



A California Public Charter School

Renewal Petition 2014–2019

Submitted to the Mountain Empire Unified School District Board of Trustees

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## ASSURANCES

This form is intended to be signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant and submitted with the full application. As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter for San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools to be located in Oceanside and Chula Vista, CA is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that this application does not constitute the conversion of a private school to the status of a public charter school; and further I understand that if awarded a charter, the school:

1. Will meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code §60605, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(c)(1)]
2. Will be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Act (Chapter 10.7 (commencing with §3540) of Division 4 of Title 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code.1 [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(O)]
3. Will be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(d)(1)]
4. Will not charge tuition. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(d)(1)]
5. Will admit all students who wish to attend the school, and who submit a timely application, unless the school receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case each applicant will be given equal chance of admission through a random lottery process. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(d)(2)(B)]

6. Will not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnic background, national origin, gender, or disability. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(d)(1)]

7. Will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, that are applicable to it. .

8. Will meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary. [Ref. Criteria for Review, §11967.5.1(f)(5)]

9. Will ensure that teachers in the school hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools are required to hold. As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to non-core, non-college preparatory teachers. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(l)]

10. Will at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.

11. Will follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the charter school

## **FOUNDING GROUP**

San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools (SDNH) is a cooperative between credentialed teachers and the community members who have chosen homeschooling as the model for instruction of their children in the Common Core State Standards. The founding group for SDNH have come together with the intent of connecting local communities, credentialed teachers, and enrolled homeschooling families through face-to-face interaction and organized strategically planned and implemented programs and events. SDNH students and their families receive credentialed-teacher support for personalizing curriculum to fit the students' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), special education goals, and learning management needs focused to maintain high academic achievement. SDNH serves students in grades K-12 throughout San Diego and adjacent counties. SDNH founders have specifically designed the SDNH program to include small urban and suburban neighborhood resource centers, each with approximately fifty or fewer students.

**Salvador León, Lead Petitioner, Director, San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools**, has a Bachelor of Science in Education and Masters of Art Degree in Education. Mr. León has twenty years of classroom teaching experience in Texas, New Mexico and in San Diego, Ca. In 1996-97 Mr. León was selected as a Technology Consultant for (R.E.T.A.) the Regional Education Technical Assistance Initiative. The initiative was a collaboration effort between N.M.S.U., U.N.M., The New Mexico Department of Education and Los Alamos National Laboratory. He has published articles at NMSU for The New Mexico Department of Education. "Technology for Teachers by Teachers " and " Technical Assistance for Teachers By Teachers." In 2001-2002 he was the Director of Vista Literacy Academy Charter School and supervised the implementation of the Dual Language Program. Mr. León has developed five web sites during his educational

career and innovatively created Electronic Portfolios for students. He is currently completing his tenth year as a consultant for a charter homeschool in San Diego.



## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools (herein known as SDNH) is a new and attractive choice for excellent personalized learning in partnership with credentialed teachers within the neighborhoods of San Diego (or San Diego County). SDNH students receive individual attention and benefit from a high standard of Personalized Learning excellence. SDNH students benefit from top-quality curriculum that combines the best in print, research, real experience and technology designed to meet all California Content Standards. Each student has a Personalized Learning Plan and a highly qualified California-certified teacher working collaboratively with a curriculum specialist to tailor the curriculum to meet that student's individual learning needs.

San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools (SDNH) is a cooperative between credentialed teachers and the community members who have chosen homeschooling as the model for instruction of their children in the Common Core State Standards. Shared-leadership model of government at SDNH improves upon traditional top down authoritarian “principal-ship” models



that fit more with the traditional classroom model of schooling. The strong personal/professional relationships forged by credentialed teachers, parent(s) and students in the SDNH model create an administrative atmosphere, in which such a triad can flourish and create a stable, accountable, and successful teaching and learning community. As such, SDNH connects local communities, credentialed teachers, and enrolled homeschooling families through face-to-face interaction and organized strategically planned and implemented programs and events. SDNH students and their families receive credentialed-teacher support for personalizing curriculum to fit the students' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), special education goals, and learning management needs focused to maintain high academic achievement. SDNH serves students in grades K-12 throughout San Diego and adjacent counties, beginning with up to 102 K-12 students during the 2013-2014 school year with planned growth to allow enrollment of future students. Keeping the school sites small is imperative and as growth increases the size of each site, SDNH opens a new site to allow steady, supported growth and appropriate accountability and student achievement.

SDNH's philosophy is that children learn best in a safe, positive environment in which they are respected, accepted, valued, nurtured as unique individuals, and challenged to achieve their full potential with personal accountability and responsibility for their choices in learning. SDNH operates from the perspective that students learn best when their teaching and learning strategies and program are individually suited to the student's unique strengths and are designed to strengthen areas of where the student is weak. Such teaching and learning has as its heart dedicated and caring families, working collaboratively with equally dedicated and caring professionally trained educators who are each committed to student success and apply research-based teaching and learning strategies.

At the center of instruction at SDNH is the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), a written document agreed upon by the credentialed teacher and the parent(s), which provides for teacher-created, individualized instruction,

tailored to the learning needs of each child. The PLP is an extensive document developed at the beginning of the school year by the California-credentialed teacher in consultation with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardians and modified at the regular consultation as a teaching and learning record. This Personalized Learning Plan is built by the credentialed teacher from a combination of baseline assessments of both academic skills/knowledge and learning modalities, information gathered from the parent(s)s, and input directly from the student. Learning needs that go beyond the purely academic (such as study habits, interpersonal skills and emotional fluency) are addressed in the Personalized Learning Plan as well.

The PLP then guides the student's course through the California Content Standards-based SDNH curriculum. We believe that the SDNH program provides a higher degree of program customization than any public school operating today.

SDNH's program strengthens "the learning triad" used by other personalized learning programs to provide support for the student's Personalized Learning Plan by SDNH's emphasis on the credentialed teachers' expertise in teaching and learning strategies and the parent(s)s'/guardians' contribution of invaluable input on the learning styles and personality of the student. SDNH relies on parent(s)-to-credentialed teacher relationships to forge strong enough ties to create the delicate balance of this stronger triad to ensure a team effort with the same goal of student achievement. The student, parent(s), and teacher have distinct roles in the SDNH triad, and the roles are well defined and considered of equal value.

The parent(s) role at SDNH is a definitive and essential part of the SDNH teaching and learning concept. SDNH provides parent(s)s with one-on-one modeling of effective strategies of teaching and assessment. The important relationships forged create the network of trust and confidence in each other that allows successful, ongoing training and support. Technology provides ongoing, daily available input and interaction regarding the teaching and learning of the students at SDNH. From informal assessments to electronic reporting of achievement, SDNH's program supports parent(s)s, students and credentialed-teachers in maintaining professional records of assessment,

creating anecdotal learning records, and other forms of recording student achievement, plans and program adjustments.

Credentialed teachers at SDNH prepare personalized curriculum for the students as well as provide one-on-one parent(s)-guidance and training for effective delivery of instructional plans and strategies in the student's ZPD using research-based teaching and learning methodologies. Keeping the student in his or her ZPD while addressing grade level Common Core State Standards, parent(s) participation in direct instructional delivery, and high quality credentialed teacher planning and implementation make SDNH unique in the personalized learning community. SDNH partners with existing neighborhood community resources to enrich the immediate learning of the student and connect the student and his or her family to a variety of community resources as a way of encouraging lifelong academic achievement and meaningful community involvement as a life style.

SDNH's goal is student achievement. SDNH students will advance in their ZPD in the core subjects of literacy (reading/language arts), mathematics, science, social studies and healthy lifestyles through a challenging curriculum designed for mastery of the Common Core State Standards. SDNH will prepare students to demonstrate excellent academic growth on the California state assessments as well as other personalized measures. SDNH will provide opportunities for students to advance in California frameworks in Visual and Performing Arts and Physical Education and values these subjects as supportive means of enhancing of the core subjects, as well as having value in and of themselves as enrichment of student learning.

SDNH has established the following expected school-wide learning results (ESLRs):

Students will incrementally increase their zones of proximal development

Students will become critical thinkers and problem solvers

Students will actively participate in constructing their own learning

Students will be engaged in meaningful community service

The target population of SDNH consists of students who may be performing well above or well below grade level in one or more subjects, so the use of API scores may not give a clear picture of the success of students at SDNH. Personalized learning models, as in the one SDNH employs, also call for the use of additional multiple assessments such as: credentialed teacher observations, parent input, student participation in consultations, work completion, and other measures as deemed appropriate. SDNH will assess individual student growth each year by portfolio review.

The school's goal is for each student to achieve their grade level of learning or to their capacity as measured by the above noted methods. However, SDNH understands that remediation may also require much more than a year's worth of growth in a year's time in some cases. Because every student will have a personalized learning plan, the parent, student and teacher will design and implement a learning format to advance the student appropriately. Successful completion of the personalized learning plan constitutes a successful year for the student individually and the school collectively.

## **2. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM**

### **A. MISSION**

San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools is comprised of neighborhood based chartered home schools focused on credentialed teacher led, parent(s) supervised learning based on K-12 Common Core State Standards,

It is the mission of SDNH for the school, the family and the community to become the catalyst for student growth and learning through the use of local community resources, technology, and tutoring. SDNH charter was created to help strengthen neighborhood goals for education through quality home school support.

To accomplish this mission, every SDNH student has a Personalized Learning Plan and an entire team of experts (including a Parent(s) or parent(s) designee, a California-credentialed teacher, and multiple curriculum specialists) committed to the student's academic success. SDNH plans for each student to receive personalized instruction in his or her ZPD in the skills and areas of learning of the Common Core State Standards, for Grades K-12.

SDNH intends to provide services for parents and students who are currently using the homeschool model. It is not our goal to market the homeschool model to students those who are succeeding in the traditional classroom environment. By helping homeschool families SDNH hopes to fill academic needs, which will benefit traditional school districts, should a student of our school move into the traditional classroom setting.

## B. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

SDNH believes that children in the 21st century must become literate and articulate, mathematically competent, and scientifically and technologically adept as well as be well-rounded involved community members in a multicultural environment. In order to promote enthusiasm and excitement for the lifelong process of learning, SDNH provides each student a curriculum that is relevant, integrated, age-appropriate, supportive of English language fluency, emotional intelligence, technological literacy, and that fosters collaborative relationships and service to the greater community. All students deserve a safe, intimate teaching and learning environment that is sensitive to their cultural heritage and primary language, while acquiring proficient English language skills, provides technological resources, and brings the family, the teacher and the community together to support life-long learning.

The target population of SDNH consists of students who may be performing well above or well below grade level in one or more subjects, so the use of API scores may not give a clear picture of the success of students at SDNH. Personalized learning models, as in the one SDNH employs, also call for the

use of additional multiple assessments such as: credentialed teacher observations, parent input, student participation in consultations, work completion, and other measures as deemed appropriate.

The school's goal is for each student to meet grade level achievement or beyond as measured by the above noted methods. However, SDNH understands that remediation may require much more than a year's worth of growth in a year's time in some cases. Because every student will have a personalized learning plan, the parent, student and teacher will design and implement a learning format to advance the student appropriately. Successful completion of the personalized learning plan constitutes a successful year for the student individually and the school collectively.

The target high school population for SDNH is students who are academically low achieving and who, due to issues of English acquisition, bullying, low self esteem, and health issues are at risk of dropping out of formal education.

SDNH philosophy is that students learn best in a safe, positive environment in which they are respected, accepted, valued, nurtured as unique individuals, and challenged to achieve their full potential with personal accountability and responsibility for their choices in learning. SDNH operates from the perspective that students learn best when their teaching and learning strategies and program are individually suited to the student's unique strengths and are designed to strengthen areas of where the student is weak. Such teaching and learning has as its heart dedicated and caring families, working collaboratively with equally dedicated and caring professionally trained educators who are each committed to student success and apply research-based teaching and learning strategies.

At the center of instruction at SDNH is the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), a written, agreed upon document created by the credentialed teacher, which provides for teacher-created, individualized instruction, tailored to the learning needs of each child. The PLP is an extensive document developed at the beginning of the school year by the California-credentialed teacher in consultation with the student and the student's Parent(s)/guardians and

modified at the regular consultation as a teaching and learning record. This Personalized Learning Plan is built by the credentialed teacher from a combination of baseline assessments of both academic skills/knowledge and learning modalities, information gathered from the parent(s)s, and input directly from the student. Learning needs that go beyond the purely academic (such as study habits and interpersonal skills) are addressed in the Personalized Learning Plan as well.

The PLP then guides the student's course through the Common Core State Standards, San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools curriculum. We believe that the SDNH program provides a higher degree of program customization than any public school operating today.

SDNH's program strengthens "the learning triad" used by other personalized learning programs to provide support for the student's Personalized Learning Plan by SDNH's emphasis on the credentialed teachers' expertise in teaching and learning strategies and the parent(s)s'/ guardians' contribution of invaluable input on the learning styles and personality of the student. SDNH relies on parent(s)-to-credentialed teacher relationships to forge strong enough ties to create the delicate balance of this stronger triad to ensure a team effort with the same goal of student achievement. The student, parent(s), and teacher have distinct roles in the SDNH triad, and the roles are well defined and considered of equal value.

The parent(s) role at SDNH is a definitive and essential part of the SDNH teaching and learning concept. SDNH provides parent(s)s with one-on-one modeling of effective strategies of teaching and assessing. The important relationships forged create the network of trust and confidence in each other that allows successful, ongoing training and support. Technology provides ongoing, daily available input and interaction regarding the teaching and learning of the students at SDNH. From informal assessments to electronic reporting of achievement, SDNH's program supports parent(s)s, students and credentialed-teachers in maintaining professional records of assessment, creating anecdotal learning records, and other forms of recording student achievement, plans and program adjustments.

## C. SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Personalized learning models, as in the one SDNH employs, call for the use of additional multiple assessments such as: credentialed teacher observations, parent input, student participation in consultations, work completion, and other measures as deemed appropriate. SDNH will assess individual student growth each year by portfolio review.

Personalized scope and sequence is created by assessing individual learning and developing a program that guides the curriculum at the student's own pace, yet with an overall goal of attaining at least grade level proficiency.

Because every student will have a personalized learning plan, the parent, student and teacher will design and implement a learning format to advance the student appropriately. Successful completion of the personalized learning plan constitutes a successful year for the student individually and the school collectively.

While the curriculum of SDNH is the K-12 Common Core State Standards, support material for these standards will include state adopted texts, online video courses such as Time4Learning, Aleks.com math, technology based courses such as Teaching Textbooks, vendor course instruction such as Rosetta Stone language programs, teacher designed courses, community college or vocational courses as appropriate, and other educational options.

**Primary (K-2)** – Gaining basic literacy in math and language arts will be the primary goal for the K-2 grade level student. Assessment, personalized learning plan, evaluation of completed assignments, field trips, social group activities and other teaching and learning strategies. The Common Core State Standards for K-2 grades comprise the curriculum for these grade levels.

**Intermediate (3-5)** – Building upon the foundation created during primary education (or providing remediation as needed) in grades 3-5 Common Core State Standards, formalize learning and help cement basic literacy and math skills. Science, social studies and visual and performing arts are important curriculum components. These subjects help expand understanding and



proficiency in language arts and math by creating relevant application of the ability to read, write, perform mathematical computation and apply mathematic reasoning.

**Middle School (6-8)** – A time of transition between childhood and young adulthood, the SDNH middle school curriculum is based on the Common Core State Standards, while taking the shifting emotional and logical development of each child into consideration. In the middle grades maturity levels of the students vary and may create divergent level of academic acquisition. Personalized learning allows the teacher and parent to balance accountability with understanding in a way that encourages achievement and supports emotional development.

**High School (9-12)** – High school is a time of preparation for higher education and/or specialized training as well as a time to help students become ready to enter the workforce and become responsible citizens of the community, the country and the world. High school students will choose between the four-year U.C college track or the school to career track, which will determine the number and types of courses they will be required to complete. Personalized learning will allow the teacher, parent and student to choose from core curriculum courses and required electives or to create specific core courses and required electives that meet the Common Core State Standards, and frameworks. Other electives will be designed to promote learning and accountability and to include the required number of hours of educational engagement. The transition into adulthood necessitates increased accountability and responsibility.

#### D. STUDENTS TO BE SERVED

While the quality alternative program SDNH provides benefits any child with a research-based alternative to the traditional education program delivered in a classroom and large-group setting. These children include those from families that choose direct involvement in their education or who have opted for a multiple-learning environment; children who are homebound due to illness or disability; "exceptional" children who are far ahead of or far behind their peers in school; young people pursuing artistic or athletic careers that require a flexible school schedule; students in group

homes or institutions; families seeking a safer environment for student learning, and students at risk of academic failure who particularly may benefit from intensive, personalized instruction in their ZPD for maximum instructional impact. Following the Common Core State Standards for Grades K-12, SDNH credentialed teachers create personalized assignments from state-adopted textbooks and online resources including publisher such as Glencoe, McGraw-Hill, Pearson, Prentice Hall, California Department of Education (CDE), San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE), and others. SDNH balances the alignment of these assignments with the Common Core State Standards resulting in personalization of a rigorous academic program to keep the student in his or her ZPD as he or she develops a sufficient understanding of grade level standards to successfully advance to the next grade level.

## E. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

The SDNH curriculum and instructional program emphasizes:

**Core subjects:** Mastery of the Common Core State Standards, for Grades K-12 in contents areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies is an imbedded goal for each SDNH student. Along with the Common Core State Standards core curriculum subjects, SDNH emphasizes academic English language acquisition, technological literacy, and the triad relationship between parent(s)/student, credentialed teacher, and members of the local community.

**Learning and assessment skills:** SDNH students instructional plans will include the development of learning skills required for lifelong, continuous learning in communication, information, problem-solving, and on-going personal development programs.

**Academic English Language Acquisition:** SDNH's program integrates researched-based curriculum for English Language Learners utilizing the collaborative support by a triad created by the teacher, the family, and the local community to provide a successful alternative to the traditional

education choices available. To assist the student in achieving English language fluency, SDNH provides textbooks, including Common Core State Standards textbooks, and technological resources in both English and the student's primary language in order to guide the student from basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) to cognitive academic language proficiency (CALPS). Full academic acquisition of the English language may take from seven to ten years for some. According to Jim Cummings' (1981) theory of common underlying proficiency (CUP) between two languages, students who learn in their first language will transfer that learning into their second language. For this reason, SDNH provides personalized and strategically scaffolded instruction in the student's ZPD, in either or both languages, to promote academic achievement (CALPS) while the student continues to develop English fluency.

**Technology Literacy:** SDNH students will develop proficiency in an array of digital information and communication tools. SDNH takes teaching and learning into the community and world at large while maintaining the skills and ability to learn in a traditional approach. SDNH's program uses technology as an integral part of teaching and learning and through technology also integrates student involvement in the community, with parent(s) and peers. SDNH also provide students, parent(s) and teachers with a technologically current platform for ongoing archiving of assessments, work samples and conversation notes regarding the teaching and learning record of the student and program.

At the center of instruction at SDNH is the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), a written, agreed upon document created by the credentialed teacher that provides for teacher-created, individualized instruction, tailored to the learning needs of each child. The PLP is an extensive document developed at the beginning of the school year by the California-credentialed teacher in consultation with the student and the student's Parent(s)/guardians and modified at the regular consultation as a teaching and learning record. This Personalized Learning Plan is built by the credentialed teacher from a combination of baseline assessments of both academic skills/knowledge and learning modalities, information gathered from the parent(s), and input

directly from the student. Learning needs that go beyond the purely academic (such as study habits and interpersonal skills) are addressed in the Personalized Learning Plan as well.

The SDNH Personalized Learning Plan guides each student through the Common Core State Standards -based SDNH curriculum, providing a high degree of differentiated learning in the student's ZPD.

SDNH's program strengthens "the learning triad" used by other personalized learning programs to provide support for the student's Personalized Learning Plan by SDNH's emphasis on the credentialed teachers' expertise in teaching and learning strategies and the parent(s)' / guardians' contribution of invaluable input on the learning styles and personality of the student. SDNH relies on parent(s)-to-credentialed teacher relationships to forge strong enough ties to create the delicate balance of this stronger triad to ensure a team effort with the same goal of student achievement. The student, parent(s), and teacher have distinct roles in the SDNH triad, and the roles are well defined and considered of equal value.

The parent's role at SDNH is a definitive and essential part of the SDNH teaching and learning concept. SDNH provides parent(s) with one-on-one modeling of effective strategies of teaching and assessing. The important relationships forged create the network of trust and confidence in each other that allows successful, ongoing training and support. Technology provides ongoing, daily available input and interaction regarding the teaching and learning of the students at SDNH. From informal assessments to electronic reporting of achievement, SDNH's program supports parent(s), students and credentialed-teachers in maintaining professional records of assessment, creating anecdotal learning records, and other forms of recording student achievement, plans and program adjustments.

Personalized learning models, as in the one SDNH employs, call for the use of additional multiple assessments such as: credentialed teacher observations, parent input, student participation in consultations, work completion, and other measures as deemed appropriate.

## Curriculum Delivery Options:

A variety of curriculum options meet the SDNH criteria for standards-based curriculum. These options include but are not limited to:

**Print-based learning** – Courses are provided in the traditional paper and-pencil, textbook format. The teacher and parent(s) will work with the child to develop learning skills. Parent(s) will deliver instruction based on a personalized course of study that includes sequenced sets of lessons, with easily identified learning objectives. Students complete their assignments and are reviewed evaluated by parent(s) and teacher. The teacher is available by telephone or Internet to provide learning support and feedback in addition to written responses and personal attention. Options for enrichment may be provided through the community library, local museums, and other community-based resources.

**Print-based plus computer** – Courses are provided that combine textbook, paper-and-pencil, a personalized study guide (lesson objectives and outcomes) and computer-based program. This method is useful when the student has access to the computer but no access to the Internet. This method of instruction places strong emphasis on performance-based learning and assessment while developing and reinforcing basic content knowledge and skills.

Textbook and teacher contact will provide the content knowledge and focus on process skills. This method of delivery requires teacher, parent(s) and student to use workplace skills to solve problems and perform tasks that show the student can use information – classify, compare, analyze, evaluate, and present. All tasks are based on individual student needs and skill levels with appropriate problems to be solved or projects to complete. An example would be curriculum or Individual Learning Systems such as “Teaching Textbooks”.

**Print-based plus Internet** - A wide range of courses and learning options are available via the Internet. The benefits of this method expand as Internet-based learning options continue to grow. This model provides increased personalization through extended learning resources available through the Internet, with prescribed print curriculum and electronic learning sources. This option provides a computer-based education network, which serves as the foundation for learning.

Teachers use a variety of providers to individualize and customize instruction. Examples of available providers are Aleks.com and publishers websites such as Glencoe.com. This method of delivery centers on print, quality on-line learning opportunities and the instructional staff guiding and individualizing student learning to obtain maximum results. Directed on-line learning may be supplemented and enhanced with off-line (print-based) activities and assignments, third party software, teacher/parent(s)/student discussion, project-based learning assignments and opportunities for collaborative projects.

**Credit by exam** – Credit by exam is offered on a case-by-case basis, as allowed by the California Education Code, to assess students to obtain high school course credit. Approved exams may be used from accredited curriculum providers or developed internally based on approved course descriptions and alignment to California state standards.

**College courses** – SDNH recognizes the research that shows that students who visit or attend courses on college campuses have a higher probability of attending college.

While it is our desire for all students to be exposed to college by taking at least one community college course during high school, SDNH must comply with state and community college policies that govern high school student attendance at the college level. When appropriate, students will be given the opportunity to attend local colleges to take courses for credit. This option would also be possible via distance learning or in-person attendance with colleges and universities. It will be directly dependent on the individualized learning plan of the student.

**Vendor Course Instruction** – Vendor Course Instruction is provided to supplement and enrich core curriculum content. Instruction obtained with the use of this option should focus on improving and broadening core curriculum content knowledge and skills. Core curriculum is defined as language arts, math, science, social studies, and foreign language. This mode of instruction may also supplement core subjects with electives such as visual and performing arts, life skills, and physical education. Parent(s) with high school students will be notified upon enrollment their student in a vendor course. An example of a vendor course is Rosetta Stone online language learning.

#### F. PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ACADEMICALLY LOW ACHIEVING

SDNH is very well equipped to respond to the needs of students who are lagging academically. When a student consistently performs at levels that are below those expected for his or her grade level, through the SDNH placement process, these students will be provided with the curriculum materials and teaching resources appropriate to their achievement level as a starting point for learning, with the goal of attaining at least one year's academic progress within the school year.

In a Personalized Learning school environment, students working below grade level are shielded from the negative social attention that struggling students often face in a brick-and-mortar environment and are thus able to concentrate on intensive learning. Personalized scope and sequence is created by assessing individual learning and developing a program that guides the curriculum at the student's own pace, yet with an overall purpose of attaining grade level proficiency.

SDNH will assist low achieving students by providing extended learning opportunities through block scheduling those courses in which the student is consistently low achieving. Once an area of need is identified the SDNH consultant, in cooperation with the parent will create blocked courses within the homeschool environment to allow the student to receive extended time

and concentrated instructional support towards improving academic achievement in the subject area of need.

SDNH consultants take full advantage of the personalized learning model to engage and motivate struggling students and offer appropriate support and resources to boost achievement and promote personal and academic development. The strong supportive relationship created by the triad of teacher, parent/student and community offers the student adult models and more concentrated interaction with the consultant and the development of supportive relationships between students and adults. The SDNH triad of personalized learning involves all students in achieving personal and academic, as well as post-secondary goals. By developing close ongoing relationships with students SDNH consultants continue to monitor and assist the low achieving student by cooperatively developing personalized learning plans that engage students at their ZPD and promote an attitude of personal accountability and self-motivation in achieving academic goals.

National Association for Secondary School Principals, *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*, (Reston, VA: Author, 2004)

## G. PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ACADEMICALLY HIGH ACHIEVING

In addition to aiding struggling students, personalized learning that combines family and school provides a successful approach for the teaching and learning of high-achievers. The placement process assures that such learners are provided with the most appropriate curriculum, pacing, and teaching approach from the time that they enroll with maintaining work in the ZPD as the goal.

SDNH credentialed teachers work closely with curriculum specialists and parent(s) to assure a steady flow of sound, research-based teaching and learning strategies in the ZPD and appropriate and ongoing reporting of learning successes and struggles. In addition, students who complete a grade's worth of curriculum well before the end of the school year may be



placed into the next grade level curriculum, if deemed appropriate by the school administrator, teacher and the parent(s). In a Personalized Learning school environment, students are able to work significantly above grade level without fear of ostracism or other negative social repercussions that gifted students sometimes face in a more traditional school setting. The individualized program allows students who may be advanced in some areas but not in others to work in their ZPD for each subject area.

## H. PLAN FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

SDNH will utilize required criteria and procedures to identify limited English proficient (LEP) students. Parent(s) of all incoming SDNH students complete the California Home Language Survey. Based on the information in this form, SDNH will comply with the state mandated CEDLT assessments. Additional assessments may be used to identify their specific level of English proficiency. The testing and placement will occur in coordination with programs already in place for public school students.

SDNH credentialed teachers have many years of experience and much evidence that Personalized Learning aids in improving fluency and proficiency in the English language for students who are learning the English language as a “second language”. Individualizing the pace of the education program allows students to move more quickly through subjects where language is not a as great a factor and to spend more time on reading and writing activities. A SDNH curriculum specialist with ESL/LEP/ELL training is available to work with SDNH credentialed teachers who are appropriately trained in teaching and learning strategies for serving students who are considered “ELL”. Teachers may choose to adapt the core material for LEP students and to provide appropriate supplemental resources, including various technologies that can facilitate language acquisition.

To meet the needs of LEP students with less English speaking proficiency, SDNH utilizes a comprehensive English as a Second Language (ESL) instructional approach, including adapted materials for students and parent(s) and special training for Credentialed teachers certified to teach ESL. SDNH will conduct the required ongoing assessments of progress and

improvements in English proficiency for its LEP students. All mandated state tests for LEP students are administered as required by law (e.g. SABE/2).

## I. PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

SDNH is committed to serving children with disabilities, whether such children are currently or newly identified as disabled. Through a combination of appropriate certifications among the SDNH teaching staff, SDNH will coordinate with the authorizing district to meet the needs of special learners.

Since SDNH is a program focused on individualization, flexibility and personalization, it is often a very good fit for students with special needs. In addition to the regular placement test, SDNH's special education placement specialist reviews each IEP, analyzing the level of functioning, educational needs, and the suggested accommodations/modifications to determine how SDNH can meet the student's needs in the least restrictive environment. Thus, SDNH can be an appropriate setting for students with special needs by providing the following services:

- One to one individualized instruction
- Ongoing collaboration with parent(s)s, students, and teachers
- A team of professionally credentialed adults focused on student success
- Ongoing consultation with special educators, certified Credentialed teachers, and curriculum specialists to assist with adapting and modifying assignments to meet specific student needs
- Personalized Learning Plans
- A safe and directed environment
- Reduced environmental distractions
- Frequent progress checks, evaluations, and reports
- Flexible schedule that allows for students to move at their own pace
- Ability to separate academics from socialization

- Recommendations for/provision of software (e.g., keyboarding or speech recognition software) to facilitate communication, organization and skill development, and to address special needs.

These factors, along with the presence of a caring and committed parent(s)/ guardian - enable SDNH to address the special needs students. (This is accomplished through the implementation of specific instructional approaches and learning strategies via a consultative service model.) Included in this group would be mild to moderate disabilities in the following categories:

Vision acuity difficulties  
Auditory deficiencies  
Health concerns  
Developmental articulation  
Developmental expressive language  
Developmental receptive language  
Gross motor skills  
Oral expression  
Written language  
Spelling  
Memory  
Handwriting  
Developmental arithmetic  
Reasoning  
Fine motor skills  
Developmental reading (dyslexia)  
Developmental writing  
Emotional/Behavior  
Social communication  
Attention disorder

More serious and profound cases of the above, as well as specific physical and pervasive developmental disorders (e.g., autism, Asperger's, Rett's Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder), neurological disorders (e.g.,

Multiple Sclerosis), and physical disabilities will require direct services. If it is determined by the IEP team that SDNH is a good educational fit for these students, SDNH will work with the authorizing district to secure the additional services required.

Students entering SDNH with an IEP:

Prior to the enrollment phase, SDNH staff will review each IEP and confer with district staff to determine the level of each student's need and consider the types of services that are required. If needed or requested by any party, an IEP meeting will be held.

If the student's IEP does not already list independent study or home study as an educational alternative, an IEP must take place. Special Education students must have a current IEP that specifies that the SDNH program design provides free and appropriate education (FAPE) for the student. To support students with existing IEPs, SDNH will accomplish the following:

Participate in Annual Reviews of the IEP, including a review of student progress within the existing IEP, creation of new IEP goals, and obtaining parent(s) consent for and approval of a new IEP.

Participate in Triennial Reviews, in which students are formally reassessed every 3 years.

Include appropriate District staff in this process, as detailed in the MOU.

Referring students for Special Education services:

If academic evidence suggests that a student requires special educational services, the following procedures will be initiated, in coordination with District staff:

The credentialed teacher will confer with the school's Special Education specialist and will implement suggested modifications, lesson adaptations,

and alternative instructional strategies. The credentialed teacher will document all modifications and the student's level of success with each.

The credentialed teacher will complete an official Special Education referral. The Parent(s) will be notified of this referral.

The Child Study Team will meet to review referral. If deemed appropriate by the team, and if a disability is suspected, the referral/evaluation process will continue. If not, the regular education program will remain in place with further suggested program modifications.

Parental consent for the student evaluation is obtained and the appropriate evaluations are arranged. Parents are provided a copy of Procedural Safeguards.

The Parent(s) is invited to the interdisciplinary team meeting to review the assessment results. The team determines if the student has a disability and which least restrictive special education services are required.

IEP meeting is scheduled, and the Parents are invited to attend. IEP goals are formulated, and Parent(s) signs IEP.

IEP is implemented.

At no time will SDNH or the Mountain Empire Unified School District unilaterally create an IEP that designates SDNH for a child's placement. As a public school SDNH shall, through its policies and procedures, comply with all applicable requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et. Seq. (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 (sec. 504). SDNH, in association with the Mountain Empire Unified School District and SELP A, will provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities, including, but not limited to, identifying, evaluating, planning educational programs, and implementing placements in accordance with those Acts.

As a charter school, SDNH has the option under Ed Code Section 47641 to be deemed a Local Educational Agency for special education purposes. Alternatively, SDNH would be considered a public school within the Mountain Empire Unified School District's LEA. This choice will be made annually and included in the MOU, in accordance with the charter school policy of the authorizing school district. If, at any time, SDNH chooses to be designated as an LEA, the school will provide verifiable assessment of its ability to fulfill all obligations in this capacity, as well as assurances that it will participate in a special education plan area approved by the State Board of Education.

Initially, the Mountain Empire District (MEUSD) will provide special education services for the School's identified special education students through the district's Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) initially.

SDNH shall be deemed, initially, an arm of the District for the purposes of special education. The District will provide special education funding and services for the School's special education pupils to the extent of the law. Specifically, the District will serve children with disabilities in the same manner as it serves children with disabilities in its other schools [IDEA 1413(a)(5)]. As long as the School is an arm of the District for special education purposes, the School will pay the District the District's special education encroachment for each student.

The School reserves the right to act as its own Local Education Agency (LEA) for the purposes of special education and will make appropriate notification to the District preceding such plans.

### **3. MEASURABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES AND OTHER USES OF DATA**

#### **A. MEASURABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX**

SDNH uses both standardized testing and ongoing, curriculum-based assessments including electronic and paper-based portfolios of student work and supplemental assessment activities - which integrate with teacher data

analysis tools to provide evidence that allows for sophisticated instructional decision-making by parent(s), students, and credentialed teachers as well as other stakeholders.

SDNH is founded upon the ideology that an individualized and credentialed teacher-supported personalized learning educational program facilitates the development of personal accountability for one's education by increasing personal responsibility for it. SDNH students have opportunity to become resourceful, self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners with problem-solving experience and educational purposes grounded in community involvement.

A crucial part of SDNH's plan for overall excellence is the establishment of clear academic and related goals for each student and for the school, as well as clear ways to measure progress toward those goals.

Academic outcomes:

SDNH has established several core academic goals, measurements, and performance criteria. They are as follows:

**Goal I - School Performance:** SDNH will use standardized testing to calibrate student performance and improvement on a yearly basis. SDNH will be fully accountable for its students' achievement in keeping with the 1999 state Academic Performance Index (API) law, the federal No Child Left Behind Act, and any other applicable achievement requirements for charter schools.

**Measurement:** SDNH students will participate in all state-mandated testing, including the STAR and CAPA, the results of which will be calculated into the school's API (a scale of 200-1000) and its Adequate Yearly Progress measure under No Child Left Behind. Participation in standardized testing will be addressed in the SDNH Master Agreement (parent(s)/student/teacher contract).

Performance Criteria: At a minimum, SDNH will work to meet or exceed the API scores of the Mountain Empire Unified School District. The program will be designed to insure that the school will demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress.

**Goal II** - Student Progress: Each student will demonstrate a year of academic growth for each year in school. Students will master a set of learning objectives in the core subject areas outlined for each grade level and aligned Common Core State Standards. They will reach this level of achievement with a mastery loop approach: When students do not meet initial performance targets, SDNH will intervene and provide additional support until an acceptable level of achievement is reached.

Measurement: Each student will complete diagnostic placement tests in reading and math at the beginning of each year, which will be used as a baseline from which to then evaluate academic growth again at the end of the year. SDNH will be using the Star Math and Reading Assessments created by Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math for these purposes.

Performance Criteria: 90% of students across each demographic subcategory will demonstrate a year of academic growth on an annual basis.

**Goal III** - Personalized Learning: Personalized Learning Plans created by credentialed teachers, using the outcomes of the data and measurements taken drive instruction. Record of student work and assessment will be made available using proprietary electronic portfolios designed specifically for this purpose. The flexibility of the teaching and learning of personalized instruction is balanced by a thorough accountability and measurement records. This style portfolio is uniquely part of SDNH.

Measurement: Each individual student will have a profile of academic strengths and weaknesses at the beginning of the school year. Internal assessments (formal and informal) will track progress on addressing individual areas of weakness. Performance Criteria: 90% of students will demonstrate one grade level improvement across all identified areas. This record will be made available electronically to all responsible parties.



Non-academic outcomes: SDNH has also established important goals for aspects of the school that go beyond core academic learning activities but clearly support student achievement. They are as follows:

**Goal IV - Parental Involvement:** Parent(s)/guardians will collaborate with SDNH credentialed teachers in the planning of content and delivery of their child's instructional program. The responsibility to the state of the credentialed teachers in providing high quality teaching and learning for each student is without question at SDNH. This part of the school plan sets SDNH apart from other personalized learning programs and clearly defines the accountability for the student learning as the teacher's duty. Because the parent(s) have the social, ethical, and moral duty to educate their children, SDNH believes that both credentialed teachers and the parent(s) have overlapping responsibilities in providing sound education for the students. While the parent(s) are accountable to the society in general for performing well their educational duties with and for their children, as employees of the State of California, the teachers have formal accountability for the teaching and learning of the SDNH students. For this model to be successful, parent(s) and teachers must be united and positive in the agreed upon education plans for their children/students.

**Measurement:** This objective will be evaluated at regularly scheduled consultations.

**Performance Criteria:** Formal conferencing with parent(s), student and teacher will occur on a regular basis and teachers will proactively identify and work with parent(s) to design and agreed upon plan for learning with assignments, clear due dates, and prior-identified means of assessment and measurement. Parent(s) and teachers will be involved in decision-making for the school as a whole regarding which assessments are used by SDNH through parent(s)/staff site councils, Charter Council, and regular consultation minutes/notes/records.

**Goal V - Attendance:** SDNH students will maintain regular attendance. School attendance is based on completed school assignments during the time period involved.

Measurement: SDNH integrates multiple methods for tracking attendance, including instructional days completed.

Performance Criteria: Total school attendance will average 96% over the school year.

**Goal VI - High-Quality Teaching:** SDNH will provide its students with high-quality, credentialed teachers.

Measurement: Teacher recruitment, retention, and performance on staff evaluations. Performance Criteria: All Credentialed teachers will meet the qualification guidelines established by the SDNH Charter.

**Goal VII - School Community:** SDNH will encourage SDNH staff, students and their families to be involved community members and organizations including schools, businesses, community resources, and mentors.

Examples: Volunteers of America Organization, Community College Information Seminars, The American Red Cross, and Help International.

Measurement: The degree of participation of students in community projects will be recorded in multiple ways such as logs, letters of appreciation from the recipients of student involvement, published news articles, public relations information, and so forth. Reporting and recording such participation will be part of the regular face-to-face meetings with SDNH teachers.

Performance Criteria: 100% of students and parent(s)s will have the opportunity to participate in SDNH community activities, and 95% will participate in such activities at least once during the school year.

## B. METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

Student assessment strategies:

SDNH shall adhere to the same accountability measures, administer the same state assessments, and follow the same proficiency measures as all public schools in California, in addition to using its own internal assessment tools. SDNH will use various assessments plus top quality curriculum and credentialed-teacher program design to improve student achievement and maintain a high level of accountability.

At SDNH's each student's evaluation begins with placement test and progress assessment utilized to assist the credentialed teacher to customize the student's academic program and formulate the student's Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). SDNH will also include ongoing online and traditional assessments to measure student progress in addressing the California Content Standards for Grades K-12 by completing assignments designed by the teacher using the parent(s)-selected, program-approved curriculum and supplemental materials. In addition to summative and formative assessments as part of the regular teaching and learning, a standardized assessment tool to measure student gains over the school year shall be used by SDNH.

Examples:

Placement - Students in grades K through 2 do not take a formal test but are evaluated by the teacher using SDNH's student evaluation tool based on the Common Core State Standards for those grades, which outlines grade level target skills and knowledge. These students will complete the STAR reading and STAR math diagnostic placement tests in reading and math at the beginning of each year (or an equivalent if technical problems arise) which will be used by the teacher in collaboration with the parent(s) to select appropriate levels of curriculum and to appropriately personalize lesson plans incorporating evidence from this test data.

Ongoing informal assessments - As students advance in the standards-based, professionally designed instructional program, several assessments will be administered in formal and informal ways and in formative and summative models. Daily assignments will be measured for completeness and

understanding each day. The SDNH student will apply and integrate new skills daily in thoughtful, research-based learning activities. Anecdotal data collected by the teacher and parent(s) such as comments from students during the instruction and practice that show understanding may be written as journal responses. Participation of students in group discussions can be noted and reported by the parent(s) and teacher as part of the student's assessment. At home the parent(s) will monitor student performance and in the consultation will allow more assessment with SDNH credentialed teachers contributing other measurements, and adjustments as guided by their professional training.

Unit assessments, offline, online and portfolios: The teacher, publisher, or state standards/frameworks breaks each subject in the SDNH curriculum into logical units of study. Assessments of the learning in each unit may include among many assessments: written compositions, science lab reports, short answers/workbook pages, essays, book responses, and a variety of work samples which will be discussed in consultation with the teacher and parent(s) for even more assessment possibilities.

Direct teacher evaluation is key at SDNH which also sets SDNH apart from other personalized learning programs. Online assessments are provided by many reputable sources including publishers, CDE, public schools and districts, and commercial educational sites. These multiple types of assessments enrich the expression of achievement. For example: While quizzes are brief and frequent and in many texts occur after every third or fourth lesson, the unit tests for most texts are more comprehensive and cover much more instructional material. Online assessments provide families with immediate objective feedback, while paper-based assessments can provide valuable reflection and information that can be examined and reported in "user-friendly ways" by SDNH's credentialed teachers.

SDNH students will participate in the STAR assessments. The results will be compared to the prior year's assessment to demonstrate learning growth. Student report cards and grades will ultimately include a balanced combination of quizzes, tests, work samples, parent(s) feedback and teacher assessment.

State-mandated assessments: SDNH is dedicated to meeting or exceeding all of California's goals and grade level requirements. SDNH students will meet as a group for teacher-proctored testing, proficiency tests and any other assessments or tests required by the State of California. Results of these assessments will be reported annually through the California Department of Education, as well as provided directly to the parent(s) of students at SDNH.

#### School Assessment Policies:

As in a traditional school program assessment policies and practices will be monitored, evaluated, adjusted for compliance to chartered goals as well as required Ed. Code. These policies and practices will follow a traditional model. Credentialed teachers will have primary responsibility for administering assessments and providing feedback to administrators. SDNH's Director will oversee the assessment program and work cooperatively with SDNH's credentialed teachers in evaluating and making recommendations for changes in instructional program for individuals, groups, or program as a whole.

The Director will have ultimate responsibility for insuring that SDNH meets the expectations and obligations required by charter school law, the Charter, and SDNH Board of Directors approved school policy.

#### School-wide Assessment Strategies:

In addition to assessment of students, SDNH will use a variety of measures for determining the success of the overall school program and the SDNH staff.

School self-assessment/evaluation: SDNH specific, measurable objectives for success. These are based upon the academic progress of its students and SDNH program performance on the following non-academic measures:

Parent(s) surveys, rating the responsiveness, effectiveness, and instructional expertise of the school as a whole.

Aggregate performance of enrolled students based on a value-added improvement model as documented through data captured by the school's Accountability Team.

The SDNH Director will be evaluated by the SDNH Board of Directors. The Board will evaluate the effectiveness of the School Director areas related to the day-to-day operations of the school and overall school performance. The SDNH Board of Directors and the SDNH Director will meet as required by reason and the charter to review the evaluations and make any revisions necessary.

### C. USE AND REPORTING OF DATA

SDNH will provide: Data tools: Teachers and parents will have a variety of assessment tools readily available to identify each student's strengths and areas of needed improvement. The valuable conversation that makes up the majority of the regular meeting of the teacher, parent(s) and student goes far beyond the use of simple right/wrong grading models of traditional assessment vehicles. SDNH's reports on student and program achievement will include a variety of advanced data visualization tools to provide students, parents, teachers, administrators, regulators and researchers with views of how students SDNH students and program are performing.

Annual progress reports: Annually, SDNH will account for the program's progress towards performance measures to all stakeholders, including parent(s)/guardians, the Mountain Empire Unified School District, the community, and the California Department of Education. In addition, the SDNH Board of Directors may contract with an outside evaluator (such as a university) to assess the school's overall performance against its mission on a longer-term basis. The school may choose to do an interim mid-year progress report.

## **4. GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE**

### **A. FOUNDING GROUP**

The founders of SDNH consist of prospective employees of SDNH.

SDNH Board of Directors

SDNH will provide an annual report to the five-member Board for approval.

SDNH will keep the lines of communication open between parent(s)s and staff

Keep SDNH staff apprised of personalized learning trends that are valuable to parent(s)s

Give parent(s)s a forum to express their needs

Help parent(s)s understand legal compliance issues

Participate in program evaluation and goal setting

### **B. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

Corporate Status:

SDNH is a California non-profit corporation. The Articles of Incorporation was be filed before August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. While incorporation status is active, the school will abide by the SDNH bylaws that provide a full description of the organization of the school.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The SDNH Board of Directors will govern SDNH. The Board sets policy and hires contractors, including those providing the management, curriculum, technology and instructional services. Additionally, the SDNH Board of Directors is responsible for assuring that all aspects of the financial and programmatic accountability systems fulfill SDNH's contract with the Mountain Empire Unified School District as well as its obligations to the California Department of Education. The SDNH Board of Directors shall adopt all policies as required for the independent study program of SDNH. The Board will meet at least once each semester, but will meet more often if needed to conduct school business in a timely fashion.

#### SDNH Board of Directors Composition:

The founding team of SDNH appointed Five SDNH Governing Board Members with attention to providing expertise in business, education, and community service among board members. As board members governing a chartered homeschool program, it is reasonable that these and succeeding members of the board share a philosophy of support for the goals and objectives of the program: particularly that the members hold positive outlooks on the role of personalized learning (homeschooling) as a valuable model of learning.

#### Board of Directors Training:

Proper oversight and effective Board practices will require that the Board of Directors be trained in appropriate procedures and policies for their responsibilities. SDNH will develop Board training procedures that will include orientation, training, and self-evaluation strategies. The SDNH Board of Directors will be responsible for outlining and implementing a regular, ongoing program in these areas.



## Compliance with Corporate Law:

The SDNH Board of Directors will adhere to all applicable laws for non-profit public benefit corporations operating a charter school, including but not limited to the laws regarding interested parties and conflict of interest. In addition, at such time as the SDNH Board of Directors assumes responsibility for a public charter school (i.e. following charter approval by the Mountain Empire Unified School District), the Board agrees to conduct its business in compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Open Meeting Laws). SDNH will also adopt a Conflict of Interest Code, as required under the Political Reform Act.

## Operating Structure:

The operating structure of the school will be comprised of a Director and Lead Teacher. This beginning structure allows for expected growth in the organization. The administrative teams will collaboratively, and jointly, supervise their site's administrative staff and credentialed teachers. The Director will act according to the policies and procedures as approved by the SDNH Board of Directors. As non-voting members of the Board, the SDNH Administrative Team will act to inform and advise the Board, and be responsible for implementing Board policies. All personnel decisions concerning the SDNH Administrative Team will be the responsibility of the Board.

## C. PARENTAL AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

Parental involvement in the school governance for charter schools is part of the reason for charter existence. Parent(s) whose students are enrolled at SDNH have input into the governance of the school via the Site Council and Charter Council to the extent that the SDNH administrative team honors the central theme of charter school governance design. The administrative team will give appropriate weight to these councils and will not consider the councils as "rubber stamps" or disregard their points of view. More input from parent(s), staff, and students is available as they serve in ad hoc work

groups and committees as needed to advise the SDNH Board of Directors or the school administration on specific matters of interest and concern. *Since SDNH relies on continued enrollment by parents who are exercising their free choice to enroll their children in the school, local history has demonstrated that parent(s)s who do not feel they are part of the governance, or that the program has diverged from charter stated purposes, have in the past, and may in the future leave the program to enroll in other programs in hopes to find a school that welcomes their input and active support. Listening to the parent(s) is not only good business; it is a definitive part of the charter school culture.*

Because the school's goal is to provide all parent(s)s with the opportunity to be informed about and participate in school-level decision-making, information about the SDNH Board of Directors meetings, agendas, and activities will be readily available to all families. For example, contact information for Board members will be posted on the website. In addition, SDNH will provide for ongoing interaction between parent(s)s via the SDNH website other available technology.

#### D. GOVERNANCE FOR SUCCESS

The governance structure outlined above is designed to insure success for SDNH. The SDNH Board of Directors will maintain local control over the school and will insure that the school receives input in decision making from all stakeholders: parent(s), staff and community members. At the same time the educational program, the technological infrastructure, and the day-to-day operations of the school will be managed by the Director and staff, who will provide high quality professional educational services to children of all backgrounds.

SDNH, along with the oversight and guidance of the Mountain Empire Unified School District, will create a charter school that will set high achievement for student learning using the personalized learning model with emphasis on credential teacher accountability. This high quality school of choice for families in San Diego County (and bordering counties) is a welcome addition to the list of personalized learning programs with its

balance of standards-based learning designed by credentialed teachers and parent-guided instruction.

#### E. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT Financial Reporting and Controls:

SDNH's goal is that financial reporting and budget development occur within all District and state required timelines. SDNH may use Charter employees, District services, or contract out the administrative and fiscal services to prepare the financial documents, or may use a combination of all three. The SDNH Board of Directors will be responsible for reviewing, evaluating, and approving these items, and for providing them to the appropriate state and local agencies.

#### Term, Termination and Renewal:

In order to provide a stable educational program for SDNH families, the term of the contract covers the requested five years of the Charter. The contract is renewable. The Mountain Empire Unified School District may revoke its agreement with SDNH if it determines SDNH has failed to provide educational services that meet California independent study requirements, illegal activities with intent, or financial misconduct. SDNH will be given an opportunity to respond and cure, and written notification is required at all times. In order to minimize disruption of students and staff, revocation would occur at the end of an academic year.

## 5. HUMAN RESOURCES

### A. QUALIFICATIONS OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

#### Teacher Certification:

SDNH will retain or employ teaching staff who hold appropriate California teaching certificates, permits, or other documents issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and in keeping with California's approved plan for

NCLB. SDNH may retain credentialed teachers, with preliminary or out of state certificates, who are in the process of completing California credential requirements as long as the work is in progress and is approved and monitored by the San Diego County Office of Education.

SDNH Credentialed teachers will assign the teaching of the core academic courses in mathematics, language arts, science, and history/social studies. These Credentialed teachers will be responsible for overseeing the students' academic progress and for monitoring grading and matriculation decisions as specified in the school's operational policies.

All credential documents will be maintained on file at all times at the school office, and will be available upon request for inspection by the Mountain Empire Unified School District. All credentials will follow the NCLB specifications.

SDNH may also employ or retain non-certificated instructional support staff in any case where a prospective staff member has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience, and the demonstrated capacity to work successfully in an instructional support capacity. Instructional support staff will not assign grades or approve student work assignments without the approval of a teacher, except in non-core or non-college preparatory courses and activities. All non-certificated staff will possess experience and expertise appropriate for their position within the school as outlined in the school's staffing plan and the school's adopted personnel policies.

#### Staff Recruitment:

SDNH plans to recruit staff through a variety of channels, including networking with District human resources personnel, area charter schools, and charter school organizations; outreach via enrolled families; and special outreach to credentialed teachers and administrators who are seeking a more flexible or alternative environment due to changing family responsibilities.

#### Human Resource Issues:

In accordance with the law and in keeping with its goals of providing exceptional talent in the service of California children and their families, human resource services will be acquired by contracting a professional organization for these purposes. In this way SDNH will assure adherence to clear guidelines regarding human resource issues such as equal opportunity employment, sexual harassment, affirmative action, and grievance procedures; hiring, contracts, compensation, promotion and professional development, and dismissal; holidays, benefits and travel, sick leave, and other leave; personnel files, work day and work year, and meeting attendance; and relationships with parent(s) and students. All of these issues will be documented in the SDNH Employee Handbook that will be available to staff as part of the hiring process.

#### Staff qualifications:

School Director - Advanced degree with administrative experience or equivalent. A former director or teacher is ideal. Must be technologically literate and have good communication skills. The Director must be able to build consensus and to inspire credentialed teachers to teach, students to learn, and parents to engage in their child's learning, while following the mission of the school. The Director should be able to represent SDNH in a variety of official and informal settings.

Teaching Staff- Credentialed teachers (as defined above) will hold a California teaching credential (or other document issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing) as required by state and federal law for charter schools. SDNH credentialed teachers may also hold preliminary or out of state certificates as long as they are in the process of completing California credential requirements under the supervision of the San Diego County Office of Education. Educators must be skilled at teaching a standards-based curriculum and incorporating innovative approaches to instruction. Should demonstrate good communication skills and be technologically literate. Special attention will be paid to applicants who have experience in individualized instruction and/or homeschooling. Since the school is based on the homeschool as an appropriate placement for

students to learn, candidates for teaching at SDNH should have a positive attitude regarding families who choose to participate in the homeschool program.

Credentialed teachers with certification in ELL, reading, and mathematics will also be given special attention. Teachers with experience in bilingual education and Experienced Homeschool Teachers shall be highly recruited.

Education Resource Centers- SDNH students, parent(s)s and credentialed teachers will have access to curriculum, and other instructional materials with support staff to aid in the use of technology, location of community programs such as English lessons for parent(s)s. Meeting of parent(s)s, students, teacher will occur in the resource centers such as the consultations, Site Council Meetings, Charter Council Meetings, Student Presentation Events for small groups. Large group settings, if needed, will make use of neighborhood resources such as meeting rooms at local parks or community centers.

#### Staff and Parent-Teacher Training:

SDNH will provide a professional training for credentialed teachers, the School Director, and other staff who will have direct contact with students. Training topics will include the SDNH curriculum and instructional techniques. Throughout the year, SDNH staff will have multiple opportunities to participate in professional development activities for the school. Because they will be working together physically in the SDNH local offices, the SDNH credentialed teachers and School Director can also provide their own informal ongoing professional development. Additional training in health and safety areas may be included as needed to comply with the school's health and safety policies.

In addition, Parent(s) and other designated volunteers will be briefed fully on their responsibilities within SDNH, and will be asked to sign an agreement to fulfill those responsibilities. Training will be offered on the curriculum and on technology basics as appropriate. As parent(s) carry out

their volunteer roles, they will be encouraged to draw upon the support of the credentialed teachers whenever they need assistance in the volunteer duties. For technical problems, SDNH will use a Technical Support supplier as needed.

## B. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The School Director and teaching staff will be compensated comparably with their counterparts in the regular California public schools. The SDNH Board of Directors will approve a salary schedule and staffing plan for the school that will maximize quality while assuring the financial stability of the school. Full time staff will receive benefits, including retirement benefits as described in Element II.

## C. HEALTH AND SAFETY

SDNH will continue to implement a comprehensive set of health, safety, and risk management policies. These policies will be developed in consultation with the school's insurance carriers and following review of District policies. They will address and/or include the following topics:

A requirement that all enrolling students and staff provide records documenting immunizations to the extent required for enrollment in non-charter public schools.

Policies and procedures for response to natural disasters and emergencies, including fires and earthquakes.

Policies relating to preventing contact with blood-borne pathogens and providing training to employees on such prevention.

A policy requiring that instructional and administrative staff receive training in emergency response, including appropriate "first responder" training or its equivalent, and/or hold current certificates in emergency response.

Policies relating to the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines.

A policy that the school will be housed in facilities that have received state Fire Marshal approval and that have been evaluated by a qualified structural engineer who has determined that the facilities present no substantial seismic safety hazard, and that the school will maintain appropriate facility compliance documents on file.

A policy establishing that school functions as zero tolerance zones for drug, alcohol, and tobacco possession and/or use.

A requirement that each employee of the school submit to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Section 44237.

A policy regarding health screenings for student, such as vision, hearing, etc.

Policies regarding visitors to the school facility, and other school security issues.

Requirements for employees that have contact with students to undergo Tuberculosis testing as required by law.

Policies to insure the school is in compliance with federal sexual harassment prevention guidelines and is maintaining a learning and work environment that is free from sexual harassment.

These policies will be incorporated as appropriate into the school's student and staff handbooks and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in the school's staff development efforts and governing Board policies.

#### D. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

In the event of a dispute between SDNH and the Mountain Empire Unified School District regarding the terms of this Charter, or any other issue



regarding the SDNH and District relationship, both parties agree to apprise the other, in writing, of the specific disputed issue(s).

In the event the initiating party believes the dispute relates to an issue that could potentially lead to revocation of the Charter, this shall be specifically noted in the written dispute statement. Within 30 days of sending written correspondence, or longer if both parties agree, the School Director and the District Superintendent, or their designees, shall meet and confer in an attempt to resolve the dispute. The designees must be identified and confirmed in writing.

If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the Charter Representative and the District Representative shall meet again within 15 days, or longer if both parties agree, to identify a neutral, third party mediator to assist in dispute resolution. The mediation shall incorporate informal rules of evidence and procedure unless both parties agree otherwise. Unless jointly agreed, the process involving assistance of a third party mediator shall conclude within 45 days.

All mediation costs and all other costs associated with dispute resolution shall be shared equally by SDNH and the Mountain Empire Unified School District. The school is entitled to receive funds throughout the term of the Charter. In the event of a dispute between the School and the Mountain Empire Unified School District, the District shall not be permitted to withhold, as a remedy or otherwise, any funds received on behalf of SDNH.

In the event the third party mediation process does not result in resolution of the dispute, both parties agree to continue good faith negotiations. If the Mountain Empire Unified School District indicates in writing that the violation constitutes a severe and imminent threat to the health and safety of the school's pupils, the Mountain Empire Unified School District is not required to be referred to mediation, but reserves the right to take any action it deems appropriate to insure the safety of students.

The school reserves the right to seek legal redress for any such actions under the law.

## OTHER DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

In addition to the processes above, the SDNH Board of Directors will develop and adopt policies and procedures for resolving internal and external disputes and grievances. These procedures will be included in the School and Employee Handbooks.

The Mountain Empire Unified School District agrees to refer all complaints regarding the school's operations to the SDNH staff and/or SDNH Board of Directors for resolution in accordance with the School's adopted policies.

## E. EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION AND RIGHTS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

SDNH will be deemed the exclusive and independent public school employer of the employees of SDNH for the purposes of the Educational Employment Act (Chapter 10.7 (commencing with Section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 4 of Title I of the Government Code).

## 6. STUDENT ADMISSIONS, ATTENDANCE, AND SUSPENSION / EXPULSION POLICIES

### A. STUDENT ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

SDNH will actively recruit families that represent the full cultural, demographic, and socioeconomic range of California communities. Outreach activities will primarily target San Diego County urban and suburban neighborhoods. To do so, SDNH will use a variety of means to inform families about its services and provide them an opportunity to enroll, including:

Registration Meetings - SDNH will conduct year round Registration Information Meetings for families following approval of the Charter. SDNH will use these orientations to provide a complete array of

information about its program, including its curriculum, teaching methods, and technology resources. The orientations will be located throughout San Diego for widest reach of students.

Web site - SDNH has launched and will maintain a website at [www.SDNH.org](http://www.SDNH.org) to inform interested families about San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools. The website will provide a description and explanation of the program and will maintain a regularly updated set of Frequently Asked Questions and their answers. An email link will be provided in order that any interested party may request more information.

Telephone/e-mail information service: SDNH has two neighborhood sites with direct phone numbers to each site for families to receive more information, and an email information service [sdnh@me.com](mailto:sdnh@me.com) to answer parent(s)' questions about SDNH.

Community and youth services partnerships - As part of its outreach process, SDNH will provide information about SDNH to community, family, and youth-serving organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs; reach out to residential facilities; and seek partnerships with parent(s) groups, health-related organizations; and organizations for young actors, dancers, and athletes.

School District referrals and outreach - SDNH will take every opportunity to brief school district administrators and guidance personnel on SDNH as an alternative for students who might benefit from Personalized Learning in a multi-environment setting.

Media outreach - SDNH will make limited use of paid media, primarily advertisements in local newspapers, print ads in parent(s)-oriented magazines, and radio service announcements, but will take full advantage of the local media's interest in promoting community events relevant to San Diego County residents and neighboring counties, in order to inform parent(s) about SDNH informational orientations and to raise awareness of the school.

### Nondiscriminatory Admissions:

SDNH will not discriminate against pupils on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability or handicap in its education programs or activities, including its admissions policies and procedures. The School will admit all pupils who wish to attend as called for in education Code 47605.

### No Tuition:

As a public school, SDNH shall not charge tuition.

### Place of Residence:

Admission to SDNH shall not be determined according to the place of residence of any pupil, or his or her parent(s) or guardian, within this state, except for such restrictions or preferences that are required or allowed by law.

### Admission Methods and Eligibility Criteria:

Through its recruitment/marketing and application guidance activities, SDNH will disclose full details about its program and encourage families to carefully consider its academic and parental involvement demands before applying. SDNH will also provide tools (such as an online self-quiz and contact with a SDNH education credentialed teacher if desired) to help parent(s) decide whether SDNH is truly the right fit for their children and for themselves.

Admissions requirements will include the expectation that parent(s) complete all enrollment and placement activities in a timely and complete fashion. This includes signing all necessary school-family

agreements (such as the Master Agreement). SDNH will give enrollment priority to siblings of enrolled students admitted in a previous year.

#### Timetable and Lottery:

In accordance with Ed Code Section 4 7605(d)(2)(B), preference for enrollment will be given to students residing San Diego County urban and suburban neighborhoods and the neighborhoods of adjoining counties. If by the initial application deadline the number of applicants, including those with district preference, enrollment exceeds the program capacity, enrollment will be determined by lottery. Siblings of students accepted through the lottery will automatically be eligible for enrollment in the school.

Students selected through the lottery have a specified time to sign a commitment letter to indicate the pupil will attend the school. If the signed commitment letter is not returned within the allotted period of time, the school will proceed to offer space to the next student on the waiting list created through the lottery process. After the school year has begun, applications for enrollment will continue to be accepted and date/time stamped on a rolling basis, with students accepted for enrollment on a space-available basis.

If a waiting list has been generated by lottery, spaces will be allocated to wait-listed students first. Once enrolled, students will not be required to reapply in subsequent enrollment periods. In subsequent years, continuing students and their siblings will be given enrollment priority. Preference will also be given to San Diego residents.

Following this allocation of spaces, if the number of new applicants still exceeds the number of remaining spaces, a lottery will be held according to the procedures described above. SDNH's actual lottery process will follow the lottery process described in the SDUSD Charter School Policy and Guidelines. In accordance with Ed Code

Section 47605 (d)(2)(C), SDNH and the Mountain Empire Unified School District will make every reasonable attempt to accommodate all the students who wish to attend SDNH.

## B. NON-DESCRIMINATION

San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools will do everything possible to reflect the statewide racial and ethnic balance. Through extensive community outreach and full disclosure about the school's program, SDNH will attract those students and families who are most committed to student success in a Personalized Learning school setting in which a credentialed teacher designed and leads the program. Lottery selection allows for fair and equitable selection of students in the event that more students apply than can be accommodated. Sibling preference helps committed families handle the logistics of successful participation in the Personalized Learning School. While the ELL student is the focus for SDNH program design, all students who would like to participate will be accepted as space provides.

In addition, SDNH will develop administrative procedures to ensure that the school's outreach, recruitment, and enrollment procedures do not discriminate against students based on physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability or handicap. As part of that process, SDNH will be certain to provide parent(s) with a very clear and accurate picture of the SDNH learning experience, so they can make the most appropriate choices for their children.

SDNH utilizes a broad reaching student recruiting effort, thereby insuring outreach to families with a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, certain subgroups may be targeted for extra recruitment efforts in order to achieve a pool of potential students that reflects a balanced student population. Partnerships and outreach efforts using a variety of community and youth organizations aid in this process.

In addition, information sessions may provide a bilingual presenter or translator when deemed necessary to be sure the attending families are

accurately informed. Bilingual personnel may also be made available when families call in to the toll-free information line, if there is sufficient need.

### C. PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES

Accurate attendance accounting is crucial to the fiscal health of a charter school that has been classified (or designated) an Independent Study School, or simply as a Personalized Learning Charter School. In order to minimize risks to the school's revenue, SDNH will utilize accurate and sophisticated systems for documenting student attendance. SDNH's attendance accounting systems will comply with California Independent Study requirements, and with the Mountain Empire Unified School District's requirements for certifying the SDNH's ADA. In addition, SDNH will work with the District to transfer all attendance data to the District's attendance accounting program (e.g. SIS) in order to generate the required State J18/19 forms. Alternatively, the attendance accounting data will be supplied in a format and level of detail similar to the Mountain Empire Unified School District's attendance accounting program, to allow efficient certification of the SDNH's ADA.

### D. STUDENT EXPULSIONS

Due to its unique program, SDNH intends to establish its own suspension and expulsion policies. The description below is provided as an initial guideline and can be modified as necessary by action of the SDNH Board of Directors. The School's discipline, suspension, and expulsion policies will be in accordance with students' rights and with applicable law.

Code of Conduct:

Appropriate conduct is expected of all students at SDNH. The student's code of conduct is explained in the School Handbook and includes steps to be followed in the event of misbehavior.

SDNH Board of Directors Policies:

SDNH will follow formal due process procedures to deal with the discipline of students. Students at SDNH are guaranteed due process of law as required by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Discipline policies will be developed to identify the types of conduct subject to discipline, to offer an opportunity for a hearing in which the student may present evidence to defend his/her actions, and, finally, to offer the Student a forum in which to appeal an adverse decision.

The School Handbook and the discipline policies will be approved by the SDNH Board of Directors and will be reviewed at least once every three (3) years. The Board will review the policies to be sure they are within all current legal guidelines and that they are consistent with the school's mission and educational program.

SDNH will not discipline pupils protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 (sec. 504), the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et. seq. (IDEA), the American with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.c. 12101 et. seq. (ADA) unless SDNH complies with the requirements of those acts. Section 118.31, Stats., which prohibits corporal punishment of pupils, shall apply to SDNH. Sections 118.32 and 948.50, Stats., which prohibit a strip search of a pupil, shall also apply to SDNH.

#### Suspension:

As a school of choice SDNH reserves the right to end the enrollment of any student who violates the behavior codes of the school. Parent(s) of students who violate these codes themselves may cause their student to be suspended or expelled. Violations that may lead to suspension include, but are not limited to, the following breaches of conduct, whether committed electronically or in person:

Cheating on tests or daily work - A student/parent(s) who knowingly participates in copying, using another student's work and representing it as his or her own (for example, students transmitting their work



electronically for another student' s use), or who provides other students with test answers or answer keys, or otherwise uses unauthorized materials in an assignment or assessment situation.

Abusive conduct - A student who uses or engages in using abusive language or conduct in the presence of others in person or electronically.

Vandalism - A student who intentionally damages or destroys school property or records (physical or electronic). In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.

Theft and robbery - A student who takes money or other property (physical or electronic) with the intent to deprive another person or the school of that property.

Threat or Use of Force or Violence - The threat or the use of force or violence is considered a serious breach of conduct. In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.

Sexual harassment - A student who subjects another to any unwelcome sexual advances including verbal harassment, unwelcome or inappropriate touching; or suggestions, requests, or demands for sexual favors.

#### Expulsion:

Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others in the School, including possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, criminal behavior, arson, possession of or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia at the School or at any School-sponsored event.

Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

#### Due Process:

If charges are to be brought against a student, which could result in a suspension of 10 days or less, an informal hearing will be convened with the student, parent(s)/guardian, School Director, and other staff members as appropriate. At this hearing, the student and parent(s)/guardian will be informed by the School Director of the charges. Should the student not admit to the charges, they will be provided an explanation of the evidence.

The student will be provided with an opportunity to present his or her version of the occurrence. If the School Director determines that the occurrence justifies suspension, written notice will be sent to the student. Students and parent(s) will also be notified in writing of their rights.

If charges are brought against a student, which could result in a suspension of an additional 10 days or an expulsion, the School Director will convene a formal expulsion hearing which will include the student, Parent(s)/guardian, School Director, and other staff members as appropriate, presided over by a hearing officer (a neutral professional with experience in school discipline issues engaged as needed by the school for this purpose). At this hearing, the charges will be reviewed and if the charges are not admitted to, the student and parent(s) shall be provided with an explanation of the evidence. The student will be provided with an opportunity to present his or her version of the occurrence. The hearing officer will determine the expulsion or recommend an alternative.

#### Notification:

The SDNH Board of Directors will be notified, in closed session or confidential correspondence, of any expulsion decisions. In the event

that a parent(s) disputes the findings of the expulsion hearing, they may request a review by the SDNH Board of Directors. Designated school district staff will be notified in a timely way of any expulsions by a designated member of the SDNH staff.

In addition, the school will include data on suspensions and expulsions in its annual performance report to the Mountain Empire Unified School District.

## 7. FINANCIAL PLANNING, REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### A. FINANCIAL REPORTING

SDNH will make quarterly financial reports to the Mountain Empire Unified School District. The School will report unaudited actuals to the DISTRICT by Sept 15th of each school year that reflect the closing of the June 30th fiscal year. SDNH will comply with the financial reporting requirements of the California Department of Education Charter School Policy.

SDNH will provide monthly financial reports to the SDNH Board of Directors. To the extent possible and practical, financial data will be reported and budgets will be developed in a format consistent with the State Accounting Code Structure (SACS).

Following review by the SDNH Board of Directors, financial data will be reported to the Mountain Empire Unified School District and the County Office of Education in a manner and timeline detailed in the MOD, and in accordance with existing charter school law and District policy. Financial data for SDNH will be reported to the state via the Mountain Empire Unified School District, except in cases where the law requires charter schools to report directly to the state. For example, any financial data needed for the preliminary and final J21 0 reports will be approved by the SDNH Board of Directors and then submitted by SDNH to the Mountain Empire Unified School District by the agreed upon deadlines each year, and the Mountain Empire Unified School District will then incorporate this data in its report to the state.

In other situations, such as the annual independent audit, the School will submit copies directly to the County Office of Education and the CDE as required by law.

As per Ed Code Section 42100, on or before Sept 15 of each year, the SDNH Board of Directors will approve, in the format prescribed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, an un-audited annual statement of all receipts and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year. This statement will then be filed with Mountain Empire Unified School District.

Fiscal policies:

The SDNH Board of Directors will create and adopt fiscal policies, including adequate internal control policies, and will require that SDNH comply with such policies and controls. In order to insure responsible fiscal management, SDNH will contract with The Mountain Empire School District for ongoing charter operational management including:

Monthly operational reviews

Budget target assessments

Attendance reporting issues

Placement testing services

Legal referral assistance

Safety and disaster plans

Human resources management

Payroll services

STRS and PERS setup and management

Government and institutional grant creation and submittal

Health benefits liability insurance setup and building/site negotiation assistance – planning

SDNH will also collaborate with the Mountain Empire Unified School District fiscal staff.

## B. INSURANCE

As a non-profit public benefit corporation, SDNH will be legally independent from the Mountain Empire Unified School District. In addition, SDNH will maintain adequate insurance coverage to further limit liability of the Mountain Empire Unified School District. Internal dispute processes will be put into place to decrease the incidence of legal disputes. SDNH will retain services of an attorney familiar with charter school legal issues to further prevent legal problems from arising.

SDNH will obtain the following levels of insurance for the 2009-10 school year:

Comprehensive General Liability: \$2,000,000 per occurrence, \$5,000,000 aggregate.

Automobile: \$1,000,000

Excess Umbrella Liability: \$14,000,000

Workmen's Compensation: Comply with current statutory limits in accordance with California Labor Code

The SDNH Board of Directors will obtain a Director and Officer's Liability policy that provides \$1,000,000 in coverage. The policy binder has not yet been issued, but will be available upon request.

Health insurance will be provided to credentialed teachers and administrative staff as determined by the SDNH Board of Directors.

SDNH and its vendors will continue to maintain and keep in force such insurance as Compensation, Liability and Property Damage, as will protect it from claims under Workman's Compensation Acts, and also such insurance as will protect it and SDNH from any other claims for damages for personal injury, including death, and claims for damages to any property of SDNH, or of the public, which may arise from operations under this Agreement,

whether such operations be by SDNH or by any subcontractor or anyone directly or indirectly employed by any of them.

Insurances will also include health, general liability (including school operation, extra-curricular activities and parent(s) volunteer activities), property, and Director and Officer's liability coverage. SDNH's liability insurance policies will name the Mountain Empire Unified School District as additional insured. As documentation, SDNH will provide copies of all appropriate certificates of insurance to the Mountain Empire Unified School District with the Mountain Empire Unified School District so named.

### C. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Administrative services will be provided under the professional services agreements approved by the SDNH Board of Directors by contract with professional services provider.

SDNH will manage the majority of its administrative services using a professional business service provider who has experience in charter school operations in general and independent study in particular. Accounting and attendance accounting practice by teachers will be in accordance to code with oversight and monitoring by the School Board. SDNH will cooperate fully with Mountain Empire Unified School District staff in the preparation and reporting of all required data and financial information.

The Mountain Empire Unified School District and SDNH may enter negotiations during the MOU process to provide services to the charter school. Such services will be mutually agreed upon. Neither party is obligated to provide or accept such services, but may do so by mutual agreement. The Superintendent or designee of the Mountain Empire Unified School District is authorized to negotiate and enter into an agreement to provide services to the SDNH.

The Mountain Empire Unified School District will provide supervisory oversight as required by law, in exchange for an oversight fee of 1% if

facilities are not provided, or 3% if facilities are provided of SDNH's annual public revenue.

Every five years SDNH will enter into a memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the District, which outlines the scope of its financial responsibility to the District and describes the service options from the District that the school may or may not choose. The definition of which staff functions constitute District oversight will be included in the MOU.

#### D. FACILITIES

SDNH facility:

SDNH will lease permanent office spaces for its administrative and teaching staff and to serve as neighborhood homeschool resource center. The facilities selected will be in an attractive and safe area, provide good access for administrators and credentialed teachers and the students or parents who visit the resource center. The facilities will have a certificate of occupancy, be air-conditioned, heated and illuminated with appropriate lighting, provide handicapped accessible bathrooms and parking, and will be fully equipped with sprinklers and other fire safety equipment.

The facilities will provide the necessary infrastructure to support the required staff. Should there be a need for further renovations, they will be made in compliance with applicable building and safety codes and will be completed prior to the beginning of the school year. The SDNH budget includes funds for leases of such facilities, estimated at current market prices. SDNH has also included a budget provision for contracting for cleaning service for its centers. Facility maintenance will be the responsibility of the commercial space provider.

SDNH intends to locate its facilities within the geographic boundaries of San Diego County or adjacent counties. Ideally, the facilities will be located throughout San Diego County and easily accessible from major roadways, allowing students and staff from various areas to reach it easily.

Upon start-up SDNH will determine the location of its resource centers based on the residences of its enrolled students. SDNH will do this to increase accessibility of the resource to program participants.

The complete SDNH educational program will operate from these facilities. In addition, in the future, the school reserves the right under Ed. Code Section 47605.1 (c), to open additional resource centers, if there is a need for them as determined by input of staff and families. SDNH will provide all required notification to the district and county of all facilities that it operates.

#### Impact on District Facilities:

SDNH expects that it will have no negative impact on the Mountain Empire Unified School District with respect to facilities. Because the SDNH program is classified by the California Department of Education as a non-classroom based model, the Mountain Empire Unified School District will not be expected to provide facilities for SDNH. As a school with a non-classroom based classification, SDNH is not eligible for facilities under Proposition 39.

SDNH agrees to notify the Mountain Empire Unified School District and County Office of Education of the location of all its neighborhood homeschool resource centers. SDNH agrees to comply with any legal geographic limitations on charter school sites.

#### E. TRANSPORTATION

SDNH will not require the Mountain Empire Unified School District to provide transportation services.

SDNH will not provide transportation to or from any regular school activities, meetings, extra curricular activities or events.

#### F. AUDITS



SDNH will be audited annually by an independent certified public accounting firm, according to the guidelines applicable to public charter schools in California. The SDNH Board of Directors will commission the audit and will engage an auditor with experience in public school finance. The cost of the independent audit shall be borne by SDNH. Copies of the audit will be submitted to the Mountain Empire Unified School District Board, the County Office of Education, the State Controller's Office, the CDE, and any other agency required by law, within 180 days of the end of the fiscal year, and in no case later than December 15 of each year.

#### Audit Exceptions and Deficiencies:

A copy of the auditor's findings will be forwarded to the SDNH Board of Directors. The SDNH School Director and the Board of Directors will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and make recommendations on how to resolve the discovered exceptions or deficiencies. This report will include timelines and deadlines for resolving the exceptions or deficiencies.

The SDNH Board of Directors will then report to the charter-granting agency regarding how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies will be referred to the Dispute Resolution Process contained in Element 14. The District may elect, at its own cost and expense, to have its own accountants review the audit exceptions and deficiencies.

#### Programmatic Audit:

The annual audits will include a performance audit to insure that the School is meeting its stated objectives, is fiscally and organizationally sound, and is in compliance with applicable laws.

## H. CHARTER SCHOOL TERM, RENEWAL, AMENDMENT AND CLOSURE

### Term of the Charter:

The term of the Charter will be five years, commencing on the date that the Charter is renewed by the State Board of Education, and expiring five years later, unless renewed.

### Renewal and Amendment Process:

The SDNH Board of Directors may request from the Mountain Empire Unified School District governing board a renewal or amendment of the Charter at any time prior to expiration. However, the School should present renewal requests to the Mountain Empire Unified School District no later than 120 days prior to the expiration of the Charter.

The Mountain Empire Unified School District governing board agrees to hear and render a renewal decision pursuant to the initial Charter petition review timelines and processes as specified in the Education Code Section 47605. Renewals will be for a period of five years, as specified in Ed Code Section 47607.

The Charter may be amended at any time using a process similar to the renewal process. Any material revision of the Charter requires an amendment that must be approved by the Mountain Empire Unified School District Board.

### Revocation:

Prior to commencement of revocation proceedings, the Mountain Empire Unified School District and School shall first endeavor to resolve any dispute under the dispute resolution process set forth above in Section 5 D. If, following the completion of that process, the governing board of the Mountain Empire Unified School District believes it has cause to revoke this Charter, the Mountain Empire Unified School District agrees to notify the SDNH Board of Directors

in writing, noting the specific reasons for which the Charter is in danger of being revoked, and grant the School reasonable time to respond to the notice and take appropriate corrective action.

In accordance with Ed. Code Section 47607 (2)(b), the following items may be considered violations that could lead to revocation or non-renewal of the Charter:

A material violation of any of the conditions, standards or procedures set forth in the Charter,

Failure to meet or pursue the pupil outcomes identified in the Charter,

Failure to meet generally accepted accounting principles,

Fiscal mismanagement, or

Violation of the law.

If SDNH disputes the cause(s) for revocation, the dispute procedures listed in 5 D (Other Dispute Resolution) will apply.

#### Closure Protocol:

In the event that SDNH ceases operation for any reason, SDNH and its Board of Directors will be responsible for winding up its business and affairs and will cooperate with the Mountain Empire Unified School District Board and the California Department of Education to the extent necessary to provide an orderly return of the students to their local schools.

In the event that SDNH ceases operation, any assets such as furniture and equipment purchased with public funds, shall be delivered to the Mountain Empire Unified School District, another charter school, or another public school entity that holds a mission similar to SDNH's. Furniture and equipment or other assets purchased with non-public

funds will be liquidated or disbursed in accordance with the corporation's articles and bylaws and with applicable non-profit law.

If SDNH does not have sufficient assets to pay all of its bills at the time it ceases operation, neither Mountain Empire Unified School District nor the California Department of Education will be responsible for its unpaid bills. In this event, the SDNH Board of Directors will develop a plan for repayment of any liabilities.

#### Other Closure Procedures:

The decision to close SDNH will be documented by an official action of the SDNH Board of Directors and the Mountain Empire Unified School District governing board. The action will identify the reason for closure. A notice of school closure will be sent to the CDE Charter School Unit and the County Office of Education. This notice will contain all relevant information, including the effective date of closure.

Parents and students will be notified in writing and will be provided with or have access to student information necessary to facilitate transfer to another school.

Any other school districts that may need to provide services to SDNH students will be notified in writing.

A process for transfer of student records will be established and followed. In addition, a plan for the maintenance of school and student records for a reasonable period of time following the closure will be made. All student records will be turned over to the Mountain Empire Unified School District, unless otherwise agreed in the adopted plan.

As stated above, the SDNH corporation will handle closing out all affairs related to the charter school. This will include dissolution of the corporation only if necessary and appropriate.

An independent audit of the school will be completed as quickly as feasible following closure of the school to determine the net assets and liabilities of the SDNH.

Any required final financial or other reports will be submitted to the CDE and other applicable agencies.

Copies of all financial and attendance records will be provided to the Mountain Empire Unified School District according to state and federal requirements, unless otherwise agreed upon by both the SDNH Board of Directors and the Mountain Empire Unified School District School Board.

#### School Management Contracts:

Administrative services will be provided under the professional services agreements approved by the SDNH Board of Directors by contract with professional services provider.

SDNH will manage the majority of its administrative services using a professional business service provider who has experience in charter school operations in general and independent study in particular. Accounting and attendance accounting practice by teachers will be in accordance to code with oversight and monitoring by the School Board. SDNH will cooperate fully with Mountain Empire Unified School District staff in the preparation and reporting of all required data and financial information.

The Mountain Empire Unified School District and SDNH may enter negotiations during the MOU process to provide services to the charter school. Such services will be mutually agreed upon. Neither party is obligated to provide or accept such services, but may do so by mutual agreement. The Superintendent or designee of the Mountain Empire Unified School District is authorized to negotiate and enter into an agreement to provide services to the SDNH.

The Mountain Empire Unified School District will provide supervisory oversight as required by law, in exchange for an oversight fee of 1% if facilities are not provided, or 3% if facilities are provided of SDNH's annual public revenue.

SDNH will yearly enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the District that outlines the scope of its financial responsibility to the District and describes the service options from the District, which the school may or may not choose. The definition of which staff functions constitute District oversight will be included in the MOU.

## **8. IMPACT ON THE CHARTER AUTHORIZER**

**San Diego neighborhood Homeschools will have negligible financial impact on the Mountain Empire Unified School District because:**

- The San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools Charter Development Team has a proven ten-year track record in successfully starting and managing, including providing the proper oversight for a charter homeschool so it will require minimal District oversight services that the School will pay for;
- The Director of San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools has been the Director/Principal of Vista Literacy Academy, has been a classroom educator for over 20 years and has had solid experience in counseling and assisting homeschooling families.
- The Assistant Director of San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools has worked for and strategically aided in the building of a local charter homechool and has proven experience in developing programs, instruction and curriculum that are effective for all learners;
- San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools is a non-profit corporation

- San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools will carry the appropriate insurance including liability, errors and omissions
- San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools recognizes the need for at least a District annual school visit and the designation of a District employee as liaison
- San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools resource centers will be situated in urban and suburban neighborhoods across San Diego County, and adjacent counties, and will be available to assist those students who require an alternative homeschool learning environment, and/or are English Language Learners, and/or who are at risk of dropping out of high school;
- San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools will be a small school, with approximately fifty or fewer students at each resource center within the San Diego and adjacent counties' urban and suburban neighborhoods.

**To Summarize the Impact on Charter Authorizer:**

- San Diego Neighborhood Homeschools is being started by professionals with many years experience and will not require services from the District other than those paid for by the school
- SDNH will be comprised of very small neighborhood resource centers of approximately fifty or fewer students each.
- SDNH intends to support students so that they do not fail or drop out of school
- SDNH will provide a needed choice for students who do not want or might not be successful in a traditional learning environment or at a large comprehensive high school.