financially self-sufficient with a 12% reserve, which is projected to grow over the next five years. The goal is to eventually grow RVC's reserves to 25%.

**Conclusion**

This charter petition addresses the 15 elements required by the California Education Code and demonstrates a solid plan to continue as a flourishing, independent charter school within the Ross Valley School District. By approving this charter, the District or State Board of Education will be fulfilling the intent of the Charter Schools Act of 1992 to improve pupil learning, create new professional opportunities for teachers, encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods, and provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in education. We are eager to work independently, yet cooperatively, with the District or State Board of Education to address any questions or concerns about this charter petition in order for the chartering authority to make the findings necessary for charter renewal for the proposed five year charter term from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2026.

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## **CHARTER RENEWAL CRITERIA**

Evidence of Meeting Charter Renewal Criteria Pursuant to Education Code Section 47607.2(b) (middle track)

Pursuant to the amendments made to Education Code Section 47607, and the creation of Education Code Section 47607.2, by Assembly Bill 1505 (2019), at the time of charter renewal, a chartering authority shall consider the performance of the charter school on the state and local indicators reported the California School Dashboard (“Dashboard”), and, in some circumstances, the performance of the charter school on assessments deemed to be verified data.

In addition to the shift toward assessing Dashboard data, Assembly Bill 1505 also created a three-tiered system of evaluating charter schools’ performance, plus a separate category for Dashboard Alternative School Status schools. Each of the three tiers has unique qualifying criteria.

The California Department of Education has deemed Ross Valley Charter a middle-tier charter school. ([Charter School Performance Category Data File \(XLSX\)](#)). RVC does, in fact, fit into the middle tier, and is eligible for charter renewal, as demonstrated below.

Education Code Section 47607.2(b) states:

(1) For all charter schools for which paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) of Section 47607 and subdivision (a) of this section do not apply, the chartering authority shall consider the schoolwide performance and performance of all subgroups of pupils served by the charter school on the state indicators included in the evaluation rubrics adopted pursuant to Section 52064.5 and the performance of the charter school on the local indicators included in the evaluation rubrics adopted pursuant to Section 52064.5.

(2) The chartering authority shall provide greater weight to performance on measurements of academic performance in determining whether to grant a charter renewal.

“Measurements of academic performance” are defined in statute as “statewide assessments in the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress system, or any successor system, the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California, or any successor system, and the college and career readiness indicator.” (Education Code Section 47607(c)(3).

The following tables display the Charter School’s schoolwide and subgroup Dashboard state indicators and, for comparison purposes, the State’s, for the 2019 Dashboard.

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Indicator	2019 RVC	2019 State
CAASPP ELA	Blue	Orange
CAASPP Math	Blue	Yellow
English Learner Progress	N/A	N/A
Chronic Absenteeism	Yellow	Yellow
Graduation Rate	N/A	Yellow
Suspension Rate	Yellow	Yellow
College/Career Readiness	N/A	Yellow

**RVC 2019 Dashboard Local Indicators**

Basics: Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities	Standard Met
Implementation of Academic Standards	Standard Met
Parent and Family Engagement	Standard Met
Local Climate Survey	Standard Met
Access to a Broad Course of Study	Standard Met

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As can be seen in our School Dashboard Data Summary above, we received colors for four out of seven indicators on the 2019 Dashboard. Of those we earned 'Blue' for our academic indicators. Our analysis for these indicators is below. We did earn 'Yellow' for the Chronic Absenteeism and Suspension Rate Indicators. As both of these indicators can have a negative impact on a student's academic opportunity, our school has taken steps to evaluate the causes and solutions to the factors that lead to both Chronic Absenteeism and Suspension.

Regarding our Chronic Absenteeism rate, through our School Attendance Review Board we have identified the challenges many of our families have been facing in ensuring that their children are able to attend school regularly. We've found that our Chronic Absenteeism rate is related, in part, to the families who are attracted to a school like ours. In particular, as a school in Marin County where there are many small districts with strict residency policies, families who have insecure housing face hurdles if they move frequently. As we accept students no matter where they live in California, we attract families with these challenges. We also attract families of students who have a history of attendance issues prior to enrolling at Ross Valley Charter. Lastly, we have also found that we have several families that choose travel during the school year, thereby missing out on valuable instructional time. Ross Valley Charter does provide independent study for instances where students need to be out for extended periods of time.

Through more regular direct communication with the families regarding attendance we have started to see an improvement in absenteeism. We have also found that this requires diligence as an increasing number of our families are facing economic and emotional stress which can impact attendance. We are either providing or connecting families with resources to help them overcome these obstacles.

Regarding our Suspension rate, we had zero suspensions our first year and third year, and suspended one student our second year. We do not take the decision to suspend a student lightly, and only do so as a last resort, once all alternatives to suspension have been exhausted. Through positive behavior intervention and support we are better able to reduce and mitigate behaviors and provide students with the structure they need to thrive. The move from zero to one resulted in a yellow performance indicator.

Ross Valley Charter is proud of its progress over its first few years. We do believe that progress needs to be constant, therefore we continue to analyze metrics such as those within this memo so that we can continue making adequate progress. When we find deficiencies, we work as a community to evaluate and address the sources of those deficiencies to ensure that we are doing all that we can to best meet the needs of our students.

(3) In addition to the state and local indicators, the chartering authority shall consider clear and convincing evidence showing either of the following:

(A) The school achieved measurable increases in academic achievement, as defined by at least one year's progress for each year in school.

(B) Strong postsecondary outcomes, as defined by college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates equal to similar peers.

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(4) Subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (3) shall be demonstrated by verified data....

“Verified data” is defined in statute as “data derived from nationally recognized, valid, peer-reviewed, and reliable sources that are externally produced.” (Education Code Section 47607.2(c)(1).)

RVC has demonstrated academic achievement, as defined by at least one year’s progress for each year in school. This graph shows both schoolwide and student subgroup growth in CAASPP test results.

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Schoolwide	ELA	70%	83%
	Math	64%	73%
Hispanic or Latino	ELA	19%	48%
	Math	25%	48%
White	ELA	83%	93%
	Math	75%	80%
Economically Disadvantaged	ELA	18%	47%
	Math	29%	37%

As can be seen in the results above, our ELA and Math scores grew significantly between our first and second year. Our ELA scores grew by over 12 percentage points and our Math scores grew by over 9 percentage points.

Growth was seen by all subgroups.

Our Latino/Hispanic scores improved significantly:

- In ELA, we went from 19% to 48% meeting/exceeding standard
- In Math, we went from 25% to 48% meeting/exceeding standard

Our Economically Disadvantaged scores improved significantly:

- In ELA, we went from 18% to 47% meeting/exceeding standard

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- In Math, we went from 29% to 37% meeting/exceeding standard

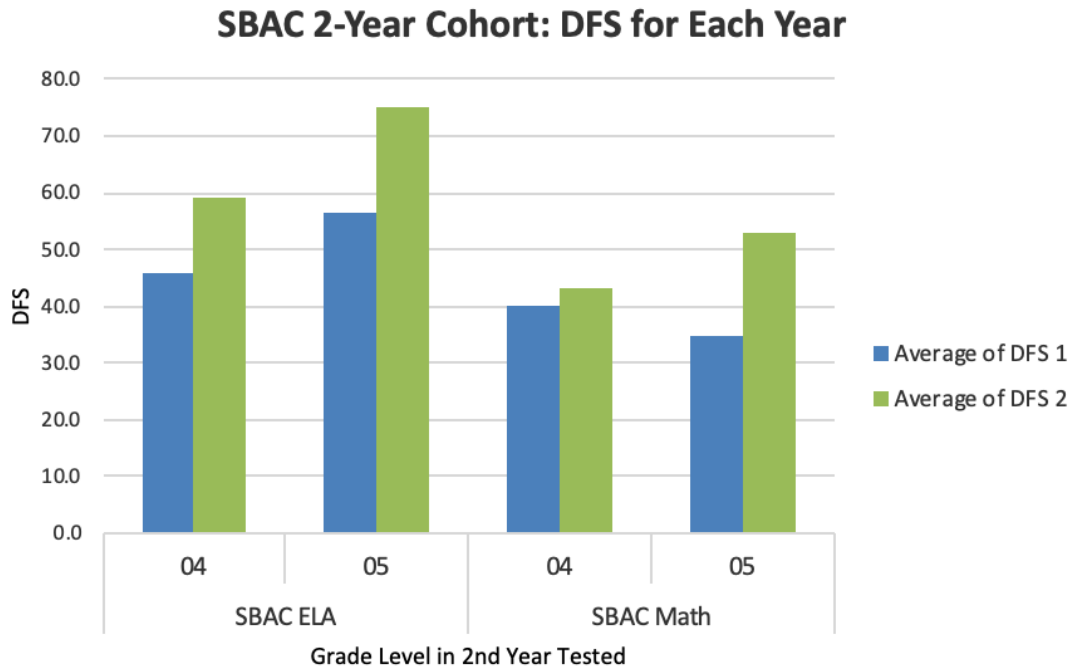
Our English Learner scores improved significantly:

- In ELA, we went from 0% to 33% meeting/exceeding standard
- In Math, we went from 9% to 25% meeting/exceeding standard

**Two Year Cohort – Distance From Standard Growth**

To further assess for year over year growth, we analyzed the scores of our students who attended Ross Valley Charter and had CAASPP scores from both years. Looking at these two year cohorts and the distance from standard of their scores we can see that all students in all subgroups (where results were available) showed growth.

**Two Year Cohort – Distance From Standard (“DFS”) Growth – All Students**

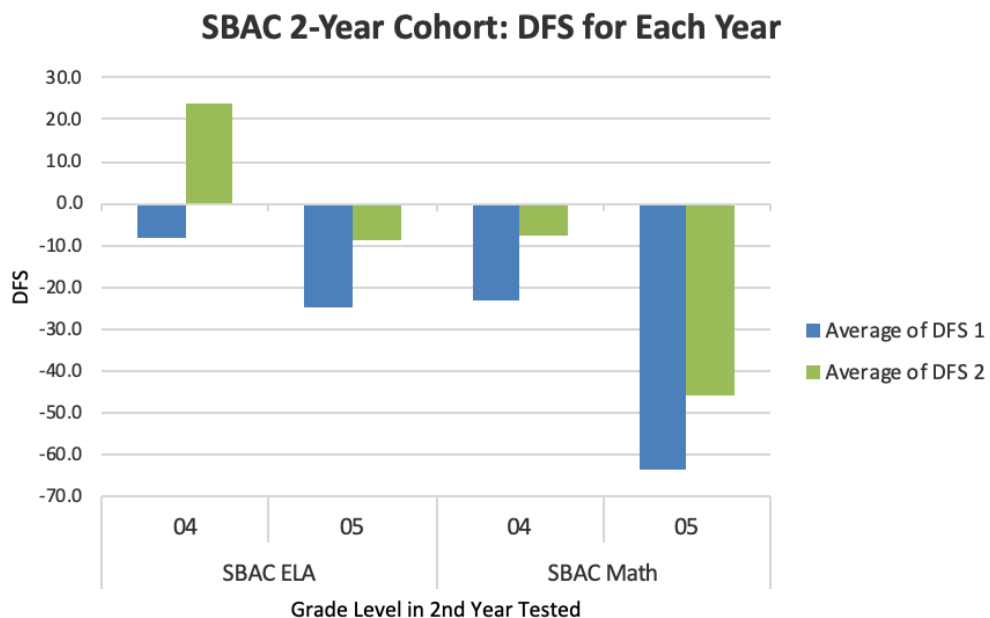




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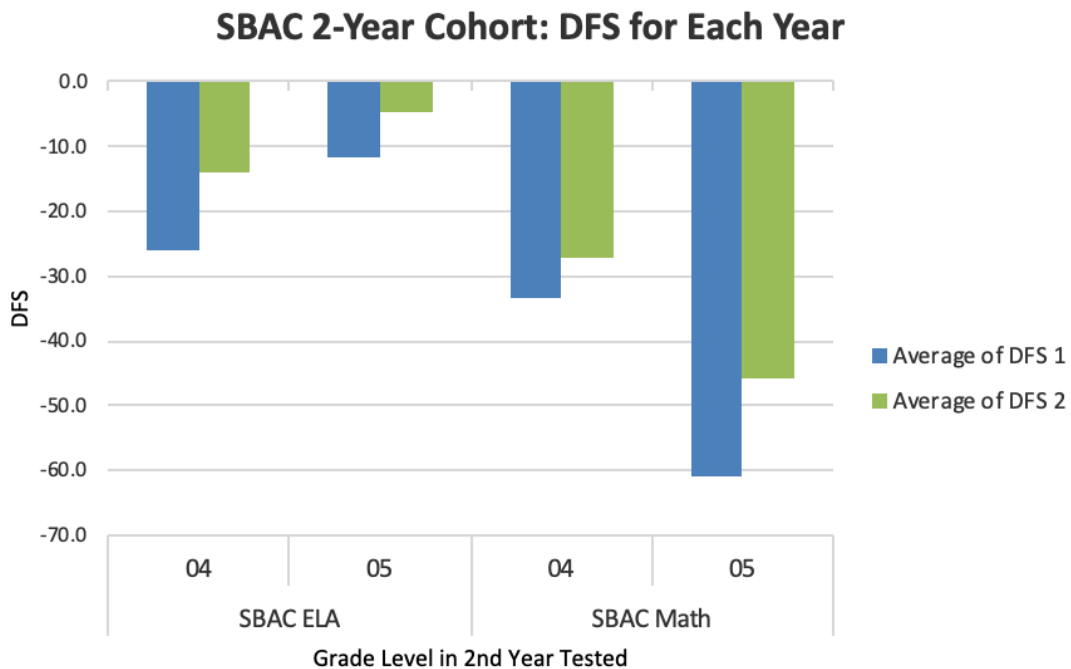
**Two Year Cohort – Distance From Standard Growth – Economically Disadvantaged**



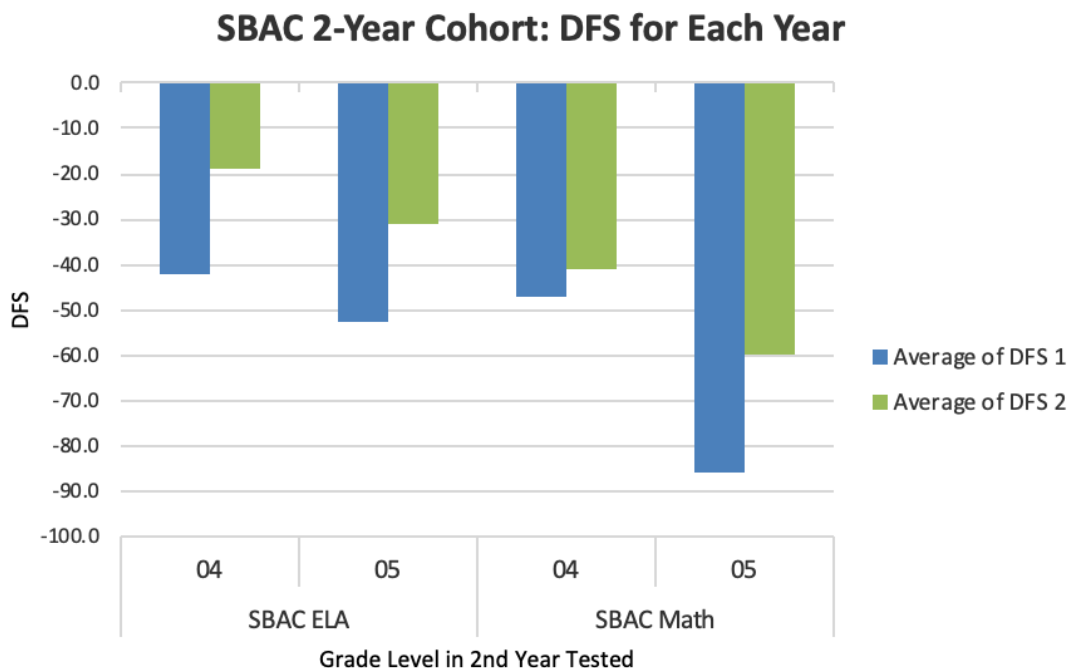
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**Two Year Cohort – Distance From Standard Growth – Hispanic/Latino**



**Two Year Cohort – Distance From Standard Growth – English Learners**



We are pleased to see such growth, yet we recognize that there is still work to do. We have worked tirelessly to look for patterns within our test results, in general, and through isolating the specific needs of individual students. This has required a multi-pronged approach to address the needs of our students. These efforts include:

- Increased focus on teaching English language fundamentals
- Explicit academic and content related vocabulary instruction
- Evaluation of new math programs
- Targeted intervention, individually and in small groups
- Teacher professional development in ELA fundamentals
- Increased home school collaboration
- Parent education related to reading and writing support at home

These efforts continue during distance learning and we are evaluating how to support these students through targeted support during the summer months and into the new school year.

In its first two years of CAASPP testing, RVC’s schoolwide scores were strong and trended significantly upward in the second year. Every student subgroup improved in the second year, including the Hispanic or Latino subgroup, which more than doubled its scores in ELA and nearly doubled its scores in Math. RVC’s Dashboard colors are blue for Math and ELA, and standards are met in all categories.

### Analysis of Comparison Schools Data<sup>1</sup>

Comparison Schools:

School	Schoolwide Assessment	2018	2019
Manor Elementary	ELA	66%	73%
	Math	53%	58%
Wade Thomas Elementary	ELA	87%	83%
	Math	85%	81%
Brookside Elementary	ELA	88%	79%
	Math	82%	73%
Hidden Valley Elementary	ELA	72%	76%
	Math	73%	81%

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<sup>1</sup> Given the suspension of the CAASPP in 2020, RVC inserted comparison data of the variety that was previously considered for charter renewal petitions.

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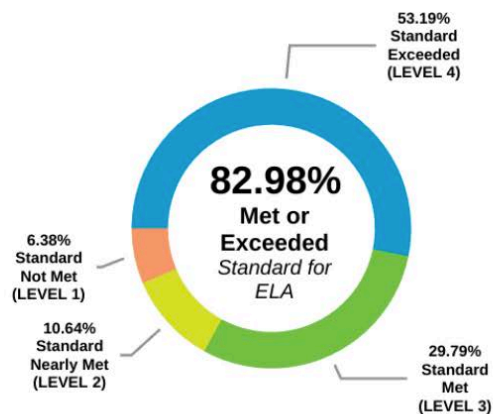
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Comparisons to RVSD, State, and County

**Ross Valley Charter English Language Arts  
CAASPP Results 2018-19**

ELA

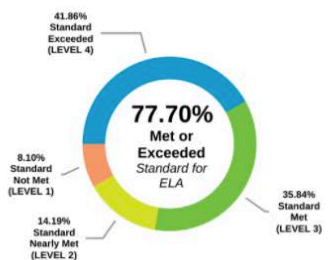
Percent of students within each achievement level



**Comparison Scores**

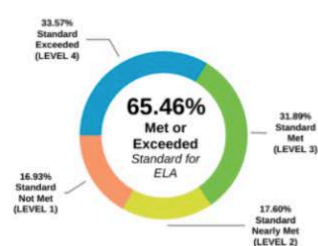
**Ross Valley School District**

Percent of students within each achievement level



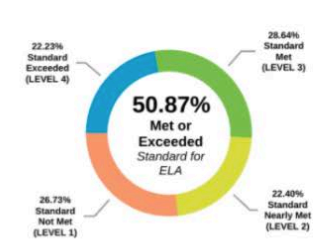
**Marin County**

Percent of students within each achievement level



**State of California**

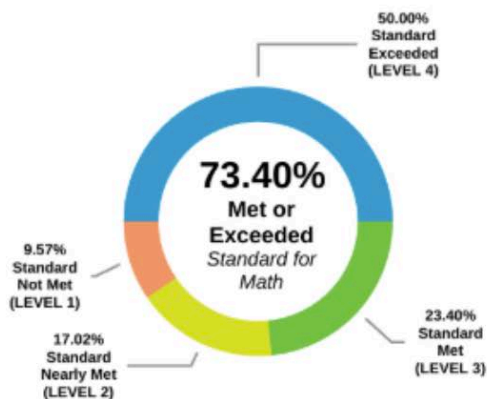
Percent of students within each achievement level



**Ross Valley Charter Math  
CAASPP Results 2018-19**

**Mathematics**

Percent of students within each achievement level

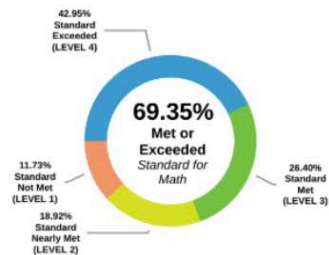


**Comparison Scores**

**Ross Valley School District**

**Mathematics**

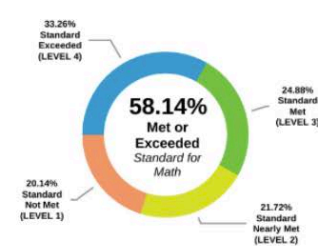
Percent of students within each achievement level



**Marin County**

**Mathematics**

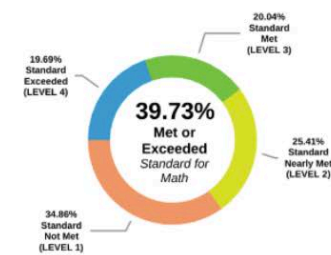
Percent of students within each achievement level



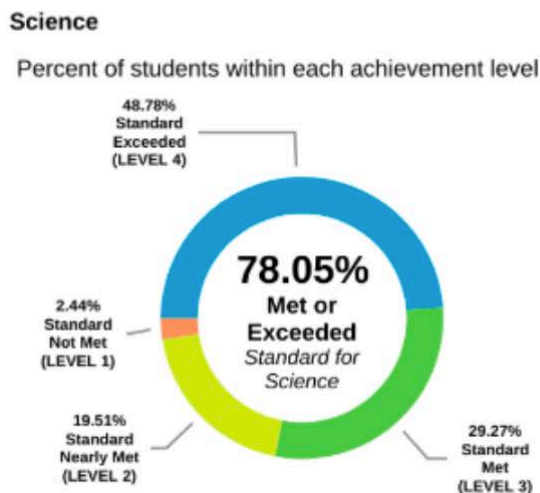
**State of California**

**Mathematics**

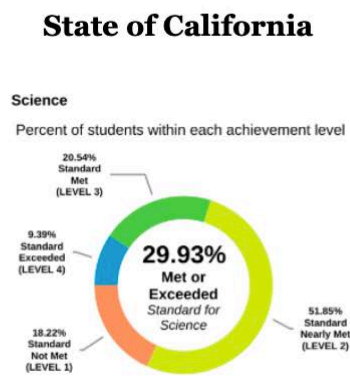
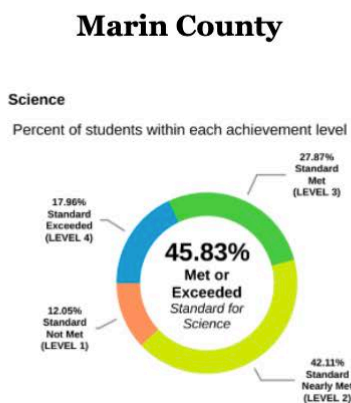
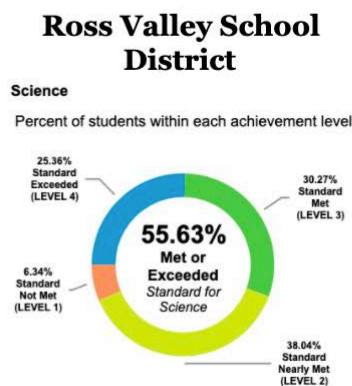
Percent of students within each achievement level



**Ross Valley Charter Science  
Results 2018-19**



**Comparison Scores**



In 2019, Ross Valley Charter students' CAASPP scores were near or above the scores of the RVSD schools the RVC students would otherwise have been required to attend. The upward trend of scores at RVC between 2018 and 2019 is stronger than any school in the District.

Ross Valley Charter has a population of 12.4% English learner students and 25.5% free or reduced price meal qualified students. RVC has a student population of 60% White, 26.7% Hispanic or Latino, and 3% African American. Other District schools have considerably fewer English learners, free or reduced price meal qualified students, and a lower percentage of non-white students. For instance, only one school in the District marginally outperformed RVC in 2019, and it was Wade Thomas Elementary. That school has only 3.8% English learners and

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6.5% of the students qualify for free or reduced price meals. Wade Thomas also has a student population of 77% White, 10% Hispanic or Latino, and 0.3% African American. Despite very different student demographics, RVC students collectively performed similar to other schools in the area.

It should also be noted that while half of District schools had lower CAASPP scores in 2019 than in 2018, Ross Valley Charter School significantly increased their scores in that time period.

A charter petition renewed pursuant to Education Code Section 47607.2(b) may be granted a renewal of five (5) years. As clearly demonstrated by the evidence above, RVC meets this renewal criteria, and should be granted a renewal term of five (5) years.



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## **ELEMENT 1 – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

Governing Law: (i) “The educational program of the charter school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom the charter school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.

(ii) The annual goals for the charter school for all pupils and for each subgroup of pupils identified pursuant to Section 52052, to be achieved in the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, and specific annual actions to achieve those goals. A charter petition may identify additional school priorities, the goals for the school priorities, and the specific annual actions to achieve those goals.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(A)(i) and (ii)

### **Mission**

Ross Valley Charter provides a public school option that leverages a progressive education model emphasizing deep inquiry and exploration, hands-on, immersion-based experiences, and active learning-by-doing approaches to prepare students to collaborate effectively in teams, think critically, seek information to solve problems, and be lifelong learners and culturally competent members of our diverse global community.

### **Educational Philosophy**

Ross Valley Charter is rooted in the tradition of progressive education. According to Alfie Kohn<sup>2</sup>, renowned education expert, schools that practice progressive education incorporate these eight important components: attending to the whole child, community, collaboration, social justice, intrinsic motivation, deep understanding, active learning, and taking kids seriously. Progressive education programs emphasize learning by doing, curriculum focused on thematic units, problem solving, group work and development of social skills, collaborative and cooperative learning projects, integration of service learning projects, de-emphasis on textbooks in favor of varied learning resources, assessment by evaluation of children’s projects and productions, a more flexible curriculum influenced by student interest, and intrinsic motivation. RVC’s educational program embraces all these aspects of progressive education.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.alfiekohn.org/article/progressive-education/>

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A Stanford University study has shown that student-centered practices found at progressive schools highly benefit all students. "The numbers are compelling," said Stanford University Professor and Stanford Center for Opportunity in Public Education ("SCOPE") Faculty Director, Linda Darling-Hammond. "Students in the study schools exhibited greater gains in achievement than their peers, had higher graduation rates, were better prepared for college, and showed greater persistence in college. Student-centered learning proves to be especially beneficial to economically disadvantaged students and students whose parents have not attended college."<sup>3</sup>

RVC emphasizes the following practices:

- **Multi-age Classes**  
Two grade levels learn together in one class, allowing teachers and children to enjoy a two-year relationship, and giving students the opportunity to alternate being a younger and older student in their class.
- **Inquiry-based Curriculum**  
Curriculum relies heavily on long-term Inquiry arcs, integrating many curricular areas, going in depth and examining a topic from many angles, and driven by student curiosity, which increases students' engagement and interest.
- **Deep Learning through the Gift of Time**  
Students are given long blocks of time to work on projects. Teachers have long weekly meetings in which they collaborate, discuss student progress, and engage in professional development.
- **Educating the Whole Child**  
The focus is not just on student academic growth, but also physical and social-emotional development.
- **Connected Community**  
Students, teachers, staff, and parents are all considered integral parts of the school community. Teachers focus on developing a strong community within the classroom as well as within the whole school and encourage students to embrace their role as a member of the larger community as well.
- **Authentic Assessment**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://ed.stanford.edu/news/new-research-shows-effectiveness-student-centered-learning-closing-opportunity-gap#sthash.z47NjQop.dpuf>

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Students' ongoing classwork and projects are assessed to show academic growth and progress toward Common Core State Standards, which reflect the importance of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills such as problem solving, collaboration, and communication.

- **Collaboration and Collective Responsibility**

Students have many opportunities to work with a partner or small group. Teachers spend time working together weekly to plan curriculum and events. Parents and teachers work together on the school's Community Council for the benefit of the school community.

- **Differentiation**

With two grade levels in one classroom, teachers focus on individual learning progress, customizing instruction and guidance to accommodate individual students' needs.

- **Cultural Competency**

Students learn about people from different cultures and backgrounds throughout history and contemporary society. Teachers and students model appreciation for differences and inclusion of all members of the school.

- **Choice**

Students have many opportunities to make choices about what they learn, how they learn it, what materials they use, and how they present their learning.

- **Service Learning**

Each class does at least one service learning project per year that the students help to identify, plan, and carry out.

## RVC Core Beliefs

- Students learn best when constructing their own knowledge in a social context that offers rich and challenging content, collaboration with fellow students and adults, and teachers serving as facilitators of this process.
- Student voice, choice, and engagement are critical to supporting student agency and knowledge construction.
- A thriving and joyful learning community has inclusive decision-making structures that foster teacher and parent engagement, collaboration, and shared ownership of the committed work of graduating students who are critical thinkers and creative problem solvers prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## Additional RVC Beliefs

- Every child is capable, dynamic, curious, competent, and full of potential.
- Children have an innate curiosity and desire to discover, learn, and make sense of the world.

- Children have the right to a nurturing, safe, engaging, and authentic environment.
- Children learn through play, investigation, inquiry, and exploration.
- Children learn through meaningful activities in which different subject areas are integrated.
- Children and adults learn in relationships with each other.
- Learning is a spiraling process in which ideas, opinions, and thoughts must be expressed, reflected upon, and expressed again.
- There are many ways to express, demonstrate, and interpret knowledge, including oral presentation, electronic displays, writing, sculpture, drawing, painting, dance, drama, puppetry, and music.
- Parents play an essential role in their children's education and they are welcome to be active and integral members of our school community.
- It is vital for teachers to have time to collaborate with colleagues and parents.

## **How Learning Best Occurs**

RVC believes that children learn best when:

- They are in nurturing, safe, supportive environments.
- Their social and emotional needs are prioritized and satisfied.
- Their learning is driven by their own curiosity and interests and is intrinsically motivated.
- They are actively engaged and self-directed in their learning, interacting with other students and adults.
- They have space and time to play, investigate, and explore.
- They gain skills to feel competent academically and socially.
- They are able to learn in their own style and at their own pace, with an understanding that they may not be doing the exact same tasks, or working at the exact same level, as their peers.
- They use hands-on, manipulative materials, and construct their own meaning and understanding through asking questions, making mistakes, and experimenting.
- They are valued for their unique skills, styles, and personalities.

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- They work and play with a diverse community of children.
- They have the opportunity to experience peer teaching, both as teacher and learner.
- They have opportunities to practice compassion and social justice, both at school and in the larger community.
- Their teachers serve as guides and facilitators.
- Their teachers, school staff, and parents work together to create a positive and joyful school environment.

## RVC Graduate Profile

RVC values skills that motivate students to be lifelong learners. We strive for RVC graduates to be:

- **Independent and confident**  
RVC students approach situations with confidence and drive. They are self-motivated and take initiative for their own learning. They are comfortable taking risks. They understand themselves as learners. They take responsibility for their own learning, develop curiosity about the world, and know how to find information to satisfy their curiosity.
- **Collaborative problem solvers**  
RVC students possess interpersonal skills enabling them to work productively with a partner or group. They are perceptive listeners and consider others' ideas. They integrate multiple perspectives. They apply what they've learned, and seek new information, in order to solve unfamiliar problems.
- **Effective communicators**  
RVC students read, write, speak, and listen with confidence and compassion. They have strong skills to express themselves accurately and clearly. They know that different situations call for different behaviors and modes of communication.
- **Creative and adaptive thinkers**  
RVC students know that there are many ways of approaching a situation. They explore multiple possibilities and go beyond seeking a single right answer. They apply what they've learned, look for patterns, exercise their imaginations, and develop innovative solutions. They have confidence to try something, have it fail, learn from it, then try something different. They remain curious.
- **People who persevere**  
RVC students embrace challenges. They are willing to work through difficult situations and problems. They recognize the benefits that come from persisting, and experience satisfaction from working hard and achieving their goals. They understand that learning is a lifelong pursuit. They are motivated to be lifelong learners.

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- **Caring community members**  
RVC students take responsibility for their behavior. They are kind and compassionate to others in the concentric circles of their world: themselves, their families, their friends, their classmates, their school, their community, and the world beyond them. They have a sense of belonging and recognize our interconnectedness.
- **Solid in foundational academic skills**  
RVC students are strong readers and enjoy reading for pleasure and information. They write well for purposes of conveying information, expressing their opinion, and telling a story. They have excellent math and science skills and are able to apply them appropriately in novel problem situations.

## What It Means To Be An Educated Person In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Ross Valley Charter believes that our students need to be prepared for a world that may be difficult for us to envision. We want to equip our students for a lifetime of learning, change, and collaboration. With information and data readily available to all via the Internet and other media and technology, it is no longer as important to memorize discrete facts. Rather, success will call for knowing a coherent body of knowledge<sup>4</sup> that facilitates knowing how to access information, acquiring knowledge, and applying it to solve novel problems. Doing so requires resourcefulness, flexibility, and an ability to see things in new ways. Educated citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century understand that life is interconnected and interdependent and will see themselves as lifelong learners in order to be active and responsible members of a diverse global community. Our students will need to be culturally competent to work and interact effectively with a wide range of different people and perspectives.

According to Tony Wagner, author of *The Global Achievement Gap*, “Being an independent, lifelong learner and knowing how to access and analyze information, which is growing exponentially and is constantly changing, is far more important than rote learning of specific academic content. Students today must be prepared to apply what they’ve learned to new situations and challenges, rather than merely recite what they’ve memorized.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Shift 3 in “Key Shifts in English Language Arts”, Common Core State Standards, <http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-english-language-arts/>

<sup>5</sup> Wagner, Tony. *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need--and What We Can Do About It*. New York: Basic Books, 2008, p. 257.

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Today's students need to build and employ a broad range of skills, including reading, writing, speaking, listening, and computing, as well as the ability to seek information, communicate effectively in multiple mediums, and be creative and critical thinkers.

Students will need compassionate and resilient social and emotional skills to participate in healthy relationships at home, work, and in the larger world. They will need to be able to work independently as well as cooperatively with others.

It is the objective of RVC to support students to become self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners.

## **Students Served: Target Student Population and Community Interest**

RVC educates transitional kindergarten through fifth grade students who reside in the Ross Valley School District (San Anselmo and Fairfax, California) and students who reside outside the RVSD as space allows.

In RVC's first year, 2017-18, the school opened with six multi-age classrooms, consisting of two blended TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> grade classrooms, two 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms, and two 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms with a total of 122 students. In its third year, 2019-20, RVC had grown to eight multi-age classes with 196 students. RVC plans to reach its full enrollment of about 220 students in nine multi-age classes in 2020-21.

In order to maintain full enrollment, RVC must continue to attract about 36 transitional kindergartners and kindergartners every year; there are currently more than 40 TK and K students enrolled for 2020-21, and more students on a waitlist or applying. Including all grade levels, more than 70 new students enrolled in each of the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years.

Between its first and second year, RVC had an in-District retention rate of 90.1%. Between the second and third year, RVC had a retention rate of 95.4%.

As mentioned in the history section on page 12 above, the predecessor of RVC, the MAP program, met a clearly identifiable need in the very progressive Fairfax community for a progressive educational approach in public education. It grew at Manor School in Fairfax from 60 students in three classrooms in 1996 to 130 students in six multiage kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms by 2008. By 2014 there was a waiting list of 100 students. RVC is projecting an enrollment of 219 students in the 2020-21 school year, a clear demonstration of the need for progressive education in Fairfax and central Marin.

RVC has been very successful in its goal of creating an educational community in Fairfax that is more socio-economically diverse than the population in the Ross Valley School District. We believe that we will continue to be able to attract students from underserved communities in central Marin, who particularly benefit from the progressive education approach of RVC. We will continue to work to maintain a percentage of ethnically and socio-economically diverse students greater than the District average. For details on how RVC has attracted students with ethnic,

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English Learner (“EL”), and economic diversity, see the Community Recruitment and Outreach Plan in Element 7: Student Population Balance.

As part of our commitment to Cultural Competency described below in Element One, we believe it is important to educate our students in a diverse student community. Two employees support students and their families who don’t speak English as their first language: an English Language Development (“ELD”) teacher works with students to support their reading, writing, and speaking in English, and also provides parent education for our Spanish-speaking parents; and a Family Outreach/Support Coordinator helps to attract students from diverse backgrounds and supports their families once they enroll at RVC.

The following chart shows the racial and ethnic diversity, English Language Learners, and Special Education of the current students in the Ross Valley School District, Ross Valley Charter, and Marin County.<sup>6</sup> RVC will continue to attempt to attract students with a similar racial and ethnic diversity, and greater percentages from non-white categories than the District.

**2019-20 Demographic Data (Dataquest)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Af. Am.</b>	<b>AI or AN</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Filipino</b>	<b>Hisp. or Latino</b>	<b>Pac. Islander</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Two or More</b>	<b>EL</b>	<b>SPED</b>
Ross Valley School District	1%	.2%	2.5%	0.3%	11.2%	0.2%	76.4%	7.7%	3.6%	11.5% (18/19)
Ross Valley Charter	3.1%	0.0%	2.6%	0.5%	27.8%	0.0%	53.6%	8.8%	20.1%	12.4% (19/20) 10.5% (18/19)

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<sup>6</sup> 2019-20 demographic information from <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>



Marin County	1.7%	0.4%	4.6%	0.6%	31.5%	0.2%	54.1%	5.8%	15.2%	12% (18/19)
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## Components of Our Learning Environment

The following components are considered critical to RVC:

### Multi-age Classes

RVC students generally learn in classes with two grades together (typically TK/K/1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>). Students usually stay with the same teacher for two years, which enables them to develop a deep, trusting relationship with their teacher. It also means they often have only three primary teachers during their elementary school experience, minimizing the anxiety that children sometimes feel as they move into a new school year. At the beginning of the second year with the same teacher, there is no need for a “getting to know you” period; students immediately pick up where they left off academically, with teachers knowing what students need to focus on from the start. Multi-age teachers find the second year with a student to be especially productive, and they appreciate the opportunity to watch children mature socially, emotionally, and academically over two full years.

Students also get the opportunity to alternate between being a younger and an older student in their classes. The younger students learn routines and class culture and receive help with academics from the older and more experienced students. The older students model behavior and help welcome the younger children, which supports our school culture of students learning from one another and relying upon each other. When a student asks a teacher a question, the teacher often encourages the student to ask a particular peer who will be able to help. Children become accustomed to helping each other as needed, regardless of being the younger or older student in the classroom. Older students also sometimes assist students in younger classes as well.

Students in mixed-age classrooms represent quite a broad range of developmental levels, academic proficiency, and experience. RVC students are comfortable being in a community with learners at all stages, and with this exposure, they gain respect for individuals learning at their own pace. They gain a greater appreciation for their own progress when they witness others being introduced to skills, they themselves have learned previously, and they envision where their learning will take them as they see what more experienced students are able to achieve. Competition is minimized, and cooperation and support are emphasized in our multi-age classrooms.

### Inquiry-Based Curriculum

Our students enjoy deep conceptual learning from multiple perspectives during Inquiry Arcs that last 6-10 weeks. These Inquiry Arcs have three phases:

## Ross Valley Charter

1. Exploration – students are exposed to concepts, make observations, and ask questions (“notice and wonder”), talk with experts, go on field trips, etc. in order to gain a broad understanding of a topic.
2. Investigation – students narrow down questions that they would like to further learn about, and conduct research or do experiments to further their knowledge. Sometimes students work as a whole class in this phase, but often they work with a partner, small group or individually.
3. Exposition – students share their learning with their families and the school community. This may be in the form of a performance, a “museum,” a community service project, written work, or another form.

RVC teachers frequently incorporate hands-on activities, project-based learning, field trips, visual and performing arts, and community events into our Inquiry Arcs. The Common Core State Standards, along with Next Generation Science Standards and California History and Social Science standards form the basis of instruction.

Teachers plan these Inquiry Arcs together and reflect regularly, adjusting instruction to the learning needs of the students. Formative assessment provides consistent, ongoing data on student progress and mastery of skills. When students are deeply engaged, they are more motivated to repeatedly practice academic skills and naturally gain greater competence. “In general, this pedagogy’s efficacy stems from the fact that it encourages learners to explore, investigate, and research to resolve problems, and develop solid critical thinking skills in the process.”<sup>7</sup>

Inquiry-based learning is one of the seeds of our progressive educational philosophy. Students work independently or collaborate with partners or in small groups to ask questions, formulate hypotheses, research, propose and determine solutions, and present them articulately. Children are active participants in the construction of their knowledge and become deeply engaged and motivated. Inquiry-based learning helps students develop important 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, such as the ability to work in teams, solve complex problems, and apply knowledge from one lesson or discipline to others.

One example of a 4th/5th grade Inquiry Arc is related to Immigration. During the Exploration phase, students talk with their families about how, and from where, their family members first came to California. Using artifacts, students share these stories with their class and discover that students in our school have come from all over the world. Then they learn about various waves of immigration to California, focusing on Spanish/Mexicans, Chinese, and pioneers who came

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<sup>7</sup> <https://wabisabilearning.com/blogs/inquiry/inquiry-based-learning-effectiveness>

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across land and those who came for the Gold Rush. Students create timelines showing when different groups came in large numbers to put it in perspective. Students take a field trip to Sacramento to visit the state capital and ride on an “immigrant train” in Old Town. Another day, we visit China Camp and learn about an early Chinese settlement in Marin County.

During the Investigation phase, students identify what they’d like to learn more about regarding immigration to California. Some may choose to learn about a particular ethnic group, some focus on looking at trends in immigration, famous immigrants in history, etc. To share their learning, students choose an option: create a video that’s a “how to” public service announcement (for example, how to apply for a green card); write a song related to immigration and record it; or create a visual model such as a map, graph or timeline. In addition, each student writes an individual informational piece about their chosen topic. These are all shared with family members and other RVC students at an Exposition.

Throughout this Inquiry Arc, students read many informational articles, take notes, watch educational videos, hear fictional tales about immigrants, interview experts, create artwork, and write informational pieces and poetry. In addition, teachers read aloud *Esperanza Rising* about a girl who came to America from Mexico, and students participate in book groups reading and discussing stories related to immigration such as *The Circuit*, *A Jar of Dreams*, *The Dragon’s Child*, and *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple*.

In-depth studies such as these engage our students and help them to fully understand and investigate a topic over many weeks or months. We incorporate many disciplines including math, writing, reading, science, social studies, art, music, and movement into an Inquiry Arc.

### **Deep Learning Through the Gift of Time**

Students benefit from the flexible use of time during the school day and across the school year. Our students have long learning blocks to facilitate in-depth thinking, conversations, collaboration, and creative projects. The RVC daily schedule includes instructional learning blocks of 1.5-2 hours, while maintaining more instructional minutes than are required by law. The students engage in long-term inquiry units, typically lasting 6-10 weeks, to go in-depth and integrate many subjects. While students may start at a surface level on a given subject, with more time they delve deeper into the subject, make more connections, and revise thinking. Eventually they are able to fully “live” a topic, for example, in a simulation or performance. That is when the deepest and most enduring learning occurs.

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Focused attention can be expected when students are given time and choose relevant, meaningful learning. This approach supports what Csikszentmihalyi<sup>8</sup> calls the "flow state," in which learners become engrossed in learning without regard for time. Many schools do not have enough time to provide surface coverage of their entire curriculum, much less the time to allow students to get into the flow state necessary for content mastery.<sup>9</sup> RVC schedules long blocks of time, and gives students the opportunity to return to projects and activities over many days or weeks in order to investigate topics deeply.

Having two years in the same class is also a gift of time. Because teachers have two years with each student, and the second year with the same teacher is when many students make tremendous growth, teachers are able to allow children to develop at their own pace without the pressure of having only one year to get them ready for the next grade. The Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University identified many benefits of this practice<sup>10</sup>, often called "looping," including:

- Teachers gain extra teaching time. "Getting-to-know-you" time becomes virtually unnecessary during the second year.
- Teacher knowledge about a child's intellectual strengths and weaknesses increases in a way that is impossible to achieve in a single year.
- Long-term teacher/student relationships improve student performance.
- Students have reduced apprehension about the new school year and the new teacher after the first year.
- Students reap benefits from time spent on developing social skills and cooperative group strategies in subsequent years.

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8 Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Harper and Row, New York.

9 Marzano, Robert J. (2003) *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Print.

10 <http://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/sites/brown.edu.academics.education-alliance/files/publications/looping.pdf>

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- Looping permits students to get to know one another well, facilitating social construction of knowledge.
- Long-term relationships result in an emotional and intellectual climate that encourages thinking, risk-taking, and involvement.
- English learners adjust to their new school and become comfortable with their teacher, developing confidence in their newly acquired language.
- Looping encourages a stronger sense of community and family among parents, students, and teachers.

Recess is an opportunity for children to relax and guide their activity in different ways. With long recess times—25 minutes mid-morning and 45 minutes for lunch and mid-day play—children have time to get involved with a playground game, read a book, do a project, or engage in fantasy play. We acknowledge and respect the importance of play in optimal brain development.<sup>11</sup> “Play is essential to the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical well-being of children beginning in early childhood. It is a natural tool for children to develop resilience as they learn to cooperate, overcome challenges, and negotiate with others. Play also allows children to be creative.”<sup>12</sup>

Adults also benefit from long periods of time to be creative and productive. Our master schedule includes clustered enrichment classes so that students at the same grade span (i.e. 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade) will have a rotation of classes (for example: PE and Music) on the same morning. This allows the teachers of that grade span to plan together for an uninterrupted, extended period every week while their students are rotating through those classes. In addition, students have an early student release at 1:45 pm every Wednesday so teachers meet from 2:15-4:30 pm. These long weekly staff meetings allow teachers and the School Director to manage the weekly “nuts and bolts” as well as engage in deep conversations, do all-school planning, work in smaller grade-cluster groups to discuss individual students, analyze assessment results, and engage in professional development. This time spent together supports the teachers to improve student learning and to continue to develop the positive school culture. More information about Professional Development for our teachers is found later in this section.

## **Educating the Whole Child**

Our goal is for RVC students to be well-rounded human beings. We nurture not just their academic growth, but also their social, emotional, and physical growth and wellness.

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<sup>11</sup> Siegel, Daniel, M.D., foreword for Cozolino, Louis (2013) *The Social Neuroscience of Education: Optimizing Attachment and Learning in the Classroom*, WW Norton & Company.

<sup>12</sup> Milteer, Regina M., et al. "The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bond: Focus on children in poverty." *Pediatrics* 129.1 (2012): e204-e213.

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Research shows that social-emotional learning (“SEL”) can have a positive impact on school climate and promote a host of academic, social, and emotional benefits for students. Durlak, Weissberg et al.’s meta-analysis of 213 rigorous studies of SEL in schools indicates that students receiving quality SEL instruction demonstrated the following:

- Better academic performance: achievement scores an average of 11 percentile points higher than students who did not receive SEL instruction
- Improved attitudes and behaviors: greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, and better classroom behavior
- Fewer negative behaviors: decreased disruptive class behavior, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals
- Reduced emotional distress: fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal<sup>13</sup>

RVC uses a home-grown, teacher developed, social-emotional learning curriculum that incorporates Brain Gym, mindfulness practices and lessons, and explicit teaching of communication and problem solving skills. Teachers discuss and practice these elements at their weekly staff meetings to ensure that they are prioritized.

All classes start the day with mindfulness practices and focus on breathing and relaxing after each transition (after recess, after lunch, etc.). Through regular class meetings, students have the opportunity to process social and emotional issues, problem-solve, and resolve conflicts. Students sit in a circle, and each child is offered a turn to give input, ask a question, or give suggestions on a particular topic. In the lower grades, teachers also use puppets to demonstrate challenging situations and how they might be handled. In the middle grades, students sometimes use role-playing to work out challenging situations. By the time students are in the upper grades, they have gained confidence in confronting uncomfortable situations and are encouraged to use “I statements” and work together to resolve conflicts. Older students are able to help younger students to negotiate interpersonal conflict.

Our teachers devote attention to the emotional needs of individual students. Teachers contact parents when they feel that would be helpful and consult with our counselor to help when children need more assistance than a teacher can provide. RVC recognizes that our students’ emotional well-being greatly impacts their ability to learn and prioritizes helping all students to process feelings and regulate emotions.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/outcomes>

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We also recognize that children need regular physical movement and activity. Peter Strick, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center of Syracuse, New York, and his staff have traced a pathway from the cerebellum back to parts of the brain involved in memory, attention, and spatial perception. They have found that the part of the brain that processes movement is the same part of the brain that processes learning. Our classrooms are set up to accommodate this. Our classrooms have a community gathering space, with students sitting in a circle on a rug and the teacher sitting with them, in order for the teacher to be more on the students' level rather than a hierarchical figure standing above them from the front of the classroom. Sometimes children sit in a circle in order to facilitate group discussions and interaction, and other times they are focused on, and facing, the teacher for instruction. Sometimes the students use white boards, notebooks, or clipboards at the rug, and other times they use the various spaces around the room to work—tables, pillows, bean bag chairs, couches, countertops, “invention centers” or “creation stations,” classroom library areas, and outdoor learning spaces. Children choose where and with whom they'll work different times throughout the day. At other times, as appropriate, teachers assign partners or groups or places to work.

Physical activity is incorporated into the students' learning by using movement games, activities, dance, yoga, and opportunities to be outdoors for a quick break or game. Physical activity is sometimes related to a unit of study and is sometimes just for a “brain and body break” such as yoga stretches, freeze dance, or forming a physical “pretzel,” which helps to integrate both sides of the brain. Research demonstrates that physical activity and exercise improve cognition, including executive function, spatial tasks, reaction times, and quantitative skills.<sup>14</sup>

We understand the value and importance of nature and incorporate outside learning when possible. For example, students sometimes have an outside center as one of their choices, they may do a math game or activity outside, and they may take class walks to observe and appreciate the changing of the seasons or another science concept. Often, individuals or small groups of older students choose to read, write, or work outside at picnic tables or on benches under trees near the classrooms. Classes of students also go on class hikes, walk across the road to the public library, or do a walking field trip downtown.

## Connected Community

RVC students, teachers, and parents recognize that our deep community connection benefits students' lives and enhances learning. Each class develops a strong familial-like bond that is reinforced with regular class meetings and discussions. Pairs of classes, older and younger, are linked as buddy classes, with each child having one or two students in another class who are their personal buddies throughout each school year. Students get together regularly with their buddy classes, and those multi-age relationships may endure beyond the classroom, and even across many years.

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<sup>14</sup>Medina, John (2009) *Brain Rules*, Pear Press. See also <http://www.brainrules.net/exercise>.

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Students eagerly anticipate and fondly recall our annual school events and traditions. These include the following events and activities:

- Pumpkin Carving – buddies plan and carve a jack-o-lantern together
- Gratitude Feast – each class prepares a part of a homemade-in-the-classroom meal featuring fall seasonal ingredients that they enjoy together, students paired with their buddies, including singing and expressing our gratitude to others at school
- Lunar New Year – students create Chinese dragon head costumes and participate in a Chinese dragon dance accompanied on drums by older students
- End-of-Year “Moving On” Family Park Day--the whole community comes together to play, enjoy each other’s company, and celebrate our graduating fifth graders with meaningful rituals
- The students feel a sense of security and joyful anticipation in the repetition of these annual traditions, and they experience them differently at each age and stage of academic development. The younger students grow to appreciate the significance of these events and look forward to taking on a larger role as they get older, such as taking the lead on carving pumpkins or serving the younger students soup at the Gratitude Feast.

Parents and teachers collaborate in the planning and implementation of many of these community events. At our spring Parent Party, parents and teachers gather to share their talents through performances and exhibits, as well as eat, dance, and enjoy each other’s company. Students benefit from the community that their parents and teachers cultivate.

Parents are an integral part of the RVC community. The first and most important connection is between the parent, the student, and the teacher. Since this relationship is a two-year relationship, teachers have the opportunity to understand, with considerable depth, the parents’ perspective and insights into their students and their learning preferences and needs. Some families with two or more children develop multi-year trusting relationships with teachers.

RVC also welcomes and encourages parent voluntary participation in any aspect of the school that they find of interest, although there is no requirement for participation, and RVC notifies parents and guardians of applicant pupils and currently enrolled pupils that parental involvement is not a requirement for acceptance to, or continued enrollment at, RVC.

Parents may choose to participate in the life of the school in a variety of different ways depending on what works for them. Some parents serve on RVC’s Board of Directors, helping to make



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decisions that shape the future of the school. Others serve on the Community Council, assisting with the day-to-day functioning of the school.<sup>15</sup>

Some parents help out regularly in the classroom (e.g., weekly, every other week, monthly), working with students and/or supporting the teacher. Teachers orient parents so they know how the classroom functions and how to assist children and can become informed participants in the classroom. Parents also enrich classroom experiences by sharing their own skills, interests, and professional knowledge in areas such as engineering, natural sciences, design, yoga, meditation, arts, crafts, cooking, sewing, gardening, woodworking, and more. Some parents assist with projects focused on specific classrooms or the entire school, class plays and events, or other school events; some drive on field trips; others do committee or project work at home. Some parents do projects on the school grounds on weekends, such as gardening, sweeping, or building projects. We acknowledge that some parents are not able, or choose not, to participate. Volunteering is not a requirement or expectation. Typically, parents become involved because of the satisfaction they receive from being part of the learning community.

We realize that some parents, particularly those whose primary language isn't English, may feel intimidated about participating in school events or activities or helping in the classroom. In addition to our outreach from teachers, our Family Outreach/Support Coordinator provides parents with the support they need to engage in school events and activities of their choosing: support for translation, childcare, or timing of activities can make the difference between a parent being able to participate or not.

*A New Wave of Evidence*, a report from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2002), is a synthesis of research on parent involvement over the previous decade. It found that, regardless of family income or background, students with involved parents are more likely to achieve the following:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to post-secondary education

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<sup>15</sup> Educational experts recommend, based on research results, that parent involvement in schools should include decision-making. Recommended frameworks for parental involvement in schools “Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities.” Epstein, J.L. and K. Salinas. 1992. *School and Family Partnerships Encyclopedia of Education Research*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Macmillan.

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This research is supported by subsequent studies as well. In its 2008 policy brief, the National Education Association (“NEA”) indicated: “Researchers note that strong school-family-community partnerships foster higher educational aspirations and more motivated students.” The NEA continued to state: “Successful school-parent-community partnerships are not stand-alone projects or add-on programs but are well integrated with the school’s overall mission and goals. Research and fieldwork show that parent-school-partnerships improve schools, strengthen families, build community support, and increase student achievement and success.” Our experience has shown that beyond these benefits, parents often truly enjoy helping at school, and they develop positive relationships with other adults and children that last for years.

### **Authentic Assessment**

The RVC teachers employ many methods to maintain awareness of and assess what students have learned. Teachers carefully observe their students in action as they work and play to assess which skills they have developed and where they need support. Worksheets are not used to determine our students’ proficiency in reading and writing; instead, children spend a lot of time actually reading and writing, as teachers observe and guide them, using informal formative assessments to determine and plan for next steps in learning. Teachers also give regular formal reading and writing assessments. More specific information about assessments is found in Element 3.

Much of our students’ work is based around Inquiry Arcs. During project work times, teachers continually assess students as they work individually, with partners, and in groups. Often at the end of a unit of inquiry, students will have an individual component of the project, such as a writing assignment or individual presentation or display, so teachers can assess individual students’ skills, learning, and growth in addition to their ability to work collaboratively with others.

Students and teachers maintain a portfolio of each child’s work throughout their years at RVC. Students and teachers choose items to be placed in their portfolios in order to reflect on their experiences and growth during the school year. At student-led portfolio review conferences at the end of each year, students, teachers, and parents have an opportunity to reflect on and appreciate that year’s growth and set goals for the next year. Graduating fifth graders take home their portfolios as a representation of their change and development during their elementary years.

### **Collaboration and Collective Responsibility**

Collaboration is important on many levels at RVC. We help students from a young age to develop the skills involved in collaborating, as they work together building with blocks, doing art projects, engaging in fantasy play, and participating in learning centers. They continue to develop these skills as older students by participating in partner work and small-group projects. We help students to process what worked well and what was challenging about working with others, and students reflect on how their group functioned and what their role was in the group. Regarding student collaboration, research has shown “When efforts are structured cooperatively, there is considerable evidence that students will exert more effort to achieve (learn more, use higher-level reasoning strategies more frequently, build more complete and complex conceptual

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structures, and retain information learned more accurately), build more positive and supportive relationships (including relationships with diverse individuals), and develop in more healthy ways (psychological health, self-esteem, ability to manage stress and adversity).”<sup>16</sup>

Teachers model collaborative skills for children and discuss these skills explicitly while debriefing group work during projects and during class meetings. Students develop their communication and interpersonal skills with practice working and playing together. Particular skills we focus on include the following:

- Listening to and acknowledging the feelings, concerns, opinions, and ideas of others
- Sharing information, ideas, and suggestions
- Seeking input from others
- Expanding on the ideas of a peer or team member
- Sharing credit for good ideas
- Acknowledging others' skills, experience, creativity, and contributions
- Stating personal opinions and areas of disagreement tactfully
- Listening patiently to others in conflict situations
- Defining problems in a non-threatening manner
- Supporting group decisions even if not in total agreement
- Asking for help in solving problems
- Checking for agreement and understanding
- Notifying others of changes or problems in a timely manner
- Making procedural suggestions to encourage progress towards goals

RVC teachers and parents also collaborate in many ways as described above in the Connected Community section.

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<sup>16</sup> Johnson, DW & Johnson, RT (1999). *“Making Cooperative Learning Work”*, Theory into Practice, College of Education, The Ohio State University.

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The RVC teachers cherish time spent meeting together and collaborating. They know that they become stronger teachers when they share ideas, help each other to problem-solve situations in their classrooms, discuss student needs and progress, and push each other to live up to the high standards they have set for themselves and their students. As a small staff, RVC teachers take the approach of “it takes a village to raise a child” and consider students to be everyone’s responsibility. They keep an eye on children throughout the years, they share information about them and their families that may be helpful, and they celebrate students’ achievements and progress together. Teachers also work together to develop curriculum, coordinate learning experiences such as Inquiry projects and field trips and discuss student work. The Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching reported that:

Effective teaching centers on a continuous professional learning cycle: planning, practice, implementation, reflection, analysis, and modification of practice.... We envision a profession in which teachers share responsibility for the development and implementation of a rigorous curriculum and multiple assessments of student learning. Collaboration and collegiality must become central to our daily practice.... [We call for schools to recognize that] supporting teacher collaboration promotes student learning.... We call upon our fellow teachers to engage as active participants in collegial professional growth by giving and receiving feedback about teaching practice and student learning, by sharing instructional practices, and by regularly visiting other classrooms.<sup>17</sup>

Because teacher collaboration time is so highly valued by the RVC community, we structure our weekly school schedule to allow for clustered specialist classes so teachers at the same grade span have common planning time each week. The weekly schedule also allows for extended teacher meeting time every Wednesday afternoon. The agendas for the Wednesday meetings are planned by the teachers in collaboration with the School Director.

We also value parents and teachers collaborating together on behalf of the children. The National Parent-Teacher Association identifies shared power as an important factor in developing family-school partnerships, suggesting that families and schools mutually accept their responsibility as “equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and

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<sup>17</sup> Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching report to the National Education Association 2011. “*Transforming Teaching: Connecting Professional Responsibility with Student Learning.*”

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create policies, practices, and programs.”<sup>18</sup> The RVC community embraces that idea, particularly at our Community Council meetings, and while working together to prepare for student performances and expositions.

### **Differentiation**

Researchers at the National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum define differentiated instruction as a process to approach teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same class. The intent is to maximize each student's growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum<sup>19</sup>.

In multi-age classes, there is a built-in element of differentiation; with a two-year age span, teachers understand that students will be at different developmental stages and they must meet students where they are developmentally. Indeed, because of this significant span in ages, the imperative for implementing differentiated approaches is “hardwired,” with the curriculum and teaching approaches reflective of this dynamic.

An example of differentiation is when our students do independent reading sessions as part of our Reading Workshop. Students choose books of their own interest and at their own independent reading level, as determined by individual assessments. The students might all be reading books from the same genre, such as Historical Fiction or nonfiction books, but each student reads a book at his or her own appropriate reading level. During Writing Workshop, students might be writing in the same genre, such as personal narrative or persuasive letters, but they may focus on different skills according to their own development and may choose their own topic within a genre. Teachers expect children to progress at their own rate, and guide and support them along the way. For example, teachers work one-on-one or in small groups with greater frequency with readers who are reading below grade level. Teachers check in more often with struggling writers during Writing Workshop and offer guidance and instruction at their developmental level. Although we meet students where they are developmentally, our goal is to support all students, so they are able to meet or exceed the expectations of the Common Core.

Teachers in the younger grades also organize centers, in which different activities happen in a class at the same time. Often these activities are open-ended, so children can access them at different levels, and either a teacher or a parent is available at some centers to provide support so that students can work at their appropriate level. Students may stay at a center for as long as needed to complete a task then move on to another center when they are ready. Working in

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<sup>18</sup> Parent-Teacher Association, “National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.”

[http://www.pta.org/files/National\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.pta.org/files/National_Standards.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Hall, Tracey. "Differentiated instruction." Wakefield, MA: National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials (2002).

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centers helps students to gain confidence and independence so that when they reach the older grades, they are able to manage their time while working independently or with a partner or small group. Students learn to do what is needed to accomplish a task, and take initiative, without awaiting instruction from a teacher.

In the older grades, students often work in collaborative groups to do research, create a project, and prepare to present their learning to others. Students may contribute to the group effort by reading aloud text to the others, taking notes, having discussions, creating a poster or other visual presentation, making a model, writing a song, making costumes, etc. Each group approaches their task based on the strengths and abilities of the students in the group, so the work will be naturally differentiated.

In addition, students experience that their peers are growing at different rates and they may be at a different stage than others in their class. This situation is typically accepted and embraced in multi-age classes, so competition and comparison are diminished. Rather, children are encouraged to focus on and celebrate their own growth and improvement, while also encouraging and supporting others. Students are taught that their intelligence can be developed through effort. They can focus on improvement instead of worrying about comparing themselves to their classmates. They are encouraged to work hard to learn more and develop new skills. They learn that the goal is not immediate perfection; rather, it is about learning something over time: confronting a challenge and making progress. Research has shown that students who learn this “growth mindset” show greater motivation in school, better grades, and higher test scores.<sup>20</sup> The RVC teachers have found that because they have celebrated students’ effort and progress, children seem to feel safe and relaxed in the classroom, and are able to appreciate the successes of themselves and others with less feeling of competition. When students are able to focus on their own learning, they can make more growth.

The Common Core State Standards include a series of rigorous expectations for students in each grade level, and thereby provide benchmarks as to where students ought to be. These standards have become targets for all students to meet or exceed in our differentiated classes. Teachers are always aware of these standards, use a variety of assessment data to identify students that need additional support in order to reach the standards, and work with them individually and in small groups frequently and with targeted instruction.

## **Cultural Competency**

RVC is committed to the ongoing process of fostering the awareness, attitude, knowledge, sensitivity and skills necessary to attain cultural competence. We define cultural competence as the will and ability to create, nurture, and sustain authentic relationships across differences.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.mindsetworks.com/webnav/whatismindset.aspx>

<sup>21</sup> Adapted in part from national diversity educator Gary Howard

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By adopting standards, policies, practices, and attitudes that support cultural competence, RVC has created a community that genuinely embraces diversity and values differences.

We believe it is critical to examine our own perceptions, prejudices, and biases. RVC stakeholders engage in professional development from local diversity trainers to engage in an on-going inquiry process about the impact of educational content, pedagogical methods, and assessment measures when working with a diverse population of learners.

We believe that all students benefit when learning with and from people with different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. We do outreach and build community relationships to encourage EL students and families to enroll in RVC. Additionally, promotional materials are designed to attract families who value diversity and inclusiveness.

We select, develop, and implement curricula that reflect diverse perspectives and languages and provide inclusive, accurate portrayal of historical events and cultural groups. Teachers encourage students to share their values and heritage and take pride in their cultural traditions. Students engage in conversations and study to promote and develop their understanding of social justice issues. We don't shy away from sensitive topics and we encourage students to ask questions and have respectful dialogue about issues in history and in the present day.

RVC educators strive to stay informed about, and sensitive to, the cultural needs of its students. We will encourage communication and participation by all parents to create shared expectations for educational success.

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## Choice

When people have the opportunity to make choices, they tend to be more invested in the outcome. Research has shown that having choice has positive effects on general well-being, behavior and values, and academic achievement.<sup>22</sup>

“Different kids do best in different kinds of environments.... Indeed, having a choice of schools is critically important. It is also important psychologically, as parents and students who are able to choose their school have a deeper level of commitment to the school. They have chosen to be a part of a community,” according to Tony Wagner, author of *The Global Achievement Gap*.<sup>23</sup>

RVC values choice on many levels. Our parents choose to send their children to RVC. Our teachers choose to teach at RVC and have flexibility in how they address the Common Core State Standards. Our students have choice during a typical school day: where to sit, with whom to work, what books to read, what supplies to use, how to show what they’ve learned, how to teach each other, how to handle situations while working and playing with other children, what to make during Maker Time, as well as which examples of work they’ll place in their portfolios at the end of the year. We feel that regular opportunity to make choices empowers our students to be active, thinking participants at school, not passive recipients of knowledge.

Here are examples in which we allow student choice in curriculum, learning, and classroom structure:

- At the beginning of each school year, students participate in developing class agreements regarding expectations for behavior, interactions, etc.
- During the Investigation phase of Inquiry Arcs, students choose an aspect of a topic they want to learn more about.
- Many classes have regularly scheduled Maker Time so children can choose what project they’d like to work on, either individually or with others.
- Students choose how they will present what they’ve learned in the Exposition at the end of an Inquiry Arc (write a poem or essay, develop a skit or song, create a piece of art or an informative display, etc.).

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.alfiekohn.org/teaching/cfc.htm>

<sup>23</sup> Wagner, Tony. *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need--and What We Can Do About It*. New York: Basic Books, 2008. Page 229.



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- Within Writing Workshop, students are given a choice on the topic they'll write about within a particular genre.
- Within Reading Workshop, students choose the books they read with some guidelines (for example, everyone is reading a particular genre, and students must read books at appropriate independent reading levels).
- Students often generate a list of ideas or options from which they make a choice. For example, students might choose the role they might assume in a period study such as the Middle Ages or Colonial America, a national park they want to learn more about, a poet they want to study, or organizations for which they could fundraise for or support.
- Older students take turns being the class "cooks" and they choose what they will make for a class snack on Fridays.

Educational expert Alfie Kohn has stated, "One way to judge the quality of a classroom is by the extent to which students can participate in making choices about their learning. The best teachers know that children learn how to make good decisions by making decisions, not by following directions. Students should have something to say about what they're going to learn and the circumstances under which they'll learn it, as well as how (and when) their learning will be evaluated, how the room will be set up, how conflicts will be resolved, and a lot more."<sup>24</sup> We believe it is important to allow children to make developmentally appropriate choices whenever possible to build that capacity and prepare them for adulthood.

### **Service Learning/Action**

When students have understood a new concept or learned new skills, they demonstrate their understanding through taking action on what they have learned. This action often has a goal of applying the learning in the service of another person or group. Thus, RVC students choose a class action at least once per year as a result of their learning, which takes the form of a community service.

Our students have the opportunity each year to work on a project to help other people, animals, or the earth. The students in each class discuss possible options so when a decision is made, they are likely to feel invested.

Classes choose service actions such as the following examples:

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<sup>24</sup> Kohn, Alfie. 2006. *The Homework Myth*. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, at page 178.

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- Make items to be given away (pillows for Alzheimer’s patients, care kits and scarves for local homeless shelter residents, chew toys for dogs at Marin Humane Society)
- Visit local senior centers to sing to and visit with the residents
- Collect books for a low-income school
- Collect shoes for local residents and children in Nicaragua
- Collect bikes and scooters for local children in need
- Participate in a broom pull at the Marin Watershed
- Create and sell products to raise money for charitable organizations such as the Marin Mammal Center or Water Wells for Africa

**RVC Educational Program Data**

Standardized test results are one method of assessing student achievement. Although RVC has placed more of an emphasis on authentic assessments and performance tasks, RVC students have performed similarly or better compared to other students in the District. In the past two years for which data are available, RVC students had the following results on the CAASPP tests. Our test scores increased significantly in the second year. We believe that is due to students having more time in our program. During our first year (2017-18), about 40 students enrolled in our school during the school year, which means some of them were only RVC students for a few months before taking the standardized tests. A much higher percentage of our students in the 2018-19 school year had been enrolled at RVC for at least a full year.

**English-Language Arts: Standard Met or Standard Exceeded**

	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
RVC	70%	83%
RVSD	78%	78%
Marin County	65%	66%
California	50%	51%

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**Math: Standard Met or Standard Exceeded**

	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
RVC	65%	73%
RVSD	70%	69%
Marin County	57%	58%
California	39%	40%

**Science: Standard Met or Standard Exceeded**

	<b>2018-19</b>
<b>RVC</b>	<b>79%</b>
RVSD	58%
Marin County	46%
California	30%

**Curriculum and Instruction**

Ross Valley Charter teaches TK-5 students to work with confidence, persevere, and take learning risks in a place where the whole school community believes in their ability to be creative collaborators, fully able and equipped to develop into thoughtful, engaged citizens who are leaders and innovators in our 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

Basic skills in language arts and math are learned and reinforced using classwork that is inherently interesting to the children whenever possible. Skills and knowledge are relevant and meaningful for students, so they experience and acquire a love of learning.

The curriculum in our multi-age classrooms is flexible and open-ended enough to address the wide range of developmental abilities, learning styles, and interests of students while meeting Common Core State Standards. Students use their creativity, adaptability, imagination, and

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working collaboratively to create songs, skits, poetry, dance, art, games, and other audience-interactive representations of students' knowledge. Students teach each other on a regular basis, so they need to know their subject matter well. Teachers collaborate on curriculum and instruction practices to ensure consistency over the six-year program.

### **Classroom Physical Environment**

Each classroom has a similar physical look in many ways. Each classroom has a central gathering space where students sit in a circle with the teacher. This area is used for direct instruction, class meetings and circle times, read-alouds, and class discussions.

Students do not have individual desks. Instead, there are tables where students work with partners, in small groups, or individually. During some times of the day, students may be assigned to tables, but much of the time students have the freedom to choose where they would like to work. Comfortable spaces such as large pillows, bean bag chairs, couches, and the carpet may be chosen by kids as working and playing areas.

Materials and supplies are shared by students in each class. There is a central supply area with pencils, paper, scissors, rulers, etc. with the expectation that students can retrieve what they need when they need it and return it when they are finished. Students have access to ample art supplies (markers, crayons, oil pastels, colored pencils, glue sticks, construction paper, paint, fabric, etc.) available for students to use as needed. TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes also have "creation stations" stocked with a variety of materials such as cardboard tubes, cardboard boxes, egg cartons, pipe cleaners, corks, popsicle sticks, and other small recyclable materials available to the students to make their creations during Maker Time and as part of their academic learning.

### **Teachers' Role**

RVC teachers interact with children based on the understanding that children are active seekers of information and not passive absorbers of knowledge. Teachers expect children to work to construct their own meaning and understanding of information and to make connections. The teachers create an environment that supports students in making choices and decisions so that they are actively engaged in their learning. This leads them to be invested and to realize the power and joy of learning, contributing to an ongoing curiosity and interest in lifelong learning.

RVC teachers function as highly motivated guides, facilitators, and coaches. They act more as a "guide on the side" than a "sage on the stage." They support student learning by presenting students with a question, problem, or situation to work on together, puzzle out, research, make mistakes, and continue trying. Teachers provide support and resources, ask questions, and encourage dialogue. They also facilitate discussions regarding process and collaborative skills. Teachers encourage students to question and wonder about things, seek information, make connections, and support each other. Teachers are on the lookout for students with a special interest in a topic that they might like to pursue individually and help to make time available for that pursuit.

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The teachers' educational goals include fostering the students' creativity and curiosity, self-reliance, social responsibility, artistic expression, critical thinking, and collaboration skills.

Our teachers integrate and differentiate curriculum and instill life-long learning habits by encouraging students to look for the larger meaning in everyday events. Students often realize that new information from other curricular areas is helpful in making their current understanding more profound, and teachers help them to see the connections between different aspects of a topic, or different topics altogether.

RVC believes that empowering teachers is critical as a strategy for implementing the Common Core State Standards ("CCSS"), Next Generation Science Standards ("NGSS"), History-Social Science Framework, English Language Development ("ELD") Standards, and remaining State Content Standards (collectively referred to herein as "State Standards"). The Center for American Progress<sup>25</sup> makes the following recommendations to districts implementing the standards:

- Create teacher leadership roles at the classroom, school, and district levels.
- Allocate time for teachers to collaborate.
- Create systems for embedded teacher professional development.
- Give teachers an active role in the selection and development of State Standards instructional materials.

RVC teachers embrace the State Standards and are given time and resources to support their work.

### **English-Language Arts**

RVC has a well-developed, content-rich curriculum that is consistent with the expectations in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy. Our literacy approach serves the needs of all readers, from emerging to fluent, in grades TK-5. Using resource books by experts in comprehensive literacy instruction such as Lucy Calkins (Pathways to the Common Core, 2012 and Units of Study for reading and writing), the Orton Gillingham phonics program, and Donald R. Bear, et.al (Words Their Way, 2011), we educate children with rich, literacy-based instruction. As students progress from "learning to read" to "reading to learn," they are exposed to greater amounts of informational reading through nonfiction texts in content areas across the curriculum. Students learn to identify key ideas and details, appreciate the craft and structure of various texts, and integrate knowledge and ideas within a range of texts. The

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2015/04/28/111762/teacher-leadership/> ; April 28, 2015

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text types used in our classrooms include stories (folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, myths, novels, etc.), drama (scripts), poetry, nonfiction, historical fiction, and scientific and technical texts.

Teaching guided by the expectations of the CCSS ensures that students gain adequate exposure to a range of fiction and nonfiction texts and comprehension tasks. Students advancing through the grades read grade-appropriate and increasingly complex texts, as outlined in the CCSS, and further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades. Their writing also progresses as they go through the grades and they practice several genres of writing each year.

### **Reading**

Our students are guided by a consistent, common language for our approach to teaching reading and writing throughout the grades. Our goal is for each student to read at or above grade level. Teachers systematically and explicitly teach decoding and comprehension skills throughout the grades, and help to increase students' vocabulary through reading aloud, previewing new vocabulary, and reading with students individually and in small groups. We teach students how to use context, as well as using roots and affixes, to derive word meanings. We also teach students to monitor their comprehension by going back to the text, using graphic organizers, and highlighting and annotating what they're reading to prepare for discussions. We emphasize teaching students to gather evidence from a text to support a claim, both verbally and in writing.

Although these reading skills are important, we also believe that developing knowledge is crucial for reading comprehension. Throughout our Inquiry Arcs, we incorporate in-depth learning about a variety of history, social science, and science topics, which helps to build our students' knowledge base. Teachers guide students in "close reading" of texts to ensure a deep understanding of vocabulary and content. Often classes will read an informational article on a subject that is related to a fictional story they are reading; each text helps with the comprehension of, and interest in, the other.

Each classroom has a well-stocked library, which is organized according to Fountas and Pinnell reading levels and/or genres throughout grades 2-5.<sup>26</sup> Students visit other classes if they are looking for a particular book or author that their classroom doesn't have, and we regularly add new books to our libraries to keep them up-to-date. We also utilize the public library that is located directly across the street from our school for fiction and nonfiction resources. Each RVC student has a library card and the children's librarian locates books for students and classes and meets with classes on request to teach about the library, highlight new books, and read stories.

Teacher read-aloud time, or "read together" time (a teacher reads a book or article and all students have a copy to follow along) is a very important part of our reading curriculum.

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.fountasandpinnellleveledbooks.com/>

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Teachers choose books or articles to read aloud to their classes that are related to their Inquiry arcs, demonstrate an author's craft, or simply provide the pure joy of experiencing a great story, and nurture a love of books. Read-alouds are often interactive, with the teacher pausing to ask questions. Students then "turn and talk" to their reading partner about their thoughts, which typically requires higher-level thinking and inference, not just basic comprehension. Often these questions and responses lead to fascinating class discussions, and sometimes individuals are inspired to read more books in the series or more books by the same author, to learn more about a particular topic, or to re-read the book on their own. In the lower grades, read-alouds are typically picture books. As the children get older, a variety of picture books, novels, poetry, and nonfiction books and articles are read aloud to, and with, them. It is a treasured time of day for students and teachers, helping to teach valuable literacy skills, contributing to our students' love of reading, and inspiring them to write.

Students practice reading on their own during Independent Reading time. Teachers help to guide students to books that they can read independently and monitor their progress with one-on-one conferences and small-group instruction. Sometimes children read with a reading partner at a similar reading level, and they discuss and compare various elements of their books. Students sometimes read in book groups—several children with either the same or similar books, which they then discuss, with or without the teacher.

Informational (nonfiction) texts are read during independent reading time, as part of Inquiry arcs, and read aloud by the teachers. Students are specifically taught how to read informational texts, focusing on text features such as the table of contents, glossary, index, graphics, and maps, as well as text structures such as problem/solution, cause and effect, compare/contrast, and time sequence. Teachers also focus on academic vocabulary that appears in a variety of content areas. By third grade, about half of the reading students do is nonfiction. Students who are reading below grade level are supported so they can access these more challenging texts. This happens in a variety of ways including teachers reading aloud while students follow with their own copy, teachers pre-reading an article with a struggling student, partner reading, etc.

Some classes perform a play based on what they are learning about, further deepening their understanding of the character, setting, dialogue, and interactions between characters. These plays may be performed for other classes, as well as for family and friends, and some include elaborate costume and set-making, while others are simpler. Some older students write scripts for plays that their classmates perform.

In the upper grades, classes sometimes focus on a particular genre. For example, for a month, a 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade class might focus on historical fiction. The teacher reads aloud an historical fiction novel and the class discusses the story, and also analyzes the techniques the author employed to combine accurate historical information with fictional elements such as dialogue and supporting characters. Individual students then choose historical fiction stories to read in a small group, on their own, or with a partner. They discuss them, write about them, and apply what they've learned about the genre of historical fiction to the book they have chosen. There might also be other activities, such as doing artwork related to their book or time period, making a class timeline showing when different stories took place, dressing as a character in their book and having a "tea party" so they can interact with other characters, and discussing common elements such as how native people and settlers interacted. At the end of a genre study, students are asked

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to write a reflective piece, with the goal that they would like to read more books in that genre on their own.

Teachers monitor students' reading levels by assessing them several times each year and give additional focused instruction to students who are below grade level. They encourage students to read books at their independent reading level to increase the volume of books they read and to increase fluency. We also choose texts that are slightly above students' independent reading level to read closely with support, sometimes reading a text several times for different purposes. Teachers support students who are struggling readers to ensure that they have access to the increasingly complex text that is expected at each grade level as part of CCSS. Classes regularly read articles or books together, so all students have the opportunity to grapple with grade level texts and vocabulary, even if the texts are above or below some students' independent reading level.

Given that each teacher reads with and assesses our students' growth frequently over the two-year period in their classes, the teachers are able to address students' needs on an individual level. Teachers also keep records throughout each student's years in elementary school to observe their growth over time and discuss a student's progress with previous or subsequent teachers as needed. A school-wide record of reading progress over time is updated every trimester.

## **Writing**

RVC implements a rigorous and coherent writing curriculum in which students gain mastery of a range of skills and applications in all aspects of language use, including vocabulary, grammar, written conventions, and the development and organization of ideas. Several RVC teachers have attended teacher training at the Lucy Calkins Writing Institutes, Teachers' College, at Columbia University in New York. Our students benefit from a consistent and common language for our approach for teaching writing throughout the grades. All students in grades TK-5 learn to write different text types appropriate for different purposes and audiences. Each year, students write opinion pieces, information pieces, and narrative stories. We are inspired by the Lucy Calkins Units of Study, which are CCSS-aligned, although our teachers adapt the units and lessons to align with our Inquiry Arcs or reading focus areas (for example, a class may read and write mysteries during a genre study). Students in the middle and upper grades often share their writing with other students and are taught how to give and receive feedback.

RVC students are taught how to cite sources in their writing. They read several books, articles, or websites on a particular topic and take notes, then create informational pieces and opinion pieces, citing evidence from the texts to defend their claims. Using sources and explaining their significance is crucial to constructing well-defended arguments. Students are taught to cite from the text while speaking and writing about stories they have read. For example, a student may claim that a particular character is responsible and will cite several examples of the character doing responsible things as evidence.

When students write stories, they may also include information they've obtained from various sources. For example, in an Inquiry arc about oceans, a student may write a fictional story with



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a dolphin as a main character and read articles or books about dolphins as background in order to describe the dolphin and its habitat and actions accurately.

During Writing Workshop lessons, the teacher starts with a mini-lesson about a particular focus (some examples: writing from left to right across the page and continuing on the next line, the proper use of punctuation in dialogue, types of leads in opinion pieces, revising for consistency in voice). During the mini-lesson, students might practice that particular skill individually, with a partner, or as a whole class, and then they proceed with extended periods of uninterrupted writing. The teacher confers with individual students or works with small groups of students on a particular aspect of writing. At the end of the workshop, students gather as a group to wrap up the session, and sometimes share their writing with a partner or the whole class.

At the end of a writing unit, students celebrate their growth by “publishing” a piece of writing they have taken through the stages of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. Often, classes have celebrations, an opportunity to read or listen to each other’s pieces.

In the lower grades, students use the Handwriting Without Tears program to learn proper handwriting techniques. By third grade, they transition from printing practice to cursive practice. In the upper grades, students do much of their writing on computers. They use Google docs so their writing can be shared with their teacher or writing partner for comments and editing. They begin to learn proper keyboarding starting in 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade and increase their knowledge of word processing during 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade, so they graduate with the ability and stamina to produce and edit strong pieces of writing on the computer.

Students at all grades learn to write poetry. In upper grade classes, this sometimes becomes a major focus, with a culminating poetry evening during which students take turns reading individual poems they have authored and recite poems or songs by well-known authors.

Writing is often integrated into Inquiry arcs. Students do research and write informational or opinion pieces on science or history topics. Some students choose to share their learning with the class by writing short skits or creating posters that include written elements.

Class time is also used for writing for authentic purposes. Some examples are students write a letter to a national park to ask for a brochure, they create newsletters about the activities in their classrooms, they write to friends and relatives in other states to learn about their region, and some write plays, fictional stories, and poetry on their own to share with others.

## **Speaking and Listening**

Students have many opportunities to practice speaking and listening. They participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners (one-on-one, older or younger buddies, small and large groups). They follow agreed-upon norms for discussion such as taking turns speaking, listening to one another, building upon others’ talk by responding to comments of others, and asking questions to clear up any confusion.

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Students frequently become “experts” in a wide range of diverse assigned and/or chosen topics that they research, become knowledgeable about, and then present orally. Sometimes that is done as part of a group, and other times students do individual presentations.

In the lower grades, students sometimes design a center activity that they share with classmates. In the upper grades, students sometimes focus on an area of individual interest that they research to learn more, then write about it, and plan and carry out a lesson about it with a small group of classmates.

All RVC students have opportunities to perform each year. Theatrical performances are an integral part of our children’s experiences, and students experience several different approaches throughout their K-5 years. In TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> grade, students perform in one or more plays in which there may be several children that play each character simultaneously to increase each child’s comfort and confidence in performing. In 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes, students have their own roles in a class play, and they contribute to creating the costumes and sets. In the upper grades, students often write and help direct a class play, and the students design sets and costumes independently. Sometimes, a class gets inspired by a particular story and may decide to create a readers’ theatre version of it (simple, without memorized lines, costumes or sets). Other times, the plays will be major productions with parents helping to create elaborate costumes and sets. Some of these plays are done at school, while others are performed at the local high school’s theatre.

## Language

RVC students learn to demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing and speaking.

According to Donald Bear, “Literacy is like a braid of interwoven threads. The braid begins with the intertwining threads of oral language and stories. As children experiment with putting ideas on paper, a writing thread is intertwined as well. As they move into reading, the threads of literacy begin to bond. The size of the threads and the braid itself become thicker as spelling (orthography) knowledge grows.”<sup>27</sup>

Letter-sound correspondences, phonics, spelling patterns, high-frequency word recognition, decoding strategies, word use and meanings—these and many other word skills are what written word knowledge is all about. We use a systematic approach to teaching phonics in our younger grades, following the Orton-Gillingham program.

Students are directly taught grammar and usage rules, including complete sentences and paragraphing, capitalization, punctuation, letter writing conventions, and how to consult

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<sup>27</sup> Bear, Donald. 2016. “Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction.” Overview, p.1

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reference materials. These skills are sometimes taught to the whole class through a “morning message” in which students notice mistakes written in a message on the board and are explicitly taught how to correct them. Students also focus on word skills like finding blends, digraphs, long vowel patterns, homophones, etc. during the morning message discussion. Other times students will use an inquiry approach to learn language conventions. For example, they’ll search their independent reading books for commas and compare and draw conclusions about rules of conventional usage, followed by reinforcing language rules during a class discussion. Using interactive Structured Word Inquiry, students analyze word parts to better understand the connection between the spelling and the meaning of words and predict the meanings of unfamiliar words based on this knowledge.

Often, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, word study, and other language-specific skills are taught or reinforced in context. For example, before reading aloud a chapter, a teacher often explains the meaning of a word or two on small teacher-made posters, points out root words, prefixes and suffixes, tells what part of speech it is, uses it in a sentence, and asks students if they can make connections to the word or think of other examples of it being used. Students then listen for these words during the read aloud. Language skills are often taught during Writing Workshop, or during projects that include writing, as it becomes useful. For example, a teacher may notice that many students are writing run-on sentences in their informational pieces in an Inquiry arc, so he/she will teach a physical lesson in which students “walk sentences” that are being read aloud from one of their pieces. They will stop and stomp a foot whenever there should be a period, raise their hands over head for an exclamation point, and make a questioning with their arms for a question mark.

## **Mathematics**

RVC applies the guiding principles of focus, coherence, and rigor—the basis for the CCSS-Mathematics—throughout our curriculum. RVC students receive a comprehensive mathematical program that allows them to develop necessary computation, application, and problem-solving skills, while daily developing deep conceptual understanding of math principles and operations. We create a safe environment for students to feel comfortable taking learning risks. We emphasize a growth mindset, so students embrace learning from their mistakes, and perseverance is encouraged. Math instruction focuses deeply on concepts emphasized in the CCSS so that students gain confidence in their mathematical skills and understandings and are able to apply the mathematics they learn in the classroom to solve problems outside of the context of math class. Students learn to make connections among different mathematical concepts, are encouraged to approach a problem in multiple ways, and explain their thinking verbally and in writing.

Our teachers keep math interesting and relevant by using a variety of activities, and not relying solely on a math workbook daily. We use math games to practice skills, integrate art projects, do physical games and activities, and use literature to set up math problems to solve. By using the CCSS Math standards as our guide, and the SFUSD Math Core Curriculum as our foundational program, we maintain consistency throughout the grades, so our students build upon their math skills each year in a logical progression.

RVC teachers focus on the CCSS Mathematical Practices, which are as follows:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
4. Model with Mathematics
5. Use appropriate tools strategically
6. Attend to precision
7. Look for and make use of structure
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

It is a priority for our students to develop strong problem-solving skills. Teachers provide time for students to grapple with problems, search for strategies and solutions, and learn to evaluate their own results as well as others'. A primary focus in math class is on the students' thinking processes, and they have frequent opportunities to share their thinking, including their mistakes and subsequent attempts to solve problems in a different way.

In order to become successful problem solvers, teachers help students to develop the following characteristics:

- Have an interest in finding solutions to problems
- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- Develop confidence to try various strategies
- Be willing to risk being wrong at times
- Accept frustrations that come from not knowing
- Persevere when solutions are not immediate
- Understand the difference between not knowing the answer and not having found it yet

Students learn to work with a partner, small group, and individually to apply the math concepts they have been taught to solve in-depth, multi-step problems. Often these take a full math period to work through, and the teacher may bring students together during their working time so that pairs or groups can share information they have learned that may be useful to others. This leads to discussions about methods that have worked or not worked, information that is helpful and not helpful, and a reinforcement of the idea that there are many ways to solve a problem.

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Sometimes students produce a poster showing their thought process and results, and they take turns presenting the posters to the class.

Although we tend not to focus on repetitive exercises, we do expect our students to memorize addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts at appropriate grade levels. We consider these critical for them to master so they can be accurate and successful math students.

In the middle and upper grades, students are grouped by grade level for math. Our teachers have found that for this subject only, they are better able to serve the students' needs with single grade groupings. Because of this, math is scheduled at the same time in 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes and also in 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade classes. Often, we hire math assistants in order to keep the student-teacher ratio low so we can support all students.

## Social Studies

We use the California History-Social Science Framework to guide our Inquiry arcs that are related to social studies. We also use the guidance of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards<sup>28</sup>, which was developed to:

- enhance the rigor of the social studies disciplines
- build critical thinking, problem solving, and participatory skills to become engaged citizens
- align academic programs to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies.

Our goal is for students to become proficient in social studies in order to achieve civic competence—the knowledge, intellectual processes, and democratic dispositions required of students to be active and engaged participants in public life.<sup>29</sup> The curriculum in our multi-age classes is on a two-year rotation, including standards for both grades during the two years spent in each class.

Our youngest students begin with investigations into our world's ancient people and civilizations. TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> grade students focus on pre-historic humans and the Middle Ages. These Inquiry arcs integrate reading, writing, art, language, culture, music, dance, and mathematics, and allow students to become fully immersed in the topic. Learning about another part of the world and different types of people is the basis of becoming a global citizen.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.socialstudies.org/c3>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards>

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Through student and teacher-led Inquiry studies of local history, National Parks, and Native Americans, students learn about a variety of 2nd and 3rd grade social studies topics, including map skills, historical research methods, primary and secondary resources, natural resources, national symbols, government structures, and more.

The 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade classes alternate each year learning about either California or US history and geography. In an Inquiry arc focused on immigration, students learn in depth about groups of people who came to California over several hundred years and how that impacted the native people, the land, and other groups of people. Students learn about newcomers from Spain, Mexico, China, and all over the world during the Gold Rush. An Inquiry arc about US history focuses on whose voices were heard throughout history, including native people, explorers, settlers, enslaved people, the original colonies, and the American Revolution. Special attention is paid to groups of people whose perspectives are often underrepresented in history textbooks, including enslaved people, native people, and women.

Teachers use a variety of resources to support learning in Social Studies, including fiction and nonfiction books, on-line resources, write-on/wipe-off maps, short videos about different time periods, field trips, art, and simulations.

We also take our students on regular field trips so they can make connections with their classroom learning.

## Science

RVC uses the Next Generation Science Standards, which include three dimensions:

- Practices—behaviors that scientists engage in as they investigate and build models and theories about the natural world and the key set of engineering practices that engineers use as they design and build models and systems.
- Crosscutting Concepts—a way of linking the different domains of science. The concepts include patterns, similarity, and diversity; cause and effect; scale, proportion and quantity; systems and system models; energy and matter; structure and function; stability and change.
- Disciplinary Core Ideas—these are grouped in four domains: the physical sciences; the life sciences; the earth and space sciences; and engineering, technology and applications of science.

We find the Scientific and Engineering practices to be particularly well-aligned with our Inquiry approach:

- Asking questions (and defining problems)
- Planning and carrying out investigations

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- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Obtaining, evaluating and communicating information
- Constructing explanations (and designing solutions)
- Developing and using models
- Using mathematical and computational thinking
- Engaging in argument from evidence

The teachers' role is to help students develop the skills, values, and attitudes that facilitate the critical thinking skills of science: observing, comparing, organizing, sorting, inferring, relating, and applying. We encourage our children's curiosities and provide them opportunities to explore and investigate the natural world around them.

Our main science focus areas, which are wrapped into Inquiry arcs, are aligned with NGSS as follows:

**TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

- Weather—patterns and variations in local weather and the purpose of weather forecasting to prepare for, and respond to, extreme weather
- Pushes and Pulls—the effects of different strengths or directions of pushes and pulls on the motion of an object
- Needs of Plants and Animals—what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive and the relationship between their needs and where they live
- Sound and Vibration—the relationship between sound and vibrating materials
- Light and Shadow—the relationship between the availability of light and ability to see objects, and the idea that light travels from place to place
- Structure and Behavior of Plants and Animals—how plants and animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow, and meet their needs as well as how behaviors of parents and offspring help the offspring survive

**2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

- Plant growth—what plants need to grow and how plants depend on animals for seed dispersal and pollination
- Habitats and Diversity—compare the diversity of life in different habitats

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- Properties—observable properties of materials through analysis and classification of different materials
- Erosion—wind and water can change the shape of the land, identify and represent the shapes and kinds of land and bodies of water in an area and where water is found on Earth
- Weather and Seasons—organize and use data to describe typical weather conditions expected during a particular season
- Life Cycles—similarities and differences of organisms' life cycles
- Inherited Traits and Adaptation (evolution)—organisms have different inherited traits, and that the environment can also affect the traits that an organism develops
- Force and Motion (including electricity and magnetism)—effects of balanced and unbalanced forces on the motion of an object and the cause and effect relationships of electric or magnetic interactions between two objects not in contact with each other magnets.

**4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

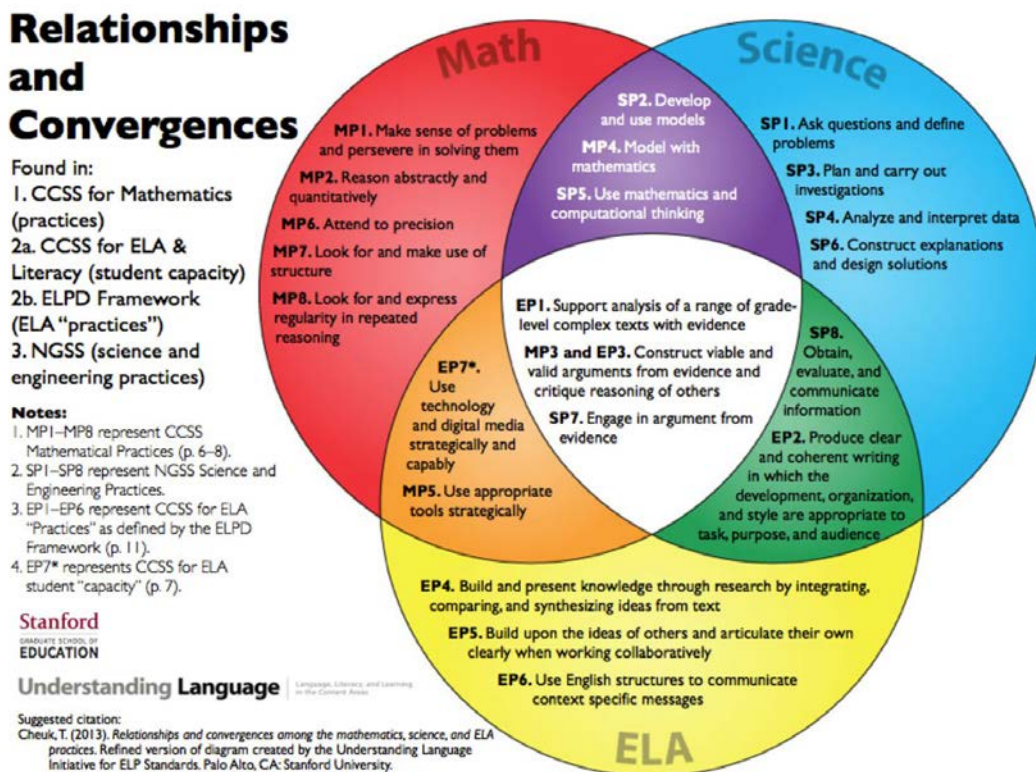
- Waves—use a model of waves to describe patterns of waves in terms of amplitude and wavelength, and know that waves can cause objects to move
- Erosion—effects of weathering or the rate of erosion by water, ice, wind, or vegetation
- Form and Function—plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction
- Reflected Light—an object can be seen when light reflected from its surface enters the eye
- Energy—relationship between the speed of an object and the energy of that object; energy can be transferred from place to place by sound, light, heat, and electric currents or from object to object through collisions
- Matter—matter is made of particles too small to be seen through the development of a model; regardless of the type of change that matter undergoes, the total weight of matter is conserved; sometimes the mixing of two or more substances results in new substances
- Ecosystems and Energy Flow—the geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and/or atmosphere interact; plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air and water; movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment; energy in animals' food was once energy from the sun



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- Shadows and Seasons—patterns of daily changes in length and direction of shadows, day and night, and the seasonal appearance of some stars in the night sky

We appreciate the convergence of math, science, and language arts standards as represented in this diagram:



Reading and writing are integrated into science through the use of nonfiction texts and science notebooks, in which students write and draw what they are learning or designing. Math is also integrated while doing experiments, recording data, and designing models.

We also often integrate science and social studies topics in Inquiry arcs. In the TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> grade Middle Ages arc, for example, students plant wheat in our outdoor garden, harvest it, and grind it into flour to make bread. This integrates a study of life long ago with the needs, behavior, and structure of plants. A 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade Inquiry arc on National Parks includes learning about ecosystems, geology, native people, map studies, national symbols, government structures, and natural resources.

Our outdoor field trips are enriching opportunities for our students to make connections with their classroom learning. Here are some examples of field trips we have taken that support and enrich our scientific studies in the classroom:

- TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> grade—Slide Ranch, Windrush Farms, Tara Firma Farm, open space hikes

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- 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade—Agate Beach tide pools, Exploratorium, California Academy of Science
- 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade—Crissy Field, Audubon Canyon Ranch, Exploratorium, local watershed

Our teachers use a variety of science curricular materials, including Engineering is Elementary units, California Education and the Environment Initiative units, and other resources either purchased or developed by our teachers.

### **Technology/STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Design, and Math)**

At RVC, we feel that technology is a tool and should be used as such; not as an end in itself, but rather as a means of learning and creating. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, studies have shown that excessive media use can lead to attention problems, school difficulties, sleep and eating disorders, and obesity. <sup>30</sup> We are aware of these concerns of over-using technology, particularly for our youngest students, and are thoughtful about how we use it at school.

RVC has a class set of Chromebooks, in charging carts, in each classroom above grades TK/K/1<sup>st</sup>, with reliable internet capacity to support all devices in use at once.

In TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> grade we prefer that students have hands-on, three-dimensional activities and experiences, so students don't use computers or iPads in the classroom. TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> classes have Creation Stations with lots of materials such as art supplies, paper towels and toilet paper rolls, paper, tape, corks, pieces of wood, etc. for students to use for making things. Teachers sometimes use a visual presenter during instruction.

In 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade, students begin using Chromebooks but most instruction is still done without the use of computers. We prefer 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade students to be reading books, writing on paper to develop their fine motor skills, doing manipulative math work, making art, and creating with their hands, although some final writing projects are done on the computer. Students in 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes have Maker Time in which the students use various materials to create projects of their choosing. Second and third grade students begin the process of learning to access and evaluate Internet websites with the close guidance of their teachers. Using a visual presenter, teachers access and share information related to Inquiry arcs. Internet resources are viewed in the same vein as other resources—another avenue for learning that needs to be critically evaluated. Teachers are careful to pre-screen websites used to further student learning. Students begin creating computer-based presentations.

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx>

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In 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade, students use Google docs to enable sharing and collaborating of written pieces with other students or the teacher. Our older students also use the internet regularly for research, and further learn about the proper use of internet searches, and how to distinguish reliable sources. They create slide show presentations and learn how to cite sources when doing research and writing papers. Teachers use a classroom presenter, and model computer and internet skills for students. We still value hands-on creativity for our older students, and they do arts and crafts projects related to our curriculum. Often these projects inspire children to further pursue similar artwork. Students use various art tools, and do woodworking, electrical circuitry, gardening, knitting, and cooking.

## Physical Education

*“Play seems to be one of the most advanced methods nature has invented to allow a complex brain to create itself.”<sup>31</sup>*

We believe it is critical to develop the whole child, and physical development is an important component of this. Our students gain confidence in using their bodies and develop basic movement and sports-related skills at developmentally appropriate levels. Using the Model Content Standards for California Public Schools, our physical education teacher focuses on games and activities at each grade level that help students to develop skills such as balancing, jumping, kicking, throwing and catching, running, dribbling, dancing, etc. Our students meet age- and gender-specific fitness standards for aerobic capacity, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition. We want our students to enjoy and appreciate physical activity, and be positive, inclusive members of a team.

The master schedule provides time for regular physical education classes (200 minutes every two weeks) as well as movement activities integrated throughout the school day.

As needed, our classes take a “brain and body break” to get kids moving. Research has shown that exercise is the single most powerful tool to optimize brain function.<sup>32</sup> Examples of brain and body breaks include doing a yoga pose, stretching, freeze dance, running outside for a few minutes, or forming a physical “pretzel” which helps to integrate both sides of the brain. Students have two recesses per day, and some teachers choose to take their students outside for another short break in the afternoon or as needed. Classes sometimes go on walking field trips as well.

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<sup>31</sup> Brown, Stuart L., and Christopher C. Vaughan. *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*. New York: Avery, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Ratey, J. J., & Hagerman, E. (2008). *Spark: the revolutionary new science of exercise and the brain*. New York: Little, Brown.

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## **Social and Emotional Learning**

Our teachers use a school-developed social-emotional learning curriculum that fosters the development of mindfulness, resilience, and empathy.

All classes start the day with mindfulness practices based on Brain Gym and focus on breathing and relaxing after each transition (after recess, after lunch, etc.). RVC teachers understand that students learn best when they feel comfortable, safe, and relaxed, and teach methods that students often report doing on their own.

Each day, our students have the opportunity to voice their concerns, appreciations, announcements, problems, solutions, and ideas in a supportive and inclusive environment. During class meetings, students use a talking stick for sharing and listening to one another. By creating a safe space where students belong and can share from their hearts, students learn compassion, empathy, attentive listening, and respect of diverse opinions.

We try to instill in our students a deep sense of empathy as well as a sense that they can make a difference to others. Every classroom does a community service project each year. The students choose an animal, a group of people, a condition, or an environmental situation to help, often related to an Inquiry arc.

## **Resources and Methods Used in Subject Areas**

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Subject Area	TK/K/1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading workshop</li> <li>• individual, small group, and whole class instruction</li> <li>• individual teacher conferences</li> <li>• read alouds</li> <li>• individual and partner work using leveled readers</li> <li>• daily reading logs</li> <li>• reading scripts for class plays</li> <li>• Expeditionary Learning theme-based reading program</li> <li>• Read Naturally</li> <li>• take-home reading program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading workshop including independent reading with individual teacher conferences and small group instruction</li> <li>• whole-group mini-lessons and flexible strategy groups</li> <li>• nonfiction close reading related to inquiry arcs (science and social studies)</li> <li>• read alouds</li> <li>• response to a variety of texts, verbal and written</li> <li>• reading scripts for class plays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading workshop including independent reading with individual teacher conferences and small group instruction</li> <li>• genre studies</li> <li>• nonfiction close reading related to inquiry arcs (science and social studies)</li> <li>• book groups</li> <li>• read alouds</li> <li>• response to a variety of texts, verbal and written</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Writing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writing workshop</li> <li>• write responses to prompts that require opinions or preferences</li> <li>• write informational text (i.e., label the classroom, recipes, instructions for a game, crafts, other informational texts, etc.)</li> <li>• daily writing journals</li> <li>• review listening center literature</li> <li>• write weekly class news</li> <li>• Handwriting Without Tears Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writing workshop</li> <li>• informational, opinion, and narrative units each year</li> <li>• grammar and written conventions integrated and explicitly taught</li> <li>• writing in various forms as part of Inquiry arcs (i.e. journal writing, letters, poetry, informational writing, essays, etc.)</li> <li>• handwriting—printing for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, cursive for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders</li> <li>• word processing for some written pieces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writing workshop</li> <li>• informational, opinion, and narrative units each year</li> <li>• poetry writing</li> <li>• grammar and written conventions integrated and explicitly taught</li> <li>• writing in various forms as part of Inquiry arcs (i.e. letters, poetry, informational writing, opinion pieces, etc.)</li> <li>• word processing for some written pieces</li> <li>• write skits or plays that are performed by classmates</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Language Skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orton-Gillingham phonics &amp; spelling scope and sequence-- consonants, vowels, vowel teams, digraphs, syllables, plurals, prepositions, sight words, etc.</li> <li>• Explode the Code</li> <li>• Primary Phonics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on parts of speech</li> <li>• word study of long vowel patterns, homophones, base words, prefixes, and suffixes</li> <li>• use of revision and editing checklists</li> <li>• spelling, grammar and punctuation lessons using daily morning message and student writing samples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• word study of spelling patterns, Greek and Latin roots, prefixes and suffixes</li> <li>• use of revision and editing checklists</li> <li>• spelling, grammar and punctuation lessons</li> </ul>
<p><b>Listening &amp; Speaking</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• class meetings</li> <li>• student-led lessons of interest</li> <li>• learning and presenting a script for a class play/skit/puppet show</li> <li>• peer tutoring/mentoring within class buddies</li> <li>• students 'announce' new discoveries they have made during work time</li> <li>• individual and group presentations with Q&amp;A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• class meetings</li> <li>• personal share time with Q&amp;A</li> <li>• reading, writing, and math partners</li> <li>• group and individual presentations, particularly at class expos</li> <li>• communicating with buddies from upper and lower -level classes</li> <li>• annual class plays</li> <li>• class interviews of local experts and class guests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• class meetings</li> <li>• reading, writing, and math partners</li> <li>• group and individual presentations, particularly at class expos</li> <li>• communicating and assisting with younger students</li> <li>• annual class plays</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Math</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with numbers 1-19 (K) and 1-100 (1st) to gain foundations for place value</li> <li>• learn and apply problem solving strategies in partner, small group and individual work</li> <li>• record the weather daily, graphing with tally marks, and recording temperature</li> <li>• sorting, classifying and making patterns with shapes, colors, and a variety of attributes</li> <li>• use ten frame and number talks</li> <li>• various resources including SFUSD Math Core Curriculum, Math Their Way, Tile Math, Everyday Math, teacher-made worksheets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number talks and strategy sharing</li> <li>• learn and apply problem solving strategies</li> <li>• various resources including SFUSD Math Core Curriculum, iReady Math, Everyday Math, YouCubed, and a variety of online math resources</li> <li>• use of manipulatives such as counters, tiles, clocks, coins and money, 2D and 3D shapes, etc.</li> <li>• workbooks and worksheets to reinforce skills</li> <li>• addition/subtraction fact practice (2nd grade); multiplication fact practice (3rd grade)</li> <li>• weekly math games and creative math alternative activities and hands-on projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number talks and strategy sharing</li> <li>• various resources including SFUSD Math Core Curriculum, Mathland, Everyday Math, Marilyn Burns lessons, problem solving, worksheets to reinforce skills</li> <li>• multiplication fact practice</li> <li>• art projects involving math</li> <li>• math problems/projects involving literature</li> <li>• partner, group, and individual problem-solving</li> <li>• extension activities</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Science</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI) units</li> <li>• Engineering is Elementary (EIE) units</li> <li>• GEMS, Lawrence Hall of Science</li> <li>• Turtle Island Restoration Network's Salmon Protection</li> <li>• life cycles of insects and flowers</li> <li>• observation journals</li> <li>• worms and composting</li> <li>• environmental field trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• integrated inquiry activities based on Next Generation Science Standards</li> <li>• EEI units and lessons integrated into inquiry arcs</li> <li>• Engineering is Elementary (EIE) units</li> <li>• field trips including the Exploratorium, California Academy of Science, local parks and National Parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• integrated inquiry activities based on Next Generation Science Standards</li> <li>• EEI units &amp; lessons integrated into inquiry arcs</li> <li>• Engineering is Elementary (EIE) units</li> <li>• environmental field trips including Walker Creek, Crissy Field, Audubon Canyon Ranch</li> <li>• individual and group research projects and experiments</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Social Studies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry arcs on topics such as The Middle Ages, the South American Rainforest, Cro-Magnon Man, The Day of the Dead, and other cultural traditions</li> <li>• use of fiction and nonfiction texts, photographs of personal travels, guest speakers, videos, etc. for research</li> <li>• historically and culturally accurate representations of arts &amp; crafts, foods, dance, songs, performances, and other traditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in-depth, student-led Inquiry arc of local history</li> <li>• nonfiction texts, literature, read alouds, photos and primary sources, videos, internet, etc. for research</li> <li>• arts and crafts, music, dance, projects</li> <li>• field trips related to local Miwok people, Marin County history</li> <li>• interviewing local and regional experts in the classroom and online</li> <li>• detailed displays of learning presented at class expos include a variety of writing, artwork, building projects, and oral presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in-depth Inquiry arcs on California and U.S. history</li> <li>• nonfiction texts, literature, read alouds, photos and primary sources, videos, internet, etc. for research</li> <li>• arts and crafts, music, dance, projects</li> <li>• field trips related to California history (Sacramento, Gold Rush, Fort Ross, Alcatraz, etc.)</li> <li>• detailed displays of learning presented at class expos include a variety of writing, artwork, building projects, and oral presentations</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Art, Music, Dance, Performances</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• music, movement, art, and dance aligned with Inquiry arcs</li> <li>• singing in class, with buddies, and the whole school</li> <li>• self-directed choice time</li> <li>• weekly Art and Music classes</li> <li>• class plays and other performances</li> <li>• focus on famous artists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• music, movement, art, and dance aligned with Inquiry arcs</li> <li>• singing in classroom, with buddies, and at whole-school traditions</li> <li>• self-directed maker time</li> <li>• weekly Art and Music classes</li> <li>• class plays and musicals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• music, movement, art, and dance aligned with Inquiry arcs</li> <li>• singing in classroom, with buddies, and at whole-school gatherings</li> <li>• self-directed maker time</li> <li>• weekly Art and twice-weekly Music classes</li> <li>• class plays or poetry nights (sometimes written by students)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visual presenter used for whole class informational lessons</li> <li>• iPad use for special needs students (as needed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visual presenter used for whole class informational lessons</li> <li>• introduce keyboarding</li> <li>• introduce internet research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visual presenter used for whole class</li> <li>• continue practicing keyboarding skills</li> <li>• writing produced using word processing</li> <li>• internet research</li> <li>• Google docs for collaborating on projects</li> <li>• Google slideshows</li> </ul>

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## Homework

Research has shown that homework in the elementary grades has minimal positive impact on student learning.<sup>33</sup> We consider family time to be highly valuable and believe that our class schedule provides ample time to build and practice skills while at school. Our developmentally appropriate approach keeps homework to a minimum, and increases it gradually as students get older, to begin instilling good habits in preparation for middle school.

Our TK, kindergarten and first grade students do not have regular homework, other than encouragement to read with their parents. Books from the classroom are made available for students to borrow to read at home. Once or twice a year, students may get to bring home a class stuffed animal to accompany them for a few days, which they then write and draw about. They also may practice their lines for a play using a script at home. Also, students prepare for Expositions by learning about a job in the Middle Ages or an animal from the rainforest, preparing a costume, and practicing their role.

In second and third grade, students begin having one or two evenings of math homework each week. They continue to read at home regularly and do one or two projects per year that may require some work at home. Optional homework is available for families who want it.

In fourth and fifth grade, students begin having a small amount of nightly homework, typically math and language arts-related. Homework is assigned on Monday and due Wednesday; and assigned Wednesday and due Friday, giving students some flexibility and practice with time management. Once or twice each year, students have a long-term project to work on at home, which may involve reading, research, writing, and/or producing a finished product or preparing a lesson to teach others.

We want our students to develop time management skills to prepare for the increased homework load in middle school, but we also do not want to unnecessarily burden them with a lot of work while they are still young.<sup>34</sup>

## School Schedule

The RVC calendar has approximately the same beginning and ending dates as the Ross Valley School District calendar, and the same holiday and vacation schedule. See a 2020-21 calendar in Appendix A.

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<sup>33</sup> Kohn, Alfie. *The Homework Myth: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2006).

<sup>34</sup>Duke University Study: Homework Helps Students Succeed in School, As Long as There Isn't Too Much (today.duke.edu, Cooper Harris March 7, 2006).

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Our daily schedule is concentrated into large blocks of instructional time to support our belief that students should have extended periods to focus on a subject. Students have early release (1:45 pm) days on Wednesdays, when teachers have meetings and professional development. During conference weeks, students are released at 1:45 pm each day. See Appendix A for a Day In the Life of a K/1<sup>st</sup> grade student and a 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade student.

The following are our daily schedules.

<b>TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> Regular Day</b>	
8:30 - 10:00	Instructional time
10:00 - 10:30	Recess
10:30 - 11:45	Instructional time
11:45 - 12:30	Lunch/recess
12:30-1:45	Instructional time
1:45	TK and K dismissed
1:45-3:15	1st grade instructional time (includes one fifteen minute recess)
280 instructional minutes for TK (including recesses) 280 instructional minutes for K (including recesses) 315 instructional minutes for 1st	

<b>2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grades Regular Day</b>	
8:30-10:35	Instructional time
10:35-11:00	Recess
11:00-12:15	Instructional time

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12:15-1:00	Lunch/recess
1:00-3:15	Instructional time
335 instructional minutes	

<b>TK/K/1<sup>st</sup> Early Release Schedule</b>	
8:30 - 10:00	8:30 - 10:00
10:00-10:30	Recess
10:30-11:45	Instructional time
11:45-12:20	Lunch/recess
12:20-1:45	Instructional time
280 instructional minutes for TK (including recesses) 280 instructional minutes for K (including recesses) 250 instructional minutes for 1st	

<b>2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grades Early Release Schedule</b>	
8:30-10:35	Instructional time
10:35-11:00	Recess
11:00-12:15	Instructional time
12:15-1:00	Lunch/recess

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1:00-1:45	Instructional time
245 instructional minutes	

RVC offers more than the required 175 school days and more than the required number of annual instructional minutes at each grade level. The required minutes are:

- Transitional Kindergarten: 36,000 (including recess)
- Kindergarten: 36,000 (including recess)
- Grades 1-3: 50,400
- Grades 4-5: 54,000

**Approximate Instructional Minutes in RVC School Year**

	<b>Transitional Kindergarten</b>	<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
127 regular days at 280 or 315 or 335 minutes/day	35,560	35,560	40,005	42,545
32 Wednesdays at 280 or 250 or 245 minutes/day	8,960	8,960	7,840	7,840
20 conference days at 280 or 250 or 245 minutes/day	5,600	5,600	4,900	4,900
<b>TOTAL INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES</b>	<b>50,120</b>	<b>50,120</b>	<b>52,745</b>	<b>55,285</b>
Legally Required Minutes	36,000	36,000	50,400	54,000
Additional Minutes Offered by RVC minutes	14,120	14,120	2,345	1,285

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## **Parent/Teacher Conferences and Progress Report Schedule**

Because we believe that interaction and communication with parents is a vital part of our students' success, our teachers have conferences with parents at least three times during the school year. We have conference days (students dismissed early) during three different periods during the school year: in August, November, and June. Teachers work to schedule conference times to accommodate parent schedules if they are unable to meet during work hours. We also distribute progress reports three times per year. A chart showing this schedule can be found in the Assessment section of Elements 2 and 3. During our last conference each year, students present their parents or guardians with a portfolio of work from the year. Students reflect on their progress and set goals for the next school year, with the support of their parents and teacher.

## **Teacher Support and Professional Development**

Our classroom teachers are a blend of the veteran multi-age teachers that started RVC and teachers hired within the last three years. All our newer teachers have many years of teaching experience, some with previous multi-age experience. As part of the RVC culture, newly hired teachers are paired with a mentor teacher, usually at the same grade span, for support in their first year. Before school starts, new teachers meet with the other teachers at the same grade level who help guide the new teachers in curriculum development and classroom set-up. Veteran teachers offer beginning teachers personal and emotional support during their first years and help them to understand the RVC culture. Experienced teachers also guide the newer teachers in the expectations for activities such as Back to School Night, parent conferences, progress report writing, expositions, performances, and other school traditions.

When possible, our weekly schedule is structured so students in the same grade span have clustered enrichment classes (for example, Music and PE). This allows teachers at the same grade levels to have common planning and preparation time to focus on curriculum development, assessment results, and student needs. Grade-level teacher meetings also include time for all teachers to reflect on their practices, and this open reflection time is particularly helpful for newer teachers. "When a critical mass of teachers at one school are comfortable talking with each other about their teaching, the school's capacity to identify and address problems in student learning and other important issues rises dramatically."<sup>35</sup>

The School Director also supports new teachers. At least monthly, the School Director informally visits all classrooms, and follows up with each new teacher to discuss classroom management, curriculum, student needs, and to offer support. The School Director may also authorize release time so teachers can observe each other's classrooms. In addition, new teachers are given the

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<sup>35</sup> DESIGNING SUPPORT for BEGINNING TEACHERS by Kendyll Stansbury and Joy Zimmerman, West Ed; [http://www.wested.org/online\\_pubs/tchrbrief.pdf](http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/tchrbrief.pdf). 2000



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opportunity to attend workshops or conferences that they, along with the School Director and other staff, agree will be helpful to them to develop their skills teaching in a multi-age, progressive education setting, implementing inquiry-based learning, and carrying out the goals of the School.

Our teacher contract includes ten (10) non-student days during the school year. These days are used for a combination of workdays in classrooms and professional development days, as determined by the teachers and the School Director. Teachers also meet every Wednesday afternoon from 2:15-4:30. The agendas of these meetings are mutually determined by the teachers and the School Director and include school logistics and business, discussing school philosophy and direction, planning curriculum and/or events, working in grade level teams, discussing student progress and assessment results, engaging in professional development, following up on professional development, and other focus areas. In addition, we employ substitute teachers to allow teachers to attend professional development workshops or visit each other's classrooms to give feedback.

RVC teachers engage in individual professional development, often in the form of after school or Saturday workshops or summer classes on a variety of topics and in many curricular areas. They also do whole-staff professional development together, including these in the past few years:

- Inquiry Based Learning training, including a two-day summer workshop plus monthly follow-up sessions during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years.
- Next Generation Science Standards workshops
- Natalie Wexler English Language Arts Book Review
- Cultural Competency with Mirza Khan
- Gender with Alison Park
- Child Development with Taylor Ross
- Emergency Training and CPR

Teachers also share information they've acquired in workshops, through reading, or other sources. Examples of topics teachers have shared in the past few years include:

- Structured Word Inquiry
- Mindfulness Techniques
- Orton-Gillingham Phonics Instruction
- Vocabulary Development Techniques

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- Math Problem Solving Techniques
- Social Justice in the Classroom
- Technology Platforms (Google Classroom, Newsela, etc.)

## Goals and Actions in the State Priorities

Ross Valley Charter complies with all requirements of Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(A)(ii) including developing annual goals and annual actions, for all pupils (i.e. schoolwide) and for each subgroup of pupils as identified in Education Code Section 52052, for each of the eight (8) state priorities identified in Education Code Section 52060(d). Please refer to the table in Element 2: Measurable Pupil Outcomes for the schoolwide and subgroup goals and actions. RVC complies with all elements of the Local Control and Accountability Plan (“LCAP”) pursuant to regulations and templates adopted by the State Board of Education and reserves the right to establish additional, school-specific goals and corresponding assessments throughout the duration of the charter term.

RVC values input from parents and teachers, and therefore includes them in a process each spring to review and modify LCAP goals. The School Director presents previous goals and outcomes and asks for input and new ideas from parents at Community Council meetings, from teachers at staff meetings, and from the Board at Board meetings. RVC prepares its LCAP in accordance with Education Code Section 47606.5, and submits the LCAP to the chartering authority and the Marin County Superintendent of Schools annually on or before July 1, as required by Education Code Section 47604.33.

## Special Populations of Learners

Ross Valley Charter believes that all students can succeed in school, and specifically addresses the needs of all subgroups, including at-risk students, to support their success.

## Plan for Diverse Learners

The differentiated, child-centered approach that is used at RVC has been designed to ensure that the learning style of each individual student is incorporated into the learning process. Our integrated instructional approach, which includes inquiry based learning, targeted instruction, and social/emotional learning, allows teachers to create a differentiated and personalized learning program based on individual student profiles, including those of special needs populations (English Learners, Gifted, At-Risk of Low Achieving, Low Socioeconomic, and Special Education). To this end, teachers implement individualized instruction based on data-driven assessments. The underlying belief that all students are capable of thriving academically, socially, and emotionally guides our approach to having a solid platform of support for each learner. The following strategies help RVC teachers ensure that all students have equal access to learning:

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**Multi-age grouping** (including having the same teacher for two years) allows teachers to build a unique rapport with their students. Over a two-year span, teachers gain in-depth knowledge about a child's intellectual strengths and challenges, which supports improved student performance. Multi-age grouping provides the following opportunities for students:

- Creates a climate that encourages thinking, risk-taking, and involvement
- Enhances development of social/emotional skills and cooperative group strategies
- Facilitates better student construction of knowledge
- Results in greater language confidence in all students, including English Learners
- Provides opportunities for peer learning, leadership, and mentoring
- Encourages a strong sense of community among parents, students, and teachers

**Inquiry-based learning** is ideal for English learners because it develops and requires the use of strong communication skills, supports collaboration across language proficiency levels, and cultivates deep content area knowledge.

**Flexible, small group instruction** is an effective way of ensuring that all students have access to important content. Flexible grouping allows teachers to match students with different peers and/or adult guides for different types of activities to optimize trust and learning.<sup>36</sup>

**Ample instructional planning time** allows teachers to create individualized lessons and curriculum incorporating various teaching modalities to meet a range of needs.

**Teacher collaboration** through team planning, team teaching, and regular professional development sessions enables teachers to learn from each other's expertise when creating curriculum and handling learning differences.

**Open communication between teachers and parents** creates a culture of mutual understanding and common educational goals and helps to bridge school and home life. All parents, including Spanish speakers, are invited to help in the classroom, participate in school activities, and be an active part of the school community.

**High expectations for all students**, supported by clearly defined and articulated learning goals and objectives that are differentiated to match language proficiency levels, help students attain successful outcomes.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/41025/2011>

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**Various forms of assessment** are used to guide, monitor, and evaluate instruction.

## **Academically Low-Achieving Students**

### **Assessment and Identification**

Teachers assess each student's reading at the beginning of each school year. Teachers use the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project ("TCRWP") leveled reading assessment to identify each student's reading level by individually listening to each student read a passage (decoding/fluency), give a retell/summary of the passage or story they read, and answer questions (comprehension). Based on this early assessment, and information from the previous year and/or teacher, we identify students at the beginning of each year that need extra support in reading. This reading assessment is repeated in November, March, and June to monitor progress of all students. For any students who are assessed as at or below grade level, teachers read individually or in small groups with them regularly to instruct them and to monitor their progress and do additional assessments as needed to ensure they are not falling further behind.

Teachers analyze writing samples from each student using checklists in the Lucy Calkins Units of Study to determine if students need extra support in written language. In addition to observation, teachers utilize checklists at each grade level for the three types of writing (informational, narrative, opinion) throughout the school year to monitor student progress in writing and to help identify students who need additional support.

Teachers use formal and informal math assessments at the beginning of the year, including reviews of the previous grade's content and teacher observation, as well as during and after each math unit, to help identify students who need extra support in math. Teachers use either unit assessments from an adopted math curriculum or teacher-created assessments based on State Standards. Teachers also review California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress test score data as available. Students are considered academically low achieving under the following circumstances:

- Score "standard nearly met" or "standard not met" on the CAASPP ELA and/or Mathematics Assessments
- Read at least two levels below "grade level" on reading assessments
- Are significantly below their grade level peers in writing and/or math assessments

### **Family Notification**

Teachers meet with parents of low-achieving students to discuss assessment results and concerns, including the beginning of the year after initial assessments are completed or any time a student is experiencing learning problems that need to be discussed. Conferences are held in November with all parents to share Report Card data, discuss student progress, and goals. Report cards are sent again in March and June to update progress, and interim progress reports, between the regular progress reports, are sent for children who are struggling. Teachers contact

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and/or meet with parents of low-achieving students as needed throughout the school year to discuss student achievement and to identify learning problems that need parental support.

**Intervention services**

Low-achieving students are fully integrated into the RVC student body and receive additional instruction and support as needed. The engaging, active educational program at RVC is designed to accommodate a full range of abilities, including low-achieving students. Specific practices that support low-achieving students include the following:

- **Hands-on, integrated curriculum and inquiry-based learning** — This approach provides concrete experiences to help students access content through a variety of modalities. Students often work with partners or small groups, and this interaction helps to solidify new understandings. Teachers support low-achieving students by choosing reading material at an appropriate level, reading important information aloud to the class or a small group, pre-reading information with struggling readers, and/or using videos of specific content to help students who read below grade level to access grade level content information. Going in-depth on a topic means multiple exposures to content, which supports low-achieving students.
- **Differentiated instruction practices** — Students read at their “just right” level, writing assignments are flexible enough to accommodate a range of abilities, and math problems are often open-ended and flexible so students can arrive at answers in many different ways. Low-achieving students may be given modified or shortened assignments as needed, so they can demonstrate mastery of grade level standards without feeling overwhelmed by longer or more complex assignments.
- **Individualized reading support** — During independent reading time, teachers meet with students reading below grade level for longer durations and/or with greater frequency in order to accelerate their reading progress. Additionally, teachers help each student to select reading material that is appropriate for each child’s independent reading level. Teachers confer with students to discuss reading selections and ensure children are selecting texts that are adequately matched to their independent reading levels and provide individualized instruction and support.
- **Close Reading** — Teachers support students who are reading below grade level by reading some stories or informational articles together as a class. Each student has a copy of the article and the teacher reads it aloud, stopping regularly to define vocabulary, explain concepts, and answer questions. This enables all students to access grade level content, regardless of reading level.
- **Individualized and small group instruction** — Teachers provide individualized and small group instruction in all subjects to support students as needed. Teachers often use “exit slips,” short written responses to questions at the end of a class, as a quick, informal assessment to identify students who need help in a particular skill and meet with them individually or in small groups to provide extra instruction. Through observation in class

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and more formal assessments, teachers identify students who need review of concepts and spend extra time with those students.

- **Parent volunteers and learning centers** — Parents are welcome, but not required, to volunteer in our classrooms. When additional adults are present in the classroom, teachers may be able to spend more focused time with low-achieving children, either individually or in small groups. In the lower grades, parents or older students may be available to read with individual children, which offers increased opportunity for students to read with support. Volunteers also may support students as directed by teachers at the lower grade levels during math, writing, and other subjects. Parents may provide assistance to teachers by being present at learning centers to answer questions as they come up, under the direction of the classroom teacher. Classroom teachers provide instruction and guidance to parents who work with students. Parent volunteers may serve to supplement the education provided by credentialed teachers, not replace it.
- **Teacher collaboration** — During professional development days and weekly faculty collaboration meetings, teachers discuss the academic progress of low-achieving students to develop and refine intervention supports. Teachers work together to compare work samples, analyze assessment results, and identify students who may need additional support. Classroom teachers consult with the Special Education, Intervention and English Learner teachers to determine how best to support students who need extra help.
- **Targeted writing support** — Students who demonstrate difficulty with writing receive extra support in the classroom. This includes specific mini-lessons that target the student's writing challenges, additional conferencing time/duration, and/or other strategies aimed at helping the child to improve their writing skills. Some students may use voice dictation on their computers to help them get their ideas down if they struggle with writing skills.
- **Intervention Teacher** — Classroom teachers work with our Intervention Teacher (job description in Appendix B) to discuss the needs of all low-achieving students. Together, they determine how best to support each student, either through push-in services or pull-out services. The Intervention Teacher may provide low-achieving students with a preview of upcoming content, extra skill practice, and/or review previously taught content. Frequent communication between the classroom teacher and Intervention Teacher is crucial to best serve low-achieving students.
- **Monitoring progress** — Ross Valley Charter follows the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Framework as defined by the California Department of Education to ensure equitable access and opportunity for all students. As such, student progress is monitored on an ongoing basis through a combination of teacher observation, Intervention Teacher observation and assessment, and classroom assessments. If intervention supports do not lead to sufficient progress, a Student Success Team ("SST") is convened to consider alternative intervention strategies. This team is made up of the classroom teacher, Intervention Teacher, Special Education teacher, parents or guardians, and the School Director. The team discusses observed strengths and areas of concern and brainstorms interventions. The team designates a period for implementing interventions and

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monitoring the student's progress after which it reconvenes to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions. Should the SST process fail to yield adequate progress, additional steps, such as a referral for special education evaluation and/or Section 504 services, are taken.

### **Academically High-Achieving Students**

Most students' needs are met by the engaging, challenging curriculum at Ross Valley Charter. The teachers work with students who are performing above grade level to ensure they are challenged and receive appropriate academic extensions within the classroom. The process for developing and monitoring these interventions is similar to the process for low-achieving students.

### **Assessment and Identification**

A variety of assessment tools are used to identify students who are academically high-achieving. Reading is assessed several times throughout the year using the TCRWP leveled reading assessment, writing samples are analyzed, and math ability is assessed throughout the year. In addition, teachers will review CAASPP test data from the previous year if available. Throughout the year, teachers assess students through qualitative measures such as checklists, observations, and project rubrics.

Students are considered academically high-achieving under the following circumstances:

- Score "standard exceeded" on the Mathematics and/or ELA CAASPP Assessments.
- Consistently perform significantly above their grade level peers on classroom work and assessments.

### **Family Notification**

Classroom teachers meet with the parents of high-achieving students at any point during the school year to discuss their students' progress. Teachers meet with parents in November to discuss student performance and strategies for meeting the needs of their high-achieving student. Student progress is monitored on an ongoing basis through a combination of teacher observation and classroom assessment. Classroom teachers provide regular progress reports to parents and administrative staff.

### **Additional Supports**

Academically high-achieving students are fully integrated into the RVC student body and receive additional support to keep them engaged and motivated. The personalized curriculum at RVC is designed to meet students where they are academically and to allow them to be challenged appropriately. Teachers implement additional strategies to ensure that the needs of high-achieving students are met. These supports include the following:

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- **Extra opportunities for enrichment in the core content areas** — Students who are reading significantly above their grade level may be given appropriately challenging content reading books, articles, or primary source documents. Students who are performing significantly above grade level in math are given more complex, in-depth problems, activities, or projects so they can apply their knowledge at a deeper level.
- **Opportunities to go at a faster pace** — Using pre-assessments, teachers ascertain what students already know about a particular unit of study so that high-achieving students can skip some class instruction and move on to more challenging work. High-achieving students may move faster through curriculum such as math by working independently, with a partner, or with a cluster of high-achieving students, with the teacher providing support and materials.
- **Encouragement to independently pursue an area of interest** — Students are given time, materials, and support when they desire to learn more about a particular topic. Sometimes high-achieving students are clustered so they may work together on a project or open-ended assignment.
- **Extra opportunities for leadership and the development of mentoring skills with other students** — Students may work with classmates, or younger or older students in other classes, on projects or activities in order to practice leadership and mentoring.
- **Individual and small group projects** — Often, high-achieving students take on a particular aspect of a project and learn about it in greater depth. We allow students to have the time to do this challenging, motivating work and sometimes to extend their learning beyond the classroom.
- **Alternative ways to show their learning** — High-achieving students are given the opportunity to show the depth of their knowledge in ways of their choosing. This might include doing an oral presentation, creating a skit or poem or song, creating a poster or on-line presentation, building a model, etc. We encourage students to be creative and to push themselves to do something new or challenging, and to share their knowledge with others.
- **Develop critical thinking skills** — We encourage high-achieving students to problem solve (think logically and brainstorm solutions), question (analyze in-depth questions), evaluate their sources for reliability, and make decisions based on what they've learned, such as forming an opinion or taking a stance on a topic. These critical thinking skills are useful in independent projects as well as in group projects.
- **Take ownership of their learning** — We encourage students to explore their passions and feel ownership of their learning. When possible, we help high-achieving students to find mentors in the school or greater community to pursue their interest.



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## **English Learners**

RVC adheres to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations with respect to serving students who are English Learners, including long-term English Learners or English Learners at risk of becoming long-term English Learners. This includes annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, English Learner and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, re-classification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirement. RVC also implements policies to ensure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding English Learners and the rights of students and parents.

Students are monitored in conjunction with the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). RVC maintains a record of all students who participate in each administration of the ELPAC test as specified in Education Code § 11512. ELPAC testing is used to fulfill the requirements for annual English proficiency testing and complies with the accountability requirements under ESSA, if applicable to RVC. RVC adheres to all legal requirements regarding oversight and administration of the ELPAC.

RVC currently has 41 EL Students and has created an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), to incorporate family and community member input into how we can best serve the needs of our EL Students, and also provides parent education to families of English Learners.

## **Assessment and Identification of English Learners**

In order to identify students who are English learners in a timely fashion and to provide appropriate instructional support and services, all parents are required to complete a *Home Language Survey* upon enrollment at the school.

Students whose primary language is not English are assessed using the ELPAC if they have not previously been identified as an English Learner by a California public school or if there is no record of prior English language proficiency test results. The ELPAC Initial Assessment (“IA”) is administered within 30 days of initial enrollment in a California public school, or within 60 calendar days before the date of first enrollment, but not before July 1 of that school year. The initial assessment is used to identify students as either an EL or as fluent in English and is only given once during a student’s time in the California public school system. The English language proficiency of all enrolled English Learners is assessed in accordance with the test contractor’s directions and California Education Code guidelines.

The ELPAC Summative Assessment is administered to ELs every year until they are reclassified as fluent English proficient. The ELPAC SA is only given to students who have previously been identified as an EL based upon the IA results, in order to measure how well they are progressing with English development in each of the four domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The results are used as one of four criteria to determine if the student is ready to be reclassified as fluent English proficient, to help inform proper educational placement, and to report progress for accountability. The SA testing window will be a four-month window after January 1 (February 1–May 31). The English language proficiency of all currently enrolled English Learners shall be assessed by administering the test during the annual assessment

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window. The ELPAC assessments will be administered via a computer-based platform, while the ELPAC Writing Domain for Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will continue to be administered as a paper-pencil test.

Through conversations with the student and parents, teachers attempt to gain a more complete understanding of the student's language profile, including languages spoken in the home and the student's literacy experiences in the home language. Research indicates that a child's fluency and literacy in the home language is an important factor when designing ELD instruction.<sup>37</sup> Students in all grade levels will likely have varying degrees of English proficiency, and many will require ongoing support in English Language Development. The California English Language Development Standards describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities in English as a new language that are expected upon exit from each proficiency level. Students are considered under the following categories:

- **Emerging**—learning to use English for immediate needs as well as beginning to understand and use academic vocabulary and other features of academic language
- **Expanding**—increasing their English skills in more contexts, and learning a greater variety of vocabulary and linguistic structures, applying their growing language skills in more sophisticated ways appropriate to their age and grade level
- **Bridging**—continuing to learn and apply a range of high-level English language skills in a wide variety of contexts, including comprehension and production of highly technical texts. Students at the Bridging level are aligned to the State Standards, although ELs at all levels of English language proficiency fully participate in grade level tasks in all content areas with varying degrees of scaffolding in order to develop both content knowledge and English.

## Family Notification

RVC staff notifies parents of the school's responsibility to conduct ELPAC testing and informs parents of ELPAC testing results within 30 calendar days following receipt of test results from the test contractor. The ELPAC is used to fulfill the requirements under the ESSA for annual English proficiency testing.

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<sup>37</sup> Edwards, V. (1998). *The Power of Babel: Teaching and Learning in Multilingual Classrooms*. Stoke-on-Tent, Staffordshire, England: Trentahm Books. Handscombe, J. (1989). *A Quality Program for Learners of English as a Second Language*. In V. Allen, & P. Rigg, *When They Don't All Speak English: Integrating ESL Students into the Regular Classroom* (pp. 1-14). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

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## **Goals for English Learners**

RVC has three primary goals for our EL students working toward English proficiency. These goals are based on the overarching goals described in the ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students.<sup>38</sup> They are to use English:

- To communicate in social settings
- To learn and communicate academically in all content areas
- In socially and culturally appropriate ways

Achieving these goals is part of students' development toward reclassification. School success requires that students acquire proficiency in interpersonal communication as well as in academic language development.

## **Critical Principles of English Language Development**

RVC uses the critical principles outlined in the ELD Standards. RVC focuses on designing activities that are meaningful and engaging for ELs, prior to shifting our instruction to "how English works." The principles of ELD are not taught in isolation, but seamlessly work together. RVC teachers implement robust strategies within Part I to allow for foundational skills to be used throughout the student's elementary school experience.

### **Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways**

The ELD Standards encourage schools to implement lessons and structures which focus on three elements of Interacting in Meaningful Ways (collaborative, interpretive, and productive). Collaborative instruction supports students engaging in dialogue with others, interpretive instruction focuses on comprehension and analysis of written and spoken texts, and productive instruction emphasizes the creation of oral presentation and written texts. ELs are fully integrated into the regular classroom setting to allow for an opportunity for our students to Interact in Meaningful Ways. Our educational program is designed to reach all learners, and we value the knowledge and experience that every student brings to the classroom. Teachers encourage students to share their knowledge in a variety of forms so that even students with very little English proficiency can participate. This might look like students sharing in Spanish and the teacher interpreting for the class or having students share ideas through pictures. Teachers strive to incorporate the home language(s) of the students in the classroom. This looks like printed materials, and audio-visual resources. Through oral presentations, such as culture shares, teachers engage ELs and their families in classroom wide presentations to allow for ideas

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<sup>38</sup>TESOL. ESL Standards for Pre K-12 Students. Alexandria, VA: TESOL. [2006.].

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to be expressed in an alternative manner. This approach supports students identifying opinions and arguments in English and connecting vocabulary from their home language to the English language. We recognize and appreciate the particular needs of ELs and will continually evaluate our educational program with those needs in mind.

RVC teachers design lessons that can be scaffolded for ELs. Scaffolding is a way of temporarily supporting learners as they develop proficiency. Scaffolding is built into the classroom environment, routines, and schedules. Most importantly, teachers will support risk-taking by creating a safe environment. The development of a safe, nurturing learning environment is central to our mission and vision for all students. Predictable routines and procedures help ELs participate in learning activities. Peregoy and Boyle define literacy scaffolds as “activities that provide built-in teacher or peer assistance, permitting students to participate fully at a level that would not be possible without the assistance.”<sup>39</sup> Such activities may include shared reading, patterned writing, cognitive mapping, and interactive journal writing.

RVC engages in constructivist, inquiry-based teaching. ELs benefit from the collaborative, engaging, and purposeful teaching methods. ELD strategies at RVC are based on the belief that “communicative competence comes from opportunities to use language in real ways for real reasons with real people.”<sup>40</sup> Teachers provide a context for language development by connecting with students’ prior knowledge and engaging in meaningful learning experiences. For example, during SEL block students are provided with an opportunity to engage peers to develop social language, during Reader’s Workshop students develop academic language and talk about texts, and during Numeracy students are asked to explain their thinking using mathematical vocabulary. The focus on conceptual understanding and contextualized learning supports language development.<sup>41</sup>

## Part II: Learning About How English Works

The CDE ELD Standards indicate three parts of instruction to develop an understanding of how English works (Structuring Cohesive Texts, Expanding and Enriching Ideas, and Connecting and

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<sup>39</sup> Peregoy, S., & Boyle, O. (2005). *Reading, Writing, and Learning in ESL: A Resource Book for K-12 Teachers*. Boston: Pearson Education.

<sup>40</sup> Fu, D., & Townsend, J. (1998). A Chinese Boy's Joyful Initiation into American Literacy. *Language Arts*, 193-201.

<sup>41</sup> Aleman, D., Johnson, J., Perez, L. (2009). *Winning Schools for ELLs*. *Educational Leadership*, pp. 66-69.  
Francis, D., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Keiffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006). *Practical Guidelines for the Education of English Language Learners: Research-based Recommendations for Instruction and Academic Interventions*. Portsmouth, NH: Center on Instruction.

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Condensing Ideas). To teach the three parts of Learning About How English Works ELs receive specific and appropriate support in English Language Development during language arts lessons. When working on literacy skills, teachers have the option to group English Learners to specifically address learning needs through guided reading. These groupings occur across grade levels. For example, a teacher may provide support to two 3rd graders and three 4th graders in the same small group, to target a specific skill required to progress their understanding of the English language. Teachers use assessments to develop specific small group lessons which are delivered during language arts blocks. These small group lessons may include specific vocabulary support and instruction, phonological awareness, and language skills. English Learners have access to appropriately leveled texts in the content areas. Additionally, specific vocabulary instruction is incorporated into all lessons. Again, our teachers' use of scaffolding naturally fits in with the literacy approach used at RVC. Teachers carefully monitor, adjust, and supplement language to scaffold student comprehension and learning. This requires that teachers have a deep understanding of our students and the content and understand how to modify their language so that it is comprehensible, but not overly simplified.

### **Part III: Using Foundational Skills**

The CDE ELD Standards outline the benefits of developing reading foundational skills instruction and oral English language development. By building off of strategies, scaffolds, and skill building within Parts I and II of the ELD principles, our teachers develop both print and oral skills for our ELs. Teachers support students grasping phonological awareness (a key component of developing Oral Skills), through lessons and instruction which allows students to grasp and demonstrate an understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes). To address the key components of improving print skills for ELs, our students become familiar with print concepts, phonics, and word recognition.

### **Expectations for the Student Experience**

While gaining proficiency in English, RVC sets expectations for students, as outlined in the ELD Standards:

- 1) All EL students will receive at least 30 minutes/day of designated ELD instruction from either teachers or learning specialists. This instruction happens during the course of the literacy block. Teachers are able to pull small groups for integrated and designated instruction.
- 2) ELs must have full access to high-quality English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies content, while progressing through the ELD-level continuum.
- 3) Students participate in sustained dialogue on a variety of topics and content areas.
- 4) Students explain their thinking and build on others' ideas.
- 5) Student construct arguments and justify their positions persuasively with sound evidence.
- 6) Students effectively produce written and oral texts in a variety of informational and literary text types.

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## **Hiring**

Ross Valley Charter is committed to hiring an instructional staff that can meet the needs of all students, including English Learners. For core courses, RVC hires only teachers who have already obtained a Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development (“CLAD”) certificate or a Bilingual, Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development (“BCLAD”) certificate or are otherwise authorized to teach English Learners.

## **Adult Learning & Collaboration**

As part of our continuing Professional Development program, RVC teachers gain an awareness and an understanding of aspects of ELD which are particularly challenging for ELs, and set both content goals and language goals for students. Additionally, teachers regularly discuss the needs and performance of our English Learners during professional development days, during weekly faculty collaboration meetings.

All teachers are trained in several, important instructional strategies including scaffolding; constructivist, inquiry teaching; intensive literacy support; and, ongoing assessments to inform teaching approach. An assumption embedded in all strategies is that students have meaningful activities and experiences to develop both academic and non-academic language in authentic contexts, in addition to activities connecting home language strengths and building from that important foundation.

## **Personalized Learning for English Learners**

The personalized learning design of the curriculum ensures that each child has a yearly plan that addresses the student’s initial diagnostic data, assessments (ELPAC or standards aligned ELA assessments) and information from parents about their child. To that end, strategies and supports might look different for each child. The goal is to ensure there is a long-term plan in place which meets the child where they are and sets developmentally appropriate habit and skill goals for the end of the year. For example, a reading skill goal for an English Learner might be: “The student advances from a level A independent reading level to a level C by the end of the year,” while a reading habit goal might be: “the student reads aloud with confidence to their peers.” Another way the learning is personalized is through family partnership. For example, the family of the student with the above goals is likely provided with sight words to practice at home with their child.

## **Ongoing Assessments**

For all English Learners, teachers will use a number of assessments to monitor progress. Students will be observed in the classroom using a rubric modeled after the ELPAC. Teachers will also monitor student performance, particularly in language arts to ensure that they are not falling significantly behind their grade-level peers.

## **Monitoring & Evaluation of Program Effectiveness**

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Evaluation of program effectiveness for English Learners at Ross Valley Charter will include:

- Adhering to RVC-adopted academic benchmarks for language proficiency level and years in program to determine annual progress
- Monitoring of teacher qualifications and the use of appropriate instructional strategies based on program design
- Monitoring of student identification and placement
- Monitoring of parental program choice options
- Monitoring of availability of adequate resources

### **ELD Teacher**

In addition to classroom teachers addressing the significant academic needs of EL students, RVC employs a part-time credentialed English Language Development Teacher to work with EL students. The ELD Teacher collaborates weekly with classroom teachers to determine how best to support EL students. Typically, this entails pulling out small groups of students to give specific instruction related to topics being learned in class but may also include “pushing in” to classrooms in order to support students as they work.

The ELD teacher has a weekly schedule, and typically works with small groups of about two to five EL students. The number of sessions per week is determined by need and availability. During these small EL classes, the ELD teacher scaffolds concepts students are learning in class, previews and reviews vocabulary and concepts, and focuses on reading, writing and speaking skills. Our ELD teacher uses a variety of visual aids such as objects, pictures, slides, short videos, and books in order to help expand vocabulary and conceptual understanding. The ELD teacher also works on Common Core focus areas such as citing text evidence, using academic language, and reading nonfiction texts.

An example is a 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELD session on animal characteristics. The Next Generation Science Standard is: Use evidence to construct an explanation for how the variations in characteristics among individuals of the same species may provide advantages in surviving, finding mates, and reproducing. The ELD teacher starts by showing students pictures of different individual animals and asks students if they know the name of the animal, and what they know or notice about the animal, to ascertain prior knowledge and stimulate interest. Then the ELD teacher explains what vertebrates are and explains that vertebrates have common structural features: they all have a skull, a rib cage, and vertebrae (backbone). Students identify those bones on themselves and learn that they are vertebrates.

Next, the teacher shows pictures of different types of feet/claws/hooves on various vertebrates and discuss with the students that animal feet have adapted to survive in their environment (for example: an elephant has a wide foot built to hold its weight, a rabbit foot is mostly just toes for fast running, a bird has claws to hold on to branches).

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Then the teacher shows pictures of several animals that have a particular body part or adaptation in common. Students are asked to identify and analyze a common structural feature found in the animals presented in each picture and prove with evidence how the various characteristics may be advantageous to the animal's survival.

Students are then given a sentence frame to use to express their ideas: "\_\_\_\_\_ are animals with \_\_\_\_\_. This structural feature allows them to \_\_\_\_\_." An example is: "Ducks, frogs, seals, and crocodiles are animals with webbed feet. This structural feature allows them to swim."

Students have the opportunity to "pair share" (collaborate with a partner) to do this work for several groups of animals. At the end of the session, students work individually on an exit slip with the assignment to analyze a cluster of animal pictures, and write sentences using the sentence frame to describe a structural feature and its use.

In this sample lesson, the ELD teacher used visuals, worked on vocabulary and concept development, gave language support in the form of a sentence frame, and fostered critical and creative thinking skills. Students analyzed and drew conclusions and practiced citing evidence. They also practiced oral language as well as written language in the exit slip.

The ELD teacher also may work with students on a classroom writing assignment by scaffolding the assignment, breaking it down into component parts (such as an introduction, transitional phrases, a conclusion, etc.), specifically teaching skills for those parts, and closely editing it with students, teaching and reinforcing written conventions individually as needed.

The ELD teacher is also responsible for ELPAC testing and reporting.

### **Additional Support for EL Students**

The Family Outreach/Support Coordinator ("FOSC") is responsible for ensuring a strong home-school connection for EL families. This part-time staff member serves as a liaison between teachers and parents of EL students in order to answer questions, identify needs, and help families feel connected to the school community. The FOSC provides translation services during parent/teacher conferences as needed.

RVC strives to be a welcoming, inclusive place for all students. Given the demographics of the Ross Valley community, most of our EL students come from Spanish-speaking households. Important written communications and weekly school newsletters are translated into Spanish, and Spanish interpretation and/or translation is made available at school events whenever possible. Bilingual parent volunteers assist with translation, when appropriate. In sensitive situations that require confidentiality (e.g. Individualized Education Programs meetings and conferences), a staff member (ELD teacher, or Family Outreach/Support Coordinator) provides translation services. Students are not used as translators.

RVC is committed to hiring instructional staff that can meet the needs of all students, including English Learners. We prioritize the hiring of teachers who have already obtained a Cross-



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cultural, Language and Academic Development (“CLAD”) certificate or a Bilingual, Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development (“BCLAD”) certificate.

### **Reclassification of English Learners**

RVC evaluates the effectiveness of its education program for EL students by the following actions:

- Adhering to academic benchmarks by language proficiency level and years in program to determine annual progress
- Monitoring teacher qualifications and the use of appropriate instructional strategies based on program design
- Monitoring student identification and placement
- Monitoring availability of adequate resources

### **English Language Learner Reclassification Policy**

Students remain classified as an English Learner (EL) until they achieve proficiency in English on a variety of criteria. Students classified as EL are re-tested annually.

### **Reclassification Requirements**

When an English Learner demonstrates English language proficiency comparable to grade-level English-speaking peers and can participate equally with them in the school’s regular instructional program, the EL student is eligible to be reviewed for reclassification by Educational Services.

- 1) Overall performance level of 4 or 5 and skill area scores of 3 or higher in listening/speaking, reading, and writing on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC).
- 2) When the student meets this scoring criterion, the next step is to evaluate the student’s performance in English Language Arts (ELA) using state or local assessments. For grades 1-3, the students must be at or above grade level on local assessments and for grades 4-5, students must have an overall achievement score of Met or Exceeded standard on CAASPP/SBAC.
- 3) If a student meets proficiency on the ELPAC test and state/local criteria, then the child’s current teacher evaluates the student’s academic performance in the classroom. If the student is achieving at levels comparable to grade-level English-speaking peers, then the school moves on to the last step of the process.

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- 4) For students who may be considered for reclassification, school staff collects documentation and determines student's eligibility. Then a conference is held in the spring with parents, who must also agree to the reclassification.
- 5) Students that have been Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) no longer participate in the English Learner Program. Their academic progress in English Language Arts will be monitored for four years and other interventions will be implemented as needed.

It is our goal that students who are enrolled at RVC beginning in kindergarten will be re-designated as fluent-English proficient ("RFEP") prior to middle school. Students who enroll at the school in subsequent years whose language development is still in the beginning or early intermediate stage receive intervention from the ELD Teacher through small group instruction targeted to meet their individual needs. The goal is that they stay on target to advance one to two levels or more per year so that they can be reclassified during their K- 8 career.

RVC closely monitors EL students who have been reclassified in order to ensure that EL students maintain their English proficiency level for at least four years after reclassification. The monitoring process includes:

- the School Director maintains a database of all reclassified EL students;
- the School Director meets at the beginning of each school year with the students' classroom teachers and the Family Outreach/Support Coordinator to ensure that all responsible parties know of reclassified students;
- if a reclassified student subsequently fails to meet grade level standards, the School Director will work with the teacher to develop individualized interventions, which will typically follow a 3-step process including in-class modifications, referral to the School Director for appropriately designed interventions, and an SST;
- all efforts are appropriately documented in the student's file.

## **Plan for Students with Disabilities/Special Education Students**

RVC recognizes its responsibility to enroll and support students with disabilities who can benefit from its programs and who otherwise qualify for enrollment. RVC works in cooperation with its Special Education Local Plan Area ("SELPA") to ensure that a free and appropriate education ("FAPE") is provided to all students with exceptional needs. RVC complies with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEA"), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any other civil rights enforced by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. Furthermore, RVC complies with AB 602, SELPA guidelines, and all California laws pertaining to special education students.

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RVC operates as a Local Education Agency (“LEA”) for special education. It is a member of the El Dorado County Charter SELPA (letter of good standing included in Appendix C) to receive funding and services.

With its educational philosophy, RVC believes that the best approach to educating high incidence special education students is for RVC to have as part of its educational team a special education certificated full-time staff member who shares the educational philosophy of the school and can be a team member with the other certificated classroom teachers, training them in the particular needs of the special ed students as well as implementing the Individualized Education Programs (“IEP”) of the students themselves. This approach best enables RVC to serve students in the least restrictive environment.

Per federal law, all students with disabilities are fully integrated into the programs of RVC, with the necessary materials, services, and equipment to support their learning. RVC ensures that any RVC student with a disability is properly identified, assessed, and provided with necessary services and supports.

RVC meets all of the requirements mandated within a student’s IEP. RVC seeks to include all special needs students with typical students to the maximum extent appropriate according to their IEP. However, if the student’s needs, as documented on the IEP, require a program other than inclusion, RVC will work with the SELPA to provide an appropriate placement and services.

RVC works with its SELPA to make time and facilities available to meet the needs of the student’s IEP. RVC actively participates in all aspects of the IEP to enable the student to be successful, including the appropriate individual tutoring schedule, classroom modifications, accommodations, strategies, and techniques. RVC makes available each student’s work products for analysis and evaluation of progress and will participate in the IEP reviews.

If a parent or faculty member feels the student’s educational needs are not being met, they may request a reassessment or a review of the IEP, by the IEP team, at any time during the year via written notice to RVC, which will then forward such written notice to the SELPA within two (2) school days. RVC encourages open communication between the parents and the SELPA for any items related to the special education services. Students at RVC who have IEPs will continue to attend RVC, unless the IEP recommends otherwise.

In order to comply with Child Find requirements as specified by law, RVC has established a referral and assessment process that brings together the parent/guardian, student, and RVC personnel to address any problems that interfere with a student’s success at RVC. This process entails search and serve, a Student Study Team, referral, assessment, and IEP review.

### **Search and Serve**

Upon the commencement of RVC’s school year, all students are evaluated. No assessment or evaluation is used for admission purposes. Through collaboration between the faculty and School Director, RVC works to identify any students who do not currently have an IEP but may be in need of a pre-referral intervention plan. The School Director and faculty then convenes the Student Study Team for that student.

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Students possibly in need of special education can be screened from already available data (i.e. school tests, teacher observations, grades, etc.) regarding the student's progress, or lack of progress, within the general program. For students who are identified as needing interventions, a Student Study Team composed of the student, the Special Education teacher, the Intervention teacher, the student's parent or guardian, the School Director, and an RVC faculty member is responsible for identifying the student's needs and developing a plan to enable that student to be successful, including, but not limited to: the appropriate individual intervention schedule, classroom modifications and/or accommodations, and strategies and techniques to enhance that student's ability to be successful. If the Student Study Team finds that the pre-intervention plan is not sufficient to meet the student's needs, they will recommend that student for a formal special education assessment. RVC may also choose to refer a student for services through the provisions of a Section 504 Plan, if appropriate.

Parents are then informed that special education and related services are provided at no cost to them.

### **Interim and Initial Placements of New Charter School Students**

When a student enrolls at RVC with an existing IEP, RVC notifies the SELPA (where applicable according to SELPA policies) within 5 days. An IEP meeting is convened within 30 days to review the existing IEP, discuss the student's present levels of performance and needs, and offer an appropriate placement and services. Prior to such meetings and pending agreements on a new IEP, RVC works with the SELPA to implement the existing IEP at RVC or as otherwise agreed by the parent/guardian.

### **Referral for Assessment**

The referral process is a formal, ongoing review of information related to students who are suspected of having special needs and show potential signs of needing special education and related services. RVC's internal method for referral for assessment is the Student Study Team. The parent of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for special education services may also make a referral for an evaluation. Any such referrals are responded to in writing by RVC within 15 days. RVC notifies the SELPA (where applicable according to SELPA policies) of the assessment request within five days of receipt. Parents are informed via the School Director or the Special Ed Teacher that special education and related services are provided at no cost to them.

If RVC, in collaboration with the SELPA, concludes that an assessment is appropriate, the parent/guardian receives a written Assessment Plan within 15 days, excluding school breaks longer than five school days. The parent/guardian is given at least 15 days to provide written consent to the Assessment Plan. Assessments are done only upon receipt of written parent permission. The assessments are completed and an IEP meeting held within 60 days (excluding school breaks longer than five school days) of receipt of the parent's written consent for assessment.

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## **Assessment**

The term “assessments” shall have the same meaning as the term “evaluation” in the IDEA, as provided in Section 1414, Title 20 of the United States Code. The School Director is responsible for gathering all pertinent information and sharing such information with the SELPA (where applicable according to SELPA policies). Information gathered is used as a tool to determine the student’s disability, eligibility for services, and the nature and extent of required services. Assessment procedures are conducted in the student’s primary language, and an interpreter will be provided, if needed. The types of assessments that may be used for determining eligibility for specialized instruction and services will include, but are not limited to:

- Individual testing
- Teacher observations
- Interviews
- Review of school records, reports, and work samples
- Parent input

Unless conflicting with the SELPA policies and procedures, RVC assesses students according to the following guidelines. If a conflict with SELPA policies and procedures exists, then SELPA policies and procedures will govern.

- Parents or guardians of any student referred for assessment must give their written consent for RVC to administer the assessment.
- The assessment will be completed and an IEP meeting held within 60 days of receipt of the parent’s written consent for assessment (excluding school breaks longer than five school days).
- The student must be evaluated in all areas related to his/her suspected disability.
- Assessments must be conducted by a person with knowledge of the student’s suspected disability and administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments. Individually-administered tests of intellectual or emotional functioning must be administered by a credentialed school psychologist.
- Assessments must be selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally, or sexually discriminatory.
- Assessments will be delivered in the student’s primary language, and a qualified interpreter will be provided if needed.

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- Assessment tools must be used for purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable.
- Assessments will be adapted as necessary for students with impaired sensory, physical or speaking skills.
- A multidisciplinary team will be assembled to assess the student, including a teacher who is familiar with the disability.

Upon completion of the assessment, an IEP team will be assembled to review the results of the assessment and determine the student's need for special education. RVC, in coordination with the SELPA, is responsible for scheduling, coordinating, and facilitating the IEP meeting. Educators qualified to interpret test results will present the assessment data at the IEP meeting. Parents will be provided with written notice of the IEP meeting, and the meeting will be held at a mutually agreeable time and place.

### **Development and Implementation of IEP**

Every student who is assessed and is found to qualify will have an IEP that documents assessment results and eligibility determination for special education services.

RVC, in collaboration with the SELPA, will ensure that all aspects of the IEP and school site implementation are maintained. RVC will provide modifications and accommodations (outlined within each child's IEP) in the general education environment, taught by the general education teacher. RVC Students who have IEPs will be served in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Each student who has an IEP will have an IEP team that oversees the IEP development, implementation, and progress of the student. All decisions concerning the special education programs, and services to be provided to a student with a disability, are to be made by the IEP team. The IEP team must include all of the following members:

- The parent or guardian of the student for whom the IEP was developed, or a representative selected by the parent in accordance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- The student, if appropriate
- The School Director
- At least one special education teacher
- A general education teacher who is familiar with the curriculum appropriate to that student, if the student is, or may be, participating in the general education environment
- If the child was recently assessed, the individual who conducted the assessment or who is qualified to interpret the assessment results

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- At the discretion of the parent, guardian, or the local educational agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the pupil, including related services personnel, as appropriate. The determination of whether the individual has knowledge or special expertise regarding the pupil shall be made by the party who invites the individual to be a member of the individualized education program team.

Others familiar with the student may be invited as needed. RVC views the parent as a key stakeholder in these meetings and will make every effort to accommodate parents' schedules and needs so that they will be able to participate effectively on the IEP team. RVC will provide an interpreter, if necessary, to ensure that all parents and/or guardians understand and can participate in the IEP process. If a parent cannot attend the IEP meeting, RVC will ensure his/her participation using other methods, such as conferencing by telephone or meeting at the parent's home.

A copy of the IEP will be given to the parent in accordance with state laws and SELPA policies. Upon the parent/guardian's written consent, the IEP will be implemented by RVC, in cooperation with the SELPA, of which RVC is a member.

Upon the parent or guardian's written consent, the IEP will be implemented by RVC. The IEP will include all required components and be written on SELPA forms.

The student's IEP will include the following:

- A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
- The rationale for placement decisions
- The services the student will receive and the means for delivering those services
- A description of when services will begin, how often the student will receive them, who will provide them, and where they will be delivered
- Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives focusing on the student's current level of performance
- A description of how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and monitored and when reports will be provided
- Accommodations necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the pupil on state and school assessments

IEP meetings will be held according to the following schedule:

- Yearly to review the student's progress and make any necessary changes

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- Every three years to review the results of a mandatory comprehensive reevaluation of the student's progress
- After the student has received a formal assessment or reassessment
- When a parent or teacher feels that the student has demonstrated significant educational growth or a lack of anticipated progress (consistent with state and federal law, IEP meetings will be held within 30 days of a parent's request)
- When an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) is required at the appropriate age
- When RVC seeks to suspend or remove the student for a period of 10 days or more for the same behavior, in order to determine if the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his/her disability

### **IEP Review**

The IEP team formally reviews the student's IEP at least once a year to determine how the IEP is meeting the individual student's needs. In accordance with IDEA regulations, the IEP team will also conduct a formal review of the IEP once every three years, in which the student is reassessed and the IEP is reviewed as part of an overall comprehensive reevaluation of the student's progress.

If a parent or faculty member feels the student's educational needs are not being met, they may request a reassessment or a review of the IEP by the IEP team at any time during the year via written notice to RVC. Once the request is received, RVC will have thirty days, not including school vacations greater than five days, to hold the IEP meeting.

Unless otherwise specified on the student's IEP, parents are informed three times a year (which is the same frequency as progress is reported to all students and parents) of the student's progress toward meeting annual goals and whether the student is expected to meet his/her annual goals. The Goals and Objectives section of the IEP will be an attachment to the general progress report. This will serve to document the method by which the student's progress toward achieving the annual goal is measured, the student's progress during the relevant period, the extent to which it is anticipated the student will achieve the annual goal prior to the next annual review, and where needed, the reasons the student did not meet the goal.

### **Staffing**

RVC is committed to ensuring all IEPs are properly implemented and all students requiring services adequately receive them.

As stated in the introduction to this section, RVC has as part of its education team at least one full-time teacher who possesses a Special Education Credential. This teacher, along with the School Director of RVC, will be the primary RVC representatives tasked with ensuring that all



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aspects of the IEP and any possible 504 plans are properly implemented. All teaching staff at RVC will also be involved in ensuring that all IEPs and 504 plans are properly implemented.

As an LEA for special education purposes and a member of the El Dorado County Charter SELPA, RVC will only hire employees to deliver instruction outlined in IEPs that are fully credentialed in California to provide those services. Any NPS or NPA that provides educational services to RVC students with IEPs has to provide proof of a current certification issued by the California Department of Education. In addition, all employees of any NPS or NPA who provides services to RVC must be appropriately credentialed or licensed as required by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

As a member of the El Dorado County Charter SELPA, RVC will fully utilize the professional development services provided by the SELPA. The El Dorado SELPA has assigned a program specialist to RVC who provides support to the teaching staff.

The School Director and the Special Ed teacher have joint responsibility for the following (with the School Director having ultimate responsibility):

- Ensure that all aspects of the IEP are followed
- Arrange for the teachers of students with IEPs to attend the team meetings
- Communicate with parents about progress made toward attaining the goals stated on the student's IEP, and inform them of due process procedures and rights
- Perform a quarterly review to ensure that the objectives and goals of students with IEPs are being met
- Complete the requisite paperwork, updating and filing of necessary information for initial referrals, triennial evaluations, ongoing monitoring of student progress, and appropriate provision of any/all test modifications and SBAC accommodations as stipulated in the IEP and allowed by current California law<sup>42</sup>
- Maintain a central file with all special education evaluation material and IEPs in accordance with FERPA and IDEA guidelines; and
- Provide a report of student progress to the board on the same schedule as students in general education

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<sup>42</sup> See SmarterBalanced\_Guidelines.pdf and SmarterBalanced\_Guidelines\_FAQ.pdf as referenced in <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/access.asp> [2015]<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/access.asp>

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## **Reporting**

RVC, in collaboration with the SELPA, will collect and maintain the following information on developmentally disabled students, as required by IDEA:

- A calculation of all school-age students with disabilities being provided special education services by age, grade, category of disability and the number of students with disabilities who are English Learners
- The number of students provided with test accommodations if such reporting is required by California Law and/or regulation and the types and the number of students exempted from assessments and the reasons they were exempted if allowed by California law and/or regulation
- The settings in which students with disabilities receive their services, specifically including the portion of the school day that they receive services in general education and the portion of the day that they are not in general education
- The number of students with disabilities suspended "in-school" and out of school, organized by disability and length of suspensions
- The basis of exit from RVC of students with disabilities, i.e., exits from special ed, moved, etc.

All necessary procedures and practices to ensure confidentiality and accurate/timely reporting will be the responsibility of the RVC School Director. The School Director ensures that a central file with all special education evaluation material and IEPs is maintained and that this file is locked and confidential, in accordance with IDEA guidelines. The School Director oversees access to these records and is responsible for ensuring that all providers responsible for the implementation of a student's IEP have access to a copy of the IEP and are informed of their specific responsibilities in implementing the IEP.

## **Procedural Safeguards**

Parents or guardians of students with IEPs at RVC must give written consent for the evaluation and placement of their child, be included in the decision-making process when a change in Special Education placement is under consideration, and be invited, along with teachers, to conferences and meetings to develop their child's IEP.

RVC acknowledges any concerns or disagreements raised by parents within five days, after which a meeting between the parent and school will be scheduled to seek resolution of the disagreement. If a disagreement or concern persists, parents or guardians have the right to initiate a due process hearing to challenge a decision regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of their child.

RVC provides the parent with a written Notice of Procedural Safeguards, which include information on the procedure to initiate both formal and informal dispute resolutions regarding

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placement, at least once per year. RVC utilizes the Notice of Procedural Safeguards used by the SELPA.

### **Dispute Resolution<sup>43</sup>**

In the event that a parent/guardian files a request for a due process hearing or a request for mediation, RVC shall defend the case.

### **Complaint Procedures**

Parents or guardians also have the right to file a complaint with RVC, or the California State Department of Education if they believe that RVC has violated federal laws, state laws, or regulations governing special education.

### **Special Education Strategies for Instruction and Services**

RVC complies with the federal mandate of the “least restrictive environment”, meaning that RVC will make every attempt to educate special education students along with their typically developing peers. RVC will mainstream all of its students as much as is practical and appropriate according to each IEP, offering a comprehensive inclusion program that incorporates specialized individual tutoring. Each student’s IEP requires unique modifications for instruction and services, therefore, the educational strategies of the IEP will be built around the student’s needs and how these fit within RVC’s general educational program. Qualified personnel will deliver the instruction outlined in each student’s IEP.

The general education teachers are assisted by the special education teacher and other special education professionals in developing understanding of the particular and specific needs of their special education students. Specific instructional materials and programs are developed as appropriate for the special education needs of the specific children in the program.

The materials and programs used for particular students are created/assigned based on the specific needs and disabilities of each student. These are developed based on assessments and input from the IEP team including teachers and parents on an individual basis. Depending on the needs of the students some online programs such as Lexia, Dreambox, Raz kids, IREADY and others may be used. RVC will ensure that all programs are evidenced based. By using online programs, the student can access the program both at home and at school and each of the programs has a system to track the student’s progress. Possible reading programs that may be used include, but are not limited to, Read Naturally, High Noon, Spalding Phonics, Reading Milestones, Edmark, Orton Gillingham, PALS, Rewards, Lindamood Bell and others depending

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<sup>43</sup> In the event that RVC opts to operate as an LEA in a SELPA other than Marin County, RVC reserves the right to make alternate arrangements for legal representation in and resolution of legal disputes pertaining to special education.

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on the needs of the child. In addition, the students will participate in the general education classroom Common Core State Standards Based Curriculum with modifications and accommodations as necessary, which will be outlined in the IEP. Math programs include but are not limited to: Math U See, Touch Points, IREADY Math, Zearn, Khan Academy and many others. In many cases a student with disabilities can continue to participate in the regular classroom math program with accommodations and modifications that are developed during the IEP. If the staff at RVC needs additional help in the development of appropriate programs for students with disabilities, RVC will ensure that they get the professional development and the chance for visitations to outstanding programs to help them improve their own programs.

### **Professional Development for RVC Staff**

The School Director, regular and special education teaching staff, as well as other appropriate faculty and staff members, attend professional development and/or training meetings, including those sponsored by the SELPA, necessary to comply with state and federal special education laws.

RVC also seeks professional development opportunities for its staff through trainings facilitated by the SELPA, Marin County Office of Education, colleges and universities, and private companies or agencies.

### **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**

RVC is solely responsible for its compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Our current facility is undergoing voluntary improvements to ensure appropriate ADA access.

RVC recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program of RVC. A student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment, is eligible for protections under Section 504.

As needed, the 504 team is assembled by the School Director and includes the parent/guardian, the student, a qualified staff member, and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student. The 504 team reviews the student's existing records; including academic, social and behavioral records, and is responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate. If the student has already been evaluated under the IDEA but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504. The 504 team carries out the student evaluation, evaluates the nature of the student's impairment, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations and the impact upon the student's education. This evaluation includes consideration of any behaviors that interfere with regular participation in the educational program and/or activities. The 504 team may also consider the following information in its evaluation:

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- Tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and are administered by trained personnel
- Tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, and not merely those designed to provide a single, general, intelligent quotient
- Tests are selected and administered to ensure that when a test is given to a student with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, that the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level (or whatever factor the test purports to measure) rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills

The final determination of whether the student will or will not be identified as a person with a disability is made by the 504 team, in writing, and notice is given, in writing, to the parent or guardian of the student, in their primary language, along with the procedural safeguards available to them. If during the evaluation, the 504 team obtains information indicating possible eligibility of the student for special education per the IDEA, the 504 team makes a referral for assessment under the IDEA.

If the student is found by the 504 team to have a disability under Section 504, the 504 team is responsible for determining what, if any, accommodations or services are needed to ensure that the student receives a free and appropriate public education. In developing the 504 Plan, the 504 team considers all relevant information utilized during the evaluation of the student, drawing upon a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, assessments conducted by staff.

The 504 Plan describes the Section 504 disability and any program accommodations, modifications or services that may be necessary.

All 504 team participants, parents, guardians, teachers and any other participants in the student's education, including substitutes and tutors, must have a copy of each student's 504 Plan. The School Director ensures that teachers include 504 Plans with lesson plans for short-term substitutes and that he/she reviews the 504 Plan with a long-term substitute. A copy of the 504 Plan shall be maintained in the student's file. Each student's 504 Plan is reviewed at least once per year to determine the appropriateness of the plan, needed modifications to the plan, and continued eligibility.

## **Continuation of Learning During the Pandemic and Other Local Emergencies**

On Friday, March 13, 2020, the Marin County Public Health Officer issued an order closing all schools in the County to in-person learning. The following Monday, March 16, RVC's teachers, staff, and administration met and created a distance learning plan for our students. On March 17, we instituted our distance learning program, which continued without interruption through the end of the academic year. We held true to our Inquiry Based Learning model throughout and continued to provide art, music, and physical education lessons in addition to covering the core curriculum.

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We evolved our methods over time to better meet the needs of our students and families. This included providing a blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning, access to devices and connectivity, provision of food for those in need, continuation of support of English Learners and Special Education students, and a variety of supports for families in need of support.

Examples of supports provided:

- Delivering learning materials, devices, and connectivity directly to students' homes
- In some cases, providing lessons at homes in outdoor locations
- Providing meals for pick-up on campus, and delivering daily meals and boxed weekly meal boxes
- Providing tutors for our homeless and foster youth
- Connecting families to housing support

We are committed to providing our students with a safe and enriching learning opportunity regardless of the obstacles in front of us. RVC shall utilize, and seek to continually improve upon, the distance learning program it created during any periods of full or partial school closure to in-person instruction due to COVID-19, other emergencies or local disasters.

As it seems likely that we will open the school year with distance learning, providing high quality, rigorous and engaging education to all RVC students will be a central focus in preparing to open school. We will approach this as if it might be a year long approach, and not a temporary accommodation.

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## **ELEMENTS 2 AND 3 – MEASURABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES AND METHODS OF MEASUREMENT**

Governing Law: “The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. ‘Pupil outcomes,’ for purposes of this part, means the extent to which all pupils of the charter school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the charter school’s educational program. Pupil outcomes shall include outcomes that address increases in pupil academic achievement both school-wide and for all pupil subgroups served by the charter school, as that term is defined in subdivision (a) of Section 52052. The pupil outcomes shall align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served by the charter school.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(B).

“The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured. To the extent practicable, the method for measuring pupil outcomes for state priorities shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a school accountability report card.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(C).

Ross Valley Charter affirms that, to the extent practicable, the method for measuring pupil outcomes for state priorities shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a school accountability report card.

RVC has set high expectations for its students and staff. RVC’s goal is to have all students graduate from RVC:

- Academically and intellectually motivated
- Socially and emotionally competent
- With the curiosity and perseverance to be a lifelong learner.

To achieve this, students need to:

- Perform academically at or above grade-level in all subject areas. They need to demonstrate their understanding and comprehension in multiple forms of assessment including writing, presentations, portfolios, demonstrations, performances, and CAASPP tests
- Have the creative thinking, adaptability, and resourcefulness as well as the collaboration skills necessary to become socially and emotionally competent
- Be persistent and engaged in learning to continue on to middle school, high school, college, and beyond as lifelong learners who are motivated to continue learning.

RVC’s student outcomes are designed to align with the school’s mission, curriculum, and assessments, the Common Core State Standards for Literacy and Mathematics, the Next

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Generation Science Standards, and the California State Standards for Social Studies. RVC believes outcomes and assessments should inform curriculum and instruction, and, like learning styles, there are multiple forms of assessment. No one measure alone will constitute a sole indicator of progress.

RVC has created goals and measures of student achievement to ensure that we meet our mission, and that we meet federal and state goals for all subgroups attending our school. RVC will continue to examine and refine our student and school outcomes over time to reflect our mission and any changes to state or local standards.

## **Charter School Goals and Outcomes That Align with The State Priorities**

Pursuant to Education Code Sections 47605(c)(5)(A)(ii) and 47605(c)(5)(B), following is a table describing RVC’s annual goals to be achieved in the state priorities, both school-wide and for all pupil subgroups, as described in Education Code Section 52060(d), as well as outcomes in the State Priorities, and specific annual actions to achieve those goals.

Because each state priority has multiple parts, in order to align with the goals and annual actions to these multiple parts of each state priority, RVC has separated out the state priorities into “sub priorities.”

The following chart delineates the RVC school-wide and subgroup goals, actions, and outcomes aligned to the state’s priorities that apply for the grade levels served by RVC and the methods for measuring progress. They are all aligned with the state’s priorities defined in Cal. Ed. Code Section 52060(d). The LCAP shall not be deemed part of the charter, and therefore, annual amendments to the LCAP shall not be considered a “material revision to the charter” as defined in section 47607. Actions intended to ensure that the school meets these goals and targets are delineated throughout this charter petition (e.g., Element 1: Educational Program; Element 4: Governance and parental involvement; etc.).

In addition to the multiple measures of student progress throughout the year, indicated in the chart below, and described more fully in the sections that follow the chart, RVC will adapt its assessment rubrics to requirements that result from evolving state and federal requirements.



<p><b>State Priority #1— Basic Services</b></p> <p>The degree to which teachers are appropriately assigned (E.C. §44258.9) and fully credentialed, and every pupil has sufficient access to standards-aligned instructional materials (E.C. § 60119), and school facilities are maintained in good repair (E.C. §17002(d))</p>	
<p><b>Sub Priority A – Teachers</b></p>	
<p><b>Goals to Achieve Sub Priority</b></p>	<p>RVC will identify, attract, and build the capacity of teachers, leaders, and classified staff, in order to support students and families. All students will be exposed to teachers that are innovative, culturally competent, and deliver instruction that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. All teachers will be appropriately assigned and fully credentialed.</p> <p>All English Learners will be supported by an appropriately credentialed ELD Teacher.</p> <p>All Special Education Students will be supported by an appropriately credentialed Special Education Resource Teacher.</p>

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<p><b>Measurable Outcomes</b></p>	<p>1. 100% of RVC Classroom, ELD, and Special Education Resource Teachers are appropriately assigned, as reported in the annual SARC and the California Dashboard.</p> <p>2. 100% of RVC Classroom, ELD, and Special Education Resource Teachers are fully credentialed, as reported in the annual SARC and the California Dashboard.</p> <p>3. 100% of RVC Classroom, ELD, and Special Education Resource Teachers are qualified, as reported in the annual SARC and the California Dashboard.</p>
<p><b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b></p>	<p><b>Methods of Assessment</b></p>
<p>Ensure all classroom teachers hold a valid CA Teaching Credential as defined by the CA Commission on Teaching Credentialing (CCTC) and appropriate EL authorization.</p>	<p>Personnel records, including documentation of required assessments, coursework, and credentials consistent with CCTC.</p>
<p>Ensure ELD teachers hold a valid CA Teaching Credential as defined by the CA Commission on Teaching Credentialing (CCTC) and appropriate EL authorization.</p>	<p>Personnel records, including documentation of required assessments, coursework, and credentials consistent with CCTC.</p>

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<p>Ensure Special Education Resource Teachers hold a valid CA Special Education Credential as defined by the CA Commission on Teaching Credentialing (CCTC).</p>	<p>Personnel records, including documentation of required assessments, coursework, and credentials consistent with CCTC.</p>
<p>Verify all teachers are qualified.</p>	<p>Personnel records, including documentation of required assessments, coursework, and credentials consistent with CCTC.</p>
<p>Subject all new teacher candidates to a rigorous hiring process, which includes paper screening, interviews, and reference checks.</p>	<p>Successful completion of a rigorous interview process that incorporates feedback from multiple stakeholders including School Director, other teachers, and parents.</p>

<b>Sub Priority B – Instructional Materials</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	All RVC students, including all subgroups, will have access to a range of current instructional strategies and CCSS aligned materials that serve different styles, paces, and preferences.
<b>Measurable Outcome(s)</b>	100% of RVC students, including all subgroups, have access to up-to-date, standards-aligned instructional materials in their classrooms, as reported in the annual SARC and the California Dashboard.
<b>Action to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Method of Assessment</b>
School leaders and faculty research and create or obtain up-to-date, standards-based instructional materials aligned to CCSS.	Review of yearly scope and sequence and unit plans and materials.
Allocate budget to purchase needed curriculum materials.	School Budget.

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<b>Sub Priority C – Facilities</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	School facilities will be maintained in good repair, as defined by California Education Code §17002.
<b>Measurable Outcome</b>	All students, including subgroups, will use facilities that receive a Good or Exemplary rating according to the State of California’s Facility Inspection Tool.
<b>Action to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Method of Assessment</b>
Maintain and update facilities as needed to provide a safe, clean learning environment.	Annual Inspection with Facility Inspection Tool, daily spot checks, and regular walkthroughs.
Address safety hazards immediately and refer general needs items to the Board for review and prioritization.	Maintenance records.  Improvement records as reflected in Board of Directors written records.

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<b>Sub Priority D – Technology</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	Teachers and students, including all subgroups, will have appropriate access to technology. RVC will ensure all students, including all subgroups, are proficient in grade-appropriate technology skills.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RVC has 1 to 1 access to devices for each of our 2nd-5th grade students, including all subgroups.</li> <li>2. 100% of classrooms have presentation technology.</li> <li>3. 100% of classroom teachers have a computer.</li> <li>4. Internet uptime during school hours is 98% and response time is 10 seconds or less.</li> <li>5. 100% of graduating 5<sup>th</sup> graders, including all subgroups, can type on computers, use word processing, conduct research online, and write papers using Google docs.</li> </ol>
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Method of Assessment</b>
Provide mobile computer carts with laptops in all 2nd-5th classrooms. Ensure that the number and type of student computers are sufficient for CAASPP testing.	Annual Inventory of Devices; purchase new devices as needed.
Equip classrooms with presentation technology	Annual Inventory of Devices.

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Provide each teacher with a computer	Annual Inventory of Devices.
Ensure reliable Internet access, based on a stable network infrastructure, and sufficient wireless bandwidth to support computers.	Internet Uptime percentage and average response time reports from Internet Service Provider and school routers.
Provide 2nd-5th grade students, including subgroups, with instruction and guidance in the use of computers for word processing and Internet research.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.

<p><b>State Priority #2— Implementation of State Standards</b></p> <p>Implementation of State Standards (including CCSS and ELD), including how EL students will be enabled to gain academic content knowledge and English language proficiency.</p>	
<p><b>Sub Priority A – State Standards Implementation</b></p>	
<p><b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b></p>	<p>All RVC curricula will be aligned to the CCSS. The School will ensure that all students, including all subgroups, engage in relevant, motivating, personalized learning experiences that integrate collaboration, communication, creativity, and—in the upper grades—the use of technology.</p>
<p><b>Measurable Outcomes</b></p>	<p>1. 100% of teachers share at least two model lessons each year in the Wednesday afternoon teacher meetings, which show alignment with CCSS.</p> <p>2. RVC students, including all subgroups, perform at comparable rates of proficiency in CAASPP testing as Ross Valley School District elementary students District-wide.</p>
<p><b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b></p>	<p><b>Methods of Assessment</b></p>



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Align curriculum to CCSS.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.  Interim (trimester) assessment data and Smarter Balanced assessment results.
Incorporate CCSS curriculum alignment review into the agendas of Professional Development and Wednesday afternoon teacher meetings.	Wednesday afternoon PLC meeting agendas.  Professional development schedules.
Provide professional development and leadership opportunities around curriculum and instruction.	Professional development schedules.

<b>Sub Priority B – EL Students &amp; Academic Content Knowledge</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	All students, including all subgroups, will have access to instructional materials aligned to CCSS. RVC will provide specific support for struggling students in English Learner and other student subgroups.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RVC EL Students perform at comparable rates of proficiency on annual CAASPP tests as Marin County EL elementary students county-wide.</li> <li>2. 100% of students, including 100% of all subgroup students, have access to instructional materials aligned to CCSS.</li> <li>3. 100% of classroom teachers receive professional development on scaffolding the CCSS for ELs.</li> <li>4. 100% of teachers receive training in best practices to improve English Language proficiency.</li> <li>5. 100% of teachers utilize CA State ELD Standards to amplify the California State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (ELA/Literacy).</li> </ol>
<b>Action(s) to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Method(s) of Assessment</b>

<p>Analyze data and monitor English Learner progress in academic content knowledge to provide timely interventions.</p>	<p>Baseline, formative, and interim assessment data in all subjects, and Smarter Balanced assessment results.</p> <p>EL student portfolios.</p>
<p>Align curriculum to CA ELD Standards.</p>	<p>Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.</p>
<p>Require all staff (teachers and administrators) to receive training in CCSS-aligned best practices in curriculum and instruction highlighting needs of all subgroups.</p>	<p>Professional development schedules.</p>
<p>Train teachers in best practices to improve academic achievement among ELs, such as Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) and GLAD strategies.</p>	<p>Professional development schedules.</p>
<p>Provide professional development for teachers and administrators on how to scaffold the CCSS for access for ELs.</p>	<p>Professional development schedules.</p>

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<p>Provide a broad range of high-quality, standards-aligned instructional resources that facilitate EL's access to core curriculum and expand their knowledge of the world. Provide curriculum and unit development aligned to both CCSS and ELD standards.</p>	<p>Annual Inventory of Instructional Materials and assessment rubrics.</p>
<p>Hire an ELD teacher to work directly with students and support classroom teachers in the implementation of CCSS content material.</p>	<p>Personnel records.</p>

<b>Sub Priority C – EL Students &amp; English Language Proficiency</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	All RVC EL students make progress to become proficient in English.
<b>Measurable Outcome(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 90% of EL students will maintain or grow their prior year’s English Language Progress Indicator (ELPI) Level, based upon their results on the ELPAC, through targeted instruction and assessment.</li> <li>2. 90% of EL students improve at least one year of growth in reading on site based reading assessments each year.</li> <li>3. 90% of EL students show growth in writing ability on site based writing assessments.</li> <li>4. 100% of EL students receive ongoing support from classroom teacher and ELD teacher.</li> <li>5. 100% of teachers receive training in best practices to improve English Language proficiency.</li> </ol>
<b>Action(s) to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Method(s) of Assessment</b>
RVC hires an ELD teacher to work with classroom teachers and EL students to support implementation of CCSS content material and literacy through ELD instruction.	Hiring records.

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<p>ELD teacher works with classroom teachers to support EL students. Classroom teachers use the new CCSS EL standards to guide instruction of EL students. Teachers give individualized instruction with focused English Language support.</p>	<p>Regular check-ins with the ELD teacher and professional development agendas.</p>
<p>EL students work with the ELD teacher as needed for support in reading and writing development, as well as content vocabulary and concepts.</p>	<p>Formative, interim, and summative assessment data (reading levels, writing checklists, math assessments, science and social studies assessments) and student portfolios.</p>
<p>Align curriculum to ELD standards.</p>	<p>Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.</p>
<p>Provide all English Learners with access to ELD teacher as needed for support in reading and writing development.</p>	<p>ELD teacher schedule.</p>
<p>Analyze data and monitor English Learner progress in language development and provide timely interventions. Conduct ongoing assessments with special attention to fluency and correctness in reading, writing, speaking.</p>	<p>ELPAC results.</p> <p>Site based reading assessment.</p> <p>Site based writing assessment.</p>

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	<p>EL Student portfolios.</p>
<p>Train teachers in best practices to improve English language proficiency among ELs. Provide professional development for teachers and administrators on how to scaffold the CCSS for access for ELs.</p> <p>Provide training on integrated/designated ELD instruction and targeted interventions.</p>	<p>Professional development schedules.</p>

<p><b>State Priority #3— Parental Involvement</b></p> <p>Parental involvement and family engagement, including efforts the Charter School makes to seek parent input for making decisions for the Charter School, and including how the Charter School will promote parent participation in programs for unduplicated pupils and individuals with exceptional needs.</p>	
<p><b>Sub Priority A – Achieving/Maintaining Parental Involvement</b></p>	
<p><b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b></p>	<p>Parents, including parents representative of all subgroups, will be an integral part of the RVC community and will participate in the governance and operation of the school. Parents will view RVC as receptive to their input and involvement.</p>
<p><b>Measurable Outcomes</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At least two parents serve on Board of Directors.</li> <li>2. At least four parents serve on Community Council.</li> <li>3. At least 80% of Parent Survey respondents, including parents representative of all subgroups, “agree” or “strongly agree” that RVC welcomes parents’ contributions and actively seeks the input of parents before making important decisions.</li> <li>4. At least one Board member will be representative of the Special Education community.</li> <li>5. At least one Board member will be representative of the English Learner community.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b></p>	<p><b>Methods of Assessment</b></p>



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Hold annual elections among parents for the Community Council.	Community Council membership roster.
Hold elections for two parent Board of Directors member nominees, to be considered for appointment by the then-existing Board of Directors to the two Board seats reserved for Parents.	Board of Directors membership roster.
Identify and appoint additional parent Board of Directors members.	Board of Directors membership roster.
Identify and appoint Board of Directors members representative of the English Learner and Special Education communities.	Board of Directors membership roster.
Solicit parent feedback through annual (or more frequent) surveys.	CDE's California School Parent Survey or similar.
Conduct periodic community meetings to consult with non-Community Council and non-Board parents.	Parent meeting minutes.
Train school staff in effective parent engagement practices.	Professional development schedules.

Collect and respond to parent concerns in a respectful and timely fashion.	Parent feedback file.
<b>Sub Priority B – Promoting Parent Participation</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	RVC consults with parents on LCAP goals, actions, outcomes, and metrics.  Parents are welcomed, including those who are representative of subgroups, to participate in classroom and RVC community events.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	At least 40% of parents choose to volunteer during the school year, including in class, on the Board of Directors or Community Council, on committees, driving on field trips, working on project preparation for teachers at home, helping with performances, or in other ways. Volunteering is not a requirement, but parents will be welcomed to participate.
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Conduct parent meetings to consult with parents during the LCAP development process. Conduct parent survey to gather feedback.	Annual LCAP. Parent meeting minutes. Parent Survey.
Encourage parental volunteerism at Back to School night.	Volunteer rosters. Back to School night packets.

<p>Welcome and encourage parental volunteerism by keeping parents informed of volunteer opportunities, parent educational offerings, and informational meetings, via the school newsletter.</p>	<p>Volunteer rosters.</p> <p>Archive of school newsletters.</p> <p>40% of annual parent survey respondents indicate that they have volunteered.</p>
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<b>Sub Priority C – Promoting Parent Participation for Unduplicated Students and Students with Exceptional Needs</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	<p>RVC consults with parents of unduplicated students and students with exceptional needs on LCAP goals, actions, outcomes, and metrics.</p> <p>At least 40% of parents who represent unduplicated students, and students with exceptional needs choose to volunteer during the school year, including in class, on the Board of Directors or Community Council, on committees, driving on field trips, working on project preparation for teachers at home, helping with performances, or in other ways. Volunteering is not a requirement, but parents will be welcomed to participate.</p>
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	<p>At least 50% of LCAP goals are generated through parent meetings including parents of unduplicated students and students with exceptional needs.</p> <p>At least 40% of annual parent survey respondents representative of unduplicated students and students with exceptional needs indicate that they have volunteered.</p>
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
<p>Conduct parent meetings to consult with parents of unduplicated students and students with exceptional needs during the LCAP development process. Conduct parent survey to gather feedback.</p>	<p>Annual LCAP.</p> <p>Parent meeting minutes.</p> <p>Parent Survey.</p>

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<p>Encourage parental volunteerism at annual Back to School night.</p>	<p>Volunteer rosters.  Back to School night packets.</p>
<p>Welcome and encourage parental volunteerism by keeping parents informed of volunteer opportunities, parent educational offerings, and informational meetings, via the school newsletter.</p>	<p>Volunteer rosters.  Archive of school newsletters.  40% of annual parent survey respondents, including those who are representative of subgroups, indicate that they have volunteered.</p>
<p>Provide translation services for school newsletters, parent meetings, and parent-teacher conferences as needed.</p>	<p>Budget and expense records.</p>
<p>Employ Family Outreach/Support Coordinator to reach out to parents of socio-economically underprivileged, EL, and other parents to facilitate access and involvement.</p>	<p>Personnel records.</p>

**State Priority #4— Student Achievement**

Pupil achievement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:

- A. California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress statewide assessment
- B. Percentage of pupils who have successfully completed courses that satisfy UC/CSU entrance requirements, or career technical education
- C. Percentage of ELs who make progress toward English language proficiency as measured by the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California
- D. EL reclassification rate
- E. Percentage of pupils who have passed an AP exam with a score of 3 or higher
- F. Percentage of pupils who participate in and demonstrate college preparedness pursuant to the Early Assessment Program (E.C. §99300 et seq.) or any subsequent assessment of college preparedness

**Sub Priority A – CAASPP**

**Goal to Achieve Sub Priority**

Students will become proficient readers and writers of the English language.

Students will become proficient in mathematical skills and content.

Students will master concepts in Science and Social Studies.

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<p><b>Measurable Outcome(s)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 80% or more of all students demonstrate at least one year of growth on the English Language Arts portions of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) assessments.</li> <li>2. 80% or more of Free and Reduced Price Lunch qualified students demonstrate at least one year of growth on the English Language Arts portions of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress assessments.</li> <li>3. 80% or more of all students are classified as being at or above grade level on school reading assessment.</li> <li>4. 80% or more of all students meet grade level expectations in writing according to in school writing assessment.</li> <li>5. 80% or more of all students demonstrate at least one year of growth on the Mathematics portions of the CAASPP assessments.</li> <li>6. 80% or more of Free and Reduced Price Lunch qualified students demonstrate at least one year of growth on the Mathematics portions of the CAASPP assessments.</li> <li>7. 80% or more of all students show mastery of math concepts on unit assessments.</li> <li>8. 80% or more of all students show mastery of science and social studies concepts on unit assessments.</li> <li>9. Low income pupils at RVC (i.e., those who qualify for Free and Reduced Price Lunch program) will on average score higher than RVSD low income pupils' averages on CAASPP assessments.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Action(s) to Achieve Goal</b></p>	<p><b>Method(s) of Assessment</b></p>

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<p>Support student progress towards mastery of standards using inquiry-based transdisciplinary units that help students make connections between subject areas and individual concepts/skills. Teachers use research-based instructional methods.</p>	<p>Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans, and unit and trimester assessment data.</p>
<p>Create an inclusive and supportive environment for all students by providing appropriate intervention and enrichment programs as needed.</p>	<p>Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans. Notes from Student Success Team meetings. Intervention Teacher schedule.</p>
<p>Analyze student CAASPP test scores and other diagnostic results and adjust instruction to ensure proficiency in ELA/Literacy and Mathematics.</p>	<p>ELA and Math Interim Assessments.</p>



<b>Sub Priority B – UC/CSU Course Requirements (or CTE) [Not Applicable]</b>	
<b>Sub Priority C – EL Proficiency Rates</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	EL students will make progress toward EL proficiency each year.
<b>Measurable Outcome(s)</b>	1. 90% of EL students increase ELPAC ELPI level each year.
<b>Action(s) to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Method(s) of Assessment</b>
Monitor EL students to assure they are making expected progress.	Reading, Writing, and Math formative assessments, ELPAC scores.  Student progress reports.
Use the CCSS EL standards to guide instruction of EL students.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.
Give individualized instruction with focused English Language support.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.
ELD teacher works with classroom teachers to support EL students, and	ELD teacher schedule.

with small groups of EL students.	
<b>Sub Priority D – EL Reclassification Rates</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	English Learner reclassification rates will meet or exceed the District’s EL reclassification rate for K-6.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	RVC meets or exceeds the RVSD 3 year rolling average percentage of EL students reclassified each year as a percentage of the previous year’s EL total.
<b>Action(s) to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
ELD teacher works with classroom teachers to help EL students to become proficient in English and to become reclassified. Students continue to be monitored and supported by ELD teacher and classroom teachers after becoming reclassified. Teachers give individualized instruction with focused English Language support.	ELD teacher schedule. Reclassification statistics. Formative assessments in reading, writing, math.

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<p>Provide ongoing monitoring and support of students after becoming reclassified.</p>	<p>Formative assessments in reading, writing, math, science, social studies. Interim Language Arts and math assessments. ELPAC tests.</p>
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<b>Sub Priority E – AP Exam Passage Rate [Not Applicable]</b>	
<b>Sub Priority F – College Preparedness/EAP [Not Applicable]</b>	
<p><b>State Priority #5— Student Engagement</b></p> <p>Pupil engagement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. School attendance rates</li> <li>B. Chronic absenteeism rates</li> <li>C. Middle school dropout rates (EC §52052.1(a)(3))</li> <li>D. High school dropout rates</li> <li>E. High school graduation rates</li> </ul>	
<b>Sub Priority A – Student Attendance Rates</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	RVC will maintain a high average daily attendance rate, schoolwide and for all subgroups.
<b>Measurable Outcome</b>	ADA rates are at least 96%.
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Monitor attendance records of students.	<p>Monthly reports.</p> <p>School Director apportionment period attendance rates reports.</p>

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Educate parents about the importance of regular school attendance.	Parent meeting records.  School newsletters.
Have a conference with parents of children, including subgroups, who miss school regularly to encourage regular attendance.	Meeting records of School Director, Teachers, and/or Family Outreach/Support Coordinator.
<b>Sub Priority B – Student Absenteeism Rates</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	RVC will have a chronic absenteeism rate (defined as missing 10% or more of school days), including for all subgroups, below the state average.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	As demonstrated by the annual release of the California School Dashboard results, RVC will have a Chronic Absenteeism rate that is lower than the State average.
<b>Action(s) to Achieve Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Method(s) of Assessment</b>
Incorporate a social-emotional curriculum,	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.
Conduct regular community building events and activities.	Master schedule.

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<p>Provide support for struggling students from ELD Teacher or Intervention teacher.</p>	<p>ELD Teacher schedule. Intervention Teacher schedule.</p>
<p>Note: All actions listed under Sub Priority A of Priority #5 also apply to Sub Priority B of Priority #5.</p>	

<b>Sub Priority C – Middle School Dropout Rates [Not Applicable]</b>	
<b>Sub Priority D – High School Dropout Rates [Not Applicable]</b>	
<b>Sub Priority E – High School Graduation Rates [Not Applicable]</b>	
<p><b>State Priority #6— School Climate</b></p> <p>School climate, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Pupil suspension rates</li> <li>B. Pupil expulsion rates</li> <li>C. Other local measures, including surveys of pupils, parents, and teachers on the sense of safety and school connectedness</li> </ul>	
<b>Sub Priority B – Pupil Expulsion Rates</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	RVC minimizes pupil expulsion for all student subgroups by implementing various methods to support students who are struggling.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	RVC expulsion rate is less than 1% in any given year, and less than 0.5% averaged over any 6-year period schoolwide and for all subgroups.
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>

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<p>Work with parents of students who are struggling to consider other methods of support.</p>	<p>Suspension records. Records of School Director meetings with parents.</p>
<p>Note: All actions listed under Subpriorities A and B of Priority #5 and Sub Priority A of Priority #6 also apply to Sub Priority B of Priority #6.</p>	



<b>Sub Priority C – Other School Safety and School Connectedness Measures (Surveys)</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	Students and adults in the RVC community will participate in creating an environment in which students feel connected and physically and emotionally safe. Students, teachers, and parents will report a sense of safety and school connectedness. The RVC community will support students in all subgroups and teachers to achieve cultural competency: the will and ability to create, nurture, and sustain authentic relationships across differences.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 80% or more of faculty and parents, including parents representative of subgroups, report that the school provides a safe environment for students on the School Climate and School Parent surveys, or similar.</li> <li>2. 80% or more of faculty and parents, including parents representative of subgroups, report that the school engages students on the School Climate and School Parent surveys (or similar).</li> <li>3. 80% or more of all 5th graders, including subgroups, report positive scores on School Connectedness Scale questions of the California Healthy Kids Survey (or similar).</li> <li>4. 80% or more of all 5th graders, including subgroups, report positive scores on School Protective Factor questions of the California Healthy Kids Survey (or similar).</li> <li>5. 100% of teachers receive cultural competency training.</li> <li>6. 100% of teachers will share at least one lesson or activity per year that teaches and reinforces cultural competency during Wednesday meetings.</li> </ol>

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<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Incorporate a social-emotional curriculum.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.
Hold regular classroom meetings to discuss issues.	Classroom schedules.
Conduct regular community building events and activities.	Master schedule.
Invite parents to school events and celebrations.	Archive of school newsletter.
Provide parents with an outlet to discuss concerns via the Community Council.	Community Council minutes.
Conduct annual surveys of students, teachers, and parents.	School Climate Survey, Parent Survey, Student Survey.
Train parent volunteers in appropriate ways to interact with students.	Parent training materials.
Train playground supervisors in conflict management techniques.	Parent training materials.

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<p><b>Train teachers in cultural competency. Work with all staff to improve cultural competency.</b></p>	<p><b>Professional development schedule.</b></p> <p><b>Records of lessons/activities shared by teachers.</b></p>
<p><b>Help students achieve cultural competency.</b></p>	<p><b>Yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans and student portfolios.</b></p>

<p><b>State Priority #7— Course Access</b></p> <p>The extent to which pupils have access to, and are enrolled in, a broad course of study, including programs and services developed and provided to unduplicated students (classified as EL, FRPM-eligible, or foster youth; E.C. §42238.02) and students with exceptional needs.</p> <p>“Broad course of study” includes the following, as applicable:</p> <p>Grades 1-6: English, mathematics, social sciences, science, visual and performing arts, health, physical education, and other as prescribed by the governing board. (E.C. §51210)</p> <p>Grades 7-12: English, social sciences, foreign language(s), physical education, science, mathematics, visual and performing arts, applied arts, and career technical education. (E.C. §51220(a)-(i))</p>	
<p><b>Goal to Achieve Priority</b></p>	<p>RVC provides all students, including all subgroups, access to a broad course of study.</p>
<p><b>Measurable Outcomes</b></p>	<p>1. 100% of students, including all subgroups, receive instruction in English, mathematics, social sciences, science, visual and performing arts, and health.</p> <p>2. 100% of students, including all subgroups, are provided PE classes 200 minutes every two weeks.</p>
<p><b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b></p>	<p><b>Methods of Assessment</b></p>
<p>Provide all students, including all subgroups, with instruction in English, mathematics, social sciences, science, visual and performing arts, health, and physical education (PE).</p>	<p>Master Schedule.</p> <p>Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.</p>

<p>Provide teachers with professional development in elevating student achievement and engagement, cultural competency, and proficiency.</p>	<p>Professional development schedule.</p>
<p><b>State Priority #8—Other Student Outcomes</b> Pupil outcomes, if available, in the subject areas described above in #7, as applicable.</p>	
<p><b>Sub Priority A – English</b></p>	
<p><b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b></p>	<p>All students, including all subgroups, will become competent readers, writers, and speakers of the English Language.</p>
<p><b>Measurable Outcome</b></p>	<p>80% or more of all students, including all subgroups, demonstrate at least one year of growth on the English Language Arts portions of the CAASPP assessments.</p>
<p><b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b></p>	<p><b>Methods of Assessment</b></p>
<p>Use CCSS to guide ELA instruction.</p>	<p>Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans, as well as formative and interim (trimester) assessment data and student portfolios.</p>

Provide support to EL students from classroom teachers and ELD teacher.	ELD schedule.
Monitor student progress in English-Language reading, writing, and speaking.	Reading assessments, Writing checklists, CAASPP assessments.
<b>Sub Priority B – Mathematics</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	All students, including all subgroups, will acquire appropriate grade level mathematical skills.
<b>Measurable Outcome</b>	80% or more of all students, including all subgroups, demonstrate at least one year of growth on the Mathematics portions of the Smarter Balanced assessment.
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Use CCSS to guide mathematics instruction.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.
Monitor student progress in mathematics.	Math unit assessments, teacher observation and formative assessments, exit slips, interim (trimester) assessments, Smarter Balanced assessment results.

Support students struggling in math.	Teacher schedules & student progress on formative, interim, and summative assessments.
<b>Sub Priority C – Social Sciences</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	All students will develop an awareness of social studies in order to achieve civic competence—the knowledge, intellectual processes, and democratic dispositions required of students to be active and engaged participants in public life.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	80% or more of students, including all subgroups, earn a rating of “understands content and concepts” (or equivalent) on social studies progress reports.
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Use California’s History-Social Science Content Standards to guide instruction.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.
Monitor student progress in social studies.	Assessments and self-assessments of projects and written work, RVC progress reports.

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<b>Sub Priority D – Science</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	All students, including all subgroups, will understand science concepts and scientific thinking.
<b>Measurable Outcome(s)</b>	<p>1. 80% or more of all 5th grade students, including all subgroups, score proficient or advanced on the science portion of the California Science Test.</p> <p>2. 80% or more of all students, including all subgroups, earn a rating of “understands content and concepts” (or equivalent) in science on RVC progress reports.</p>
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Use Next Generation Science Standards for California to guide instruction.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.
Teachers use hands-on, interactive activities to increase interest and competence in science.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.
Monitor student progress in science.	Teacher observation, assessments of science projects and classwork, CAASPP, RVC progress report, student portfolios.



<b>Sub Priority E – Visual and Performing Arts</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	All students, including all subgroups, will have frequent opportunities to practice visual and performing arts both in their regular classrooms and in specialized art and music classes.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	<p>1. 100% of students, including all subgroups, do at least one art project per month as part of their daily classroom instruction.</p> <p>2. 100% of students, including all subgroups, have the opportunity to participate in at least one performance per school year, and at least 95% participate.</p>
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Incorporate art projects into Inquiry arcs.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans. Student portfolios.
Offer art, music and poetry instruction to all students.	Master schedule.
Produce at least one performance per class per school year.	Performance schedule.

<b>Sub Priority F – Physical Education</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	Students, including all subgroups, will receive physical education instruction each week.
<b>Measurable Outcome</b>	100% of students attending school, including all subgroups (with the exception of students excused for medical reasons), participates in an average of 200 minutes of PE every two weeks.
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Retain PE teacher.	Personnel records.
Schedule PE classes amounting to an average of 200 minutes of PE every two weeks.	Master schedule

<b>Sub Priority G – Health (grades 1-6 only)</b>	
<b>Goal to Achieve Sub Priority</b>	Students school-wide, including all subgroups, learn appropriate skills to ensure physical and emotional health.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	1. 100% of students, including all subgroups, are provided health education as part of PE classes. 2. 100% of teachers include lessons from our Social Emotional learning program.
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Incorporate a social-emotional curriculum.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.
Include a health component in PE classes.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.
<b>Sub Priority H – Foreign Languages (Grades 7-12 only) [Not Applicable]</b>	
<b>Sub Priority I – Applied Arts (Grades 7-12 only) [Not Applicable]</b>	
<b>Sub Priority J – CTE (grades 7-12 only) [Not Applicable]</b>	

### Additional RVC Goals

Ross Valley Charter has the following additional goals specific to our Mission and Core Beliefs:

<b>RVC-Specific Goal: GRADUATE PROFILE SKILLS</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<p>Students, including all subgroups, will demonstrate high levels of the following skills emphasized in RVC's Graduate Profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent and confident</li> <li>Collaborative problem solvers</li> <li>Effective communicators</li> <li>Creative and adaptive thinkers</li> <li>People who persevere</li> <li>Caring community members</li> <li>Solid in foundational academic skills</li> </ul>
<b>Measurable Outcome</b>	80% of students, including subgroups, show mastery of each of the specified skills on year-end progress reports.
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Design open-ended projects for students to work on independently, with a partner, or in small groups.	<p>Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.</p> <p>Student portfolios.</p>

Lead discussions with students on process skills and identify for students when skills are being demonstrated.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans. Student reflections.
Monitor student progress in understanding and developing Graduate Profile skills.	Progress reports, teacher observations. Formative and Interim Assessments. Student portfolios.
<b>RVC-Specific Goal: SERVICE LEARNING</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	RVC encourages students to be active participants in their communities and the larger world.
<b>Measurable Outcome</b>	100% of students participate in service-learning projects each year.
<b>Action to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Method of Assessment</b>
Incorporate at least one service-learning project into each class each year.	Review of yearly, unit, and daily lesson plans.

<b>RVC-Specific Goal: FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	RVC will demonstrate fiduciary and financial responsibility.
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have a positive operating income every year.</li> <li>2. Maintain positive cash balance.</li> <li>3. Maintain at least a 10% reserve.</li> </ol>
<b>Actions to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
Maintain a balanced budget and adequate monthly cash flow and annual reserve.	Bimonthly (every other month) financial reporting to the Board including budgeted vs. actual revenue and expense and cash flow.
Produce financial reports and submit an annual balanced budget demonstrating fiscal transparency, sound financial standing, and prudent resource allocation.	Bimonthly financial reporting to the Board including budgeted vs. actual revenue and expense and cash flow.
Have regular meetings of the school Budget Committee, including parents and teachers	Budget Committee meeting minutes.  Staff meeting minutes.

Achieve and maintain full enrollment.	Enrollment records.
<b>RVC-Specific Goal: BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b>	
Goal	The Board of Directors will provide effective and sound oversight of Ross Valley Charter. RVC governance and leadership will effectively support the essential work of the Charter School to promote teaching and learning.
Measurable Outcome	The Charter School substantially meets its goals annually (or in accordance with other applicable timeframe specified in the goals).
<b>Action to Achieve Goal</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>
The Board of Directors analyzes student learning outcomes and parent, teacher, and student survey results each year and devises an action plan to improve performance in any deficient areas.	Board approved reports on achievement of goals in the areas of parent, teacher, student surveys, balanced budget, CAASPP test results, and multiple measures of learning outcomes.  Trimester reports on Interim Assessments aligned with CCSS.  Board approved action plans to mitigate any shortfalls in these goals.

## **ELEMENT 4 – GOVERNANCE**

“The governance structure of the charter school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the charter school to ensure parental involvement.” –Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(D)

### **Non Profit Public Benefit Corporation**

Ross Valley Charter is a directly funded independent Charter School and is operated as a California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation, pursuant to California law. RVC receives tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

RVC operates autonomously from its authorizer, with the exception of the supervisory oversight as required by statute and other contracted services as negotiated between the authorizer and RVC. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(d), the Authorizer shall not be liable for the debts and obligations of RVC, operated as a California nonprofit benefit corporation, or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by RVC as long as the authorizer has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law.

Please see Appendix D for the RVC Articles of Incorporation, nonprofit corporate Bylaws, and a Conflict of Interest Code.

### **Board of Directors**

RVC is governed by a corporate Board of Directors (“Board”) whose directors are referred to as “Members,” in accordance with its adopted corporate bylaws, which are consistent with the terms of this charter.

The Board consists of five (5) to nine (9) Members. In accordance with Education Code Section 47604(c), the entity that grants the RVC charter to be operated as a nonprofit public benefit corporation is entitled to have a single representative serve on the Board of RVC. At least two Member positions are reserved for parents of students attending RVC at the time the Member's term on the Board commences. One Member position is specifically identified as representing the RVC teachers' perspectives. This Member shall not be an employee of RVC. The other Board positions are members of the community. Board members are not subject to a limit on the number of terms they may serve. The following individuals currently serve on the RVC Board of Directors:



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Teacher Representative	John Kirk
Community Representative	Sonya Stanley
Community Representative	Kristi Kimball
Community Representative	Sharon Sagar
Parent Representative	Cheryl Flick
Parent Representative	Amy Gramajo

The relevant experience of this Board can be found in Appendix C.

The terms of the Board Members are staggered, to limit the likelihood of significant board turnover in a single year. Currently, the term of each Member is two (2) years.

New Board Members are appointed by the existing Board, with input from the RVC Community Council. The Board strives to retain a membership that includes expertise in varying fields (e.g., education, law, school finance) and which will be able to offer relevant and sound advice, direction, and discussion to RVC. Selection and appointment processes for Board members are detailed in the RVC Bylaws [Appendix D].

The process of filling Board vacancies is:

- Two Board Member positions are reserved for parents, guardians, or family members of students attending RVC at the time the Member's term would begin. These members will be selected after considering nominations by the families and guardians of current RVC students with each family allowed two votes.
- One Board Member position is a teacher representative who will be appointed by the Board after considering a nomination by the full-time teacher employees of RVC. This Member will not be an employee of RVC.
- The other Board Members will be appointed by the entire Board of Directors as vacancies occur, with a nomination process that includes input from the Community Council and the teachers.

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The RVC Conflict of Interest Code requires Board Members, Officers, the School Director and other employees not to influence votes or actually vote on decisions and contracts that might benefit them financially. The Code, which is included in Appendix D, addresses the requirements of the Political Reform Act and Government Code Section 1090, *et seq.*, as legally required. It clearly states that any Board Member, Officer, or the School Director is disqualified (and the specific manner for doing so) from making, participating in making, or trying to use their official position to influence, any Charter School decision which they know or have reason to know will have a reasonably foreseeable material financial effect, distinguishable from its effect on the public generally, on the official, or a member of his or her immediate family. Additionally, RVC complies with Government Code Section 1090, *et seq.*, as set forth in Education Code Section 47604.1.

### **Teachers' Role in Governance and Conflicts of Interest Code**

One of RVC's three Core Beliefs is that "a thriving and joyful learning community has inclusive decision-making structures that foster teacher and parent engagement, collaboration, and shared ownership of the committed work of graduating students who are critical thinkers and creative problem solvers prepared for the 21st Century."

To that end, the RVC Board has one Member responsible for representing the teachers' opinions in Board meetings. To avoid perceived conflicts of interest, and although expressly permitted, with conditions, by Education Code Section 47604.1, the teacher representative Board position will not be filled by an RVC employee.

RVC believes that empowering teachers in the governance of their schools is critical as a strategy for implementing the Common Core State Standards. In its report titled: "Teacher Leadership; The Pathway to Common Core Success," The Center for American Progress<sup>44</sup> makes the following recommendation to districts for a successful implementation of the standards:

**Teachers involved in district- and school-level governance.** In the profiled districts, teachers serve on school, district, and union governing bodies as a way to ensure that teachers' perspectives are included in decisions made about the standards and other district priorities.

In the 93-page California Common Core State Standards the words collaborate, collaborative, collaborating, and collaboration appear 40 times. In the five-paragraph Introductory Message from the State Board President and State Superintendent of Public Instruction, these words appear in each of the last three paragraphs.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2015/04/28/111762/teacher-leadership/>; April 28, 2015

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/finalelaccsstandards.pdf>

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We believe that the reason this collaborative behavior is so strongly emphasized in the Common Core State Standards is that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century digital workplace requires this skill for success. We believe that collaboration is a skill that is best acquired when children are given the opportunity to see it modeled, firsthand, by teachers, parents, and other school personnel, a belief substantiated by the Center for American Progress study.

For these reasons, RVC has created a Teacher Liaison Officer position to advise the Board, which serves as an officer position only and not as a Member of the Board, to allow for teachers' voices to be shared with the Board. The Teacher Liaison Officer is appointed in the same manner as all other officers of the Board, consistent with the corporate bylaws.

## Board Meetings and Duties

The RVC Board meets regularly, at least every month while school is in session, and in full compliance with the Brown Act and Education Code Section 47604.1(c), namely that all matters within the jurisdiction of the Board must be heard, discussed, deliberated, and acted upon by a majority of the Board, be held in open, public meetings, with limited exceptions allowed for closed session. All Board Members attend Brown Act training, held by CCSA and/or Young, Minney and Corr, LLP, RVC's counsel, or another educational institution.

The Board meetings are held at RVC, or when needed in another place suitable for community attendance and participation. Meeting notices and agendas are communicated to parents to encourage them to attend and protocols have been established with the intention of creating an inclusive and welcoming environment.

The Board is responsible for certain operational and fiscal affairs of RVC, including, but not limited to:

- Personnel actions (e.g., hiring, dismissal, annual performance evaluations) for RVC's School Director;
- Approve hiring of all employees of RVC after considering recommendations by the School Director and/or Community Council;
- Approve termination of employees of RVC after considering recommendations by the School Director;
- Approve and monitor the implementation of general policies of RVC. These include, but are not limited to, effective personnel policies for career growth and compensation of employees;
- Act as a fiscal agent. This includes the receipt of funds for the operation of RVC in accordance with RVC Board Bylaws and the receipt of grants and donations consistent with the Mission of RVC;

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- Contract an external auditor to produce an annual financial audit according to generally accepted accounting practices;
- Monitor progress of student learning and overall staff performance in achieving annual goals;
- Approve plans to mitigate shortfall in achieving goals;
- Approve RVC strategic plans, annual goals, and annual calendars;
- Approve RVC policies and procedures and handbooks;
- Approve charter amendments and material revisions (which must also be approved by the authorizer);
- Appoint an administrative panel to act as a hearing body and/or take action on recommended student expulsions if necessary;
- Approve and monitor annual budget and fiscal and performance audits;
- Communicate, negotiate, and collaborate with the authorizing entity;
- Initiate and oversee long-term strategic planning;
- Approve bylaws, resolutions, and policies and procedures of RVC operation;
- Select individuals to serve on the Board, taking into account recommendations from the Community Council; and
- Decide matters of policy after consultation with the Community Council; and
- Review all contracts over \$10,000.

The RVC Board Members attend periodic conferences and in-service opportunities for the purposes of training individual Board Members regarding their conduct, roles, and responsibilities. All Board Members receive training periodically on various matters regarding charter school law and governance. Training may include attending conferences whereby relevant governance training is available. Additional trainings and workshops will be held at special and regularly scheduled Board meetings. Trainings may be given by RVC's legal counsel, the California Charter Schools Association, Marin County Office of Education, California School Boards Association, or other experts. Topics include, but are not limited to, conflicts of interest, RVC legal compliance, the Brown Act, special education, budget, and finance.

The Board may execute any powers delegated by law to it and shall discharge any duty imposed by law upon it and may delegate to an employee of the School any of those duties. The Board, however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so

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delegated. Such delegation shall be in writing; specify the entity designated; describe in specific terms the authority being delegated and the beginning and ending dates of the delegation; and require an affirmative vote of a majority of Board Members.

The role of the Board is to ensure that compliance with state law and regulation is followed throughout RVC. It is where final decisions are made and ultimate responsibility rests. But it is also the role of the Board to make sure that stakeholders – particularly teachers and parents – are authentically engaged in making recommendations on Charter School matters that the Board has to decide on. This requires a careful balance between the Board fulfilling its legal responsibilities as a public agency while encouraging the spirit of open, honest conversation and collaboration about difficult issues so that solutions are found that meet all stakeholders' needs, as well as fulfilling legal requirements, through a collaborative process.

## Community Council

The day-to-day guidance of RVC will be jointly overseen by the School Director and the Community Council (“Council”). The Council is an essential organizational structure operating in furtherance of the Mission and Beliefs of RVC, founded on principles of collaboration between the stakeholders – parents, teachers, and administrators – in the education of the students.

As the only employee who directly reports to the Governing Board, the School Director has overall authority to ensure that the directives of the Board are carried out in the day-to-day operation of the Charter School.

The Council has no formal authority within the RVC governance structure and all its recommendations that affect budget, personnel, legal compliance, and other matters that relate to the responsibilities of the Board will be brought to the Board as recommendations. The Board retains ultimate legal authority and responsibility for the operation of RVC.

All three of our Core Beliefs are imbued with a spirit of voice, choice and collaboration.

1. **Students learn best when constructing their own knowledge** in a social context that offers rich and challenging content, collaboration with fellow students and parents, and teachers acting as facilitators of this process.
2. **Student voice, choice, and engagement are critical** to creating student agency and knowledge construction.
3. **A thriving and joyful learning community** has inclusive decision-making structures that foster teacher and parent engagement, collaboration, and shared ownership of the committed work of graduating students who are critical thinkers and creative problem solvers prepared for the 21st Century.

Each of these Core Beliefs echo the concept of modeling collaboration, choice, and voice in both learning and decision-making processes. In order to make these values real, the learning community has to have structures that give meaningful empowerment to stakeholders and require stakeholders to work through problems and differences in a straightforward, honest way.

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The Community Council structure is designed to support the opportunity for teachers and parents to develop the learning process and to continuously react to the changing world. It is patterned after the School Site Council structure described in Ed Code 52852. It has the same number of voting members as the School Site Council Structure and has the same parity between school employees and parents.

The Council is composed of eight (8) voting members and as many non-voting members as the Council shall, from time to time, deem appropriate. The School Director is a voting member. All RVC teachers are considered members of the Council, and the teachers have a total of three votes for Council purposes. The four voting parent members on the Council are elected annually by the families of RVC, with each parent or guardian of RVC student(s) having one vote with a maximum of two per family in the elections.

All parent positions on the Council serve for one-year terms. Parents elected to the Council are not subject to a limit on the number of terms they may serve.

The Council serves according to its own bylaws, which do not conflict with any provisions of this charter petition and decides on the different positions and roles of the four elected parents and any other non-voting parent members of the Council that the Council deems it appropriate to create. One elected position will be the Facilitator of all Council meetings.

The recognized existence and importance of this kind of parallel, but unofficial, decision making authority in school reform is reflected in the Education Code's provisions on Alternative Education and School Site Council cited in the work of Patrick Dolan and the Teacher Union Reform Movement.<sup>46</sup>

Council meetings usually occur monthly, and the schedule of meetings is decided and published to RVC families and staff, who are encouraged to attend. Any special meetings of the Council are also communicated to the RVC community. Any family or staff members who have specifically requested in writing (including email) to receive notice of Council meetings shall be notified by email of any Council meetings.

The duties and responsibilities of the RVC Community Council include, but are not limited to:

- Work to realize the Core Beliefs and Mission of RVC in the best interests of the students;
- Monitor the educational effectiveness of the program and make reports to the Board for its review and approval;

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<sup>46</sup> W. Patrick Dolan, *Restructuring Our Schools, A Primer on Systematic Change*, 1994, Systems and Organizations, Kansas City

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- Continuously evaluate opportunities for evolving and improving RVC as new educational theories and approaches emerge;
- Foster an ongoing culture of community and cooperation between parents, teachers, and administrators for the benefit of the students;
- Make decisions on recommendations to the Board, as appropriate, on how RVC can best meet the needs and interests of students and their families based on the RVC Mission;
- Select new Council members in accordance with this Charter and Council Bylaws;
- Along with the School Director, allocate financial resources within budget categories that are delegated to it by the Board and not otherwise designated or restricted by law;
- Make recommendations to the Board regarding matters of policy, budget, or other matters within the Board's authority;
- Review and approve, and, where appropriate, participate in preparing, annual program evaluations or reports required by law and/or required to be submitted to the Board, the authorizing entity, or any other oversight entity;
- Report current activities and issues to the Board at Board meetings;
- Participate in personnel selection processes as outlined by the Board;
- Make recommendations to the Board regarding parent and teacher Board member selection based on election processes it oversees;
- With the School Director, develop the annual school calendar for approval by the Board;
- Serve as a transparent conduit of information between RVC and RVC's family community-at-large; and
- Form and coordinate committees and other activities that enhance the intrinsic Beliefs of RVC and contribute to the fulfillment of its Mission. These committees work with various bodies within and outside RVC, providing support as appropriate.
- Participate in the LCAP process.

Any decision of the Council can be appealed to the Director or the Board by anyone.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

The Community Council includes a Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The charge of this Committee will be to advise the Community Council and the Board on the goals and activities outlined in both Element 7, Student Population Diversity, and the Cultural Competency section

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of Element 1. It will do a self-evaluation on an at least an annual basis, in order to determine whether target goals/objectives are being met. This committee identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges and makes recommendations for improvement and engages the community as necessary.

## School Director

The School Director of RVC is the administrative leader at RVC, who models RVC's Core Beliefs and Mission, acts as the community leader of the Charter School, spearheads the development of culture, and has overall responsibility for student learning and performance. The School Director is hired by and reports to the Board. The School Director attends all Board meetings but is not a Member. The School Director is a member of the interviewing and selection committee for other school staff. The School Director collaborates with the teachers as they develop the academic program, requests professional development activities, improves curriculum and instruction, and provides support and resources aimed at increasing teacher effectiveness and leadership. The School Director also ensures that the connection between RVC administration and families is strong, mutually respectful, and marked by continuous communication about student learning and behavior. Consistent with our Beliefs and Mission, the School Director creates, facilitates, and supports a positive and productive ongoing collaboration between family and staff at RVC. The School Director is also the primary liaison with the District, the County, and State Offices of Education. A comprehensive description of the School Director's qualifications may be found in Element 5—Employee Qualifications.

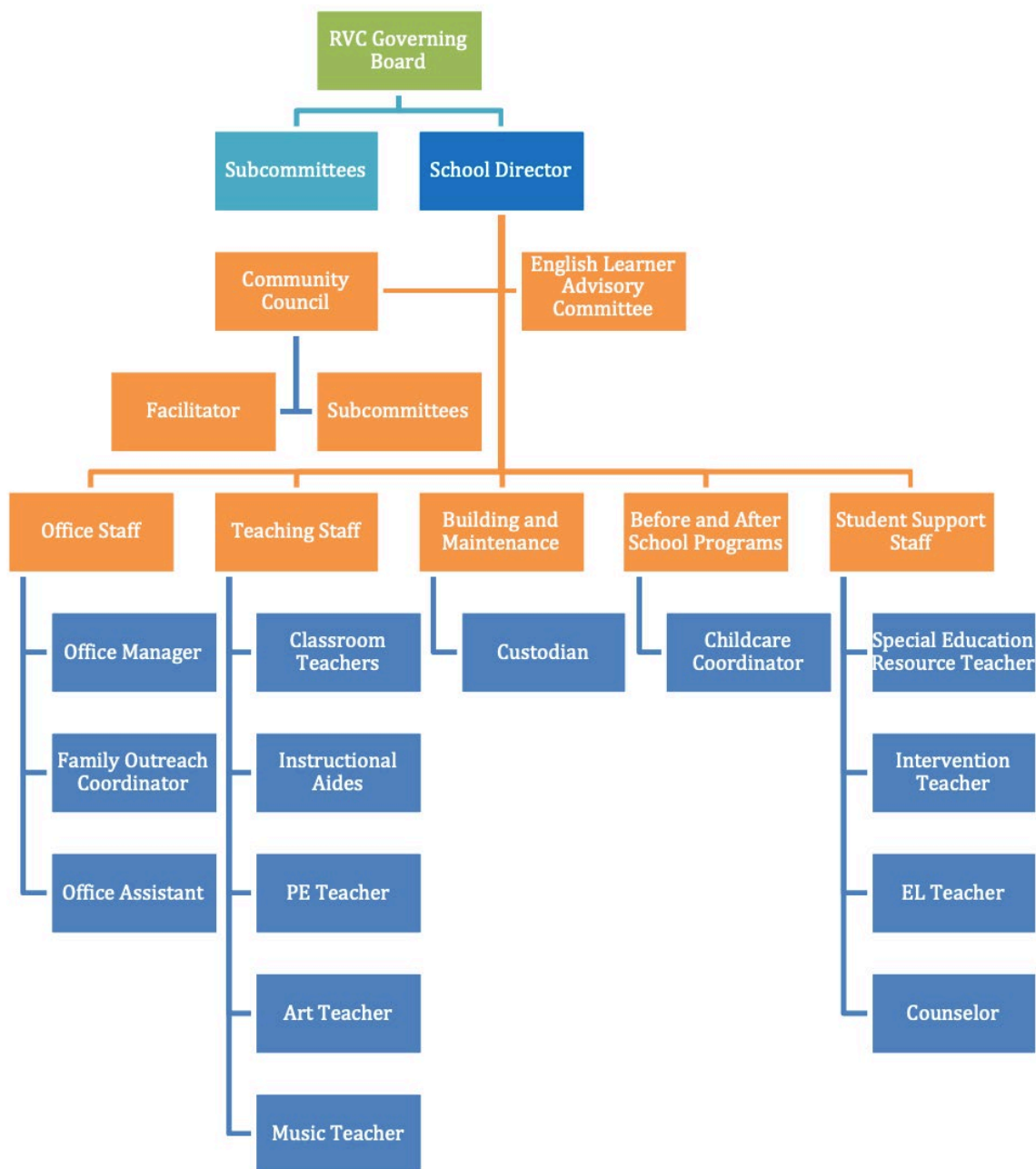
The School Director's duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Promote the success of all students, and support the efforts of the Board to keep RVC focused on learning and achievement;
- Support and evaluate teachers and other employees, and facilitate staff professional development;
- Guide RVC in its collection, analysis, and programmatic response to student learning data;
- Manage Charter School revenues and expenses to stay within approved budget;
- Monitor site safety;
- Participate as a member of the Community Council and attend its meetings;
- Develop RVC Board meeting agendas in conjunction with the Board Chairman in compliance with the Brown Act; and
- Facilitate the LCAP process.



## Organizational Chart

The entire staff, reporting to the School Director in the Organization Chart which follows, will work as a team in supporting the education of RVC students with a spirit of collective responsibility for the students' education and wellbeing.



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## **Teachers**

The teachers, in coordination with the School Director, have primary responsibility for the creation and development of the educational curriculum at RVC. The School Director, Board, and Community Council of RVC trust the professional expertise of the teachers on matters relating to curriculum and assessment of student performance. The teachers acknowledge the core value of collaboration with each other and with family and administrator stakeholders in the educational Mission of the RVC. The responsibilities of the teachers include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Generate and implement curriculum design, educational methodology, and be collectively responsible for learning outcomes;
- Select and create resources and materials;
- Align standards with curriculum across the grade levels;
- In conjunction with the School Director, recommend expenditures that support the instructional program to the Council and the Board;
- Select, design, and implement ongoing assessments and student evaluations in alignment with State Standards, and communicate assessment results to parents;
- Facilitate family-teacher conferences;
- Participate in the Council, including attending Community Council meetings;
- Engage in the inquiry process to encourage professional growth and development;
- Observe colleagues and provide feedback and support;
- Collaborate with colleagues and hold each other accountable for implementation of the Beliefs and Mission of the RVC;
- Participate on staff hiring committees;
- Make recommendations for teacher professional development opportunities to the School Director and Council for approval and participate in professional development.

## **ELAC**

RVC has an English Learner Advisory Committee (“ELAC”), a committee for parents or other community members who want to advocate for English Learners. The role of the ELAC is to advise the Director and Community Council on programs and services for English learners. The ELAC acts in an advisory capacity. It is not a decision-making body, but it is the voice of the English Learner community. Specifically, the ELAC:

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- Advises on the development of services for English learners.
- Assists in the development of the school's needs assessment and efforts to make families aware of the importance of regular school attendance.
- Has representation on the Community Council

The ELAC membership includes parents of English Learners but may also include other duly elected family & community members. The percentage of parents of ELs who are elected must be at least equal to the percentage of English Learners at the school site. For example, if 50% of the students are English learners, at least 50% of the membership of the ELAC must be parents of ELs. The remaining 50% of the committee members can be the Director, community members, teachers of participating students, instructional aides, parent liaisons, other parents, and staff.

## **Family Outreach and Support**

The School employs a Family Outreach/Support Coordinator, whose duties are to provide additional support primarily for families of students that receive free/reduced price lunch and students who are designated as English Learners. This coordinator helps to advocate for access to RVC resources, ensures that students and their parents feel welcome and comfortable in the school community, and serves as a bridge to help families communicate with their student's educational team (i.e. teachers, support personnel, and administration).

## **Parental Involvement**

Parent involvement and the parents' role as co-learners are important components of RVC and provide the backbone for the sense of community in the Charter School. Parents are viewed as critical stakeholders and co-learners (along with teachers and administrators) in the education of the students, and parents are given a voice in RVC policy setting and decision-making.

Teachers will often develop close relationships with parents in a spirit of creating a partnership for student learning. This is facilitated and deepened because parents usually spend two years with each of their child's teachers.

Parents may volunteer to:

- serve on the Board;
- serve on the Community Council;
- participate in the classroom or for special classroom events or needs;
- drive on field trips;

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- assist with playground supervision or serving lunch;
- assist in planning and organizing RVC community-building events or school-wide student events;
- assist during RVC events; and
- support any Council needs or serve on any Council-formed committees to address specific issues facing RVC.

Parents also serve an important role in electing the parent representatives of the Council. RVC supports this culture of welcoming, but not requiring, parent involvement in our community.

RVC welcomes and encourages parents to be involved in RVC activities in any manner mentioned above or listed below or another manner determined to be suitable to the parents' schedule and interests and RVC's needs. While in-classroom parent participation is typically a very satisfying and helpful experience, RVC recognizes that being involved during the school day is not feasible for many parents. There are many ways of contributing parent support to RVC outside of the regular school day hours, and all are equally important to the success of the school. The Community Council includes a Room Parent Coordinator, who helps to identify valuable involvement opportunities for all RVC parents looking to contribute time in support of the success of the school, including working parents or other parents for whom participating during the school day is not possible.

- Other examples of parent involvement which may be better for parents who are not available during the school day include:
  - assist with technology;
  - prepare materials at home;
  - provide language support at evening meetings, including translation assistance;
  - serve as a classroom parent (e.g., organizing/facilitating communications to other parents, serving as a liaison between teacher and parents, organizing volunteers);
  - help to coordinate field trips;
  - serve in a group formed to enhance the School environment (e.g., garden group, Safe Routes to School, or social and emotional support for students);
  - assist with facility and grounds improvement projects.

Being involved in Charter School activities is in no way required of parents. The school provides a free education to all students who attend RVC with no requirement for family volunteering in the school community or donating funds.

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## **ELEMENT 5 – EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS**

**Governing Law:** The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the charter school. Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(E).

### **Qualifications of Key Charter School Employees**

In general, Ross Valley Charter will recruit dedicated, qualified, and enthusiastic individuals to serve in all of RVC's employment positions. All prospective employees are required to successfully complete a Department of Justice ("DOJ") fingerprinting background check using a qualified Live Scan operator, tuberculosis ("TB") risk assessment or examination, and reference checks, to ensure the health and safety of RVC's faculty, staff, and pupils. In addition, prospective employees are carefully screened to ensure they have the qualifications for employment as determined by education codes and law as they pertain to charter schools. RVC staff may also be required to participate in random drug testing as may be required by the Board of Directors. In addition, prospective employees are carefully screened to ensure they have the qualifications for employment as determined by laws applicable to charter schools.

At RVC there is no discrimination or harassment based on race or ethnicity, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, actual or perceived physical or mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law, including immigration status. RVC is a school of choice and no employee will be forced to work here.

The following positions are considered "key" at RVC:

### **Qualifications of the School Director**

The responsibilities of the School Director are described at length in the Governance Element above. The Board has approved a job description that summarizes the qualities and experience needed for the School Director prior to recruiting. The School Director has demonstrated leadership qualities and experience that aligns with the RVC Core Beliefs and indicates that he or she will be able to effectively discharge all of the responsibilities and functions that are outlined in the Governance Element.

The School Director shall meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree (required)
- Relevant experience with school and organizational leadership and educational innovation (preferred)
- Experience in supervision and evaluation of employees (preferred)

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- Ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups, the Board and the community (required)
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate collaboration with individuals holding diverse views and reach consensus decisions (required)
- Interest in progressive education and commitment to the school's values and success (required)
- Experience with school operations including finances, fundraising, facilities, health and safety, and other operational management (preferred)
- Be familiar with special education services and the provision of these services (preferred)
- Other qualifications and/or qualities deemed important by the Board (preferred)

## Qualifications of Teachers

Classroom teachers, Resource Specialist Teacher, Intervention Teacher, and ELD teacher must hold the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, CLAD/BCLAD certification or other documents required for the teacher's certificated assignment pursuant to Education Code Section 47605(*J*), 47605.4(a), and 48000(g). Courses include English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Our teachers have an elementary age multiple subject credential. RVC will confer with the California Commission on Teaching Credentialing ("CCTC") and the Marin County Office of Education for any clarifications regarding credentials as needed.

RVC may use local assignment options authorized in statute and regulations for the purpose of legally assigning certificated teachers, in the same manner as a governing board of a school district. Teachers employed by charter schools during the 2019–20 school year shall have until July 1, 2025, to obtain the certificate required for the teacher's certificated assignment.

RVC teachers shall meet or exceed all applicable requirements under the ESSA.

Accordingly, a teacher must have:

- a bachelor's degree
- an appropriate state multiple subject teaching credential (or credential required for the teaching position)
- demonstrated academic subject matter competence

RVC will hire faculty based on content mastery, academic excellence, academic ability, and performance reviews, and will consider bilingualism, and experience with progressive education, inquiry based learning, and multi-age settings. RVC believes that it will be best served if one or

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more of its 9 classroom teachers is bilingual in English and Spanish. We will use recruitment that includes the collection of transcripts, reference checks, writing samples, and an extensive interview process.

In addition, teachers who desire a position with RVC must:

- Be committed to our Mission and Core Beliefs;
- Be willing to work collaboratively with parents in the classroom and community;
- Show enthusiasm for collaboration with other teachers at RVC;
- Be willing to participate in professional development opportunities and to engage in continuous reflection on the goals and methods of education at RVC;
- Implement the RVC Mission and Core Beliefs;
- Be skilled at or be willing to be trained in the current and future teaching practices used at RVC;
- Be knowledgeable about educational psychology and developmentally appropriate practices;
- Be willing to work beyond the typical school day, on some evenings and weekends.

**Qualifications of Other Employees****After School Childcare Coordinator**

- Bachelor's degree or higher
- Background in education, youth development or related field
- Experience coordinating activities and services, preferably for youth and families
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Proficiency with technology
- Highly collaborative
- Spanish skills a plus

**Art Teacher**

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- Passion for art and the ability to share that passion with students
- Knowledge of art and design concepts using a variety of media and materials
- Broad range of knowledge in a variety of media including drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, collage, design, ceramics, and construction
- Knowledge of child cognitive development and various learning styles
- Familiarity with social-emotional teaching strategies
- Ability to collaborate with colleagues, parents and community
- Any credential required by existing California law and regulation

**Counselor**

- Bachelor's Degree
- Currently attending or graduated from a relevant Graduate-Level Counseling Program
- Independently fulfill professional duties with limited supervision/shadowing
- Previous experience in a public school setting (preferred)
- Commit to a full year (part-time or full-time)

**Custodian**

- The required knowledge and ability to perform the duties in the job description, which has been acquired during some demonstrated custodial experience.

**EL Teacher**

- At least three years teaching English Language Learners and a demonstrated track record of success in improving their language acquisition
- Familiarity with the policies, procedures, and training associated with the administration of the ELPAC
- Proficiency in analyzing, communicating, and presenting data
- Understanding and command of the best practices in teaching ELLs
- Fluent in Spanish (strongly preferred)



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- Bachelor's Degree
- Possession of either BCLAD certificate; CLAD certificate; Bilingual Certificate of Competence (BCC); or Language Development Specialist (LDS) certificate desirable

**Family Outreach/Support Coordinator**

- Fluent in Spanish
- Familiarity with and comfort in Latinx culture
- Experience with Latinx families and children
- Experience in early or primary educational setting highly desired

**Instructional Aides**

- Knowledge of Techniques and methods of instruction and behavior management.
- Cultural and physical differences and needs of learners in general and special education program.
- English usage, spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Mathematics through Algebra 1 (through Algebra 2 preferred).

**Intervention Teacher**

- Experience working with children.
- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field (preferred): education, psychology, child development, family and consumer sciences.
- California Teaching Credential preferred
- Teaching experience in math, and/or reading
- Ability to motivate students
- Good classroom management skills

**Music Teacher**

- Passion for music and the ability to share that passion with students

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- Knowledge of music concepts using a variety of instruments and tools
- Knowledge of child cognitive development and various learning styles
- Familiarity with social-emotional teaching strategies
- Ability to collaborate with colleagues, parents and community
- Any credential required by existing California law and regulation

**Office Assistant**

- Bachelor's Degree, preferred
- Experience with children, preferred
- Bilingual (Spanish), preferred
- Knowledge of:
  - Concepts of child development and behavior
  - Conflict resolution techniques
  - Clerical duties and necessary skills
- Ability to:
  - Model desired behaviors
  - Remain calm when emotions are running high
  - Maintain a patient, warm, receptive attitude towards students
  - Communicate effectively with school staff and parents
  - Work independently
  - Multi-task with many interruptions.
  - Work with confidentiality and discretion
  - Answer phones

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**Office Manager**

- Proficient in MS Office suite of applications
- Experience with (or willingness and ability to learn) cloud based productivity software (such as the Google Drive suite), and student information systems.
- Bachelor's degree or higher highly preferred
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Highly collaborative

**Physical Education Teacher**

- High school diploma required; college degree strongly preferred
- Experience teaching PE or leading youth activities, particularly for ages 5-11.
- Experience in education, coaching or related field
- Demonstrated experience leading and/or teaching groups of children with the ability to engage and inspire youth
- Knowledge of cooperative games as well as traditional sports
- Valid Clear Physical Education credential (preferred)
- Ability to complete CPR/First Aid Training
- Highly collaborative
- Any credential required by existing California law and regulation
- Spanish fluency (preferred)

**Special Education Resource Teacher**

- Education Specialist Instruction Credential required
- Multiple Subject Teaching Credential desired
- Language Skills: Have a great command of the English language. Spanish Bilingual preferred.

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- **Mathematical Skills:** Mastery of basic math and Algebra.
- **Technology Skills:** Able to use excel, Word, PowerPoint, communicate via email, Google Docs
- **Reasoning Ability:** Able to initiate tasks, plan, and problem solve
- **Personal Qualities:** Prompt, team player, flexible
- **Transportation:** Able to drive to locations assigned to provide supports and services, to professional development opportunities

Full Job descriptions are in Appendix B.

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## **ELEMENT 6 – HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES**

**Governing Law:** The procedures that the charter school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall require all of the following:

- (i) That each employee of the charter school furnish the charter school with a criminal record summary as described in Section 44237.
- (ii) The development of a school safety plan, which shall include the safety topics listed in subparagraphs (A) to (J), inclusive, of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 32282.
- (iii) That the school safety plan be reviewed and updated by March 1 of every year by the charter school. Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(F).

In order to provide safety for all students and staff, Ross Valley Charter has adopted and implemented full health and safety procedures and risk management policies at its school site in consultation with its insurance carriers and risk management experts.

The following is a summary of the health and safety policies of the Charter School:

### **Procedures for Background Checks**

Employees and contractors of RVC will be required to submit to a criminal background check and to furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Sections 44237 and 45125.1. Applicants for employment must submit two sets of fingerprints to the California Department of Justice for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. RVC shall not hire any person, in either a certificated or classified position, who has been convicted of a violent or serious felony except as otherwise provided by law, pursuant to Education Code Sections 44830.1 and 45122.1. RVC will comply with all applicable state and federal laws regarding background checks and clearance of all personnel and will comply with all state and federal laws concerning the maintenance and disclosure of employee records. RVC's School Director shall monitor compliance with this policy. The Board Chairman shall monitor the fingerprinting and background clearance of the School Director. Volunteers who will volunteer outside of the direct supervision of a credentialed employee shall be fingerprinted and receive background clearance prior to volunteering.

### **Role of Staff as Mandated Child Abuse Reporters**

All employees will be mandated child abuse reporters and will follow all applicable reporting laws, the same policies and procedures used by RVSD. RVC will provide annual training on child abuse and neglect reporting requirements to employees and persons working on their behalf who are mandated reporters, within the first six weeks of each school year or within six weeks of employment and as mandated by Education Code Section 44691.

### **Tuberculosis Risk Assessment and Examination**

Employees, and volunteers who have frequent or prolonged contact with students, will be assessed and examined (if necessary) for tuberculosis prior to commencing employment and

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working with students, and for employees at least once every four years thereafter, as required by Education Code Section 49406. RVC staff will be notified by the RVC Director in advance of the expiration of current tuberculosis clearance certificates and will provide updated tuberculosis clearances every four years.

## **Immunizations**

All enrolled students and staff will be required to provide records documenting immunizations as is required at public schools pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 120325-120375, and Title 17, California Code of Regulations Sections 6000-6075.

## **Medication in School**

The Charter School will adhere to Education Code Section 49423 regarding administration of medication in school. RVC will adhere to Education Code Section 49414 regarding epinephrine auto-injectors and training for staff members.

## **Vision, Hearing, and Scoliosis**

Students will be screened for vision, hearing and scoliosis. The Charter School will adhere to Education Code Section 49450, *et seq.*, as applicable to the grade levels served by RVC.

## **Suicide Prevention**

RVC shall maintain a policy on student suicide prevention in accordance with Education Code Section 215. RVC shall review, at minimum every fifth year, its policy on pupil suicide prevention and, if necessary, update its policy.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

RVC shall adhere to an Emergency Preparedness Handbook drafted specifically to the needs of the Charter School site in conjunction with law enforcement and the Fire Marshall. This handbook shall include, but not be limited to the following responses: fire, flood, earthquake, terrorist threats, and hostage situations. If assuming a facility that was previously used as a school site, any existing emergency preparedness plan for the school site shall be used as a starting basis for updating the handbook for the Charter School.

Staff shall receive training in emergency response, including appropriate 'first responder' training or its equivalent.

## **Bloodborne Pathogens**

RVC shall meet state and federal standards for dealing with bloodborne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials in the workplace. The Board shall establish a written infectious substances control plan designed to protect employees and students from possible infection due

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to contact with blood borne viruses, including human immunodeficiency virus (“HIV”) and hepatitis B virus (“HBV”).

Whenever exposed to blood or other bodily fluids through injury or accident, staff and students shall follow the latest medical protocol for disinfecting procedures.

## **Nutritionally Adequate Free or Reduced Price Meal**

RVC shall provide each needy student, as defined in Education Code Section 49552, with one nutritionally adequate free or reduced-price meal, as defined in Education Code Section 49553(a), during each school day.

## **School Safety Plan**

RVC shall adopt a School Safety Plan, to be reviewed and updated by March 1 of every year, which shall include identifying appropriate strategies and programs that will provide or maintain a high level of school safety and address RVC’s procedures for complying with applicable laws related to school safety, including the development of all of the following pursuant to Education Code Section 32282(a)(2)(A)-(J):

- child abuse reporting procedures
- routine and emergency disaster procedures
- policies for students who committed an act under Education Code Section 48915 and other Charter School-designated serious acts leading to suspension, expulsion, or mandatory expulsion recommendations
- procedures to notify teachers of dangerous students pursuant to Education Code Section 49079
- a discrimination and harassment policy consistent with Education Code Section 200
- provisions of any schoolwide dress code that prohibits students from wearing “gang-related apparel,” if applicable
- procedures for safe ingress and egress of pupils, parents, and employees to and from RVC
- a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning
- the rules and procedures on school discipline adopted pursuant to Education Code Sections 35291, 35291.5, 47605, and 47605.6
- procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents

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## **Bullying Prevention**

RVC has adopted procedures for preventing acts of bullying, including cyberbullying. RVC shall annually make available the online training module developed by the CDE pursuant to Education Code Section 32283.5(a) to certificated schoolsite employees and all other schoolsite employees who have regular interaction with children.

## **Drug, Alcohol, and Smoke-Free Environment**

The Charter School shall function as a drug, alcohol, and smoke-free environment.

## **Facility Safety**

The Charter School shall comply with Education Code Section 47610 by either utilizing facilities that are compliant with the Field Act or facilities that are compliant with the California Building Standards Code. RVC agrees to test sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms annually at its facilities to ensure that they are maintained in an operable condition at all times. RVC shall arrange for fire inspections from the local fire department/authorities. RVC shall conduct fire drills monthly as required under Education Code Section 32001. RVC shall secure a Certificate of Occupancy from the applicable local land use permitting authority prior to the start of school, if required by law.

## **Comprehensive Discrimination and Harassment Policies and Procedures**

RVC is committed to providing a school that is free from discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as any harassment based upon the actual or perceived characteristics of race, religion, creed, gender, gender identity, gender expression, color, nationality, national origin, ancestry, ethnic group identification, genetic information, age, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, sex and pregnancy, physical or mental disability, childbirth or related medical conditions, military and veteran status, denial of family and medical care leave, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance, or regulation.

RVC has a comprehensive policy and has included it in the relevant Charter School handbooks to prevent and immediately remediate any concerns about discrimination or harassment at the Charter School (including employee to employee, employee to student, student to student, and student to employee misconduct). Misconduct of this nature is very serious and will be addressed in accordance with the Charter School's discrimination and harassment policies. A copy of the policy shall be provided as part of any orientation program conducted for new and continuing pupils at the beginning of each quarter, semester, or summer session, as applicable, and to each faculty member, all members of the administrative staff, and all members of the support staff at the beginning of the first quarter or semester of the school year, or at the time that there is a new employee hired.



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## **ELEMENT 7 – STUDENT POPULATION BALANCE**

**Governing Law:** The means by which the charter school will achieve a balance of racial and ethnic pupils, special education pupils, and English learner pupils, including redesignated fluent English proficient pupils, as defined by the evaluation rubrics in Section 52064.5, that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the district to which the charter petition is submitted. Upon renewal, for a charter school not deemed to be a local educational agency for purposes of special education pursuant to Section 47641, the chartering authority may consider the effect of school placements made by the chartering authority in providing a free and appropriate public education as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public Law 101-476), on the balance of pupils with disabilities at the charter school. - Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(G).

Ross Valley Charter has been successful in its efforts to enroll a student body that meets or exceeds the range of diversity found in the broader school aged community of Ross Valley School District. The school believes that a diverse student body enriches the education of the entire school community. The underlying belief that all students are capable of thriving academically, socially, and emotionally guides our approach and ensures that all students have equal access to learning.

The table below compares the diversity of Ross Valley Charter School with that of the district in which it is located, the Ross Valley Elementary District.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> dq.cde.ca.gov/Dataquest/ see both Ross Valley Elementary and SBE – Ross Valley charter

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	<b>Ross Valley School District 2018-19</b>	<b>Ross Valley School District 2019-20</b>	<b>Ross Valley Charter 2018-19</b>	<b>Ross Valley Charter 2019-20</b>
<b>English Learners</b>	2.9%	3.6%	12.5%	20.1%
<b>Eligible to Receive Free or Reduced Price Meals</b>	10.1%	9.7%	29.4%	28.4%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	11.3%	11.2%	26.7%	27.80%
<b>Black or African American</b>	1.1%	1%	3.1%	3.1%
<b>Students with Disability</b>	11.5%	Data not yet publicly available	10.5%	12.4% <sup>48</sup>

RVC knows that it is imperative to do active, ongoing outreach to attract students in these traditionally underserved groups. In addition to the outreach and recruitment described below, RVC is proposing to provide a preference for English Learners and students eligible to receive Free or Reduced Price Lunch as outlined in Element 8 below. RVC believes that these admission preferences are critical to building the kind of diverse community RVC believes is critical to its educational philosophy.

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<sup>48</sup> CBEDs Fall 2019-20 reporting

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## **Community Outreach & Recruitment Efforts that Align with Targeted Population and Education Program**

RVC has a comprehensive outreach plan to reach underserved communities in the Ross Valley School District. Through consistent outreach we have attracted many students from the Fairfax San Anselmo Children's Center (FSACC), a local private non-profit Title 5 childcare program, diverse preschool, and aftercare center. Additional efforts are made to reach target populations utilizing bilingual print and online media outlets, and our bilingual Family Outreach/Support Coordinator reaches out to families that have shown interest in RVC to ensure their questions have been answered and they get assistance in the application process.

RVC strives to ensure that all recruitment, outreach, and/or promotional materials are translated into Spanish and/or contain language-appropriate sidebars with contact information for Spanish Speakers. Outreach may include the following media:

### **Online media**

- RVC maintains a bilingual website and link with other websites, including Spanish Language websites, as appropriate.
- RVC has a Facebook and Instagram accounts in order to maintain a social media presence.

### **Print based media**

- RVC creates bilingual flyers, with targeted placements, to encourage enrollment and offer information about upcoming events.
- RVC creates and distributes a bilingual brochure to educate families about RVC offerings.

### **Broadcast Media**

- RVC has produced a short video with Spanish subtitles for use at recruitment and outreach events.

### **Word of Mouth Communication**

- We have found a critical recruitment tool in attracting a diverse learning community is through word-of-mouth communication. Our families who qualify as low-income, and/or have students who are either English Learners or receive special education services are our strongest advocates. These parents often share the success of their students with their personal networks and encourage others to apply.

### **Tours**

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- We provide tours at least once a month. Our comprehensive tours highlight all aspects of our program including how we meet the needs of All learners.

## **Staffing and Staff Development Efforts to Support Student Population Balance**

Recognizing that cultural proficiency is a continuum, RVC provides on-going diversity reflection and training for teachers, staff, and parents. (See Education One section on Cultural Competency.)

RVC is committed to hiring instructional staff who can meet the needs of all students, including English Learners. To that end, RVC seeks to hire new teachers who are bilingual in English and Spanish.

RVC has a part-time credentialed ELD Teacher to provide small group English instruction at students' current English level and facilitates and monitors EL students' continued growth.

RVC has a half-time bilingual Family Outreach/Support Coordinator who assists with recruitment, outreach and support for diverse family populations.

RVC has a full-time Special Education teacher to support students with IEPs.

## **Partnerships and Collaboration**

RVC continues to identify local leaders from target populations in order to:

- educate them about Ross Valley Charter;
- continue to educate ourselves about the needs of local underserved communities;
- solicit their support and assistance with recruitment and retention efforts

Collaborative relationships may include, but are not limited to, the following organizations and/or meetings:

- Fairfax-San Anselmo Children's Center
- The Fairfax Food Pantry
- Head Start
- St. Rita pastor
- St. Vincent de Paul Society

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Through innovative teaching strategies and built-in staff support, RVC is confident in its ability to meet the academic needs of students and families from underserved communities.

A self-evaluation is implemented by RVC's Diversity and Inclusion Committee on at least an annual basis, in order to determine whether target goals/objectives are being met. This committee identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges and makes recommendations for improvement, as necessary.

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## **ELEMENT 8 – ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Governing Law: Admission policies and procedures, consistent with [Education Code Section 47605] subdivision (e). Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(H).

Ross Valley Charter is nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, and all other operations, and does not charge tuition nor does it discriminate against any student on the basis of any of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220.

RVC admits all pupils who wish to attend the Charter School limited only by enrollment/space constraints. No test or assessment is administered to students prior to acceptance and enrollment into the Charter School. RVC complies with all laws establishing minimum and maximum age for public school attendance in charter schools. Admission, except in the case of a public random drawing, shall not be determined by the place of residence of the pupil or his or her parent or legal guardian within the state except as otherwise required by law. In accordance with Education Code Sections 49011 and 47605(e)(2)(B)(iv), admission preferences shall not require mandatory parental volunteer hours as a criterion for admission or continued enrollment.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(A), RVC shall not discourage a pupil from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the charter school for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the characteristics described in Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B)(iii), including pupils with disabilities, academically low-achieving pupils, English learners, neglected or delinquent pupils, homeless pupils, or pupils who are economically disadvantaged, as determined by eligibility for any free or reduced-price meal program, foster youth, or pupils based on nationality, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Similarly, in accordance with Section 47605(e)(4)(C), RVC shall not encourage a pupil currently attending the Charter School to disenroll from the Charter School or transfer to another school for any reason, including, but not limited to the academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the characteristics described in Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B)(iii), as listed above.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(D), the Charter School shall post a notice developed by the CDE on the Charter School website, outlining the requirements of Section 47605(e)(4), and make this notice available to parents.

RVC requires the parents or guardians of students who wish to attend the Charter School to complete a simple application form which includes the student's name, date of birth, entering grade level, and contact and address information for parents or guardians. An optional section of the form will indicate eligibility for one or more admissions preferences, as defined below.

After admission, students will be required to submit an enrollment packet, which shall include the following:

- 1) Completion of student enrollment/registration forms including student data sheet, emergency medical information cards, National School Lunch Program application

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- 2) Proof of Immunization
- 3) Home Language Survey
- 4) Proof of minimum age requirements
- 5) Proof of residency status, e.g. utility bill
- 6) Release of records form if applicable<sup>49</sup>

The only RVC admission requirement is that students wishing to attend RVC must follow the Charter School's admission procedures with respect to completing applications by the announced deadlines. RVC also encourages the parents of potential students to attend one of our non-mandatory school tours prior to submitting an application, to learn more about RVC's program. Spanish translation is available for school tours. But these tours will not be mandatory and enrollment applications are available on-line, in person, as well as by mail upon request.

The open enrollment deadline, which normally takes place in the early spring for admission the following fall, shall be coordinated with local schools to give students and their parents the opportunity to consider the full range of educational opportunities available to them. Applications received after the deadline will be maintained in the order received in the event subsequent open enrollment periods are offered or space becomes available.

### **Public Random Drawing**

Applications are accepted during a publicly advertised open-enrollment period each year for enrollment in the following school year. At the conclusion of the open enrollment period each year, applications are counted to determine whether any grade level has received more applications than spaces available. In the event that this happens, RVC holds a public random drawing (or "lottery") to determine admission for the impacted grade level, with the exception of existing students, who are guaranteed admission in the following school year.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B), admission preferences in the case of a lottery shall be given to the following students in the following order:

- 1) Siblings of pupils admitted to or attending RVC.

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<sup>49</sup> RVC shall not request a pupil's records or require a parent, guardian, or pupil to submit the pupil's records to the Charter School before enrollment.

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- 2) Children of RVC's teachers and staff.
- 3) Students who reside within the Ross Valley School District boundaries who are English Learners or who are eligible to receive Free or Reduced Price Meals.
- 4) Students who reside within the Ross Valley School District boundaries.
- 5) Students who reside outside of the District boundaries who are English Learners or who are eligible to receive Free or Reduced Price Meals.
- 6) Students who reside outside of the District boundaries.

RVC agrees to adhere to the requirements related to admission preferences as set forth in Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B)(i)-(iv).

Public random drawing rules, deadlines, dates and times are described in the "Enrollment and Lottery Policy and Procedures" document developed by the Board and communicated on the application form and on RVC's website. Public notice for the date and time of the public random drawing will also be posted at the school. The lottery is held in a space large enough to accommodate all people who want to attend. Parents need not be present at the lottery in order for their children to gain admission if selected. RVC also informs parents of all applicants and all interested parties of the rules to be followed during the public random drawing process via mail or email prior to the lottery date. RVC conducts the lottery by early March for enrollment in the fall of that year.

The Board of Directors will take all necessary efforts to ensure lottery procedures are fairly executed. Lottery spaces are pulled by the designated lottery official (the School Director or designee). Separate lotteries shall be conducted for each grade in which there are fewer vacancies than applicants. All lotteries shall take place on the same day in a single location. Lotteries will be conducted in descending order beginning with the highest applicable grade level. There is no weighted priority assigned to the preference categories. Rather, within each grade level, applicants will be divided into 6 pools, one for each of the six preference categories listed above. Applicants will be drawn in a random lottery from these six pools beginning with the pool of applicants who qualify for the first preference category. As a name is drawn it shall either be admitted if there are vacancies or, if not, added to a waitlist after vacancies have been filled. This process shall be repeated for each of the 5 subsequent pools, in the order of the preference category, 2 through 6. There shall be only one waitlist for each grade, and names will be added to the waitlist in the order of the preference category of the applicant, with applicants from preference category one being first and preference category 6 being last.

At the conclusion of the public random drawing, the parents/guardians of all students who were not granted admission due to capacity are given the option to put their child's name on a waiting list according to their draw in the lottery. This waiting list allows students the option of enrollment in the case of an opening subsequent to the lottery or even once the new school year begins. Admissions Application Forms, the manual record of all lottery participants and their assigned lottery numbers, and other lottery-related documents will be physically and securely



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filed on campus, and lottery results and waiting lists will be readily available in RVC’s main office for inspection upon request.

The application, public random drawing, and approximate admission schedule and process is below, and may be amended by RVC as necessary.

The exact schedule and due dates are communicated to interested parents and students on Ross Valley Charter’s website and through communications to interested parents.

November – March	Application forms available
1st week of March	Application forms due
2nd Week of March	Public Lottery
As soon as possible after lottery completion	Families notified
Approximately 3 weeks later after parent notification	Completed enrollment packets due to Ross Valley Charter

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## **ELEMENT 9 – INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL AUDITS**

**Governing Law:** The manner in which annual, independent, financial audits shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority. Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(I).

An annual independent financial audit of the books and records of the Charter School is conducted annually as required by Education Code Sections 47605(c)(5)(I) and 47605(m). The books and records of the Charter School are kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and, as required by applicable law, the audit employs generally accepted accounting procedures. The audit is conducted in accordance with applicable provisions within the California Code of Regulations governing audits of charter schools as published in the State Controller's K-12 Audit Guide. The RVC budget includes provision for this expense.

RVC's Board selects an independent auditor using a subcommittee of the board to review proposals and bringing a recommendation to the board for approval. The auditor will have, at a minimum, a CPA and educational institution audit experience and will be approved by the State Controller on its published list as an educational audit provider. The Governing Board contracts for the audit and receives the audit report. The School Director and designees provide support to the Auditor. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars.

The annual audit is completed and forwarded to the authorizer, the County Superintendent of Schools, the State Controller, and to the CDE by the 15th of December of each year. The School Director, along with the audit committee, if any, reviews any audit exceptions or deficiencies and reports to the Charter School Board of Directors with recommendations on how to resolve them. The Board submits a report to the authorizer describing how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved to the satisfaction of the authorizer along with an anticipated timeline for the same. Audit appeals or requests for summary review shall be submitted to the Education Audit Appeals Panel (EAAP) in accordance with applicable law.

In RVC's first two audits, there have been no findings.

The independent financial audit of the Charter School is a public record to be provided to the public upon request.

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## **ELEMENT 10 – SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION PROCEDURE**

**Governing Law:** The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled from the charter school for disciplinary reasons or otherwise involuntarily removed from the charter school for any reason. These procedures, at a minimum, shall include an explanation of how the charter school will comply with federal and state constitutional procedural and substantive due process requirements that is consistent with all of the following:

(i) For suspensions of fewer than 10 days, provide oral or written notice of the charges against the pupil and, if the pupil denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence that supports the charges and an opportunity for the pupil to present the pupil's side of the story.

(ii) For suspensions of 10 days or more and all other expulsions for disciplinary reasons, both of the following:

(I) Provide timely, written notice of the charges against the pupil and an explanation of the pupil's basic rights.

(II) Provide a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer within a reasonable number of days at which the pupil has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate.

(iii) Contain a clear statement that no pupil shall be involuntarily removed by the charter school for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the pupil has been provided written notice of intent to remove the pupil no less than five school days before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian or, if the pupil is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the pupil's educational rights holder, and shall inform the pupil, the pupil's parent or guardian, or the pupil's educational rights holder of the right to initiate the procedures specified in clause (ii) before the effective date of the action. If the pupil's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder initiates the procedures specified in clause (ii), the pupil shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the charter school issues a final decision. For purposes of this clause, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions specified in clauses (i) and (ii). Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J).

This Pupil Suspension and Expulsion procedure has been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students at Ross Valley Charter. In creating this policy, the Charter School has reviewed Education Code Section 48900 et seq. which describes the schools' list of offenses and procedures to establish its list of offenses and procedures for suspensions and expulsions. The language that follows closely mirrors the language of Education Code Section 48900 et seq. RVC is committed to annual review of policies and procedures surrounding suspensions and expulsions and, as necessary, modification of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension or expulsion.

If a Policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. This policy shall serve as RVC's policy and procedures for student suspension and expulsion and it may be amended from time to time, without the need to amend the charter, so long as the amendments comport with legal requirements. Charter School staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This Policy and its Procedures will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook and will clearly

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describe discipline expectations. It will be reviewed and updated by the Board of Directors when they review and update other Board policies and procedures, or more frequently as needed. Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of the Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

RVC administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline and involuntary removal policies and procedures. The notice shall state that the Policy and Procedures are available on request at the School Director's office.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities, unless otherwise agreed, during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the IDEA or who is qualified for services under Section 504 is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to general education students, except when federal and state law mandates additional or different procedures. RVC will follow all applicable federal and state laws including, but not limited to, the California Education Code, when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in according due process to such students.

No student shall be involuntarily removed by RVC for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five schooldays before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder, and shall inform him or her of the basis for which the pupil is being involuntarily removed and his or her right to request a hearing to challenge the involuntary removal. If a parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the Charter School shall utilize the same hearing procedures specified below for expulsions, before the effective date of the action to involuntarily remove the student. If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include removals for misconduct which may be grounds for suspension or expulsion as enumerated below.

## **Procedures**

### **Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students**

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at any time including but not limited to: a) while on school grounds; b) while going to or coming from school; c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

#### **Enumerated Offenses**

1. **Discretionary Suspension Offenses.** Students may be suspended for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
  - a. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
  - b. Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
  - c. Unlawfully possessed, used, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
  - d. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
  - e. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
  - f. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
  - g. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
  - h. Possessed, or used, tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to: cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
  - i. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
  - j. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
  - k. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.

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- l. Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- m. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- n. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- o. Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this subdivision, “hazing” means a method of initiation or pre-initiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this section, “hazing” does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- p. Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this section, “terroristic threat” shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family’s safety, or for the protection of school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases, or the personal property of the person threatened or his or her immediate family.
- q. Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this section, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual’s academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- r. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.

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- s. Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- t. Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
  - i. “Bullying” means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
    1. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student’s or those students’ person or property.
    2. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.
    3. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.
    4. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.
  - ii. “Electronic Act” means the creation or transmission originated on or off the school site, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
    1. A message, text, sound, video, or image.
    2. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:

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3. Posting to or creating a burn page. A “burn page” means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
4. Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. “Credible impersonation” means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.
5. Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. “False profile” means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile.
6. An act of cyber sexual bullying.
  - a. For purposes of this clause, “cyber sexual bullying” means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a pupil to another pupil or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.
  - b. For purposes of this clause, “cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.
- iii. Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) (a) and (b) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.
- u. A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (1).
- v. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess



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the item from a certificated school employee, with the School Director or designee's concurrence.

2. **Non-Discretionary Suspension Offenses:** Students must be suspended and recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
  - a. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the School Director or designee's concurrence.
  - b. Brandished a knife at another person.
  - c. Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code Section 11053, *et seq.*
  - d. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault or committed a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900(n).
3. **Discretionary Expellable Offenses:** Students may be recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
  - a. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
  - b. Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
  - c. Unlawfully possessed, used, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
  - d. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
  - e. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
  - f. Caused, or attempted to cause, damage to school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
  - g. Stole, or attempted to steal, school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
  - h. Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.

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- i. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- l. Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- m. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- n. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- o. Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this subdivision, “hazing” means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this section, “hazing” does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- p. Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this section, “terroristic threat” shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family’s safety, or for the protection of school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and database, or the personal property of the person threatened or his or her immediate family.
- q. Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this section, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual’s academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive

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educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.

- r. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- s. Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- t. Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
  - i. “Bullying” means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
    1. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student’s or those students’ person or property.
    2. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.
    3. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.
    4. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.
  - ii. “Electronic Act” means the creation or transmission originated on or off the school site, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

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1. A message, text, sound, video, or image.
2. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
  - a. Posting to or creating a burn page. A “burn page” means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
  - b. Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. “Credible impersonation” means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.
  - c. Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. “False profile” means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile.
3. An act of cyber sexual bullying.
  - a. For purposes of this clause, “cyber sexual bullying” means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a pupil to another pupil or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.
  - b. For purposes of this clause, “cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.
4. Notwithstanding subparagraphs (3) (a) and (b) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

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- u. A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (1).
  - v. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the School Director or designee's concurrence.
4. Non-Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students must be recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined pursuant to the procedures below that the pupil:
- a. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the School Director or designee's concurrence.
  - b. Brandished a knife at another person.
  - c. Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code Section 11053, et seq.
  - d. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault or committed a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900(n).

If it is determined by the Administrative Panel and/or Board of Directors that a student has brought a fire arm or destructive device, as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, on to campus or to have possessed a firearm or dangerous device on campus, the student shall be expelled for one year, pursuant to the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994. In such instances, the student shall be provided due process rights of notice and a hearing as required in this policy if the Board expels a student based upon a determination that he or she has brought a firearm or destructive device to RVC.

The term "firearm" means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device. Such term does not include an antique firearm.

The term "destructive device" means (A) any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, including but not limited to: (i) bomb, (ii) grenade, (iii) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (iv) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (v) mine, or (vi) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clauses.

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## **Suspension Procedure**

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

### **1. Conference**

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the School Director or the School Director's designee with the student and his or her parent and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or Charter School employee who referred the student to the School Director or designee.

The conference may be omitted if the School Director or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or Charter School personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the conference, the pupil shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action, and the evidence against him or her, and shall be given the opportunity to present his or her version and evidence in his or her defense, in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J)(i). This conference shall be held within two (2) school days, unless the pupil waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization. No penalties may be imposed on a pupil for failure of the pupil's parent or guardian to attend a conference with Charter School officials. Reinstatement of the suspended pupil shall not be contingent upon attendance by the pupil's parent or guardian at the conference.

### **2. Notice to Parents/Guardians**

At the time of the suspension, an administrator or designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension and the date of return following suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may also state the date and time when the student may return to school. If Charter School officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.

### **3. Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Expulsion**

Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension. Upon a recommendation of expulsion by the School Director or School Director's designee, the pupil and the pupil's parent/guardian or representative will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the pupil should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. In such instances when the Charter School has determined a suspension period shall be extended, such extension shall be made only after a conference is held with the pupil or the pupil's parents, unless the pupil and the pupil's parents fail to attend the conference.

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This determination will be made by the School Director or designee upon either of the following: 1) the pupil's presence will be disruptive to the education process; or 2) the pupil poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the pupil's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

### **4. Homework Assignment During Suspension**

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.2(a), upon the request of a parent, a legal guardian or other person holding the right to make education decisions for the pupil, or the affected pupil, a teacher shall provide to a pupil in any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, who has been suspended from school for two or more school days, the homework that the pupil would otherwise have been assigned.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.2(b), if a homework assignment that is requested pursuant to Section 47606.2(a) and turned into the teacher by the pupil either upon the pupil's return to school from suspension or within the timeframe originally prescribed by the teacher, whichever is later, is not graded before the end of the academic term, that assignment shall not be included in the calculation of the pupil's overall grade in the class.

### **Authority to Expel**

As required by Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J)(ii), students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer to determine whether the student should be expelled. The procedures herein provide for such a hearing and the notice of said hearing, as required by law.

A student may be expelled either by the neutral and impartial Charter School Board following a hearing before it or by the Charter School Board upon the recommendation of a neutral and impartial Administrative Panel to be assigned by the Board as needed. The Administrative Panel shall consist of at least three members who are certificated and neither a teacher of the pupil nor a Board member of the Charter School's Governing Board. Each entity shall be presided over by a designated neutral hearing chairperson. The Administrative Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense, and the Board of Directors shall make the final determination.

### **Expulsion Procedures**

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Unless postponed for good cause, the hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the School Director or designee determines that the pupil has committed an expellable offense.

In the event an Administrative Panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the Board for a final decision whether to expel. The hearing shall be held in closed session (complying with all pupil confidentiality rules under FERPA) unless the pupil makes a written request for a public hearing in open session three (3) days prior to the date of the scheduled hearing.

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Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Upon mailing the notice, it shall be deemed served upon the pupil. The notice shall include:

1. The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
2. A statement of the specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
3. A copy of the Charter School's disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;
4. Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at the Charter School to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;
5. The opportunity for the student and/or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel or a non-attorney advisor;
6. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
7. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
8. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

**Special Procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses**

The Charter School may, upon a finding of good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations that shall be examined only by the Charter School or the hearing officer. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, shall be made available to the pupil.

1. The complaining witness in any sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of his/her right to (a) receive five days' notice of his/her scheduled testimony, (b) have up to two (2) adult support persons of his/her choosing present in the hearing at the time he/she testifies, which may include a parent, guardian, or legal counsel, and (c) elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.
2. The Charter School must also provide the victim a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to, and during, breaks in testimony.



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3. At the discretion of the entity conducting the expulsion hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which he or she may leave the hearing room.
4. The entity conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
5. The entity conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours he/she is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the entity presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The entity conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany him or her to the witness stand.
7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, the Charter School must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the Charter School. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising his or her discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom he or she believes is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.
8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.
9. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in public at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have his/her testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are no alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing room by means of closed-circuit television.
10. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the entity conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstance can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person.

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Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

**Record of Hearing**

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

**Presentation of Evidence**

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense. Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay. Sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the Board or Administrative Panel determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

If, due to a written request by the expelled pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900, a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public.

The decision of the Administrative Panel shall be in the form of written findings of fact and a written recommendation (within 3 days of the hearing) to the Board who will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The final decision by the Board shall be made within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The decision of the Board is final.

If the Administrative Panel decides not to recommend expulsion, the pupil shall immediately be returned to his/her educational program.

**Written Notice to Expel**

The School Director or designee, following a decision of the Board to expel, shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the Board's adopted findings of fact, to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall also include the following: (a) Notice of the specific offense committed by the student; and (b) Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the Charter School.

The School Director or designee shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the authorizer. This notice shall include the following: (a) The student's name; and (b) The specific expellable offense committed by the student.

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### **Disciplinary Records**

The Charter School shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the Charter School. Such records shall be made available to the authorizer upon request.

### **No Right to Appeal**

The pupil shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from the Charter School as the Charter School Board's decision to expel shall be final.

### **Expelled Pupils/Alternative Education**

Parents/guardians of pupils who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including, but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence. The Charter School shall work cooperatively with parents/guardians as requested by parents/guardians or by the school district of residence to assist with locating alternative placements during expulsion.

### **Rehabilitation Plans**

Students who are expelled from the Charter School shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Board at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to the Charter School for readmission.

### **Readmission**

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school district or charter school shall be in the sole discretion of the Board following a meeting with the School Director or designee and the pupil and parent/guardian or representative to determine whether the pupil has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the pupil poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The School Director or designee shall make a recommendation to the Board following the meeting regarding his or her determination. The Board shall then make a final decision regarding readmission during a closed session of a public meeting, reporting out any action taken during closed session consistent with the requirements of the Brown Act. The pupil's readmission is also contingent upon the Charter School's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission.

### **Notice to Teachers**

The Charter School shall notify teachers of each pupil who has engaged in or is reasonably suspected to have engaged in any of the acts listed in Education Code Section 49079 and the corresponding enumerated offenses set forth above.

### **Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities**

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**1. Notification of SELPA**

The Charter School shall immediately notify the SELPA and coordinate the procedures in this policy with the SELPA of the discipline of any student with a disability or student who the Charter School or SELPA would be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability. The Charter School will also notify the SELPA of which it is a part of any suspension or expulsion.

**2. Services During Suspension**

Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year shall continue to receive services so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting (which could constitute a change of placement and the student's IEP would reflect this change), and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP/504 Plan; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

**3. Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination**

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP/504 Plan, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- a. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b. If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that either of the above is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP/504 Team shall:

- a. Conduct a functional behavioral assessment, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that the Charter School had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement;

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- b. If a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
- c. Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the Charter School agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and that the conduct in question was not a direct result of the failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan, then the Charter School may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

#### **4. Due Process Appeals**

The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or the Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request an expedited administrative hearing through the Special Education Unit of the Office of Administrative Hearings or by utilizing the dispute provisions of the 504 Policy and Procedures.

When an appeal relating to the placement of the student or the manifestation determination has been requested by either the parent or the Charter School, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer in accordance with state and federal law, including 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k), until the expiration of the forty-five (45) day time period provided for in an interim alternative educational setting, unless the parent and the Charter School agree otherwise.

In accordance with 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k)(3), if a parent/guardian disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or if the Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, the parent/guardian or Charter School may request a hearing.

In such an appeal, a hearing officer may: (1) return a child with a disability to the placement from which the child was removed; or (2) order a change in placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

#### **5. Special Circumstances**

Charter School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

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The School Director or designee may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability in cases where a student:

- a. Carries or possesses a weapon, as defined in 18 U.S.C. Section 930, to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function;
- b. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
- c. Has inflicted serious bodily injury, as defined by 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k)(7)(D), upon a person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

#### **6. Interim Alternative Educational Setting**

The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP/504 Team.

#### **7. Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services**

A student who has not been identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to IDEIA and who has violated the Charter School's disciplinary procedures may assert the procedural safeguards granted under this administrative regulation only if the Charter School had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred.

The Charter School shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if one of the following conditions exists:

- a. The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement, to Charter School supervisory or administrative personnel, or to one of the child's teachers, that the student is in need of special education or related services.
- b. The parent has requested an evaluation of the child.
- c. The child's teacher, or other Charter School personnel, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education or to other Charter School supervisory personnel.

If the Charter School knew or should have known the student had a disability under any of the three (3) circumstances described above, the student may assert any of the protections available to IDEIA-eligible children with disabilities, including the right to stay-put.

If the Charter School had no basis for knowledge of the student's disability, it shall proceed with the proposed discipline. The Charter School shall conduct an expedited

evaluation if requested by the parents; however, the student shall remain in the education placement determined by the Charter School pending the results of the evaluation.

The Charter School shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if the parent has not allowed an evaluation, refused services, or if the student has been evaluated and determined to not be eligible.

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## **ELEMENT 11 – RETIREMENT SYSTEMS**

**Governing Law:** The manner by which staff members of the charter schools will be covered by the State Teachers' Retirement System, the Public Employees' Retirement System, or federal social security. Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(K).

### **Compensation and Benefits**

Employees of RVC shall receive compensation packages which are competitive with what is offered by local school districts. A comprehensive health benefits package will be included as part of each full-time employee's compensation. Full-time is defined as any employee working 30 hours per week or more, but special allowances can be made for employees sharing a full time job. The health benefits of other full-time employees will be the same as the teachers.

### **Retirement**

RVC will make any contribution that is legally required of the employer, including STRS and federal social security.

All certificated employees of RVC will participate in the State Teachers' Retirement System (STRS). Employees will contribute the required employee percentage and RVC will contribute the employer's portion. All withholdings from employees and from RVC will be forwarded to the STRS fund as required. Employees will accumulate service credit years in the same manner as all other members of STRS.

All non-certificated employees will participate in federal social security.

The School Director is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements for retirement coverage have been made.

RVC retains the option for its Board of Directors to elect for RVC to participate in additional retirement system(s) in the future, should it find that participation enables the school to attract and retain a high quality staff.



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**ELEMENT 12 – PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE  
ALTERNATIVES**

Governing Law: The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools. Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(L).

No student may be required to attend the Charter School. Students who reside within the District who choose not to attend the Charter School may attend school within the District according to District policy or at another school district or school within the District or outside the District through the District's intra- and inter-district transfer policies. Parents and guardians of each student enrolled in the Charter School will be informed on admissions forms that students have no right to admission in a particular school of a local education agency as a consequence of enrollment in the Charter School, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency.

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### **ELEMENT 13 – EMPLOYEE RETURN RIGHTS**

**Governing Law:** The rights of an employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter school. Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(M).

No public school district employee shall be required to work at Ross Valley Charter. Employees of the District who choose to leave the employment of the District to work at the Charter School will have no automatic rights of return to the District after employment by the Charter School unless specifically granted by the District through a leave of absence or other agreement. Charter School employees shall have any right upon leaving the District to work in the Charter School that the District may specify, any rights of return to employment in a school district after employment in the Charter School that the District may specify, and any other rights upon leaving employment to work in the Charter School that the District determines to be reasonable and not in conflict with any law.

Newly hired teachers will not be guaranteed rights to years of service credit and sick leave credit from their prior employer. Employment by the Charter School provides no rights of employment at any other entity, including any rights in the case of closure of the Charter School.

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## **ELEMENT 14 – DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

**Governing Law:** The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the chartering authority to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter. Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(N).

The Charter School recognizes that it cannot bind the authorizer to a dispute resolution procedure to which the authorizer does not agree. The following policy is intended as a starting point for a discussion of dispute resolution procedures. The Charter School is willing to consider changes to the process outlined below as suggested by the authorizer.

The Charter School and the authorizer will be encouraged to attempt to resolve any disputes with the authorizer amicably and reasonably without resorting to formal procedures.

In the event of a dispute between the Charter School and the authorizer, the Charter School and the authorizer agree to first frame the issue in a letter (dispute statement) and to refer the issue to the authorizer Superintendent and School Director of the Charter School, or their respective designees. In the event that the authorizer Board of Education believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter in accordance with Education Code Section 47607, the Charter School requests that this shall be noted in the written dispute statement, although it recognizes it cannot legally bind the authorizer to do so. However, participation in the dispute resolution procedures outlined in this section shall not be interpreted to impede or act as a pre-requisite to the authorizer's ability to proceed with revocation in accordance with Education Code Section 47607 and its implementing regulations.

The Superintendent, or designee, and School Director, or designee, shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute, not later than five (5) business days from receipt of the dispute statement. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, both parties shall identify two Board members from their respective boards who shall jointly meet with the Superintendent, or designee, and School Director, or designee, and attempt to resolve the dispute within fifteen (15) business days from receipt of the dispute statement.

If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, and the full Charter School Board agrees that mediation is an appropriate next step, the Superintendent and School Director, or their respective designees, shall meet to jointly identify a neutral third party mediator to engage the parties in a mediation session designed to facilitate resolution of the dispute. The format of the mediation session shall be developed jointly by the Superintendent and School Director, or their respective designees. Mediation shall be held within sixty (60) business days of receipt of the dispute statement. The costs of the mediator may be split equally between the authorizer and the Charter School. If mediation does not resolve the dispute either party may pursue any other remedy available under the law. All timelines and procedures in this section may be revised upon mutual written agreement of the authorizer and the Charter School.

If the State Board of Education authorizes the RVC charter, and requires the statements below to be affirmed, RVC shall:

- Recognize that, because it is not an LEA, the SBE may choose to resolve a dispute directly instead of pursuing the dispute resolution process specified in the charter, provided that

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if the SBE intends to resolve a dispute directly instead of pursuing the dispute resolution process specified in the charter, it must first hold a public hearing to consider arguments for and against the direct resolution of the dispute instead of pursuing the dispute resolution process specified in the charter.

- Recognize that if the substance of a dispute is a matter that could result in the taking of appropriate action, including, but not limited to, revocation of the charter in accordance with EC Section 47604.5, the matter will be addressed at the SBE's discretion in accordance with that provision of law and any regulations pertaining thereto.
- Recognize that the SBE cannot be pre-bound to a contractual obligation to split the costs of mediation or agree to mediation to resolve disputes.

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## **ELEMENT 15 – CLOSURE PROCEDURES**

**Governing Law:** The procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the charter school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the charter school, including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records. Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(O).

Closure of the Charter School will be documented by official action of the Board of Directors. The action will identify the reason for closure. The official action will also identify an entity and person or persons responsible for closure-related activities.

The Charter School will promptly notify parents and students of the Charter School, the Marin County Office of Education, the State Board of Education, the Charter School's SELPA, the retirement systems in which the Charter School's employees participate (e.g., State Teachers' Retirement System, and federal social security), and the California Department of Education of the closure as well as the effective date of the closure. This notice will also include the name(s) of and contact information for the person(s) to whom reasonable inquiries may be made regarding the closure; the pupils' school districts of residence; and the manner in which parents/guardians may obtain copies of pupil records, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements.

The Charter School will ensure that the notification to the parents and students of the Charter School of the closure provides information to assist parents and students in locating suitable alternative programs. This notice will be provided promptly following the Board's decision to close the Charter School.

The Charter School will also develop a list of pupils in each grade level and the classes they have completed, together with information on the pupils' districts of residence, which they will provide to the entity responsible for closure-related activities.

As applicable, the Charter School will provide parents, students and the District with copies of all appropriate student records and will otherwise assist students in transferring to their next school. All transfers of student records will be made in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. The Charter School will ask the CDE to store original records of Charter School students. All student records of the Charter School shall be transferred to the CDE upon Charter School closure. If the CDE cannot store the records, the Charter School shall work with the CDE to determine a suitable alternative location for storage.

All state assessment results, special education records, and personnel records will be transferred to and maintained by the entity responsible for closure-related activities in accordance with applicable law.

As soon as reasonably practical, the Charter School will prepare final financial records. The Charter School will also have an independent audit completed by December 15<sup>th</sup> of the year of closure, or within six months of the closure date, whichever is earlier. The Charter School will pay for the final audit. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant selected by the Charter School and will be provided to the District promptly upon its completion.

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The final audit will include an accounting of all financial assets, including cash and accounts receivable and an inventory of property, equipment, and other items of material value, an accounting of the liabilities, including accounts payable and any reduction in apportionments as a result of audit findings or other investigations, loans, and unpaid staff compensation, and an assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to the Charter School.

The Charter School will complete and file any annual reports required pursuant to Education Code section 47604.33. All academic reporting will be completed.

On closure of the Charter School, all assets of the Charter School, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property and all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by students attending the Charter School, remain the sole property of the nonprofit public benefit corporation and, upon the dissolution of the non-profit public benefit corporation, shall be distributed in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation. Any assets acquired from the District or District property will be promptly returned upon Charter School closure to the District. The distribution shall include return of any grant funds and restricted categorical funds to their source in accordance with the terms of the grant or state and federal law, as appropriate, which may include submission of final expenditure reports for entitlement grants and the filing of any required Final Expenditure Reports and Final Performance Reports, as well as the return of any donated materials and property in accordance with any conditions established when the donation of such materials or property was accepted.

On closure, the Charter School shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of the Charter School.

As the Charter School is operated as a non-profit public benefit corporation, should the corporation dissolve with the closure of the Charter School, the Board will follow the procedures set forth in the California Corporations Code for the dissolution of a non-profit public benefit corporation and file all necessary filings with the appropriate state and federal agencies.

As specified by the budget in Appendix E, the Charter School will utilize the reserve fund to undertake any expenses associated with the closure procedures identified above.

## **MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

### **Budget and Financial Reporting**

Governing Law: The petitioner or petitioners also shall be required to provide financial statements that include a proposed first-year operational budget, including startup costs, and cash flow and financial projections for the first three years of operation. Education Code Section 47605(h).

Attached, as Appendix E, please find the following documents:

- Financial forecast narrative identifying and explaining assumptions
- A projected six year budget and financial projection.
- A projected five year cash-flow

These documents are based upon the best data available to the petitioners at this time.

The Charter School shall provide reports to the chartering authority and County Superintendent of Schools as follows in accordance with Education Code Section 47604.33, and shall provide additional fiscal reports as requested by the Chartering Authority:

1. By July 1, a preliminary budget for the current fiscal year.
2. By July 1, an annual update required pursuant to Education Code Section 47606.5.
3. By December 15, an interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through October 31. Additionally, on December 15, a copy of the Charter School's annual, independent financial audit report for the preceding fiscal year shall be delivered to the chartering authority, State Controller, California Department of Education and County Superintendent of Schools.
4. By March 15, a second interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through January 31.
5. By September 15, a final unaudited report for the full prior year. The report submitted to the chartering authority shall include an annual statement of all the Charter School's receipts and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year.

The Charter School shall provide reporting to the CDE as required by law and as requested by the CDE including, but not limited to, the following: California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), actual Average Daily Attendance reports, all financial reports required by Education Code Sections 47604.33 and 47605(m), the School Accountability Report Card (SARC), and the LCAP.

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## **Insurance**

The Charter School has acquired and financed general liability, workers compensation, and other necessary insurance of the types and in the amounts required for an enterprise of similar purpose and circumstance, including, for example, errors and omissions, fidelity bond, sexual molestation and abuse coverage, and employment practices legal liability. Coverage amounts are based on recommendations provided by the authorizer and the Charter School's insurer. The authorizer is named as an additional insured on all policies of the Charter School. The Charter School can provide evidence of the above insurance coverage to the authorizing agency.

The Charter School has the following insurance policies:

1. Commercial General Liability, including Fire Legal Liability, coverage of \$5,000,000 per Occurrence and in the Aggregate.
2. Workers' Compensation Insurance in accordance with provisions of the California Labor Code adequate to protect Charter School from claims that may arise from its operations pursuant to the Workers' Compensation Act (Statutory Coverage). The Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage must also include Employers Liability coverage with limits of \$1,000,000/\$1,000,000/\$1,000,000.
3. Commercial Auto Liability, including Owned, Leased, Hired, and Non-owned, coverage with limits of \$1,000,000 Combined Single Limit per Occurrence.
4. Crime Insurance or Fidelity Bond coverage shall be maintained by Charter School to cover all Charter School employees who handle, process or otherwise have responsibility for Charter School funds, supplies, equipment or other assets. Minimum amount of coverage shall be \$50,000 per occurrence, with no self-insured retention.
5. Professional Educators Errors and Omissions liability coverage with minimum limits of \$3,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 general aggregate.
6. Sexual Molestation and Abuse coverage with minimum limits of \$3,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 general aggregate. Coverage may be held as a separate policy or included by endorsement in the Commercial General Liability or the Errors and Omissions Policy.
7. Employment Practices Legal Liability coverage with limits of \$3,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 general aggregate.
8. Excess/umbrella insurance with limits of not less than \$10,000,000 is required of all high schools and any other school that participates in competitive interscholastic or intramural sports programs.



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## **Administrative Services**

**Governing Law:** The manner in which administrative services of the charter school are to be provided. Education Code Section 47605(h).

For the past three years, RVC has been using EdTec to provide accounts payable, accounting, payroll, and CDE student reporting services.

EdTec is a social venture founded in 2001 to develop, support, and advance quality charter schools. EdTec has built an excellent reputation throughout California among charter schools and their authorizers for providing the highest quality business services and operations support. EdTec's team provides expertise and support to more than 350 charter schools across a comprehensive range of services.

EdTec's economies of scale deliver experienced personnel specializing in various areas of school finance and operations, including budgeting, cash flows and forecasts, accounting, payroll, accounts payable, financial reporting, compliance management and the development of benchmarks and best practices.

Starting in the year 2021-22, RVC is contracting with EdTec to provide the additional services of budgeting, cash flows, forecasting, financial reporting and compliance management.

For its first four years, RVC has relied on the voluntary services of its Business Official to provide these financial and compliance management functions.<sup>50</sup> The first two annual, independent financial audits of RVC have identified no findings.

RVC has an Employee Handbook, included in Appendix F, that addresses employment matters. RVC tracks the hiring process and personnel requirements at the school level (primarily managed by the School Director and Office Manager). Fingerprinting is tracked by the Board Chair and School Director.

When selecting a vendor or program, we get recommendations from other charter schools and charter organizations. We also ask other local school districts, as appropriate. We evaluate the services provided as to whether they will meet our identified needs at a cost we can afford, and often discuss options with appropriate staff and teachers, before bringing the final recommendation to the board for adoption. When required or necessary, we ask for proposals and bids.

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<sup>50</sup> See Budget Narrative, page 9, in Appendix E for qualifications and background of the Business Official.

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## Authorizer Oversight

Pursuant to California law, the authorizer will be required to provide oversight and performance monitoring services, including monitoring school and student performance data, reviewing the Charter School’s audit reports, performing annual site visits, engaging in any necessary dispute resolution processes, and considering charter amendment and renewal requests. In accordance with Education Code Section 47613(a), the authorizer may charge for the actual costs of supervisorial oversight of the Charter School not to exceed one (1) percent of the revenue of the Charter School. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47613(f), “revenue of the charter school” is defined as the amount received in the current fiscal from the local control funding formula calculated pursuant to Education Code Section 42238.02, as implemented by Education Code Section 42238.03.

## Contracted Services

RVC is contemplating contracting for the services listed below. The Governing Board will be considering the possible providers listed. All these services are included in the 3-year budget in Appendix E. The RVC Governing Board has adopted a Conflict of Interest Code which is included in Appendix D of this petition. This Code will be followed in evaluating and selecting all contract services and developing all contracts.

<b>Object Code</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Service Provider</b>
2200	Counseling 2 hours per week	We contract this service from a local County provider or a public or private licensed provider who may supply us with an intern
3400	Health Insurance for Employees	CharterSafe.
5450	Liability Insurance	CharterSafe.
5535	Utilities: Gas, Electric, Water, Sewer, Garbage	We have set up our own accounts with these utility providers.
5605	Copier Lease	We contract with Ray Morgan to provide this service.
5615	Building Repair and Maintenance	We select providers to do this work as a professional service.

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<b>Object Code</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Service Provider</b>
5803	Auditing Services	The Board annually selects an audit firm from the state certified list to provide this service.
5808	Banking Services	Westamerica Bank
5812	Business Services including accounting, payroll, A/R, financial reporting to Board, district, county, and state	EdTec for accounting, payroll, AP, and student attendance reporting services. Starting in 2021-22 Edtec will also provide financial reporting and budgeting and compliance management.
5836	Fingerprinting Services	No contracted vendor, but through available and approved providers in Marin County
5845	Legal Services	Young, Minney and Corr, LLP.
5863	Professional Development Services	PD is provided by different vendors who are selected based on our needs and their capabilities.
5872	Special Education Services	RVC employs a certificated special education teacher and a speech therapy teacher. We contract for specialized special ed services, like occupational therapy and psychological testing services from state certified providers.
5880	Student Health Services	We contract these services from a health services vendor.
5881	Data Services	School Information System accounting software is provided by School Pathways.
5887	Technology Services	We contract with a local technology support provider. Our device and infrastructure setup is constructed so that 95% of support can be done remotely.

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<b>Object Code</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Service Provider</b>
5910	Internet and Telephone Services	Comcast internet and Crexendo voice over internet telephone service.

## Facilities

**Governing Law:** The facilities to be used by the charter school. The description of the facilities to be used by the charter school shall specify where the charter school intends to locate. Education Code Section 47605(h).

RVC currently is renting a former Catholic school at St. Rita Parish at 102 Marinda Drive, Fairfax, CA 94930 under a 5-year lease (through June 2024) with a 4-year option at lessee's option. RVC is leasing 16,700 square feet – 88% of the site – including eleven (11) classrooms and considerable space for administration and student support services. There is also a multipurpose room that the school uses for school events and weekly gatherings, and two large outdoor play areas. The Charter School is located across the street from a public library, which classes use regularly.

## Free and Reduced Price Meals

Ross Valley Charter provides Free and Reduced Price Meal services.

## Potential Civil Liability Effects and Impact on Authorizer

**Governing Law:** Potential civil liability effects, if any, upon the charter school and upon the school district. Education Code Section 47605(h).

RVC is operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 23701(d).

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(d), an authority that grants a charter to a charter school operated by or as a non-profit public benefit corporation shall not be liable for the debts or obligations of the charter school or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors or omissions by the charter school if the authority has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law. The Charter School shall work diligently to assist the Authorizer in meeting any and all oversight obligations under the law, including monthly meetings, reporting, or other Authorizer-requested protocol to ensure the Authorizer shall not be liable for the operation of the Charter School.

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Further, the Charter School and the Authorizer shall enter into a memorandum of understanding, wherein the Charter School shall indemnify the Authorizer for the actions of the Charter School under this charter.

The corporate bylaws of the Charter School shall provide for indemnification of the Charter School's Board, officers, agents, and employees, and the Charter School has general liability insurance, Board Members and Officers insurance, and fidelity bonding to secure against financial risks.

As stated above, insurance amounts will be determined by recommendation of the Authorizer and the Charter School's insurance company for schools of similar size, location, and student population. The Authorizer shall be named an additional insured on the general liability insurance of the Charter School.

The Charter School Board will develop, publish, and institute appropriate risk management practices as discussed herein, including screening of employees, establishing codes of conduct for students, and dispute resolution. These will be published as Charter Policies as well as included in parent, student, and employee handbooks.

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**CONCLUSION**

By approving this charter, the authorizer will be fulfilling the intent of the California Legislature in adopting the Charter Schools Act of 1992 to, among other objectives:

- Improve pupil learning;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers; and
- Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities available within the public school system.

Ross Valley Charter is successfully educating students and has experienced and motivated teachers, parents eager to enroll their children, community support, a viable budget, and a proven philosophy and educational program.

The Petitioners have demonstrated their ability to function independently, yet also to work cooperatively with the authorizer to establish the highest bar for what a charter school can and should be. To this end, the Petitioners would be pleased to work with the authorizer to answer any questions regarding this petition for charter renewal and to enable the authorizer to approve the requested charter proposal with a five-year term from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2026.