

**A PETITION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL**

**For the Renewal Term: JULY 1, 2014 – JUNE 30, 2019**

**SUBMITTED TO**

**The Board of Trustees**

**CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**December 17, 2013**

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# AFFIRMATIONS

As the authorized lead petitioner, I, Jeremy Cavallaro, hereby certify that the information submitted in this petition for a California public charter school to be named Community Roots Academy, the “Charter School”), and to be located within the boundaries of the Capistrano Unified School District (the “District”) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that this petition 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 Charter School will follow any and all federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to the Charter School,including but not limited to:

* The Charter School shall meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Sections 60605 and 60851, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)(1)]
* The Charter School shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of Community Roots Academy for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O)]
* The Charter School shall be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
* The Charter School shall not charge tuition. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
* The Charter School shall admit all students who wish to attend the Charter School, and who submit a timely application; unless the Charter School receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case each application will be given equal chance of admission through a public random drawing process. Except as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2), admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or his or her parents within the State. Preference in the public random drawing shall be given as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B). In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the Charter School in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(C). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(A)-(C)]
* The Charter School shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
* The Charter School shall adhere to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004.
* The Charter School shall meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11967.5.1(f)(5)(C)]
* The Charter School shall ensure that teachers in the Charter School hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools is required to hold. As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to noncore, non-college preparatory teachers. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(l)]
* The Charter School shall at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
* The Charter School shall, for each fiscal year, offer at a minimum, the number of minutes of instruction per grade level as required by Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(1)(A)-(D).
* If a pupil is expelled or leaves the Charter School without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the Charter School shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil’s last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card and health information. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(d)(3)]
* The Charter Schoolshall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47612.5(a)]
* The Charter Schoolshall, on a regular basis, consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's education programs. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(c)]
* The Charter School shall comply with any jurisdictional limitations to locations of its facilities. [Ref. California Education Code Sections 47605 and 47605.1]
* The Charter School shall comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment. [Ref. California Education Code Sections 47612(b), 47610]
* The Charter Schoolshall comply with all applicable portions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
* The Charter Schoolshall comply with the Public Records Act.
* The Charter Schoolshall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
* The Charter Schoolshall comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act.
* The Charter Schoolshall meet or exceed the legally required minimum of school days. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11960]

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Jeremy Cavallaro Date

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Roots Academy is a WASC Accredited charter school that provides its students with a rigorous and enriching Project-Based Learning Environment using Inquiry-based instruction through meaningful real-world context as they prepare to become 21st Century Scholars.

**INTRODUCTION**

Community Roots Academy is in its third-year of operation and currently serves a total of over 400 students in grades K-7. The following chart illustrates our school’s enrollment by grade level and school year. CRA has a traditional school year calendar with instruction delivered in self-contained classrooms.



The following chart reflects the current student demographics at Community Roots Academy:



**PROJECTED GROWTH**

Community Roots Academy will expand annually to serve a total of 684 students in grades K-8 by the 2017-18 school year.



**STUDENT OUTCOMES**

The following chart provides a two-year comparison of our school’s Academic Performance Index (API) with neighboring public schools.



In the 2011-12 school year, CRA tested a total of 19 students. In the 2012-13 school year, then total number of students tested was 99. Therefore, API results must be interpreted with caution as noted by the California Department of Education (CDE). CRA also earned a 2012 Statewide Ranking of 10 due to its API results. CRA did not have an API Similar Schools Ranking due to the number of students tested (n=99).

The following charts reflect our school’s Annual Measurable Objectives (percentage of students who performed Proficient/advanced) both school wide and by subgroup for ELA and mathematics CST for the past 2 years. The numerically significant subgroup identified is White students.

The following analysis was made:

* In 2012, a total of 18 students were tested and included in the school’s API/AYP
* Of the students tested in 2012, a total of 11 were identified as the following subgroup: White
* In 2013, a total of 99 students were tested and included in the school’s API/AYP.
* Of the students tested in 2013, a total of 77 students were identified as the following subgroup: White

Despite the fact that the CDE has only identified one numerically significant subgroup for CRA, the following charts include other subgroups tested, although not numerically significant since our school strives to educate and close the achievement gap for all students.

The following charts reflect the following:

* In 2012: 83.3% of students school wide performed at Proficient/Advanced in ELA; and 83.3% in mathematics.
* In 2013: 70.7% of students school wide performed at Proficient/Advanced in ELA; and 77.8% in mathematics
* In ELA: 81.8% of White students scored at Proficient/Advanced in 2012; and 69% in 2013.
* In math: 72.7% of White students scored at Proficient/Advanced in 2012; and 78% in 2013.

The decline in performance in 2013 must be interpreted with caution as the difference in the number of students tested in 2012 compared with 2013 was statistically significant, a comparison of 18 (2012) students versus 99 students (2013).









In the 2012-13 school year, CRA expanded to serve grades 3 and 6.





In the 2012-13 school year, CRA did not have any Asian students enrolled in the grade 6. Therefore, the following chart reflects two identified subgroups, although not numerically significant due to the number of students tested, which was under 100 students school wide.





As a result of preparing for a successful WASC Accreditation, Community Roots Academy developed the following measurable student outcomes that are embedded in daily instruction and practice and thus reflects the school’s core values, set of expectations and assets every CRA student will gain.

Community Roots Academy graduating students will be:

***Community Roots Academy graduates are:***

***Critical Thinkers who:***

* Apply, analyze, identify, synthesize and evaluate information and experiences.
* Connect the skills and content learned across the curriculum and evaluate multiple points of view.
* Use the **Inquiry Method** to address a problem, hypothesize, observe, and draw conclusions as they investigate an issue/problem.
* Collaborate and Participate in Experiential Learning and utilize problem-solving techniques.

***Effective Communicators who:***

* Demonstrate Content area and grade level mastery in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, History and Science
* Collaborate, work effectively, and manage interpersonal relationships with peers.
* Participate in projects, presentations, town meetings, and host exhibitions, which connect students to the ‘real world’ and the community.

***21st Century Scholars who:***

* Use technology effectively as a learning tool to access information.
* Demonstrate the ability to integrate technology as an effective tool in their daily lives.
* Use Visual and Performing Arts as learning tools and a means of expression.

***Socially Responsible Global Citizens who:***

* Embrace and respect cultural diversity through the understanding of our Global World.
* Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of American and World History and the values of different cultures (through a multi-cultural curriculum)
* Contribute to social activism through school wide projects.

In the past 2 years, Community Roots Academy has accomplished the following:

* Average attendance rate above 95%
* Full WASC Accreditation
* Recipient of the CDE Public Charter School Grant Program: $350,000
* Recipient of the Aliso Viejo Schools Grant,$10,000
* Developed & exude a Data-Driven Culture, where decision-making across all areas is based on the analysis of data. Our school administers a plethora of student assessments that allow teachers and the administration to check for student understanding on a daily basis.
* CRA was the recipient of the “Zero Waste School” as a result of our recycling and composting program led by students.
* CRA has implemented the Habits of Mind, school wide that are embedded in our core values, daily practice, and student measurable outcomes.
* CRA has a highly successful parent engagement program, evidenced by the large number of parents who volunteer at school wide events, in the classroom that support student learning and funding academic programs
* CRA has adopted a 1:1 Google Chromebooks program to prepare students for both 21st century skills and the Smarter Balanced Statewide Assessments.
* CRA has established beneficial relationships with community partners such as Environmental Nature Center, University of California Irvine, Ocean Institute, Ecology Center, Inside the Outdoors, Surfrider Foundation, the City of Aliso Viejo and others.

# ELEMENT 1: EDUCATIONAL PLAN

*“The educational program of the school, designed, among other things, to describe what the school intends to accomplish, to identify those whom the school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling students to become self-motivated, competent* *and lifelong learners. A description, for the charter school, of annual goals, for all pupils and for each subgroup of pupils identified pursuant to Section 52052, to be achieved in the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the* *nature of the program operated, by the charter school, and specific annual actions to achieve those goals. A charter petition may identify additional school priorities, the goals for the school priorities, and the specific annual actions to achieve these goals.” Education Code §47605(b)(5)(A)(i-ii).*

**MISSION**

Community Roots Academy (“CRA”) is a Kindergarten through eighth grade learning community where learning is embedded in a meaningful real world context and where children are deliberately taught to see the connections between their formal education and the world. Not only do CRA students meet and exceed the California content standards, but they also are enabled as leaders now and for the future by learning to think independently, to solve problems creatively, to articulate their ideas and to work productively while collaborating with diverse people. At CRA, students learn to combine curiosity and application, leading to a deep understanding of content, self-motivation and confidence. These skill sets empower students to take on challenges to become who they want to be and excel beyond their potential.

**VISION**

CRA is a learning community with rigorous academic standards. We are dedicated to building strong relationships between all of our members. We are a learning environment that embodies the 21st century values we teach and practice. Collaboration, creativity, adaptability, reflection and evaluation are embedded in the CRA philosophy, governance, curriculum and daily operations. CRA supports and values children’s different learning styles and reaches all students through meaningful project-based curriculum. Our educators collaborate with community-based organizations to create learning experiences to build efficacy, confidence, empathy, a sense of purpose and connections to the real world. CRA is a place to learn about whom we are and empowers us to grow into the individuals we aspire to be. CRA students graduate as independent thinkers, responsible citizens and active community members.

**TARGET POPULATION**

Community Roots Academyserves the community of Aliso Viejo. Currently, our school serves a total of 410 students in Grades K-4 and 6-8 and is expanding to serve a total of 504 students in grades K-8, by the 2014-15 school year.

The following chart illustrates the projected enrollment by grade level and school year.



**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Community Roots Academy (“CRA”) builds the skills, knowledge and attitudes that empower individuals to thrive in their future.

* **Values for Today and Tomorrow** –CRA instills in its students the skills for success in our global society: mastery of fundamental academic skills in addition to problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, initiative, effective communication, adaptability and evaluating information and imagination all of which are requirements found in the Common Core State Standards. We teach, model and exude these values in our philosophy, governance, curriculum, instructional practice and operation.
* **Project-Based Curriculum** – The CRA curriculum includes engaging learning experiences that involve students in complex real-world projects through which they develop and apply skills and knowledge. Project-based learning empowers students with the skills for College & Career Readiness.
* **Community Partnership –** Community partnership is integral to effective education. Strong communities foster positive development in students. The CRA community includes students, parents, administration, teachers, community-based organizations, universities and national and international educational institutions.
* **Model Learning Community** – At CRA, all members of our professional community continually seek learning and growth opportunities. Faculty and staff participate in an extensive professional development program and also partner with colleagues to foster a challenging academic environment for all. Highly qualified and motivated teachers collaborate in decision-making and develop curriculum while guiding, supporting and evaluating students.
* **Environmental Stewardship** – CRA curriculum, policies and practices are designed to promote environmental awareness and stewardship.

**ACTUALIZING OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

**Values for Today and Tomorrow**: We believe there are specific skills and attitudes that make individuals and organizations successful in today’s world.”

* Mastery of fundamental academic skills (reading, writing and mathematics) is the foundation of an effective education.
* Proficiency at problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, written and oral communication and evaluation are essential skills for success.
* Adaptability, initiative and imagination are habits of mind that are critical to success.

All professional members of the Community Roots Academy learning community embrace and utilize these essential skills in their practices.

CRA’s deliberate curriculum and framework enable students in the CRA learning community to develop these skills and habits. CRA’s learning environment nurtures close relationships among students and school professionals through modeling and experiential learning and intentional connections to meaningful world experiences.

**“We value individuals and their history.”**

* Teachers implement a multicultural curriculum through units of study that are designed to increase student awareness and appreciation of various world cultures.
* CRA conducts regular Town Meetings where community members gather to learn about their similarities and differences through student work exhibitions and student-led presentations.
* CRA students participate in and host exhibitions showing their work product and what they have learned with the school community and the general public.

1. **Project-Based Curriculum: “**We believe people learn best through collaboration and experiential learning both inside and outside the classroom.”

* Teachers collaborate to create project-based curriculum.
* Partnerships with community-based organizations provide students with opportunities to work together to create connections to the real world and to give back to their community while enhancing their curriculum-based learning.
* The curriculum incorporates field trips and field study to enrich student and teacher learning experiences.
* Teachers plan and examine student work in grade level teams.
* Teachers share their expertise, set and maintain individual professional goals and improve their instructional practices in collaborative teams.

**“We teach students problem-solving and critical thinking skills, essential attributes to success in the global marketplace.”**

* Learning at CRA is based upon inquiry and guiding questions.
* Challenging and relevant texts are integrated into all grade level curricula.
* Through modeling and instruction, students learn to respect and challenge intellectual ideas, to question responses and to form opinions in an environment free of judgment.
* Students work in cooperative learning groups.
* Through questioning, debate and expression, students examine their points of view, as well as the perspectives of others.
* Students are exposed to a variety of cultures, races, religions, gender, health, political and other belief systems. Students learn to recognize and appreciate the differences and similarities between peoples.

**“We believe in authentic instruction and assessment that is adaptable to meet the needs of all learners.”**

* Students’ academic and social growth is measured through portfolio review, informal teacher assessment and analysis of goal setting, in addition to mandated state testing.
* Assessment modifications are made to meet the needs of any individuals with learning differences.
* Assessment is an integral part of the learning process, providing a valuable tool for reflection and growth.

1. **Community Partnership:** “We believe strong communities foster positive development for students.”

* Teachers and school leaders maintain close relationships with students and their families.
* CRA maintains its small size (under 300 students in K-5 and in 6-8) to help ensure strong relationships among students and teachers.
* Students maintain positive relationships with all adults working at or in conjunction with CRA through community open work and student advisory.
* The school establishes and maintains partnerships with community-based organizations and educational institutions to integrate expertise and real world connections into our students’ learning experiences.
* CRA is committed to parent communication and involvement that is achieved, in part, by:
  + Establishing a parent/teacher organization;
  + Maintaining a weekly parent communication detailing upcoming events, educator profiles and student work; and
  + Keeping parents informed about curriculum and practices through electronic communications and through faculty-led workshops and programs for parents.

1. **Model Learning Community: “**We are a model learning community.”

* CRA supports the professional development of teachers, administrators and school aides through weekly staff meetings, as well as workshops, retreats and learning institutes.
* Teachers plan, create and implement curriculum to best meet the needs and interests of students while exceeding California content standards.
* Teachers also meet to participate in cross-grade planning; teachers and schools leaders examine and continuously re-evaluate the scope and sequence of the curriculum.
* Teachers and administrators work collaboratively on school governance and curriculum review.

**“We hold students and staff to rigorous academic standards while developing social and emotional competence.”**

* Teachers design curriculum for social, emotional and academic competence, challenging students to work to their fullest potential.
* Students, parents and teachers collaborate to create and work toward student goals.
* Interdisciplinary instruction creates a framework where students can approach new and challenging content and real- life situations with confidence.
* Students learn the skills of conflict resolution and participate in advisory groups to build social competency.

1. **Environmental Stewardship:** “We believe developing an appreciation and responsibility for the natural environment enhances education and individuals lives.”

* Students develop an appreciation for the environment through curricular, projects, guided outdoor experiences and overnight trips.
* Students participate in on-going initiatives to promote conservation and reduce waste on campus.

**AN EDUCATED PERSON IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

An educated person in the 21st century has the confidence and skills to create the future. In order for an individual to create the future their education will need to instill a profound respect for themselves, others and the world around them.

An educated person in the 21st century is empowered with the desire to continually grow and develop throughout their lives. They have the ability to set goals, create a plan to achieve them and execute their plan. An educated person in the 21st century possesses the ability to critically evaluate information and form opinions while maintaining the confidence to re-evaluate their opinions and beliefs when presented with compelling data. They build on their successes as well as learn from their mistakes.

An educated person in the 21st century is adaptable and has a timeless skill set that will serve them in a rapidly evolving social, cultural, technological and economic landscape. They communicate and collaborate effectively and think creatively and critically to solve problems.

**HOW LEARNING BEST OCCURS**

CRA has been designed to create a learning environment most conducive to learning for both students and teachers, based on five best practices: 1) in a small school, 2) with a rigorous interdisciplinary core academic curriculum, 3) utilizing project-based instructional methodologies, 4) in a collaborative community of learners, and 5) with community partnerships.

**SMALL SCHOOL**

CRA’s organization and size allow faculty and staff to establish meaningful relationships with students and families. CRA will maintain small class sizes, lower student to teacher ratio and a smaller overall school (targeting 300 Kindergarten-5 students and 300 6-8 students or fewer). The benefits of small schools are well documented in research and some of the benefits include: improved attitudes towards school, fewer instances of negative social behavior and better attendance especially in areas of low SES and minority students.[[1]](#footnote-1) At CRA, students, families and educators are partners in learning. They develop strong relationships, which foster continuous, honest dialog about students’ goals, growth and development.

**RIGOROUS INTERDISCIPLINARY CORE ACADEMIC CURRICULUM**

At CRA, all subject areas and academic disciplines are integrated and interrelated to reflect a real-world learning context. Students will develop proficiency in the core subjects of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science while working to solve design challenges, problem-based projects and service learning projects. A rigorous academic curriculum based on real world projects and activities increases student achievement, improves retention of concepts and increases both student and teacher motivation. Educational research has identified that effective teaching of a rigorous core curriculum improves reading comprehension and overall student performance.[[2]](#footnote-2) Additional research also points to how a rich background of core knowledge improves students’ ability to think. Educational psychologist Daniel Willingham explains, “Knowledge comes into play mainly because if we want our students to learn how to think critically, they must have something to think about.” Willingham goes on to explain that a solid foundation of core knowledge actually improves thinking by freeing space in working memory, making new knowledge easier to process.[[3]](#footnote-3) Effective teaching of a curriculum rich in core content knowledge will foster CRA students’ ability to think critically and to acquire new knowledge while contributing to improved student performance. At CRA, teachers and administrators will collaborate to design and regularly update a rich core curriculum based on California content standards.

**PROJECT-BASED LEARNING**

At CRA, we believea project-based approach to the curriculum is best suited for teaching core academic and 21st century skills and provides the most opportunity for student success. We believe that authentic learning, including design-based, problem-based and project-based challenges, provides students continuous opportunities to discover their passion and give them the ability and desire to explore real world processes and issues. As students work to meet these authentic challenges, they will apply their knowledge from all academic disciplines and build self-confidence as they negotiate some of the challenges of the real world in a safe, nurturing learning environment. At CRA, teachers will collaborate to design and execute projects that will develop students’ knowledge base and ability to solve problems, to foster critical thinking and collaboration and to build confidence.

At CRA, the project-based approach was inspired by the work of John Dewey and his work at the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago. The goal of the Laboratory School curriculum was to create an environment where students learned to solve social problems and meet social needs by using knowledge gained from past experiences. The activities or experiences in the curriculum were framed in such a manner that the knowledge gained had a meaningful purpose to the students in their present lives.

Dewey believed education was most effective:

…when there was no rift between experience and knowledge, when information about things and ways of doing grew out of social situations and represented answers to social needs, when the education of the immature member of society proceeded almost wholly through participation in the social or community life of which he was a member….[[4]](#footnote-4)

At the Laboratory School, Dewey and his colleagues sought to create an environment where individuals learned by their actions and conduct. The reasons for such actions and conduct were clear, serving purposeful functions in the individuals’ lives. For example, in a primitive fishing village, a boy may learn to fish from observing other individuals fishing and by fishing himself. The boy leans these techniques not because he wants to pass a test with little practical meaning, but because his contribution to the village as a fisherman is vital to sustaining the village’s existence. The boy’s test is life itself; he learns a skill by experiencing it and immediately appreciating (to some extent) his need for such skill.

Like John Dewey and the Laboratory School, CRA seeks to utilize project-based instruction to enable students to be successful at life in their time.

Research provides evidence that students engaged in effective project-based learning demonstrate improved academic achievement, positive attitudes towards learning and increased ability to use higher-level cognitive skills. Moreover, research also indicates students involved in project-based learning demonstrate increased focus on learning and mastery and motivation.[[5]](#footnote-5) Additionally, students of all ability levels engaged in project-based learning demonstrated improved scores on standardized assessments and other performance assessments.[[6]](#footnote-6) Equally important to improved academic performance, multiple studies show students involved in project-based learning have demonstrated and articulated a distinct attitude towards learning and acquisition of knowledge. The juxtaposition of these attitudes are best explained by J. Boaler in research comparing a school using a project-based approach to mathematics and a school using a more traditional approach. She states, “Students taught with a more traditional, formal, didactic model developed an inert knowledge that they claimed was of no use to them in the real world.” In contrast, “students taught with a more progressive, open, project-based model developed more flexible and useful forms of knowledge and were able to use this knowledge in a wide range of settings.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Additionally, in a review of research on project-based learning, John Thomas indicates that project-based learning enhances the quality of subject matter knowledge gained by students and increases capacity for higher order cognitive skills such as problem solving and critical thinking.[[8]](#footnote-8) The research on project-based learning suggests great potential for enabling students to build core academic knowledge and skills as well as the capacity to use their knowledge to meet the challenges they will face throughout their lives.

**IN A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS**

At CRA, we believe collaborative learning communities’ foster positive development for students. The faculty and staff are models of learning and collaboration as they work together and with partnering organizations to design curriculum, make informed decisions and create policies. Students learn to work together on projects and activities deliberately designed to foster student collaboration and development of interpersonal skills. Research suggests a number of benefits of collaborative learning. Learners of any age achieve more in collaboration than in competitive or individualistic interaction. Students are more effective interpersonally and are more positive about school, subject matter, teachers and each other in collaborative learning environments.[[9]](#footnote-9) Cooperative learning environments promote: better connections to people, emotional maturity, strong personal identity, the ability to cope with adversity, self-confidence, higher self-esteem, independence and autonomy.[[10]](#footnote-10) CRA’s organizational framework is designed for students, families, teachers, administrators and community partners to work together to create and maintain a collaborative learning community through structured interdependent cooperative tasks, individual accountability and a supportive environment.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Community partners are integral to the CRA curriculum and school community. As financial and human resources for educational institutions and non-profit organizations become scarcer, the need for partnership between like-minded organizations is critical to sustaining the organizations and delivering a high quality, 21st century education.[[11]](#footnote-11) Partnerships with community-based organizations (“CBOs”) and educational institutions provide CRA resources to support school organization and development, finances, curriculum and professional development. They will provide students access to experts in various content areas, allowing CRA’s students to gain deeper insights into content and act as role models in the 21st century workforce. Additionally, the community partners support teachers in their development and execution of projects that contribute to the school and community. Research has indicated that partnerships between schools and CBOs can help build relationships with parents, foster trust between parents and educators, work to develop parent leadership and even improve student achievement.[[12]](#footnote-12) Our community partnerships enrich CRA on-campus experiences as well as expand our learning environment beyond our classrooms.

Community Roots Academy has adopted the following Expected School-wide Learning Results/Student Outcomes that supports its mission and vision. The ESLR’s are embedded in daily instruction and practice and thus reflects our school’s core values and set of expectations and assets every CRA student will have.

***Community Roots Academy graduates are:***

***Critical Thinkers who:***

* Apply, analyze, identify, synthesize and evaluate information and experiences.
* Connect the skills and content learned across the curriculum and evaluate multiple points of view.
* Use the **Inquiry Method** to address a problem, hypothesize, observe, and draw conclusions as they investigate an issue/problem.
* Collaborate and Participate in Experiential Learning and utilize problem-solving techniques.

***Effective Communicators who:***

* Demonstrate Content area and grade level mastery in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, History and Science
* Collaborate, work effectively, and manage interpersonal relationships with peers.
* Participate in projects, presentations, town meetings, and host exhibitions, which connect students to the ‘real world’ and the community.

***21st Century Scholars who:***

* Use technology effectively as a learning tool to access information.
* Demonstrate the ability to integrate technology as an effective tool in their daily lives.
* Use Visual and Performing Arts as learning tools and a means of expression.

***Socially Responsible Global Citizens who:***

* Embrace and respect cultural diversity through the understanding of our Global World.
* Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of American and World History and the values of different cultures (through a multi-cultural curriculum)
* Contribute to social activism through school wide projects.

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGIES**

The following instructional methodologies are the foundation of CRA practices. CRA hires teachers who have experience using these methods or the desire to learn them. These methodologies are fully supported by CRA’s professional development plan.

**PROJECT-BASED LEARNING (PBL)**

Project-based learning is a model in which projects are the framework for learning. Projects derive from design-based or problem-based challenges and assignments. Students learn through investigation, decision-making and working autonomously while producing a realistic product or presentation.

At CRA, project-based learning is a school wide learning method that is supported through professional development, resources and mentoring from experienced teachers and administrators.

Project-based learning at CRA is consistent with researchers’ definitions of project-based learning (“PBL”).[[13]](#footnote-13)

1. PBL projects are central, not peripheral to the curriculum.
2. PBL projects are focused on questions or problems that "drive" students to encounter (and struggle with) the central concepts and principles of a discipline.
3. Projects involve students in a constructive investigation.
4. Projects are student-driven to some significant degree.
5. Projects are realistic, not school-like.

Teachers utilize a project formula which breaks projects into four phases – Define, Plan, Do, Review. This model, which is proposed by Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel in their book *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in our Times*, provides a framework for understanding and instructing effective projects. “The project bicycle” breaks projects into four phases for both teachers and students – Define, Plan, Do, Review. Trilling and Fadel’s model provides guidelines for managing project time, balanced instruction, assessment, evaluating learning and facilitating community involvement.[[14]](#footnote-14)

**Evidence of Effectiveness:** As cited earlier, research evidence suggests that students engaged in effective project-based learning demonstrate improved academic achievement, positive attitudes towards learning and increased ability to use higher-level cognitive skills. In addition, research also indicates students involved in project-based learning demonstrate increased focus on learning and mastery and motivation.[[15]](#footnote-15)

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**

**Description:** Differentiated instruction is a teaching method, which enables teachers to customize curriculum and instruction to appropriately challenge each student. Student learning occurs best if tasks and challenges are just a bit beyond their capabilities. This optimum degree of student challenge is known as the zone of proximal development. Differentiated instruction provides teachers a framework to adjust curriculum, assignments, assessments and expectations to meet the needs of each and every learner. CRA hires teachers with experience in differentiated instruction and support this practice with professional development and mentoring from teachers and administrators.

**Evidence of Effectiveness:** Research provides ample evidence that students have a better attitude towards school and are more successful in school if they are taught using methods that are responsive to their readiness levels.[[16]](#footnote-16) Additionally, more recent research has identified more specific benefits of differentiated instruction including greater student engagement, higher levels of intrinsic motivation, higher student productivity, greater student autonomy, increased achievement and an improved sense of self-competence.[[17]](#footnote-17)

**ARTS INTEGRATION**

**Description:** Arts integration is pedagogy where the performing and visual arts are deeply embedded in the core academic curriculum. Teaching of the arts in meaningful connection to core academic knowledge helps students appreciate and understand visual and performance arts while helping to enhance their learning in other disciplines.

At CRA, performing and visual arts are integrated as part of the core curriculum, playing a major role in helping students interpret a broad range of themes in English language arts, social studies, science and mathematics and as a tool for expressing student learning. At CRA, artistic work is incorporated into daily and weekly assignments and learning experiences. Students may draw, paint, create models, create plays and songs, tell stories, and write poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Arts integration is a school wide methodology, and CRA utilizes the expertise of arts specialist teachers, grade level teachers and community partners to create learning experiences that incorporate the arts in meaningful ways.

**Evidence of Effectiveness:** There is a wealth of evidence to indicate the academic and social benefits of integrating visual and performing arts as a part of the core curriculum. Research shows students taking part in learning the visual arts, music, dramatic enactment and dance have demonstrated enhanced cognitive development and organizational abilities, enhanced ability to read and interpret text, improved writing ability, improved spatial reasoning and mathematical ability, increased self-confidence and self-efficacy, enhanced creativity and many other academic and social benefits.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION**

**Description:** Technology integration is an instructional method where students use computers, digital media and other technology as tools for learning and expressing their understanding of core academic concepts. Teachers guide students to build proficiency in communication, research, organization and presentation of data, document production and self-expression using technology. CRA is committed to developing students’ and teachers’ capacities to utilize technology to enhance learning. CRA aims to utilize technology integration in all grade levels to some extent. CRA will seek to hire teachers with technological capabilities, and technology integration will be supported by professional development and mentoring from teachers and administrators.

**Evidence of Effectiveness:** The National Association of School Boards of Education (“NASBE”) Study Group on e-Learning concluded, “that e-learning will improve American education in valuable ways and should be universally implemented as soon as possible. Technology is not a solution in isolation, but rather a key component that helps make it possible for schools to address core educational challenges.”[[19]](#footnote-19) Additional research has identified trends emerging in studies that indicate that by integrating technology as a tool throughout the disciplines, technology accelerates, enriches and deepens basic skills, motivates and engages students in learning, helps relate academics to the practices of today’s workforce, strengthens teaching, contributes to school change and connects school to the world.[[20]](#footnote-20) The potential benefits of using technology as a tool to expand the classroom and instruction are evident in current research.

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

**Description:** In recent years a growing number of educators are recognizing the significant impact social and emotional development has on academic achievement. A substantial body of recent research reveals how cognitive development resulting from social and emotional learning frequently transfers into an increased capacity for academic learning. Further, exclusively academic proficiency leaves students unprepared to effectively negotiate the challenges of life. If self-esteem, character and human relationships are neglected, academic performance will suffer and potential will be limited.

**Evidence of Effectiveness:** Jonathan Cohen, a pioneer in the Social-Emotional Learning Movement, demonstrates how the integration of social-emotional learning throughout the curriculum and school contributes to (1) creating safe, caring and responsive classrooms; (2) enhancing an awareness of self and others; (3) encouraging students to become flexible problem solvers; (4) helping students become more able to cooperate, form relationships, be self-motivating and adopt roles as both followers and leaders; and (5) engaging in long-term planning that includes collaboration among home, school and community.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Additional research on social-emotional learning has indicated, **“**When schools attend systematically to students’ social and emotional skills, the academic achievement of children increases, the incidence of problem behaviors decreases, and the quality of the relationships surrounding each child improves. And, students become the productive, responsible, contributing members of society that we all want.”[[22]](#footnote-22) Attending to students’ social and emotional well-being clearly contributes to academic success.

**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

One of the expectations for CRA teachers is their participation in and contribution to, project development, as projects are a core vehicle for instruction, taking the place of traditional instructional materials in large part. Project development is a critical component of CRA’s instructional program and teachers are fully supported through professional development, teacher mentoring and coaching and designated time for teachers to collaborate in grade level teams, that is part of CRA’s teachers’ daily schedule. Teachers collaborate in grade level teams with performing and visual arts and physical education to create, refine and execute integrated interdisciplinary projects for each grade. Grade level teams collaborate with other teachers and community partners to integrate fieldwork, physical education, performing arts and visuals arts. Teachers will develop the projects based on the California Content/Common Core Standards using the Understanding by Design[[23]](#footnote-23) approach along with the 21st Century Learning Bicycle.[[24]](#footnote-24) These frameworks guide teachers to select learning goals for students and create authentic project-based learning experiences, which will accomplish the desired learning goals.

**CURRICULUM**

The curriculum of Community Roots Academy is designed to teach core academic skills and 21st century skills, while integrating technology, performing arts and visual arts. Project-based learning[[25]](#footnote-25) allows students to best learn all of these skills thoroughly and simultaneously. By taking part in a combination of project-based learning, students learn through experience and reflection as they participate in long-term projects at each grade level. Each grade level’s projects share similar frameworks and structures as projects in other grades, but as students develop and learn, the projects become more complex, and students take more responsibility for their learning. The sophistication of the projects can adjust individually, student by student, as each student develops, as well as collectively when students advance grade levels. Community partners are critical to creating and executing the project-based curriculum because they add content area expertise, adult world context and sense of purpose to students’ learning.

**CRA’s INSTRUCTION OF CORE SUBJECTS & 21ST CENTURY SKILLS**

The CRA curriculum incorporates the state adopted Common Core Standards for each grade level while integrating technology, performing arts and visual arts and health and physical fitness. We believe in order for students to thrive in the future, they need to learn how to use their core content knowledge. Thus, CRA curriculum extends further to teach critical 21st century skills. Specifically, CRA curriculum and instruction teach critical thinking, social and College & Career readiness skills to enable students to be productive and responsible citizens as well as leaders in the workforce. Problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, initiative, effective communication, adaptability, evaluating information and imagination are all integral elements of the CRA educational program and the newly adopted California Common Core State Standards. As students grow and develop, they continue to hone these skills through their immersion in learning experiences and projects that connect them to the real world in meaningful ways. Students will have the tools to explore any future they desire and the desire to work to create a better future.

**SCOPE & SEQUENCE FOR PROJECTS**

The California content standards & Common Core State Standards are embedded in CRA’s project-based, inquiry driven curriculum. The CRA curriculum and instruction is thoughtfully designed to maximize engagement and achievement while building the essential skills for College & Career Readiness. The curriculum scope and sequence reflects the stages of child development, providing students with cognitive, physical and social challenges that promote positive development. As our students grow as individuals, the curriculum evolves to meet their developmental needs. For instance, the early childhood curriculum focuses on developing basic academic and communication skills, like learning to be a part of a group and understanding what makes up a community, and progresses to reading and interpreting sophisticated texts, presenting points of view and working to make significant contributions to the community in the middle school. As students progress through grade levels, the curriculum content becomes more complex and students take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Students take an active role in planning projects, providing one another feedback, setting expectations and creating assessments. Additionally, students’ projects increasingly connect with the adult world, often working toward solving problems within the community. In essence, they develop the skills and habits of mind that prepare them to learn and negotiate challenges throughout their lives.

**CORE SUBJECTS – COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

The following is a written description of CRA core subject courses and a matrix of the content and skills being taught at each grade level.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

CRA follows the state adopted Common Core Standards for English Language Arts. and reading, writing, speaking and listening will be embedded in projects in all courses, but specific, focused literacy instruction will be taught during the Humanities curriculum.[[26]](#footnote-26) CRA Humanities courses will introduce students to the basic components and skills of reading and writing and help students develop into fluent, independent readers, skilled writers and articulate speakers.

**READING**

The ability to read fluently and interpret text independently is critical to academic success as well to building a life-long love of reading. In the elementary years (Kindergarten–5), CRA’s reading curriculum progresses from the building blocks of reading in Kindergarten to fluency and decoding proficiency in 5th grade. Humanities at CRA will utilize balanced literacy and an integrative approach to reading, blending the best elements of both whole language and code-emphasizing phonics.

Key components of the Kindergarten–5 Balanced Literacy Program include:

* **Phonics Instruction** – building reading and decoding skills through linking letters to sounds to form letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns to help students learn to read.
* **Whole Language Instruction** – building literacy through focusing on meaning and strategy instruction, such as context and syntax.
* **Vocabulary Building –** explicit instruction vocabulary development.

In balanced literacy -

* The teacher models by reading or writing to the students within the following modalities:
* Interactive Read Aloud
* Demonstration or Modeled Writing
* The teacher reads or writes with the students within the following modalities:
* Shared Reading
* Shared Writing or Interactive Writing
* Guided Reading (contains independent reading with close conferring)
* Reading and writing is done by the students independently within the following modalities:
* Independent reading (with teacher observation and conferring)
* Writing process (with teacher observation and conferring)[[27]](#footnote-27)

As CRA students progress to middle school they have mastered decoding and will have a growing vocabulary and require additional reading strategies to continue their development as readers. Middle school students increasingly use reading, writing and speaking in projects and assessments in all subjects.

Key components of the middle school reading curriculum include:

* **Independent Reading** – Students will have designated class time and a homework expectation of weekly independent reading. Students will set goals for their reading and track their progress on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Humanities teachers will meet with students to help with book selection, provide support and discuss progress towards goals. CRA students will be competent and critical readers capable of understanding text on a variety of levels.
* **Literacy Circles** – Students are assigned or choose groups based on any number of teacher specifications or students’ choices. Each group meets regularly to discuss various literary themes, questions, author’s purpose and similar topics. During each meeting, students take on roles and responsibilities to conduct the meetings. Students summarize, define new vocabulary, create character and plot maps, create questions and answer teacher questions about the text to prepare for the discussion group. When the group meets, they review their work, discuss the text and choose a reading goal for the next meeting. Between meetings, the group members work independently to prepare for the next meeting.

**WRITING**

Writing is a critical component of all aspects of the CRA curriculum for all grade levels. Students receive specific instruction in various types of writing, the writing process, grammar and mechanics throughout the Humanities curriculum. CRA utilizes two main strategies for writing instruction, Writer’s Workshop and Writing Across the Curriculum.

* ***Writer’s Workshop*** – Students learn throughout the writing process including brainstorming, drafting, editing and final publication. Students learn to develop their ideas while writing about topics that are important to them in frequent writing sessions. In the Writer’s Workshop model, teachers explain the writing process and offer instruction in writing during mini-lessons. At the heart of the Writer’s Workshop are teachers conferencing with students to offer guidance and to discuss the aspects of writing that are relevant to students and their current work. Teacher conferencing is highly personalized so that students’ focus on grammar, style or other aspects of writing according to their needs, in addition to topics addressed in mini-lessons. Students make repeated revisions while editing their works after feedback from peers and teachers. After sufficient revisions, students create a published piece to share.

**MATHEMATICS**

The CRA mathematics curriculum will follow the state adopted Common Core Standards for mathematics. Students will develop skills in number sense, measurement, geometry, algebra and mathematical reasoning. Although math skills will be utilized throughout CRA projects and curriculum, the mathematics block will be when math skills are isolated, practiced and reviewed for mastery. Students progress from learning the basics of counting and computation to use logic and mathematical thinking to solve problems.

*Pacing and Addressing Individual Needs*

At CRA, we recognize that mathematics can be a somewhat linear learning process where certain knowledge and skills need to be mastered before progressing to a more complex task or activity. As in all subjects, CRA utilizes activities that provide appropriate mathematical challenges for students of all abilities. Teachers will closely monitor and document students’ progress, then use differentiation and student grouping to create multiple pathways for learning and student scaffolding. In order to accommodate the wide range of student ability levels, teachers may choose to group students according to ability.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

The Kindergarten-5 social studies program at CRA will use Scott Foresman’s *History-Social Science for California.* This program was selected for its flexible, comprehensive approach to the content and compatibility with a project-based approach to social studies. It is aligned with state social studies standards and approved by the state of California for use in classrooms.

Grades six, seven, and eight will use *Ancient Civilizations*, *Medieval and Early Modern Times*, and *America: History of Our Nation, Independence Through 1914,* respectively. These texts are part of a three-book series published specifically for California middle grades students by Prentice Hall and are based upon state social studies standards. They provide a wealth of resources that help students connect the past to the present. The Prentice Hall series is approved by the state of California.

**SCIENCE**

At CRA, the science curriculum closely follows the California content standards. Students are able to explore their natural curiosity in the world around them. Even the youngest students use the scientific method to investigate the physical, life and Earth sciences. Students learn to ask questions and teachers guide students in hands-on experimentation to find answers and solutions.

The Kindergarten-5 science program will utilize the *National Geographic Science* texts to complement the project-based curriculum. *National Geographic Science* integrates reading into the content area highlights and the everyday application of scientific concepts through colorful, high-interest books that encourage scientific inquiry. Published in partnership with Hampton-Brown, the texts are aligned with the California state standards for science.

**INSTRUCTION FOR SPECIALIZED STUDENT POPULATIONS**

At CRA, instruction of all students with learning differences, including high achieving students’, low achieving students’, English Language Learners’ and special education students’ academic programs, is considered on an individual and case by case basis. In order to meet the diverse needs our student population, CRA utilizes a combination of push-in and pull-out instruction to best serve each student. In Community Roots Academy’s approach to educating students with learning differences we consider each student and design an instructional approach to best suit their individual’s needs. We primarily use a push-in model, where an additional instructor works with a student or a small group of students within the regular classroom. Using this approach, students receive the additional assistance needed to succeed at grade level activities without sacrificing instructional time from the regular curriculum. Examples of push-in assistance can include clarifying instructions, dividing assignments into smaller steps or components, modeling reading and writing strategies, extra coaching and immediate feedback on assignments, etc. Additionally, all CRA classrooms utilize independent instruction or self-initiated skills practice such as flashcards, puzzles, games and technology, which have demonstrated success in supporting learning in students with learning differences.[[28]](#footnote-28)

In addition to push-in strategies, pull-out strategies are utilized for students with needs that are better met individually or in small groups outside the regular classroom. Examples of pull-out instruction: Working with English Language Learners on content specific vocabulary, previewing a reading selection with a struggling reader or re-teaching a specific math concept. These activities are best done as pull-out activities because they focus on specific isolated skills in an effort to support the regular classroom instruction. The skills practiced are integral to a student’s success within the regular classroom setting.

**PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE LOW-ACHIEVING**

CRA supports academically low achieving students succeed with (1) curriculum that engages student interest with ‘real world’ relevance and active learning strategies, (2) a supportive school environment where each student’s personal and academic needs are known well and (3) the systematic use of academic supports and interventions to meet the needs of academically low-achieving students. Additional academic support allows students to keep pace with class work, and targeted academic interventions will address individual learner needs through backfilling academic skills needed to bring students up to grade level performance (see Student Success Team section below). Teachers participate in professional development to address students’ special needs, including those of low achievers, and use a curriculum planning process that prompts for differentiated planning of instruction to address the special needs in their classes. CRA allocates Supplemental Hourly Funding to provide additional instruction through programs, which may include extended day program, early day program, Saturday program and/or summer school. If needed, CRA may adjust individual students’ daily schedules to provide additional support to students during the regular school day.

CRA identifies students who are performing below grade level through the results of California Standards Tests (“CSTs”), California Measures of Academic Performance & Progress (CalMAPP) and from CRA’s assessments. Staff are trained to identify and monitor the progress of students who are struggling academically. CRA holds its instructional staff accountable for raising the academic achievement of these students since it is not only a moral imperative; it is also a factor in the Academic Performance Index (“API”) and in Annual Yearly Progress (“AYP”). Instructional staff monitors progress of academically low achieving students throughout the year to ensure that students are on track for meeting growth goals. Services for academically low achieving students begin with an assessment of student abilities and needs. Student supports and interventions are adjusted as needed to address the specific needs of students. Depending on the identified needs, students receive one or more of the following interventions.

Instructional activities and/or materials are modified to accommodate different academic needs, interests and learning styles

* In projects, student choice and involvement allows flexibility for teachers to work with students to customize project plans and expectations to address student needs.
* Through arts and technology integration, teachers create project extensions and supplemental activities based on student ability and interests.
* Flexible and fluid student groupings provides academically low achieving students opportunities to participate both in specialized groups consisting of only academically low achieving students and in heterogeneous groups. In specialized groups, students benefit from a pace and content tailored to their skill level and needs. When heterogeneous groups are used strategically, academically low achieving students benefit from the skills modeled by more advanced students. Additionally, students’ participation in multiple groups recognizes that not all students are low achieving in all areas. Students can get appropriate level challenges to meet their individual learning needs and to provide students the most opportunities for success.

Additional help is available to students during the school day from teachers, support staff, peers, and/or volunteer tutors. Supplemental instruction, including extra help and/or targeted academic interventions to raise skills to grade level. Student Success Team (SST) meetings with school personnel and the parent or guardian (optional) are designated for students that are not achieving at grade-level standards to review the above strategies and plan for new ones.

**PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ACADEMICALLY HIGH ACHIEVING**

CRA also is an ideal environment for high achieving students. Students who demonstrate an ability to advance at a faster pace or a higher cognitive level are academically challenged by CRA’s curriculum and flexible instructional practices. Teachers are expected to adjust assignments and expectations to maximize student success while maintaining a rigorous curriculum. Students are encouraged and supported to reach beyond the grade-appropriate state standards to pursue their own interests and learn at their own pace. Teachers modify instruction as needed to engage and challenge each student at his or her level. Staff also guide learners to extracurricular enrichment activities that happen throughout the year.

The process for identifying students who are academically high achieving is similar to the process for identifying academically low performing students, using the results of the CSTs and CRA’s assessments. Modifications for academically high achieving students begins with an assessment of student abilities and needs.

Depending on identified needs, students receive one or more of the following interventions:

* Instructional activities and/or materials modified to accommodate different academic needs, interests and learning styles

1. In projects, student choice and involvement allows flexibility for teachers to work with students to customize project plans and expectations to address student needs. Due to the deep, complex, rigorous, and integrated nature of project-based learning, academically high achievers are encouraged to be creative, develop their strengths, take risks, and extend their learning.[[29]](#footnote-29) Project-based learning provides a natural opportunity for students to actively direct their learning and to work on complex problems and issues that have multifaceted solutions.
2. Through arts and technology integration, teachers can create project extensions and supplemental activities based on student ability and interests.
3. Acceleration is an instructional strategy used to advance the pace of instruction to the student’s advanced abilities when other forms of instruction at grade-level do not provide an intellectual or academic challenge.
4. Flexible and fluid student groupings provide academically high achieving students opportunities to participate in groups consisting of only highly able students so they may receive instruction at an advanced pace and accelerated level. In these advanced groups, students benefit from the challenging pace and content as well as scaffolding from other advanced students. Additionally, students’ participation in multiple groups recognizes that not all students are gifted in all areas. Students can get appropriate level challenges to meet their individual learning needs and to provide students the most opportunities for success.

* Learning activities above grade level, including with older students on a variety of activities, such as multiage groupings in mathematics.
* Pairing with low-performing students as peer tutors for a small portion of their day to develop leadership and social skills, deepen their own understanding, and narrow the achievement gap. (Research shows that people deepen understanding through the process of teaching others).
* Participation in enrichment activities during or after school.

**GIFTED & TALENTED STUDENTS**CRA accommodates the needs of gifted and talented students, both those previously identified at other schools and those identified through the CRA Identification Process. At CRA, gifted and talented students will be identified on their intellectual, academic, creative and leadership abilities. CRA curriculum and instructional practices are flexible enough to accommodate and appropriately challenge gifted students in all subject areas. The identification of gifted and talented students at CRA is a four-step process.

1. Identification and referral – Teachers and administrators nominate potential candidates.
2. Screening/Review – School administrator or designee screens students by reviewing existing data – cumulative report cards, portfolios, report cards, progress reports and standardized test data; students can be asked to voluntarily take additional assessments.
3. Committee Review – Gifted and Talented Committee reviews findings and makes recommendations.
4. Verification – Executive Directors review all screenings, assessments and recommendations and determine the eligibility of students.

The following is a list of examples of student performance and achievement that teachers and administrators might identify as gifted and talented.

* Multiple years of student achievement in English Language Arts or Math two years beyond grade level.
* Multiple years of superior report cards.
* Multiple years of standardized test scores beyond grade level.
* Distinguished participation in community activities.

To ensure that the individual needs of gifted and talented students are met, the core curriculum teachers develop individualized learning plans, working with an administrator with input and consultation of parents. Individualized learning plans may include supplemental reading, greater depth of study, customized projects and differentiated expectations. CRA and parents are partners in developing an educational program and goals best suited to each individual student. The specific goals of the individualized learning program are evaluated on report cards and discussed with parents at conferences. CRA’s project-based curriculum and instructional practices such as differentiation, arts and technology integration, acceleration and collaborative grouping allow teachers the opportunity to appropriately challenge gifted and talented students.

**PLAN FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS**

CRA identify, serve and monitor the progress of English Language Learners (“ELL”) to ensure that they have full access to CRA’s educational program, and that they make appropriate progress to English proficiency. All students whose home language is a language other than English (as indicated on their home language survey) are administered the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) during the testing window (currently July 1 to October 31) to determine their English language proficiency level, and will administer the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) starting with the 2016-17 school year, in place of CELDT, once approved by the State Board of Education. CRA uses annual CELDT and CST data, teacher observations and optional parent input to identify English Language Learners (“ELL”), determine their English Language Development (“ELD”) levels and reclassify ELL students as English proficient when appropriate. Once an ELL student is reclassified as English proficient, CRA monitors the student’s progress using CST scores and CRA assessments for at least two years to ensure academic progress.

CRA teachers strive to raise ELL students’ rate of English acquisition and overall academic performance. Our instructional staff monitors progress of ELLs throughout the year to ensure this subgroup of students are on track for meeting academic growth goals.

CRA ensures that ELL students have full access to their grade level curriculum by using a range of supportive instructional practices.

* Predictable and consistent classroom management routines, aided by easy-to-read schedules on the board or on charts, to, which the teacher refers frequently.
* Graphic organizers that make content and the relationships among concepts and different lesson elements visually explicit.
* Additional time and opportunities for practice, either during the school day, after school, or through homework.
* Identifying, highlighting, and clarifying difficult words and passages within texts to facilitate comprehension, and more generally greatly emphasizing vocabulary development.
* Giving students extra practice in reading words, sentences and stories in order to build automaticity and fluency.
* Providing opportunities for extended interactions with teacher and peers.[[30]](#footnote-30)
* Cooperative learning (students working interdependently on group instructional tasks and learning goals), which encourages reading in English and promotes comprehension.[[31]](#footnote-31)
* Providing instructional material at or near students’ reading levels in their native language and/or in English.

To support ELL students attain English proficiency, CRA uses the following practices:

* Provide formal English Language Development instruction as needed, either in a “pull-out” program during the school day, integrated within the classroom, or as a program outside of school hours.
* Use Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies to support rigorous academic content and English learning, including the following components.
* Use of Realia (real objects and materials).
* Use of Manipulatives (drawings, posters, brainstorming-clusters, graphs, tables, maps, props, multimedia presentations, storyboards, story maps).
* Visuals (study-prints, textbook illustrations, overhead-projected prints, reproductions of paintings, and documents).
* Graphic organizers (matrices, Venn diagrams, and webs).
* Planned opportunities for interaction between all individuals in the classroom (creating a skit and acting it out, co-operative learning, collaborative learning, and student-generated stories based on personal experiences).[[32]](#footnote-32)
* Place ELL students in classrooms with a qualified teacher who possesses the appropriate qualifications, such as a CLAD or its equivalent.
* Provide teachers with professional development on using ELD standards as well as best practices in second language acquisition so they become skilled in classroom strategies to meet the needs of ELL students.
* Align instructional materials and curriculum for ELL students with ELD standards, in tandem with CRA teachers’ collaboration to integrate reading, writing and listening standards throughout the curriculum.
* Provide instructional support in the home language (as appropriate) or in accessible English for students with the lowest ELD levels as is feasible and advisable.
* Monitor the progress of ELL students.

**PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

As a public school, Community Roots Academy has an important obligation to serve students with exceptional needs. CRA adheres to all laws and/or consent decrees, as applicable, affecting individuals with exceptional needs, including all provisions of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), its amendments, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Office for Civil Rights mandates, and AB 602. All students are given equal access to the school regardless of disabilities, and CRA does not discriminate against any student nor deny admissions to any student based on his/her disabilities or lack of availability of special education services. All students with disabilities are accorded a Free, Appropriate Public Education. Section 504 services required by CRA students are the responsibility of the charter school.

Under applicable state and federal law, CRA has various options on how to deliver special education and related services either as (1) arm of the charter-granting agency, (2) an independent local education agency, or (3) as a charter SELPA. During each school year during which the school operates as an arm of Capistrano Unified School District for special education purposes, CRA understands that it is required to contribute an equitable share of its charter block grant funding to support District-wide special education instruction and service costs. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47646(b), the District shall provide the school with funding and/or services reasonably necessary to ensure that all students with exceptional needs who attend the school are provided a free and appropriate education.

**CHILD FIND**

CRA participates in a comprehensive “child find” system to identify students who have or may have exceptional needs. CRA participates in the child find systems of its special education local plan areas (“SELPAs”) provider. The following is our policy and practice:

* Post matriculation in-take practices that identify students with exceptional needs to help ensure that the school is aware of all students who have identified special needs;
* Communication with all feeder local education agencies to request and obtain cumulative files and other documents in a timely fashion;
* Staff development and training for school staff, to ensure that they know how to identify students who may have exceptional needs; and,
* Review of student assessment data, including but not limited to state-mandated testing to identify students who may be falling behind expectations in their academic progress and are in need of additional support or services.

**STUDENT STUDY TEAM**

The Student Study Team” (“SST”) at CRA, is specifically for students who are not demonstrating success in academic classes. The SST consists of the student’s teacher(s), a school administrator, the student’s parent/guardian (if possible), and others. The SST implement strategies within the general education setting, and monitors the student’s progress as new strategies are tried. If the student does not demonstrate success after all feasible strategies have been exhausted, and if the student’s difficulty appears like it could be caused by a disability eligible for special education services, the student is then referred for formal assessment.

**REFERRAL & ASSESSMENT**

If within a reasonable amount of time the student is not making significant progress with the personalized assistance, the Student Success Team in conjunction with the parent(s) will make a recommendation for assessment to determine eligibility for special education services. When CRA determines that an assessment is appropriate, the parent will receive an assessment plan for his/her child. The assessment plan will describe the types and purposes of the assessment that may be used to determine eligibility for services. Assessments may include individual testing, observations of the student at school, interviews with the student and school personnel who work with the student, and a review of school records, reports and work samples. The parent must consent to the assessment plan before the assessment can take place. The school initially anticipates that these assessments would be conducted by the staff that perform such services for the District. If this assessment identifies that the student has exceptional needs and requires special education and/or related services under the terms of applicable special education law, the school anticipates working with appropriate District staff to convene and conduct an individualized educational plan (“IEP”) team meeting or meetings.

**INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN**

An IEP is created for each student requiring special education services upon the completion of each assessment. The IEP team recommend actions to be taken for the student and consist of the student’s parent(s), the student’s teacher, a CRA staff member, a special education authority, and if necessary, additional members familiar with the condition of the student. The IEP team solicits participation from a CUSD special education representative and, if applicable, a representative from the student’s District of residence, at IEP meetings when it is anticipated that special education service options are considered within least restrictive environments other than those at the charter school.

CRA participates and as appropriate in planning and conducting the IEP team meetings and processes. CRA commits to implementing all special education and related services called for by the IEP in partnership with the District and/or SELPA. Instructional staff monitors their progress throughout the year to ensure that those students are on track for meeting growth goals. Student progress toward the goals specified in the IEP is reviewed by the IEP team on an annual and a triennial basis.

CRA monitors student progress toward the goals specified in the IEP regularly and formally reviews each IEP at least an annual and triennial basis, or more frequently if need arises. CRA shall, prior to the placement of the student with exceptional needs, ensure that the staff and other persons who provide special education services to the student be knowledgeable of the content of the IEP. A copy of each IEP shall be maintained at the school site. Service providers from other agencies who provide instruction or a related service to the individual of the school site shall be provided a copy of the IEP. All IEPs shall be maintained in accordance with state and federal student record confidentiality laws.

**SERVICE PROVISION**

For students with exceptional needs for whom CRA’s distinctive educational program is determined to be appropriate and the least restrictive environment, it is CRA’s intention to provide special education services within a modified inclusion model. Special education students will participate in the general education program to the greatest extent feasible and advisable, with supplemental supports and modifications to assist students to keep pace. Appropriate designated instructional services and related services will be provided, consistent with each student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP). It is the intent of CRA to provide the continuum of options specified in Education Code Section 56361 through participation in special education programs and services in the same manner of other public schools within the District’s SELPA.

CRA believes that students with special needs benefit academically, socially and emotionally from the opportunity to receive services in this modified inclusion model. Special education personnel work in a collaborative model with all teachers and staff aides to ensure that appropriate accommodations are in place and that the learning environment and curriculum are modified in a manner consistent with each student’s IEP.

CRA implements and reviews programs and services, including related services, required by IEPs of its students to support the movement of the students into less restrictive environments and increase the interactions of these students with non-disabled students. CRA’s general program of instruction for students with disabilities shall be responsive to the required sequence of courses and related curricular activities provided for all students in the charter school. CRA’s special education personnel are credentialed and/or licensed consistent with California laws and regulations. Student discipline and procedures for suspension and expulsions comply with federal and state laws and regulations, and include positive behavioral interventions. CRA conducts assessments and standardized testing for students with disabilities using state and District guidelines for modifications and adaptations. CRA conducts staff development activities to support access by students with disabilities to general education programs.

**DUE PROCESS**

In the event of a due process claim to enforce provisions of applicable special education law, CRA is committed to working in cooperation with the District to the maximum extent permitted under law to respond to and defend the school and the District in the process.

**SECTION 504 SPECIAL NEEDS**

CRA understands that its students may have exceptional needs that are not governed by the terms of the federal special education law (IDEA) but who may require accommodations or services pursuant to the terms of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and that CRA is for planning and implementing any such accommodations or services.

**RIGHT TO PURSUE LEA STATUS**

As noted above, the school initially anticipates functioning as an arm of the District for purposes of special education. CRA also retains the right to pursue independent local education agency (“LEA”) and/or special education local plan area (“SELPA”) status pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a) and the District shall not hinder or otherwise impede the efforts of the school to do so. In the event that the school opts not to establish independent LEA and/or SELPA status, it shall remain an arm of the District for special education purposes as required by Education Code Section 47641(b), and shall continue to receive funding and services pursuant to the terms of this section and any related annual agreements.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

At CRA, we believe that sustained professional development is essential to fostering a school culture where learning from investigation and exploration is modeled every day. The goal of professional development at CRA is to create a community of learners where teachers and administrators experience and model learning for the community.

The professional development plan for CRA is a multi-tiered framework that enables teachers to grow and develop as individuals while contributing the collective development of the school and pursuit of the school’s goals for students.

The first tier of professional development is a collaborative pursuit of two school-wide professional learning goals. Teachers and school leadership review the yearly self-study and select two goals that will help improve the instructional practices to better meet the needs of all CRA students.

The second tier of professional development is the mini-observation and feedback loops between teachers and the Executive Director of Education (“EDE”). Observations are brief, unannounced and frequent. The EDE observes with five objectives in mind: safety, purpose, teaching, environment, and learning. These objectives will guide a continued dialog about individual practices and professional development.

The third tier of professional development is Professional Development Portfolios (“PDP”). Each year at CRA, individual teachers work independently or in a team to plan, develop, document and present a PDP. The PDPs document the teachers’ efforts at enhancing instructional practices in an area of their choice and study the effects of their development on practice and student outcomes. The PDP project fosters professional development through experimentation and reflection. Building a PDP library allows teachers to record data on instructional practices and to explore personal interests while leaving a permanent resource for the school. While working on individual projects, teachers and administrators collaborate to provide feedback, help research and share ideas. In addition to PDPs, CRA teachers collaborate on grade level teams to develop and refine curricular projects. Grade level teachers collaborate with specialty teachers (art, music, physical education) and community partners to create integrated units of study.

# ELEMENT 2: MEASURABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

*“The measurable student outcomes identified for use by the charter school. ‘Student outcomes’ means the extent to which all students of the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school’s educational program. Pupil outcomes shall include outcomes that address increases in pupil academic achievement both school-wide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school, as that term is defined in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 47607. The pupil outcomes shall align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school.” Education Code § 47605(b)(5)(B).*

**MEASURABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES**

The Executive Director of Education (“EDE”) responsible and accountable to the school community for implementing curriculum and instruction to promote student achievement of measurable student outcomes and for demonstrating progress toward and meeting Adequate Yearly Progress goals as required by No Child Left Behind and the recently state-adopted California Measurement of Academic Performance & Progress (CalMAPP).

**SCHOOL OUTCOME GOALS**

CRA pursues the following school outcome goals.

1. CRA will continue to meet/exceed AYP targets required by NCLB, including an Academic Performance Index (“API”) rating of 800 both school wide and with each numerically significant sub-group targets.
2. CRA continues to maintain an ADA of 95% and a higher attendance rate than local area public schools, on average.
3. CRA continues to strive to academically outperform neighboring public schools as identified by School wide API, API Similar Schools Ranking & API State wide ranking.
4. CRA maintains a high level of parent satisfaction as measured by an 80% satisfaction rate on the annual parent survey.
5. CRA strives to close the achievement gap between groups with traditionally disparate scores: standardized test score data will demonstrate a pattern of raised achievement over time for traditionally underserved students.
6. CRA has developed and continues to foster relationships with the community in which it is housed in order to carry-out the school’s mission of creating students with the tools to be community leaders and problem solvers.

**PUPIL OUTCOME GOAL**

CRA strives to pursue pupil outcome goals, as measured by multiple and varied benchmark assessments detailed in chart below, that are aligned to state and federal guidelines.

These pupil outcomes are directly tied to the program goal of providing students with a rigorous standards-based program while preparing them to successfully learn, excel in school and prepare to be self-motivated, competent, life-long learners*.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **OUTCOMES** | **MEASURABLE GOAL** |
| **ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS:** in reading and other language arts skills including writing and oral communication as outlined by the California Content Standards. | * 90% of students will demonstrate at least one grade level improvement in reading skills annually * 75% of students performing at grade level upon entry to CRA will score Proficient/Adv. on CalMAPP testing (school wide and numerically significant subgroups) * 75% of students performing below grade level at entrance to CRA will evidence gains of at least one proficiency level on CalMAPP testing within 3rd years of enrollment at CRA |
| **MATHEMATICS:** Mastery of age appropriate principles of mathematics and logical reasoning and the ability to apply them to real life situations as defined by California Content Standards. | * 75% of students performing at grade level upon entry to CRA will score Proficient/Adv. on CalMAPP testing (school wide and numerically significant subgroups) * 90% of students performing below grade level on entrance to CRA will progress at least one grade level equivalent on a diagnostic assessment of foundational math skills each year * 75% of students performing below grade level at entrance to CRA will evidence gains of at least one proficiency level on CalMAPP testing within 3rd years of enrollment at CRA (school wide and numerically significant subgroups) |
| **HISTORY/SOCIAL-STUDIES:** Students will understand and apply historical, political and geographical knowledge to prepare them to be active and responsible citizens as outlined by the California Content Standards. | 100% of students will demonstrate effective use of technology to conduct academic research, communicate and apply their learning.   * 100% of students will participate in a Presentation of Learning (POL) |
| **SCIENCE:** Students will demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills and strategies of science as defined by the California Content Standards. Students will understand and apply the scientific method of inquiry to examine scientific problems and questions. Their scientific inquiries will build an understanding of the major underlying concepts of the various branches of science, including earth science, biology, chemistry and physics. | * 90% of students will demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary specific to the domain of science * 75% of students performing at grade level upon entry to CRA will score Proficient/Adv. on Science CST/CalMAPP testing (school wide and numerically significant subgroups) * 75% of students performing below grade level on entrance to CRA will evidence gains of at least one proficiency level on CalMAPP testing within 3-years of enrollment at CRA |
| **English Language Learners** will make appropriate progress toward English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening. | At least 75% of ELL students will increase by at least one ELD level annually as demonstrated by CELDT/ELPAC scores and redesignation data. |
| **Special education** students will achieve or make progress toward the learning goals in their Individualized Education Plans. | Special education-designated students will make progress annually toward the learning goals as outlined in their IEPs. |
| *CRA students will be* ***Critical Thinkers*** *who:*   * Apply, analyze, identify, synthesize and evaluate information and experiences. * Connect the skills and content learned across the curriculum and evaluate multiple points of view. * Use the Inquiry Method to address a problem, hypothesize, observe, and draw conclusions as they investigate an issue/problem. * Collaborate and Participate in Experiential Learning and utilize problem-solving techniques. |  |
| *CRA students will be* ***Effective Communicators who:***   * Demonstrate Content area and grade level mastery in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, History and Science * Collaborate, work effectively, and manage interpersonal relationships with peers. * Participate in projects, presentations, town meetings, and host exhibitions, which connect students to the ‘real world’ and the community. |  |
| *CRA students will be* ***21st Century Scholars who:***   * *Use technology effectively as a learning tool to access information.* * *Demonstrate the ability to integrate technology as an effective tool in their daily lives.* * *Use Visual and Performing Arts as learning tools and a means of expression.* |  |
| *CRA students will be* ***Socially Responsible Global Citizens who:***   * *Embrace and respect cultural diversity through the understanding of our Global World.* * *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of American and World History and the values of different cultures (through a multi-cultural curriculum)* * *Contribute to social activism through school wide projects.* |  |

**ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX**

CRA recognizes that academic accountability is one of the foundations of the charter school’s concept and believes in the importance of federal and state assessments to school accountability for student academic performance. CRA, as a public school is held accountable to state and federal accountability system, including the Academic Performance Index (“API”). CRA will annually develop a plan for meeting school wide and subgroup API growth goals that will be shared with all teachers, staff, parents, students and the community.

# ELEMENT 3: OUTCOME MEASUREMENT

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

**LOCAL CONTROL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN**

In compliance with Education Code § 47605.6, Community Roots Academy will develop a Local Control Accountability Plan in accordance with the template adopted by the State Board of Education in order to help monitor progress towards Community Roots Academy objectives. This plan will be reviewed and updated annually and the budget revised to implement the actions described in the plan as submitted to the Capistrano Unified School District. Community Roots Academy will engage the school community in the plan development and review process. Further, Community Roots Academy will comply with all applicable regulations and compliance requirements developed in this regard.

At Community Roots Academy, assessments are integral instruments for analyzing student performance, driving instruction and assessing CRA’s progress toward its educational and institutional goals. CRA implements a balanced assessment system utilizing a combination of formative and summative assessments that inform instructional practices as well as measure student performance.

**STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENTS**

CRA also administers state mandated tests by grade level, including the California Standards Tests (CST), California Measurement of Academic Performance & Progress (CalMAPP), the California English Language Development Test (CELDT)/ ELPAC and the California Physical Fitness Test (PFT) in Grade 7. API and AYP growth goals are developed annually and CRA reports API and AYP data to all stakeholders annually as described below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **GRADE** | **MAPP**  **(ELA/MATH)** | **Science Assessment** | **Physical Fitness** | **CAPA**  **(ELA/MATH)** | **CELDT** |  |  |
| 2nd |  |  |  | √ | √ |  |  |
| 3rd | √ |  |  | √ | √ |  |  |
| 4th | √ |  |  | √ | √ |  |  |
| 5th | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |  |  |
| 6th | √ |  |  | √ | √ |  |  |
| 7th | √ |  |  | √ | √ |  |  |
| 8th | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |  |  |

The CRA assessment system is designed to reflect current best practices in assessment and specific attention has been given to each of the following elements: **1) clear purpose** - teachers and administrators understand the purpose for each assessment, **2) specific learning targets** – clear expectations of knowledge and skills *(CRA Grade Level Benchmarks),* **3) sound design** – learning outcomes and process are matched to a specific type of assessment, **4) effective communication of results** – timely and clear presentation of results and next steps to parents, students and colleagues, and **5) student involvement** – student involvement in self-assessing, setting goals and tracking progress.[[33]](#footnote-33) Using these elements as guidelines for designing an effective assessment system helps ensure that CRA assessments demonstrate student learning and inform curriculum and instruction. This approach also makes assessments an integral part of the learning process. In addition to evaluating students, these assessments build content knowledge and develop 21st century skills such as collaboration, effective communication, problem solving, critical thinking, initiative, adaptability, evaluation and imagination. CRA’s assessment system not only builds a solid foundation of knowledge, it also teaches students how to use their knowledge.

**EXPLANATION OF ASSESSMENTS TOOLS**

CRA’s balanced assessment system includes assessments that measure individual student and overall school performances. Student assessments are on-going and uses multiple measures. For this document, the assessment tools are organized by frequency within three timeframes: immediate, short-term and cumulative. This continuous cycle of assessment ensures that gaps in student learning will be recognized and addressed in a timely way and also measures students’ retention of knowledge and skills over time. The combination of each of these types of assessments creates a map of each student’s growth and development at CRA.

**IMMEDIATE ASSESSMENTS**

Immediate assessments are critical for teachers to gauge student understanding on a day-to-day basis. Immediate assessments are brief (usually under 10 minutes), given frequently and easily scored. Each teacher will establish a repertoire of immediate assessments and clearly convey the purpose of this type of assessment to students. Immediate assessments are formative, and their purpose is to provide teachers instant feedback while they are teaching specific content or skills. It is crucial that students understand these assessments are formative and not summative, meaning they are significant, but they will have a minimal impact on their overall grade. Based on this feedback, teachers can quickly adjust their instruction to meet the students’ needs. For example, if the majority of the class could not demonstrate understanding of a particular lesson, the teacher would re-teach the entire lesson using a different approach. Alternatively, if only a few students struggled with a lesson, the teacher could offer small group instruction to re-teach the concept to meet the needs of those specific students. These immediate assessments take a variety of forms including quizzes, journal entries, class discussions, weekly updates and exit cards.Although each of these assessments differs in form, they all gauge each individual’s understanding of content or skills. In addition to informing instruction, these types of assessment also benefit students by significantly improving long-term memory because they aid in information retrieval and improve connections to new material.[[34]](#footnote-34) CRA’s immediate assessments are a teacher’s first line of defense in preventing gaps in student learning and are an integral aspect of a balanced assessment system.

**SHORT-TERM ASSESSMENTS**

Short-term assessments are another integral aspect of CRA’s balanced assessment system. Short-term assessments vary greatly in form and function, but all of these assessments provide students with timely, specific feedback on their work. In addition, these assessments usually contribute more significantly to a student’s grade than immediate assessments. Thus, short-term assessments are both formative and summative. It is critical for teachers to clearly explain the purpose of each assessment.

Examples of short-term assessments that CRA utilizes include rubrics, solution reviews, performance assessments and presentations. Each of these assessments is unique in purpose and benefit both students and teachers in a variety of ways.

**RUBRICS**

Rubrics are matrixes designed to outline the specific content being assessed and performance level expectations for a given project or assignment. These matrixes can be simple or intricate. Regardless of their complexity, rubrics provide students with exemplars of performance level associated with all possible scores or grades.

Rubrics are a valuable assessment tools for CRA teachers because they are adaptable and flexible enough to use in all content areas and with students of any age. In addition they bring objectivity to subjective scoring and provide a consistent tool for evaluation. Rubrics benefit students by clarifying the content being assessed and performance level expectations. They also act as a guide for students to refer to while working on an assignment and can be used by students to assess their own work prior to submission. Furthermore, rubrics clearly communicate the grading process to students and parents and offer specific feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of an assignment or project.

**SOLUTION REVIEWS**

CRA also utilizes solution reviews as an integral type of formative assessment.Solution reviews are opportunities for students to share more significant projects or assignments in progress in order to get feedback from teachers, peers or other members of the school community. During solution reviews, students present the work they have completed thus far and their plan for completion. After students present their work, students field questions and get suggestions from teachers, classmates and possibly experts in the field. Students benefit from these types of assessments in numerous ways by giving students the opportunity to present their ideas to an audience helps them understand their ideas are valued and reinforces the idea that their work holds significance in the real world. Additionally, students benefit from receiving and incorporating feedback, as well as offering constructive feedback to others.

**PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS**

CRA utilizes performance assessments as another component of its balanced assessment system. Performance assessments are usually small group or individual projects completed over a short period of time. Performance assessments are extremely valuable because they can be both formative and summative. The feedback students receive guide them in preparing the larger project and enable them to produce a higher quality work product.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Presentations are another relatively short-term assessment CRA teachers use to enhance and evaluate student learning.Presentations are student demonstrations of learning given to an audience of peers, parents or other school community members. Presentations reflect polished work products that have been reviewed and refined over time. Students not only deeply understand the content they are presenting, but they also will develop critical communication skills and confidence. Research indicates that presentations “ensure that their [students] mastery is genuine. These public presentations signal to students that their work is valued and reinforce the signiﬁcance of their tasks in a real-world context.”[[35]](#footnote-35) CRA teachers’ use of presentations motivate and engage students by making their work more meaningful while aiding them in building a deep content knowledge and mastering 21st century skills.

Rubrics, solution reviews, performance assessments and presentations are examples of the types of on-going, short-term assessments that are utilized by CRA instructors. These assessments not only will serve as tools for evaluation, but also for improving instruction and enhancing student learning.

**CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENTS**

In addition to immediate and short-term assessments, CRA utilizes several different types of cumulative assessments to measure students’ progress throughout the school year and throughout their career at CRA. CRA uses cumulative assessments, including locally generated benchmark assessments, student portfolios, state approved textbook summative assessments and state mandated standardized assessments, to evaluate student progress.

**BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS**

Benchmark assessments at CRA are created and updated by teachers and designed to track students’ progress toward grade level benchmarks – expectations of student knowledge and skills for each grade level. These assessments are designed to measure students’ progress towards meeting statewide performance and content standards. The benchmark assessments include a combination of open response, multiple choice and writing prompts. Identical tests or tests measuring identical skills are given to students approximately every 60 days or three times annually. Ideally, students demonstrate mastery of at least 1/3 of the material by the first assessment, at least 2/3 of the materials by the second; and meet all benchmarks by the third assessment.

CRA uses its benchmark assessments to monitor student progress in order for teachers to use concrete data to adapt instruction to meet the specific needs of an entire class, groups or individuals. In order to utilize benchmark assessments to their fullest potential, CRA incorporates the following guidelines into the establishment of CRA benchmark assessments and into its regular practices. A clear set of learning outcomes is established for each grade level that is easily understood by teachers, students and parents. Teachers are involved in developing the benchmarks and maintain an intimate familiarity with them. After students are administered the assessments, they are scored and review the assessments. Teachers and school leaders then review the data in small teams to identify gaps in learning and to create action plans to address any academic issues. For example, if a significant number of students answer a question incorrectly on material that the instructor has already taught, the teacher adjust the curriculum to include re-teaching and reviewing this particular content. Timeliness is critical to the process. Teachers involve students in the process by communicating the assessment result and plans for follow up teaching. Finally, CRA school leadership continuously follows up with teachers to be sure action plans are being implemented and adapted to best meet students’ needs.

Benchmark assessments are an integral tool for providing CRA teachers and school leaders a consistent stream of data to aid in decision-making. An efficient and effective system of benchmark assessments enable CRA teachers to make informed curricular decisions and systematically intervene with struggling students. Benchmark assessments also improve instruction by providing data to help teachers identify the areas where their instruction is effective and areas for improvement. Reviewing the assessments and planning collaborative follow up will create a forum for teachers to learn from each other and drive continuous improvement among faculty.

**PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENTS**

CRA student work portfolios represent a collection of individual student work demonstrating each student’s progress and mastery of selected content and skills throughout the year. Student portfolios are reviewed and assessed annually. These portfolios continue with and are supplemented by the students throughout their career at CRA.

At CRA, student portfolios are an on-going collaboration between each student and his/her teachers. The portfolio illustrates a student’s growth and development through work samples and written reflection. Periodically throughout each school year, teachers select pieces of student work that demonstrates mastery of particular content or personal best work product. For example, a teacher might choose a piece of writing that exemplifies a student’s mastery of personal narrative writing or a younger student’s best attempt at writing a complete sentence. Along with each of these selections the teacher would attach a narrative that provided the date the work was completed and the reason for adding it to the portfolio. In addition to teacher entries, students periodically are given the opportunity to select work samples for their portfolio and provide written explanations or reflections on their choices. Along with these selections, students would share their reasoning for these choices. At the end of each school year, teachers review the portfolios with students and guide them through a self-evaluation of their progress throughout the year.

Student portfolios at CRA are a valuable part of cumulative assessment because they present a broader and more intimate view of student learning than scores on benchmark assessments or standardized tests. Student involvement in selecting and reflecting on portfolio pieces promotes students’ accountability and self-directed learning. Research indicates that student involvement in self-assessment leads to the assumption of greater responsibility for their learning and higher academic achievement.[[36]](#footnote-36) CRA’s use of portfolio assessments enhance student learning and document their development over the course of their school career.

**EXIT PROJECT**

The CRA exit project is the culmination of the CRA educational experience designed for 8th grade students to demonstrate all of the 21st century skills they have developed in their experiences at CRA. The teacher-approved exit project is entirely student designed and implemented over the course of approximately 12 weeks. The exit project process begins with a small group or an individual who purposes a project, problem or design possibility to be approved by an 8th grade teacher. The proposal includes the purpose, intended outcomes, an execution plan and a list of the individuals he/she intends to involve in the project. After the project is approved, the student(s) asks a CRA faculty member to act as the project advisor. The faculty project advisor is responsible to schedule periodic meetings to check progress and offer feedback. As students execute their project plan, they are required to document their process through written journal, photography, video or another approved means. In order to demonstrate proficiency in CRA’s 21st century skills, students are required to incorporate several elements into their projects including technology, collaboration with peers and input from an expert in a related field, incorporating critical feedback and creating a project presentation. When students have completed their exit projects, they are required to present their process and outcomes to a panel made up of faculty members, school District representatives and community partners who will evaluate the work.

The exit project provides students the opportunity to design and execute an original project, problem or design utilizing the 21st century skills developed at CRA. This self-directed learning experience acts as an assessment of the skills students learned at CRA.

**STUDENT OUTCOME & ASSESSMENT MATRIX**

The following Matrix below includes state mandated assessments. The combination of assessment tools used in each content area may vary; not all measures will apply to every content area every year.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **Assessment Measure** | **Monitoring Timeline** | **Reporting** |
| English Language Arts   * By the end of eighth grade students will demonstrate the ability to read fluently & comprehend a variety of age appropriate texts. * Students will demonstrate the ability to read and respond to age appropriate text both orally and in writing. * Students will demonstrate effective public speaking and active listening. * Students will demonstrate the use of age appropriate vocabulary orally and in writing. | * CalMAPP (CA. Measurement of Academic Performance & Progress) – ELA (Gr. 3-8) * Locally created benchmark assessments * Performance evaluations or presentations * Portfolio assessments | * Aligned with state testing and reporting timeline * 3 times annually, approx. every 60 days * 1-4/semester * Annually in June | * Parents/guardians, community, Board of Trustees, SARC, performance report to CUSD * Parents/guardians, students, faculty, and performance report to CUSD. * Parents/guardians, community, students, faculty. * Parents/guardians, students, faculty |
| Mathematics   * By the end of eighth grade, students will demonstrate proficiency at age appropriate principles of mathematics and logical reasoning and the ability to apply them to real life situations as defined by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) * Students will understand and solve problems using computation, algebra, number sense, measurement, geometry, statistics, data analysis, probability and logic. | * CalMAPP (CA. Measurement of Academic Performance & Progress) – Math (Gr. 3-8) * Locally created benchmark assessments * Common Core Aligned assessments * Performance evaluations or presentations * Portfolio assessments | * Aligned with CUSD testing and reporting timeline * 3 times annually, approx. every 60 days * Per instructional unit * 1-4 per semester * Annually in June | * Parents/guardians, community, Board of Trustees SARC, performance report to CUSD * Parents/guardians, students, faculty, performance report to CUSD * Parents/guardians, students, faculty * Parents/guardians, community, students, faculty * Parents/guardians, students, faculty |
| Science   * By the end of eighth grade students will demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skills, and strategies of science as defined by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) * Students will understand and apply the scientific method of inquiry to examine scientific problems and questions. * Students’ scientific inquiries will build an understanding of the major underlying concepts of the various branches of science, including earth science, biology, chemistry and physics. | * CalMAPP – Science (Gr 5 & 8) Locally created benchmark assessments * NGSS aligned summative assessments * Portfolio assessments | * 3 times annually, approx. every 60 days * Per instructional unit * Annually in June | * Parents/guardians, students, faculty, performance report to CUSD * Parents/guardians, students, faculty * Parents/guardians, students, faculty |
| Social Studies   * By the end of eighth grade, students will understand and apply historical, political and geographical knowledge as outlined by the California State Standards, to prepare them to be active and responsible citizens. * Students will demonstrate grade level historical knowledge (Grade 4, California; Grade 5, Early U.S. History; Grade 6, Ancient Civilizations; Grade 7, Medieval and Early Modern Times; Grade 8, U.S. History). * Students will be able to conduct historical research to ask and answer questions about the past and make predictions about the future. | * State mandated History/Social Science assessments * Locally created benchmark assessments * Common Core Aligned summative assessments * Portfolio assessments | * 3 times annually, approximately every 60 days * Per instructional unit * Annually in June | * Parents/guardians, students, faculty, performance report to CUSD * Parents/guardians, students, faculty * Parents/guardians, students, faculty |
| Technology  Students will demonstrate technological proficiency in areas including word processing, spreadsheet development, research, and responsible internet use and multimedia presentations. | * Digital Portfolio * Performance evaluations or presentations | * Annually in June * 1-4 per semester | * Parents/guardians, students, faculty * Parents/guardians, community, students, faculty |
| Visual and Performing Arts   * Students will demonstrate the ability to understand and create works of visual and performance art related to core subjects including social studies, language arts, world language, science and mathematics. | * Performance evaluations or presentations | * 1-4 per semester | * Parents/guardians, community, students, faculty |
| Physical Education   * Students will understand the aspects and importance of physical health & demonstrate knowledge and skills that contribute to a healthy lifestyle, including nutrition and exercise.   Students regularly engage in a variety of forms of physical activity. | * Teacher observation * Physical Fitness Testing (PFT) * (Gr 5 & 8) | * 4 times annually, parent-teacher conferences and report cards * Annually | * Parents/guardians, students, faculty * Parents/guardians, students, faculty |
| * English Learners | * CELDT (2013-2016)   ELPAC (starting 2016-17SY) | * Aligned with CUSD testing and reporting timeline | * Parents/guardians, community, Board of Trustees SARC, performance report to CUSD |
| Designated Special Education Student Progress | * IEP | * Annual IEP evaluation meeting according to IEP schedule | * Parents/guardians, teachers, administrators |
| Attendance  CRA will continue to have an ADA of at least 92% | * Student records of Annual Average Daily Attendance (ADA) | * Annually in July | * Parents/guardians, community, Board of Trustees SARC, annual performance report to CUSD |
| CRA will maintain high-level parent satisfaction as measured by an 80% satisfaction rate on the annual parent survey. | * Annual parent surveys | * Annually in May | * Parents/guardians, community, Board of Trustees SARC, annual performance report to CUSD |
|  |  |  |  |

**USE & REPORTING OF DATA**

CRA has implemented an assessment data collection and analysis that assesses the quality and effectiveness of its educational program. CRA monitors, records, analyzes, reports student progress and creates longitudinal data on individual student progress and school wide progress toward meeting goals, including API and AYP targets. CRA uses PowerSchool to record, organize and report student data. Powerschool allows CRA to maintain a comprehensive student records that includes attendance, demographic data, free and reduced lunch eligibility and emergency information.

Teachers input student assessment performance on immediate and short-term assessments into PowerSchool. Additionally teachers enter benchmark assessments into the LinkIt 3 times annually. After each benchmark assessment period (60 days), SIS reports are generated on student attendance and performance. These reports will be review and analyzed by teachers and the executive director of education to drive instruction and professional development as well as measure student progress.

The results of these assessments are reviewed with parents during parent-teacher conferences scheduled midway through each semester (or more frequently if requested by teacher or parents). Teachers also review assessment results with their students to ensure students understand the purpose of the assessment, their individual progress and to set individual student goals. The goal of sharing assessment data with parents and students is to de-mystify the assessment process and to use assessment as a tool for instruction and communication about a student’s progress towards meeting state standards and school-wide learning goals.

Student data will be:

* Processed and organized into easily read and understood formats such as tables and graphs.
* Provided to staff during regularly scheduled assessment review meetings and used to monitor individual student progress.
* Analyzed and discussed during grade level meetings and across grade levels to target specific areas of strength and weakness in overall student achievement.
* Evaluated annually to measure the overall effectiveness of the CRA educational program and make strategic curricular and instructional modifications as necessary.
* Provided to parents and reviewed at parent-teacher conferences each semester.
* Used to create student progress reports to be communicated with parents on a monthly basis and report cards each semester.
* Used to create an annual School Accountability Report Card (SARC) in compliance with CUSD deadlines.
* Used by the EDE to create an annual, comprehensive analysis of student achievement to present to the Board of Directors and to external stakeholders. The results of state test scores and API rankings come out once a year and will be reported to our parents/guardians shortly after the rankings are released. This annual performance report will also include the results of our other assessments measures, including our growth measures, authentic assessments, etc.

CRA issues comprehensive, standards-based report cards at the end of each semester (approximately 90 days). In addition, parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for mid-semester to maintain an on-going communication with parents regarding individual student progress. Additionally, CRA distributes interim progress reports electronically or by mail each month. Student assessments that include: regular examinations, performances, projects, papers and other assignments are graded using a conventional number system for all courses and a numbered content-standard based report card for grades K-8. A content-standard based report card, particularly in English/Language Arts and Mathematics, provides more skill-specific information. The scale for reporting this vehicle is as follows: 4=Meets or Exceeds Standard; 3=Making Significant Progress Toward Standard; 2=Making Progress Toward Standard; 1=Shows Limited Progress Toward Standard. Missing work may result in a grade of Incomplete (I). Teachers will determine the deadlines for submission of missing work, as well as the consequences and final grade if students fail to complete missing work. CRA retains the ability to adapt the frequency of these reports in order to provide more effective and meaningful feedback to parents and students.

In a commitment to continual progress and school wide development, CRA also utilizes student assessment data to drive instruction and guide professional development efforts. In weekly grade level team meetings, teachers review and analyze student assessment data to help them develop strategies to support underperforming students. Additionally, reviewing assessment data in these weekly team meetings provides a format for teachers to measure their instructional effectiveness. Continued self-reflection and data analysis enables teachers to identify areas for growth in their methodologies and instructional delivery.

In addition to teacher self-reflection, the Executive Director of Education uses student assessment data as a component of assessing the effectiveness of teachers’ instructional practices in order to inform professional development efforts. The EDE collaborates with teachers to create individual development goals and provide appropriate support to enable the faculty to grow professionally and meet the needs of their students.

One of CRA’s guiding principles is to establish and to maintain a model learning community where students and educators are provided the feedback and support, which enable them to grow and develop as individuals. Our balanced assessment system creates a framework of continuous feedback cycles to ensure incremental student progress towards state standards, to enhance long-term retention of knowledge and skills and to provide data for evaluation of instructional practices.

# ELEMENT 4: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

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

**NON-PROFIT**

Community Roots Academy is operated as a California public benefit corporation with an IRS approved 501c3 status. CRA is currently governed by Board of Directors comprised of 5 members serving staggered one, two and three year terms.

**BOARD RESPONSIBILITES**

The Community Roots Academy Board of Directors is responsible for the following:

1. Developing annual school wide goals for the school and long range plans with input from the Co-Directors, teachers, and parent action committee members.
2. Establishing and approving all major educational and operational policies.
3. Approving all major contracts.
4. Approving the school’s annual budget and overseeing the school’s fiscal affairs.
5. Evaluating the performance of the Executive Director's -.
6. Assessing CRA goals, objectives, academic achievements/student progress, the school’s financial status and any need for redirection.
7. Reviewing reports from legal counsel, auditors, business services provider and consultants and providing recommendations to the Community Roots Academy Co-Directors
8. Setting policy, approving the budget, and ensuring that the school helps students achieve high academic standards

**GOVERANCE STRUCTURE OF CRA**

Board Members are selected based on their expertise and skills and their commitment to advocate for the school’s student population and uphold the school’s mission (See Appendix C: Board Roster). Board seats may be filled by community members who have the desired mix of experience and expertise, to ensure the school’s success. The threshold screening criteria for all prospective members of the Board of Directors include a demonstrated understanding of the school’s mission and vision and an interest in serving the charter school’s target student population. Other criteria for Board selection include a commitment to diligently fulfill all responsibilities as Board Members, with a willingness to routinely attend Board meetings, to actively participate in Board working groups and/or committees, and to actively engage in overseeing and supporting the CRA program. Demonstrated ability to act in a leadership capacity is preferred.

The Board of Directors has ultimate responsibility to oversee the program to ensure the school’s success; however, the CRA Co-Directors and teachers will carry out the day-to-day operations of the school. The Co-Directors are the overall site managers and report directly to the Board of Directors. The Co-Directors are responsible for implementing policy, overseeing operations and carrying out the provisions of the charter and the Board’s directives. The teaching faculty work closely with the Executive Director of Education to implement the educational program. The Executive Director of Education will be responsible for hiring, providing support to, evaluating and, when needed, terminating instructional staff. The Executive Director of Resource Development will be responsible for hiring, providing support to, evaluating and, when needed, terminating non-instructional staff.

*The Board of Directors, Make-Up of the Board of Directors*

The Board of Directors will be comprised of between three and eleven voting members with legal, financial and/or pedagogical expertise.

**ELECTION TERM & REMOVAL PROCESS FOR BOARD MEMEBERS**

Board Members are chosen as follows:

Current Board of Directors determine the selection process for representatives from the general community with an attempt to achieve the desired mix of skills and expertise necessary to effectively govern the charter school.

To establish continuity and sustainability for the charter school’s long-term success, members of the Board of Directors will serve three years in staggered terms. To create the staggered effect, the Board of Directors in the opening year will be elected to one, two and three year terms.

Community Roots Academy Board Members or other members of the Community Roots Academy community may recommend the removal of a Board Member pursuant to the Board of Directors’ removal policy and procedure that is set forth in the school’s bylaws (See Appendix E – Bylaws).

**BOARD STRUCTURE**

The Board of Directors follows the Brown Act and meet routinely. (Expulsion hearings and other confidential governance matters are held in closed session, unless open session is requested by the parent of the child in question in accordance with current law). The Board has appointed members that serve as the chairperson, and secretary and treasurer (Chief Financial Officer). The secretary distributes the agenda and records board minutes. Two weeks prior to a scheduled Board meeting, the secretary issues a request for agenda items. The school’s Co-Directors and any member of the Board of Directors may request that an item be placed on the agenda, with ultimate discretion to set the agenda being held by the chairperson. The agenda for a Board meeting is issued to all Board of Directors members and posted in school’s website and publicly posted at least 72 hours prior to a board meeting. The treasurer is responsible for overseeing the fiscal situation of the charter school, and provides guidance to the school’s primary fiscal employee to ensure that CRA is operating in a fiscally responsibly.

The following is an outline of the governance structure of CRA:

**BOARD TRAINING & SUSTAINABILITY**

CRA is committed to continuous improvement and on-going training to assist the Board of Directors in fulfilling its responsibilities to act as stewards for the charter school. To this end, the Board will seek appropriate training and educational opportunities, both as a full Board and individually. Such training experiences may include group training sessions with legal counsel or other experts familiar with public school governance, and/or training sessions with charter school governance experts. New Board Members will go through an initial orientation and training to help ensure that they fully grasp their responsibilities as Board Members and develop the requisite expertise in public school oversight to be effective. Board Members may be given a stipend to attend supplemental training sessions in areas of school oversight as needed. CRA maintains, general liability and Board errors and omissions insurance policies.

**VOLUNTEERS & PARENT ACTION COMMITTEES**

CRA believes firmly that active parent and student participation in school operations and decision-making helps foster a public school’s long-term sustainability as a successful program.

Once a student is admitted to the school, his or her family is encouraged to sign up with one of the school’s parent action committees. Possible committees include Fundraising Committee, Landscape and Garden Committee, Building Maintenance Committee, Diversity Outreach Committee, Art and Music Committee, Business Partnerships Committee, Teacher Support Committee, and Parent Relations Committee. The Co-Directors of the school and the Board of Directors oversee and direct the work of these committees. Where appropriate, especially in the upper grades, students are invited to participate on these action committees in an effort to involve students in the ongoing operations of the school.

CRA is responsible for screening all volunteers for the protection of students, including fingerprinting and criminal background checks for those on site when students are present. Registered sex offenders under Penal Code section 290 may not serve as volunteers on campus or anywhere or at anytime students are present. Volunteers working on campus or when students are present who will be unsupervised by certificated personnel at any time must submit to a criminal background check pursuant to Education Code 45125.

**AMENDMENTS**

Material revisions of the provisions contained in this Charter may be made in writing with the mutual consent of the CUSD Board of Trustees and the CRA Board of Directors. Material revisions and amendments shall be made pursuant to the standards, criteria, and timelines in Education Code Section 47605; provided however that the charter school shall not be required to obtain petition signatures prior to making material amendments to the charter petition.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION GOVERNANCE**

The Community Roots Academy and the Capistrano Unified School District pledge to work in cooperation to ensure that a free and appropriate education is provided to all students with exceptional needs in accordance with all state and federal laws regarding provision of special education services.

Community Roots Academy shall have the right to pursue independent local education agency (LEA) and/or special education local plan area (SELPA) status pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a) and the District shall not hinder or otherwise impede the efforts of the charter school to do so. In the event that CRA opts not to establish independent LEA and/or SELPA status, it shall remain an arm of the District for special education purposes as required by Education Code Section 46741(b), and shall continue to receive funding and services pursuant to the terms of this section and the annual agreement.

Community Roots Academy and the District shall annually, and in good faith, negotiate and enter into a written agreement, via a memorandum of understanding or annual operational agreement, to clearly specify the desired mix of special education funding and services to be provided and to detail the specific terms of such services and funding.

# ELEMENT 5: EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS

*“The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the school." Education Code Section 47605(b) (5) (E).*

**QUALIFICATION OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES**

CRA ensures that all legal qualification requirements are met for teachers, staff, paraprofessionals and other administrative employees of the school. Each certificated employee at the charter school meets the state licensing requirements for the position that he/she holds. No state licensing requirements exist for most non-certificated positions. For all positions, certificated and non-certificated, the employee, at minimum, needs to satisfactorily meet the performance specifications required for the position and must possess the qualifications required to perform the essential functions of the position, as determined by the CRA Board and/or the Co-Directors. The number, type, mix and salary levels of each employee are outlined in detail in the financial plan, attached. All persons working on campus or when students are present must submit to a criminal background check pursuant to Education Code 45125 and must have a current TB test on file with the charter school.

CRA adheres to the No Child Left Behind (“NCLB”) requirements with respect to teachers and paraprofessional employees. Teachers meet the requirements for employment as stipulated by the California Education Code section 47605(l). Teachers of core, college preparatory subjects (i.e., English language arts, math, science, history/social science, special education) are required to hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in a non-charter public school would be required to hold. As specified in NCLB, as applicable to charter schools, CRA has flexibility regarding the qualifications needed for teachers in non-core subject areas. In order to ensure implementation of the school’s mission and educational philosophy, preference is given to teachers who have experience designing and implementing a curriculum aligned to state standards.

**TEACHERS**

Community Roots Academy employs a teaching staff that holds appropriate California teaching certificates, permits, or other documents issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. These teachers teach the “core” academic and college preparatory classes of mathematics, language arts, science, history /social studies. Our teachers are responsible for overseeing the students’ academic progress and for monitoring grading and matriculation decisions as specified in the school’s operation policies.

Pursuant to the teacher qualification requirements under the NCLB, all CRA teachers teaching core subjects are “highly qualified” as that term is defined under NCLB and further defined by California state regulations implementing NCLB requirements, as applicable to charter schools such as CRA. Applicants to teach in our program will be evaluated based on the following qualifications:

* Demonstrated instructional ability, with experience in the school’s instructional methods preferred, and knowledge of content to be taught.
* Possession of a CLAD credential for core college preparatory subjects.
* Desire to engage in professional development to continually improve effectiveness in improving student achievement.
* Knowledge and experience with standards-based instruction: ability to align curriculum and standards.
* Knowledge of assessment strategies, including the ongoing use of formative assessments and the ability to use data to adjust instruction to meet students’ needs and to promote continuous improvement of student learning.
* Ability to effectively use instructional strategies to meet students’ diverse needs
* Demonstrated competence in advanced technology as a teaching tools by integrating technology into instruction.
* Strong classroom management skills.
* A commitment to the school’s mission and vision.
* Willingness to work with the CRA team to ensure continuous school improvement.
* Willingness and ability to work with students and parents on an ongoing basis to ensure student success.
* Love of students, enthusiasm for teaching, the belief that each student can succeed and a commitment to ensuring that all students master the content and skills necessary for success at the next level of schooling.
* Positive references from most recent employment and/or college or graduate school.

Community Roots Academy also may employ or retain non-certificated instructional support staff where the candidate has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience and the capacity to work successfully in an instructional capacity. Instructional support staff would not assign grades or approve student work assignments without the approval of a teacher unless they are instructing non-core or non-college preparatory courses and activities.

**CO-DIRECTORS**

The Co-Directors are the primary administrators of the charter school’s program. In this role, the Co-Directors must possess both leadership skills and other job-related competencies to build and sustain a high quality educational program.

The job duties of the Executive Director of Education include the following:

* Promoting the school’s mission and vision while overseeing the daily operations of the school;
* Creating and maintaining a supportive environment that helps students and staff feel safe and reach their full potential;
* Hiring, supporting, evaluating and, when necessary, terminating all instructional staff;
* Reporting on the school’s academic performance to the governing Board, the charter authorizer and funders;
* Supporting teachers in instruction to implement the school’s vision and realize the school’s mission;
* Preparing credentialing paperwork and monitor processing;
* Coordinating all professional development activities of instructional staff;
* Organizing teacher common planning time;
* Acting as a liaison to external partners supporting the educational program;
* Representing school at meetings/forums; and
* Assisting in writing grants, facilitating fundraising and/or obtaining loans, as needed.

The qualifications for this position include:

* Organizational management experience with human and financial resources, including employees and volunteers, and compliance procedures related to academics;
* Leadership, supervision and staff development experience;
* At least five years teaching experience using the school’s instructional methods;
* Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to interact effectively with staff members, parents, District personnel, vendors and community stakeholders;
* Proficiency in the use of computers, including but not limited to word processing, spreadsheets, multimedia presentations, email, the internet and digital media;
* Advanced degree, preferably in education and/or administrative credential; and
* In-depth understanding of and commitment to the school’s vision and mission.

The job duties for the Executive Director Resource Development include the following:

* Overseeing the budget and financial reporting for the school;
* Hiring, evaluating, supporting and, when necessary, terminating non-instructional staff;
* Developing procedures around payroll, benefits and retirement withholdings;
* Training the office staff in attendance accounting, compliance reporting and other fiscal policies;
* Overseeing local and state compliance reporting;
* Managing vendor relationships (e.g., custodial, food service, technology)
* Assisting in the development of school policies;
* Developing with Board Members and stakeholders a strategic plan for the school;
* Procuring both short and long-term facilities for the school;
* Working with the Board of Directors and other stakeholders to procure additional funds for the school;
* Coordinating the technology infrastructure;
* Leading the fundraising efforts for the facility and for educational programs (including identifying grants, external funding sources, and financing);
* Reporting to the Board on the financial progress of the school; and
* Representing the school at public meetings/forums.

The qualifications for this position include:

* Organizational management experience with human and financial resources, including employees and volunteers, budgeting fiscal management and compliance procedures;
* Leadership and supervision experience;
* Experience in contract negotiations and vendor relationship management;
* Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to interact effectively with staff members, parents, District personnel, vendors and community stakeholders;
* Proficient in the use of computers, including but not limited to word processing, spreadsheets, multimedia presentations, email, the internet and digital media;
* Advanced degree
* In-depth understanding of and commitment to the school’s vision and mission.

**SUPPORT STAFF**

The school employs administrative and operational staff that have demonstrated experience or expertise in the issues and work tasks required of them and are provided professional development opportunities to ensure that they remain abreast of all relevant changes in laws or other operational requirements. All non-instructional staff shall possess experience and expertise appropriate for their positions within the school as outlined in the school’s staffing plan and the school’s adopted personnel policies.

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS, HIRING & PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Prior to employment and within thirty (30) days of hiring, each employee is required to submit to a criminal background check as required by Education Code §44237. CRA adheres to California laws including fingerprinting and prohibitions regarding the employment of persons who have been convicted of a violent or serious felony. CRA complies with the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act as they apply to certificated personnel and paraprofessionals. Each employee must furnish proof of tuberculosis testing, as well as documents establishing legal employment status. The Co-Directors and/or administrative designees are responsible for monitoring and maintaining documentation of criminal investigation clearances, as required by California and federal laws. Those employees that require a criminal background check and do not have a current background check are required to undergo such a check through such services as a LiveScan fingerprint process. CRA shall pay for such services on behalf of its prospective employees. These services shall occur where the LiveScan service is offered, which may be located at District, county or local college facilities.

Employee supervisors are responsible for providing feedback on performance. They will not wait until major evaluations but shall maintain an ongoing dialogue about how the employee performs his or her work. For example, the principals visit classrooms regularly, for both quick “snapshot” visits and longer stays to keep in touch with teacher performance.

Major evaluations occur once a year and address all aspects of each employee’s job description. Performance measures, both quantitative and qualitative, are used to evaluate all school personnel.

Teachers are evaluated by the EDE based on the following measures:

* Student progress as referenced from assessment measures.
* Effectiveness of teaching strategies as evaluated by the director, lead/mentor teacher, and Academic Review Board through classroom visitations.
* Performance of job duties.
* Knowledge of curriculum.
* Participation in school activities aligned with the school’s mission and vision
* Performance rating on teacher evaluation rubric (see p. 58)

Classified and other personnel are evaluated by the Executive Director of Resource Development based upon completion of assigned job duties and regular, punctual attendance.

If an employee disagrees with an evaluation, a written objection may be appended to the review. Employees always have the right to engage in the Due Process and Process for Resolving Complaints/Grievances. If requested, assistance is provided to employees in due process. Please refer to Element 11 for specific details about the grievance process.

All staff members have the right to due process at all times.

The Co-Directors have the authority to create formal job descriptions for each position, recruit and interview candidates. The CRA Board of Directors has the right, if it so chooses, to review these candidates’ credentials before a job offer is made to the candidate. The Executive Director of Education is responsible for evaluating the performance of the teaching staff on an annual basis, and the Executive Director of Resource Development is responsible for evaluating the performance of the administrative staff on a yearly basis. The CRA Board of Directors has the right, if it so chooses, to review these performance evaluations before they are delivered to the staff members. The Co-Directors, with input from the CRA Board of Directors, determine the criteria by which to evaluate the job performance of these employees. The CRA Board of Directors creates the job description of the Co-Directors and reviews their performance on an annual basis.

**SALARIES & BENEFITS***“The manner by which staff members of the charter school will be covered by the State Teachers’ Retirement System, the Public Employees’ Retirement System or federal social security.” Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(K).*

CRA offers a 403b plan in conjunction with Social Security for its certificated and non-certificated full-time staff.

CRA does not maintain a formal salary schedule for certificated or non-certificated employees. CRA offers all full time employees health benefits and a retirement savings plan with a percentage of matching by CRA. As a CRA staff members, all employees have access to high quality professional development from organizations such as Google and the University of California Irvine.

The Co-Directors, as approved by the Board of Directors, has the authority to determine the salary and benefit levels, working conditions and work year characteristics (e.g., length of year and day, vacation policies, etc.) for all employees, which allows CRA to attract and retain high caliber employees necessary for CRA’s success.

# ELEMENT 6: HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

*“The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall include the requirement that each employee of the school furnish the school with a criminal record summary as described in section 4437.” Education Code Section 47605 (b) (5) (F).*

CRA has adopted and implements a comprehensive set of health, safety and risk management policies. These policies were developed in consultation with the school’s insurance carriers and at a minimum addresses the following topics:

1. All enrolled students and staff shall provide records documenting immunizations to the extent required by law, including mandatory tuberculosis screening for staff and volunteers expected to have prolonged contact with students.
2. Policies and procedures for school wide training to respond to natural disasters and emergencies, including fires and earthquakes (Disaster Plan). This Disaster Plan shall be appropriate to the school site.
3. Policies relating to preventing contact with blood-borne pathogens.
4. Policy that requires instructional and administrative staff shall receive training in emergency response, including appropriate “first responder” training or its equivalent.
5. Polices relating to the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines. All facilities and sites shall meet federal, state and local building codes andrequirements applicable to California charter schools prior to the site being used by CRA. All structures secured for CRA staff and students shall meet or exceed the requirements set forth in the following codes or acts:
6. Federal Uniform Building Code (UBC)
7. Fire and Emergency Exit Codes
8. Health and Safety Codes
9. Local Building Codes and
10. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
11. 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 the facilities present no substantial seismic safety hazard.
12. Policies and procedures for the immediate reporting of suspected child abuse, acts of violence, or other improprieties, and the role and obligation of staff in the reporting of child abuse pursuant to CA Penal Code Section 11164.
13. A policy establishing that the school functions as a drug, alcohol and tobacco free workplace.
14. A requirement that each employee of the school submits to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Section 44237. The school will comply with the provisions of the California Education Code, Section 44237.
15. A policy against sexual harassment and provides for training on this topic.
16. A policy outlining school staff training on the school’s health and safety policies.
17. Policies requiring that every female student in grade 7 and every male student in grade 8 shall be screened for scoliosis. The screening shall be in accordance with standards established by the California Department of Education. Policies detailing how CRA will test each student’s vision and hearing upon first enrollment in the school and at least every third year thereafter until the student has completed the eighth grade.

Health and Safety issues are dealt with in accordance with CRA Board Policies. These policies are incorporated as appropriate into the student and staff handbook and reviewed on a regular basis.

Community Roots Academy will develop a Comprehensive School Safety Plan that includes the Site Emergency Response Plan and will provide the CUSD Police with a copy.

**AUXILLARY SERVICES**

School staff conducts annual reviews to ensure all auxiliary services are safe (food services, transportation, custodial services, hazardous materials) by developing appropriate policies, monitoring of compliance with those policies and implementation of awareness training.

# ELEMENT 7: RACIAL & ETHNIC BALANCE

*“The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school District to which the charter petition is submitted.” Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(G).*

CRA has implemented a student recruitment strategy that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following elements or strategies to achieve a racial and ethnic balance that is reflective of the CUSD:

1. An enrollment process that is scheduled and adopted to include a timeline that allows for a broad-based recruiting and application process
2. The development of promotional and informal material that appeals to all major racial and ethnic groups represented in the District, including materials in languages other than English to appeal to limited English proficient populations
3. Meetings and events in locations that assist in reaching a racial and ethnic balance that is reflective of the CUSD
4. The distribution of promotional and informational materials to nonprofits and businesses that serve the various racial, ethnic and interest groups represented in the District
5. Creation of a Facebook page and website

Because we seek a targeted student population whose families may not be reachable by traditional means, CRA utilizes direct outreach strategies such as direct mailing and community and home meetings targeted in specific communities in the local area.

# ELEMENT 8: ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

***“****Admission requirements, if applicable.” Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(H).*

Community Roots Academy actively recruits a diverse student population. Students who understand and value the school’s mission and are committed to the school’s instructional and educational philosophy are encouraged to apply. Admission to CRA shall be open to any resident of California that is of legal age to attend public school (e.g., old enough to join Kindergarten). Pupils are considered for admission without regard to disability, gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and association with a person or group with one or more of the above actual or perceived characteristics. CRA strives through recruiting efforts to achieve a racial and ethnic balance of students that reflects the general population within the territorial jurisdiction of the CUSD.

Community Roots Academy has no requirement for admission and must admit any child that wishes to apply. We do, however, have a family-school agreement which all parents are asked to sign and an orientation meeting which parents are asked to attend. A family cannot be turned away for refusing to sign this agreement or refusing to attend an orientation. In no instance will a student be refused admission nor subjected to any form of discipline for failure of a parent to sign or comply with the family school agreement (See Appendix H -Parent/Student Handbook).

**FAMILY-SCHOOL AGREEMENT**

This agreement has two main components: 1) agreement to abide by the academic and behavioral rules of the school. Parents/legal guardians will be asked to sign a family school agreement stating that they understand the academic and behavior policies of Community Roots Academy and will support those policies at home and will work to ensure that their children abide by the rules of the school. 2) Voluntary Family Participation Plan. Signing the voluntary Family-School Agreement also outlines the volunteer agreement of completing twenty hours per year of participatory services at the school and for submitting a plan for completion of those hours. Parents are greatly encouraged to complete these hours and every effort will be made to offer flexible options to parents to perform these hours; however, no student will be denied admission or continuing enrollment at the school due to their parents not completing these hours.

**NO ADMISSION TESTING**

Post matriculation, Community Roots Academy holds a grade-level knowledge-based examination, which allows the administrator or testing coordinator to assess the students’ readiness for the grade of entrance; however, such assessments are not used as a means to prohibit or discourage certain students from attending. Post matriculation, various assessments are administered to monitor and assist each student’s academic progress. These instruments aid in the development of individualized learning plans for children. Children who are performing below grade level or simply need a little extra help will be asked to attend voluntary summer and after school programs designed to remediate any deficiencies.

**APPLICATION & ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

CRA has established an annual recruiting and admissions cycle, which includes a reasonable time for all of the following: (1) outreach and marketing, (2) orientation sessions for students and parents, (3) an admissions application period, (4) an admissions lottery, if necessary, and (5) enrollment. CRA may fill vacancies or openings that become available after this process using either a waiting list or any other non-discriminatory process.

Community Roots Academy has developed a standardized application form required of all prospective students. Applications for admission are made available in December of the previous year and will are due by the third Friday in March. CRA holds at least three parent information meetings between January and March, annually so parents can learn more about the school before they apply. When students enroll they receive a student handbook detailing school philosophy, discipline, policy and parent participation.

**LOTTERY**

If the number of applications for admission to a grade exceeds the number of available slots in that grade, the spaces for that grade will be filled by random lottery. This lottery is held in a public setting. Drawings are held on a grade by grade basis to fill the available slots per grade. All applicants to a grade will have their name randomly drawn. Those students who have their name drawn after the number of admission slots to that grade have been filled are placed on an admissions waiting list for that grade in the order that they were drawn.

This lottery takes place during the end of March. Students currently enrolled at CRA are exempt from the lottery.

Admission preferences are extended to potential students in the case of a random public lottery in the following order.

1. Returning or existing students in good standing.
2. Children of CRA Employees. This priority is capped at 10% in accordance with the California Department of Education guidelines on charter school admission policies.
3. Siblings of students currently attending the school if space is available

In order to meet the requirement that preference for admission be offered to in-district students. CRA will ensure that approximately 85% of slots for admission will be allocated to in-district zip codes. Specifically a weighting mechanism is employed to ensure that approximately 85% of school enrollment comes from the District resulting in approximately 15% of enrollment coming from outside the District.

After the lottery, families receive their official enrollment forms and are informed of the enrollment process detailed below. If the number of applications does not exceed the number of spaces available in each grade in the school there will be no lottery, and all students who submitted complete contact information forms will be enrolled.

**THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS**Each summer, after the lottery for admission, CRA hosts an orientation meeting for parents. At the meeting, staff and parents review school policies and are asked to sign the family-school contract and official enrollment papers. The enrollment packet also includes information such as an immunization record and a list of emergency contacts. Parents are also asked to sign up with a parent action committee through which they will complete most of the suggested parent volunteer hours. Parents and legal guardians also receive a family-student handbook during this mandatory orientation. Parents who are unable to attend the orientation are required to make a personal appointment with CRA’s Co-Directors or designee to address the information covered in the meeting.

# ELEMENT 9: INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL AUDITS

*“The manner in which an annual, independent, financial audit shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority.” Education Code Section 47605 (b) (5) (I).*

CRA is an independent, directly-funded charter school. Each year, the Board of Directors’ Audit Committee oversees the preparation and completion of an annual audit of the school’s financial affairs. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with applicable provisions within the California Code of Regulations governing audits of charter schools as published in the State Controller’s K-12 Audit Guide. The books and records of the Charter School are kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and as required by applicable law, the audit uses Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Each audit shall be made by a certified public accountant selected from the directory of certified public accountants designated by the State Controller’s Office as active to conduct audits of local education agencies. This auditor will have experience with audits of educational entities and education finance, preferably with charter schools. The scope of the audit includes all elements mandated by the Audit Guide regulations promulgated by the Education Audit Appeals Panel as applicable to charter schools and any other elements as required by applicable law. The audit is conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school and verifies the accuracy of the school’s financial statements, average daily attendance and enrollment accounting practices, and review the school’s internal controls. By December 15th of each year, the annual audit is completed and a copy of the auditor’s findings is forwarded to the charter-granting agency, the county superintendent of schools, the State Controller, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The school’s audit committee reviews any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the school’s Board of Directors with recommendations on how to resolve them. The Board reports to the charter-granting agency regarding how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved. In addition, the charter granting agency’s primary factor when deciding whether an audit exception or deficiency is resolved is whether the auditor considers the item resolved; however, the charter granting agency may reserve the right to only consider an item resolved once the charter granting agency believes the item is resolved to its satisfaction (EC 47605(b)(5)(I)).

# ELEMENT 10: SUSPENSION/EXPULSION PROCESS

*“The Procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled.” Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(J).*

This policy and its rules and procedures have been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well being of all students. When these policies and standards are violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction.

CRA staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently amongst all students and accord all students with similar rights to due process. These disciplinary rules and procedures are printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook and are clearly describe discipline expectations. In addition to these suspension and expulsion policies required for this charter, prior to completing student enrollment, CRA has develop a complete set of student discipline policies and procedures which are distributed to each student/parent as part of the Student Handbook.

Discipline includes but is not limited to advising and counseling students, conferring with parents/guardians, detention during and after school hours, the use of alternative educational environments, suspension and expulsion.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student.

For purposes of the policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee’s use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to the charter school property.

CRA’s Co-Directors shall ensure that students and parents/guardians are notified in writing of all discipline policies, rules, and procedures and given an opportunity to provide input and feedback on discipline policies and procedures. Transfer students and their parents/guardian shall be so advised upon enrollment. The notice shall state that these disciplinary rules and procedures are available on request at the charter school office.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school-related extracurricular activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to regular education students except to the extent that federal and state law or the student’s Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) mandates additional or different procedures for that student. CRA will follow all federal and state law when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities and according due process to such students.

**Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students**

A student may be suspended or expelled for any of the enumerated acts listed below if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at Charter School or at any other school: (a) while on school grounds; (b) while going to or coming from school; (c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; (d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity. A CRA student *shall be* recommended for suspension or expulsion for the following acts:

1. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person or willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense.
2. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with one of the charter school Co-Directors or designee’s concurrence.
3. Unlawfully possessed, used sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of, any controlled substance as defined Health and Safety code sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
4. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
5. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal code section 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288, 288a or 289, or committed a sexual battery as defined Penal Code 243.4.
6. Made terrorist threats against school officials and /or school property.
7. Committed sexual harassment as defined in Education code Section 212.5.
8. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated n an act of hate violence as defined in Education Code Section 233. (e)

A CRA student *may be* recommended for suspension or expulsion for the following acts:

1. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
2. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
3. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
4. Possessed or used tobacco or any product containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel.
5. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
6. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in the Health and Safety Code sections 11014.5
7. Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisor, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
8. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
9. Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e., a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
10. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and /or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
11. Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder, and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.

**SUSPENSION PROCEDURE**

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

* **INFORMAL CONFERENCE:** Suspension shall be preceded by an informal conference conducted by CRA’s Executive Director of Education or designee with the student and whenever practicable, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to CRA’s Executive Director of Education.

The conference may be omitted if CRA’S Co-Directors or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An “emergency situation” involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student’s right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

* **NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS:** At the time of the suspension, a CRA employee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may also state the date and time when the students may return to school. If school officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may add that state law requires the parent/guardian to respond to such requests without delay.

**AUTHORITY TO EXPEL**

Only CRA’s Board of Directors upon the recommendation of the expulsion panel may expel a student. The expulsion panel shall be made up of two teachers and one member of the CRA Board of Directors.  The teachers shall not also be members of the CRA Board or the primary teacher of the student being considered for expulsion.  The member of the CRA Board shall not be a CRA employee or an immediate relation of such an employee. The Board of Directors may expel any student found to have committed an expellable offense(s) listed above in the “Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion.”

Except for expulsions for offenses listed under Education Code Section 48915(c), a student may only be expelled upon the findings and recommendations of the expulsion panel if CRA’s Board of Directors finds that the student committed the expellable offense and that at least one of the following findings may be substantiated:

1. That other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct.
2. That due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others.

**EXPULSION PROCEDURE**

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. The hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after CRA’s Co-Directors or designee determines that one of the acts listed under “Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion” has occurred.

The hearing will be presided over by CRA’s Co-Directors who will make a recommendation to the expulsion panel.

Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student’s parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. The notice shall include:

1. The date and place of the hearing;
2. A statement of the specific facts, charges and offense upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
3. A copy of charter school’s disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;
4. Notification of the student’s or parent/guardian’s obligation to provide information about the student’s status in charter school to any other District in which the student seeks enrollment;
5. The opportunity for the student or the student’s parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel;
6. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
7. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
8. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student’s behalf including witnesses;

**RECORD OF HEARING**

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

**PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE**

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to an expulsion hearing, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the expulsion panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed any of the acts listed in “Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion” above.

Finding of facts shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While no evidence shall be based solely on hearsay, sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses whose disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

The decision of the expulsion panel shall be in the form of a recommendation to CRA’s Board of Directors, which will make a final determination regarding the expulsion.

**WRITTEN NOTICE TO EXPEL**

CRA’s Co-Directors or designee following a decision of CRA’s Board of Directors to expel shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall include the following:

1. The specific offense committed by the student from the acts listed in “Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion” above
2. Notice of the right to appeal the expulsion
3. Notice of the student’s or parent /guardian’s obligation to inform any new District in which the student seeks to enroll of the student’s status with the charter school

If a pupil is expelled or leaves Community Roots Academy without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, CRA shall notify the superintendent of the school District of the pupil's last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school District with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card, and health information. Upon expulsion from the charter school, students will attend school pursuant to the procedure of their District of residence pertaining to expelled students.

**APPEAL OF SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION**

The suspension of a student will be at the discretion of the EDE or the EDE’s designee. Expulsion of a student will be recommended by the EDE and must be approved by the Board of Directors. Parents and/or guardians will be notified in advance of the suspension or expulsion and can appeal a student’s suspension or expulsion. A suspension appeal will be heard by the EDE, and upon consideration the EDE’s decision is final. An expulsion may be appealed within five working days. The student will be considered suspended until a meeting is convened to hear the appeal (within 10 working days) at which time the parent(s) must attend to present their appeal. The appeal shall be heard by a fair and impartial panel of representatives assigned by the CRA Board of Directors. The decision of the panel of representatives of the Board of Directors will be final.

In the event of a decision to expel a student from CRA, the school will work cooperatively with the district of residence, county, and/or private schools to assist with the appropriate educational placement of the student who has been expelled. Any incident of violent and/or serious student behavior shall be communicated to the district/school to which the student matriculates.

# ELEMENT 11: EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEMS

Capistrano Unified School District employees cannot be required to work at Community Roots Academy, nor can the District require CRA to hire District non-certificated, certificated, or confidential employees, with the exception of District employees provided to the charter school as part of the administrative services paid for by the charter school under a separately negotiated agreement for services or memorandum of understanding.

Community Roots Academy employees are not subject to District transfers without written consent of that employee.

CRA Board of Directors has approved and adopted a comprehensive personnel policies and procedures that are provided to each employee upon hire. These policies set forth personnel obligations, rights, responsibilities, complaint procedures, discipline procedures, and other pertinent policies essential to preserving a safe and harmonious work environment. CRA’s Co-Directors resolve complaints and grievances and administer any personnel discipline, with the assistance of the District when necessary, in accordance with these policies. Disputes over personnel discipline shall not be covered by CRA’s dispute resolution process, and instead, will be resolved through the personnel policies and procedures.

**CREDENTIAL MONITORING**

All teachers hired are highly qualified as defined under No Child Left Behind. Appropriate records of credentials held by CRA teachers and supporting documentation is maintained by the school administration. Credentials are monitored annually in compliance with state and federal law.

**WORK MATTERS**

Work calendars, hours per week, and vacation time are determined by individual employment work agreements. Administrators and office staff shall work a calendar year of 12 months, with a standard week of approximately 40 hours. These staff may possibly work extra time for special events, school meetings, etc. Teachers typically work a calendar year of 10 months and up to 1 additional month to provide extended instruction time, with a standard week of approximately 38.5 hours, including instructional hours, meetings and professional development (including staff development days and supplemental instruction). Teacher will likely work longer hour weeks for evening parent conferences, for school meetings, events, preparation of instruction and professional development.

**TIME OFF**

CRA complies with all the regulations pursuant to California Labor Code 233.

Only full-time employees working year round (12 months a year) in excess of 36 hours per week may accrue and take paid vacation time. Part time employees working 30 hours per week or more will receive pro-rated paid vacation. Part-time employees working less than 30 hours per week will not be eligible for paid vacation. Full-time employees will accrue 15 days of paid vacation per year, which cannot be carried over from year to year. Vacation is accrued on a monthly basis (*i.e.*, a full-time employee accrues one and one quarter vacation day per month).   
  
**SICK DAYS**  
Full-time employees and teachers working in excess of 36 hours per week may take paid sick leave. Full-time employees and teachers working in excess of 36 hours per week accrue a total of 10 days of paid sick leave per year.  Sick leave is accrued on a monthly basis (an employee accrues one sick day per month).  Eligible employees may not carry over unused sick leave from one school year to the next. Sick leave will not accrue during any unpaid leave of absence.  
  
**BEREAVEMENT**

Eligible full-time employees and teachers may take up to five (5) days paid leave per rolling 12-month period for the death of a parent, parent-in-law (including parent of a domestic partner), spouse, domestic partner, child (including stepchild or child of domestic partner), or sibling.  Paid Bereavement Leave is available only to a full-time employee or teacher who has been working at CRA for twelve (12) consecutive months. Upon request, and at the school’s sole discretion, those employees not eligible for paid Bereavement Leave may take up to five (5) days unpaid leave per rolling 12-month period as bereavement leave.   
  
CRA retains the right to modify any of the preceding ‘work related matters’ policies, as it deems appropriate.

Employees will be expected to engage in professional behavior with fellow employees, students, parents, and others with whom interaction is made on behalf of or while representing CRA. Unprofessional behavior includes unlawful harassment including, but not limited to jokes, threats, put-downs, decorations, and innuendoes related to gender, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Employees are expected to refrain from such activity and to report alleged improprieties in accordance with state and federal laws.

**DUE PROCESS**

All staff members will have due process rights that include:

* Right to just cause discipline and dismissal.
* Right to mediation and a fair hearing if necessary.
* Right to appeal before a free state arbitrator (offered to small school districts).
* Right to binding arbitration conducted by a paid arbitrator.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

If an employee has a grievance, the first step in attempting to resolve the dispute is to engage in a good faith effort with the administrative staff. The good faith effort will include problem identification, possible solutions, selection of resolution, timeline for implementation, and follow-up. A written summary of the good faith effort will be included in the personnel file.

If the good faith effort is unsuccessful, the employee should submit a written complaint to the CRA Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will schedule a hearing at a mutually convenient time and place for discussion of the complaint with all parties involved, but in no event later than 35 days after receipt of the written complaint and after notification to the employee. Board members who are interested parties will excuse themselves from grievance proceedings if such members have a conflict of interest in the subject of the proceedings (See Appendix F – Conflict of Interest Policy).

A decision as established by a majority vote of the members of the CRA Board of Directors hearing the grievance will be rendered within ten working days of the completion of the hearing. In the event that additional information, investigation, or hearings are necessary after the initial hearing, the hearing may be continued and the final decision will be made within ten working days of the last committee hearing, or as soon thereafter as is practicable. Any additional proceedings will be completed as soon as practical. The decision of the CRA Board of Directors will be final. If the attempt to resolve the grievance through the hearing process is not successful, professional mediation or legal intervention may be necessary.

If the grievance is a complaint of discrimination, action will take place within 24 hours. An investigation of the complaint will ensue to determine as many facts about the issue as possible.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION**

Any CRA employee who engages in unprofessional behavior of any kind will face disciplinary action up to and including termination.

# ELEMENT 12: STUDENT ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES

*“The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school District who choose not to attend charter schools.” Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(L).*

No student is required to attend the Community Roots Academy. Students who do not attend the school may attend their local school or pursue an inter-District transfer in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of their District or county of residence.

Parents or guardians of each student enrolled in the charter school are informed upon enrollment and within the student/parent handbook that the student has no right to admission in a particular school of any local education agency as a consequence of enrollment in CRA, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the Capistrano Unified School District.

# ELEMENT 13: RETURN RIGHTS OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

*“Description of the rights of any employee of the school District upon leaving the employment of the school District to work in a charter school and of any rights of return to the school District after employment at a charter school.” Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(M).*

Those members of the Community Roots Academy staff who leave employment in Capistrano Unified School District to work at CRA shall not have any right to return to employment within the CUSD without prior consent by the CUSD.

Employees of CRA who were not previous employees of the Capistrano Unified School District will not become employees of the Capistrano Unified School District and will not have the right to employment within the District upon leaving the employment of the charter school.

Upon dismissal from CRA, no previous CUSD employee may return to the District for employment without the prior written consent of the CUSD.

# ELEMENT 14: DISPUTE RESOLUTION

*“The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter.” Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(N).*

**INTENT**

The intent of this dispute resolution process is to (1) resolve disputes within the school pursuant to the school’s policies, (2) minimize the oversight burden on CUSD, (3) insure a fair and timely resolution of disputes, and (4) frame a charter oversight and renewal process and timeline so as to avoid disputes regarding oversight and renewal matters.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The Members of the Board of Directors and the staff of Community Roots Academy and the District agree to resolve all disputes regarding this charter school pursuant to the terms of this section. Both shall refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

**DISPUTES ARISING FROM WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

Disputes arising from within CRA, including all disputes among and between students, staff, parents, volunteers, advisors, and partner organizations and Board of Directors Members of the school, shall be resolved by the charter school and the Board of Directors pursuant to policies and procedures developed by the charter school Board of Directors.

The District shall not intervene in any such internal disputes without the consent of CRA’s Board of Directors and shall refer any complaints or reports regarding such disputes to the chairperson of the Board of Directors or the Co-Directors of CRA for resolution pursuant to the charter school’s policies. The District agrees not to intervene or become involved in the dispute unless the dispute has given the District reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this charter or related laws or agreements has occurred, or unless the Board of Directors of the charter school has requested the District to intervene in the dispute.

**DISPUTES BETWEEN CRA & THE DISTRICT**

In the event that Community Roots Academy and the District have disputes regarding the terms of this charter or any other issue regarding CRA, both parties agree to follow the process outlined below. However, this dispute resolution process will not apply to those issues that may lead to revocation of the charter petition as outlined in EC 47607(c) unless the District chooses to have this process apply.

In the event of a dispute between CRA and the District, the staff and Board of Directors Members of the school and District agree to first frame the issue in written format and refer the issue to the District superintendent, or his/her designee, and CRA school Co-Directors. In the event that the District superintendent believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter, this shall be specifically noted in the written dispute statement.

CRA’s Co-Directors and the District superintendent shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, both parties shall identify two Board Members from their respective Boards who shall jointly meet with the superintendent of the District and the Co-Directors of Community Roots Academy and attempt to resolve the dispute. If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the superintendent and the Co-Directors shall meet to jointly identify a neutral, third party arbitrator. The format of the arbitration session shall be developed jointly. The superintendent and Co-Directors shall incorporate informal rules of evidence and procedure into the arbitration format unless both parties agree otherwise. CRA and the school District shall each bear its own costs incurred as a result of its compliance with this dispute resolution process.

**OVERSIGHT, REPORTING, REVOCATION & RENEWAL**

The Capistrano Unified School District Board may inspect or observe any part of CRA at any time. With only occasional exceptions, the District may seek to provide notice to the school at least three working days prior to any inspection, observation, or monitoring. If the Board of Education of the Capistrano Unified School District believes it has cause to revoke this charter, the Board agrees to notify CRA’s Board of Directors in writing, noting the specific reasonable time to respond to the notice and take corrective action. CRA understands and accepts that the Board of CUSD may have legal right to revoke this charter if it has found legal and reasonable grounds for revocation specifically set forth in the law, provided however that CUSD has given CRA prior notice of any grounds for revocation and reasonable opportunity to cure such violation, unless the District determines, in writing, that the violation constitutes a ‘severe and imminent threat to the health or safety of pupils’ (EC 47607d). CRA agrees to respond promptly to all reasonable inquiries, including inquires regarding its financial records.

The Board of the Capistrano Unified School District agrees to receive and review the annual fiscal and programmatic performance review and annual audit. Within two months of the receipt of this review, the District must notify the Board of Directors of CRA if it considers the charter school is not making satisfactory progress relative to the goals specified in the charter. This annual notification will include the specific reasons for the District’s conclusions.

# ELEMENT 15: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING (EERA)

*“A declaration whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act.” Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O).*

Community Roots Academy is the exclusive public school employer for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. Under the EERA, CRA employees shall have the right to form a collective bargaining unit and to negotiate directly with the charter school. If the employees lawfully form a collective bargaining unit with a representative designated to negotiate with the charter school on their behalf, CRA shall negotiate matters covered by the EERA directly with that representative. These matters may include such items as salary levels (which may be based upon such factors as educational degree attained, years of teaching experience and/or other factors), employee benefits (health plan provider, levels of coverage and co-payments, retirement plans, vacation days, dental and vision coverage, etc.), number of work days per year and number of teaching hours per day, and work rules (including required breaks).

# ELEMENT 16: PROCEDURES FOR CLOSURE

*A description of the procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the school, including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records. (Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(P))*

Closure of Community Roots Academy will be documented by official action of the Board of Directors. The action will identify the reason for closure. The official action will also identify an entity and person or persons responsible for closure-related activities.

The Board of Directors will promptly notify parents and students of CRA, the District, the Orange County Office of Education, the Charter School’s SELPA, the retirement systems in which CRA’s employees participate (e.g., Public Employees’ Retirement System, State Teachers’ Retirement System, and federal social security), and the California Department of Education of the closure as well as the effective date of the closure. This notice will also include the name(s) of and contact information for the person(s) to whom reasonable inquiries may be made regarding the closure; the pupils’ school districts of residence; and the manner in which parents/guardians may obtain copies of pupil records, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements.

The Board will ensure that the notification to the parents and students of the Charter School of the closure provides information to assist parents and students in locating suitable alternative programs. This notice will be provided promptly following the Board's decision to close the Charter School.

The Board will also develop a list of pupils in each grade level and the classes they have completed, together with information on the pupils’ districts of residence, which they will provide to the entity responsible for closure-related activities.

As applicable, CRA will provide parents, students and the District with copies of all appropriate student records and will otherwise assist students in transferring to their next school. All transfers of student records will be made in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. CRA will ask the District to store original records of Charter School students. All records of the Charter School shall be transferred to the District upon Charter School closure. If the District will not or cannot store the records, CRA shall work with the County Office of Education to determine a suitable alternative location for storage.

All state assessment results, special education records, and personnel records will be transferred to and maintained by the entity responsible for closure-related activities in accordance with applicable law.

As soon as reasonably practical, CRA will prepare final financial records. Community Roots Academy will also have an independent audit completed within six months after closure. CRA will pay for the final audit. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant selected by CRA and will be provided to the District promptly upon its completion. The final audit will include an accounting of all financialassets, including cash and accounts receivable and an inventory of property, equipment, and other items of material value, an accounting of the liabilities, including accounts payable and any reduction in apportionments as a result of audit findings or other investigations, loans, and unpaid staff compensation, and an assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to CRA.

CRA will complete and file any annual reports required pursuant to Education Code section 47604.33.

On closure of Community Roots Academy, all assets of the Charter School, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property and all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by students attending CRA, remain the sole property of CRA and upon the dissolution of the non-profit public benefit corporation shall be distributed in accordance with the of Incorporation which require approval from the Board (See Appendix D – Articles of Incorporation). Any assets acquired from the District or District property will be promptly returned upon CRA’s closure to the District. The distribution shall include return of any grant funds and restricted categorical funds to their source in accordance with the terms of the grant or state and federal law, as appropriate, which may include submission of final expenditure reports for entitlement grants and the filing of any required Final Expenditure Reports and Final Performance Reports, as well as the return of any donated materials and property in accordance with any conditions established when the donation of such materials or property was accepted.

On closure, CRA shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of the Charter School.

As Community Roots Academy is operated as a non-profit public benefit corporation, should the corporation dissolve with the closure of the Charter School, the Board will follow the procedures set forth in the California Corporations Code for the dissolution of a non-profit public benefit corporation and file all necessary filings with the appropriate state and federal agencies.

As specified by the Budget in Appendix I, Community Roots Academy will utilize the reserve fund to undertake any expenses associated with the closure procedures identified above.

# ELEMENT 17: FINANCIAL PLANNING, REPORTING & ACCOUNTABILITY

**BUDGET**

*Provide financial statements that include one-year cash flow and three-year budget.*

CRA has provided one-year cash flow and five-year projected budget that can be found in Appendix I.

**FINANCIAL REPORTING**

CRA has fiscal control policies and procedures in place and contracts with a back-office provider experienced in charter school operations. The School complies with all other financial reporting requirements of California Education Code § 47604.33 and fully complies with California Education Code § 47604.3.

CRA has implemented an attendance recording and accounting system, which complies with state law

CRA will annually prepare and submit to CUSD:

* On or before July 1st, a final budget. For a charter school in its first year of operation, financial statements submitted with the charter petition pursuant to Education Code 47605(g) will satisfy this requirement.
* On or before December 15th, an interim financial report which reflects changes to the final budget through October 31st
* On or before March 15th, a second interim financial report which reflects changes to the final budget through January 31st
* On or before September 15th, a final unaudited financial report for the prior full fiscal year

# ELEMENT 18: DISTRICT SERVICES

Community Roots Academy and Capistrano Unified District (CUSD) will negotiate in good faith and may on an annual basis to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) separate from this charter, one that establishes more specifically the financial and service relationship between the two parties. The School’s purchase of goods and services, if any, from the District shall not negate the operational independence of the School from the District. Breach of the MOU shall not necessarily constitute breach of this charter.

# ELEMENT 19: POTENTIAL CIVIL LIABILITY EFFECTS

Capistrano Unified School District shall not be required to provide coverage to CRA under any of the District's self-insured programs or commercial insurance policies. Community Roots Academy shall secure and maintain, as a minimum, insurance as set forth below to protect CRA from claims, which may arise from its operations. The following insurance policies are required:

1. Workers' Compensation Insurance in accordance with provisions of the California Labor Code, adequate to protect CRA from claims under Workers' Compensation Acts, which may arise from its operations.
2. General Liability, Comprehensive Bodily Injury and Property Damage Liability for combined single limit coverage of not less than $2,000,000 for each occurrence. The policy shall be endorsed to name the Capistrano Unified School District and the Board of Education of CUSD as additional insured.
3. Fidelity Bond coverage shall be maintained by CRA to cover all charter school employees who handle, process, or otherwise have responsibility for charter school funds, supplies, equipment or other assets. Minimum amount of coverage shall be $50,000 per occurrence, with no self-insured retention.

**INSURANCE CERTIFICATES**

CRA shall keep on file certificates signed by an authorized representative of the insurance carrier (See Appendix G). Certificates shall be endorsed as follows: The insurance afforded by this policy shall not be suspended, cancelled, reduced in coverage or limits or non-renewed except after thirty (30) days prior written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, has been given to the District. Facsimile or reproduced signatures are not acceptable. The District reserves the right to require complete certified copies of the required insurance policies.

**INDEMINIFICATION**

With respect to its operations under this charter, CRA shall, to the fullest extent permitted by law, hold harmless, indemnify, and defend the District, its officers, directors, and employees from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, suits, losses, liability expenses and costs including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees and costs arising out of injury to any persons, including death or damage to any property caused by, connected with, or attributable to the willful misconduct, negligent acts, errors or omissions of CRA or its officers, employees, agents and consultants, excepting only those claims, demands, actions, suits, losses, liability expenses and costs caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of the District, its officers, directors and employees. The District shall be named as an additional insured under all insurance carried on behalf of CRA as outlined above.

With respect to its operations under this charter, the District shall, to the fullest extent permitted by law, hold harmless, indemnify, and defend CRA, its officers, directors, and employees from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, suits, losses, liability expenses and costs including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees and costs arising out of injury to any persons, including death or damage to any property caused by, connected with, or attributable to the willful misconduct, negligent acts, errors or omissions of the District or its officers, employees, agents and consultants, excepting only those claims, demands, actions, suits, losses, liability expenses and costs caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of CRA, its officers, directors and employees.

# ELEMENT 20: TERM OF THE CHARTER

The term of this charter renewal shall be for a five-year period beginning July 1, 2014 and ending on June 30, 2019.

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