

RIDGECREST CHARTER SCHOOL

A Charter School Renewal Proposal

Presented to:

**The Sierra Sands School District and if Necessary the State Board
of Education on Appeal**



Prepared in compliance with the terms, conditions and requirements of California Education Code 47600 et seq.

Submitted by the Ridgecrest Charter School (A California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation) in cooperation with parents, teachers, staff, community leaders and other concerned citizens of Ridgecrest, California.

September 2008

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AFFIRMATIONS/ASSURANCES

As the authorized lead petitioner, I,

Richard Smith hereby certify that the information submitted in this petition for the renewal of a California public charter school named Ridgecrest Charter School, located within the boundaries of the Sierra Sands Unified School 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 the renewal charter, the Charter School:

- Shall meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Section 60605, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)(1)]
- Shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the Ridgecrest Charter School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(O)]
- Shall be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- Shall not charge tuition. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- Shall admit all students who wish to attend the Ridgecrest 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 lottery process. 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. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(A)-(B)]
- Shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, 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)]
- 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.
- Shall comply with the MOU between the Ridgecrest Charter School and the State Board of Education as long as it is a State Board of Education Charter.
- 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)]
- 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 are required to hold.

As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to non-core, non-college preparatory teachers. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(1)]

- Shall at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
- 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)]
- Will follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to the Ridgecrest Charter School including but not limited to:
 - The Ridgecrest Charter School shall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection.
 - The Ridgecrest Charter School shall on a regular basis consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's education programs.
 - The Ridgecrest Charter School shall comply with any jurisdictional limitations to locations of its facilities.
 - The Ridgecrest Charter School shall comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment.
 - The Ridgecrest Charter School shall comply with all applicable portions of the No Child Left Behind Act.
 - The Ridgecrest Charter School shall comply with the Public Records Act.
 - The Ridgecrest Charter School shall comply with the Brown Act.
 - The Ridgecrest Charter School shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
 - The Ridgecrest Charter School shall meet or exceed the legally required minimum of school days.

Richard Smith, **Lead Petitioner**

Date

PREFACE

In the past two years Ridgecrest Charter School (“School” or “Charter School”) has gone through a reconstruction in its mission, administration, academic program, and delivery of instruction. The school has moved from a Core Knowledge base to the California State Content Standards base. The pedagogy and methodology are aligned to the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. All textbooks are State adopted and reflect the California State Standards. Teachers have been provided with training from UCLA School Management Team on various instructional strategies, i.e. Checking for Understanding, Vocabulary Development, Peer to Peer classroom observations, ESL Bridges to Understanding, as well as, training from the Kern County Department of Education in various educational techniques. Teachers also have four hours every other Friday to collaborate as grade levels, receive additional support from the Lead teacher on campus, and attend additional training from UCLA and various workshops provided by the county.

All teachers are fully credentialed and NCLB compliant. Teachers have also received 40 hours of training in the Open Court Reading Program. As a result of these changes, Ridgecrest Charter School has increased its API score by 22 points over the last two years. Additionally, Ridgecrest Charter School has achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year of operation.

Student learning and progress is followed through benchmark assessments that are administered every six weeks and are analyzed by the teachers to inform instruction and next learning. Ridgecrest Charter School has continued to implement an intervention program that provides 30 minutes per day of additional instructional support to students who scored below proficient on the STAR test.

Ridgecrest Charter School will continue to provide a safe, small school environment with a rigorous curriculum, personalized, inquiry based instruction that promotes student learning, teacher articulation and collaboration and promotes team building and school unity. Ridgecrest Charter School over the last two years has shifted focus from what teachers are teaching, to a more specific holistic approach of, what students are learning. Ridgecrest Charter School will continue to foster an atmosphere that promotes learning at the highest level, while also promoting a sense of community and family in a small K-8 environment.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The California Charter Schools Act is intended to provide an environment where accountability, flexibility, innovation, parental choice, parent-teacher involvement and public-private partnerships can work together to provide a better future for our children. As Education Code 47601 relates: “It is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting this part, to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a method to accomplish all of the following:

- a. Improve pupil learning;
- b. Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving;
- c. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- d. Create new professional opportunities for teachers including the opportunity to share responsibility for the learning program at the school;
- e. Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- f. Hold the schools established under this part accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems; and
- g. Provide vigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools.”

Mission

The mission of the Ridgecrest Charter School is to provide an experience-centered, life-long learner based environment that enables each student to meet the academic challenges and develop the social, emotional, and physical understanding necessary to succeed in life.

Our Vision

We seek to establish an educational environment that is creative, academically rigorous and emotionally nurturing. Ridgecrest Charter School will provide a safe and supportive environment that empowers students with the strategies and tools to become life long learners and informed, responsible citizens to function effectively in the 21st century global environment.

Educational Philosophy

We believe students learn in an environment that encourages inquiry and dialogue around state content standards, that values and builds on prior knowledge and that nurtures and supports the whole child.

Our school provides an environment where accountability, flexibility, innovation, parental choice, parent teacher involvement, and public-private partnerships can work together to provide a better future for our children. Our school will embrace, celebrate and benefit from the ethnic, linguistic and the socioeconomic diversity of our ever changing community by promoting family, school, and community partnerships.

Goals

1. academic achievement- the ability to read, write, speak, and calculate with clarity and precision;
2. the ability to demonstrate good citizenship through self-control, respectfulness, and kindness, especially with respect to teachers and others;

3. a high self-esteem, based on academic success; and
4. preparation to confidently address future academic challenges.

General Description

In September 2001, a new charter school in Ridgecrest began providing a rigorous education to children. This school is known as the Ridgecrest Charter School. The School currently operates as a charter school authorized by the State Board of Education (“SBE”). As required by Education Code Section 47605(j)(3), this charter renewal request shall be submitted to the Sierra Sands School District (“District”) for consideration and if denied, shall submit to the SBE. This charter shall use the generic term “Authorizer” to describe the entity that approves the charter renewal.

As of 2008-2009, the school has met all Adequate Yearly Progress (“AYP”) criteria for each year of operation, and has exceeded its Academic Performance Index (“API”) growth targets in the last two years of operation. Ridgecrest Charter School currently serves approximately 200 students at one site, in kindergarten through eighth grade, with twenty students in each kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classroom and 28 students in each classroom of grades four through eight (with instructional aide support as needed). Within the life of the renewed charter, enrollment is projected to reach approximately 350 students in grades K-8, with the same student distribution based on the continuation of the current class-size reduction funding.

For the duration of the third charter period, the Ridgecrest Charter School plans to continue to offer activities and adult supervision Monday through Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A goal during this second charter term will be to expand the program to include before and after school day care, such that the hours of operation would extend from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Instructional minutes offered by the charter school will exceed the number of minutes required by state law, and the School offers 180 days of instruction. A goal during this second charter term will be to expand our Special Education program to include an additional twenty calendar days for extended school year services for Special Education students where necessary so that these services, when required by a student’s individualized education program (“IEP”) can be offered in-house at Ridgecrest Charter School. It is planned that the instructional day will be from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for Grades K through 8, with clubs, extra curricular activities, extended day care and a variety of tutorial opportunities available both before and after core instruction. Attached as Appendix A, please find the 2008-2009 school calendar and schedule and a draft calendar and schedule for 2009-2010.

The Ridgecrest Charter School will provide a rigorous, inquiry based curriculum, learning style-evaluation, management process, and staff development, which will be constantly monitored and changed when necessary to maximize our effectiveness. The school will continue its balanced program for the new millennium that develops minds, bodies and spirits. An academic program that integrates four areas of literacy in a curriculum will continue to be taught as a team approach: language, technology, life sciences, and life skills. In addition, the program will provide physical education, health, and a nutritious meal program. Programs that develop emotional and social life skills training through fine arts, community service and environmental focus, including targeted counseling services and conflict resolution programs will be offered.

Ridgecrest Charter School students, in addition to mastering the California State Standards, will:

- read fluently to enjoy, infer, and interpret a variety of print material, i.e. literature, poetry, newspapers;
- engage in constructive dialogue, value literature and language and express oneself effectively through a variety of modalities;
- become curious, motivated, self-reflective learners who generate questions to deepen understanding;
- understand mathematical relationships, reason logically, problem solve and use mathematical techniques effectively in practical application;

- become stewards of the environment, and seek to make the community a better place;
- integrate and apply acquired knowledge in and out of the classroom; and
- take ownership of ones actions and be responsible citizens of the community.

Student Population and the Faculty Team

Students can come from any school in the State but preference will be given to students residing in the Sierra Sands School District. (“District”) The Ridgecrest Charter School faculty team will be role models for lifelong learning and professionalism. The faculty team will be held accountable for ensuring that Ridgecrest Charter School students achieve high standards. The faculty team will have the freedom and responsibility for supporting the development of all academic programs.

The Ridgecrest Charter School and (A California Non-profit Public Benefit Corporation) will continue to set new standards for efficient and effective management, freeing more resources for the education of children.



ANALYSIS OF THE LAST TERM

At the end of 2007-2008, Ridgecrest hired UCLA School Management Program (“UCLA”) to assist Ridgecrest Charter School in developing and implementing an action plan for academic achievement and an assessment plan to assist the School in using data to improve student achievement. UCLA created graphs representing the baseline CST grade level proficiency levels as shown below.

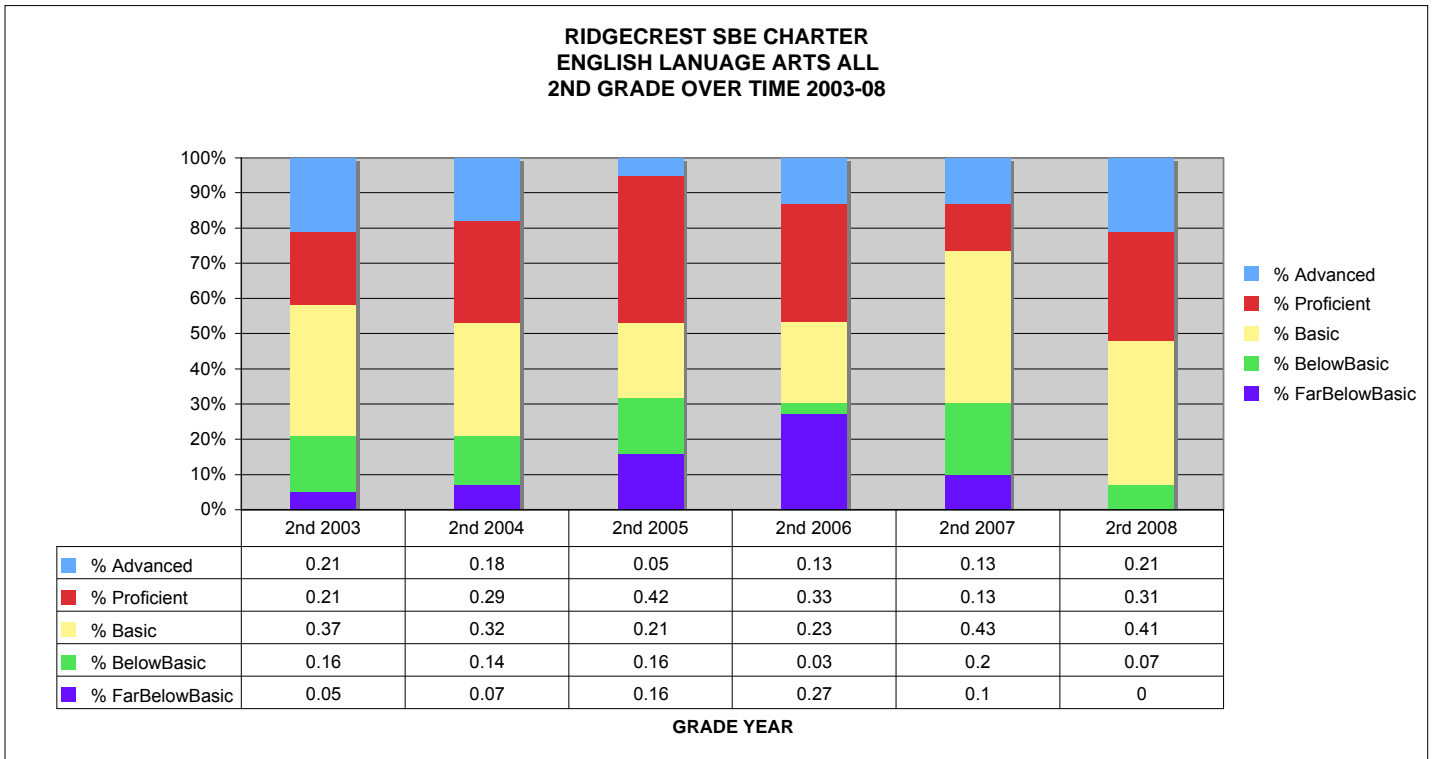
Student Achievement Plan

During the 2007-08 school year Ridgecrest Charter School created a Student Achievement Plan that outlined the academic goals for the school community in line with the pupil outcomes in the charter related to grade level proficiency in English Language Arts, Math, Science, and History/Social Studies. Below is a brief synopsis of what the goal was and what the actual outcomes were, based on the CST results for the 2007-08 school year.

English Language Arts

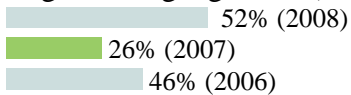
2nd Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 48% of students in grade 2 will score at proficient or above in ELA, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



The trend from 2005 to 2008 indicate the school is achieving their goal of reducing the percent of students in the lower categories (Far Below, Below, and Basic - FBB, BB, B) while increasing the percent of students in the Advanced (AD) and Proficient (PRO) categories.

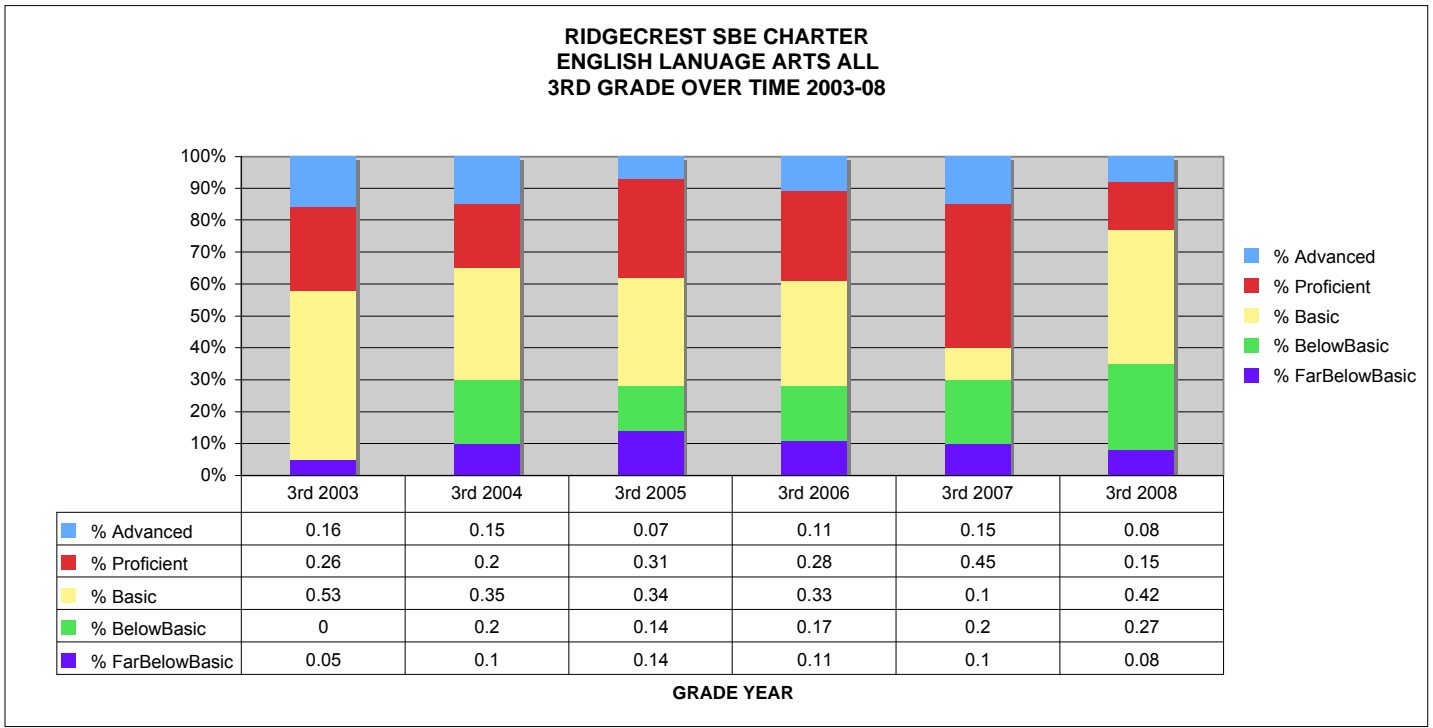
English Language Arts (% proficient or above)



The state average is 48%.

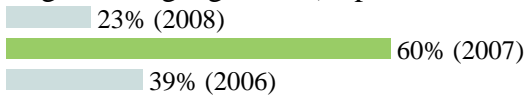
3rd Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 50% of students in grade 3 will score at proficient or above in ELA, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



While this data indicates a grade year to year decline in the percent of students in the Advanced and Proficient categories, comparing these results to the 2nd grade results for the cohort indicate a drop of at most 2 students for the proficient or better categories into the basic and below categories. There was an equivalent drop in the FBB category.

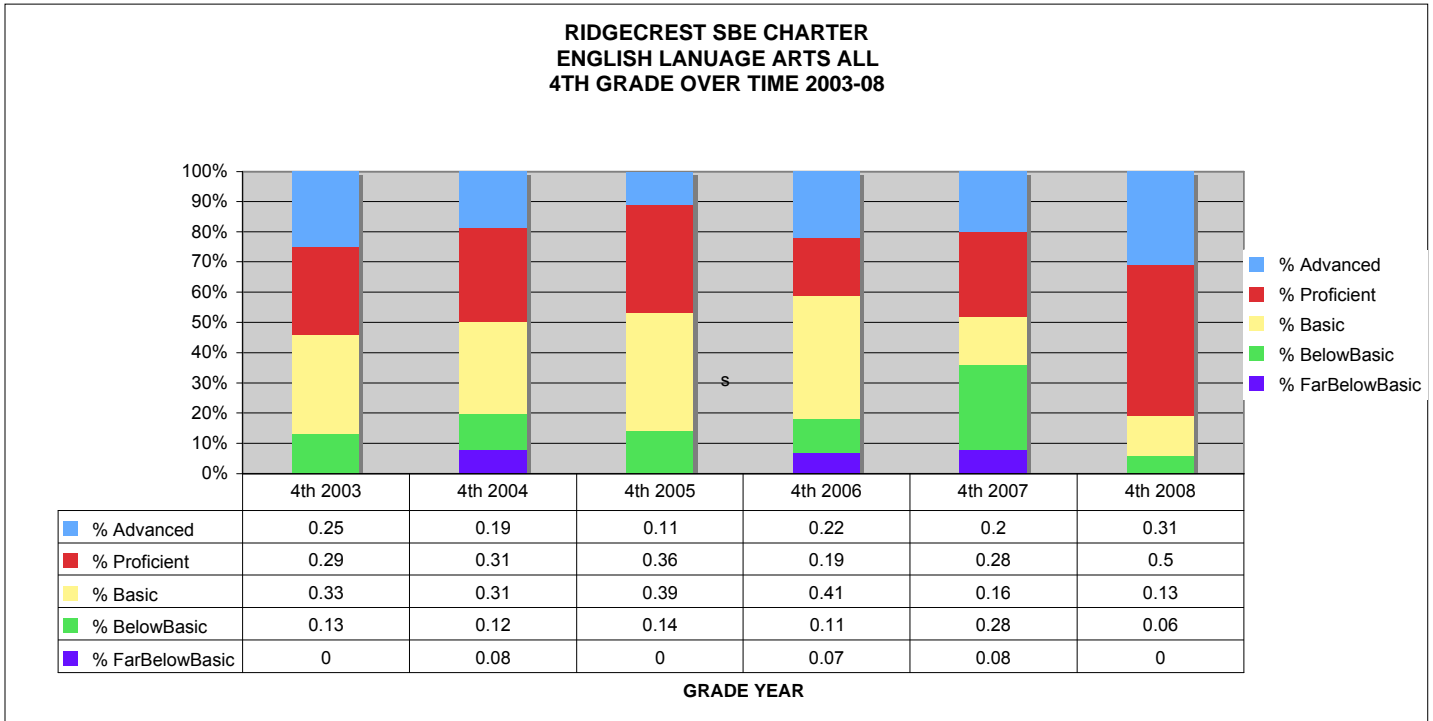
English Language Arts (% proficient or above)



The state average is 38%.

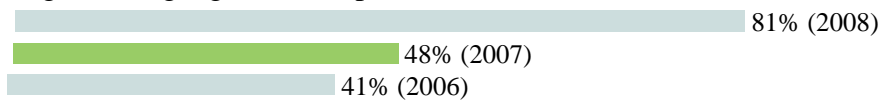
4th Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 53% of students in grade 4 will score at proficient or above in ELA, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



The 4th grade data indicates steady growth in the schools ability to provide value added learning. Year to year same grade level growth continues to move students out of the Basic and Below categories into the Proficient or better categories. When comparing 3rd to 4th cohort, it is evident that 4th grade takes students where they are and improves on their learning.

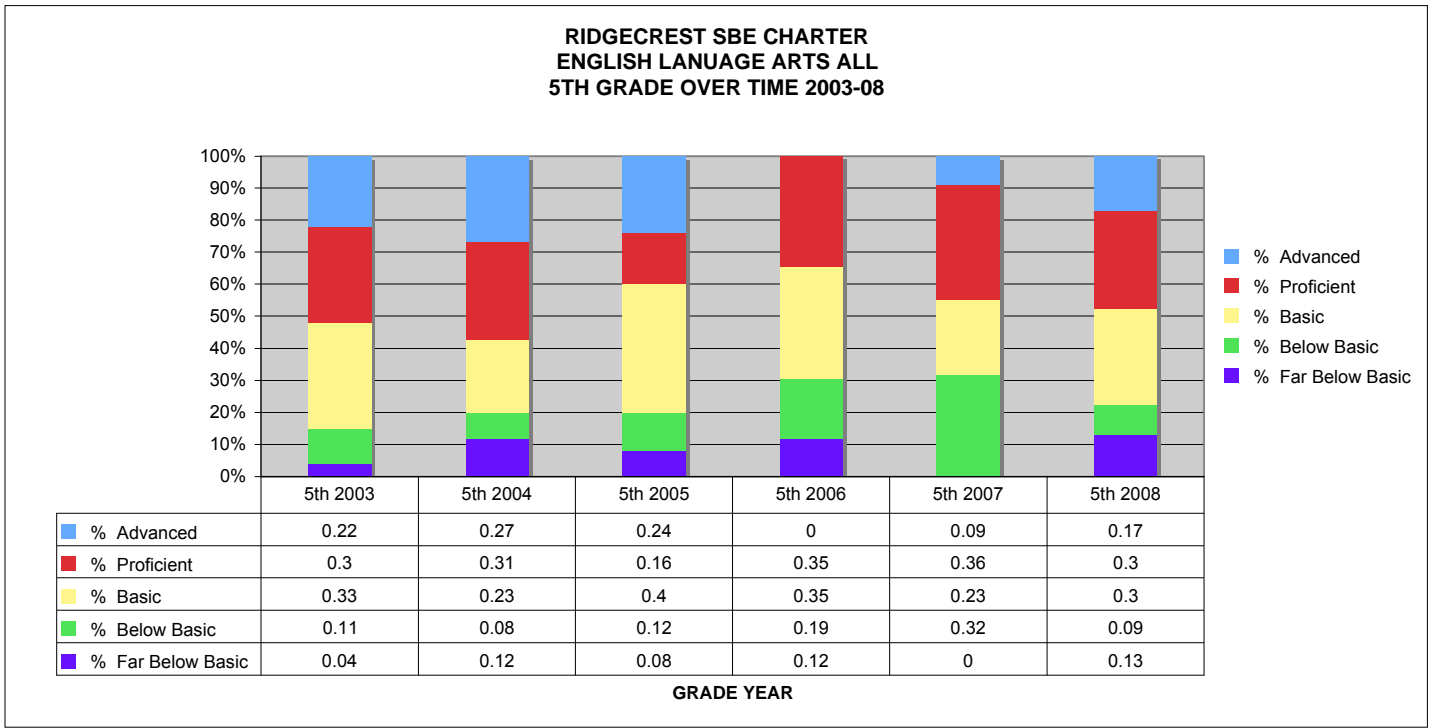
English Language Arts (% proficient or above)



The state average is 55%

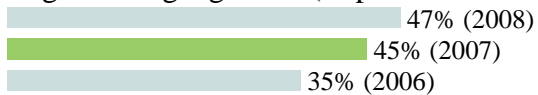
5th Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 50% of students in grade 5 will score at proficient or above in ELA, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



In 5th grade, beginning in 2006, there is evident improvement in increasing the percent of students who are proficient or better accompanied by a decrease in the percent of students in Below Basic.

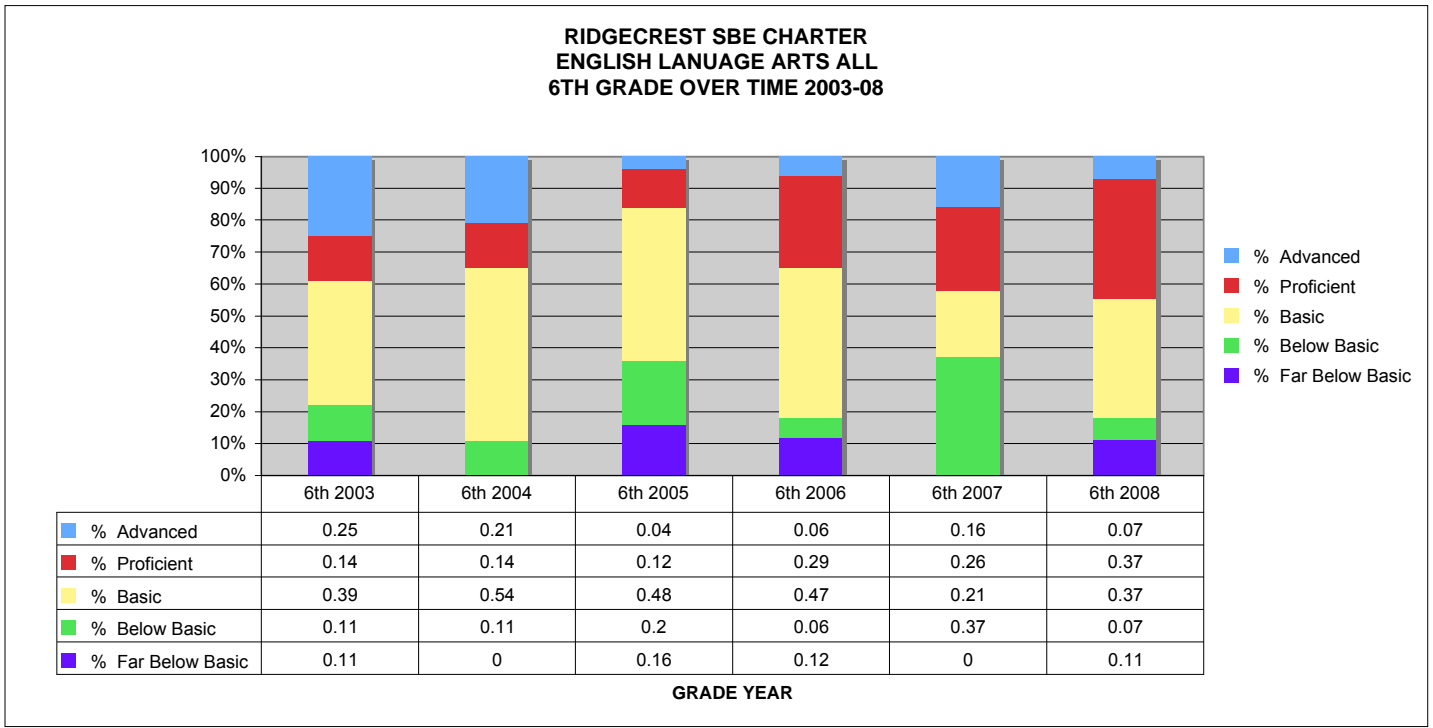
English Language Arts (% proficient or above)



The state average is 48%.

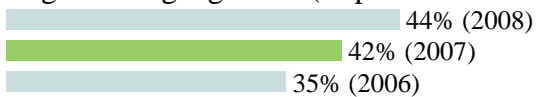
6th Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 47% of students in grade 6 will score at proficient or above in ELA, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



The trend for 6th grade beginning in 2005 showing a steady increase in the percent of students who are Proficient or Better. This is reinforced when we look at the 5th to 6th grade cohorts.

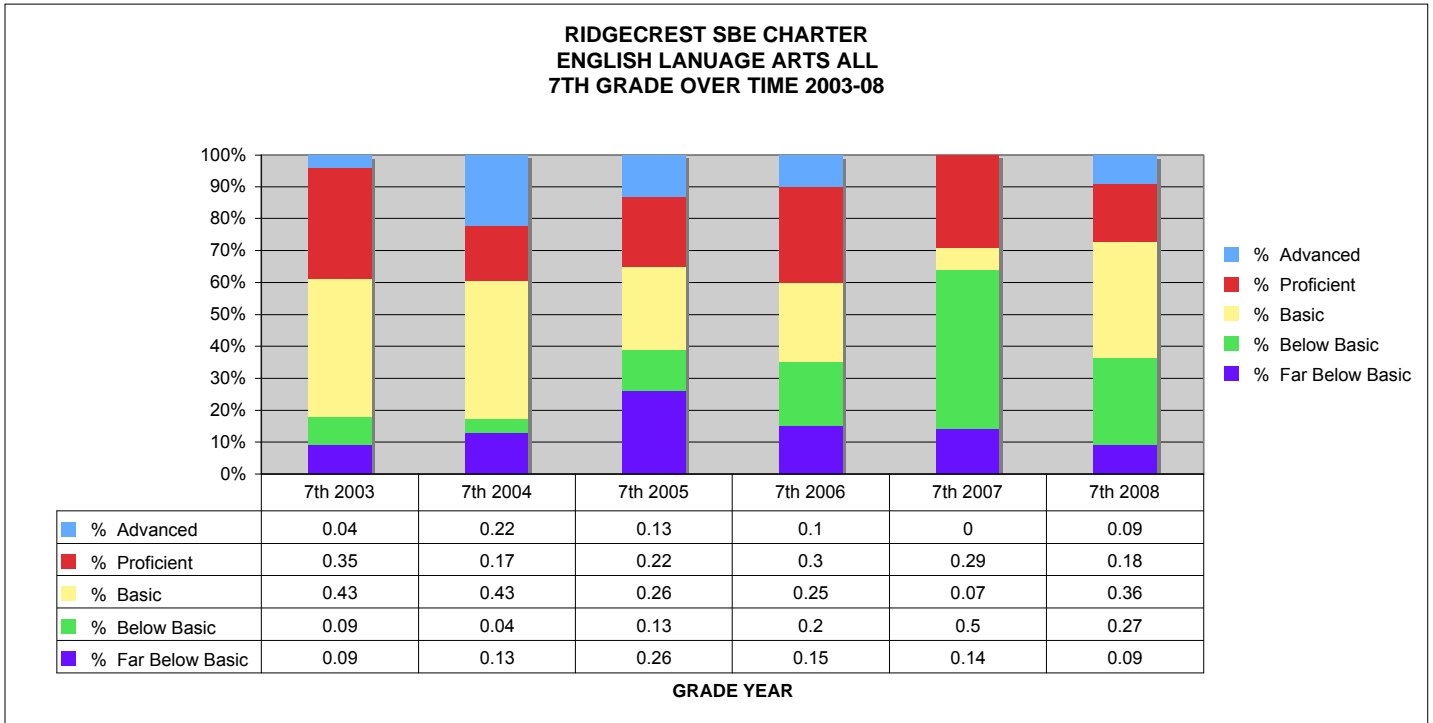
English Language Arts (% proficient or above)



The state average is 47%.

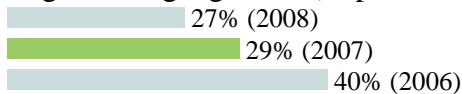
7th Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 46% of students in grade 7 will score at proficient or above in ELA, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



The 7th grade data indicate a lack of consistency in the results. There is evidence of consistency only in the level of Basic or better hovering around 60-70 percent. The Advanced group shows decreases from 2004 to 2007 with a small increase in 2008. Some of the mid-range fluctuation may be due to the small number of students since only eleven students were tested.

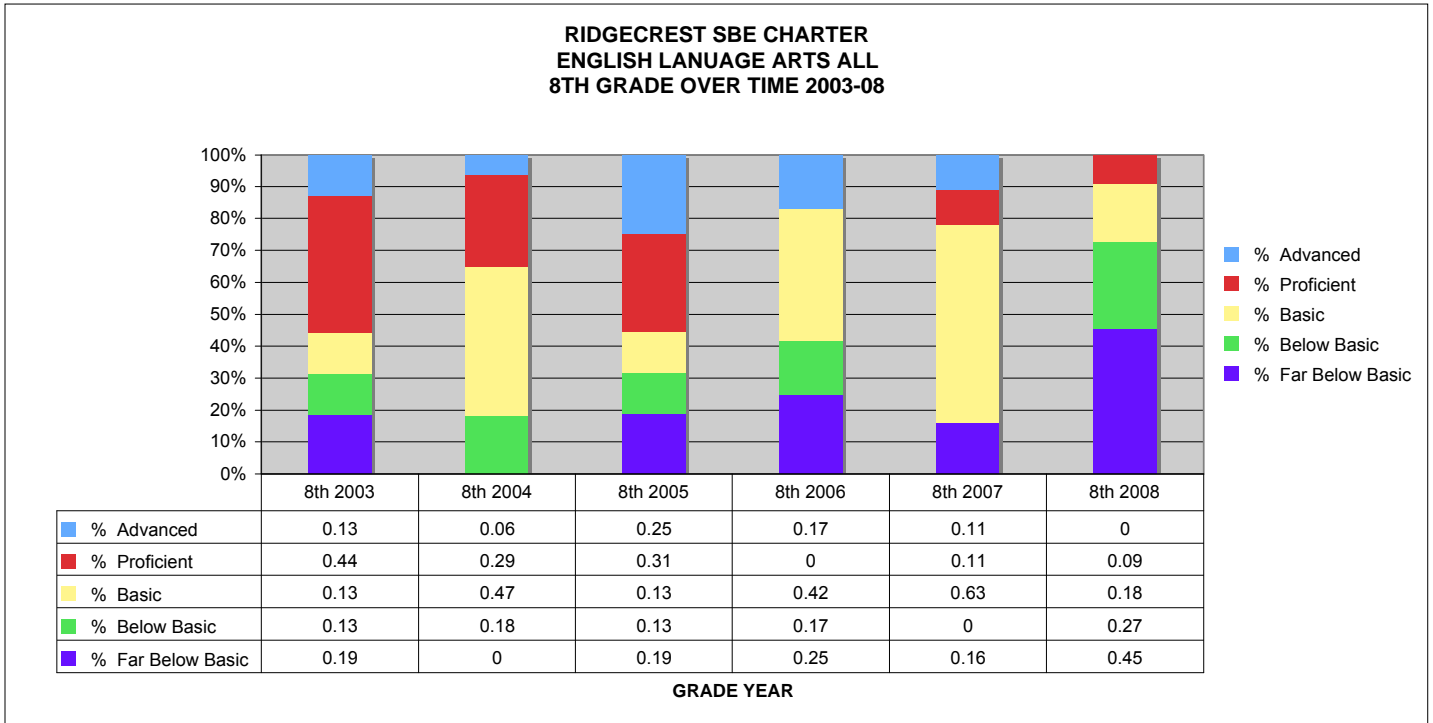
English Language Arts (% proficient or above)



The state average is 49%.

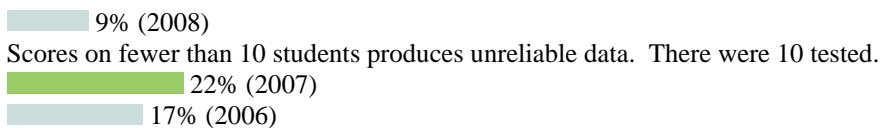
8th Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 41% of students in grade 8 will score at proficient or above in ELA, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



The data indicates an inconsistent pattern in the year to year same grade results. Compared to the incoming former 7th grade student's results, the 8th grade students generally decreased the percent in the top categories and increased the lower categories. This appears in the year to year same grade students as indicated by the decrease of Proficient or Better from 22% to 9% from 2007 to 2008, while the FBB goes from 16% to 45% from 2007 to 2008. As with the 7th grade results, since there were only 11 students tested, score changes in a small number of students can cause seemingly large swings on results.

English Language Arts (% proficient or above)

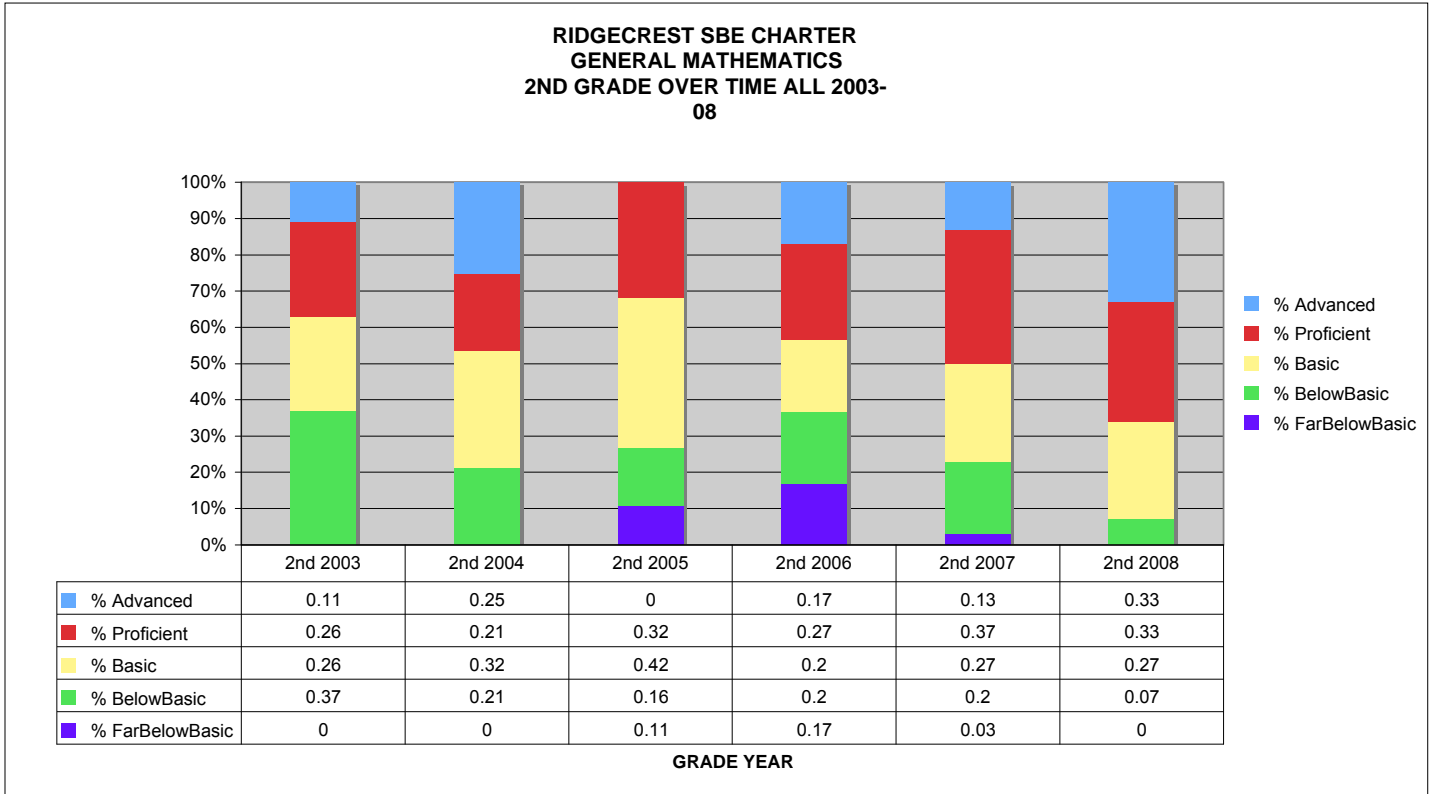


The state average is 45%.

Mathematics

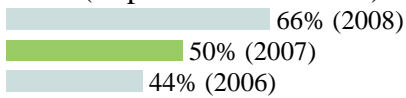
2nd Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 59% of students in grade 2 will score at proficient or above in Mathematics, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



The math pattern from the data indicates beginning in 2006 a strong increase in Proficient or Better, especially the Advanced category in 2008, year to year coupled with a strong decrease in FBB and BB.

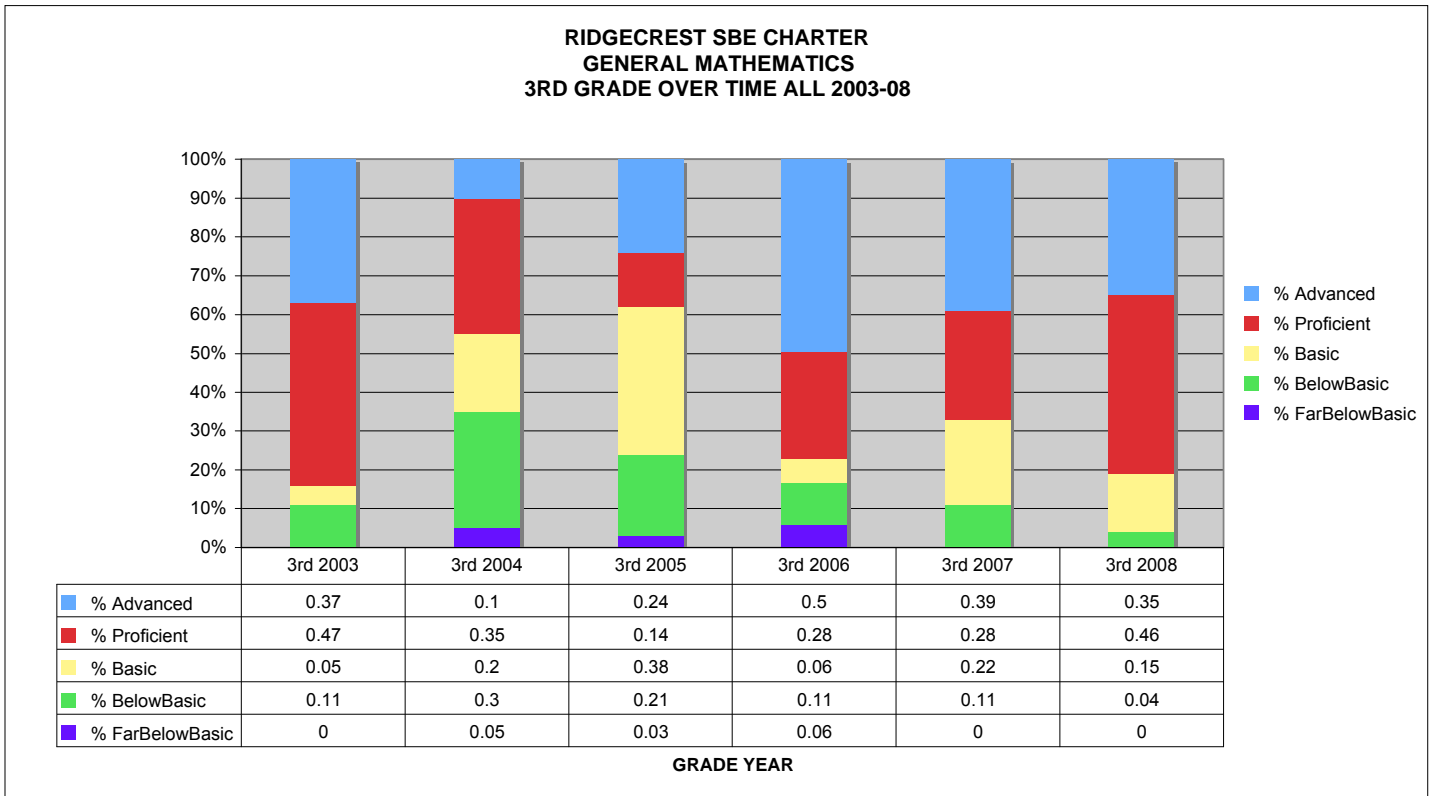
Math (% proficient or above)



The state average is 59%.

3rd Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 72% of students in grade 3 will score at proficient or above in Mathematics, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



The data indicates a trend to move students from the FBB and BB categories into the upper levels. The 81% Advanced and Proficient levels in 2008 indicates a strong base in basic mathematical skills. The gain from the 50% Advanced and Proficient levels at the end of 2nd grade in 2007 to the 81% end of 3rd grade in 2008 is an indicator of value added education.

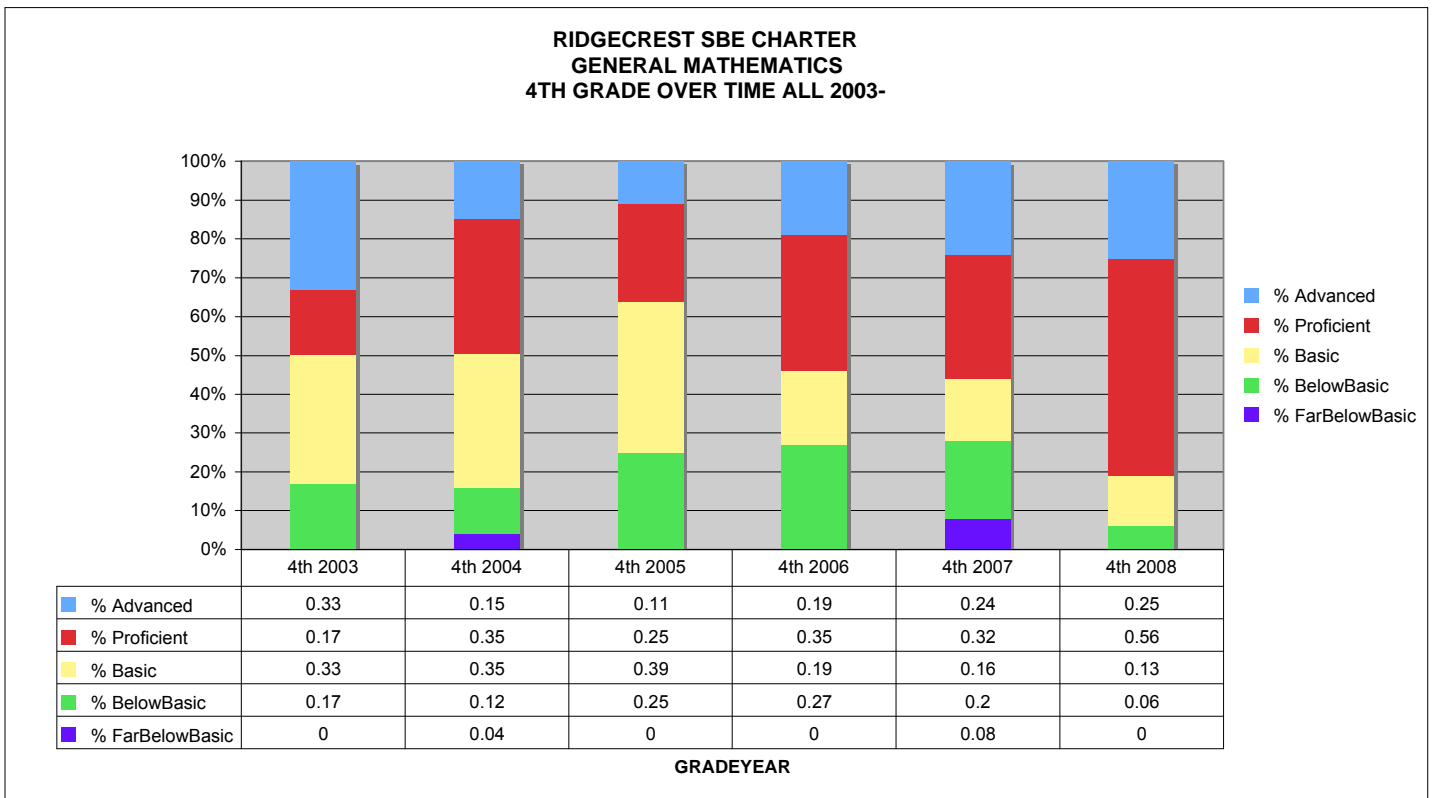
Math (% proficient or above)



The state average is 61%.

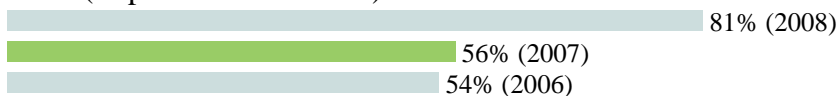
4th Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 61% of students in grade 4 will score at proficient or above in Mathematics, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



In the 4th grade data, beginning in 2005, there is a strong trend toward increasing the percent of students in the Proficient or Better category in the year to year same grade category. It is also evident in the 3rd to 4th cohort data, moving from 67% to 81% Proficient or better.

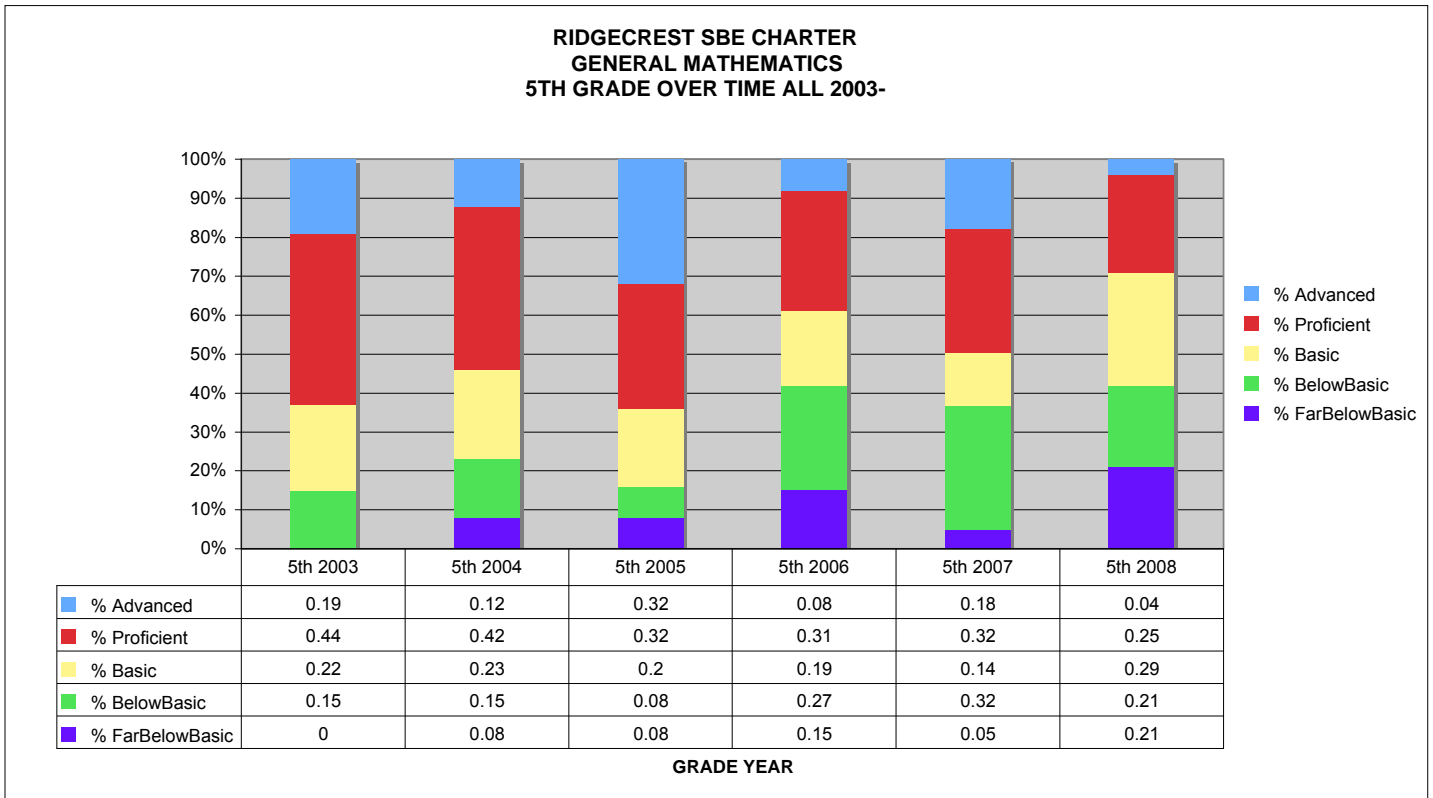
Math (% proficient or above)



The state average is 61%.

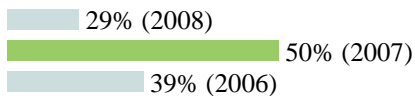
5th Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 55% of students in grade 5 will score at proficient or above in Mathematics, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



In the 5th grade data, there is no consistent visible pattern. All categories fluctuate showing gains and losses. When we look at the data from the 4th to 5th cohort, we find that the general pattern is a decrease in the percent of Advanced and an increase in the percent of Far Below Basic.

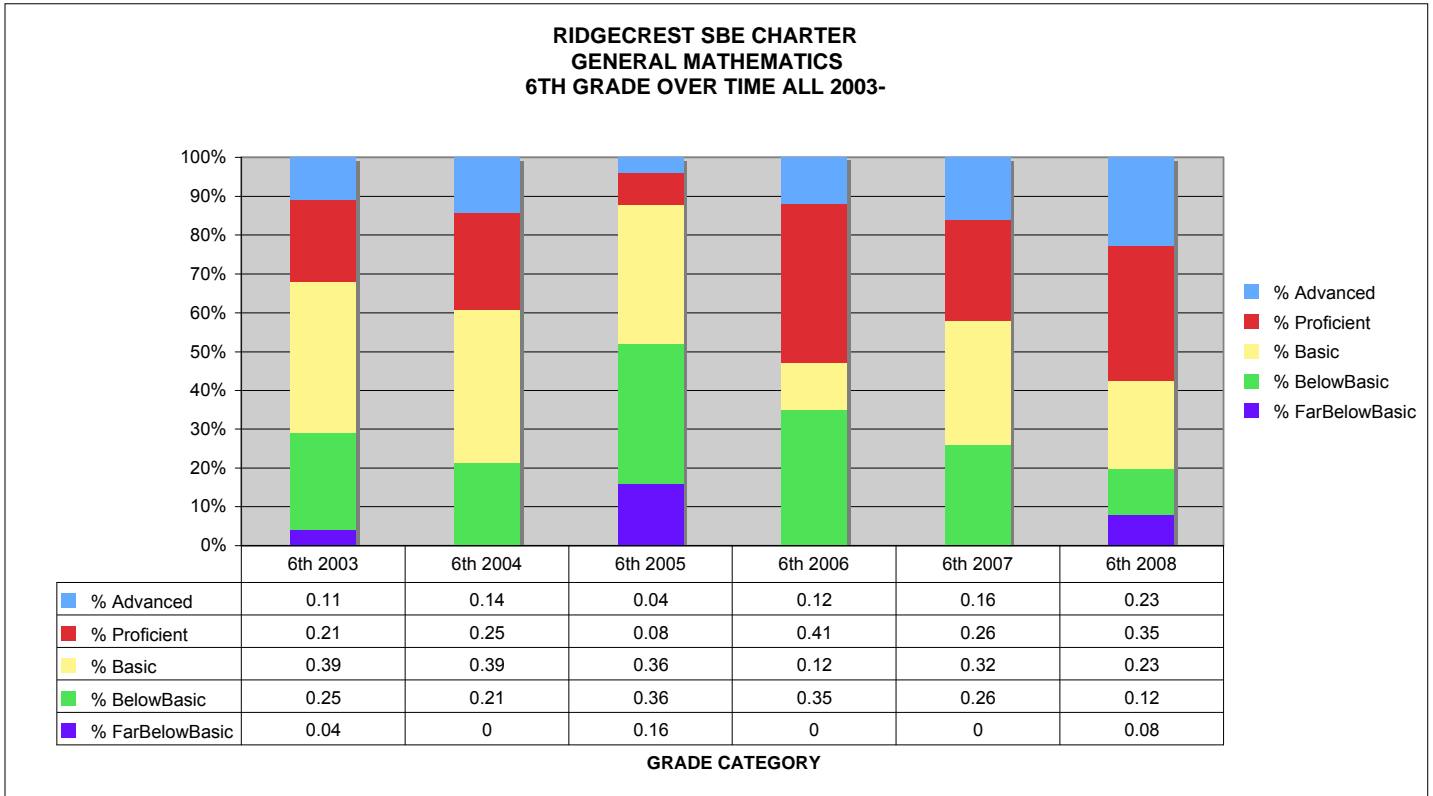
Math (% proficient or above)



The state average is 51%.

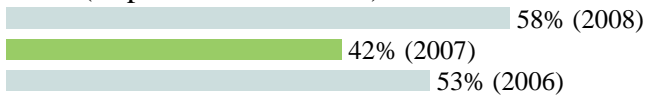
6th Grade

During the 2007-08 school year 47% of students in grade 6 will score at proficient or above in Mathematics, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



The data show a trend in the year to year same grade results following 2005 of increasing the percent of students in the Advanced category and decreasing the percent in Below Basic and below. This is also evident in the 5th to 6th cohort data where the Advanced category moved from 16% in 2007 to 23% in 2008 the Below basic and Far Below Basic categories moved from 35% down to 20% in 2008.

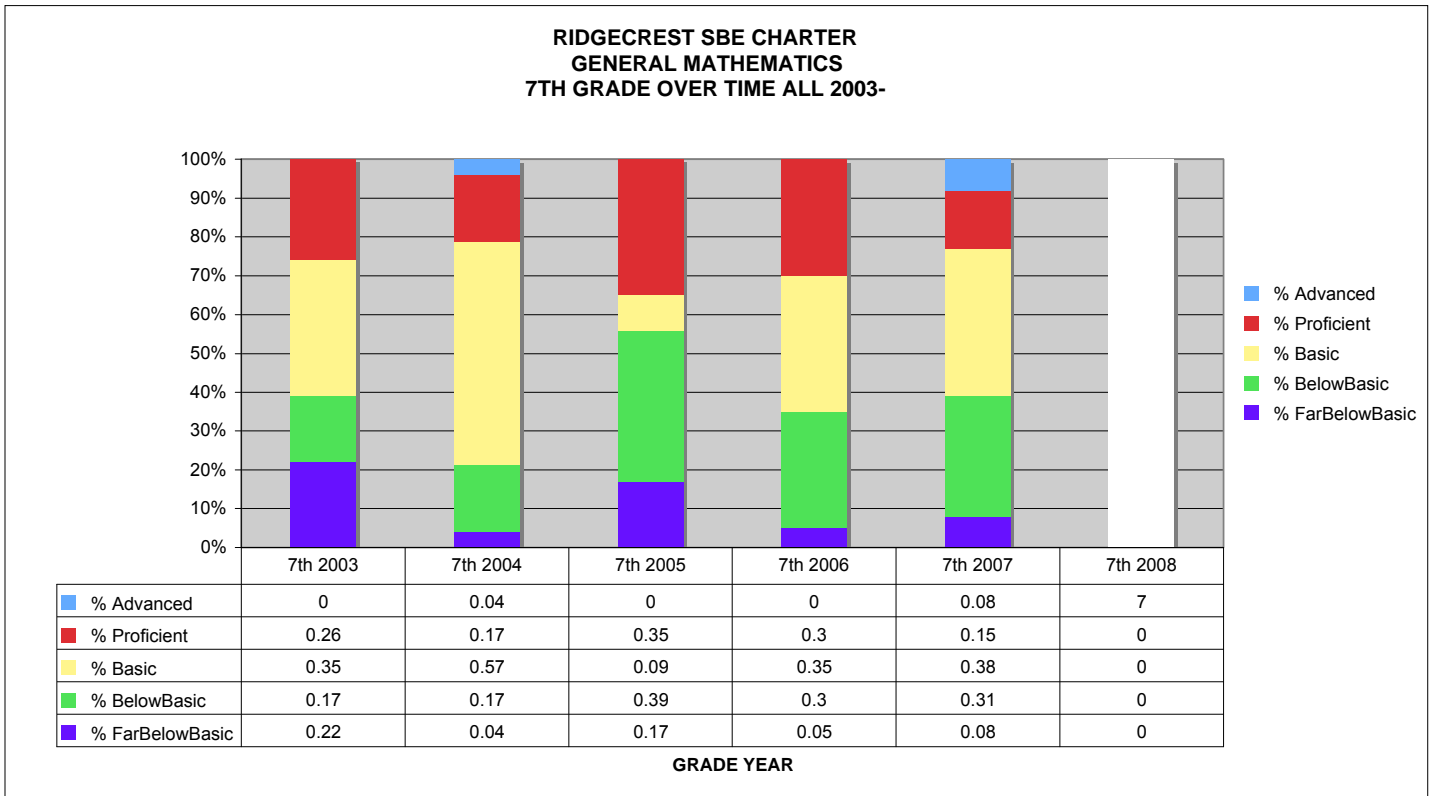
Math (% proficient or above)



The state average was 44%.

7th Grade

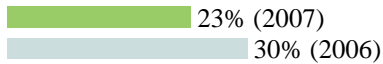
During the 2007-08 school year 39% of students in grade 7 will score at proficient or above in Mathematics, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.



While we do not have data for 7th grade 2008 (only 7 students were tested), there are prior year information that indicates a general trend to an increase in the lower categories and a decrease in the upper levels. The data indicate a random result in the mid – categories.

Math (% proficient or above)

Data not available, less than 10 students tested.

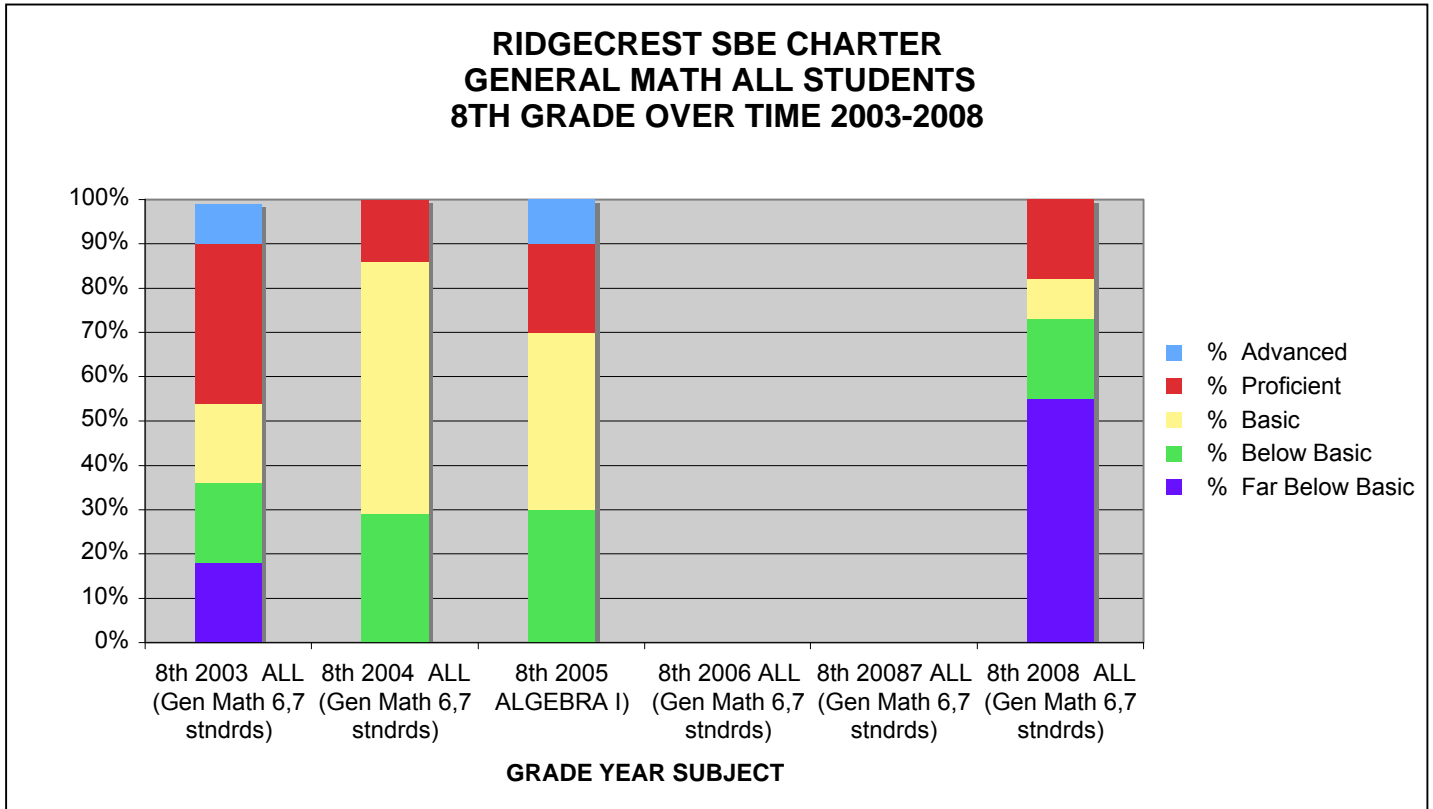


The state average is 41%.

8th Grade

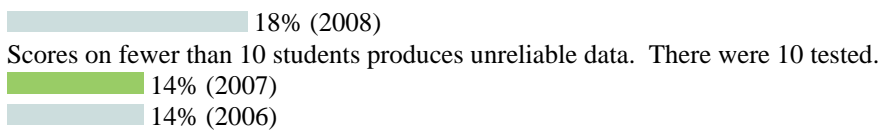
During the 2007-08 school year 25% of students in grade 8 will score at proficient or above in Mathematics, as demonstrated on the 2008 STAR results.

Grade 8- General Math Test



Because of the small number of students tested, there are only sporadic results available. Where there are data, they indicate a general drop in the higher levels and an increase in the lower levels.

Math (% proficient or above)



The state average is 31%

Conclusions:

Overall, students at Ridgecrest Charter School scored higher than state averages. At the end of 2007-2008, Ridgecrest hired UCLA School Management Program (“UCLA”) to assist Ridgecrest Charter School in developing and implementing an action plan for academic achievement and an assessment plan to assist the School in using data to improve student achievement. UCLA created graphs representing the baseline CST grade level proficiency levels.

Analysis of Other Academic Measurable Pupil Outcomes from Prior Term

The charter for the prior term contained additional academic pupil outcomes beyond the student proficiency rates on state standards. Ridgecrest Charter School utilized UCLA to analyze the progress of the School on the pupil outcomes described in the charter. The following presents the pupil outcomes from the charter in each text box, with a summary of Ridgecrest's progress toward meeting those outcomes immediately following:

Outcome

The school will demonstrate student improvement on standardized test scores that compare favorably with schools that have similar student populations (e.g., race, gender, socio-economic status). Compare Ridgecrest Charter School standardized test scores to standardized test scores for schools in the state and for similar schools

Summary:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

In looking at the data for English Language Arts, we find that an average of 32% of the students grades 2 through 8 attained a level of Proficient or better. If we look at only the elementary level (grades 2 through 5) we find that an average of 37% of the students attained proficient or better.

In comparing the gains in API with the local district – Sierra Sands USD - and with the California State, we find the Ridgecrest Charter School gained 15 points – the same as Sierra Sands, and one point more than the state which had a gain of 14 points.

Comparing at the scores of the subgroup - Socioeconomically Disadvantaged – we find that Ridgecrest Charter School had 34.3% Proficient or better, SSUSD had 35.5%, and California had 34.0% - all essentially equivalent. Looking at the White (Not Hispanic) subgroup, we find Ridgecrest Charter School had 42.5 % Proficient or better, SSUSD had 57.8% and California had 66.5%. A portion of the result for Ridgecrest Charter School is due to the small sample size effect of the low scores in the 7th and 8th grades.

MATHEMATICS

In math, we find that an average of 64% of the students in grades 2 through 5 attained Proficient or better. Because of the small number of students tested in grades 7 and 8, we were not able to find an average including those grades.

Comparing at the scores of the subgroup - Socioeconomically Disadvantaged – we find that Ridgecrest Charter School had 60% Proficient or better, SSUSD had 38.1%, and California had 39.7% - as indicated, Ridgecrest Charter School has been successful in working with the SD students. Looking at the White (Not Hispanic) subgroup, we find Ridgecrest Charter School had 56.8 % Proficient or better, SSUSD had 56.4% and California had 65%. Again, a portion of the result for Ridgecrest Charter School is due to the small sample size effect of the low scores in the 7th and 8th grades

COMMENTS

We find in general, Ridgecrest Charter School has performed at the equivalent level with the state and the surrounding district their students would attend for the Socioeconomically Disadvantaged in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. The results for the White (Not Hispanic) subgroup fell behind in English Language Arts while the mathematic scores were equivalent to Sierra Sands USD. The reason for the low results will need to be analyzed to determine changes to the program for these students.

Outcome

The school will meet its targeted growth rate for the Academic Performance Index.

Summary:

In 2007, Ridgecrest Charter School exceeded its growth target by 2 points. In 2008, Ridgecrest Charter School exceeded its growth target by 10 points, thus tripling the State requirement. Given the action plans described herein, Ridgecrest Charter School anticipates future growth in-line with or in excess of its API growth target each year of the next charter term.

Outcome

Ridgecrest Charter School students will meet or exceed the Annual Yearly Progress (“AYP”) targets identified under the federal No Child Left Behind Act

Summary:

Ridgecrest Charter School met 11 out of 11 AYP criteria for 2007-2008 testing; 9 out of 9 AYP criteria for 2006-2007 testing; 9 out of 9 AYP criteria for 2005-2006 testing; met 9 out of 9 AYP criteria for 2004-2005 testing; and 9 out of 9 criteria for 2003-2004 testing. Prior to this term, all AYP criteria were met for 2002-2003. Thus, in conclusion, Ridgecrest Charter School has met AYP criteria for every year of operation.

Outcome

Compile annual Ridgecrest Charter School attendance records and compare to state attendance statistics utilizing the California Department of Education approved attendance reporting system – Ridgecrest Charter School students will exceed the comparable school attendance results by a minimum of 5% annually.

Summary:

Ridgecrest Charter School met this pupil outcome. Based upon the Ed Data website for 2006-2007 (the last reported year), it appears that enrollment for the State was 6,286,943 and ADA was 5,864,761 for an attendance rate of 93%. The Ridgecrest Charter School enrollment was 212 for 2006-2007 and ADA was 208.12 for an attendance rate of 98%.

Outcome

In accordance with Education Code section 47607(b) as amended by Assembly Bill 1137, and effective January 1, 2005, Ridgecrest Charter School will, at a minimum, meet at least one of the following criteria for renewal review:

- attained its Academic Performance Index (API) growth target in the prior year or in two of the last three years, or in the aggregate for the prior three years;
- ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API in the prior year or in two of the last three years;
- ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API for a demographically comparable school in the prior year or in two of the last three years;
- in consultation with the State Board of Education through the California Department of Education, determine that the academic performance of Ridgecrest Charter School is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that Ridgecrest Charter School students would otherwise have been required to attend, as well as the academic performance of the schools in the Sierra Sands Unified School District, taking into account the composition of the pupil population that is served at Ridgecrest Charter School.

Summary:

For purposes of this renewal, Ridgecrest Charter School has 1) met its API growth target in the prior year and in two of the last three years and thus meets the criteria for renewal under Education Code Section 47607(b)

Other School Accomplishments:

The following represents the accomplishments of Ridgecrest Charter School in its prior term:

- Ridgecrest Charter School is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (“WASC”);
- In 2007-2008, Ridgecrest Charter School 6-8 graders participated in the Kern County Math Field Day;
- In 2007-2008, Ridgecrest Charter School 4th grade students worked in collaborative groups while studying missions. Students then created their own missions and displayed them in a History Fair;
- Ridgecrest Charter School held a K-8 school-wide Junior Olympics every year since 2001-2002. In 2007-2008, 10 students went on to compete in the regional Junior Olympics;
- Ridgecrest Charter School received an International Testing and Evaluation Association (ITEA) technology grant to fund its computer lab;
- In 2007-2008, Ridgecrest Charter School conducted a school-wide spelling bee, grades K-8. The winner went on to compete with area schools at the District-level;
- In 2007-2008, Ridgecrest Charter School held a school-wide science fair, and eight Ridgecrest Charter School students went on to compete at the County level;

- In 2007-2008, one Ridgecrest Charter School student was honored with a trip to Washington, D.C. by the National Young Scholars Program;
- In 2006-2007, Ridgecrest Charter School students formed a chess team and came in fifth place in the City-wide chess tournament. In 2007-2008, a Ridgecrest Charter School student came in second place in the City-wide chess tournament. In 2008-2009, the Ridgecrest Charter School chess club contains 23 students;
- In 2007-2008, Ridgecrest Charter School held a school-wide geography bee sponsored by National Geographic;
- In 2007-2008, Ridgecrest Charter School eighth graders took the American Scholastic Achievement League test. Students competed against American schools worldwide. Four Ridgecrest Charter School eighth graders met or exceeded the national average in the competition;
- Ridgecrest Charter School maintains clean, safe, and orderly facilities which meet all requirements of Education Code Section 47610;
- The Ridgecrest Charter School Parent Teacher Organization (“PTO”) meetings/activities on average achieve 90% parent participation;
- Ridgecrest Charter School holds a community harvest festival every year which raises over \$4000 annually;
- Ridgecrest Charter School sends three representatives from grades 6-8 to serve on the City Youth Advisory which advises on City expenditures for City youth programs;
- In 2008-2009, Ridgecrest Charter School created a girl’s volleyball team and a boy’s and girl’s basketball team, which are currently playing amongst the schools in the Sierra Sands School District;
- More than 50% of Ridgecrest Charter School teachers hold masters degrees; 100% of all teachers are appropriately credentialed and highly qualified;
- In 2007-2008, Ridgecrest Charter School students created Thanksgiving and December Holiday baskets of food which were provided to the Salvation Army for distribution;
- In 2007- 2008, Ridgecrest Charter School collected funds for the Red Cross to provide support for the military;
- In 2007-2008, Ridgecrest Charter School was the only School that participated in the Kiwanis Walk-A-Thon and was one of the leading teams in fundraising for the event which raised \$2000 in funds for breast cancer awareness;
- Ridgecrest Charter School operates multiple after school clubs including but not limited to chess, choir (which performs at public meetings and events), drama, yearbook, student council, gardening, and cooking;
- Ridgecrest Charter School holds regular family fun nights of arts and crafts and movies;

- Ridgecrest Charter School holds an annual family and student breakfast as a kick off for red ribbon week for CHAMPS, the City's drug and alcohol prevention program; police officers spend two weeks on campus working with students on education regarding drugs and alcohol prevention and education;
- City police conduct regular counseling for Ridgecrest Charter School students on topics of interest such as bullying, gossip, theft, and bicycle safety;
- Ridgecrest Charter School holds a variety of field trips annually including but not limited to the following Maturango Museum, Petroglyphs located on the China Lake Naval Base, Short Canyon (for the annual wildflower blossom), Manzanar (a former Japanese Internment Camp), Cal State University Bakersfield Wild-life preserve, and Camp KEEP Cambria (Kern Environmental Education Program);
- Ridgecrest Charter School has achieved a "clean" independent fiscal audit for each year of its operation;
- In 2006-2007, a school-wide talent show was held in the Ridgecrest Charter School auditorium;
- In 2007-2008, Burroughs High School drama club performed a Dr. Seuss play for Ridgecrest Charter School students in the Ridgecrest Charter School auditorium; and
- Each year since 2001-2002, Ridgecrest Charter School has held a Scholastic Book fair for Ridgecrest Charter School students and families.

ELEMENT ONE

Educational Program

Governing Law: A description of the educational program of the school, designed, among other things, 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 pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners. --California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)

Whom the School is Attempting to Educate

The Ridgecrest Charter School is committed to providing a successful, safe, and rigorous educational experience aligned to the California State Standards, while promoting the joy, dedication to, and importance of learning for all of our students. Ridgecrest Charter School welcomes, as space and resources are available, all California residents legally able to attend a California public school in grades K – 8. Our educational program is committed to academic, social, civic, and character development. Our current 2008-2009 enrollment is approximately 200 students; we anticipate that the enrollment will reach approximately 350 students at the end of this charter term.

California State academic content standards are utilized when implementing the curriculum and instruction. Curriculum is research-based and student-focused to develop each student's full potential, while recognizing his or her uniqueness. Our high expectations will result in literate, self-reliant, and confident learners. Homework is regularly assigned Monday through Thursday. Students are required to comply with a dress code as stated in the Parent-Student Handbook. Accurate and easily understood evaluation procedures, reflecting actual achievement, are employed. It is our goal to provide every opportunity to students to achieve one month's worth of growth for one month's time in class, irrespective of their grade level at the beginning of the year. For students in Special Education, their growth expectations will be reflected in their Individualized Education Plan.

The educational program includes an integrated curriculum incorporating a variety of learning/teaching styles and is assessed regularly. Peer tutoring, cross-age generational learning, community mentors, tutors, and experts teach students at their own rate in order to individualize instruction. We celebrate diversity and build on the strengths of each member of our school community. The charter school follows a curriculum that emphasizes direct instruction, guided practice and student interactive methods for teaching and learning. All texts are state adopted and approved, aligned to state standards. These include Open Court Reading Program K-6, and Houghton Mifflin California Math Series K-6 grade and Glencoe McGraw-Hill (California pre-algebra/algebra series for seventh and eighth grade.

Attached as Appendix B, please find Sample Lesson Plans from each grade level; as Appendix C, an instructional materials list; and as Appendix D, a narrative of a typical day of a Ridgecrest Charter School Student.

The goals of Ridgecrest Charter School are:

- to provide students with practical knowledge and skills that will promote competence, a life-long curiosity and self-motivation for learning in an ever-changing world;
- to provide students with the necessary tools to maximize their ability to achieve high scores on norm-referenced state and national tests;
- to teach and motivate students to seek understanding of the world around them and to apply this understanding to the broader world contexts of career, family and civic responsibility;

- to help students learn to reason, research, analyze, apply, elucidate and extrapolate for preventive problem-solving and goal setting/attainment;
- to provide a culture that will learn by doing, accompanied by the willingness and the energy to keep asking the questions that will generate the next best alternative;
- to regularly measure student and staff performance and to provide information for attaining higher achievement;
- to regularly measure parent and school community satisfaction; and
- to enable pupils to become self motivated, competent, and life-long learners.

What it Means to be an Educated Person in the 21st Century

Educated persons of the 21st century will have a strong and healthy self-concept and see themselves as autonomous, cooperative, respectful and productive lifetime learners. They will be self-disciplined, intuitive, self-motivated and pro-social toward others and wise in their personal choices. They will be able to work and live harmoniously with others and the environment and interact in a manner that is flexible, healthy, purposeful and creative. The educated persons of the 21st century understand that life existence is interconnected and interdependent and will see themselves as integral members of a diverse community. They will have developed a broad knowledge base and acquired skills that will allow them to be constructive, successful and contributing members of society. The educated persons of the 21st century will:

- have a strong understanding in core areas of math, reading, writing, and science;
- be able to understand and use computers and adapt to new technologies as they become available;
- appreciate the fine and performing arts;
- be knowledgeable of western and world cultures both present and historic;
- be able to work collaboratively with others;
- be a complex and creative thinker;
- be a problem solver and an independent decision-maker;
- be a lifelong learner, capable of using existing knowledge and skills and capable of learning new skills when necessary;
- will understand that every action has an impact and will recognize the impact of his or her behavior on others and the environment; and
- be self-assured, articulate, accepting of diversity and compassionate, and use common sense.

We establish a learning community where:

- learning needs are met,
- resources are provided,
- questions are answered, and
- potentials are unlocked for all learners

Learning Best Occurs When:

The Ridgecrest Charter School educational program is based upon the understanding that learning best occurs:

- in an environment that values and builds on students prior knowledge and engages students actively in a rigorous curriculum that is student centered, inquiry based and humanistic;
- when students are encouraged to construct meaning through questioning, problem solving and discovery;
- when children feel safe, cared about, and encouraged to explore new ideas;

- as a result of positive attitudes, a supportive environment, and high expectations from teachers and parents;
- when parents participate in school and are taught how to help their students with their schoolwork;
- when teachers are highly qualified, motivated, and love their work;
- in small classes and through curriculum that is exciting, challenging, and inquiry based.
- when students are invited to apply their knowledge and encouraged to look at all sides of issues;
- when differentiated instruction is utilized; and
 - Where children are valued for who they are and what they bring to the class.

Second Language Program

One of the goals of the prior term was to create a second language program at Ridgecrest Charter School. To date, Ridgecrest Charter School has not had the funding to create a full curriculum driven second language program, and any second language offerings have been done through the after school program utilizing parents and teacher volunteers. Ridgecrest Charter School renews its goal in this term to create a full second language program. The Ridgecrest Charter School Board is currently considering curriculum options for the program and the business manager is considering funding availability for the program. Ridgecrest Charter School is optimistic that it will be able to incorporate its second language program into the curriculum during the 2008-2009 school year.

Technology

The Ridgecrest Charter School recognizes that access to and utilization of technology is essential to preparing students for secondary and post-secondary education as well as for productive placement in the business and professional world. We realize as well that access to the information highway for many families, and for their school-age children, is often limited. To this end, the comprehensive Technology Plan was developed which includes the following:

- acquisition of appropriate software, hardware, and routing access to the information highway;
- a management plan that encourages daily access to computers;
- course competencies in computer literacy;
- utilization of technologically-advanced software to supplement the core curriculum and promote the practice of higher-level thinking skills;
- parent access to literacy courses and a management plan to promote after school at-home use by students while providing an opportunity to strengthen the role of parents in homework assistance and class-work skill reinforcement for the students as they return the next day to school; and
- appropriate safeguards to ensure access to educational information only.

Ridgecrest Charter School received a technology grant from ITEA and has received donations from the Cerro Coso Community College of 15 multi-media desks, 4 laptops, 12 CPUs, 20 computer monitors, and associated wiring expanding the computer lab from 28 to 40 computers. Additionally, classrooms house 18 additional computers. As a result, Ridgecrest Charter School has a student to multi-media ratio of 1:3. Ridgecrest Charter School maintains a variety of curriculum software available for school-wide student use to support the educational program including literacy and mathematics. Each year, 100% of the Ridgecrest Charter School employees participate in technology training.

Short-term Independent Study

In the interest of maintaining individual student academic progress and minimizing disruption to the educational program as a result of an extended student absence, Ridgecrest Charter School will consider, on a case-by-case basis, the use of short-term independent study contracts for students who receive prior approval for absences due to travel or extended illness, of three or more days in duration. Any such use of independent study will be limited to occasional, incidental instances of extended absences, and will be fully compliant with all applicable independent study laws and regulations. The Ridgecrest Charter School governing board shall develop board policies and master agreements in accordance with Education Code Section 51745 et seq. and implementing regulations, and shall ensure, through consultation with Ridgecrest Charter School's independent auditors, that all forms and procedures are in conformance with independent study law requirements.

Serving Students Achieving Below /Above Grade Level

It is the policy of Ridgecrest Charter School to develop Individual Student Plans for all students in all classes. These Individual Student Plans should be inclusive of relevant strategies to meet all of the education needs of the child. It is the goal of Ridgecrest Charter School to meet the educational needs of every child in every classroom and to utilize general education interventions first where possible to minimize the need for special education services. This ultimately gives the charter school more latitude of response in meeting all children's needs. For students achieving below grade level proficiency, the Individual Student Plan will include appropriate interventions to include but not be limited to after school tutoring, Success-Makers program, peer tutoring, the Lexia Literacy program, Reading Dogs, reading buddies, and parent/community volunteer support. For students achieving above grade level proficiency additional challenges are included in the Individual Student Plan to include but not be limited to opportunities to peer tutor another child, Success Makers (higher level work), additional class projects and homework for extra credit, and the ability to join upper grade classes for course work.

If the Individual Student Plan is not meeting the educational needs of the child, and the teacher or teachers have met with parents and instituted classroom modifications, the child will be referred to the Student Study Team. The purpose of the Student Study Team is to bring all school-wide resources to aid powerful learning program strategies for special needs. The Student Study Team uses a systematic problem-solving approach, utilizing teachers, administrators, parents, the student, counselors, psychologists, relatives, and community persons, to assist students who are not progressing at a satisfactory rate. The Student Study Team is not a pre-requisite to evaluation for special education eligibility.

Plan for English Learners

Overview

Ridgecrest Charter School will meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners ("EL") as it pertains to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, EL and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, re-classification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirement. The Charter School will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding EL's and the rights of students and parents.

Home Language Survey

The Charter School will administer the home language survey upon a student's initial enrollment into the Charter School (on enrollment forms).

CELDT Testing

All students who indicate that their home language is other than English will be CELDT tested within thirty days of initial enrollment¹ and at least annually thereafter between July 1 and October 31st until re-designated as fluent English proficient.

The Charter School will notify all parents of its responsibility for CELDT testing and of CELDT results within thirty days of receiving results from publisher. The CELDT shall be used to fulfill the requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act for annual English proficiency testing.

Reclassification Procedures

Reclassification procedures utilize multiple criteria in determining whether to classify a pupil as proficient in English including, but not limited to, all of the following:

- Assessment of language proficiency using an objective assessment instrument including, but not limited to, the California English Language Development Test or (“CELDT”);
- Participation of the pupil’s classroom teachers and any other certificated staff with direct responsibility for teaching or placement decisions of the pupil to evaluate the pupil’s curriculum mastery;
- Parental opinion and consultation, achieved through notice to parents or guardians of the language reclassification and placement including a description of the reclassification process and the parents opportunity to participate, and encouragement of the participation of parents or guardians in the reclassification procedure including seeking their opinion and consultation during the reclassification process;
- Comparison of the pupil’s performance in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance and basic skills based upon the performance of English proficient pupils of the same age that demonstrate to others that the pupil is sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively in a curriculum designed for pupils of the same age whose native language is English; and
- The Student Oral Language Observation Matrix will be used by teachers to measure progress regarding comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar usage.

Strategies for English Learner Instruction and Intervention

Teachers will be trained to use Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) techniques to meet the needs of English language Learners. All Ridgecrest Charter School teachers are CLAD (or any updated California Commission on Teacher Credentialing equivalent) certified.

The instructional design model to be used by The Charter School places a heavy emphasis on differentiating instruction to meet the needs of English Language Learners based on their academic and language readiness. Through the well-defined professional development plan that accompanies this instructional design model, Ridgecrest Charter School teachers attended training provided through the UCLA School Management Program called “Bridges to Understanding: Teaching that Matters for English Learners” which trained teachers

¹ The thirty-day requirement applies to students who are entering a California public school for the first time or for students who have not yet been CELDT tested. All other students who have indicated a home language other than English will continue with annual CELDT testing based upon the date last tested at the prior school of enrollment.

will be trained on a variety of instructional strategies to be used specifically with English Learners. This three-day training explores the connection between what teachers do and how students learn using strategies designed to engage culturally and linguistically diverse learners in thought-provoking, standards-based learning which resulted in an action plan to implement these strategies in the classroom. This training, or one of similar quality and content will be provided annually to Ridgecrest Charter School teachers.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

The Charter School recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program of the Charter School. Any student, who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity including but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodation by the School.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Director or designee and shall include the parent/guardian, the student (where appropriate) and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations. The 504 team will review the student's existing records; including academic, social and behavioral records, and is responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate. If the student has already been evaluated under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act ("IDEIA") but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEIA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504. The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team who will evaluate the nature of the student's disability and the impact upon the student's education. This evaluation will include consideration of any behaviors that interfere with regular participation in the educational program and/or activities. The 504 team may also consider the following information in its evaluation:

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

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

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

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

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

The Ridgecrest Charter School Section 504 Policy is attached as Appendix E.

Serving Special Education Students

At present, the school is a Local Education Agency within the Kern County Consortium SELPA ("SELPA"). Ridgecrest Charter School shall be solely responsible for identifying, assessing, and serving students who qualify under the IDEIA in accordance with the IDEIA and applicable State law and SELPA policies and procedures and each student's Individualized Education Program ("IEP"). The Charter School agrees to adhere to the policies and requirements of the Local Plan for Special Education. Ridgecrest Charter School annually signs an MOU with the SELPA assuring compliance with the Local Plan and applicable State and Federal law.

It is understood that all children will have access to the Charter School and no student shall be denied admission due to disability. The Charter School shall ensure it meets its Child Find obligations by ensuring that enrollment packets provide questions to determine if a student has an existing Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan or if parents have any concerns regarding potential eligibility. Parent/teacher observation, and student study teams shall also be utilized to ensure the identification of all students who may require assessment for eligibility. Assessment plans and assessments are provided in accordance with the timelines specified in State and Federal law. Ridgecrest Charter School ensures that an IEP team with the all legally required team members meets to review all assessments, meets within thirty days of a new student enrollment, meets in response to a parent or teacher referral, meets annually for each student with an IEP, and as otherwise required by law. Parents are provided their Parent's Rights and Responsibilities form at all times as required by law. Special education services are provided, in a full-inclusion model, utilizing pull-out services only if required by a student's IEP. Ridgecrest Charter School ensures that all teachers are informed of the modifications/accommodations required by a student's IEP to ensure full compliance. Ridgecrest Charter School is prepared, as necessary to provide a full continuum of placement option in accordance with applicable law and the local plan.

The Charter School shall be responsible for providing all services under this Agreement to all students of the Charter School regardless of their school district of residence. If needed due to limited special education staff, the Charter School may seek out contracts with other appropriately qualified special education providers with school districts, individuals, or non-public agencies to serve Charter School students.

The Charter School shall instruct Parents/Guardians to raise concerns regarding special education services, related services and rights to the Charter School Staff. The Charter School staff shall then in turn respond to and address the parent/guardian concerns. The Charter School shall address/respond/investigate all complaints received under the Uniform Complaint procedure involving special education. The Charter School may initiate a due process hearing on behalf of a student enrolled in Charter School as is determined is legally necessary to meet a school agency's responsibilities under federal and state law. The Charter School shall defend any due process hearing brought by a student enrolled in the Charter School as assume all costs therefore.

The Charter School shall receive funding for serving its special education students as allowed under the SELPA Local Plan. The Charter School shall be solely responsible for all costs to provide special education and related services for students with disabilities. As a member of the Kern County SELPA, all special education revenues received through the SELPA and all expenses incurred by Ridgecrest Charter School on behalf of its special education students, shall be segregated into a restricted program. Ridgecrest Charter School shall be responsible for all encroachment in the special education program.

The Director will meet regularly with special education personnel including psychologists, speech and language therapists, adaptive physical education specialists, and resource specialists. The Director will request a monthly report from all special education professionals outlining the amount of time each professional spends with each special education student as correlated with each student's IEP requirements. The reports from all service providers shall include meeting dates with parents as scheduled on the IEP.

Professional Development

Ridgecrest Charter School teachers participate in a minimum of ten (10) full professional development days annually. Ridgecrest Charter School is committed to training teachers in English Learner strategies, use of assessments and data to drive instruction, peer observation and dialogue, standardized testing preparation, technology. Teachers utilize grade-level and school-wide collaboration strategies to ensure that best practices are fostered for Ridgecrest Charter School students.

The following describes a day of professional development conducted by UCLA:

Visit and Professional Development at Ridgecrest Charter School.

John Otterness

SMP – UCLA

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On 9/5/2008, I spent the day at Ridgecrest Charter School (Ridgecrest Charter School) observing classes and providing Professional Development. I arrived at 7:30 a.m. and met with the Principal and Dean of Students to prepare for the classroom observations and to organize the afternoon set-up for the 3 hour professional development on Classroom Walkthroughs (CWT). The teachers had been informed of my classroom visits and the afternoon work. I then observed in classes for the balance of the morning.

I began with the 8th grade and visited classes in descending order until the morning break, after which I began with the Kinder and visited in ascending order until I had covered all the classrooms.

Grades 6, 7, 8:

In these classes, I observed the students engaged in their work as directed by the teacher. The students seemed more at ease asking questions and responding to the teacher's questions than during my last visit. I observed teachers doing direct instruction with the students following and responding. Although the classes are small, I observed situations where the students were doing independent work following the teacher's descriptions of the tasks. I observed pair share and student to student interactions to gain and share knowledge among themselves along with questions for the teacher. The classes – both students and teachers - seemed more focused on mastering the material than previously observed. There was a more relaxed and engaging atmosphere. I felt, in the classrooms. All the material they were using and working on seemed to be at grade level whether they were doing English Language Arts (ELA) or Math.

Grades 3, 4, 5:

In these grades, there was more teacher direction but a similar atmosphere seemed to prevail. In the grades with 2 classes, they were working on the same concepts and using the same material when I visited. There was some variation in the way the students were being involved in each class at the same grade level. This is an area where the CWT will provide assistance. Again, the students seemed engaged with the work. In several rooms, I had an opportunity to talk with the teacher while the students worked singly or together. They described ideas they had to improve the students' involvement and their outcomes. These ranged from room arrangement to providing more high order questions and assignments.

Grads k, 1, 2

The K class was made up of the combined classes since one of the teachers was absent and they had not been able to get a substitute. If I hadn't been told this, I wouldn't have known from the class. They were working in groups and fully engaged. The teacher was able to work with all students in a positive way and the students responded by carrying out their tasks and following directions. The other grades followed a similar pattern – the students generally were fully engaged with the task directed by the teacher. There also was perhaps more difference between teaching styles and student engagement task than I observed in the upper grades. Again, the CWT will provide evidence leading to change.

Afternoon, 1-4 p.m.:

I provided a three hour professional development session on the CWT – from why it's important to how to do it to doing a virtual CST and debrief. Mr. Baker from the school provided a video from computer hookup in the auditorium and made sure the facilities were set. The staff initially had questions and pre-conceived ideas but as we discussed and they saw video clips of sessions with schools using CWT, they engaged fully in the Virtual CWT by observing several video taped classes and doing non-judgmental debriefs focused on students. They asked excellent questions and discussed what CWT could mean for Ridgecrest Charter School. They were engaged until the end of the session. They are a pleasure to work with.

**ELEMENT TWO
MEASURABLE PUPIL OUTCOMES**

The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. “Pupil outcomes,” for purposes of this part, means the extent to which all pupils of the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school’s educational program. – Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(B)

And

ELEMENT THREE

METHODS BY WHICH PUPIL PROGRESS IN MEETING PUPIL OUTCOMES IS TO BE MEASURED

The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured. – Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(C)

Ridgecrest Charter School shall meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Section 60605, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools.

Ridgecrest Charter School shall pursue the following measurable pupil outcomes as measured against the following methods of measurement:

Measurable Pupil Outcome	Methods of Measurement
Utilizing the 2007-2008 Statewide CST data and each subsequent year thereafter, Ridgecrest Charter School students shall meet or exceed the state-wide average percentage of student’s scoring proficient and advance proficient in each of the subject areas tested per grade level.	CST data
The school will demonstrate student improvement on standardized test scores that compare favorably with schools that have similar student populations and grade levels (e.g., race, gender, socio-economic status).	Academic Performance Reporting Data
The school will meet its targeted growth rate for the Academic Performance Index (“API”).	API Data
Ridgecrest Charter School students will meet or exceed the Annual Yearly Progress (“AYP”) targets identified under the federal No Child Left Behind Act	AYP Data

Measurable Pupil Outcome	Methods of Measurement
Ridgecrest Charter School students will maintain its 2007-2008 98% average daily attendance (“ADA”) rate within 2% annually.	Average Daily Attendance Data
Ridgecrest Charter School will, at a minimum, meet at least one of the criteria for renewal pursuant to Education Code Section 47607(b).	Academic Performance Reporting Data

Use of Data

The Ridgecrest Charter School, as the petitioner, holds itself accountable for student progress. Staff, as the employees of the charter school, are accountable to Ridgecrest Charter School for student performance improvement. In addition to State Standardized testing, Ridgecrest Charter School utilizes Success Maker, STAR scores, and teacher generated assessment and observation to perform ongoing assessment of student achievement. We believe that a student’s success equals our success. Academic standards are measurable and measured. This includes pre and post-testing as well as longitudinal data, portfolio and performance-based assessments, writing on demand, essay exams, oral presentations of reading, and standardized tests as designated by the publisher. Each classroom teacher is provided with professional development to improve upon strategies to assess learning, analyze results, develop improved teaching strategies, and shape instruction. Daily instruction provides ongoing feedback through observation, projects, criterion referenced tests, open-ended tasks and writing samples.

Based on the outcome of the student performance assessment, curriculum changes may be made and/or curriculum augmentation may be implemented. This cycle of performance assessment and curriculum analysis/modification is performed on a yearly basis and shall remain consistent with the state accountability targets as defined by the California Academic Performance Index growth targets and Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act.

As stated above, Ridgecrest Charter School develops an Individualized Student Plan for each of its students with the parent/guardian, student and teacher. This “contract” and its regular benchmark reviews (at least every six weeks) will include academic scores, progress reports, report cards, citizenship grades to assess improvement in academics, attitude and behavior, and attendance information. A sample Individualized Student Plan is attached as Appendix F.

Parent Survey

Each year the Ridgecrest Charter School surveys parents on a variety of indicators of parent satisfaction, staff relationships, and student progress. Results of the survey are published in the school newsletter. The survey template is attached as Appendix G.

Reporting Academic Progress

The Ridgecrest Charter School shall meet all the applicable reporting and inspection/site visit requirements under Education Code Section 47604.33 and 47607 and the MOU with its Authorizer which currently requires ongoing academic reports and shall promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries in accordance with Education Code Section 47604.3.

In addition to the reports to the Authorizer required under the MOU and applicable law, Ridgecrest Charter School shall publish a school accountability report card (“SARC”) each year as required by law.

The Report shall be transmitted in writing to the Authorizer and the California Department of Education. Copies of the Report will be made available to each family in the school and shall be posted on-line.



ELEMENT FOUR

Governance and Operation

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 Section 47605(b)(5)(D)

Legal

The Ridgecrest Charter School is a public charter school within Kern County operating under the jurisdiction of its Authorizer. In accordance with Education Code Section 47604(c), it operates as a California non-profit public benefit corporation which shall operate within the terms and conditions specified in this petition.

The Ridgecrest Charter School will be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, shall not charge tuition, and shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, 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).

The school will comply with all federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances that are applicable to California charter schools, including those related to zoning, occupancy, construction, health, and safety. The school will secure general liability insurance, workers compensation, and unemployment insurance.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47604(c) on authority that grants a charter to a charter school to be operated by, or as, a non-profit public benefit corporation is not liable for the debts or obligations of the charter school, or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by the charter school, if the authority has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law.

The corporate bylaws, articles of incorporation, and conflicts code are attached as Appendix H.

Board of Directors

The Ridgecrest Charter School will be governed by its charter Board of Directors (“Charter Board”), understanding that the Ridgecrest Charter School (a California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation) has a legal fiduciary responsibility for the well-being of the school. As such, and with particular reference to the Education Employment Relations Act, Ridgecrest Charter School, as the applicant for this charter, will set the terms and working conditions for all employees and will do so consistent with state and federal law.

The Charter Board shall have a maximum of six members. The school will strive to compose a board that includes a city community member, a member appointed by staff election, and three school community members. (parent or guardian) All five members shall be subject to an election process and shall not be employed by the school or receive any direct or indirect financial benefit from relationships with the school. The sixth member shall be held aside for Authorizer appointment. Per Education Code 47604(b), the Authorizer may designate a representative to the Board of Ridgecrest Charter School who shall be a voting or non-voting member at the discretion of the Authorizer. The school will be administered in a nonsectarian manner.

The Charter Board will be responsible for the following:

- approval of the general policies of the school;
- employment, discipline, and release of school personnel;

- approval and monitoring of the school's budget;
- receipt of funds for the operation of the school in accordance with the Charter and applicable law;
- solicitation and receipt of grants and donations consistent with the mission of the school;
- reviewing the school's personnel policies and receiving from the Director reports relative to their implementation, such policies to be consistent with any applicable laws;
- fulfilling all other responsibilities provided for in the California Corporations Code, the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, or this charter necessary to ensure the proper operation of the school are being carried out;
- reviewing monthly operations reports from the Director and annual independent audit reports; and
- hiring and evaluation of the Director.

Board members hold two year terms which are staggered to ensure continuity on the Board.

It is understood that the Authorizer shall have the right of access to all charter school records to carry out their oversight responsibilities, and that the records of the charter school are subject to the California Public Records Act. Board members shall receive annual training on the Ralph M. Brown Act during the first three months of each school year.

RCS will act as its own fiscal agent to the fullest extent of the law. RCS will see to it that all provisions of charter school legislation will be followed. RCS will monitor the budget monthly. An external auditor will be contracted with to assure standards of fiscal responsibility. RCS employs a Business Manager who works with back office service providers to ensure best accountable business practices.

Director Responsibilities

Subject to the approval of the Charter School Board, the Director shall also have the responsibility of organizing, reorganizing, and arranging any of the educational, administrative, management, and support staff, which in their judgment best serves the Charter School.

The Director shall also personally or by direction (a) review all policies adopted by the Charter School Board and make appropriate recommendations to the Board; (b) periodically evaluate employees as provided for by California law and Board policy; (c) advise the Board of sources of educational programs, student services, special education services and funds which are available to implement present or contemplated Charter School programs; and (d) advise the Board about all school matters. The Director shall supervise and provide oversight throughout the term of this contract for all duties within this position description, even while the Board recognizes that an appropriate amount and type of work shall be delegated to other positions by the Director. The Director shall also have all other responsibilities assigned by the Board, including but not limited to the following:

- implementation of Board policies and the charter;
- ongoing day to day operation of the School;
- the execution and ongoing review of an academic plan that focuses on student learning;
- providing professional development that puts skills into context consistent with the overall school mission;
- parent and community involvement in and support for school programs and change efforts;
- regular measurement of progress towards achieving both student and staff performance;
- effective human resource models for career and compensation; and
- creation of the SARC.

Parent Involvement

One goal of this school is that of empowering parents as educational partners. Parents should know that their voice and participation at the school influences the development of the total school and its components. Parents will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of meaningful ways at the school site and their presence on campus and assisting teachers in the classroom is most important.

In order to ensure significant parent involvement, the school has a standing Parent Teacher Organization (“PTO”) which serves in an advisory capacity to the Board and is open to all parents and staff. The PTO will advise the Ridgecrest Charter School Board through the Director on the operations of the school, staff, teachers, and students. It will review and provide input on curriculum, facilities, safety, grants, technology, and community relations. The school will encourage a higher rate of parent participation (including parent conference attendance, parent meeting attendance, and parent volunteer presence) than similar schools in Kern County where such data is available.

Parents are strongly encouraged to donate at least four (4) hours of service monthly per family. A service hour form is sent home with the school newsletter each month for parents to complete and return to school. The aim of this requirement is to ensure that all families are informed and actively involved in the school and to provide assistance to the school.

Parents will be encouraged to become active in developing their child’s learning plan and the school’s curriculum, evaluation process, and other programs. A Parent Center has been established on campus. It is used for parent education meetings, a resource center, and parent organizing efforts for school improvement and community leadership. Outreach efforts include PTO newsletters, Internet and E-mail communications. ,

The PTO ensures that notice is given to the parents of the following:

- the times and dates of all parent meetings and all Board meetings for the year;
- special classroom and school-wide events to be held during the year;
- the process for time and labor donations to the school;
- the process for “phone tree/e-mail communication” for all classrooms;
- access to a Ridgecrest Charter School website; and
- the procedure for verifying parent participation at all school and school-related events to enable families to meet their annual hourly participation goals.

Parents will be encouraged to take advantage of Labor Code Section 230.8 which bars discharge or discrimination against an employee for taking time off to visit a child’s school or for using vacation, personal leave, compensatory time off or time off without pay (up to eight hours in any calendar month, up to forty hours each school year).

ELEMENT FIVE

Employee Qualifications

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

All parents, community members, and staff see themselves as teachers and role models. Because of their love for children, employees view themselves as dedicated staff members willing to work beyond their normal scope of hours and duties. They are committed to developing the social, civic, character, and academic development of each student. Employees are risk takers with a passion for lifelong learning in a positive environment where they can be viewed as coaches and facilitators of learning.

Selection and appointment of Ridgecrest Charter School's staff members shall be the exclusive prerogative of the Ridgecrest Charter School. Persons who work at the charter school shall be selected, employed, and released by the charter school which will set the terms and conditions of employment.

The Ridgecrest Charter School will not discriminate against any applicant on the basis of his/her ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, national origin, age, gender, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. The Ridgecrest Charter School board will be involved in the selection process for the Director and, with the Director, in the identification of staff. Ridgecrest Charter School, at the conclusion of the process, shall act as the legal contract entity and public school employer for the Educational Employment Relations Act.

Director's Qualifications

The Director at the Ridgecrest Charter School should possess leadership abilities and a comprehensive educational vision that is consistent with the school's mission and educational program. In addition, the Director should possess skills in hiring and supervising excellent teachers, technological and data-analysis experience, and if possible, business experience. An administrative credential is encouraged but not required. A bachelor's degree is required as a minimum. The Director must hold at least an emergency teaching credential in order to be employed. A representative team of parents and staff, with the Ridgecrest Charter School board, will interview candidates for Director, with the final selection made by the Ridgecrest Charter School board.

The Director shall endeavor to maintain and improve her or his professional competence by all available means, including, but not limited to, joining and participating in appropriate local, state, and national educational associations and their activities, as well as workshops, visitations, and meetings. The Director shall select such activities, subject to the approval of the Charter School Board. For activities approved by the Charter School Board, the Charter School shall reimburse the Director for all reasonable expenses incurred in connection with these activities.

Business Manager Qualifications

The Business Manager shall have the responsibility of directing, coordinating and organizing facilities and business operation services, which in their judgment best serves the Charter School. The Business Manager shall also personally or by direction review all facilities and business operation services and policies adopted by the Charter School Board and make appropriate recommendations to the Board. The Business Manager at the Ridgecrest Charter School should possess leadership abilities and a comprehensive educational vision that is consistent with the school's mission and educational program. A bachelor's degree or 5 years of public school business management is required as a minimum. A representative team of parents and staff, with the Ridgecrest Charter School board, will interview candidates for Business Manager, with the final selection made by the Ridgecrest Charter School board.

Teachers' Qualifications

The school will provide new professional opportunities for teachers and create opportunities to tap the expertise and experience of qualified professionals previously excluded from the public school system.

The most important qualities for our teachers are:

- caring about our students;
- familiarity with or willingness to be trained in the school's curriculum sequence and learning styles;
- a demonstrable effectiveness in teaching; and
- a willingness to work hard and to take responsibility and exercise leadership for the school as a whole.

Specific qualifications include:

- In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(1), possession of a California Teaching Credential, or holding a Pre-Intern or Intern Credential or other California Commission on Teacher Credentialing document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold;
- meet the highly qualified requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act²;
- dedication to putting in time, energy, and effort in developing the school's program;
- commitment to working with parents as educational partners;
- willingness to become a learner as well as teacher/coach in the school;
- knowledge or willingness to become knowledgeable about the developmental needs of our students;
- sensitivity to social as well as academic needs of the students;
- willingness and ability to plan cooperatively with other teachers;
- willingness to be trained in the use of different curriculums and learning styles in the classroom;
- willingness to be an active participant in staff meetings;
- willingness to work closely with the Student Study Team Coordinator by providing any information regarding a student's behavior change, attitude, and/or classroom performance;
- willingness to take a leadership role in some aspect of the school's development; and
- a strong knowledge of their personal strengths and weaknesses, and a willingness to continue education through additional courses and training, workshops, seminars, and staff development.

All other staff members shall meet the basic criteria for employment as identified by the board and shall possess those qualities held by reference to "employees" above. All staff will understand, in dress and demeanor, that they are role models for students. The best individuals are sought – understanding that those who desire to work in a public charter school should display a love for learning and exhibit joy in their task. All staff members, including teachers, will be interviewed by a panel put together by the Director.

Instructional support staff, meeting all other legal prerequisites for employment (e.g. fingerprint and TB clearance, I-9 verification, etc.), may be non-certificated but will not, in accord with the law, serve as the "teacher of record" who is responsible for overseeing the student's academic progress and who will monitor all grading and matriculation decisions as specified in the school's operational policies.

For purposes of the Education Employment Relations Act, all employees are the employees of the charter school for public employment purposes and are not the employees of the State Board of Education.

² 7th and 8th grade teachers will be teaching in a multiple subject self contained classroom format thus utilizing the same highly qualified criteria as teachers in grades K-6.



ELEMENT SIX
Procedures to Ensure Health and Safety of Pupils and Staff

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 44237. – Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(F)

In order to provide safety for all students and staff, the Charter School will continue to update, adopt and implement full health and safety procedures and risk management policies at our school site in consultation with its insurance carriers and risk management experts. The current Ridgecrest Charter School health and safety policies and procedures are attached as Appendix I.

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

Procedures for Background Checks

Employees and contractors of the Charter School will be required to submit to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Ed. Code 44237 and 45125.1. New employees not possessing a valid California Teaching Credential must submit two sets of fingerprints to the California Department of Justice for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. The Director of the school shall monitor compliance with this policy and report to the Charter School Board of Directors on a quarterly basis. The Board President shall monitor the fingerprinting and background clearance of the Director. Volunteers who will volunteer outside of the direct supervision of a credentialed employee shall be fingerprinted and receive background clearance prior to volunteering without the direct supervision of a credentialed employee.

Role of Staff as Mandated Child Abuse Reporters

All non-certificated and certificated staff will be mandated child abuse reporters and will follow all applicable reporting laws.

TB Testing

Faculty and staff will be tested for tuberculosis prior to commencing employment and working with students as required by Education Code Section 49406.

Immunizations

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

Medication in School

The Charter School will adhere to Education Code Section 49423 regarding administration of medication in school.

Vision, Hearing/Scoliosis

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

Emergency Preparedness

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

Blood borne Pathogens

The Charter School shall meet state and federal standards for dealing with blood borne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials in the work place. The Board shall establish a written infectious control plan designed to protect employees and students from possible infection due to contact with blood borne viruses, including human immunodeficiency virus (“HIV”) and hepatitis B virus (“HBV”).

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

Drug Free/Alcohol Free/Smoke Free Environment

The Charter School shall function as a drug, alcohol and tobacco free workplace.

Facility Safety

The Charter School shall comply with Education Code Section 47610 by either utilizing facilities that are compliant with the California Building Standards Code. The School agrees to test sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms annually at its facilities to ensure that they are maintained in an operable condition at all times. The School shall conduct fire drills monthly.

Comprehensive Sexual Harassment Polices and Procedures

The Charter School is committed to providing a school that is free from sexual harassment, as well as any harassment based upon such factors as race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. The Charter School has developed a comprehensive policy to prevent and immediately remediate any concerns about sexual discrimination or harassment at the Charter School (including employee to employee, employee to student, and student to employee misconduct). Misconduct of this nature is very serious and will be addressed in accordance with the Charter School sexual harassment policy.

Additional Insured

The charter school agrees to purchase premises liability insurance and will name as “additional insureds” those legal entities identified by the State Board of Education.

ELEMENT SEVEN
Maintaining a Racial and Ethnic Balance in the School

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)

Pupils will be considered for admission without regard to the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, 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). The school will strive to achieve a racial and ethnic balance of students and staff which reflects the community in which the school is located.

Targeted marketing in order to achieve racial balance will include print and electronic media, community and regional outreach through flyers, direct presence at service group meetings within and outside the community, distribution of promotional and informational materials to a broad variety of community groups and agencies that serve the various racial and ethnic groups represented in the district, outreach meetings in convenient locations and upon the request of community groups to reach prospective students and parents, and direct mail where appropriate.

Attached, as Appendix J, please find marketing examples.

ELEMENT EIGHT
Admissions Requirements, if Applicable

Admission requirements, if applicable. – Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(H)

Because the Ridgecrest Charter School is a public school committed to equal opportunity, the school will be non-sectarian and employ no admissions exams or special admissions requirements. Admission to the Ridgecrest Charter School shall be open to all California residents legally able to attend a California public school for the identified grade levels being served by this school, on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to any of the characteristics listed in Section 220 of the Education Code, proficiency in English language, or academic achievement. The Ridgecrest Charter School is a school of choice. Admissions shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or of his or her parents within the State.

In the event that there are more applicants than available space for enrollment, attendance, except for existing pupils (assuming intent to re-enroll is communicated to School as required by School rules) shall be determined by public random drawing. Preference in the public random drawing shall be given as follows:

- 1) Newly enrolling siblings of existing students;
- 2) Children of staff members;
- 3) Children residing in Sierra Sands Unified.; and
- 4) Children residing in Kern County.

Please see Appendix K for Enrollment Policies and Procedures. Each potential applicant and parent will be provided opportunity to sign an agreement showing their support for and commitment to the expectations of students and parents. These expectations will be provided to each parent and applicant.



ELEMENT NINE
Audit of Financial and Programmatic Operations

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

Fiscal

The Ridgecrest Charter School receives funding in accordance with the Charter School Block Grant. It is the intent of the Ridgecrest Charter School to:

- implement the fiscal regulations approved by the State Board of Education pursuant to the requirements of law; and
- compensate the SELPA for the value of any direct services requested by the charter school and provided, at their discretion, by the SELPA (understanding that the SELPA will provide the charter school with a cost estimate for services requested and approved by the SELPA).

In addition to the revenue sources specified in the Charter School block grant, the State Board of Education will ensure the distribution of other revenue sources that the school is eligible for, to the extent that the charter school students and programs generate funding payments. These other revenue sources can include, but are not limited to, the following sources and programs: the California State Lottery; Supplemental Hourly Instruction Program revenues; categorical block grants; charter school funding from the California Department of Education; the federal government, or other sources; and any other available or mutually agreeable sources and funding for programs.

Accountability and Annual Fiscal Audit

The State Board of Education and the charter school's board will review the fiscal integrity of the Ridgecrest Charter School in order to satisfy itself that sound financial procedures are in place and are being followed. The adherence to such sound financial practices by the Ridgecrest Charter School is a condition for the continuance of the charter.

Each fiscal year, the charter school's business manager will oversee selection of an independent auditor with experience in educational finance and who appears on the State Controller's list of educational auditors and the completion of the annual audit of the school's financial affairs. The audit will verify the accuracy of the school's financial statements, attendance and enrollment accounting practices, and review the school's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accord with generally accepted accounting practices applicable to the school. To the extent required under applicable law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in any applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars. The annual audit will be completed by December 15th following the close of the prior academic year and copies will be sent by that date to the Authorizer, the Kern County Office of Education, and the California Department of Education. The school's business manager will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the school's board with recommendations on how to resolve them to the satisfaction of the Authorizer. The Ridgecrest board will report to the Authorizer regarding how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved to the satisfaction of the Authorizer. The board will complete this process within sixty days of audit receipt. Any disputes with the Authorizer regarding the satisfactory resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies will be referred to the dispute resolution process contained in this document with the understanding of Ridgecrest Charter School that ultimately the Authorizer must be satisfied with the resolution.

Business Practices and Contracting for Services and Goods

The Ridgecrest Charter School may, where permitted, contract with the local district for goods or services which the district, at its discretion, may choose to make available. Such contracts, however, shall not be construed to negate the operational independence of the charter school from the district.

The Ridgecrest Charter School will contract for accounting, budgeting, payroll, and independent audit services with a school district, the County Office of Education, or a commercial firm. Ridgecrest Charter School will provide for fiscal and business management service functions either through in-house staff or through an outside service provider. Should the school elect to consider an outside service provider, it shall issue a Request for Proposal to firms and agencies qualified to perform such services, including the Kern County Office of Education. At minimum, on an annual basis, the Director and the Board shall evaluate the services being provided. The school shall notify the State Board of Education no later than August 1 each year as to the entity providing such services.

Attached, as Appendix L, please find a three-year fiscal projection.

These documents are based upon the best data available to Ridgecrest Charter School at this time.

Financial Reporting

The Charter School shall provide reports to the Authorizer as follows, and shall provide additional fiscal reports as requested by the Authorizer or required by the MOU with the Authorizer:

1. By July 1, a preliminary budget for the current fiscal year. 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;
2. By December 15, an interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through October 31. Additionally, on December 15, a copy of the Charter School's annual, independent financial audit report for the preceding fiscal year shall be delivered to the Authorizer, State Controller, State Department of Education and County Superintendent of Schools;
3. By March 15, a second interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through January 31; and
4. By September 15, a final unaudited report for the full prior year. The report submitted to the Authorizer shall include an annual statement of all the Charter School's receipts and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year.

Facilities

The Charter School purchased a site and has leased portable buildings to house its students. The school has a mortgage on the property. All State and local building code provisions have been followed for site and building improvements in accordance with Education Code Section 47610.

In designing a facility to invite learning, architecture and construction represent our student-centered focus. Community facilities were remodeled and renovated to meet this end. The current Ridgecrest Charter School facility, located at 325 South Downs in Ridgecrest, is an enlarged prior school site, with portable buildings

added along with playground areas, landscaping, a perimeter fence, computer lab, and a library. The playgrounds, landscaping, and fencing were donated and installed entirely by local businesses and parents. The library books were all donated by parents and a complete library system set up by parents and community volunteers. This community creativity allowed for access to resources which established a pathway to growth. A local identity was maintained while encompassing a global perspective. Ridgecrest Charter School has a cafeteria with a full kitchen and an auditorium.

The following tables represent the classroom distribution by grade level and an analysis of the condition of School facilities.

Class Size Distribution – Number of Classrooms By Size		
2008-2009		
Grade	1-20	21-32
K	2	
1	2	
2	2	
3	2	
4		1
5	1	
6	1	
7		1
8	1	

School Facilities Conditions		
Interim Evaluation Instrument Area	Facility in Good Repair?	
	Yes	No
Gas Leaks	√	
Mechanical Systems	√	
Windows/Doors/Gates (interior and exterior)	√	
Interior Surfaces (walls, floors, ceilings)	√	
Hazardous Materials (interior and exterior)	√	
Structural Damage	√	
Fire Safety	√	
Electrical (interior and exterior)	√	
Pest/Vermin Infestation	√	
Drinking Fountains (inside and outside)	√	
Restrooms	√	
Playground/School Grounds	√	
Other		

Insurance and Safety Policy

The Ridgecrest Charter School has compiled and maintained as necessary general liability, student accident insurance, automotive liability, errors and omissions, property, workers compensation, and unemployment insurance policies through its own insurance program or through agencies recommended by the Authorizer. If separate insurance is procured, it shall be equivalent with respect to limits of coverage.

Personnel Policies

Ridgecrest Charter School has developed personnel policies which are periodically reviewed by the Ridgecrest Charter School's board and the charter school's legal counsel for compliance with applicable laws. Attached, as Appendix M, please find the School's personnel handbook.

Salary

Teachers and other employees are placed on the charter school salary schedule according to the responsibilities which they assume and past employment experience. .

Revenues and expenditures are reviewed annually, and a recommendation is made through Ridgecrest Charter School after counsel with staff for cost of living adjustments and incentive pay to remain competitive with similar positions within the county. Teachers may move up within each teacher level based on performance. Career paths will be developed for teachers.

Evaluation Procedure

The Director shall have the right to observe and evaluate staff using a performance appraisal framework and system. The purpose of the performance appraisal system is to promote greater accountability by leading to changes in professional practice that result in the continuous improvement of student achievement. The assessment will include, but need not be limited to:

- an analysis of student achievement based on student performance on standardized and other specific assessments;
- observations by the Director in professional settings;
- accomplishment and growth consistent with core professional expectations as documented by the teacher in a professional performance improvement program;
- a self-assessment based on adherence to the vision and mission of the school;
- community presence and involvement including frequency of parent contact; and
- an analysis of parent and student surveys to be collected in the spring of the year.

The Director will be evaluated by the Ridgecrest Charter School Board.

ELEMENT TEN
Suspension and Expulsion Procedures

The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled. – Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(J)

This Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy has been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well being of all students at Ridgecrest Charter School (“Charter School”). When the policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. This policy shall serve as Charter School’s policy and procedures for student suspension and expulsion, and it may be amended from time to time without the need to amend the charter so long as the amendments comport with legal requirements.

Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This Policy and its Procedures will clearly describe discipline expectations, and it will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook which is sent to each student at the beginning of the school year. The Charter School administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline policies and procedures.

Discipline includes but is not limited to advising and counseling students, conferring with parents/guardians, detention during and after school hours, 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 school property.

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

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (“IDEIA”) or who is qualified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”) is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to regular education students except when federal and state law mandates additional or different procedures. Charter School will follow all applicable federal and state laws when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in according due process to such students.

A. Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is 1) related to school activity, 2) school attendance occurring at Charter School or at any other school, or 3) a Charter School sponsored event. A Pupil may be suspended or expelled for acts that are enumerated below and related to school activity or attendance that occur at any time, including, but not limited to, and of the following:

- 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; or
- d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

B. Enumerated Offenses

Students may be suspended or expelled for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:

1. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
2. Willfully used force of violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
3. 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 students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Director or designee's concurrence.
4. Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
5. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code 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.
6. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
7. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
8. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
9. Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
10. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
11. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11014.5.
12. Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
13. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.

14. 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.
15. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal code 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a or 289, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code 243.4.
16. 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.
17. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
18. Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this subdivision, "hazing" means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this section, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
19. Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property. For purposes of this section, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school district property, or the personal property of the person threatened or his or her immediate family..
20. Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this section, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
21. Caused, attempted to cause, threaten to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
22. Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.

Alternatives to suspension or expulsion will first be attempted with students who are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from assigned school activities.

C. Suspension Procedure

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

1. Conference

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the Director or the Director's designee with the student and his or her parent and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the Director. The conference may be omitted if the Director or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the conference, the pupil shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against him or her and shall be given the opportunity to present his or her version and evidence in his or her defense.

This conference shall be held within two school days, unless the pupil waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization.

No penalties may be imposed on a pupil for failure of the pupil's parent or guardian to attend a conference with school officials. Reinstatement of the suspended pupil shall not be contingent upon attendance by the pupil's parent or guardian at the conference.

2. Notice to Parents/Guardians

At the time of suspension, the Director or designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension and the date of return following suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may also state the date and time when the student may return to school. If school officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.

3. Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Placement/Expulsion

Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension.

Upon a recommendation of Placement/Expulsion by the Director or Director's designee, the pupil and the pupil's guardian or representative will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the pupil should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. This determination will be made by the Director or designee upon either of the following determinations: 1) the pupil's presence will be disruptive to the education process; or 2) the pupil poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the pupil's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

D. Authority to Expel

A student may be expelled either by the Governing Board following a hearing before it or by the Governing Board upon the recommendation of an Administrative Panel to be assigned by the Governing Board as needed. The Administrative Panel should consist of at least three members who are certificated and neither a teacher of the pupil or a Board member of the Governing Board. The Administrative Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense.

E. Expulsion Procedures

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Unless postponed for good cause, the hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the Director or designee determines that the Pupil has committed an expellable offense.

In the event an administrative panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the Governing Board for a final decision whether to expel. The hearing shall be held in closed session unless the pupil makes a written request for a public hearing three (3) days prior to the hearing.

Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Upon mailing the notice, it shall be deemed served upon the pupil. The notice shall include:

1. The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
2. A statement of specific facts, charges and offenses 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 at the school to any other school district or school to 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 or a non-attorney advisor;
6. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
7. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
8. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

F. Special procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offences

The Charter School may, upon finding a good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations which shall be examined only by the Governing Board, administrative panel, or the hearing officer. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, shall be made available to the pupil.

1. The complaining witness in any sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of his/her right to (a) receive five days notice of his/her scheduled testimony, (b) have up to two (2) adult support persons of his/her choosing present in the hearing at the time he/she testifies, which may include a parent, guardian, or legal counsel, and (c) elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.
2. The Charter School must also provide the victim a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to and during breaks in testimony.
3. At the discretion of the person or panel conducting the hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which he or she may leave the hearing room.
4. The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
5. The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours he/she is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the person presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The person conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany him or her to the witness stand.
7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, the Charter School must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the Charter School. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising his or her discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom he or she believes is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.
8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.
9. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in the public at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have his/her testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are not alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing by means of closed-circuit television.
10. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the person conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstances can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an

opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

G. 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.

H. Presentation of Evidence

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense.

Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay and sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the Governing Board, Panel or designee determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

If, due to a written request by the accused pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900, a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public.

The decision of the Administrative Panel shall be in the form of written findings of fact and a written recommendation to the Governing Board who will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The final decision by the Governing Board shall be made within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The decision of the Governing Board is final.

If the expulsion hearing panel decides not to recommend expulsion, the pupil shall immediately be returned to his/her educational program.

I. Written Notice to Expel

The Director or designee following a decision of the Governing Board to expel shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the Governing Board's adopted findings of fact, to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall also include the following:

1. Notice of the specific offense committed by the student
2. Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the Charter School.

The Director or designee shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the student's district of residence. This notice shall include the following:

1. The student's name
2. The specific expellable offense committed by the student

J. Disciplinary Records

The Charter School shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the Charter School. Such records shall be made available to the District upon request.

K. No Right to Appeal

The pupil shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from the Charter School as the Governing Board decision to expel shall be final.

L. Expelled Pupils/Alternative Education

Pupils who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including, but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence.

M. Rehabilitation Plans

Students who are expelled from the Charter School shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Governing Board at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one (1) year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to the Charter School for readmission.

N. Readmission

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school, school district or charter school shall be in the sole discretion of the Governing Board following a meeting with the Director and the pupil and guardian or representative to determine whether the pupil has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the pupil poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Director shall make a recommendation to the Governing Board following the meeting regarding his or her determination. The pupil's readmission is also contingent upon the Charter School's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission.

O. Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities

i. Notification of SELPA

The Charter School shall immediately notify the SELPA and coordinate the procedures in this policy with the SELPA the discipline of any student with a disability or student who the Charter School or District would be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability who is suspended for more than ten (10) school days during a school year.

ii. Services During Suspension

Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year shall continue to receive services so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education

curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment or functional analysis, and behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

iii. Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- a) If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b) If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team determine that either of the above is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP Team shall:

- a) Conduct a functional behavioral assessment or a functional analysis assessment, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that the Charter School had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement;
- b) If a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
- c) Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the Charter School agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team determine that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and that the conduct in question was not a result of the failure to implement the IEP, then the Charter School may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

iv. Due Process Appeals

The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or the Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request an expedited administrative hearing through the Special Education Unit of the Office of Administrative Hearings.

When an appeal relating to the placement of the student or the manifestation determination has been requested by either the parent or the Charter school, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the forty-five (45) day time period provided for in an interim alternative educational setting, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the Charter School agree otherwise.

v. Special Circumstances

Charter School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

The Director or designee may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability in cases where a student:

- a) Carries or possesses a weapon, as defined in 18 USC 930, to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function;
- b) Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
- c) Has inflicted serious bodily injury, as defined by 20 USC 1415(k)(7)(D), upon a person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

vi. Interim Alternative Educational Setting

The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP team.

vii. Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services

A student who has not been identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to IDEIA and who has violated the district's disciplinary procedures may assert the procedural safeguards granted under this administrative regulation only if the Charter School had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred.

The Charter School shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if one of the following conditions exists:

- a) The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement, to Charter School supervisory or administrative personnel, or to one of the child's teachers, that the student is in need of special education or related services.
- b) The parent has requested an evaluation of the child.
- c) The child's teacher, or other Charter School personnel, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education or to other Charter School supervisory personnel.

If the Charter School knew or should have known the student had a disability under any of the three (3) circumstances described above, the student may assert any of the protections available to IDEIA-eligible children with disabilities, including the right to stay-put.

If the Charter School had no basis for knowledge of the student's disability, it shall proceed with the proposed discipline. The Charter School shall conduct an expedited evaluation if requested by the parents; however the student shall remain in the education placement determined by the Charter School pending the results of the evaluation.

The Charter School shall not be deemed to have knowledge of that the student had a disability if the parent has not allowed an evaluation, refused services, or if the student has been evaluated and determined to not be eligible.

ELEMENT ELEVEN
STRS and PERS Contribution

The manner by which staff members of the charter schools will be covered by the State Teachers' Retirement System, the Public Employees' Retirement System, or federal social security. – Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(K)

To the extent allowed by law, employees of Ridgecrest Charter School shall be able to participate in any and all teacher and employee retirement funds that they would be eligible to participate in if they were teaching in a non-charter public school.

Certificated, classified, and other staff members of the Ridgecrest Charter School shall retain all previously vested rights in their respective retirement systems, including, but not limited to State Teachers' Retirement System, Public Employees' Retirement System, and the Social Security System. The charter school will, from its budget, honor any obligation under those programs to match the employee contribution.

Faculty and staff and the Ridgecrest Charter School will participate in the federal Social Security system and will have access to other school-sponsored retirement plans. Ridgecrest Charter School will allow eligible school faculty and staff who transfer from a different public school to participate in the STRS or PERS, and make contributions to STRS or PERS.

ELEMENT TWELVE

Attendance Options for Students Who Choose Not to Attend the Ridgecrest Charter School

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 may be required to attend the Charter School. Students who reside within the District who choose not to attend the Charter School may attend school within the District according to District policy or at another school district or school within the District through the District's intra and inter-district policies. Parents and guardians of each student enrolled in the charter school will be informed on admissions forms that the students have no right to admission in a particular school of an local education agency as a consequence of enrollment in the charter school, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency.



ELEMENT THIRTEEN

Employee Rights When Working in the Ridgecrest Charter School and Right to Return to a Different Public School After Employment at a Charter School.

A 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 with the charter school. – Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(M)

The Ridgecrest Charter School will hire all school staff. For staff employed by a different public school in the prior year, they shall (as in the case of all other employees) be selected, employed, and released by the charter school through Ridgecrest Charter School which shall set the terms and conditions of employment.

When hiring a Director, applicants shall be interviewed by a team including parents, staff, and board members. The Ridgecrest Charter School board shall make the final selection. The Director shall have a two- year contract while the other members of the Ridgecrest Charter School staff will be given annual contracts; the Director and staff will be considered employees of the Ridgecrest Charter School as executed through the Ridgecrest Charter School.

No public school district employee shall be required to work at the Ridgecrest Charter School. Any employee who so desires shall be considered for employment through an open application process, and, if hired, shall enter into a contractual agreement with the Ridgecrest Charter School which shall have the authority to hire and terminate the position, in accordance with the agreement executed between the Ridgecrest Charter School and the employee.

Charter school employees shall have any right upon leaving the LEA to work in the charter school that the LEA may specify, any rights of return to employment in a LEA after employment in the school that the LEA may specify, and any other rights upon leaving employment to work in the school that the Authorizer determines to be reasonable and not in conflict with any law.

Charter school staff who are hired but were not part of a public school district in the preceding year shall be considered as “at will” employees with no right of return to a district.

ELEMENT FOURTEEN
Dispute Resolution Procedure

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

Dispute Resolution Process – Direct Resolution

Because the State Board of Education (SBE) is not a Local Education Agency, the SBE, if the Authorizer, may choose to resolve a dispute directly instead of pursuing the dispute resolution process outlined below, provided that if the SBE intends to resolve a dispute directly, it must first hold a public hearing to consider arguments for and against the direct resolution of the dispute.

Dispute Resolution Process –Alternate Resolution

- (a) California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(N) requires that a charter designate the procedures to be followed by the charter school and the "entity" creating the charter in the event of a dispute relating to the provisions of the charter. In the case of the Ridgecrest Charter School petition, the entity creating the charter shall be the Authorizer.
- (b) The Ridgecrest Charter School shall be governed by the charter board, as set out in Element Four of this charter application, which is responsible for the governance and operation of the school in accordance with the provisions of the charter.
- (c) In the event of a dispute concerning the terms of the charter, the Authorizer shall provide written notice to the other of the nature of the dispute and the facts which the party believes supports the failure to comply. This notice shall be provided within 15 calendar days of when the party either knew or should have known of the possible dispute unless there are extenuating circumstances. In an emergency, where oral notice precedes written notice, the oral notice shall be immediately followed by written notice.
- (d) After the receipt of the notice, the Authorizer designee and a representative of the Ridgecrest Charter School board shall meet to try and resolve the dispute. If a resolution is reached, a written description of that resolution shall be drafted and signed and preserved as guidance for future action.
- (e) If no resolution is reached, the matter shall be submitted to a mediator experienced in conflict resolution and educational issues. The first opportunity for striking the choice of mediator shall be determined by lot. The parties shall alternately strike until one name remains. Within 10 calendar days of appointment or otherwise mutually agreed, the parties shall meet to attempt to resolve the dispute. Any agreements reached shall be written and preserved as set out in paragraph (d) above.
- (f) If no resolution is reached in mediation, each party shall have been deemed to have exhausted its responsibilities under this charter and shall the right to pursue any remedy available under law.

ELEMENT FIFTEEN
Labor Relations/Employment

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

All employees of the charter school shall be employees of the charter school and not employees of the State Board of Education for purposes of the Education Employment Relations Act.

ELEMENT SIXTEEN

School 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 charter 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)

All goods and materials purchased by the Ridgecrest Charter School with funds provided by the Ridgecrest Charter School will be owned by the Ridgecrest Charter School's not-for-profit organization and shall remain so notwithstanding any withdrawal of charter status by the State Board of Education. Any materials and property donated or loaned to the Ridgecrest Charter School will be properly inventoried and returned to the owner on withdrawal of charter status. All public property used by the charter shall be protected by insurance satisfactory to the State Board of Education.

Should closure occur, Ridgecrest Charter School closure-related activities will be conducted by the Director. The Director will notify the parents/guardians of pupils, the State Board of Education, the California Department of Education, the Kern County Office of Education, the Kern County Special Education Local Plan Area, the Public Employees' Retirement System, State Teachers' Retirement System, and federal social security. Such notification shall be by mail and will include the effective date of closure and will state that all reasonable inquiries be made to the Director regarding closure. The notification will also include the pupils' school district of residence, for most of whom it will be Sierra Sands Unified School District, 113 W. Felspar, Ridgecrest, CA 93555, and a list of pupils in each grade level and the classes that they have completed. The notification will also state that parents and guardians may obtain copies of pupil records, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements from Sierra Sands Unified School District. Student records will be transferred for storage and forwarding/distribution to the Local Education Agency in which the school resides if the local LEA permits such a transfer. In the alternative, records will be stored at the County Office of Education.

Transfer of all pupil records, all state assessments results, and any special education records will be by the Director. Maintenance of all pupil records will be by the Sierra Sands Unified School District except for records and/or assessment results that the charter may require to be transferred to a different entity.

Transfer and maintenance of personnel records to the Kern County Office of Education will be in accordance with applicable law.

A final independent audit shall be conducted and concluded within six months of school closure that may function as the annual audit, with the audit report being forwarded to the County Office of Education, the California Department of Education, and the State Board of Education. The audit report will include at least the following: an accounting of all financial assets, including cash and accounts receivable and an inventory of property, equipment, and other items of material value, an accounting of the liabilities, including accounts payable and any reduction in apportionments as a result of audit findings or other investigations, loans, and unpaid staff compensation, and an assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to the charter school.

On closure of the School, all assets of the School, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property and all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by students attending the School, remain the sole property of the Charter School and shall be distributed in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation upon the dissolution of the non-profit public benefit corporation to a non-profit public benefit corporation or governmental agency. Ridgecrest Charter School will dispose of any net assets remaining after

all liabilities of the charter school have been paid or otherwise addressed, including, but not limited to, the following: the 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, and the return of any donated materials and property in accordance with any conditions established when the donation of such materials or property was accepted.

As the School is operated by a non-profit public benefit corporation, should the corporation dissolve with the closure of the 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. Ridgecrest Charter School further agrees upon closure to complete and file any annual reports required pursuant to Education Code section 47604.33.

Ridgecrest Charter School will utilize its reserve fund to ensure an adequate amount of funding to cover all costs incurred from the aforementioned closure procedures.

Term and Renewal of Charter

The term of this charter shall *be five years from the date of Authorizer approval.*

This charter may be revoked as provided by law. Before revoking the charter, the Authorizer shall comply with Education Code Section 47607 and any applicable implementing regulations.

The Authorizer must approve material revisions made to the charter pursuant to Education Code Section 47607. However, all proposed revisions to the charter must be presented to the Authorizer for a determination as to whether or not the proposed revision is a material revision that must be approved by the State Board of Education.

A request by the Ridgecrest Charter School for renewal of the school's charter shall be presented no later than February of the school's last year of operation in the then current term.

