
CHARTER OF THE
CREATIVE ARTS CHARTER SCHOOL
A CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Accepted March 24th, 2009
Effective June 30th, 2009

AFFIRMATIONS/ASSURANCES

As the authorized lead petitioner, I, Liz Jaroslow, hereby certify the information submitted in this application for the charter renewal of a California public charter school, Creative Arts Charter School (Charter School), is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I also certify this application does not constitute the conversion of a private school to the status of a public charter school; and further understand that, if awarded the renewal, Creative Arts Charter School:

- Shall meet all statewide standards and conduct all student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Section 60605 and 60851, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. (*Ref. Education Code Section 47065(c)(1)*)
- Shall be deemed the exclusive public charter school employer of the employees of Creative Arts 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 not discriminate on the basis of 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 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 1974, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004.
- 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 11976.5.1(f)(5)(C)*)
- Shall ensure that grade level teachers in the Charter School hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other documents 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 47605.6(2)(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)*).
- Admission to Creative Arts Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of a pupil, or her parent or guardian, within the state, except for preferences given

when the number of pupils who wish to attend the Charter School exceeds the school's capacity. (*Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)*)

- Will follow any and all other federal, state and local laws and regulations that apply to Creative Arts Charter School including but not limited to:
 - Creative Arts Charter School shall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection.
 - Creative Arts Charter School shall on a regular basis consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's education programs.
 - Creative Arts Charter School shall comply with any jurisdictional limitations to locations of its facilities.
 - Creative Arts Charter School shall comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment.
 - Creative Arts Charter School shall comply with the Public Records Act.
 - Creative Arts Charter School shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
 - Creative Arts Charter School shall meet or exceed the legally required minimum number of school days and instructional minutes.

Liz Jaroslow, Lead Petitioner

Date

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. SCHOOL HISTORY

Creative Arts Charter School (CACS) was founded in 1994 by a dedicated group of parents and educators who wanted to provide their children with high-quality public education through implementing recent progressive theories in education that fostered creativity and exploration in children. The school began as an early childhood program with kindergarten through third grades. In the third year of operation, planning began to extend the scope of the school through the eighth grade, and each year an additional grade level was added. In 2002, CACS graduated its first eighth grade class to a full range of high schools throughout San Francisco. CACS anticipates a maximum total of 312 students in kindergarten through eighth grade in the years to come.

Renewed by the San Francisco Board of Education in March of 2004, the CACS charter has continued to develop in both breadth and scope. Originally run almost exclusively by its board of directors and a long list of dedicated volunteers, the school now employs an administrative team that includes a director, business manager, operations manager, arts coordinator, counselor, and student services coordinator. The CACS faculty currently includes 11 classroom teachers, a special education teacher, a special education paraprofessional, a part-time literacy specialist, a full-time music teacher, a part-time middle school arts teacher, and two part-time visual arts teachers.

2. SCHOOL LOCATION

CACS shall operate as a classroom-based instructional program within the geographic boundaries of San Francisco Unified School District in a site as yet to be determined at the time of this submission.

B. THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS OF THE SCHOOL

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 students to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.

--Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)

1. MISSION

The mission of Creative Arts Charter School is to provide K-8 grade students of San Francisco with an innovative, high-quality education that focuses on an arts-integrated, project-based curriculum, with the overall goal of giving our students a lifetime appreciation of learning and the development of their unique talents and abilities.

2. HOW LEARNING BEST OCCURS

CACS bases its teaching methodology on constructivist learning theory developed on the premise that students construct their own understanding of the world by generating “rules” and “mental models,” that help make sense of experiences. Learning occurs when mental models are adjusted to accommodate new experiences. At CACS, children learn when their existing set of beliefs, theories and perceptions are challenged through conversation and hands-on activity or experience. Constructivist theory also maintains the brain does not necessarily or automatically categorize information according to traditional academic disciplines. (See Appendix A for description of a constructivist classroom.) CACS understands all learners have different strengths and

weaknesses. With these principles in mind, the CACS curriculum approaches subject matter from multiple perspectives and includes a variety of learning activities so that every student will succeed.

CACS embraces learning as a dynamic experience in which children actively participate in the process of inquiry in collaboration with their teachers. Students explore and learn core subjects of language arts, math, science and social studies, through direct experience, using a hands-on, experiential, curriculum with an arts-integrated focus. They also study the arts as distinct disciplines that become more formalized as students progress through the grades in the middle school years.

In order to nurture optimum academic and personal growth, our teachers practice innovative and diverse teaching models that value students as unique individuals with varied learning styles, and help nurture their academic and personal growth. This value is supported by the school infrastructure of small class sizes housed in a small school environment. Parents are encouraged to participate actively in the learning experience. To ensure an intimate school experience, first through sixth grade students remain with their teachers for a two year loop. In kindergarten, the class is self-contained; and seventh and eighth grades are departmentalized into a humanities core and a math/science core. The core subjects at all grade levels (science, math, social studies and language arts) are taught as interdisciplinary units with the arts integrated into each subject. These units let the students connect all of the subjects as they exist in real life. Traditional textbooks do not match this interdisciplinary style of teaching; therefore, they are valued as supplemental support to the resource-based curriculum, with most references coming from primary and secondary sources, such as library books, newspapers, periodicals, fieldtrips, teacher-created materials and electronic research. The result is a progressive liberal arts education that builds critical thinking skills in children and leaves each student feeling intellectually strong with the ability to examine, test and make sense of the world.

Compelling evidence supports the emphasis on an arts-integrated curriculum and the positive impact of arts education in schools. The Association for the Advancement of Arts Education (AAAE) analyzed nearly 400 recent studies, public policies and programs in dance, theater, music and the visual arts for children and youth, including the bipartisan education legislation, America 2000 and Goals 2000. Concurring with the indisputable statistical and qualitative evidence documented in this research, the AAAE highly recommends sustained school-based arts education programs that include the following:

- have a sequential curriculum in the arts
- school arts specialists
- direct involvement of community artists and arts organizations
- a clear assessment component, and
- a connection between the arts and other subject areas in the school.¹

Yet while most American elementary schools offered at least minimal designated music and visual arts instruction in the 1999-2000 academic year, only 20% of them offered designated dance instruction, and a mere 19% offered drama/theater. Just 38% of public elementary schools sponsored visiting artists, and 22% sponsored artists-in-residence. Furthermore, of the arts specialists teaching in schools, only 58% of music specialists and 53% of visual arts specialists

¹ Association for the Advancement of Arts Education, 1996. "Research on Arts Ed," Kent Seidel, Ph.D.

felt that they were supported by the administration at their schools.² In California's current fiscal climate, these percentages have no doubt decreased, while CACS remains committed to maintaining at least our current level of arts education.

In the primary grades at CACS, teachers use an integrated curriculum design, empowering children to engage individually and cooperatively with material and ideas. At all levels, instructors are creative and innovative in addressing the developmental needs of students, and in matching children's individual learning styles to challenging daily activities. Since its beginning years as a kindergarten and elementary school, and now as a K-8 school, CACS has borrowed deeply from two highly esteemed teaching models: integrated thematic teaching units and arts-integrated curriculum support.

All of the nine grade levels employ project-based learning whenever possible to help students understand the multifaceted relationships among academic subjects, technical and life skills, and the greater world.

THE RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM

In 2006, an extended look at discipline and community had the staff at CACS posing questions about how to establish a tone of respect in the school, among students and adults, as well as with each other and families. These discussions were linked closely with our desire to foster a diverse community and our mission to give children purposeful and altruistic experiences at school. In addition, we were aware of trends, not only in our district, but nationwide, toward inequitable discipline practices and a growing need for teachers and administration to look to new methods to engage all students fully at school. This study informed the decision to adopt *The Responsive Classroom* (Appendix B).

To that end, five senior teachers were sent to New York for extensive training. These five teachers create model Responsive Classrooms and share their practice with the rest of the staff.

The Responsive Classroom combines engaging students (K-8) in daily morning meetings, designed to foster respect for individuals, and for the group, with a strong component of academic choice and democratic classroom management. It also incorporates shared decision making with students and examination of values staff and students will uphold to create a strong community.

The Responsive Classroom also incorporates a teaching method called Academic Choice, in which students are required to plan, execute and reflect upon their own assessments and demonstration of knowledge.

CACS has been chosen as one of two Northern California sites to host a week long Responsive Classroom training for Bay Area teachers in June 2009.

ARTS PROGRAM

CACS teachers and staff provide innovative educational experiences in collaboration with students, using the arts as a vehicle for investigation, problem solving and multi-modal learning. While working in the arts, students are uniquely called upon to envision and set goals, determine methods to reach those goals, re-vision and re-work original ideas, work collaboratively, and develop self-discipline.

CACS believes education of the whole child should include work in dance, drama, music and visual arts. Everyday at school should involve opportunities to play, invent and discover. As part

² U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), "Survey of Elementary School Music Specialists," "Survey of Elementary School Visual Arts Specialists," and "Arts Survey of Elementary School Classroom Teachers," FRSS 77, 2000.

of a universal, cross-cultural language, the arts represent innate aspects of our common humanity, providing an inherent foundation for communication and a bridge for understanding one another across boundaries of age, race, gender identity, socioeconomics and culture. CACS has placed the arts at the center of its curriculum, and relies on them to provide fundamental purpose, definition and identity to the school.

Students from kindergarten through fifth grade participate weekly in visual arts, music, and dance or theater classes. Small class sizes (10-15 students as funding permits) assure quality learning experiences. The programs in each of these disciplines are sequenced by grade level in accordance with the State of California's Visual and Performing Arts Teaching Standards.

In grades six through eight, students select a specific art form in the area they wish to emphasize as they prepare to apply to high school. Additionally, those in good standing choose an elective arts class, which they attend once a week. Based on student interest, CACS offers an assortment of elective classes, such as beginning guitar, theater improvisation and monologue, stop animation, digital photography, History of African-American music, spoken word, silk screening and careers in the arts.

The program is staffed by a full-time arts coordinator and music teacher, and part-time visual arts teacher, middle school music teacher, dance teacher and theater teachers. Student interns and parents also help staff these classes. The school's arts coordinator collaborates with the arts staff to organize shows and performances and also to work closely with classroom teachers to integrate the arts into the regular curriculum. Music, for example, can inspire appreciation of mathematics and physics; likewise, students learn geometry through visual and graphic arts. Thus, students become well versed in a broad range of art media and techniques as they enhance their core competency skills. They also learn the impact and importance of the arts socially, historically and multiculturally. CACS arts staff are active and accomplished artists in their respective fields.

Each year, CACS organizes a school-wide performance/art show featuring all of the arts classes during two evenings of song, music, dance, theater and visual arts. CACS stages several smaller performances and art shows throughout the year. Additionally, the arts staff hosts a Winter Showcase during which families attend art, music and dance classes with their children.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: GRADES 6 – 8

Every middle school student (sixth, seventh and eighth grades) is required to participate in the community service program. CACS embraces volunteerism as a cornerstone of its own existence and as a means to inspire core values among its students. The school integrates the community service program as a requirement for its upper-level classes and views it as an opportunity for students to define themselves as agents of change in their school, neighborhood and broader community.

The community service program at CACS is an invaluable tool for helping older students to enhance their personal, academic and social development. They increase their civic responsibility, build adult relationships and become better prepared for college or careers, all while fulfilling unmet needs in their community. Community service begins at school with eighth grade buddies. Every eighth grade student is assigned a lower grade class to work with all year. The buddies' primary role is to support the Responsive Classroom morning meeting. They attend school-wide weekly meeting with their buddy classes as well as plan and implement one morning meeting each month in their buddy classrooms. In addition, sixth through eighth grade students are responsible for general maintenance and clean up of the buildings and grounds. Community service projects have ranged from assisting seniors, to cleaning up local parks, to peer and cross-grade tutoring and mentoring within the school.

In the 2008-09, teaching staff identified environmental justice as the focus of middle school community service. We have begun to work with Herons Head Park. Once an abandoned pier in

Bayview-Hunters Point, this area has been transformed into a thriving nature preserve and model for similar projects around the Bay Area. CACS students attend lectures and training given by the Heron's Head staff and then volunteer time to clean and maintain the park.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORY: GRADES 7 AND 8

Middle school advisory focuses on issues most pressing to adolescents. Middle school teachers and other staff are assigned advisory groups of 8-12 students. Advisors deal with adolescent-related issues along with communicating with families and handling minor discipline issues. All students are assigned an advisor with whom they meet with in small groups once a week. The purpose of the advisory program is three fold. First, students focus on life skills such as conflict resolution and listening skills. Second, students devote time and study to issues related to self-esteem, goal setting and peer pressure. Finally, each advisory group completes community service projects. During the fall semester, eighth grade advisory focuses exclusively on high school research writing high school entrance exams and completing high school applications, Homework includes attending the SFUSD Enrollment Fair and writing about the schools that peak their interest. In addition, advisory teachers work closely with families to set-up shadowing appointments, discuss schools that would be a good fit for their children and ensure deadlines for applications and transcript requests are met.

3. WHOM THE SCHOOL IS ATTEMPTING TO EDUCATE.

The students and families that make up CACS are as diverse as the populace of San Francisco. CACS will continue outreach efforts to draw a student population that is reflective of the City's population and to educate four to fourteen year-old students of all ethnicities, family structures, socioeconomics, learning styles and abilities (Appendix C) indicates positive growth in CACS population by ethnicity. Many students who come to CACS have been unable to succeed in other schools where the pedagogy is more conventional and less varied. Twenty-six children (11%) have diagnosed learning differences, and study through Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Additionally, many students have identifiable learning or behavioral disorders, with 48% of students designated as Educationally Disadvantaged.

It is significant to note that CACS serves a higher percentage of students with IEP's and the same percentage of students designated as EDY as the SFUSD (statistics provided by the SFUSD Achievement Assessments Office of the Research and Accountability Department, September 2008).

CACS utilizes Student Success Teams (SSTs) and Response to Intervention (RTIs) to ensure that interventions are effective in addressing each student's individualized needs and goals. To that end, we hired an additional learning specialist to support kindergarten through third grade students identified as at risk by the DIBBELS and Brigance assessments. Since 2006, the additional learning specialist has served 26 students (22% of K-3 grades) in small groups or one-to-one support. In addition, every effort is made to include support staff, such as the arts and PE staff in SSTs and IEPs.

CACS and San Francisco Unified School District are committed to working together to ensure the delivery of a free and appropriate education to all students, including those with exceptional needs. CACS will work with SFUSD to develop plans and procedures to cooperatively meet the needs of special education students enrolled at CACS and to provide all appropriate special education services, required by law. CACS staff is committed to working with students designated as Limited English Proficient and will convene SSTs as necessary to develop and deliver an appropriate educational program that meets the individual needs of such students.

4. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN “EDUCATED PERSON” IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

Exposing children to the arts helps them become more successful students, better connected to their communities, more confident in their personal development and better prepared for their careers. Former U.S. Commissioner of Education, Ernest Boyer, summarized his recommendations at the National Endowment for the Arts Conference in 1994:

“Here, then, is my conclusion. First, we need the arts to express feelings words cannot convey. Second, we need the arts to expand the child’s way of knowing and to bring creativity to the Nation’s classrooms. Third, we need the arts to help students integrate their learning and discover the connectedness of things. Fourth, we need the arts in education to help children who are emotionally and physically restricted.”³

By integrating arts into schools, educators provide their students with indispensable and invaluable opportunities to learn with identifiable program goals that shall include the objective of enabling students to become self-motivated, competent and lifelong learners. The arts are necessary at all grade levels. Dance, music, theater and visual arts are fun. They help keep children engaged in learning and allow educators to reach students who are at-risk, and those with special learning needs who do not respond to standard teaching methods. The arts help develop the many types of intelligences that all people possess, but that traditional academic study does not reach. Gardner (1993) proposes seven primary forms of intelligence: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, body-kinesthetic, intrapersonal (e.g., insight) and interpersonal (e.g., social skills).⁴ An arts-based curriculum coupled with staff specialists in a community context is the ideal way to help students identify their strengths and capitalize on them.

Likewise, by connecting the arts with core subjects such as math, reading, and science, students learn about, comprehend and value academic disciplines as well. The arts require creativity, self-discipline, imagination, critical thinking and confidence. They help students build good problem solving and other cognitive development habits that stay with them throughout their educational and professional careers. And the arts remove boundaries, allowing students to experience and understand an increasingly complex world and all aspects of life around them in safe and creative ways.

B. 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)

By connecting the arts with core subjects, students discover and further develop their creativity, self-discipline, imagination, critical thinking skills and confidence. Through this approach, we expect children to develop in four key areas:

- their approaches to new tasks
- their interactions with others, both children and adults
- their ability to form and to test theories
- their approach to tackling new and evolving academic challenges.

³ U.S. Department of Education. “Transforming Ideas for Teaching and Learning the Arts,” 1997.

⁴ Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*. NY: Basic Books.

Our program is designed to support children becoming literate and numerate, meeting the content and performance standards set by the California Department of Education including the California State Standards for Visual and Performing Arts and character education for a successful transition into ninth grade.

1. KEY ACADEMIC SKILLS

Developmentally appropriate or age-appropriate mastery of core academic skills including:

- Language Arts: Students are literate and articulate and can demonstrate reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Students can communicate clearly to others both orally and in writing using a variety of means of expressions. Students can comprehend and interpret a variety of forms of written expression.
- Mathematics: Students can reason logically and understand and apply mathematical concepts, processes and techniques.
- History / Social Studies: Students have knowledge and understanding of a variety of cultures around the world, including their own history and geography.
- Science: Students understand general principles of scientific methods and inquiry and can apply these to life science, physical science and Earth science.

Students have the ability to think critically, analytically, logically and creatively.

Students can demonstrate the ability to gather, organize and communicate information, using various tools, including technology.

Students can recognize their own unique learning styles and reflect on and evaluate their progress.

2. ART/MUSIC/MOVEMENT SKILLS

Students demonstrate the ability to plan, initiate and complete their projects. Students produce quality products reflective of the process of creativity.

Students demonstrate a capacity for artistic expression through a variety of media that may include music, visual arts, theater, dance, and other arts forms.

3. SOCIAL SKILLS

Students understand and respect the interdependent relationship of human beings, other living creatures, and the earth, and will reflect this understanding in their decisions and actions.

Students demonstrate the ability to solve problems with their peers, and to resolve disputes using conflict resolution skills.

Students demonstrate their ability to work collaboratively and cooperatively, using interactive communication and showing compassion and consideration for individual differences.

Students demonstrate the personal habits and attitudes of responsibility, confidence, motivation, perseverance and flexibility.

Student performance will be evident by successful completion of the year's portfolio, evaluation of scores from standardized tests, and documentation of progress using additional assessment tools. CACS expects its eighth grade students to demonstrate readiness to graduate and move into a high school program by the end of the academic year. By completion of eighth grade, students will meet all statewide standards and conduct the pupil assessments pursuant to Section 60605 and any other statewide standards authorized in the statute or pupil assessments applicable to pupils in non-charter public schools.

C. METHODS TO ASSESS PUPIL PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING OUTCOMES

The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured.

-- Education code section 47605(b)(5)(C)

While the majority of schools in San Francisco are currently required to design their curriculum with a specific emphasis on raising standardized test scores, CACS has made a conscious decision to allow curriculum and teaching methods to dictate assessment. This is not to say that performance on standardized tests is not important. In the middle school; we have seen an increase in traditional assessments. However, a hands-on, arts-integrated, project-based approach to learning cannot be measured with traditional assessments. CACS recognizes that these differences in the educational program and curriculum sequence may sometimes be reflected in variations in scores in specific areas of the state standardized tests. It is important to note that the teaching methods of CACS have resulted in a steady rise in API and AYP scores and consistently meeting or surpassing growth targets (Appendix D).

For students who are Limited English Proficient, with an IEP or 504 plan, and/or other special needs, performance standards and assessments will be adapted as appropriate in accordance with their plans.

To track student progress, teachers at CACS maintain individual student portfolios which are used in conjunction with a performance assessment tool called the Work Sampling System (WSS). The purpose is to document and address children's skills, knowledge, behavior and progress across a wide variety of curriculum areas on an ongoing basis. The seven curriculum areas measured with the WSS include Personal and Social Development, Language and Literacy, Mathematical Thinking, Scientific Thinking, Social Studies, The Arts, Physical Development and Health. These areas of assessment are based on state and national standards that guide CACS teachers in their curriculum design. At the middle school level, students are assigned letter grades and effort designations in core subjects. Developmental checklists along with narratives are used to assess student achievement in the art disciplines. Families have the option to request that letter grades not be assigned to their child. Student portfolios are also kept as documentation of student progress and growth in the seven areas listed above. Portfolios are prepared by the students reviewed with families during conferences.

To keep families further apprised of their child(ren)'s learning and development at CACS, mid-trimester progress reports (Appendix E) are mailed home for students who are experiencing difficulties or, in middle school, are at risk for receiving less than a "C" average.

Twice yearly, at the Spring and Fall family/school conferences, teachers provide families with detailed anecdotal reports of progress and challenges at school. Families are also encouraged to schedule informal meetings throughout the school year with their child's instructors to discuss progress, issues and challenges. These meetings help teachers and parents become an educational development team for students and are especially important for families who have limited time to volunteer in the classroom.

Additionally, CACS participates in the STAR tests program, a mandatory standardized test for all California elementary and middle schools. Students at CACS typically take this test in the Spring, and their results are sent home in July.

METHODS TO ASSESS PUPIL PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING OUTCOMES	
Proficiency in Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work Sampling System (K-5) ▪ Grading system based on rubrics (6-8) ▪ State required testing ▪ Portfolios development and presentation ▪ Family/School conferences
Proficiency in Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work Sampling System (K-5) ▪ Grading system based on rubrics (6-8) ▪ State required testing Portfolios development and presentation ▪ Family/School conferences
Proficiency in Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of research report / science fair project (6-8) ▪ Work Sampling System (K-5) ▪ Grading system based on rubrics (6-8) ▪ State required testing ▪ Portfolios development and presentation ▪ Family/School conferences
Proficiency in History/Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work Sampling System (K-5) ▪ Grading system based on rubrics (6-8) ▪ State required testing ▪ Presentation of projects ▪ Portfolios development and presentation ▪ Family/School conferences
Art/ Music/Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developmental checklists ▪ Narratives to assess student achievement ▪ Presentation of work ▪ Portfolios development and presentation ▪ Family/School conferences
Social Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work Sampling System (K-5) ▪ Completion of Advisory Program (7-8) ▪ Family/School conferences

D. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The governance structure of the school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parent involvement.
--Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(D)

CACS has maintained 501(c) (3) status as a California non-profit organization since 1994. The families and staff follow written bylaws to assure the smooth implementation of the charter. The bylaws contain clear provisions for making necessary changes in the organization and include a description of the relationship between staff, governing body and committees, as well as how each group is selected.

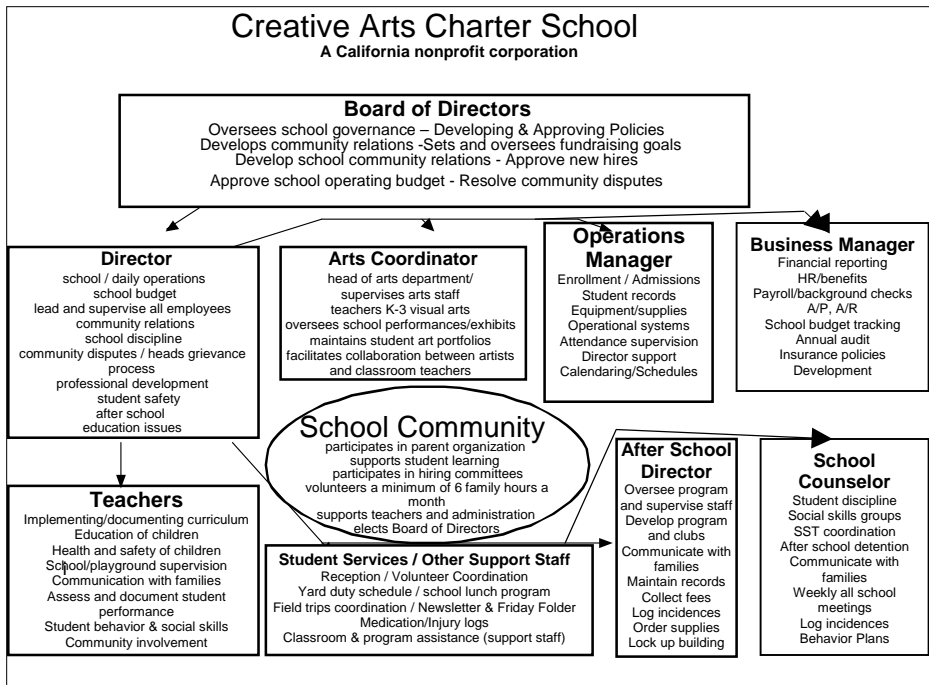
The staff, families and other community leaders will govern the school with an 11 member board of directors. In electing board members, each family with a child currently enrolled in the school shall have one vote per child enrolled, as will each member of the staff. There must never be

enough community members and staff, separately or conjointly, to outvote parents. That is, families, taken as a caucus, can veto any item. We believe this sharing of power will ensure family involvement.

In accordance with state and federal laws, the district may decide to designate a representative to serve as a twelfth member of the CACS governing board in conformance with applicable state laws. Participation on the board shall not act or be interpreted as approval or action by the district. Regardless of such appointment and participation, the district and CACS remain separate legal entities.

The board of directors is responsible for formal policy-making, and the director of the school is responsible for making decisions and implementing programs consistent with school policy. However, the board does not operate in a vacuum. If deemed necessary, the board may designate committees to provide information necessary for decision-making. Parents working on committees are essential at every level of governance and planning. The following describes committees and their activities in more detail:

- Budget/Finance Committee: Chaired by the director or treasurer; prepares fiscal budget, oversees annual audit, reports to board on the financial condition of the school.
- Hiring Committee: When staff openings exist, a hiring committee is created to review resumes, interview candidates and make recommendations to the board.
- Fundraising Committee: Makes recommendations to the board regarding annual fundraising policy and goals. Coordinates with class families/staff/administration to successfully plan and carry out the school and classroom's assigned fundraising activities.
- Diversity/Outreach Committee: Works with school administration/board to coordinate activities that “spread the word” about the school to the general public, targeting the diverse families of San Francisco (i.e. coordinating school faire booths, hosting open houses, connecting with preschools, etc.).
- Facilities Committee: Makes recommendations to the director and board regarding facilities related issues.
- Family Engagement Committee: Works with the Diversity/Outreach Committee and Fundraising Committee to encourage and track volunteers and build community morale by coordinating social events, work parties and clean up days.



The director and the staff representative regularly report to the board and ensure staff members' ideas and concerns are discussed at each board meeting. Weekly staff meetings allow a place and time for staff members to be involved in decision-making.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Family participation is one of the founding principles of CACS, as family involvement in education increases a child's personal growth and academic achievement. It is important that families take an active role in their children's education, both at school and at home. At school, families assist in classrooms, in the office and attend fieldtrips, particularly in the lower grades. At home, homework assignments for all grade levels often call for family input.

Family participation is also crucial to the daily operations of CACS, with parents volunteering their time and talents to support classroom activities, after school programs, fundraising events and the governance of the school. CACS views families and the community as highly valuable curriculum resources. Families enrich the nature and quality of learning with their varied cultural heritages and languages, beliefs and values, and family life differences. The culturally rich and diverse CACS community provides a warm climate for learning, communication and cooperation among its students. All families of CACS students are expected to contribute several volunteer hours each month and attend school celebrations and social events. Students, therefore, have regular and consistent opportunities to explore cultures different from their own. Just as important, parents who dedicate time and effort to this community program set a standard of volunteerism and self-initiative for their observant and impressionable children. Family volunteer hours are flexible and reflect individual talents, skills, interests and time availability.

In the 2006-07 school year CACS instituted Family Sharing Weeks in January to provide families with an opportunity to share family traditions.

CACS further builds family involvement into its structure through community meetings. The staff and board hold monthly meetings regarding school matters, community issues, the school's governance process, etc. All parents are encouraged to attend, with occasional meetings being mandatory. Times and dates are posted in the school's newsletter, in the online calendar and on the school bulletin boards.

E. EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS

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

Teachers who teach core academic subjects at CACS shall meet California Commission on Teacher Credential Requirements, consistent with the language and intent of Education Code Section 47651. For the purpose of this section, core academic classes shall be mathematics, language arts, science, and history/social studies.

CACS shall also employ artists and other non-core teaching staff who have an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience, and the demonstrated ability to work successfully with students.

Administrative and operational staff must possess a combination of applicable education, professional experience, and knowledge of the tasks that will be required of them. CACS will provide opportunities for professional development to ensure the administration remains abreast of changes in the law or operational requirements.

San Francisco Unified School District shall not require any employee of the school district to be employed by CACS; however, fully qualified special education teachers and paraprofessionals may be placed at CACS to address the needs of students with IEP's.

All faculty and staff will undergo a criminal background check and fingerprinting to be conducted by both the Department of Justice and the FBI, as well as a child abuse registry check. The applicants will be required to produce a full disclosure statement regarding prior criminal records. All staff will be required to produce documents for U.S. employment authorization. For medical safety, all staff will have medical clearance including proof of medical examination and a TB test as required by State and Federal law.

F. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

The procedures 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)

Each employee will observe health and safety requirements as established for Children's Centers School Age Programs. In particular, each employee will meet the requirements and procedures of Education Code 44237, including the requirement that as a condition of employment each new employee must submit to a criminal background check and test negative for tuberculosis. CACS will adopt and implement a set of health, safety, and risk management policies. These policies will be developed in consultation with the school's insurance carriers and at a minimum will address the following topics:

- Provide records documenting immunizations to the extent required for enrollment in non-charter public schools.
- Outline a response to natural disasters and emergencies, including fires and earthquakes.
- Provide basic first aid and CPR.
- Create policies relating to the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines.
- Require that each employee of the school submit to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Section 44237.

G. THE MEANS TO ACHIEVE A RACIAL AND ETHNIC BALANCE

The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted.

--Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(G)

The school will look to its diversity/outreach committee to help inform parents of its program and to develop and implement an appropriate student recruitment strategy to ensure an ethnic and racial balance among students that is reflective of the population of San Francisco. The outreach committee will actively recruit participants to enrich the school's racial, ethnic, family lifestyle and socioeconomic diversity by implementing the following efforts as necessary:

- Bring diverse staff on recruiting visits
- Maintain marketing materials in multiple languages
- Visit and speak at local community-based organizations in targeted low-income neighborhoods, daycare centers, SFUSD Child Development Centers and events hosted by Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco;
- Conduct family information sessions to elaborate on the commitment involved with attending CACS;
- Promote the school at neighborhood festivals;
- Make local school visits;
- Speak at civic organizations, with a particular focus on local community populations;
- Ensure an enrollment process that includes a timeline that allows for a broad-based recruiting and application process.

H. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Admission requirements.

--Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(H)

Admission will be for children whose ages meet the current education code requirements. Selection shall be by public random drawing when the demand exceeds the space available, and shall incorporate steps as is necessary to honor the diversity commitment spelled out above and to keep the gender balance at a maximum of 60% in each classroom.

CACS will actively recruit a diverse student population from San Francisco who support the school's mission and are committed to the school's instructional and operational philosophy. Before children enter the school, their family must be invited to learn the nature of this school. A copy of the charter will be available on the CACS website with a printed copy in the business office. An application signed by the parent/guardian and verifying documentation will be necessary to process the student through the school's admissions procedures and must be submitted. No other admission requirements will be made upon families. Waiting lists will be kept for each academic year, open to public inspection.

Admission to CACS shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the pupil, or of his or her parent or guardian, within this state, except that it shall adopt and maintain a policy giving admission preference to pupils who reside within the City and County of San Francisco. In addition, when the number of applicants exceeds capacity, the school shall reserve the right to grant priority in admissions to siblings of current students and children of staff. Priority in admission will be granted according to the following order:

1. Children of staff
2. Siblings of current students
3. Residents of San Francisco

CACS is non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, does not charge tuition, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender or disability.

ATTENDANCE

CACS operates a classroom-based instructional program, requiring students to attend school everyday. CACS shall work with SFUSD's Attendance Office to establish attendance procedures that ensure accurate student attendance counting and reporting. CACS shall maintain auditable attendance records that shall be open to inspection by SFUSD's Attendance Office upon written request.

CACS shall meet all applicable requirements of Education Code Section 47612.5, including the requirement to meet, at a minimum, the same number of instructional minutes as set forth in paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 46201 for the appropriate grade levels.

I. FINANCIAL AUDITS

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)

CACS shall hire a qualified auditor to prepare an annual audit using generally accepted accounting procedures. The audit will take place and be finalized after the close of the previous fiscal year and before December 15, which is the State Controller's and SFUSD's submittal deadline. The annual audit shall include at a minimum the following information:

- 1) Test of documentary evidence supporting financial transactions.
- 2) Review of all required documentation for the operation of the school, i.e. leases, certificates of insurance, vendor contracts, etc.
- 3) Confirmation of receivables and other assets and liabilities.
- 4) Determination of the financial health of the school in terms of net assets, liabilities, and cash reserves.
- 5) Review of health/safety procedures and a summary of any major changes.
- 6) Review of admission practices including the number of actual students enrolled, enrollment procedures, transcript procedures, etc.
- 7) Determination of existing internal/external dispute issues or lawsuits and their resolutions.
- 8) Review of attendance practices including an analysis and testing of monthly student data reports; excused absence documentation; instructional minutes and school calendar; and teacher verification sheets.
- 9) Review of human resources practices including the analysis of payroll documents and procedures.
- 10) Review of all retirement plans including the analysis and testing of STRS employee contributions.
- 11) Outline of internal control.

- 12) Review of the school budget and analysis of budget performance including a comparison with prior year actuals.
- 13) Review of accounting procedures and practices including an analysis and testing of accounts payable; accounts receivable; journal entries; bank deposits; monthly bank reconciliations; fixed assets; accrued liabilities; general ledger; trial balance; etc.
- 14) Review of acquisition, tracking and expenditure of grants and donations including the analysis and testing of grants and donations that are restricted in purpose.
- 15) Review of information to determine whether there are material errors, fraud, or other illegal acts may exist.

The school's audit committee will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the school's board with recommendations on how to resolve them. The board will report to the charter-granting agency regarding how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved. In addition, CACS welcomes SFUSD to conduct a site visit that would include observation of the instructional program. SFUSD shall provide CACS with three (3) working days notice before a site visit to ensure CACS has all necessary personnel available for SFUSD during the visit.

J. PUPIL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

The procedures by which a student can be suspended or expelled.

--Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(J)

CACS recognizes that many daily decisions required of those who work with children and young adults are of a moral and ethical nature. The CACS Ethical Code of Conduct offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth common basis for resolving the principal ethical dilemmas encountered at school. The primary focus is on daily practice with students and their families and setting and maintaining the moral/ethical code of conduct appropriate for CACS. The provisions apply to the students, parents/guardians, teachers and administrative staff and ensure the *Due Process* obligation of the school. CACS recognizes that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community and society. The goal of CACS is to help children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect and positive regard.

Students may be suspended for any of the acts enumerated in SFUSD student handbook as a suspendable offense, when that act is related to any school activity (including going to and coming from) or school attendance occurring within the school's jurisdiction or when attending school related events within the jurisdiction of any other school district. A student may be suspended for such acts when they are related to school activity or attendance that occur at any time, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

1. While on school grounds
2. While going to or coming from school
3. During the lunch period
4. During, or while going to or coming from, a school-sponsored activity.

Incidents that may warrant student expulsion will be handled in a manner consistent with California Education Code, affording all required due process rights to students and their families. CACS may seek the advice and guidance of, or work in conjunction with, SFUSD Pupil Services Department in accordance with District policy for handling expulsion recommendations.

Discipline involving students with IEP's will be handled as outlined in the student's plan and in accordance with federal law.

All disciplinary actions will be documented on the CACS Breach of Student Conduct Incident Report and/or other appropriate SFUSD forms.

CACS will comply with all federal laws regarding student discipline for children with disabilities and will stay apprised of any developments in the IDEA legislation. If a student with disabilities has an IEP that includes disciplinary guidelines, the student will be disciplined according to these guidelines. Students whose IEP does not include specific disciplinary guidelines may be disciplined in accordance with the standard school policies listed above.

K. RETIREMENT SYSTEM

The manner by which staff members of the charter schools will be covered by the state teachers retirement system, or federal social security. --Education code section 47605(b)(5)(k)

CACS participates in the Social Security system and provides State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) benefits to all eligible employees. All staff who are eligible to participate in STRS do not also participate in Social Security. STRS employees contribute 8% of gross wages and CACS pays an additional 8.25% of earnings. CACS works with a third party administrator to provide all employees with the option of contributing to a 403(b) retirement plan.

CACS retains the option for its board to elect to participate in the Public Employee Retirement System ("PERS") as applicable in the future should it find participation necessary. If the school elects to have its staff participate in the PERS system in the future, then all eligible staff will do so. If CACS should choose to participate in the PERS system, the parties will cooperate as necessary to provide required data and reports. If decided by SFUSD, CACS shall pay SFUSD its actual costs of the reporting services pursuant to Education Code section 47611.3 for the provision of such services.

L. ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES

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

As per state law, no governing board of a school district shall require any pupil enrolled in a school district to attend a charter school. Transportation is parental responsibility for families who choose to attend the CACS, with the exception of any students whose IEP mandate district-provided transportation.

M. DESCRIPTION OF THE RIGHTS OF EMPLOYEES

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 at a charter school. --Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(M)

Certificated teachers may take unpaid leave from the district in accordance with the district's policies and procedures in order to work at CACS. Permanent certificated teachers of SFUSD who leave their positions to work for CACS shall have the right, after one year, to return to a comparable position within the district. All certificated teachers who were employed by SFUSD immediately prior to employment at CACS shall be guaranteed return rights with restored seniority rights and step and range placement, as per years of service with SFUSD.

N. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS, OVERSIGHT, REPORTING AND RENEWAL

The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter.

--Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(N)

1. DISPUTE WITHIN THE SCHOOL

The purpose of the dispute resolution process is to have community members resolve issues in-house in an amicable and fair manner whenever possible and to avoid contacting the Board of Education and district unnecessarily. The CACS community includes students, parents, teachers, applicant families, volunteers, advisors, community members partners and collaborators.

The school community will review the CACS Dispute and Resolution Process each year. Procedures will be fair, specific and supported by the school community. In the event of a dispute, individuals are instructed to:

- 1) Make an appointment with the teacher or the person whose area of responsibility the issue involves, or the person directly involved in the issue.
- 2) If the meeting did not resolve the issue, make an appointment with the director. When appropriate, the director may request the teacher, staff member, or other party to take part in the meeting.
- 3) If after a reasonable amount of time, the issue has not been adequately addressed, submit in writing a statement to the board of directors and director. The person about whom the complaint is made will be given a copy of the written statement. The director and the president of the board will work with all parties to resolve the issue.
- 4) If the issue or complaint is against the director, first, bring the issue to the director's attention. If after a reasonable amount of time the issue is not resolved, you may file a written complaint with the board for resolution.
- 5) If the issue involves a school policy, first, bring the matter to the attention of the director.
- 6) If the director is unable to resolve the matter, you may appeal to the board of by either submitting a written statement, or attending a board meeting.

All CACS faculty, staff, administrators, parents, applicant families and board of directors will sign pledges to resolve disputes via this dispute process or its replacement. This means individuals will avoid contacting the Board of Education and the School District regarding a conflict at CACS until all of the relevant procedures listed above have been exhausted and documented.

2. DISPUTE BETWEEN SCHOOL AND SFUSD

The San Francisco Unified School District and/or Board of Education agrees to inform the CACS director if they are contacted regarding a conflict at CACS and to refer the involved parties to the dispute resolution process before further action. If the conflict involves CACS and either the San Francisco Unified School District or a member of the Board of Education, it is agreed that CACS will have an opportunity to present its position before any action is taken, and that every effort to resolve the issue amicably will be given before any conditions are given or potential charter revocation actions are taken. If such meeting(s) fail to resolve the issue or dispute, the San Francisco Unified School District and CACS shall meet to jointly identify a neutral, third-party mediator. The findings of the mediation shall be non-binding. If mediation fails to resolve the dispute, both parties will agree to non-binding arbitration. The parties will be responsible for the

fees and cost of the mediation/arbitration in accordance with Education Code. However, the Mediator/Arbitrator may award cost and /or attorney's fees to the prevailing party to the extent permitted by law. If the allocation of responsibility for payment of the arbitrator's fees would render the obligation to arbitrate unenforceable, the parties authorize the arbitrator to modify the allocation as necessary to preserve enforceability. The decision of the arbitrator shall be in writing and shall include a statement of the essential conclusions and findings upon which the decision is based. The interpretation and enforcement of this agreement to arbitrate shall be governed by the California Arbitration Act.

3. INDEMNIFICATION

CACS shall, to the fullest extent permitted by law, indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the SFUSD, its officers, directors, and employees, attorneys, agents, representatives, volunteers, successors and assigns (collectively hereinafter "SFUSD and SFUSD Personnel") from and against any and all actions, suits, claims, demands, losses, costs, penalties, obligations, errors, omissions, or liabilities, including legal costs, attorney's fees, and expert witness fees, whether or not suit is actually filed, and/or any judgment rendered against SFUSD and/or SFUSD Personnel, that may be asserted or claimed by any person, firm or entity arising out of, or in connection with, the performance under the charter or any acts or errors or omissions by the school, its board of directors, administrators, employees, agents, students, representatives, volunteers, successors and assigns (collectively CACS). This indemnity provision shall exclude actions brought by third persons directly against the District arising out of acts of willful misconduct or the sole negligence of SFUSD

SFUSD shall, to the fullest extent permitted by law, indemnify, defend, and hold harmless CACS from and against any and all actions, suits, claims, demands, losses, costs, penalties, obligations, errors, omissions, or liabilities, including legal costs, attorneys' fees, and expert witness fees, whether or not suit is actually filed, and/or any judgment rendered against CACS that may be asserted or claimed by any person, firm or entity arising out of, or in connection with, any negligence or acts or errors or omissions by SFUSD and/or SFUSD Personnel. This indemnity provision shall exclude actions brought by third persons directly against CACS arising out of acts of willful misconduct or the sole negligence of CACS.

4. OVERSIGHT, REPORTING AND RENEWAL

As part of the supervisory oversight provided by SFUSD, CACS recognizes the need for annual site visits and a review of the fiscal and educational programs of the school. The district shall provide CACS with reasonable notice to the director prior to any observation or inspection of school's programs or records. SFUSD shall provide CACS with at least three (3) working days notice prior to the actual site visit or inspection. Activities related to supervisory oversight shall not be assigned to a third party without the mutual consent of the school's board of directors.

Should the findings of the District lead to a belief that it has cause to revoke this charter, the district will notify the governing board of the school in writing of the specific cause for revocation, and grant the school reasonable time to respond to the allegations and take appropriate corrective action.

Should the findings of the annual visit by SFUSD determine that the school is making satisfactory progress towards its goals, this charter, and any mutually agreeable revisions, is renewed for a term of no less than five years.

O. LABOR RELATIONS

A declaration whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act (Chapter 10.7 {commencing with section 3540} of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government code. --Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O)

All employees of CACS shall be employees of CACS and not employees of San Francisco Unified School District, and CACS shall be the employer for all purposes, including collective bargaining, as provided in Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O).

P. 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 maintenance and transfer of pupil records. --Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(P)

Should CACS close, all remaining assets and liabilities of the organization will be disposed of by the school's board of directors to another charter school, non-profit, or other appropriate entity, or returned to the state in accordance with the asset disposition provisions of the organization's bylaws and state law. Assets allowing, administrative staff will be retained as long as necessary to ensure the transfer of assets, disposition of liabilities, transfer of student records, and closure of the facility. Student records and cumulative files will be forwarded to the schools to which the students transfer or, depending upon circumstance, will be turned over to SFUSD. All other student and school records shall be disposed of in a way that will ensure the confidentiality of the records. It shall be the responsibility of the board of directors to finalize all closing arrangements. The treasurer shall ensure that a financial audit of the school's assets and liabilities is performed.