



**Creative Arts Charter School  
Charter Renewal Petition  
For the term July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2024**

Respectfully submitted to the San Francisco Unified School District  
January 15, 2019

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## Affirmations and Declaration

Creative Arts Charter School (“CACS” or the “Charter School”) shall follow any and all federal, state and local laws and regulations that apply to the Charter School, including but not limited to:

- The Charter School shall meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Section 60605, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)(1)]
- The Charter School declares that it shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the Charter School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(b)(6)]
- The Charter School shall be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- The Charter School shall not charge tuition. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- The Charter School shall admit all students who wish to attend the Charter School, unless the Charter School receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case it will hold a public random drawing to determine admission. Except as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2), admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or his or her parents within the State. Preference in the public random drawing shall be given as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B)(i)-(iv). In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the Charter School in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(C). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(A)-(C)]
- The Charter School shall not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- The Charter School shall adhere to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

- The Charter School shall meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11967.5.1(f)(5)(C)]
- The Charter School shall ensure that teachers in the Charter School hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools are required to hold. As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to noncore, non-college preparatory teachers. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(l)]
- The Charter School shall at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
- The Charter School shall, for each fiscal year, offer at a minimum, the number of minutes of instruction per grade level as required by Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(1)(A)-(D).
- If a pupil is expelled or leaves the Charter School without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the Charter School shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil's last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including report cards or a transcript of grades, and health information. If the pupil is subsequently expelled or leaves the school district without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the school district shall provide this information to the Charter School within 30 days if the Charter School demonstrates that the pupil had been enrolled in the Charter School. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(3)]
- The Charter School may encourage parental involvement, but shall notify the parents and guardians of applicant pupils and currently enrolled pupils that parental involvement is not a requirement for acceptance to, or continued enrollment at, the Charter School. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(n)]
- The Charter School shall maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection. [Ref. Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(2)]
- The Charter School shall on a regular basis consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's education programs. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)]
- The Charter School shall comply with any applicable jurisdictional limitations to the locations of its facilities. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47605 and 47605.1]
- The Charter School shall comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47612(b) and 47610]

- The Charter School shall comply with all applicable portions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (“ESEA”), as reauthorized and amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”).
- The Charter School shall comply with the Public Records Act.
- The Charter School shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- The Charter School shall comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act.
- The Charter School shall meet or exceed the legally required minimum number of school days. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11960]

## **Success And Accomplishments Of The Prior Charter Term: 2014-2019**

Creative Arts Charter School is a public school dedicated to helping students become creative, collaborative, and inquisitive learners. For nearly two decades, students at CACS have voyaged beyond the bounds of a traditional classroom through comprehensive engagement in visual arts, dance, music and theater. Students' daily exposure to the arts, through studio courses and arts integrated curriculum, allows for creative expression in which students utilize their minds and bodies to bring ideas and dreams to life. The CACS community is proud to celebrate the incredible growth, expansion, and institutional development that has taken place over the past five years.

Below is a list of CACSs program highlights:

- CACS is the longest-running charter school in San Francisco, serving our community since 1994.
- CACS was founded by local parents and teachers who wanted an innovative, arts-integrated, public school option for children.
- We are a single-site charter school and operate as a non-profit public benefit corporation.
- We are currently and have always been locally authorized by the SFUSD Board.
- At our last renewal in 2014, the SFUSD Board unanimously approved our charter petition.
- In 2014, CACS received the California Distinguished School Award and the Excellence in Arts Award from the California Department of Education.
- Our governing board is locally elected by parents/guardians and staff.
- We allocate two board member seats for community members and one seat for an SFUSD representative.
- As required by law and to ensure transparency and accountability, CACS complies with the Public Records Act, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Ralph M. Brown Act. All Board meetings are held in San Francisco, at our school site.
- CACS is also unique in that our staff is unionized by UESF and we operate as part of the SFUSD SELPA.

- We are determined and strategic in our pursuit to close the achievement gap and ensure all students achieve at high levels.
- CACS has partnered with the San Francisco Coalition of Essential Small Schools for the past 5 years to ensure that our teachers and staff are equipped to serve our most at-risk students.
- We have formed a variety of community partnerships including: Alonzo King Lines Ballet, San Francisco State University, Alameda County Office of Education, Leap Arts in Education, ArtSpan, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), Visual Thinking Strategies, Alemany Farms, The Exploratorium, Blue Bear Music, Tree Frog Treks, SF JAZZ, Asian Art Museum, The Mexican Museum and SF Symphony's Adventures in Music Program.
- We track and publicly report all student data on a regular basis as required by the California Education Code. This data is submitted to both SFUSD and the California Department of Education (CDE) to ensure transparency and accountability.
- As a public school, we are committed to upholding high standards for student achievement, executing our responsibilities with sound governance, and maintaining balanced and transparent financial operations.
- Over the past four years, CACS has shown consistent growth for our entire student body and specific student groups on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). Overall, the total percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency standards increased by 7% in ELA and 15% in Math due to the adoption and implementation of a new Common Core aligned math curriculum.
- We have also seen significant growth for our students of color and low-income students. Student scores within these subgroups have improved steadily between 2015 and 2018. Data shows that 36% more low-income students, 20% more Latino students and 26% African American students at CACS are currently meeting or exceeding proficiency standards in math.
- We are proud to contribute to the overall public education landscape in San Francisco and serving as a trusted community partner to our families, students and neighbors.

## Charter Renewal Criteria

*Evidence of Meeting Charter Renewal Standards Pursuant to Education Code Section 47607(b) and the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 11966.4(a)(1).*

Education Code Section 47607(b) requires that a charter school must meet at least one of the following renewal criteria prior to receiving a charter renewal:

- (1) Attained its Academic Performance Index (API) growth target in the prior year or in two of the last three years, both schoolwide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school.
- (2) Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API in the prior year or in two of the last three years.
- (3) Ranked in deciles 4 to 10 inclusive, in the API for a demographically comparable school in the prior year or in two of the last three years.
- (4) The entity that granted the charter determines that the academic performance of the charter school is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that the charter school pupils would otherwise have been required to attend, as well as the academic performance of the schools in the school district in which the charter school is located, taking into account the composition of the pupil population that is served at the charter school.
- (5) Has qualified for an alternative accountability system pursuant to subdivision (h) of Education Code Section 52052.

The following shall serve as documentation confirming that the Charter School meets the statutory criteria required for renewal as set forth in Education Code Section 47607(b)(4). (Also see **Appendix A** for details of the CAASPP Data.)

### **CAASPP Assessment Analysis**

CACS meets the renewal criteria pursuant to Education Code Section 47607(b)(4), as it demonstrates with the data below that the academic performance of CACS is at least equal to the academic performance of the schools in SFUSD, taking into account the composition of the pupil population that is served at CACS.

The table below shows the percent of students that met or exceeded standards on the CAASPP assessment for ELA and math schoolwide and for significant subgroups (those with 30 or more students) from 2015 through 2018.

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Schoolwide	ELA	66%	68%	71%	73%
	Math	53%	53%	55%	68%
White	ELA	74%	75%	83%	82%
	Math	63%	61%	60%	77%
Latino	ELA	56%	67%	68%	62%
	Math	41%	46%	41%	61%
African American*	ELA	7%	14%	10%	20%
	Math	0%	0%	10%	26%
Asian*	ELA	71%	68%	67%	89%
	Math	63%	60%	60%	77%
Two or More*	ELA	90%	80%	78%	76%
	Math	60%	50%	69%	65%
Econ. Disadvantaged	ELA	47%	50%	45%	67%
	Math	32%	31%	32%	68%
English Learner**	ELA	--	--	--	60%
	Math	--	--	--	40%
Students with Disabilities*	ELA	25%	29%	28%	32%
	Math	12%	9%	13%	12%

Source: [caaspp.cde.ca.gov/sb2018/](https://caaspp.cde.ca.gov/sb2018/)

\*These student groups had fewer than 30 test takers each year.

\*\* From 2015-2017, CACS had fewer than 11 EL test takers, thus percentages are not reported.

As the table above demonstrates, CACS has shown consistent growth on both ELA and math over the four-year period schoolwide and for the following subgroups: White, African American, Asian, and economically disadvantaged students. Latino students showed significant increases in math, with 20% more students meeting or exceeding math standards from 2015 to 2018. Overall, Latino student performance in ELA grew 8% over the four year period and reached a high of 68% of Latino students meeting or exceeding ELA proficiency standards in 2017. The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding proficiency standards in ELA increased by 7% over the four-year period in ELA and remained steady in math, with a high of 13% in 2017.

### **CAASPP School Comparison Analysis**

To provide additional context for the analysis of the Charter School’s state assessment data, we provide CAASPP comparison data for the schools within SFUSD that serve similar student populations. Given SFUSD’s open enrollment system, it is difficult to know which schools CACS pupils would otherwise attend. Therefore, the comparison below includes the following district schools that serve similar student demographics as CACS. The table below shows enrollment percentages by ethnicity and subgroup. These schools were chosen based on the percentage of Latino, White and socioeconomically disadvantaged students, given those are the three subgroups for which CACS has more than 30 test takers.

<b>School</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Econ. Disadv.</b>
<b><i>Creative Arts</i></b>	<b><i>17%</i></b>	<b><i>54%</i></b>	<b><i>25%</i></b>
SFUSD	31%	14%	53%
Aptos Middle	21%	14%	53%
Presidio Middle	12%	23%	39%
McKinley Elementary	14%	52%	24%
Harvey Milk Elementary	17%	41%	38%
Rosa Parks Elementary	20%	17%	56%

First, we compare the percent met/exceeded schoolwide for ELA and math to the comparison schools. The table below presents this data for 2015 through 2018.

**Percent Met/Exceeded Comparison, Schoolwide**

School	Schoolwide Assessment	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Creative Arts</b>	<b>ELA</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>73%</b>
	<b>Math</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>68%</b>
SFUSD	ELA	52%	53%	55%	55%
	Math	48%	50%	51%	51%
Aptos Middle	ELA	46%	53%	59%	60%
	Math	43%	49%	53%	57%
Presidio Middle	ELA	68%	71%	72%	72%
	Math	69%	70%	70%	69%
McKinley Elementary	ELA	75%	67%	71%	68%
	Math	62%	58%	63%	63%
Harvey Milk Elementary	ELA	53%	24%	40%	34%
	Math	29%	35%	24%	27%
Rosa Parks Elementary	ELA	59%	49%	45%	41%
	Math	54%	46%	44%	35%

As shown above, CACS consistently outperforms SFUSD in ELA and math over the four-year period. CACS outperforms Aptos Middle and Harvey Milk Elementary all four years in both ELA and math. On average, CACS performs the same as or better than the comparison schools from 2015 through 2018

**Analysis of Charter Renewal Criteria – Student Subgroups**

Education Code Section 47607(a)(3) states:

The authority that granted the charter shall consider increases in pupil academic

achievement for all groups of pupils served by the charter school (defined as “a numerically significant pupil subgroup, as defined by paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 52052.” EC §47607(a)(3)(B)) as the most important factor in determining whether to grant a charter renewal.

The table below show the percent of students meeting or exceeding standards in 2018 for the following significant subgroups for CACS: Latino, White and economically disadvantaged students.

% Met/Exceeded 2018	Latino		White		Economically Disadvantaged	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
<b>Creative Arts</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>68%</b>
SFUSD	29%	21%	78%	70%	43%	39%
Aptos Middle	35%	47%	78%	75%	49%	47%
Presidio Middle	43%	38%	84%	74%	56%	55%
McKinley Elementary	37%	37%	85%	78%	35%	24%
Harvey Milk Elementary	32%	12%	55%	65%	10%	4%
Rosa Parks Elementary	29%	18%	60%	48%	20%	15%

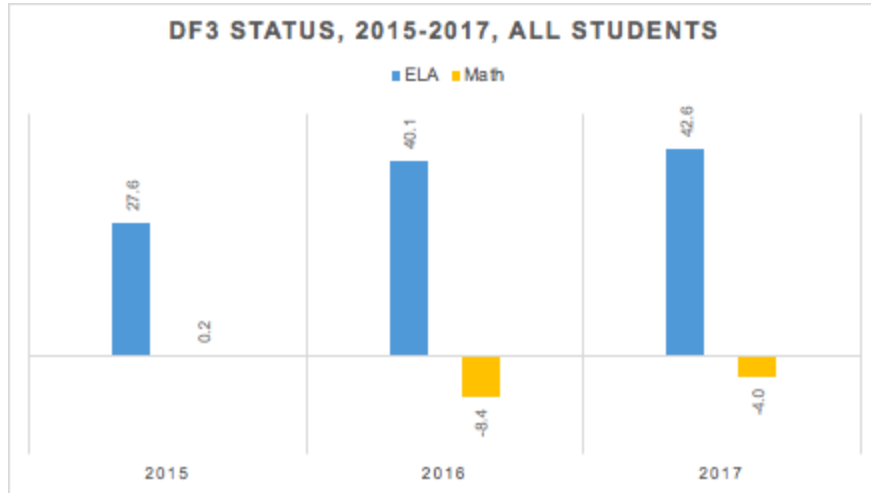
As the table above shows, CACS outperforms all comparison District schools and SFUSD as a whole in ELA and math for Latino and economically disadvantaged students in 2018. For White students, only McKinley Elementary (85%) and Presidio Middle (84%) have more students meeting or exceeding proficiency standards in ELA as compared to CACS (82%). In math, only McKinley Elementary (78%) outperforms CACS for White students (77%) by a small margin.

### California Academic Indicator: Distance from Level 3

In February 2017, the State Board of Education adopted a new academic indicator for assessing overall performance on the CAASPP that utilizes students scale scores. In this methodology, called Distance from Level 3 (DF3), each student’s assessment score is compared to the lowest possible scale score to achieve Level 3 (standard met). The difference between a student’s earned scale score and the minimum Level 3 scale score produces a positive, negative or neutral result. The results show either the needed improvement to bring the average score to Level 3 (Academic Indicator is a negative number) or the extent to which the average score exceeds Level 3 (Academic Indicator is a positive number). The Fall 2017 California School Dashboard reports both a Status and

Change metric for DF3.

The chart below shows CACS's DF3 status metric from 2015 through 2017.<sup>1</sup> Over the past three years, students have consistently increased their performance on the DF3 Status metric for ELA, growing from -27.6 to 42.6. In math, student performance has dropped slightly from 0.2 to -4.0.

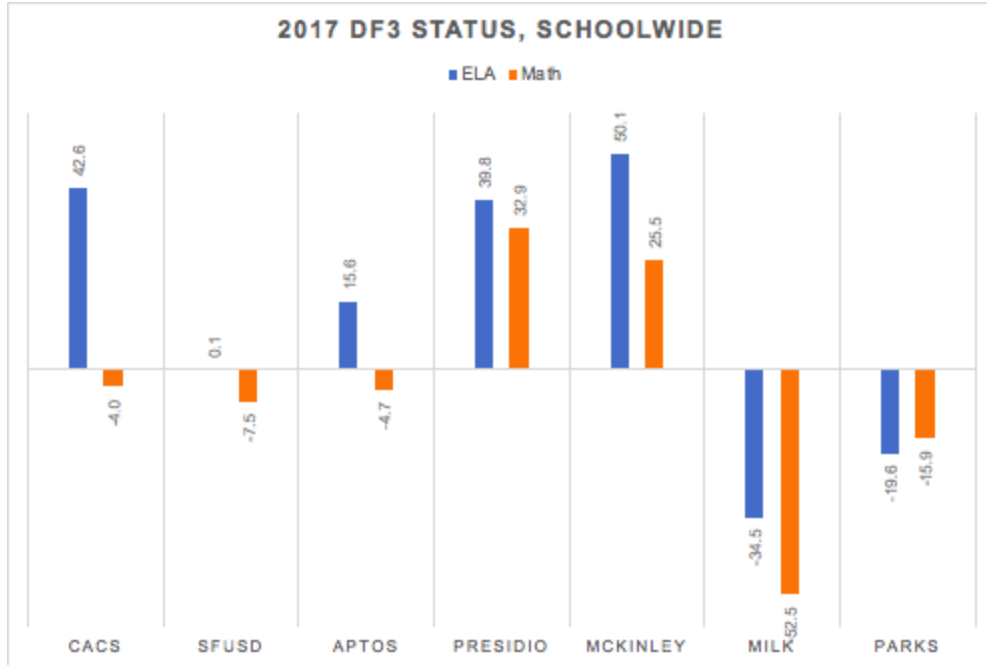


As shown above, CACS students have made 15 points of growth over the three-year term in ELA and slight drops in math (-4.2 points).

In the Fall 2017 California School Dashboard, the state reported both a Status and Change metric for DF3 for all students and subgroups. Our comparative analysis looks at the DF3 Status metric for CACS and the comparison schools for all students in 2017.

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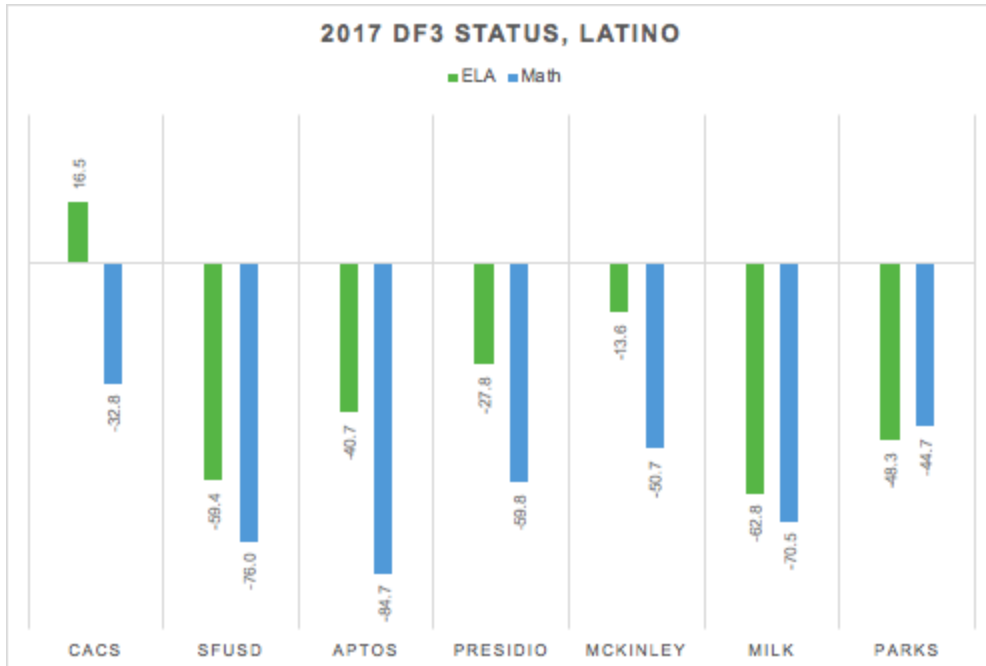
<sup>1</sup> At the time the charter petition was written, the Fall 2018 Dashboard had not been made public, so the above data is from the Fall 2017 Dashboard.



As demonstrated above, CACS outperforms SFUSD, Aptos Middle, Presidio Middle, Harvey Milk Elementary and Parks Elementary in ELA. Only McKinley Elementary scored higher in ELA than CACS in 2017. In math, CACS outperforms SFUSD, Aptos Middle, Harvey Milk Elementary and Rosa Parks Elementary, and performs behind the other two comparison schools.

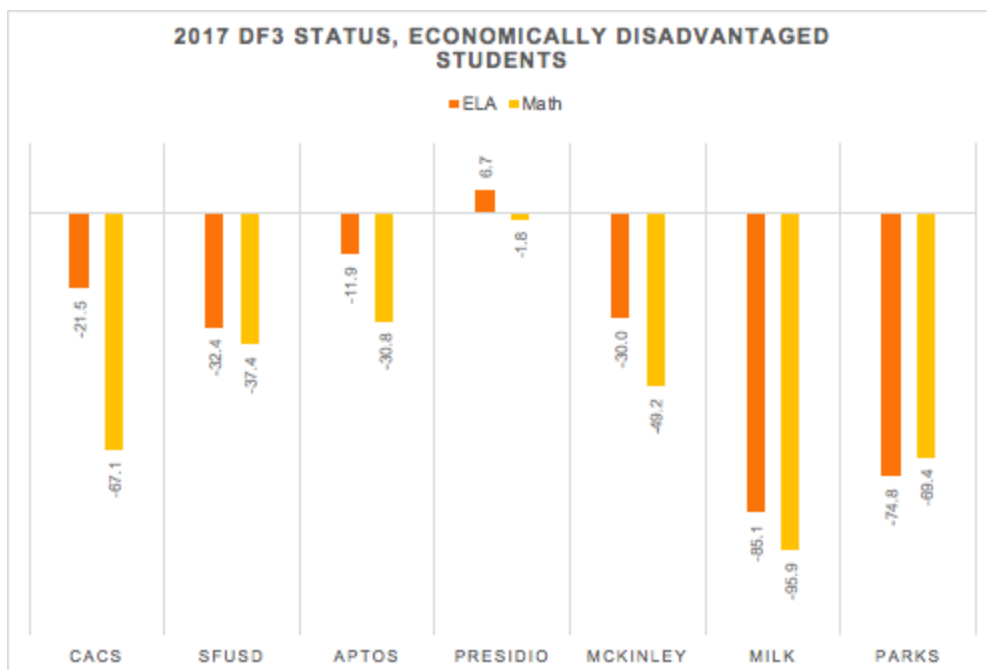
In addition to looking at data for all students, the Fall 2017 California School Dashboard also reports a DF3 metric for all subgroups. Below we compare CACS performance to the District as a whole and the comparison schools for the following subgroups: Latino students, economically disadvantaged students and White students.

The table below compares the DF3 metric for Latino students in ELA and math in 2017.

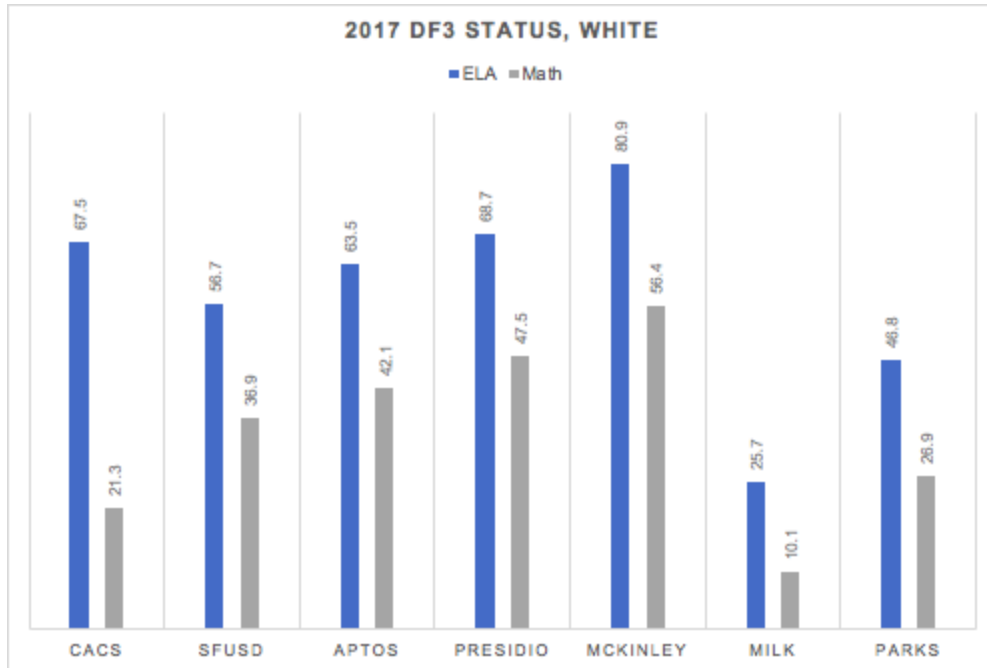


For Latino students, CACS outperformed SFUSD and all comparison schools in ELA and math, and is the only school above the met level in ELA in 2017.

The chart below compares outcomes for economically disadvantaged students in ELA and math in 2017. In ELA, CACS outperforms SFUSD as a whole and three of the comparison schools (McKinley, Harvey Milk and Rosa Parks). In math, CACS outperforms Harvey Milk and Rosa Parks Elementary schools.



The chart below compares outcomes for White students in ELA and math in 2017. In ELA, CACS outperforms SFUSD, and three of the comparison schools (Aptos, Harvey Milk and Rosa Parks). In math, CACS's performance is not as strong compared to SFUSD and the comparison schools, with CACS only outperforming Harvey Milk Elementary.



To address the gap in math achievement, especially for low income students, CACS has implemented a number of interventions to ensure that students receive additional supports to effectively master math standards. CACS has utilized CACS teachers and administrators as well as hired outside educational providers to support students during our after school program 2-3 days week. CACS has also researched and purchased intervention curriculum to be used during our after school program. CACS also implemented a summer school math camp for students who had not met mathematical standards based on the CAASPP or our own internal assessments. Additional information about these supports are detailed below in Element A.

Overall, CACS demonstrates strong performance on the CAASPP. The data presented above makes the case that CACS meets charter renewal criteria based on academic performance as compared to district schools.

In addition, see **Appendix B** for a comprehensive description of how CACS has met all new charter school requirements enacted into law after the charter was originally granted or last renewed (5 CCR 11966.4(a)(2)).

## Element A: Educational Program

*“The educational program of the charter school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom the charter school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an ‘educated person’ in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in the program shall include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and life-long learners.” Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(A)(i).*

*“The annual goals for the charter school for all pupils and for each subgroup of pupils identified pursuant to Section 52052, to be achieved in the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school, and specific annual actions to achieve those goals. A charter petition may identify additional school priorities, the goals for the school priorities, and the specific annual actions to achieve those goals.” Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii).*

### Mission and Vision

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#### Mission

Creative Arts Charter School engages K-8 students in an equitable and academically rigorous education through arts integrated and interdisciplinary study. Our public school community cultivates curiosity and joy. Students are empowered to develop a sense of self, responsibility, and advocacy to effect and create change in their communities and the world.

#### Vision

CACS maintains an environment to learn for each student, supporting our teachers in creating and delivering an innovative, high-quality education through arts-integrated, project-based curriculum with an emphasis on the knowledge, skills and mindset necessary to attain the levels of intellectual, artistic and social development, self and community awareness, and social justice values as envisioned in our Portrait of a Graduate (described later in this document).

### Target Student Population

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CACS seeks to serve the diverse public school children and families of San Francisco. In 2019-20, we expect to enroll 440 students in grades K-8. There are 22 students per class in grades K-3; 24-26 students per class in grades 4 and 5; and 28 students per class in grades 6-8. We expect the following number of students enrolled at each grade level over the five-year term of the charter.

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
# of students	44	44	44	44	48	48	56	56	56	440

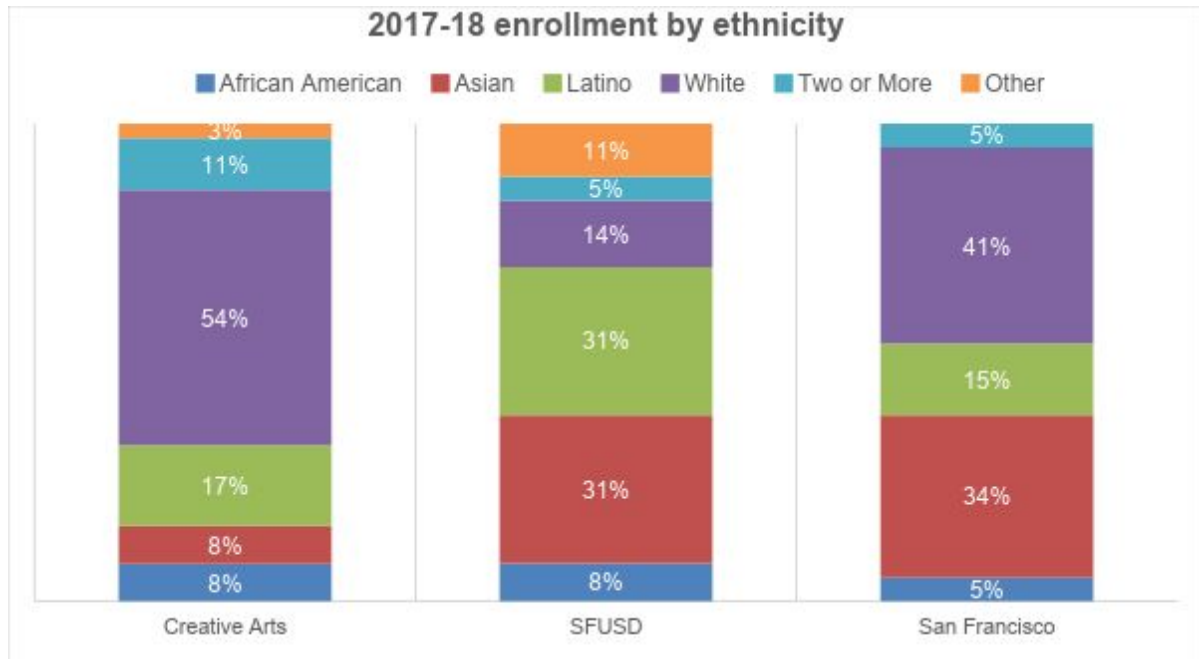
#### Student Population & Diversity

CACS is open to all students who wish to attend. For the past five years, CACS has served a diverse student population, as detailed in the table below, showing percentage of students enrolled for each subgroup.

<b>Group</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
African American	7.7%	7.5%	6.8%	7.6%	7.9%
American Indian	1.5%	0.7%	1.1%	0.9%	0.91%
Asian	8.2%	8.5%	9.1%	7.8%	5.1%
Filipino	1.9%	1.9%	2.3%	1.8%	1.4%
Hispanic or Latino	12.6%	14.3%	13.4%	16.7%	15.7%
White	34.9%	39.1%	50.6%	54.5%	55.9%
Two or More Races	4.6%	6.0%	7.1%	10.6%	11.6%
Not Reported	28.6%	22.0%	9.6%	0.2%	0.2%
Economically Disadvantaged	17.2%	15.9%	18.5%	25.0%	19.3%
English Learners	4.6%	6.5%	7.3%	6.7%	6.6%
Students with Disabilities	4.4%	11.4%	11.4%	8.3%	11.8%

Over the past five years, CACS has seen increased enrollment trends for several important student populations: Latino student enrollment increased from 12.6% to 16.7%; mixed race student enrollment increased from 4.6% to 10.6%; and economically disadvantaged student enrollment increased from 17.2% to a high of 25.0% in 2017-18. Surprisingly, we also saw a significant increase in enrollment of white students. This gain may be due to the fact that in both 2014-15 and 2015-16 we had an unusually high percentage of students in the not reported category, as those percentages decrease over the four years, white student enrollment increases.

CACS is located in San Francisco's Western Addition and serves an increasingly diverse group of students. While our students come from many San Francisco neighborhoods, nearly 14% live in the Western Addition. Many students who come to CACS transfer from other schools, having been unable to succeed in schools where the pedagogy is more conventional and less varied. CACS seeks to continue to serve kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade public school children and families of San Francisco and to expand outreach and recruitment efforts to our city's diverse communities to better represent the demographics of San Francisco as a whole. The chart below compares 2017-18 enrollment by ethnicity for CACS and SFUSD. The third column shows the percentage of the general population of San Francisco by ethnicity as an additional point of comparison.



As the chart above shows, CACS serves a comparable percentage of African American students to SFUSD and a larger percentage of students who identify as two or more races (11% compared to 5% for SFUSD).

Each year, our Diversity and Outreach Committee, made up of administrators, teachers and family members focus recruitment efforts to target diverse communities, participating in the SFUSD recruitment fair as well as multiple Parents for Public Schools information nights. We have also created a working list of 32 preschools, Head Start programs and child development centers in San Francisco who we contact each year to provide information about CACS and attend outreach events at their sites. In addition to our morning tours, we offer several evening tours for working families. Finally, we attempt to reach students across various home languages, providing enrollment materials in multiple languages as well as family volunteers to translate at school information tours.

In 2016-17, these extensive efforts resulted in a more diverse entering kindergarten class than in previous years with approximately 55% students of color. In 2017-18, the kindergarten class was comprised of 60% students of color and 27% low-income students. Although we remain focused on recruiting a diverse student population, this trend did not continue in the 2018-19 kindergarten class, with only 25% students of color and 2% low-income students.

During the 2018-19 enrollment period, CACS received 386 kindergarten applications for 44 spaces. Of this applicant pool, 20% were from families who identified as Hispanic/Latino and 8% were from families who identified as African American or Black. Our goal has always been to be more racially and ethnically diverse and reflect the diversity of SFUSD. The makeup of this class is a result of a randomized lottery, which is one of the reasons that CACS seeks to modify our enrollment preferences, as discussed below in Element H.

CACS is squarely focused on continuing and building upon our outreach efforts to enroll a student population that is reflective of the diversity of San Francisco and to educate a range of students across race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender orientation, family structure, physical and learning abilities, and socio-economic class. The data above shows some positive trends in student enrollment; however, we know we have more work to do to accomplish our goals. CACS seeks to continue to serve students and families who desire a progressive education focused on arts integration and interdisciplinary learning.

## **School Year and School Day**

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CACS follows approximately the same calendar as San Francisco Unified School District, so that families with students in both SFUSD schools and CACS can have consistent schedules. The school year starts and ends on the same day, with identical vacation schedules. The calendar may differ at times with regards to professional development days or shortened days for family-teacher conferences. Overall, students at CACS attend school for 179 days of the year. We have included a draft calendar for the 2019-20 academic year in **Appendix C**.

School hours at CACS are as follows by grade level:

Grade Level	Days of the Week	Start Time	End Time
Kindergarten	M, W, Th, F	8:45am	2:25pm
	Tu	8:45am	1:30pm
Grades 1-5	M, W, Th, F	8:45am	3:25pm
	Tu	8:45am	1:30pm
Grades 6-8	M, W, Th, F	9:00am	3:30pm
	Tu	9:00am	1:30pm

Tuesdays are early release days, so teachers can use the afternoon for staff meetings, professional development, and collaboration with colleagues. The daily schedule in each classroom varies by grade level. We have included sample schedules for both elementary and middle school in **Appendix D**, with the recognition that schedules may vary based on the unit of study, field trips and other curricular-related decisions.

Students are expected to be at school, on time, every day; except in case of illness or family emergency. School wide, we forecast at least 95% average daily attendance. For the 2017-18 academic school year, our average daily attendance was 95.1%.

## **An Educated Person in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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At CACS, we believe an educated person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a creative problem solver, a respectful collaborator and a motivated life-long learner. We are committed to instilling in our students a love of learning and an appreciation for intelligence in its multiple forms, working to equip students with both a strong academic foundation and valuable life skills. We believe that learning through the arts is essential to the human experience and that teaching students how to think as artists will equip them with strategies and skills that are essential to

all subjects.

This means that learning is much more than mastering knowledge and acquiring skills; it is also about understanding *how* to learn and coaching students to develop the growth mindset that will enable them to ask questions, take risks, test solutions and consistently learn from mistakes. Through ongoing arts-integrated, project-based learning, students gain the necessary skills to work collaboratively and communicate effectively with others; thereby developing flexibility, an ability to compromise and advocate for their ideas, inquisitiveness, persistence and a passion for learning that extends far past the walls of the school. The foundation of our school is a strong belief in the role of the arts in learning, and we expect our students to leave CACS as joyful learners who can utilize creativity and innovation in all subjects, including the artistic disciplines.

Finally, we believe that an educated person has not only academic skills, but also skills in social and emotional domains, as well as community awareness and a commitment to social justice. CACS values these skills as we aim to prepare students for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Traditional knowledge-based education is insufficient to meet the needs of the future. Perhaps Ray Peacock, former research director of Phillips Laboratories in the UK, described it best:

*Lots of people think knowledge is what we want, and I don't believe that, because knowledge is astonishingly transitory. We don't employ people as knowledge bases, we employ people to actually do things or solve things.... Knowledge bases come out of books. So I want flexibility and continuous learning... and I need team working. And part of team working is communications... So the things therefore are the flexibility, the team working communications and sheer persistence.<sup>2</sup>*

### **Portrait of a Graduate**

The CACS *Portrait of a Graduate* describes the knowledge, skills and habits of mind that we expect our students, as educated citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to attain. This document serves as a guide to our decision-making about pedagogy, curriculum and assessment at all grade levels, and connects our teaching to explicit goals for student growth.

#### *Intellectual Development*

CACS graduates appreciate learning as a life-long pursuit of finding answers to their own questions. They are able to interpret, filter, and synthesize information and apply core academic skills to real world applications.

#### *Artistic Development*

CACS graduates understand the arts are rigorous disciplines essential to the human experience. They take joy in self-expression and use creativity as a tool for enriching their academic learning and deepening their cultural awareness.

#### *Social Development*

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<sup>2</sup> Boaler, Jo. (2008). *What's Math Got to Do with It?: How Parents and Teachers Can Help Children Learn to Love Their Least Favorite Subject*. New York: Viking.

CACS graduates are responsible, self-directed persons, with developed communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution skills based on a respect for the perspectives of others.

#### *Self-Awareness*

CACS graduates possess a strong sense of self-reliance and have the confidence to learn from their mistakes and acknowledge areas for personal improvement.

#### *Community Awareness*

CACS graduates view diversity, tolerance, and compassion as templates that direct life. They are eager to invest in their community, take responsibility for its well-being, and participate in change for the greater good.

#### *Social Justice*

CACS graduates have a deep awareness of prejudice, fairness and otherness. They have developed the tools to turn empathy into action, serve as allies to their peers, and advocate for their rights and the rights of others.

### **How Learning Best Occurs**

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As emphasized in our mission, CACS employs an arts-integrated, project-based, interdisciplinary curriculum based on a constructivist philosophy of learning. Our philosophies stem from a strong belief in a growth mindset that every child can learn, every child brings strengths to the classroom, and every child has a unique and personal approach to learning.<sup>3</sup> These philosophies stem from a large body of research on how students learn. Furthermore, we consistently use research-based pedagogical strategies to help our students develop the skills and qualities necessary for the 21st century including: arts integrated education, constructivist teaching, project based learning and design thinking and personalization. Each is described in more detail below.

#### **Arts Integrated Education**

At the heart of our school lies a fundamental belief in the importance of the arts in education. 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 approach. They also study the arts as distinct disciplines that become more formalized as students progress through the grades in the middle school years.

In accordance with our mission, we believe that engaging children in 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:

Our beliefs on the effectiveness of integrating arts into the curriculum are borne out by research. A preponderance of evidence suggests that “students who study and participate in

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<sup>3</sup> Dweck, C. (2007) *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Ballantine.

the arts do substantially better than those who do not on almost every academic measure.”<sup>4</sup> For example, sustained learning in music and theater is highly correlated with higher reading and mathematics achievement. More recent brain research suggests “not only that music is fun, but also that it improves our brain development and even enhances skills in other subjects such as reading and math... Music enhances creativity and promotes social development, personality adjustment and self-worth.”<sup>6</sup> Finally, research suggests a plethora of benefits from arts education: “Involvement in the arts is associated with gains in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skill. Arts learning can also improve motivation, concentration, confidence, and teamwork.”<sup>7</sup>

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. However, the study of the arts is not just a tool to impact student performance in academic subjects. To focus solely on this aspect would be to deny the important emotional and social aspects of the arts that contribute to students’ understanding of the world around them. 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. Specifically, they “tap into deeply cultural and expressive aspects of people’s lives that are at the center of what it means to be human.”<sup>8</sup>

Studies also suggest that arts education promotes positive social development and joyful learning. Dance, music, theater and visual arts are joyful. And this joy may be the key to student success, keeping students engaged in school and learning. In the words of Jane Alexander, former head of the National Endowment for the Arts:

*“Children learn better with arts as a part of the curriculum. They learn all their subjects better. They’re more engaged. Teacher attendance goes up. The child is happier; the teacher is happier.”<sup>9</sup>*

By integrating arts into schools, educators provide their students with indispensable and invaluable opportunities to learn, with identifiable program goals that include enabling students to become self-motivated, competent and life-long learners.

At CACS, we also see the arts as an important tool in addressing the persistent opportunity gap in San Francisco. Research studies suggests that students in schools that include a

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<sup>4</sup> National Association of State Boards of Education (2003). *The Complete Curriculum: Ensuring a Place for the Arts and Foreign Languages in America’s Schools*.

[http://www.nysaft.org/advocacy/pdf/SG\\_Complete\\_Curriculum\\_Arts\\_and\\_FL\\_2003.pdf](http://www.nysaft.org/advocacy/pdf/SG_Complete_Curriculum_Arts_and_FL_2003.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Edward B. Fiske, Ed., (1999). *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

<sup>6</sup> Norman M. Weinberger, “The Music in Our Minds,” *Educational Leadership*, 56, 3 (1998): 36-40.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, Fran, (2009). “Why Arts Education Is Crucial, and Who’s Doing it Best,” *Edutopia*.

<http://www.edutopia.org/arts-music-curriculum-child-development>.

<sup>8</sup> National Association of State Boards of Education (2003). *The Complete Curriculum: Ensuring a Place for the Arts and Foreign Languages in America’s Schools*.

[http://www.nysaft.org/advocacy/pdf/SG\\_Complete\\_Curriculum\\_Arts\\_and\\_FL\\_2003.pdf](http://www.nysaft.org/advocacy/pdf/SG_Complete_Curriculum_Arts_and_FL_2003.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> The Merrow Report. Retrieved from [www.pbs.org/merrow/tv/sta/quotes.html](http://www.pbs.org/merrow/tv/sta/quotes.html).

focus on the arts are more successful at reducing the achievement gap than students in schools that do not, and that learning in and through the arts reduces the drop-out rate for at-risk students.<sup>10</sup> This agrees with our observations of our students that arts-integration and arts instruction keep our children engaged in learning, and particularly allow educators to reach students who are at-risk as well as those with special learning needs who do not respond to standard teaching methods.

Furthermore, in response to findings released last year from the California Arts Education Data Project, schools across the state are embarking on the implementation of plans to ensure that arts education is accessible to all students. "An Unfinished Canvas," the SRI study in 2006 of Arts Education Policy and Practice in California, found that "In California's more affluent schools, almost twice the percentage of students received instruction in each arts discipline, compared with high-poverty schools." Where community resources support a complete education, the arts exist; where those resources are lacking due to economic disadvantage, the arts and its many benefits for students are marginalized. These benefits extend from student engagement in school, to improved academic achievement, to developing aspects of creativity and innovation cultivated by the arts, to preparing students with the skills they will need to function successfully in the workforce."<sup>11</sup> These findings agree with our Creative Arts belief that the arts matter in a child's learning and that we are leading with fidelity to establish the arts as an essential component in a child's development.

Our emphasis on the arts also stems from Howard Gardner's research on multiple intelligence.<sup>12</sup> Gardner proposes seven primary forms of intelligence: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, body-kinesthetic and intrapersonal (e.g., social skills). All people possess many types of intelligences, but traditional academic study does not always address these multiple ways of knowing and learning. 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 their intelligences.

In support of our approach, we also cite Harvard's School of Education researchers who note that "schools that treat the arts seriously institute other kinds of innovations that are favorable to academic learning. For instance, these schools may become more inquiry-oriented, more project-based, more demanding of high standards, and more focused on processes that lead to excellence."<sup>13</sup> In addition, Arts Education expert, professor emeritus of Art at San Francisco State, and supporter of CACS, Julia Marshall, explains that, "An emphasis on inquiry represents a shift in art integration because when art integration happens through inquiry, students do not simply represent academic content using art methods and materials; they connect their topic to big ideas, and they do it through an art practice that involves methods, tools, and thinking from various disciplines—such as

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<sup>10</sup> Edward B. Fiske, Ed., (1999). *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

<sup>11</sup> Woodworth, K. R., Gallagher, H. A., Guha, R., Campbell, A. Z., Lopez-Torkos, A. M., and Kim, D. An unfinished canvas. Arts education in California: Taking stock of policies and practices. Summary Report. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

<sup>12</sup> Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*. NY: Basic Books.

<sup>13</sup> Winner, E. (2000). The Arts and Academic Improvement: What the Evidence Shows Executive Summary Harvard Project Zero Reviewing Education and the Arts Project (REAP). *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34(3/4).

observation, critical analysis, synthesis, questioning, connecting, and reaction.”<sup>14</sup> Integration here works on a procedural level (methods and thinking) and on a conceptual level (linking to ideas and concepts). Moreover, in an art integration pedagogy based on inquiry, learners explore content and connections through an organic, yet intentional, process that welcomes improvisation and invention.<sup>15</sup> In her article, “A Systems View,” Marshall observed the work of CACS and documented her findings around integration in practice here. In her research, she examined the work of third grader Libby and her classmates who Marshall notes, “had license to improvise and play, and to see information and ideas in a new light. In this model, learning is multidimensional, substantive, and creative.”<sup>16</sup>

### **Constructivist Teaching**

We see the arts and arts integration as fundamental to CACS’ educational program, but not the entirety of our program. To help students attain the qualities needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we also implement a student-centered, constructivist curriculum, pushing students to develop the skills and motivation needed to be lifelong learners.

Constructivist learning theory is based on the premise that students construct their own understanding of the world by generating “rules” and “mental models,” that help make sense of experiences.<sup>17</sup> 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 that the brain does not necessarily or automatically categorize information according to traditional academic disciplines.

In light of these ideas, CACS embraces learning as a dynamic experience in which children actively participate in the process of inquiry in collaboration with their teachers. Constructivist curriculum allows students to continually reflect on their own learning, pose their own questions, and pursue answers in a structured, but personalized environment. This occurs in and across all subject areas, where learning activities are coupled with extensive reflection and metacognitive analyses, which lie at the heart of cognitive development.<sup>18</sup> 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.

### **Project Based Learning**

Project based learning has a long history, stemming from the original ideas of John Dewey, who felt that students learned by doing. At the heart of project based learning is student inquiry, as teaching focuses on in-depth investigations of ideas driven by students in a collaborative, creative and recursive process that culminates in authentic assessments. Blumenfeld and colleagues describe it as such:

*Project based learning is a comprehensive perspective focused on*

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<sup>14</sup> Marshall, J. (2016). A Systems View: The Role of Art in Education. *Art Education*, 69(3), 12-19.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Piaget, J. (1970). *Science of education and the psychology of the child*, trans, D, Coltman. NY: Orion Press.

<sup>18</sup> National Research Council (2005). *How students learn: science in the classroom*. Washington, D.C: National Academies Press.

*teaching by engaging students in investigation. Within this framework, students pursue solutions in non-trivial problems by asking and refining questions, debating ideas, making predictions, designing plans and/or experiments, collecting and analyzing data, drawing conclusions, communicating their ideas and findings to others, asking new questions and creating artifacts.*<sup>19</sup>

Project based learning allows students to integrate their knowledge in complex ways and demonstrate understanding in authentic settings, prizing critical thinking over rote memorization, creativity over drill-and-kill. Our philosophy at CACS is that learning is more powerful when students have the opportunity to examine topics in deep and meaningful ways, which can be achieved through project based learning.

All 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. We provide opportunities for students to collaborate on projects around an identified *real-world* need. Students begin the inquiry process by building empathy, researching, and defining the identified need. Students then construct a “needs statement” relaying the key characteristic of the problem, which point to an implementation strategy. The prototyping phase comes next, defined by iterative problem solving and testing of the solution. At each stage of the prototyping phase, students present and receive feedback from teachers and peers. This feedback accompanies the self-reflection process that allows students to learn from mistakes and recognizes the value of failure when creating innovative solutions for current and future problems. This approach emphasizes creative thinking, hands-on learning and emotional and social development, all of which are key components of the CACS model.

### **Teaching for Understanding**

Developed at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the Teaching for Understanding<sup>®</sup> framework is an approach to teaching that requires students to think, analyze, problem solve, and make meaning of what they have learned. The framework helps educators 1) identify topics, concepts and skills that are worth understanding; 2) frame goals that help students focus on the most important aspects of those topics; 3) engage students in challenging learning experiences that help to build and demonstrate their understanding; and 4) develop assessment practices that help to deepen student understanding. At CACS, we utilize this framework to support our teachers to take students beyond the simple mastery of facts to being able to apply knowledge flexibly in unfamiliar contexts.

### **Personalization**

We strongly believe that every student has unique talents and abilities. As such, we view our students as individuals, who deserve a personalized education that recognizes their different strengths and weaknesses and honors them on a personal level. Multiple features of our instructional program stem from these ideas: small class sizes help build communities in which students are well-known by the faculty and their peers; looping for two years provides teachers opportunities to develop deep relationships with students and families

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<sup>19</sup> Blumenfeld, P.C, Soloway, E., Marx, R.W., Krajcik, J.S., Guzdial, M., and Palincsar, A. (1991). Motivating Project-Based Learning: Sustaining the Doing, Supporting the Learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 26(3&4), 369-398.

over time; teachers approach subject matter from multiple perspectives and include a variety of differentiated learning activities so that every student will succeed; and culturally relevant curriculum honors the diverse cultures and family experiences of each child. Overall, we honor the differences in our students, celebrate their unique strengths and find ways to challenge and push each student to be their best self, in both academic and non-academic goals.

## **Instructional Design**

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Our mission statement, pedagogical strategies and *Portrait of a Graduate* drive our instructional design, influencing our daily structure, pedagogical strategies, curriculum and assessment decisions. The CACS instructional design and curriculum is focused around the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for California English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the California History-Social Studies Science Content Standards, English Language Development (ELD) standards, and other applicable state content standards (hereinafter, collectively the State Standards).

CACS students attend our school together at our site in the Western Addition. To ensure an intimate school experience, kindergarten through fifth grade students remain with their teachers for two-year loops: K-1, 2-3, and 4-5. Looping allows students to develop a sense of community, predictability, and familiarity with routines and procedures, while being grounded in a caring, trusted relationship with their teacher. The sixth, seventh and eighth grades are departmentalized into humanities classes (which encompasses Language Arts and Social studies), and a Math and Science block, with a strong Advisory Program infused into the beginning and end of each day. 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. In addition, all students receive explicit instruction in the arts, including (but not limited to) visual arts, music and dance.

### **Instructional Approaches and Strategies**

CACS administrative staff and teachers have developed an *Institutional Framework for Teaching and Learning*. This framework sets forth the collective values, principles and aspirations that guide our daily work. The framework provides a foundation to inform and drive our educational practice. The framework is comprised of eight components: routines, engagement, environment, climate, student-teacher relationship, high expectations for all students, joyful learning process, and culture of Collaboration, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy and Self Control (CARES). Each is described in more detail below.

#### **Routines**

At CACS, we set up and maintain classroom routines to provide predictable, safe boundaries for students and teachers. Routines reinforce classroom expectations, provide clarity around classroom norms and schedule, and thus lead to a cohesive classroom community.

#### **Engagement**

At CACS, we engage students in active and social learning activities that demonstrate our community's commitment to a hands-on, project-based curriculum. These activities originate from lesson plans that motivate, inspire, and empower students to become increasingly aware and involved in their own process of learning so that they are able to construct their own meanings and understanding. Units are designed around a throughline with clear and measurable understanding goals (based on the Teaching for Understanding framework). Teachers actively assess and monitor students' learning and differentiate instruction to maximize student engagement and investment in the learning process.

### **Environment**

At CACS, we prominently and artfully display student work in process to document and demonstrate the ways in which students learn and make understanding. Teachers maintain clean and organized classrooms while giving students increased responsibility for its maintenance and upkeep. Classroom materials are easily accessible to promote smooth transitions, a calm environment, and high engagement. Expectations are created, posted, and verbalized to promote sustained learning.

### **Climate**

At CACS, teachers create a climate where students can be increasingly trusted to take control of and be responsible for their learning. The ability of a teacher to create a climate that encourages collaboration and social learning is demonstrated in the way in which students work independently and in groups. When discipline issues arise, teachers react promptly by providing redirections and reminders so that students are given every opportunity to remain in their classrooms and learn in their communities. Students are given multiple opportunities to take a break and rejoin the class so that they have opportunities for self-regulation and agency over their behaviors. When larger issues arise, we use Restorative Practices to come to a common, shared solution that feels fair to all parties.

### **Student-Teacher Relationship**

Transformative learning takes place in classrooms where teachers care deeply for their students and know their students well – academically, socially, and emotionally. The optimal conditions for learning exist in classrooms where teachers take the time to build meaningful relationships with each student, deliberately and noticeably create a climate of trust, predictability and safety, so that students feel comfortable taking risks and sharing with each other.

### **High Expectations for All Students**

At CACS, teachers have high expectations for students and believe in the capabilities of each student to learn and make progress. High expectations are modeled by and manifested in the professional standards teachers set and maintain for themselves. Teachers, staff, and administrators maintain culturally responsive pedagogical practices in order to communicate their authentic belief in the potential of each and every student. As Zaretta Hammond states, "Personal warmth and authentic concern exhibited by the teacher earns her the right to demand engagement and effort. Here is where the power of the teacher as ally in the learning partnership is realized" (2015, p. 98).<sup>20</sup> In this manner, CACS strives to ensure equitable school and classroom environments and clear, consistent

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<sup>20</sup> Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

expectations for students and families.

### **Joyful Learning Process**

At CACS, optimal conditions of learning are in place when teachers have built a sense of anticipation and excitement around the learning activity. Students are most successful in classrooms where they have a sense of agency over their learning, and can choose to write or research topics that they are truly passionate about. Joyfulness can be observed at CACS as students run into the building with a smile on their faces, eager to begin the school day, when students regularly share their work with the entire school community during Friday morning Community Meeting, and when classes celebrate their accomplishments and reflect together on their learning to create pride and community cohesion.

### **Culture of CARES**

At CACS, we cultivate a community in which students are taught the core elements of CARES: Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control. These character traits are explicitly taught, but are also embodied throughout the school day - with students and teachers sharing appreciations for one another, learning about being allies instead of bystanders, and supporting others to make safe and healthy choices for the benefit of the community.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

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Since its inception, 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.

#### **Arts Integrated Instruction**

The arts are a tool to nurture individual curiosity, creativity, and to make meaning of our learning. Arts Integration is the core teaching and learning approach at CACS in which students construct and demonstrate their understanding through an arts discipline. By engaging in a creative process students connect the arts with another academic discipline to meet established unit understanding goals. We believe that Arts Integration ensures that our classrooms are inclusive and equitable.

At CACS, arts integration is promoted and supported by the implementation of the following educational, research based frameworks developed by researchers at Project Zero and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

**Making Learning Visible (MLV)** is the practice of documenting and exhibiting student work in a way that makes the learning process visible not only to teacher and student, but to parents and the community. Forms of MLV are expressed by interactive wall exhibits, process boards, and art research notebooks. Documentation includes photos of students in process, teacher/student written reflections, student work and peer-to-peer feedback noted through the use of thinking routines, such as See, Think, Wonder.

The **Studio Thinking Framework** champions arts education by giving teachers, students and parents a common language with which to explain the essential power of arts learning.

Studio thinking habits include: observe, reflect, develop craft, express, engage and persist, understand the art world, stretch and explore, and envision. These habits grace the walls of each classroom and art space and are integrated into the daily curriculum as a tool for reflection and planning.

The **Teaching for Understanding (TfU)** Framework helps teachers orientate lessons and assessment directly at students' developing understanding with understanding defined as the capacity for students to use what they know flexibly in new situations. Across the grades, teachers use the Teaching for Understanding framework developed by the Harvard Graduate School of Education.<sup>21</sup> Teachers develop overarching understanding goals and essential questions aligned with State Standards. These goals are then the starting point for the “backwards design” process.

Planning backwards, teachers develop focused instruction and assessment that build students' understanding of the initial learning goals, empowering them to engage individually and cooperatively with content, material, and ideas. At all levels, teachers are creative and innovative in addressing the developmental needs of students, and in matching children's individual learning styles to challenging daily activities.

Based in theory and research, the **Visual Thinking Strategies** program uses skilled facilitation of visual art discussions to increase student engagement, performance, and enjoyment of learning. Monthly discussions using developmentally appropriate, pre-selected art images provided by the VTS program, engage teachers and students in a critical thinking approach that weaves observing, analyzing and questioning.

### **Studio Arts Instruction**

Students in grades kindergarten through 5th grade receive 50 minutes of direct arts instruction in each discipline of Dance, Music and Visual Arts every week. The Middle School elective program builds confidence while facilitating interdisciplinary coursework and artistic collaboration. Students commit to Dance, Music, Theatre or Visual Arts each year and receive 150 minutes each week to develop their craft.

### **English Language Arts Curriculum and Instruction**

The English-Language Arts program at CACS provides students with the opportunity to deeply engage with the written and spoken word. We utilize a balanced approach to literacy aligned with the ELA CCSS, in which students engage in independent and shared reading and writing activities, word study, and listening and speaking skill development. Through daily participation in the Units of Study for Teaching Reading and Writing (Readers and Writers Workshop), students are provided opportunities to engage in collaborative discussions that foster deep understanding of increasingly complex texts. Through differentiated guided reading groups, students are exposed to both fiction and non-fiction texts facilitating students' interest in and ability to interpret various literary genres. Students not only write to express their creative interests, but also to represent learning from integrated units in science and social studies.

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<sup>21</sup> Blythe, T., & Teaching for Understanding Project. (1998). *The teaching for understanding guide*. San Francisco: CA, Jossey-Bass Publishers.

At CACS, we encourage students' love of reading and writing and together, as the Units of Study, work towards facilitating a sense of independence in young readers and writers as they progress through the year and through each grade level. This is done through explicit, direct teaching of both habits and strategies that readers and writers use. For example, "both the reading and writing units teach students to self-assess, set goals, strive to excel, work wisely with partners and clubs, explain ongoing work to the teacher, receive and apply feedback and develop homework skills."<sup>22</sup> Students develop as readers and writers in their own time, and the built in time for independent practice, guided reading, and conferencing allows for targeted differentiation at a variety of levels.

### **Readers Workshop**

At CACS, we utilize a process approach to writing based on the *Units of Study for Teaching Reading*<sup>®</sup> series (Readers Workshop) in grades K through 5 and continue the model in our middle school grades. At the center of this program is Lucy Calkins' belief that readers need access to books they find fascinating, time to read and expert instruction. Each lesson begins with a 10-15 minute mini-lesson in which students learn a new strategy or habit. Afterwards, students are released to either read independently or participate in small-group work (Guided Reading) or have a conference with a teacher. Next, the teacher reminds the class of the habits they've learned through a mid-workshop teaching point that lasts two or three minutes. The students continue with what they were doing, and gather as a group for sharing and reflection during the last five minutes of the reading block. Each lesson within a unit builds upon the previous one, with the main teaching points living on through the unit as they are captured on anchor charts that students can use as tools.

### **Book Clubs and Literature Circles**

Another feature of the Readers Workshop model offers students opportunities to participate in literature circles, which continue into middle school. Literature circles are like "book clubs" where students read the same text and spend time in discussion groups where they examine the story closely together. The texts are at students' independent levels (although sometimes students are grouped by interest levels) and feature highly engaging stories all connected around a central theme. Students are assigned different tasks and roles that rotate each week. These weekly roles include jobs like discussion director, passage picker, and character sketcher. Each week they meet and facilitate their own literature circles, where they bring their assignments from the past week and come together to examine the story closely. Students practice the specific comprehension skills of making inferences, connections, predictions, visualizations and building understanding of unfamiliar words, while also practicing discussion skills and accountable talk. Literature circles culminate with a group project, where students integrate an art form as they demonstrate their understanding through a project of choice.

In middle school these literature circles close with independent writing assignments, with which students demonstrate skills in using textual evidence to address a writing prompt based on the theme. Literature circles are also used for books that the entire class reads. When the whole class reads the same book, literature circles are in heterogeneous groups, and involve group read aloud and group discussions and assignments.

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<sup>22</sup> Calkins, L. (2017). *Units of Study for Teaching Reading Grades K-5 Series Overview* [Pamphlet]. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The Readers Workshop model builds students' sense of efficacy, because the units make it clear that when students "apply strategies, work hard, revise their first understandings, and get help, their reading will get visibly and dramatically better, right before their eyes."<sup>23</sup> Students are able to track their own progress using rubrics and learning progressions, while their reading is formally assessed using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. In this manner, students, teachers, and families are able to track and see growth and feel a sense of pride in their accomplishments as readers.

### **Phonics Instruction**

Students in early kindergarten receive direct instruction in developing phonological awareness through games and songs that ask them to identify words, syllables, rhymes, and phonemic awareness via oral language. From phonological awareness, reading instruction in mid-kindergarten through first grade focuses on ensuring that students develop phonemic awareness as they learn that words are comprised of sounds that can be blended and segmented. Research recommends that educators conduct brief instructional sessions in phonological and phonemic awareness, totaling about 20 hours in the school year.<sup>24</sup> Explicit, systematic, and sequential phonics instruction focuses on teaching students specific strategies and skills for decoding words and encoding them by learning specific phonics patterns using visuals and kinesthetics (such as word walls, body movements, and phonics picture cards) as cues. As part of our Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) model, CACS employs a Literacy Specialist who works specifically with kindergarten through second grade students regularly in order to provide early intervention to support struggling students for shorter and longer term intervals (tiers two and three). See below of additional information on the Charter School's MTSS model.

### **Guided Reading**

The foundational principles of Guided Reading inform much of the small group work that is done during the independent practice portion of Readers Workshop. Prior to a guided reading session, the teacher selects a text at an appropriate instructional level that will engage students in solving some challenging words, previews some phonemic patterns or sight words that students might encounter, and supports students with word-solving strategies, comprehension, and fluency as they read. The idea is that students are regularly exposed to new texts, supported in reading them through, and practice them over and over to develop fluency. Students might read chorally, individually, or popcorn-style. The teacher, on the other hand, teaches problem-solving strategies to decode unfamiliar words, highlights difficult sentence structure, and explains new concepts or ideas.<sup>25</sup> To conclude, students engage in a wrap up, review, and extension activity that helps to solidify understanding of the strategy objective. Guided reading books serve as additional texts that students can feel successful reading and revisiting during independent reading time in Readers Workshop.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups (NIH Publication No. 00-4754). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>25</sup> Fountas, I.C. & Pinnell, G.S. (1996). *Guided Reading Good First Teaching for All Children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

### **Readers Workshop in Middle School**

Literacy work and reading strategies are taught and practiced by various means. Teachers use various genres of text, such as news articles, historical fiction, current novels, informational text, poetry, and classic literature. As in grades K-5, Middle School teachers follow a gradual release model, first modeling new strategies to compare and contrast themes, identify literary devices and structures, or writing techniques for students. After this mini-lesson, students practice the strategy as a group, and finally students are released to read and practice the new strategy either in small groups, pairs or independently. During this time, teachers circulate and have mini-conferences with students to assess student understanding and give one-on-one instruction that provides necessary differentiation based on individual students' needs.

### **Writers Workshop**

Lucy Calkins states, "Writers grow like oak trees, in the fullness of time, and for any teacher to bring her students to the ambitious levels that are crucial for success in the twenty-first century, those students need to have the opportunity to grow over time."<sup>26</sup> Following specific learning progressions, students in each grade are explicitly taught how to write across a variety of genres: personal narrative, fiction, realistic fiction, informational pieces, opinion, poetry, lab reports, and persuasive letters by setting and meeting concrete, sequential goals that build towards cohesive pieces of writing. Writers Workshop sessions follow the same model as Readers Workshop lessons: a mini-lesson, independent work time along with small group and individual conferring, a mid-workshop teaching point, and opportunities for sharing writing, giving and soliciting feedback, and reflection. In addition to graphic organizers and examples from mentor texts, students are also provided rubrics (in kid-friendly language) so that they know what is expected of them and can work towards meeting or exceeding expectations.

In Middle School, students work on citing evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what is explicitly stated and/or implied from a book, article, poem or play. Students analyze where materials on the same topic disagree on matters of fact, interpretation or point of view. Students learn how authors support their ideas through word choice, sentence and paragraph structure and other methods. Students learn to build writing around strong central ideas or points of view; supporting the ideas with sound reasoning and evidence, precise word choices, smooth transitions and different sentence structures. Teachers help students in learning how to plan and conduct research projects that include several steps and use many credible and documented print and digital sources. Teachers prepare students to analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media (e.g. print, TV, web) and evaluate its social, political or commercial motives and messaging. Students learn how to use strong, active verbs to create a clear picture for the reader, learn and interpret figures of speech and develop academic and general vocabulary.

### **Writing Across Integrated Units**

Students also engage in large-scale writing projects that are directly aligned with the thematic units of study that they are exploring in Science and Social Studies. For example, first graders studying the Pacific Ocean might write and illustrate a field guide to the

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<sup>26</sup> Calkins, L., Hohne, K., & Robb, A. (2015). *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions Grades K-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

creatures that reside in each of the ocean zones. Meanwhile, fifth graders might craft realistic fiction monologues to perform that reflect a possible perspective of the daily life and work of an individual from Colonial times. As a tie-in to learning about Mars Exploration, eighth graders have written and distributed science-fiction zines.

### **Word Study and Structured Word Inquiry**

At CACS, word study begins with sorting words into separate orthographic patterns so that students can learn and apply spelling using systematic curricula such as Words Their Way or Wordly Wise. We also utilize Structured Word Inquiry (SWI), an instructional approach to literacy, that uses the principles of scientific inquiry as the basis of word level literacy instruction. There are two key features of this instructional model: 1) the model explicitly targets any features and conventions that govern “word structure,” and 2) teachers employ not just an inquiry approach, but a structured inquiry approach.

There are four standard questions used to guide SWI investigations:

- 1) What does the word mean?
- 2) How is it built?
- 3) What other related words can you think of?
- 4) What are the sounds that matter?

CACS utilizes structured word inquiry as a means of deepening concepts across subject areas and teachers use this instructional model to investigate the terms and concepts they are trying to help students understand.

Middle School uses the Wordly Wise curriculum for vocabulary development and reading comprehension practice. The curriculum breaks down vocabulary words into roots, suffixes and prefixes to help students build understanding and comprehension around word make-up, and to better dissect unknown words. Wordly Wise has a grammar component where students develop grammar skills and understanding. Teachers also use grammar and vocabulary words from literature, the history curriculum, and current affairs as part of their daily Do-Now activities to build authentic connections to academic learning. Students are then tasked with applying their newly acquired vocabulary and grammar knowledge through a variety of writing assignments that align with the content that they are studying in class.

### ***Mathematics Curriculum and Instruction***

The math program seeks to develop in students a deep understanding of the mathematical concepts presented in the Common Core Standards for Mathematics and the Standards for Mathematical Practice. In addition, it is our goal to teach students problem identification, procedural and computational skills that will allow them to excel in solving challenging real-world problems. Across all grades, there is an emphasis on mathematical discourse. We encourage students to develop the Common Core Math Practices to be able to construct viable arguments to communicate their mathematical reasoning and critique the reasoning of others, persevere in solving problems, attend to precision, model with mathematics and use appropriate tools strategically, reason abstractly and quantitatively, and look for and make use of problem structures and express regularity.

At CACS, we consistently review student performance and assessment data to determine

how best to support student academic growth. At the end of 2015-16, we noted that many students were struggling to reach proficiency in math on state assessments. In order to address these issues, CACS developed a Math Task Force comprised of teachers across grade levels and administrators during the 2016-2017 school year. The Math Task Force undertook research to identify high quality curricula that were aligned with CCSS. In addition, the members of the Math Task Force designed Family Education Nights to share the ways in which math education has shifted and how families can support their young mathematicians.

After a few curriculum models were identified, the Task Force conducted site visits to schools implementing these programs with fidelity in order to see them in action. Based on these site visits, grades K-5 adopted and implemented the Bridges in Mathematics curriculum during the 2017-18 school year.

Once our K-5 math program rolled out, a new Math Task Force comprised of 6-8th grade administrators, teachers and families conducted their own research to identify Middle School math curriculum models that are aligned to CCSS and worked in partnership with Bridges in Mathematics. Based on their research and site visits, the Middle School Math Task Force adopted and implemented Illustrative Mathematics during the 2018-2019 school year. These new curricula complement one another and serve to further deepen and extend students' mathematical thinking as they progress through the grades.

### **Bridges in Mathematics (Grades K-5)**

In grades K-5, CACS teachers utilize Bridges in Mathematics, a comprehensive curriculum developed by The Math Learning Center that equips teachers to fully implement the CCSS for Mathematics in a manner that is rigorous, coherent, engaging, and accessible to all learners. The curriculum focuses on developing students' deep understandings of mathematical concepts, proficiency with key skills and ability to solve complex and novel problems. Bridges blends direct instruction, structured investigation and open exploration. It taps into the intelligence and strengths of all students by presenting material that is as linguistically, visually and kinesthetically rich as it is mathematically powerful.

The curriculum was developed to emphasize building a deeper conceptual model through the use of visual models. For example, "when we launch a task during Number Corner or unit work, we use manipulatives and a variety of visual models to invite students to make sense of the mathematics through materials, drawings, and mental images."<sup>27</sup> Students are encouraged to wonder, be curious and take risks, while teachers apply Growth Mindset and making mistakes as a crucial part of the math learning process. In addition, students are met where they are: the low-floor/high-ceiling tasks that are embedded allow all students to engage at their own levels while teachers are able to provide differentiated learning opportunities.

### **Math Talks and Problem Strings**

Classroom discourse is another very important part of our math program. Many of the K-5 teachers utilize "problem strings" or "math talks" to gain insight into how students are

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<sup>27</sup> Hansen, P. (2017, June 23). "Low-Floor/High-Ceiling Tasks and Other Takeaways" [Blog Post]. Retrieved from <https://www.mathlearningcenter.org/new/blog/low-floorhigh-ceiling-tasks-other-takeaways>.

thinking about math and utilizing problem-solving strategies. These problem strings provide students with valuable opportunities to think about various strategies and models for decomposing and recomposing numbers, one of the most important skills for future math success.<sup>28</sup> Research has shown that the key strategy that low-achieving students lack is the ability to use numbers flexibly, and number talks are a powerful antidote to this problem.<sup>29</sup> One of the guiding principles of our elementary grades is a strong focus on developing number sense and conceptual understanding, allowing students to develop the ability to use numbers flexibly and recognize the many possible solutions to a math problem.

### **Number Corner**

Number Corner is another feature of Bridges in Mathematics that makes use of a calendar grid to allow students to use the day markers in order to make predictions based on visual representations of a particular concept or skill (such as shapes, telling time, decimals, or volume). During this 20 minute time each day, students also collect repeated data around a given topic over the course of a month. As the month progresses, students understand and make observations around the repeated structure of these number patterns and are tasked with explaining their reasoning to their classmates, and providing feedback on, adding onto, or respectfully disagreeing with others' mathematical ideas. The goal is for students to be engaged and build their confidence and enthusiasm as they take risks, and stretch and explore their math brains.

### **Illustrative Mathematics (Grades 6-8)**

In 2018-19, Illustrative Math (IM) was implemented into the middle school curriculum. *Illustrative Mathematics 6-8 Math* is a problem-based core curriculum that encourages mathematical discourse and collaboration, perseverance and enjoyment of mathematics. Students discover mathematical principles by completing carefully designed and sequenced activities, solving programs in mathematical and real-world contexts, and constructing arguments using precise language. Teachers shift their instruction with high-leverage routines that guide students in understanding and make connections between concepts and procedures. The curriculum also has built-in differentiation for English Learners, accelerated learners and struggling students.

IM uses the 5 Practices for Orchestrating Productive Mathematics Discussions by Smith and Stein. The five practices were designed to help teachers to use students' responses to advance the mathematical understanding of the class as a whole by providing teachers with some control over what is likely to happen in the discussion as well as more time to make instructional decisions by shifting some of the decision making to the planning phase of the lesson. The five practices are:

- **Anticipating** likely student responses to challenging mathematical tasks;
- **Monitoring** students' actual responses to the tasks as they work on the tasks in pairs or small groups;
- **Selecting** particular students to present their mathematical work during the

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<sup>28</sup> For example, in a math problem such as  $95 + 18$ , a student who can use numbers flexibly will see that, if they decompose 18 into  $13 + 5$  first, then add the 5 to 95 to get 100, the problem becomes  $100 + 13$ , a much easier route to success. Students who lack this ability to decompose and recompose must resort to much more difficult methods to solve this problem, such as counting or memorization.

<sup>29</sup> Boaler, J. (2008). *What's Math Got to Do with It?* New York: Ballantine.

- whole-class discussion;
- **Sequencing** the student responses that will be displayed in a specific order; and
- **Connecting** different students' responses and connecting the responses to key mathematical ideas.

The IM curriculum implements shifts implied by the Common Core State Standards through focus, coherence and rigor. In any lesson, unit or grade, it teaches fewer topics at greater depth so they can be mastered sooner and so students can move on to the next topic. The curriculum balances conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and meaningful applications of mathematics. IM makes sure the mathematical story line is clear across lessons, units and grades and makes connections between topics within lessons, units and grades.

Concepts within the IM curriculum spiral within each grade and from grade level to grade level within the following five mathematical domains: ratios and proportional relationships; the number system; expressions and equations; geometry; and statistics and probability. Concepts are revisited at greater depth and complexity each year.

Students work in small groups to master the concepts and develop strong, independent learner traits. Peer relationships are developed through discussion, mentorship and problem solving. Teachers and support staff facilitate student learning primarily through engaging students in student led small groups. Direct instruction/activity synthesis occurs periodically throughout each lesson. Following is a description of the focus areas for grades 6-8.

- Grade 6: Area and Surface Area, Introducing Ratios, Unit Rates and Percentages, Dividing Fractions, Arithmetic and Base Ten, Expressions and Equations, Rational Numbers, Data Sets and Distributions.
- Grade 7: Scale Drawings, Introducing Proportional Relationships, Measuring Circles, Proportional Relationships and Percentages, Rational Number Arithmetic, Expressions, Equations and Inequalities, Angles, Triangles and Prisms, Probability and Sampling
- Grade 8: Rigid Transformations and Congruence, Dilations, Similarities and Introducing Slope, Linear Relationships, Linear Equations and Linear Systems, Functions and Volume, Associations and Data, Exponents and Scientific Notation, Pythagorean Theorem and Irrational Numbers.

The IM curriculum provides both physical materials and online, manipulative modules that students and families can access at home in addition to at school. The curriculum also provides thorough and accessible family materials that help guide families through the math and offer resources for them to help their student at home.

CACS also utilizes the following supplemental resources to support the math curriculum including: Study Island homework and intervention software, teacher created projects and materials, Khan Academy, guest speakers and field trips.

### ***Science Curriculum and Instruction***

The CACS science curriculum is grounded in the Next Generation Science Standards, which aims to integrate the three dimensions of science: Science and Engineering Practices,

Crosscutting Concepts, and Disciplinary Core Ideas. We explore scientific ideas and concepts through engaging in arts-integrated, interdisciplinary, project based learning. We have developed a K-8 Scope and Sequence using the Disciplinary Core ideas of NGSS and organizing them into thematic units (that incorporate crosscutting concepts) and align the Science and Engineering Practices with literacy and math. These units and projects are documented using the *Teaching for Understanding*<sup>®</sup> framework, which allows students and teachers to build on previous iterations of projects to create and make new meaning of the scientific ideas and practices.

### **Science & Engineering Practices**

The 8 Science & Engineering Practices are:

1. Asking questions (for science) and defining problems (for engineering)
2. Developing and using models
3. Planning and carrying out investigations
4. Analyzing and interpreting data
5. Using mathematics and computational thinking
6. Constructing explanations (for science) and designing solutions (for engineering)
7. Engaging in argument from evidence
8. Obtaining, evaluating and communicating information

These practices describe behaviors that scientists engage in as they investigate and build models and theories about the natural world and the key set of engineering practices that engineers use as they design and build models and systems. Especially in Middle School, Design Thinking strategies and constructivist approaches include students defining problems and exploring questions based on their prior schema. Design Thinking allows for students to think critically and collaborate to engineer their own solutions to real-world problems.

Arts-based integration is an essential component of our practice at CACS, and seamlessly allows K-8 students to develop and use artistic models to communicate ideas about science and connect scientific learning across disciplines, including the four STEM fields, making STEAM a practice that we have engaged in for many years. For example, reading and writing strategies are employed as students conduct preliminary research and find evidence from text to support their learning. These elements come to fruition when students participate in our exhibitions of learning: We Are Makers and Thinkers (in the winter) and Exhibition of Learning (in the spring), which allows for multiple opportunities to write and revise arguments, present them orally, and share the products of the Design Thinking and arts integration processes with a wider audience.

An example of this approach in action is the sixth grade annual Design Thinking project that utilizes engineering skills and practices in order to understand how body systems work together to perform a specific function. At the beginning of this unit, the students are introduced to a story of an 11-year old girl living in Afghanistan who lost a limb due to stepping on a landmine. The students do research and learn about Afghanistan as a country and compare and contrast between Afghanistan and the United States in economy, lifestyles, cultural values, terrain and access to quality medical care. The students discuss the difficulty of acquiring high quality prosthetics in Afghanistan due to limited availability of materials and other resources. The students participate in a number of empathy tasks and

discussions to think about what it might be like to be an amputee and what body functions might be more difficult with a missing limb. The students then use the story to define criteria for making their “patient” a prosthetic leg out of inexpensive, widely available materials such as duct tape, wire, pvc pipe and wood shims. The students use the criteria, the story and a materials list to design and then build a working prosthetic prototype for their “patient.” After an initial build, the students test their prototype to determine if it meets the criteria. They then can make adjustments and continue building and testing until their prototype meets the criteria. In addition to this project, each individual student writes an informational report that discusses the entire design thinking process.

### **Seven Crosscutting Concepts**

The NGSS Framework identifies seven crosscutting concepts that bridge disciplinary boundaries, uniting core ideas throughout the fields of science and engineering. Their purpose is to help students deepen their understanding of the disciplinary core ideas and develop a coherent and scientifically based view of the world. The seven crosscutting concepts in the NGSS Framework are as follows:

- Patterns
- Cause and effect: Mechanism and explanation
- Scale, proportion, and quantity
- Systems and system models
- Energy and matter: Flows, cycles, and conservation
- Structure and function
- Stability and change.

Crosscutting concepts “build students understanding of science and engineering practices. When students encounter new phenomena, whether in a science lab, on a field trip, or on their own, they need mental tools to help engage in and come to understand the phenomena from a scientific point of view. Familiarity with crosscutting concepts can provide that perspective. Since these crosscutting concepts address the fundamental aspects of nature, they also inform the way humans attempt to make sense of the world around them.”<sup>30</sup> For example, 5th graders have created biosphere models in their study of the atmosphere, ionosphere, and geosphere. Students are engaging in observational drawing and recording of data over time and looking for patterns in their observations, using science notebooks. The crosscutting concept of “systems and system models” is clearly related to the practice of developing and using models.

Moreover, the use of science notebooks promotes student learning in a unique manner, as students use both the right and left brain hemispheres to help sort, categorize and implement their new learning in creative ways. In addition to recording data and listing vocabulary words, taking notes, and listing lab procedures, students are also asked to make predictions, do observational drawings and sketches, and offer reflections.<sup>31</sup> We have found that science notebooks leverage the three-dimensional learning of NGSS by creating a space for students to make connections between the Disciplinary Core Ideas, Crosscutting

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<sup>30</sup> Next Generation Science Standards: For States, By States. (2013). Retrieved from <https://www.nap.edu/read/18290/chapter/13>.

<sup>31</sup> National Science Teachers Association. (2002). Science Interactive Notebooks in the Classroom. Retrieved from <https://www.nsta.org/publications/news/story.aspx?id=47679>.

Concepts, and Science and Engineering Practices.

### **Disciplinary Core Ideas**

In the elementary grades, we encourage inquiry and investigation of the Disciplinary Core Ideas as students engage in experimental science activities utilizing the *FOSS* curriculum, the *GEMS* guides and curriculum kits from the California Academy of Science. “Disciplinary ideas are grouped in four domains: the physical sciences; the life sciences; the earth and space sciences; and engineering, technology and applications of science”.<sup>32</sup> In addition, we foster a number of partnerships with scientific institutions and organizations around the Bay Area, including the Exploratorium, California Academy of Sciences, Aquarium of the Bay, Alemany Farm and USCF’s Daly Ralston Resource Library. These partnerships bring scientists, curricular expertise, and unique materials like fossils or organ specimens into the classroom, offering students unique phenomena and models of scientific exploration. Through these partnerships, students are able to ask questions and investigate phenomena in real-world settings that exist in their own community.

In the middle school grades we continue with inquiry based practices. We utilize Study Island to as the information foundation. We enrich this curriculum with on-going project work and experiential opportunities such as labs and experiments using the scientific method to explore, question and discover. We reinforce the learning with guest speaker and field trips such as Exploratorium, California Academy of Science and more.

### **Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction**

The History-Social Studies Framework/Content Standards and associated ELA Common Core State Standards are presented through integrated units that are developed collaboratively and revised by the CACS teaching staff using the *Teaching for Understanding*<sup>®</sup> framework. In 2015-16, CACS teachers and administrators delved deeply into Common Core State Standards to align and document the CACS social studies curriculum and create a K-8 Scope and Sequence to ensure alignment. Social studies content is also integrated heavily into Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop through analysis of informational texts, expository/persuasive writing, and research projects. Teachers integrate primary sources to ensure students examine, explore and uncover history first hand, in conjunction with supporting secondary sources, such as library books, newspapers, periodicals, field trips, teacher-created materials and electronic research. In addition, Humanities courses for grades 6-8 utilize lessons from the Teacher Curriculum Institute’s *History Alive!*

One of the key elements of the CACS social studies curriculum is explicit dedication to representing multiple cultures and diverse perspectives. Students learn to look at history from multiple perspectives: Native American, African American, Latinx, Women and LGBTQ communities. We are firmly committed to making sure that our students not only see their own faces and lives in our curriculum, but also appreciate the diversity of their community. Furthermore, as part of our focus on social justice as described in the *Portrait of a Graduate*, we encourage students to take a stand for the rights of others.

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<sup>32</sup> National Science Teachers Association. Disciplinary Core Ideas. Retrieved from <https://ngss.nsta.org/DisciplinaryCoreIdeasTop.aspx>.

Students work on arts integrated projects around some of the larger themes and ideas including: studying and representing Changemakers in first grade; learning about the Missions from the perspective of the Indigenous Californians who were on the land prior to the colonization of the Spanish; and Middle School students learning about propaganda, amendments to the Constitution and Early American colonies. Students learn about the foundation of American Government and how the United States was created from the American Colonies to the American Revolution, Industrial Revolution and Civil War. Historical events are connected to political and sociological current events.

Our school-wide use of arts integration projects allows students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding during small formative assessments, as well in larger, culminating assessments. These projects allow for students to demonstrate their learning through various modalities, and often allows students choice in their way of presenting their expertise. For example, the sixth grade creates a film to document their learning about Ancient Egypt. Students make the film from start to finish and play all the varying roles in the film production. Students apply for “jobs” that are most interesting to them, and participate in pre-production, production and post-production of the film. Some projects also involve outside “experts” in the field, who join students in the classroom to teach them more about their craft. During the Egyptian film, a guest filmmaker joins the students to help and teach them the different roles and different stages of filmmaking.

### **Generation Citizen**

As part of our Social Studies program, all 7th grade students participate in Generation Citizen, a standards-aligned and academically rigorous civics curriculum that is action-based and focused on providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in our democracy as active citizens. The curriculum has been published and has received recognition from the National Council of Social Studies.

Over the course of the in-class program, students choose an issue they care about, develop a focused, strategic plan to address the issue, take real action, and then reflect on their successes, challenges and plans moving forward. Each semester culminates in a Civics Day, in which CACS students present their plans to other students, community members, and public officials, celebrating their work and gaining feedback to further their efforts.

### ***The Arts Curriculum and Instruction***

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, theatre, music and visual arts. Every day at school should involve opportunities to play, invent and discover. As part 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 heart of its curriculum, and relies on them to provide fundamental purpose, definition and identity to the Charter School.

Students from kindergarten through fifth grade participate weekly in fifty-minute sessions in each arts discipline: visual arts, music, and dance. Small class sizes (10-15 students as funding permits) assure quality-learning experiences centered on student engagement, arts specialist knowledge, relationships and environment. The programs in each of these disciplines are structured by the Studio Thinking Habits of Mind framework and sequenced in content and skill by grade level in accordance with the State of California's Visual and Performing Arts Teaching Standards and by the National Arts Standards. Arts Specialists weave classroom themes into studio instruction to further support integration and deepen the academic and art connections.

Beginning in sixth grade, students choose an art discipline that they commit to for the year. By focusing on the discipline of their choice, students develop an in-depth appreciation of the art form while developing their personal craft. All students can pursue artistic studies in Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual arts. The daily atmosphere of creative work, self-discipline, and commitment to their art discipline prepares students for both high school and to be active community members who connect with the world around them.

A full-time Director of Arts Programming, visual arts teacher, dance, and music teacher staff the program as well as a part-time theatre teacher in middle school. In addition, CACS also invites local artists to enrich our units of study. The Charter School's Director of Arts Programming collaborates with the arts staff to organize school-wide exhibitions and performances, plans artistic partnerships and also works closely with classroom teachers to integrate the arts into the regular curriculum. Students are referred to as 'scientists' or 'historians' as they investigate, observe, engage in analysis and experimentation while immersed in the creation of art pieces that demonstrate their understanding of core academic content. For example, second graders scientists as part of their 'Farm to Table' unit work in collaboration with the visual arts specialist to observe, and dissect local plants and then document their observations and thinking through drawing in their own research notebook. Through this integrated learning process, students recognize the relationship between the methods and practices of artists and that of scientists. 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 school wide exhibitions of learning, which make visible the arts-integrated approach in our classrooms and studio classes. Held twice a year, these annual Exhibitions of Learning celebrate the learning by doing approach of CACS. Students exhibit their understanding from the Fall or Spring semester through hands-on demonstrations, wall exhibits and performances. The community is invited to explore and engage with our community of artful learners. Our Exhibitions are a joyful, signature practice of Creative Arts and an essential element of our school's making learning visible method.

In addition, CACS stages several smaller performances and art shows throughout the year in collaboration with San Francisco community organizations and local artists. For example, our Spring Show highlights dance making across the grades in the dance studio and demonstrates how we integrate classroom studies within our dance model.

CACS values our partnerships with community based organizations. Partnerships have offered our community the opportunity to deepen and expand connections with local resources and build relationships that have a lasting impact on our students, families and staff. One notable partnership that supports our arts integration approach is the CACS partnership with Alameda County's Office of Education Integrated Learning Specialist Program (ILSP). ILSP Courses are held each year at CACS, where our teachers have the opportunity to collaborate with other Bay Area teachers while developing their understanding of arts integration frameworks used at CACS, included Teaching for Understanding, Making Learning Visible and Studio Thinking. Community arts partnerships currently include Alonzo King Lines Ballet, SF JAZZ, SF Film Society, LEAP, SF MOMA and Visual Thinking Strategies.

### ***Physical Education Program***

The intent of physical education at CACS is for students to develop life-long habits of building physical strength and dexterity. The program helps students develop a range of physical and athletic skills, as well as a number of habits of teamwork, cooperation, and fair play. Students are exposed to a variety of physical movement activities that suit a variety of learning styles and skills and that are aligned to the CCSS. Students in 1st through 5th grade receive one 50-minute period of physical education per week. Students in middle school receive two 50-minute periods of physical education per week.

### ***Social Development Curriculum and Instruction***

At CACS, our goals for our graduates extend beyond intellectual and artistic development. In preparing our students for the future, we aim to support their social development, self-awareness, community awareness, and dedication to social justice. To support these goals, CACS implements a variety of programs throughout the Charter School, as described below.

### ***Responsive Classroom***

At CACS, our goal as educators is to promote students learning through effective and equitable means, respecting and recognizing students' individual needs while maintaining high expectations for all. After careful research regarding effective strategies, CACS has adopted the Responsive Classroom® approach in 2005. The Responsive Classroom model's fundamental belief is that the greatest cognitive growth occurs within a constructive social context; therefore, CACS focuses on building school and classroom community, teaching children how to develop positive social skills through productive social interaction. We use specific language to help our students to clearly see and reflect upon the ways they think, work, and play.<sup>33</sup> All of our teachers attend a Responsive Classroom Institute, during which time they are trained in the core tenets of the program.

As part of our Responsive Classroom program, CACS teaches students what it means to be a student, a community member, and a leader by using positive, reinforcing language and interactive modeling. Through weekly All School Community Meetings, one-on-one discussions, and group activities, CACS proactively and reactively teaches CARES as a framework to guide student development of their social skills from kindergarten until 8th

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<sup>33</sup> Denton, P. (2015). *The Power of Our Words*. Turners Falls, NH: Center for Responsive Schools, Inc.

grade.

Each day, class in grades K-5 begin with a Morning Meeting, designed to set a positive, friendly tone for the day, introduce and incorporate the academic curriculum, and foster respect for individuals and the classroom community in an enjoyable manner. Students greet one another by name, share something about themselves, participate in a song or activity and are grounded in news and announcements for the day so that they know what to expect from the schedule.

Responsive Classroom also incorporates Academic Choice. This provides students with structured and meaningful choices about what and how they learn to further develop curious, confident and autonomous learners. Students are taught how to listen, collaborate, share ideas, offer productive feedback and observe thoughtfully. They are also taught how to learn through a cycle of planning, executing and reflecting. Academic Choice might take place through Centers in kindergarten or first grade classrooms, rotating through selected Math Workplaces in grades K-5, or choice and design over longer term projects to demonstrate their learning in grades K-8.

CACS also emphasizes shared decision-making with students through specific social coaching around conflict resolution one-on-one and as an entire class. Starting in kindergarten, students are taught to ask for and give others “bubble space”, can give and receive “I-messages,” and are coached through more specific conflict resolution conversations starting in third grade. When a problem impacts the whole class, the teacher will hold a Class Meeting (using some of the strategies from Mona Halaby’s book Belonging: Creating Community in the Classroom), to come up with shared solutions.

Our goal with responding to misbehavior is “to stop the misbehavior and restore positive behavior as quickly as possible”<sup>34</sup> and keep students in the classroom while learning strategies for self-regulation. At the beginning of the year, each class comes up with agreements together as a community. If an agreement is broken, each classroom has a take-a-break area where students can self-select to visit in order to decompress and reset, or teachers can send students to take a break as well. If students are not able to be successful after taking a break in their own classroom, they are sent to a buddy classroom where they take a break in a separate setting prior to returning to class. When a misbehavior occurs and taking a break doesn’t correct the behavior, logical consequences ensure that a consequence fits the nature of the situation. For example, if a 1st grader knocks over another student’s block tower during building, rather than telling them that they need to sit on the bench and miss recess, she will be asked to make an apology of action, where she helps the other student to rebuild their block tower. With older students, we continue to use a restorative approach to consequences, in addition to constructing democratic classroom meetings.

We know that the ways in which the adults of the Charter School work together is as important as our individual competence, therefore we frequently examine the values staff and students must uphold to create a strong community. We believe that knowing the

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<sup>34</sup> Responsive Classroom Course for Elementary Educators Resource Book. (2017). Turners Falls: MA. Center for Responsive Schools, Inc.

families of our students is as important as knowing our students. It's essential that we establish a partnership with our student's families and use this relationship to strengthen our school community.

### **Community Meetings**

A long-standing tradition and signature practice at CACS is the All School Community Meeting on Friday mornings. Each classroom takes turns leading and sharing the learning that is taking place and celebrating the community CACS has established. We have three community meetings per month on Fridays, starting at 9:00AM and lasting for about 20-30 minutes. On the third Friday of each month, 2-3 8th grade ambassadors spend time in an assigned lower grade classroom. Our 8th grade ambassadors also accompany their assigned lower grade classrooms to our community meetings on the yard, and sit with their classes. This demonstration of leadership across grade levels is called Buddy Class.

During Community Meeting, each classroom rotates leading our meetings according to a set schedule. Meetings follow the Responsive Classroom® Morning Meeting protocol and include a greeting, news and announcements, appreciations, a group activity demonstrating classroom learning and ending with a moment of silence. We also take time to celebrate birthdays by singing the chorus to Stevie Wonder's Happy Birthday song in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Community meetings are very creative in approach. They feature dance and music performances, dramatic reenactments, poetry slams, news reports, reader's theater and more.

Community Meetings reflect what we value in our students and what we continuously seek to create in a school. We see students proudly standing together, working collaboratively, using an assertive voice in front of a microphone, taking a chance and sharing what they have learned. We see a captive audience, attentively listening, being appreciative and empathetic and learning from their peers. And in the end, we take time to hope for peace in our hearts, our school, in our city, and in our world, with the understanding that we are just a small part of many larger communities.

### **Counseling Program**

Led by the School Counselor, our counseling team includes one full-time counselor and one part-time counselor. At CACS, we believe all students can benefit from social and emotional support, explicit teaching about coping strategies, and practice being an ally to their peers. The counseling team provides in class, small group, and/or individual support in areas of anti-bullying, CARES, LGBTQ+ and diversity awareness, friendship and social skills, family transition, loss and more from a trauma-informed lens. We attempt to provide students with the tools for self-awareness, social development, and social justice. While each grade level is different based on developmental needs, we incorporate discussion, role plays and games to help students develop their social and emotional skills.

CACS approaches our counseling and support services through a trauma-informed approach that achieves the following:

1. *Realizes* the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
2. *Recognizes* the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff and others involved with the Charter School;

3. *Responds* by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices; and
4. Seeks to actively resist *re-traumatization*.<sup>35</sup>

This framework is implemented at CACS by focusing on safety; transparency and trustworthiness; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice and choice; and cultural, historical and gender issues. While CACS utilizes this framework to specifically support students that have experienced trauma, we know that all students benefit from the implementation of trauma-informed practices.

### **Book Buddies**

At CACS, we pair older and younger students from across grades as Book Buddies. These classes meet together weekly to read together and occasionally collaborate on projects. Older students model positive learning styles for the younger ones, sharing their love of reading, their passion for math, their love of art, or more. Older students take a leadership role and younger students are given one-on-one attention that is authentic and unique. Both classes often present their work to the other, providing remarkable and appreciative audiences for presentations. Best of all, cross-grade friendships extend beyond the classroom. Students share hugs, waves, or smiles on the yard and give appreciations to one another during Community Meetings.

### **Middle School Advisory Program**

The Advisory program serves as the fabric that weaves the various components of the Middle School together. Each cohort of 28 students is split into thirds, allowing for an intimate class size of 18-19 students per advisory. Currently, advisors include middle school teachers, the Middle School Administrator, the School Counselor and the Executive Director. The program personalizes the educational experience, builds strong relationships amongst school constituents, and promotes a positive school culture. The sense of belonging and inclusion in the program emphasizes that school is a safe place for students to be genuine, and their unique developmental needs are acknowledged and met.

Advisory meets daily for 30 minutes in the morning and 10 minutes in the afternoon. Advisory groupings are used for activities (e.g. service learning, camping, etc.) as well as assignments (potlucks, advisory olympics, etc.) with grade level Family Association support. Many of the practices and activities that take place in Advisory mirror those that staff engage in through I-groups, where community problems are approached from an equity lens.

Advisors act as student advocates and are liaisons for parent-teacher-student communication, specifically when they conduct family/student conferences. In addition, advisors are responsible for holding regular grade check-ins and acting as an advocate for students and families. Advisors also support students with the development of organizational skills.

### **Origin Developmental Designs**

Each Advisory integrates *Origins Developmental Designs*, a continuation of the *Responsive*

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<sup>35</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Trauma-Informed Approach and Trauma Specific Interventions. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/ncic/trauma-interventions>.

*Classroom* approach specifically designed for middle school students (<http://www.originsonline.org>), which utilizes *Restorative Circles* to reinforce community, bonding and belonging. The curriculum is designed to focus on getting to know each student, their family and community, and ultimately prepare them for their transition into high school. The 6th grade advisory's theme is foundations, the 7th grade strives towards autonomy and the 8th grade concentrates on self-sufficiency.

Because student success relies on a blend of good relationships, social skills and engagement with learning, CACS uses the *Developmental Designs* curriculum and comprehensive practices to integrate social and academic learning. The practices in the *Developmental Designs* approach are designed to meet adolescent needs by addressing the following key elements of effective teaching:

- Meet middle school students' needs
- Use developmentally appropriate practices and content
- Build social-emotional skills
- Rigorously respond to rule-breaking
- Motivate students to achieve academically
- Intervene with struggling students
- Create inclusive learning communities
- Build a strong, healthy adult community

### **Outdoor Education**

CACS's middle school organizes one camping trip every year in the fall for sixth and seventh grade students. We believe outdoor education is a tool to enrich the classroom curriculum as well as integrate community-building opportunities. For the past three years, CACS has partnered with Web of Life Field (WOLF) School.

During WOLF School's Outdoor Science School program, educated naturalists lead students in scientific field studies where students can explore, discover, and learn about the natural world through fun activities on the trail and in remarkable outdoor environments. These naturalists are experts at taking material taught in the classroom and creating supplemental curriculum in the outdoors, and field studies can be tailored to teachers' particular subject interests or state standards for a specific grade.<sup>36</sup>

### **8th Grade Trip**

8th graders participate in an enriching educational trip at the end of their final year at CACS. They learn responsibility, budgeting, goal setting and collaboration while fundraising around \$20,000 for their trip. 8th grade students fundraise most of the money through various activities like weekly popsicle and/or bake sales, school dances and the schoolwide annual Trivia Night Talent Show. They are tasked with setting a budget and contributing at least 10 hours of service to the fundraising efforts. Students create committees for all events and take leadership roles with each task (e.g. dance committee, trip committee, fundraising committee, etc.). Students take pride in their accomplishments and work hard to ensure they reach their goal.

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.wolfschool.org/outdoor-science-school>

## Curriculum and Materials

Following is a summary of the curriculum and resources used at CACS across subjects.

Curriculum	Grades	Subject
Reader's Workshop Writer's Workshop	K-8	Language Arts
Fountas & Pinnell	K-8	Language Arts
Bridges in Mathematics	K-5	Math
Illustrative Mathematics	6-8	Math
Study Island	6-8	Math
FOSS	K-5	Science
GEMS guides	K-5	Science
California Academy of Science	K-5	Science
History Alive!	6-8	History/Social Studies
Responsive Classroom	K-5	Social Development
WOLF Camp	6-7	Outdoor Education
Generation Citizen	7	Civics
Developmental Designs	6-8	Social development

## Technology Integration

CACS believes in the use of technology for specific purposes that directly support student learning and arts integration. Starting in kindergarten, students rotate through the use of iPads to participate in educational apps that support the curriculum, such as differentiated instruction through RAZ Kids, Splash Math, etc. In third grade, students are provided Chromebooks and have access to the Google Suite of programs to create presentations, type up writing assignments and provide comments to peers during the peer editing process. Students in 3rd through 8th grade must also have familiarity with typing and computer usage to access the annual CAASPP assessments. In addition, students have access to artistic media applications such as Photoshop, iMovie, Adobe Illustrator, animation software, and Garage Band to support the development of videos, photographs, and mixed media projects. The math, science and humanities classes utilize online platforms for individualized learning to support in-class curriculum for a variety of learners. Study Island and Khan Academy are used for math and science with video teaching modules. An online account is provided to each student for the history curriculum (History Alive!), which includes an audio component. Struggling readers & writers have the option to use e-readers and Chromebooks for assignments. All middle school teachers are provided document cameras and projectors to support curriculum instruction.

## Professional Development

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To ensure the curriculum development process results in meaningful, arts-integrated, standards-based unit and lesson plans, which enhance students' understanding of key content areas and result in equitable outcomes, teachers engage in a structured collaboration process. Grade level teams in lower elementary and multi-subject teams in middle school meet during Tuesday professional development to engage in relevant, applicable workshops, share ideas, write curriculum, and receive feedback.

## **Professional Development Topics**

School leadership and teachers collaborate to determine specific topics and sequencing for professional development. The following topics to be covered include, but are not limited to:

- Arts integration practices
- Trauma-informed practices
- Peer observation cycles
- Mapping science curriculum to NGSS
- Educational equity and data analysis
- Restorative Justice practices
- Gender Inclusive best practices
- Developmental Designs and Responsive Classroom social development curriculum implementation
- Emergency preparedness and training

One significant focus topic of our professional development work is equity. CACS is a member of the San Francisco Coalition for Essential Small Schools (SF-CESS) and works with the organization to create the conditions and engage in the work required to identify, interrupt and transform inequities facing CACS students and their families based on demographic indicators such as race, class, language, power, etc. SF-CESS provides technical assistance and professional development to design and implement equity-centered programs while also providing leadership coaching. Our staff is committed to meeting in small groups (called iGroups) across grade levels and disciplines once a month to discuss and examine issues impacting our pedagogical practices. An iGroup, an “individual inquiry group,” is a small team of colleagues (5-8 participants including a trained facilitator), who are committed to interrupt and improve inequitable experiences and outcomes for the students they serve by examining and transforming their own practice. This work is done in community to foster public and transparent accountability. At its simplest, many view an iGroup as a support group for those engaged in similar work – with an explicit focus on transformation and equity.

Another focus topic of our professional development is arts integration. Teachers engage in interactive workshops that allow them to explore and deepen their learning around the key frameworks we use in teaching and learning. A team of lead teachers and the Director of Arts Programming facilitate monthly workshops that offer hands-on experiences that model application of the frameworks, including Making Learning Visible, Studio Thinking, arts methods and techniques in the classroom and Teaching for Understanding. Local artists and experts in the field of arts education are often invited to lead and enrich the experience. For example, an associate curator at the Asian Art Museum led a workshop for teachers to support them in ‘thinking like a curator’ in preparation for our upcoming Exhibition of Learning. Working in collaboration across disciplines and grade levels enables teachers to partner with one another, look at student work together and develop best practices in arts integration.

Teachers are held accountable for applying professional development ideas and practices through coaching, walk-throughs and supervisory observations. In addition, students and teachers demonstrate the learning acquired through integrated units during the Exhibitions of Learning at the end of each semester, in which students share and explain their work with families and community members. These exhibitions of learning highlight the project-based,

interdisciplinary, learning activities and arts integration prized by our community and help hold teachers accountable to the students and families they serve.

### **Time Allocated for Professional Development**

Teachers are provided eight full, pupil-free days and at least 2 hours each week, and at least 150 minutes of prep each week, for a total of almost 200 hours annually, to engage in collaborative planning time and professional development to continuously improve their teaching practice. These opportunities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Teachers work with the Administration during the summer months prior to the school opening and throughout the year to plan curriculum and assessments, professional development and more for the upcoming year.
- A four day mandatory training for all CACS teachers prior to the start of each school year to review the Charter School’s philosophy, goals, and teaching methodology; to discuss professional readings and research; to analyze and discuss instructional practices and student outcomes; and to engage in collaborative planning for the year ahead.
- At least once-weekly grade level planning meetings; monthly planning time across grade levels.
- Tuesday “Early Dismissal” sessions provide a dedicated two-hour block of time each week for faculty to engage in professional development with a rotating schedule of full-faculty meetings, professional development workshops, and monthly collaborative planning time for curriculum and assessment development.
- Pupil-free days throughout the year to intensely analyze student achievement data and engage in collaborative planning.
- Clearly articulated expectations with respect to professional development outcomes.
- Opportunities to attend professional development workshops or conferences on topics that have been agreed upon in advance by the Administrators.
- All staff is provided with stipends for attending and participating in professional development sessions that take place outside of school hours.

### **Plan for Students who are Academically Low Achieving**

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CACS is committed to ensuring that all students achieve at their maximum learning potential, including students achieving below grade level expectations. Teachers regularly scaffold and differentiate instruction so that instructions and content are comprehensible for all. In addition, teachers receive training on effective intervention strategies targeted towards the areas of greatest need. To reach the greatest number of our students falling within this category, our school utilizes the following best practices: growth mindset and collaboration. Each is discussed below.

#### **Growth Mindset**

It is important for all of our students to develop a growth mindset through explicit instruction and exposure. A growth mindset ensures that students understand that with effort, it's possible to increase intelligence levels, talents, and abilities. Therefore, everyone is capable of improvement and growth. As Carol Dweck notes, our job as educators is to give praise and feedback to our students based on “what they accomplished through practice, study,

persistence, and good strategies. And we can ask them about their work in a way that admires and appreciates their efforts and choices.”<sup>37</sup> The idea of growth mindset avoids stereotype threat, while truly embodying our arts-integrated approach of process and persistence over product.

## **Collaboration**

### *Amongst Teachers*

In order to ensure that all students have equitable access to standards-based content that is aligned by grade level, we have scheduled common collaboration times for grade and subject level teachers time to meet regularly in order to plan units and lessons, field trips, projects, and reflect on pedagogy and learning. Engaging in professional dialogue allows teachers to support one another to meet the needs of all students by sharing the workload, exchanging ideas and reviewing student work to standardize grading practices. Collaboration helps our teachers feel part of a broader community and ensures that they are actively motivating and engaging learners to the strategies and skills necessary for life-long learning and success.

### *Amongst Students*

Cooperative Learning: Students learn well from each other and are given ample opportunities to work together to plan, create and perform projects, as well as to discuss and debate issues. This is evident in our classroom layout, as students do not sit in desks, but rather in groups. Flexible and cooperative grouping allows students to practice the social aspects of learning and contributes to active participation and teamwork necessary for 21st century citizenship. Each student brings his/her unique talents and abilities to the group and is able to learn from the diverse strengths of his/her peers.

Varied Assessment: As all students possess and utilize different strengths for their learning, a teacher who allows for a variety of assessments is more apt to find out what students have truly learned, not just how they take a test. At CACS, we believe that the learning process is just as important as the final product. To that end, a mixture of formative, summative, and standardized assessments are used to determine student growth and progress. Rubrics, learning progressions, portfolios, oral presentations, open-book tests, Fountas and Pinnell assessments, group projects, concept mapping, pre-, mid-, and post unit assessments, as well as oral and written reflections are only some of the ways that we assess learning. Using a wide range of assessments allows the teacher to gain a more accurate perspective of their students’ progress and understanding towards stated standards and outcomes. In the arts classes, teachers use a summative, narrative, written assessment tool that enables students to reflect upon their projects. The Studio Habits of Mind and the National Arts Standards are incorporated into the assessment, which allows our young artists to express their process and select works that convey a personal meaning to them from the semester.

## **Identification**

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<sup>37</sup> Dweck, C. (2008). *Mindset*. New York, NY: Balantine Books.

At CACS, diagnostic, formative and summative assessments are utilized to determine whether or not students are meeting standards-based pupil outcomes. Those students identified as 1) scoring at Level 1 (Not Met) or Level 2 (Nearly Met) on the CAASPP in ELA and Math; 2) performing at an intensive (far below) or strategic (needing extra support) level on diagnostic math assessments; 3) scoring below grade benchmarks on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment; 4) demonstrating significant behavioral or social-emotional issues; or 5) not maintaining a C average or above in middle school; are selected for targeted intervention.

We communicate and partner with families to provide support to students who are identified as at-risk of not meeting or not meeting standards-based pupil outcomes.

### **Strategies to Support Academically Low Achieving Students**

The following program elements, described throughout this petition, are designed to support all students. These elements have demonstrated particularly successful results with low achieving students and others who are at risk of school failure and for whom traditional strategies are less likely to be effective:

- Frequent communication between home and school (informal posting on the web-based communication server; in-person communication; formal communication at parent/teacher/student conferences; progress reports and report cards; additional conferences with staff as needed)
- Small group guided reading intervention and direct phonics instruction for those students reading below grade level (grades K-5)
- Small group pull out math intervention for those students identified as at-risk (grades K-5)
- Small group or individual counseling sessions with the school counselor or counseling interns
- Advisory support, including a homework check and study support
- At least two periods of Study Hall for middle school students
- Math camp
- Summer school (free)
- After school math/homework club
- Paid high school students to support programs
- Bridges Intervention program in math

### Additional Support Staffing

Each spring, we take time to evaluate our current programs, new programs, student data and solicit feedback from our teachers and staff and families (through Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) surveys designed by the Board of Directors and administration). Once we amalgamate all of this information, we have honest conversations about what is working and what changes need to be made to our overall program. As a result of these reflective and evaluative processes, we determined the need to invest more funding into supporting students who need supplemental academic and social-emotional support, which we transparently share with our Board of Directors. After receiving approval from our Board of Directors, we created job descriptions and hired to fill these new roles. Some examples of additional support positions include:

- **Librarian/Literacy Support Specialist** to provide additional phonemic awareness activities, letter and sound recognition, decoding and segmenting, and guided reading support to students in kindergarten through 2nd grade.

- **Math Intervention Specialist** to provide small group instruction and scaffolded support to develop numeracy, fluency, and build strategies in 4th through 8th grade mathematicians.
- **School-Based Therapist** to provide individual and small-group therapy to our students who have experienced significant trauma, suffer from anxiety, or need assistance with self-regulation and/or emotional management.

### Student Success Team

In addition to the strategies listed above, CACS implements an effective Student Success Team (SST) model to provide additional supports to struggling students. Initial SST meetings are scheduled for students in need of additional support within the first several months of school and/or on an on-going basis throughout the year as teachers, families, or students notice that they need extra support. The SST process enables the family, teacher, child (depending on age), administrative team, school counselor and/or other support providers to work together to construct a differentiated learning and/or behavior plan to address the child's needs and areas of growth. SST plans set short-term achievable goals and document interventions and accommodations to be put into place. Follow up SSTs are scheduled after 6 to 8 weeks and serve as an opportunity for the SST team to check on progress towards the goals identified in the SST and/or to reflect/review data on the viability of the strategies implemented as a result of the SST. Additional steps, such as a referral for special education assessment and/or 504 document might be taken, should the SST process fail to yield adequate progress of the child after at least two rounds of implementation with fidelity.

### Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is an evidence-based model that uses data, strategic thinking, and problem-solving methods to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention. The levels of intervention are delivered to students in varying intensities (multiple tiers) based on student need. Students who are struggling to achieve mastery receive targeted assistance from instructional and support staff and are provided with multiple opportunities to improve their performance and master content. If general supports (Level 1) are not assisting the student meet grade level standards, then students are automatically move to tiered support strategies.

Possible services fall along this scale, according to need:

#### **Level 1: Support Strategies for All Students**

- Additional instructional time
- Differentiated instruction
- Flexible groupings
- Regular reminders and redirections
- Arts integrated teaching and learning that allows for flexibility to make meaning of content
- Multiple opportunities for collaboration with peers
- Additional exposure to the information and language being presented in the lesson
- Family/School conferences twice a year
- Planner and written homework checks
- Flexible opportunities for seating

- Focus on accelerating student progress and meeting student needs
- Small group instruction during reading, writing, and math
- Use of graphic organizers and scaffolded instruction
- Daily advisories, Morning Meetings, Closing Circles

### **Level 2: Support Strategies for Low-Achieving Students**

- SST meetings
- Individual conferences with teachers
- Behavior plan
- Small group pull-out or push-in instruction with Literacy or Math Support coach
- Additional Focused assignments
- Use of intervention curricula within Bridges or Illustrative Math
- Short-term 6-8 week check-in cycles with counselor
- Afterschool homework club and tutoring with provided support

### **Level 3: Support Strategies for Low-Achieving Students**

- Possible referral for Special Education evaluation or 504 determination
- Weekly one-on-one meetings with counselor on an ongoing basis
- Pull-outs and push-in with Special Education Resource teachers or paraprofessionals
- Collaboration between classroom teacher, Special Education Resource teacher, and school counselor

### **Classroom Modifications for At-Risk Students**

In addition to the instructional methods and strategies detailed above, when appropriate, classroom modifications are made to support low achieving students. Modifications or accommodations may be implemented by the classroom teachers in coordination with the Student Success Team or 504 plan, for students who are not yet meeting grade level academic or behavioral expectations, depending on the student's specific needs. These may include using different materials (visual aids, manipulatives, audio materials), using different methods (reading written material aloud to student, guided note-taking, visual cues/modeling), differentiated pacing and assignments (reduced, shortened homework), environment changes (taking a break as needed), testing accommodations and more.

### **Tracking the Academic Progress of At-Risk Students**

CACS closely monitors the academic progress of our at-risk students. Grade level teachers utilize their combined prep (which we call collaboration) time to collaborate around at-risk students at least once a week to determine progress to goals and what additional supports are needed. Student data and scores in Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments and Bridges Number Corner assessments are maintained year over year in order to see growth and progress over time. The following groups of students are monitored by teachers and school administration to ensure satisfactory academic progress and to provide timely and targeted intervention when necessary:

- Students identified as achieving below grade level
- Students identified as being at risk for school failure due to environmental factors such as trauma
- Socioeconomically disadvantaged students

In the event that struggling students fail to make satisfactory academic progress despite targeted interventions implemented by the classroom teacher, the teacher may decide to hold an SST meeting with the family and additional staff to document further interventions and accommodations. If two SST meetings are held and we still do not see progress, we may refer a student for a 504 or for a special education evaluation in order to provide more support and/or legal accommodations.

### **Plan for Students who are Academically High Achieving**

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CACS is committed to providing a rich and challenging curriculum to all students. Therefore, all students achieving above grade level as measured by the CAASPP, interim assessments, progress reports, portfolio assessment, Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments, Bridges math assessments and/or other means will receive appropriate academic extensions within the classroom. Students reading above grade level are given reading materials and literature at their independent and/or instructional levels within their Reader's Workshop time. During Math Workplaces time, students may also work with more challenging and complex sets of numbers. Academically high achieving students may also be given a more challenging culminating assignment upon completing the book, such as a literary analysis task that is considered above grade level. Students who demonstrate high levels of skill/accomplishment in the area of writing receive individualized coaching and support in this area through the Writer's Workshop process. These students are also often called upon to develop and apply their leadership skills in this area as they serve as peer-editors for their classmates.

In K-5 mathematics, students are often given challenge problems and longer explorations through which they are able to apply their mathematical skills and concepts in unique contexts. All curricular models support differentiation, as content is taught through a mini-lesson with time for students to apply learning at their individual levels. During this time, teachers may meet with students or small groups to provide more challenging work or feedback on the process that students are already engaging with. Additionally, the middle school differentiated model considers the individual needs and learning styles of students and engages their mathematical minds to provide a high level of engagement, focus, and rigor. Our science and social studies units allow high achieving students opportunities to stretch and explore by providing a number of opportunities to conduct processes of research and inquiry.

At Family School Conferences, the achievement of each child, including high achieving students, is discussed and individualized goals are set and revisited throughout the year. The goal-setting process embedded in these conferences allows teachers, students and families to work together to ensure that all high achieving students are being appropriately challenged in areas where they have strengths and supported in areas where they need to continue to grow and develop.

### **Plan for Students with Disabilities**

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CACS complies with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504),

the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

CACS is categorized as a public school of the District in accordance with Education Code Section 47641(b). CACS complies with all state and federal laws related to the provision of special education instruction and related services and all SELPA policies and procedures; and shall utilize appropriate SELPA forms.

CACS is solely responsible for its compliance with Section 504 and the ADA. The facilities to be utilized by the Charter School are accessible for all students with disabilities.

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

CACS 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. A student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment, is eligible for protections under Section 504.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Executive Director 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 IDEA but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504. The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team, which 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 including those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.
- 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 IDEA, a referral for assessment under the IDEA 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 a 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 Charter 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 site administrators 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.

#### **Services for Students Under the IDEA**

*The following description regarding how special education and related services are provided and funded is included by CACS for the sole purpose of providing a reasonably comprehensive description of the special education program in the Charter Petition and is not binding on the District. The specific manner in which special education and related services are provided and funded shall be set forth in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), delineating the respective responsibilities of the Charter School and the District. The language that follows is not meant to unilaterally bind the District, nor to preclude alternative arrangements between the District and the Charter School as agreed upon in a MOU.*

CACS intends to provide special education instruction and related services in accordance with the IDEA, Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and practices of the SELPA. CACS shall remain, by default, a public school of the District for purposes of Special Education pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b).

However, CACS reserves the right to make written verifiable assurances that the Charter School shall become an independent LEA and join a SELPA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a) either on its own or with a grouping of charter school LEAs as a consortium.

As a public school of the District, solely for purposes of providing special education and related services under the IDEA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b), in accordance with Education Code Section 47646 and 20 U.S.C. Section 1413, CACS seeks services from the District for special education students enrolled in CACS in the same manner as is provided to students in other District schools. CACS will follow the District and

SELPA policies and procedures and shall utilize SELPA forms in seeking out and identifying and serving students who may qualify for special education programs and services and for responding to record requests and parent complaints and maintaining the confidentiality of pupil records. CACS will comply with District protocol as to the delineation of duties between the District central office and the local school site in providing special education instruction and related services to identified pupils. An annual meeting between CACS and the District to review special education policies, procedures, protocols, and forms of the District and the SELPA and District protocol, will ensure that CACS and the District have an ongoing mutual understanding of District protocol and will facilitate ongoing compliance.

As long as CACS functions as a public school of the District solely for purposes of providing special education and related services under the IDEA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b), CACS anticipates that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be in place between the District and CACS which spells out in detail the responsibilities for provision of special education services and the manner in which special education funding will flow to the students of CACS.

The District shall be designated the Local Educational Agency (LEA) serving CACS students. Accordingly, CACS shall be deemed a public school of the District pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b) and 47646(a). CACS agrees to adhere to the requirements of the Local Plan for Special Education and to District policies. As a public school of the District, solely for purposes of providing special education and related services under the IDEA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b), in accordance with Education Code Section 47646 and 20 U.S.C. Section 1413, CACS seeks services from the District for special education students enrolled in CACS in the same manner as is provided to students in other District schools.

CACS acknowledges the importance of cooperating with the District so that the District can provide special education services to CACS students. CACS agrees to promptly respond to all District inquiries, to comply with reasonable District directives, and to allow the District access to CACS students, staff, facilities, equipment and records as required to fulfill all District obligations under this Agreement or imposed by law. CACS believes that the allocation of responsibility for the provision of services (including but not limited to referral, identification, assessment, case management, Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, modification and implementation) shall be divided in a manner consistent with their allocation between the District and its school sites.

### **Staffing**

All special education services at CACS will be delivered by individuals or agencies qualified to provide special education services as required by California's Education Code and the IDEA. CACS staff shall participate in all mandatory District in-service training relating to special education.

It is CACS's understanding that the District will be responsible for the hiring, training and employment of site staff necessary to provide special education services to its students, including, without limitation, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and resource specialists unless the District directs CACS that current District practice is for the individual

school sites to hire site special education staff or the District and CACS agree that CACS must hire on-site special education staff. In that instance, CACS shall ensure that all special education staff hired by CACS is qualified pursuant to District and SEPLA policies, as well as meet all legal requirements. The District may review the qualifications of all special education staff hired by CACS (with the agreement of the District) and may require pre-approval by the District of all hires to ensure consistency with District and SELPA policies. The District shall be responsible for the hiring, training, and employment of itinerant staff necessary to provide special education services to CACS students, including, without limitation, speech therapists, occupational therapists, behavioral therapists and psychologists.

### ***Notification and Coordination***

CACS shall follow District policies as they apply to all District schools for responding to implementation of special education services. CACS will adopt and implement District policies relating to notification of the District for all special education issues and referrals.

CACS shall follow District policies as they apply to all District schools for notifying District personnel regarding the discipline of special education students to ensure District pre-approval prior to imposing a suspension or expulsion. CACS shall assist in the coordination of any communications and immediately act according to District administrative policies relating to disciplining special education students.

### ***Identification and Referral***

CACS shall have the responsibility to identify, refer and work cooperatively in locating CACS students who have or may have exceptional needs that qualify them to receive special education services. CACS will implement District and SELPA policies and procedures to ensure timely identification and referral of students who have, or may have, such exceptional needs. A pupil shall be referred for special education only after the resources of the regular education program have been considered, and where appropriate, utilized.

It is CACS's understanding that the District shall provide the Charter School with any assistance that it generally provides its schools in the identification and referral processes, and will ensure that the Charter School is provided with notification and relevant files of all students who have an existing IEP and who are transferring to CACS from a District school. The District shall have unfettered access to all CACS student records and information in order to serve all of the Charter School's students' special needs.

In the event CACS receives a written request from a parent for assessment, it will work collaboratively with the District and the parent to address the request. Unless otherwise appropriate pursuant to applicable State and Federal law, CACS and the District will provide the parent with a written assessment plan within fifteen days of receipt of the written request and shall hold an IEP within sixty days of parent's consent to the assessment plan to consider the results of any assessment.

CACS will follow District child-find procedures to identify all students who may require assessment to consider special education eligibility and special education and related services in the case that general education interventions do not provide a free appropriate

public education to the student in question.

### ***Assessments***

The term “assessments” shall have the same meaning as the term “evaluation” in the IDEA, as provided in Section 1414, Title 20 of the United States Code. The District will determine what assessments, if any, are necessary and arrange for such assessments for referred or eligible students in accordance with the District’s general practice and procedure and applicable law. CACS shall work in collaboration with the District to obtain parent/guardian consent to assess CACS students. CACS shall not conduct special education assessments unless directed by the District.

### ***IEP Meetings***

It is CACS’s understanding that the District shall arrange and notice the necessary IEP meetings. IEP team membership shall be in compliance with state and federal law. CACS shall be responsible for having the following individuals in attendance at the IEP meetings or as otherwise agreed upon by the District and Charter School: the Executive Director and/or the Charter School designated representative with appropriate administrative authority as required by the IDEA; the student’s special education teacher; the student’s general education teacher if the student is or may be in a regular education classroom; the student, if appropriate; and other Charter School representatives who are knowledgeable about the regular education program at the Charter School and/or about the student. It is the Charter School’s understanding that the District shall arrange for the attendance or participation of all other necessary staff that may include, but are not limited to, an appropriate administrator to comply with the requirements of the IDEA, a speech therapist, psychologist, resource specialist and behavior specialist; and shall document the IEP meeting and provide of notice of parental rights.

### ***IEP Development***

CACS understands that the decisions regarding eligibility, goals/objectives, program, services, placement and exit from special education shall be the decision of the IEP team, pursuant to the District’s IEP process. Programs, services and placements shall be provided to all eligible CACS students in accordance with the policies, procedures and requirements of the District and of the SELPA and State and Federal law.

CACS shall promptly notify the District of all requests it receives for assessment, services, IEP meetings, reimbursement, compensatory education, mediation and/or due process whether these requests are verbal or in writing.

### ***IEP Implementation***

Pursuant to District policy and how the District operates special education at all other public schools in the District, the District shall be responsible for all school site implementation of the IEP. CACS shall assist the District in implementing IEPs, pursuant to District and SELPA policies in the same manner as any other school of the District. The District and CACS will need to be jointly involved in all aspects of the special education program, with the District holding ultimate authority over implementation and supervision of services. As part of this responsibility, CACS shall provide the District and the parents with timely reports on the student’s progress as provided in the student’s IEP at least as frequently as report cards are

provided for CACS's non-special education students. CACS shall also provide all home-school coordination and information exchange unless directed otherwise by the District. CACS shall also be responsible for providing all curriculum, classroom materials, classroom modifications, and assistive technology unless directed otherwise by the District.

CACS shall comply with any directive of the District as relates to the coordination of CACS and District for IEP implementation including but not limited to adequate notification of student progress and immediate notification of any considered discipline of special education students in such matters, the petitioners would notify the District of relevant circumstances and communications immediately and act according to District administrative authority.

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

CACS shall comply with Education Code Section 56325 with regard to students transferring into CACS within the academic school year. In accordance with Education Code Section 56325(a)(1), for students who enroll in CACS from another school district within the State, but outside of the SELPA with a current IEP within the same academic year, the District and CACS shall provide the pupil with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the previously approved IEP, in consultation with the parent, for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days, by which time the District and CACS shall adopt the previously approved IEP or shall develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP that is consistent with federal and state law. In accordance with Education Code Section 56325(a)(2), in the case of an individual with exceptional needs who has an IEP and transfers into CACS from a district operated program under the same special education local plan area of the District within the same academic year, the District and CACS shall continue, without delay, to provide services comparable to those described in the existing approved IEP, unless the parent and the District agree to develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP that is consistent with federal and state law. For students transferring to CACS with an IEP from outside of California during the same academic year, the District and the Charter School shall provide the pupil with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the previously approved IEP in consultation with the parents, until the District conducts an assessment pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of Section 1414 of Title 20 of the United States Code, if determined to be necessary by the District, and develops a new IEP, if appropriate that is consistent with federal and state law.

### ***Non-Public Placements/Non-Public Agencies***

The District shall be solely responsible for selecting, contracting with, and overseeing all non- public schools and non-public agencies used to serve special education students. CACS shall not hire, request services from, or pay any non-public school or agency to provide education or services to special education students without the prior written approval of the District. CACS shall immediately notify the District of all parental requests for services from non-public schools or agencies, unilateral placements, and/or requests for reimbursement.

### ***Non-discrimination***

It is understood and agreed that all children will have access to CACS and no student shall

be denied admission nor counseled out of CACS due to the nature, extent, or severity of his/her disability or due to the student's request for, or actual need for, special education services.

### ***Parent/Guardian Concerns and Complaints***

CACS shall follow District policies as they apply to all District schools for responding to parental concerns or complaints related to special education services. CACS shall instruct parents/guardians to raise concerns regarding special education services, related services and rights to the District unless otherwise directed by the District. CACS shall immediately notify the District of any concerns raised by parents. In addition, CACS and the District shall immediately bring to the other's attention any concern or complaint by a parent/guardian that is in writing and/or which involves a potential violation of state or federal law.

The District's designated representative, in consultation with the Charter School's designated representative, shall investigate as necessary, respond to, and address the parent/guardian concern or complaint. CACS shall allow the District access to all facilities, equipment, students, personnel and records to conduct such an investigation.

CACS and the District shall timely notify the other of any meetings scheduled with parents/guardians or their representatives to address the parent/guardian concerns or complaints so that a representative of each entity may attend. The District, as the LEA, shall be ultimately responsible for determining how to respond to parent concerns or complaints, and CACS shall comply with the District's decision.

CACS and the District shall cooperate in responding to any complaint to or investigation by the California Department of Education, the United States Department of Education, or any other agency, and shall provide timely notice to the other upon receipt of such a complaint or request for investigation.

### ***Due Process Hearings***

The District may initiate a due process hearing or request for mediation with respect to a student enrolled in CACS if the District determines such action is legally necessary or advisable. CACS agrees to cooperate fully with the District in such a proceeding. In the event that the parents/guardians file for a due process hearing, or request mediation, the District and CACS shall work together to defend the case. In the event that the District determines that legal representation is needed, CACS agrees that it shall be jointly represented by legal counsel of the District's choosing.

CACS understands that the District shall have sole discretion to settle any matter in mediation or due process. The District shall also have sole discretion to file an appeal from a due process hearing or take other legal action involving any CACS student necessary to protect its rights.

### ***SELPA Representation***

It is CACS's understanding that the District shall represent the Charter School at all SELPA meetings and report to CACS of SELPA activities in the same manner as is reported to all schools within the District.

### ***Funding***

CACS will enter into an MOU with the District regarding Special Education, which will include a description of how the CACS special education program is funded.

### ***Retention of Special Education Funds by the District***

The District shall retain all state and federal special education funding allocated for CACS students through the SELPA Annual Budget Plan and shall be entitled to count CACS students as its own for all such purposes.

### ***Retention of ADA Funds by the District for Non-Public Placements***

The Parties acknowledge that the District may be required to pay for or provide CACS students with placements at locations other than at CACS's school site in order to provide them with a free appropriate public education. Such placements could include, without limitation, programs or services in other District schools, in other public school districts within the SELPA, in a County Office of Education program, in a non-public school, at home, at a hospital or in a residential program. When such programs or services are provided at District expense, the District shall be entitled to receive from CACS the pro rata share of all funding received for such student, including, without limitation, all ADA funds, based on the number of instructional days or minutes per day that the student is not at the CACS site.

### ***Contribution to Encroachment***

CACS shall contribute its fair share to offset special education's encroachment upon the District's general fund. Accordingly, CACS shall pay to the District a pro-rata share of the District's unfunded special education costs ("encroachment"). At the end of each fiscal year, the District shall invoice CACS for CACS's pro-rata share of the District-wide encroachment for that year as calculated by the total unfunded special education costs of the District (including those costs attributable to CACS) divided by the total number of District ADA (including CACS students), and multiplied by the total number of CACS ADA. CACS ADA shall include all CACS students, regardless of home district.

### ***Instructional Strategies for Special Education***

CACS utilizes Student Success Teams and Response to Intervention to ensure that interventions are effective in addressing each student's individualized needs and goals. CACS is committed to working with SFUSD 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.

Our students with disabilities have a range of needs, which we are equipped to meet effectively. Our Learning Center is staffed by a dedicated team of professionals including a resource specialists, special education paraprofessionals, speech therapist, occupational therapist and school psychologist, serving students with identified learning needs and those at risk for delayed acquisition of the skills needed to succeed in school.

To meet their needs, CACS employs a number of strategies:

- Students with IEPs or 504 Plans receive inclusion and pullout services in accordance with the goals stipulated in the IEP or 504 respectively.
- Analysis of diagnostic math assessment, initial reading assessment, ELPAC and CAASPP data guide “target student” identification, target student goal setting and action planning.
- Teachers refer students with identified academic or behavioral concerns to the SST.
- The SST works to identify interventions for academic and behavioral needs (ex: behavioral support plan).
- Identified target students who are considered “at-risk” academically, receive small group targeted interventions in literacy and/or math.
- Teachers differentiate curriculum through small group instruction in the classroom (ex: leveled guided reading groups). The Learning Center team consults with teachers to assist them in differentiating curriculum.
- Resource teachers implement multi-sensory literacy techniques (drawing from Linda Mood Bell, Orton Gillingham, etc), Heinemann Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) Program, and the SPIRE program to provide interventions for K-2 students who struggle with reading
- CACS has undergone ADA-upgrade, allowing us to serve our students with mobility issues.

In the case of students who receive special education services either through and IEP or 504 plan, CACS will ensure that it makes the necessary adjustments to comply with the mandates of State and federal laws, including the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Plan of 1973, regarding the discipline of students with disabilities.

## **Plan for English Learners**

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CACS meets all applicable legal requirements for English Learners (EL) as they pertain to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, EL and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, reclassification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirements. CACS implements policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding ELs and the rights of students and parents.

### **Identification and ELPAC Testing**

CACS adheres to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations with respect to serving students who are English Learners. To identify students who are English Learners in a timely fashion and to provide appropriate instructional support and services, all parents are required to complete a Home Language Survey upon enrollment at the Charter School.

Based on the results of the Home Language Survey, students whose primary language is not English are assessed using the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) aligned to the State ELD Standards if he or she has not previously been identified as an English Learner by a California public school or if there is no record of prior ELPAC (or California English Language Development Test (CELDT)) results. ELPAC initial assessments take place within 30 calendar days after the date of first enrollment at the

Charter School.

The English language proficiency of all currently enrolled English Learners are assessed through ELPAC summative assessments in accordance with the test contractor's directions and pursuant to all legal requirements. Students with disabilities are permitted to take the test with the accommodations listed in the Education Code if they are specified in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. An alternate assessment for English language proficiency is administered to students who are unable to participate in ELPAC testing, according to the guidelines set forth in the student's IEP. CACS staff notifies parents of the Charter School's responsibility to conduct ELPAC testing and informs parents of ELPAC testing results within 30 calendar days following receipt of test results from the test contractor. Students are monitored in conjunction with the ELPAC performance levels.

CACS maintains a record of all students who participate in each administration of the ELPAC test. ELPAC testing is used to fulfill the requirements for annual English proficiency testing and comply with the accountability requirements under Title III of the ESSA. CACS adheres to all legal requirements regarding oversight and administration of the ELPAC test.

### **Instructional Strategies for Students with Limited English Proficiency**

CACS staff is committed to working with students designated as Limited English Proficient and convenes SSTs as necessary to develop and deliver an appropriate educational program that meets the individual needs of such students.

We use a full immersion model to support ELs, providing additional support and scaffolding as needed to help students access the curriculum. Our curricular model of project based learning and the use of diverse instructional strategies addressing multiple intelligences assist students in learning content as well as English, as they are able to access content ideas through multiple modalities, not just language.

Our arts integrated and cooperative learning approaches allow for visual scaffolding while encouraging peer interactions to model and enhance language development. The research of Mpellas states that using arts as a tool for expression is a vital tool for EL students, as cited in Angelides & Michelou, "Generally, children use the spoken word 'in order to narrate or describe something; with drawings they 'narrate' or 'describe' without using language', essentially communicating the same messages, but in a visual language that can be understood and interpreted by all" (2009, p. 43)<sup>38</sup>.

CACS, teachers' instruction across the grades utilizes a variety of SIOP model (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) and SDAIE (Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English) models in order to support EL students, including:

- Charts, graphs, pictures, illustrations, realia, math manipulatives, multimedia, and demonstrations by teacher and other students
- Content that is adapted to each EL student's needs through use of graphic organizers, outlines, labeling of pictures, study guides, adapted text, and highlighted text

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<sup>38</sup> Angelides, P. & Michaelidou, A. (2009). Collaborative Artmaking for Reducing Marginalization. *Studies in Art Education*, 51(1), 36-49.

- Multiple ways to integrate lesson and thematic content with language practice opportunities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing
- Linking information to students' prior knowledge, and explicitly linking new concepts with those that have previously been covered, and introduce unfamiliar vocabulary to align with students' experiences to facilitate comprehension
- Emphasizing verbally and visually key academic content vocabulary to review, define, and refer to
- Word study through a mixture of strategies: Words Their Way, explicit phonemic instruction; Structured Word Inquiry, explicit teaching of prefixes, suffixes, and word families

In addition, CACS teachers engage in the following practices to support universal access of subject matter content for all students, but these best practices also support English Language Learners:<sup>39</sup>

- Teachers use controlled vocabulary, sentence structure, visuals, and gestures as necessary and appropriate to make the presentation of content comprehensible
- During lesson planning and preparation, teachers identify lesson objectives aligned with state and local standards
- Teachers provide students with a variety of strategies for organizing and retaining information associated with effective learning, such as graphic organizers and visual note taking
- Teachers provide students with regular opportunities to interact with their peers through collaborative learning activities, such as think/pair/share, partner and group projects, turn and talk
- Teachers provide students with regular opportunities to use new language skills in context
- Teachers pace lessons appropriately to allow for the participation, think time, and active engagement of all students
- Teachers utilize language-based as well as content-based assessments

Differentiated and individualized reading allows students access to literature at language-appropriate levels, and teachers encourage students to celebrate each other's languages and cultures in the classroom.

As described above, CACS employs a bilingual Reading Intervention Specialist and a Math Intervention Specialist that supports English Learners. Overall, CACS continues to develop in our ability to serve our students with limited English proficiency, and our arts-integrated approach to teaching and learning is a natural bridge for students who are developing English language skills.

### **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

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<sup>39</sup> Based on the eight broad elements of sheltered instruction described by Echevarria, Vogt, and Short. *Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The SIOP model*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon (2004).

including, but not limited to, the ELPAC.

- 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 in 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.

CACS classifies students as Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) based on state guidelines for ELPAC scores in all categories of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For students in kindergarten, reading and writing scores are not criteria considered for IFEP classification. CACS may change a student's status to Reclassified Fluent English Proficient based on state guidelines. Once students are proficient, they are Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP). After a student is RFEP, they no longer take the ELPAC. However, their progress continues to be monitored for four (4) years by meeting regularly with their teachers and reviewing their benchmark assessments and standardized testing results to ensure that they are able to keep up with their peers.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of Program Effectiveness**

CACS evaluates the effectiveness of its education program for ELs by:

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

### **Charter School Goals and Actions to Achieve the Eight State Priorities**

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CACS complies with all requirements pursuant to Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii) including developing annual goals, for all pupils (i.e. schoolwide) and for each subgroup of pupils as identified in Education Code Section 52052, for each of the applicable eight (8) state priorities identified in Education Code Section 52060(d). See Element B for the schoolwide goals, actions, and measurable outcomes, both schoolwide and for numerically significant student relevant subgroups, and see Element C for the corresponding assessments.

CACS also complies with all elements of the Local Control and Accountability Plan pursuant to regulations and templates adopted by the State Board of Education and reserves the right

to establish additional, school-specific goals and corresponding assessments throughout the duration of the charter.

CACS has clearly defined school-wide outcome goals in compliance with Education Code Sections 47605(b)(5)(B) and 52060(d).

CACS pursues school-wide and subgroup outcome goals, as measured by multiple and varied benchmark assessments that are aligned to State Standards and reflect proficiency measures required by the CAASPP, as well as applicable state priorities detailed in Education Code Section 52060(d) that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the Charter School. For purposes of measuring achievement of these goals, a numerically significant pupil subgroup will be defined as one that meets both of the following criteria:

- (i) The subgroup consists of at least 30 pupils, each of whom has a valid test score.
- (ii) For a subgroup of pupils who are foster youth or homeless youth, a numerically significant pupil subgroup is one that consists of at least 15 pupils. (Education Code 47607(a)(3)(B) and 52052(a)(3)).

See **Appendix E** for the CACS 2018-19 LCAP that includes school-wide and subgroup outcome goals and performance targets aligned to the eight state priorities that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the Charter School, and methods for measuring progress and the individual(s) with primary responsibility for each, all aligned with the state's priorities defined in Education Code Section 52060(d). The LCAP shall not be deemed part of the charter, and therefore, annual amendments to the LCAP, in accordance with Education Code Section 47606.5, shall not be considered a "material revision to the charter" as defined in Education Code Section 47607. The Charter School shall submit the LCAP to the District annually on or before July 1, as required by Education Code Section 47604.33. Actions intended to ensure that the Charter School meets these goals and targets are delineated throughout this charter petition.

## Element 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 charter school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the charter school’s educational program. Pupil outcomes shall include outcomes that address increases in pupil academic achievement both schoolwide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school, as that term is defined in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 47607. The pupil outcomes shall align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school.”*  
Ed. Code § 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 five 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
- Their ability to effectively communicate new understanding

### **Goals, Actions and Measurable Outcomes That Align with the Eight State Priorities**

CACS has clearly defined schoolwide goals, actions, and measurable outcome, both schoolwide and for each subgroup of pupils, pursuant to Education Code Sections 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii) and 47605(b)(5)(B), which align with the Eight State Priorities as described in Education Code Section 52060(d), which are found in the Charter School’s LCAP (**Appendix E**).

CACS will pursue the following school-wide and subgroup outcome goals, as measured by multiple and varied benchmark assessments that are aligned to state and federal standards and reflect proficiency measures required as well as applicable state priorities detailed in Education Code Section 52060(d) that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the Charter School.

For purposes of measuring achievement of these goals, a numerically significant pupil subgroup is defined as one that consists of at least 30 pupils, each of whom has a valid test score; or, for a subgroup of pupils who are foster youth or homeless youth, a numerically significant pupil subgroup is one that consists of at least 15 pupils. Cal. Education Code § 52052(a)(3).

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47606.5, CACS shall annually update the LCAP, including the goals and annual actions identified therein. As required by Education Code Section 47604.33, CACS shall submit the LCAP to SFUSD annually on or before July 1.

CACS complies with all state assessment and accountability requirements applicable to charter schools for pupil achievement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable: CAASPP statewide assessment, the California School Dashboard, the percentage of ELs who make progress toward English language proficiency as measured by the ELPAC, EL

reclassification rates, and high school graduation rates.

CACS prepares students for taking all state-mandated standardized tests through its innovative and comprehensive educational program. Teachers design their daily lessons, unit plans and assessments around the essential content standards and the knowledge, skills and support reasoning embedded in the State Standards. Subjects are taught using curricular resources, materials, and assessments that are aligned to effective teaching of these standards. In addition, the Charter School's innovative educational program (i.e. the curriculum, lessons, projects, and activities) serves to enrich the concepts reflected in the content standards assessed by the CAASPP.

### **Schoolwide Goals**

As stated in the Charter School's 2018-19 LCAP, we are tracking the following goals and annual measurable outcomes:

Goal #1: Provide teachers professional development that will support collaboratively developed curriculum to be aligned to the CCSS and designed with strategies for differentiation intended to support English Learners and other student subgroups.

#### Annual Measurable Outcomes

- 96% of collaboratively developed curriculum units contain equity strategies (modifications/adaptations for ELs, exceptional students, high and low-achieving students)
- 96% of teachers receive directed curriculum coaching
- 96% of walk-throughs and evaluation forms provide evidence of instructional strategies aligned with the CCSS

Goal #2: All CACS students receive a well-rounded education and instruction that integrates the arts and core content areas. By connecting the arts with core subjects, students discover and further develop their creativity, self-discipline, imagination, critical thinking skills and confidence.

#### Annual Measurable Outcomes

- 96% unit/lesson plans will demonstrate arts integration and standards-alignment in a broad course of study of integrated lesson plans contain "equity strategies" (modifications/adaptations for ELs, exceptional students, high and low-achieving students)

Goal #3: All CACS students tested will demonstrate at least one year of growth on the English Language Arts and Mathematics section of the CAASPP.

#### Annual Measurable Outcomes

- CACS will establish aligned proficiency baselines as measured by the CAASPP/SBAC and our own in-house assessments to ensure consistent/similar results.

Goal #4: 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.

#### Annual Measurable Outcomes

- 100% graduation rate
- 91% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students accepted into one of their top three high schools of choice

Goal #5: CACS teachers support students' social development, self-awareness, community awareness and dedication to social justice.

#### Annual Measurable Outcomes

- 81% of students will earn a rating of at or above grade level in Personal/Social Development on the end of year report card in Grades K-5
- On the parent survey, 90% of parents will "moderately" or "strongly agree" that their child felt safe and respected at CACS, respectively

Goal #6: CACS environment is structured to encourage high degrees of parent/family involvement encouraging families to feel welcomed and able to support the education success of their students.

#### Annual Measurable Outcomes

- 95% of parents will respond that they "agree" or "strongly agree" that their communication needs are being met and 85% "agree" or "strongly agree" that school staff welcomes parent suggestions
- On the parent survey, 100% of parents will respond that they "agree" or "strongly agree" that they have lots of chances to get involved but only 75% "agree" or "strongly agree" that they regularly volunteer at CACS
- On the parent survey, 91% of parents will respond that they "agree" or "strongly agree" to feeling comfortable participating in discussions and activities at CACS

#### **Middle School Transition Plan**

When students transition from fifth to sixth grade, CACS provides the following supports:

- Sixth grade Teachers visit the fifth grade classrooms to discuss the upcoming changes
- We hold an orientation in the Spring for all fifth grade families
- Fifth and sixth grade teachers collaborate to discuss the needs of the incoming students in order to make thoughtful advisory and cohort groupings.
- We hold a middle school orientation in August for all middle school families and their students to get to know one another and prepare for the start of the school year
- Transition meetings are scheduled for all incoming students with Special Education services.
- All incoming middle schoolers are offered the opportunity to have a buddy family assigned to them to help support their transition, answer questions and just be a friendly face upon arrival.

#### **High School Transition Plan**

The move from middle school to high school is a major event in the lives of students and their families. CACS has designed and regularly revisits a process that addresses the stress created by the transition, and ensures exiting eighth graders are academically and socially prepared.

CACS wants its graduates to enter ninth grade having the self-awareness to know themselves as learners, artists, allies, and collaborators. In addition, we work hard to instill a sense of commitment to community awareness and social justice through curriculum that incorporates multiple perspectives, civic engagement, volunteer opportunities, and discussion about current events.

At CACS, the administration and the Family Association (FA) have worked to develop a supportive system that creates equitable opportunities for all families to navigate the high school application process in the Bay Area. We begin the process during the 7<sup>th</sup> grade year by hosting an evening event with alumni parents and students. We share a presentation that informs families of the expectations for navigating the high-school application process. This includes important details like:

- Testing (Secondary Schools Admissions Test (SSAT), ISPE, High School Placement Test (HSPT) and placement testing)
- Lowell High School application process
- Ruth Asawa School of the Arts High School (SOTA) application process
- Connecting parents to large network of alumni families to support them with the process and share their experiences
- Letters of Recommendation process
- A Better Chance application support

In the eighth grade year, we meet with eighth grade families to revisit the presentation in detail and to update families of new dates, administrative changes by schools, and to recruit support for the FA team. Below are some examples of the support CACS provides for our transitioning eighth grade students:

- Encourage students to participate in high-school activities and events to learn the art of networking and developing new connections.
- FA representative and eighth grade counselor schedule site visits to public high schools for CACS students. A CACS representative escorts the students via public transportation to allow students to learn to navigate and use the time restraints as part of their decision-making process. This allows opportunities for students whose parents are less able to facilitate the visits as well as reduce the disruptions to the student's school day
- Work with private schools to arrange presentations at CACS or site visits.
- Inform families of school enrollment fairs and events.
- Prepare student transcripts.
- Use the school's communication system (Schoology) to publicize any updates or deadlines related to the high-school application process.
- Alumni event: Host annual alumni event where ninth grade students speak to the upcoming graduates to discuss the transition to high school and share their personal experiences.
- Saturday workshops: We host a Saturday workshop where students can sign up to receive help with the application process from start to finish.

## **Element C: Methods of Assessment of Student Outcomes**

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

At CACS, we use multiple measures to assess students’ level of conceptual understanding, content knowledge, and the acquisition of new skills. We provide opportunities for authentic assessment where students are able to demonstrate competency across the multiple domains of Blooms Taxonomy of Learning: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. By engaging students in formative, on-going and summative assessments, teachers are able to use assessment data to inform instruction, determine students’ misunderstandings, gauge proficiency and detect areas where the curriculum or instruction can be improved. We also firmly believe that the assessments themselves can be an important tool for students’ learning. Meaningful assessments provide useful feedback. We encourage students to use this feedback and multiple opportunities for revision as tools for understanding and growth.

Our beliefs on assessment closely align with the thinking of Jo Boaler:

*“Assessment for learning is based upon the principle that students should have a full and clear sense of what they are learning, of where they are in the path toward mastery, and of what they have to do to become successful. Students are given the knowledge and tools to become self-regulatory learners, so that they are not dependent upon following somebody else’s plans, with little awareness of where they are going or what they might be doing wrong.”<sup>40</sup>*

The Assessment for Learning model is a research-based approach to using assessment as a meaningful tool for student learning, in which teachers clearly communicate learning goals, students understand where they are on the path to clearly defined objectives, and teachers provide clear feedback and guidance on how to reach success. We see assessment not only as a tool to inform teaching, but also as a pillar of successful learning. Through multiple measures, listed below, we provide students, teachers, and families with a comprehensive view of student achievement.

### **State Assessments**

CACS adheres to all state testing requirements and any revisions of the Education Code that apply to charter schools. The Lower School Administrator serves as the testing coordinator to manage the assessment processes. The statewide testing program currently centers on the CAASPP conducted each spring, and the ELPAC initial assessment administered at the start of the school year and the summative assessment administered annually during the testing window (February 1 – May 31).

CAASPP measures student performance relative to State Standards. CACS analyzes the CAASPP results to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction in addressing State Standards, to guide modifications to the curriculum and instruction to

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<sup>40</sup> Boaler, J. (2008). *What’s Math Got to Do with It?* New York: Ballantine.

better integrate State Standards, and to evaluate the progress of each student relative to State Standards.

CACS will meet or exceed the state's accountability standards for pupil achievement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable: CAASPP statewide assessment, the California School Dashboard, the California Physical Fitness Test, the California Science Test (CAST), the percentage of ELs who make progress toward English language proficiency as measured by the ELPAC and EL reclassification rates.

### **School Based Assessments**

CACS believes that assessments in the academic program should be designed to specifically measure student attainment of the knowledge, skills, and reasoning embedded in the State Standards. CACS measures students' progress towards achieving and exceeding standards-based learning outcomes and the subject matter competencies described in Element B of this charter in a variety of ways.

Assessments reflect a direct relationship between the learning goal/outcome, the content standard, and the procedure(s) used to measure students' progress towards achieving subject area mastery. Furthermore, assessment procedures and content contained therein should meet the academic needs of all students. As such, a variety of assessment design considerations and the assessment conditions are established to accommodate students from diverse backgrounds. Such assessment variations may include:

- Identifying learning styles and designing assessments to elicit a variety of thinking and application skills.
- Utilizing technology for presentation of assessment content, test items, answer choices and student responses.
- Allowing for a variety of assessments in measuring a single outcome or learning goal.
- Providing a variety of assessment environments/conditions.

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of a student's growth, teachers deploy multiple formative and summative assessment methods (both quantitative and qualitative) and such assessments are on-going. Additionally, assessments must be both reliable, equitable and valid in order to accurately determine to what extent students have reached specific learning goals and have achieved mastery of related standards. Thus, teachers and students at CACS incorporate a wide array of assessments throughout the school year as described in detail below.

### **Report Cards/Progress Reports**

The CACS report card summarizes students' achievements in each of the subject areas, or "domains," covered by the Work Sampling System (WSS). Students' progress is assessed and described using a continuum measuring their level of proficiency towards meeting or exceeding grade level standards ("Far Below Grade Level", "Below Grade Level", "Grade Level", or "Above Grade Level"). In addition, there is a detailed narrative of student performance accompanying each domain level. Report cards are sent home to families at the end of each semester along with a "Report Card Letter" intended to help families navigate the students' report and familiarize them with the curriculum, activities, and themes the class has covered. At the middle school level, in addition to the narratives, students are

assigned letter grades and effort designations in core subject areas.

To keep families further apprised of their child(ren)'s learning and development at CACS, mid- semester progress reports are mailed home for students who are below grade level in a core subject for grades K-5, and for all students in middle school. Each semester, CACS administration and staff examine report card data on a school-wide level to detect trends in student performance and adjust the curricular program accordingly.

#### *Parent/Student/Teacher Conferences*

Twice yearly, at the Fall and Spring Family School Conferences, teachers provide families with detailed anecdotal reports of progress and challenges at school. These conferences are a time for celebration and reflection, as students help lead conversations about their strengths and areas of growth. Furthermore, it represents a time for our staff to reflect on student progress and celebrate the growth we have seen over the semester. 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.

Family School Conferences also reflect our values about individualization and personalization of the curriculum. Conferences are led by students beginning in the second semester of the first grade school year. Students are asked to reflect and articulate their strengths and challenges both academically and socially-emotionally. During the conference, students, families and teachers are able to set achievable long-term and short-term goals together. As students progress in their journey at CACS (especially in middle school), they are asked to reflect on their growth and progress as it relates to our school's *Portrait of a Graduate*.

In each conference, students work with families and staff to craft goals for themselves that meet their needs. For example, our highest-achieving students use this time as an opportunity to explore ways to increase the level of challenge in their schoolwork or push themselves to higher standards. Our struggling students, meanwhile, may use this time to reflect on how effective our interventions have been, marvel at their progress and successes and explore what further changes are needed from the student, the family and the staff to continue to support their learning. For every student, we work to push them to high standards and make sure they are consistently challenging themselves in their work; and conferences allow us an opportunity to summarize our assessments in a holistic fashion, using evidence for portfolios, testing, interviews and other sources.

#### *Fountas & Pinnell Reading Assessments in Grades K-5*

All students in grades K-5 are assessed in reading and early literacy skills using the *Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessments System*®. The assessments are administered three times per year in September, December and May. The primary purpose of the assessment is to measure the reading development of individual students and determine the students' independent and instructional reading level. This data informs teachers' planning of appropriate reading instructions and appropriate student grouping for targeted reading strategies. In addition, the data serves to provide feedback to parents and students about the reading developments made over a given time period. Moreover, the data can be used

to identify students who need extra support, enrichment and targeted reading intervention plans.

### Diagnostic and Interim Math Assessments

All students in grades K-5 are assessed in math using the Bridges in Mathematics assessment system which includes unit pre- and post-assessments; mid-unit check points; number corner assessments; and comprehensive growth performance assessments administered three times each year. All students in grades 6th-8th are assessed in math using the Illustrative Mathematics assessment system which includes pre- and post-assessments, and mid-unit check points and assessments.

### Writing Rubric

CACS teachers create and utilize genre-specific writing rubrics that align with grade-specific content standards. The rubrics assess students' writing for organization, content, purpose, and writing conventions. Frequently, teachers provide students the opportunity to self-assess using a student-friendly rubric, as well as peer assessment. Writing rubrics are used throughout the writer's workshop process, allowing students to understand the goals of the assignment, follow their progress towards these goals, and get feedback from teachers on how to improve their writing to meet the objectives.

### Unit Assessments

For units developed using the *Teaching for Understanding*® framework, teachers create on-going and culminating unit assessments with three questions in mind:

1. What evidence can show that students have achieved desired results?
2. What assessment tasks and other evidence will anchor our curricular units and thus guide instruction?
3. What should we look for to determine the extent of student understanding?

Using the *Teaching for Understanding*® framework, teachers work to make sure that their assessments are valid, reliable, and appropriate to the learning task at hand. These assessments can take the form of projects, short-answer tests, papers, poetry or quizzes. The assessments are used to provide teachers with a picture of what each learner understands so that curriculum and instruction may be adapted and/or differentiated, and the teacher can direct and guide students towards mastery of content and skills. These assessments also offer students multiple opportunities for revision, self-assessment, and student reflection.

Our mission of offering students arts-integrated, project based learning experiences drive the summative unit assessments from integrated units. These projects are designed to be authentic, require the students to address an identified audience, allow the student opportunities to personalize the task, and are open-ended and complex. Based on the *Teaching for Understanding*® framework, these kinds of assessments are most appropriate for measuring "enduring understanding," as opposed to a traditional quiz, which might measure simple content or basic skills. Summative assessments from units are often shared in public Exhibitions of Learning, as described below.

### Exhibition of Learning

Towards the end of each semester, students and families gather to engage with carefully constructed tasks and projects that promote reflection and challenge students to demonstrate and apply new understanding and/or skills in a unique context. During the Exhibition of Learning, students host guests throughout the Charter School demonstrating what they have learned through interactive exhibits, art, experimentation, and oral presentations. This form of public assessment promotes accountability to families and our community, as they directly witness the summative results of students' work. In addition, our faculty has the opportunity to examine the work of their peers, gaining inspiration from colleagues and pushing the staff collectively towards a higher standard of work. These experiences also align to our mission, as students share the work they've done in an arts-integrated, interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum.

Observation/Reflection/Interviews

On an ongoing basis, teachers engage in close observation of student engagement and progress. These observations are tracked through anecdotal notes and/or checklists. Teachers also encourage students to engage in reflection and self-assessment during the onset or wrap-up of daily lessons. Students more formally reflect on their learning before each conference and report card cycle.

**Relationship Between Desired Outcomes and Assessment Methods**

Below we describe the assessments that are used to closely monitor our desired outcomes. The teaching staff use a wide variety of informal assessments as well to guide their teaching, including but not limited to pre-assessments, whole-class and small group discussion, exit tickets, homework, and one-on-one interactions. While these assessments are not listed below, they are used on a daily basis to monitor students' individual progress towards goals and modify curriculum to meet students' needs. We use more formal assessments in a more systematic way, analyzing not only individual student growth, but also programmatic strengths and weaknesses.

<b>CACS Desired Outcomes</b>	<b>CACS Internal Assessment(s)</b>	<b>External Assessment(s)</b>
<b>Proficiency in Language Arts</b>	Fountas & Pinnell Phonics and Phonemic Awareness Assessment (K-1) Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessments (K-5) Writing Unit Rubrics (K-8) Teacher Observation/Interviews Progress Reports	CAASPP ELA assessment (3-8) ELPAC
<b>Proficiency in Mathematics</b>	Standards based diagnostic and formative assessment Bridges - unit assessments and Number Corner assessments Illustrative Mathematics unit assessments Teacher Observation/Interviews Progress Reports	CAASPP Math assessment (3-8)

<b>Proficiency in Science</b>	Demonstrations of Understanding at Exhibition of Learning Student self-assessment/reflection notes End-of-unit assessments Science project rubric Teacher Observation/Interviews Progress Reports	CAST (5 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>Proficiency in History/Social Studies</b>	Demonstrations of Understanding at Exhibition of Learning Student self-assessment/reflection notes End-of-unit assessments Social Studies project rubric Teacher Observation/Interviews Progress Reports	
<b>Development in Art / Music / Dance</b>	Demonstrations of Understanding at Exhibition of Learning Teacher observation and reflection notes Associated rubrics Authentic Portfolios	
<b>Development in Physical Education</b>	Progress Reports Teacher Observation/Interview	California Physical Fitness Test (Grades 5 & 7)
<b>Development in Social Skills</b>	Progress Reports Student self-assessment/reflection notes Teacher Observation/Interview Student survey	

**Alignment of Assessments to Mission, Exit Outcomes and Curriculum**

Our philosophy of summative assessment stems directly from our mission statement, allowing students to use the arts and interdisciplinary study to demonstrate their knowledge in end-of-unit projects. Some of these projects are cross-curricular, while others focus on one academic discipline. All, however, require students to demonstrate understanding by applying new knowledge and skills in a novel, authentic context while employing the arts as a means of communication. Moreover, these projects encourage students to be creative and innovative problem-solvers. These projects manifest themselves in a variety of ways: students may put on plays, build models, interpret literature as dance, create murals, compose music and lyrics or set fractions to music. Whether it be a student-composed and directed musical recounting the events of the Revolutionary War, or “art carts” built in math class demonstrate knowledge of geometry, measurement, and woodworking skills, CACS students are asked to integrate their knowledge and skills in order to create something new. This lies at the heart of our mission, and thus the heart of our assessment system.

Students share their learning in many ways, including our two Exhibitions of Learning per

year, in which students explaining their thinking to an audience of mixed-age peers, parents, families and community members. We see this experience as an opportunity not only for students to practice explain their thinking before an authentic audience, but also as accountability for our school. We put our work before the audiences that matter most to us and demonstrate our students' learning. Our students never cease to amaze us in their ability to think both critically and creatively in all the academic disciplines, as well as non-academic areas.

In accordance with our belief that assessment should inform teaching and learning, we place great importance on formative and ongoing assessments that provide students with the opportunity to track and reflect on their new knowledge and understanding. This aligns with our philosophy of constructivist learning, which recognizes that students enter a learning environment with prior schema, and learning proceeds best when they have opportunities to reflect about the metacognitive changes that occur as they integrate new experiences into their mental models.

Finally, our assessment system is closely tied to our exit outcomes, as described in the table in the previous section of this document. We align our assessment choices based on the kinds of knowledge and skills we are attempting to assess. For enduring understandings, we focus on performance tasks and projects. To evaluate content familiarity or basic skills, more traditional testing is a more effective assessment tool. To the extent practicable, the method for measuring pupil outcomes for state priorities shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a school accountability report card.

Assessments are also tied to our curricular model. We implement integrated units and interdisciplinary connections, and as such, our project-based assessments are integrated and interdisciplinary as well. In the elementary grades, these connections happen within a single classroom, with students writing about history or using math to interpret science. At the middle school level, teachers work across subjects to integrate their work, so that social studies teachers may include statistical analysis in their study of historical data, or our Director of Arts Programming may collaborate with the science teacher to support a model-building activity in astronomy. The project-based assessments that come from these collaborative and integrated efforts reflect that learning is multidimensional and may focus on multiple disciplines and skills at one time.

### **Use and Communication of Assessment Data**

CACS uses the multiple forms of assessment in the core subject area to inform curriculum and instruction. Reading, writing, and math assessment data is carefully analyzed by grade-level teams in order to determine re-engagement strategies and modifications that will lead to greater levels of student understanding. The results of assessments are shared with students on an ongoing basis, as well as with parents and guardians multiple times throughout the course of the year.

Parent teacher conferences take place in October and March. Report cards are sent home at the end of the semester in December and May. Progress reports are sent home mid-way through the semester for students identified as needing academic or behavioral interventions. Classroom performances take place at various times throughout the semester, and the culminating Exhibitions of Learning happen at the end of each semester. It is our

hope that the sharing of student assessment data will help to inform students, parents, and teachers about how to support improved educational outcomes.

In 2017-18, CACS established an Educational Data Task Force consisting of Teachers, Admin and Board members. The Task Force's intention was to establish best practices, systems, and processes to collect, analyze and uncover actionable insights from data in order to improve student learning, instructional practices, and school climate. In 2017-18 the Task Force focused on Math and Community Surveys. In 2018-19, the Educational Data Task Force became part of the Educational Program Committee as it played an important role in teacher and student success in 2017-18.

## Element D: Governance Structure

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

The Charter School is a directly funded independent charter school and is operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation, pursuant to California law.

The Charter School will operate autonomously from the District, with the exception of the supervisory oversight as required by statute and other contracted services as may be negotiated between the District and the Charter School. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), the District shall not be liable for the debts and obligations of the Charter School, operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation, or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by the Charter School, as long as the District has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law.

CACS has maintained 501(c) (3) tax-exempt status as a California non-profit organization since 1994. The organization has Bylaws (**Appendix F**) 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. Also attached as **Appendix G** are the CACS Articles of Incorporation.

The Charter School will be governed by a Board of Directors, in accordance with its adopted bylaws, which shall be consistent with the terms of this charter.

The authorized number of directors shall be 15, unless, as described below, the District exercises its right to appoint a representative under Education Code Section 47604(b), in which case the number of directors shall be sixteen (16). Each director shall hold office for 2 year terms. After serving a term, directors may be reelected for subsequent terms. Directors shall be elected and/or appointed pursuant to the Bylaws.

A list of current board of directors' members can be found in **Appendix H**. A majority of the remaining directors shall consist of parents who are members of this corporation.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47604(b), the District may decide to designate a representative to serve as a 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 CACS organization chart is attached in ***Appendix I***.

### **Scope of the Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is the Charter School's governing body and consists at least one (1) employee of the Corporation and at least two (2) "greater community" directors—who are neither CACS parents nor other interested parties—and the majority of the remaining directors shall consist of parents who are members of this corporation.

The CACS Board complies with the Brown Act, guaranteeing the public's right to attend and participate in CACS Board of Director meetings. The CACS Board is responsible for setting policy for the Charter School, overseeing school governance, and ensuring both short and long-term financial stability. This governing Board is also legally required by our Charter School's non-profit 501(c)(3) status. Board members support the mission of the Charter School and ensure that the work of school leadership and the board committees/individuals are aligned with the school mission (Current Committees include Finance, Facilities, Development, Governance, Strategic Planning, and Teacher Retention, Diversity Outreach). The Board actively seeks to represent our school community in race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender orientation, physical and learning differences, and socio-economic class. We also seek more engagement from parents/caregivers of middle school students.

### **Board Responsibilities:**

- Ensure financial stability of the Charter School
- Set and approve the Charter School budgets
- Ensure adequate financial resources (raise funds and resources)
- Hire, supervise, evaluate, discipline, and dismiss the Executive Director (when necessary) and review his/her performance
- Maintain an effective Board of Directors (recruit and orient new members, support committee and governance structures, meet Board responsibilities, etc.)
- Represent the organization to the public (promote the Charter School, build partnerships, raise awareness and interest)
- Negotiate all legal contracts and ensure legal integrity (includes negotiating contracts with our teachers' union)
- Support the mission, set policy and strategic goals for the Charter School
- Execute all applicable responsibilities provided for in the California Corporations Code
- Participate in the dispute resolution procedure and complaint procedures when necessary
- Approve charter amendments as necessary and submit requests for material revisions as necessary to the District for consideration
- Contract with an external independent auditor to produce an annual financial audit according to generally accepted accounting practices

- Approve annual independent fiscal audit
- Appoint an administrative plan or act as a hearing body and take action on recommended student expulsions

The Board may initiate and carry on any program or activity or may otherwise act in a manner which is not in conflict with or inconsistent with or preempted by any law and which are not in conflict with this charter or the purposes for which schools are established.

The Board shall follow policies and procedures regarding self-dealing and conflicts of interest, as laid out in the bylaws. The Board may initiate and carry out any program or activity that is not in conflict with or inconsistent with any law and which is not in conflict with the purposes for which charter schools are established.

The Board may execute any powers delegated to it by law and shall discharge any duty imposed by law upon it and may delegate to an employee of the Charter School any of those duties with the exception of budget approval or revision, approval of the fiscal audit and performance report, and the adoption of Board policies. The Board however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated. Such delegation will:

- Be in writing;
- Specify the entity designated;
- Describe in specific terms the authority of the Board of Directors being delegated, any conditions on the delegated authority or its exercise and the beginning and ending dates of the delegation; and
- Require an affirmative vote of a majority of Board members.

The Board of Directors is responsible for formal policy-making, and the Executive Director is responsible for making decisions and implementing programs consistent with school policy.

### **Board Meetings**

The Board of Directors meets monthly August through June, generally on the third Tuesday of the month starting at 6:30pm at CACS. Meetings typically last 2.5-3 hours. In compliance with the Brown Act, all board agendas are posted to our internal communication site and physically at the Charter School at least 72 hours in advance. All board materials, including meeting minutes, are made available to the public. An annual one-day board planning retreat is typically held on a weekend day in August or September and attended by all board members to review the strategic plan and set annual goals for committees and in line with our strategic plan. The Charter School Board of Directors will also attend an annual in-service for the purposes of training individual board members on their responsibilities with topics to include, at minimum, conflicts of interest and the Brown Act. Committees of the board meet approximately once a month, pending their respective work agenda, with some additional time required between meetings.

Monthly board meetings always have a time set aside at the beginning of the meeting for public comment and members of the public may make public comment before any agenda item. Meetings generally include a monthly financial update from our Finance Committee as well as committee updates on progress towards strategic goals set at the annual retreat.

The Executive Director gives a report on important updates and celebrations of the Charter School.

### **Board Committees**

The CACS 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. Board Members have a responsibility to solicit input from, and opinions of, the parents of students, the faculty and staff regarding issues of significance and to weigh the input and opinions carefully before taking action. The following describes committees and their activities in more detail:

- Finance Committee: Chaired by the Executive Director or treasurer; prepares fiscal budget, oversees annual audit, reports to board on the financial condition of the Charter School.
- Hiring Committee: When an Executive Director opening exists, a hiring committee is created to review resumes, interview candidates and make recommendations to the Board.
- Development 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 Charter School's and classroom's assigned fundraising activities.
- Diversity and Outreach Committee: Works with Charter School administration/Board to coordinate activities that "spread the word" about the Charter School to the general public, targeting the diverse families of San Francisco (e.g. coordinating school fair booths, hosting open houses, connecting with preschools, etc.). More information can be found in Element G.
- Facilities Committee: Makes recommendations to the Executive Director and Board regarding facilities related issues.
- Teacher and Staff Support: Engages and responds to teachers and staff through surveys, in-person sessions, and ongoing conversation to support teacher retention at CACS. Committed to providing opportunity for teachers and staff to grow and flourish professionally and creatively.
- Governance Committee: The Governance Committee ensures that the Board of Directors provides effective governance for the Charter School.

The Executive 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.

CACS shall comply with the Brown Act. Also, CACS has adopted a Conflict of Interest Code which complies with the Political Reform Act, Corporations Code Conflicts of Interest rules, and which shall be updated with any charter school specific conflicts of interest laws or regulations. See **Appendix J** for the Conflicts of Interest Code.

### **Parental Involvement in Governance**

#### 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. With the goal of supporting family involvement, the FA was formed. The FA works with the Diversity/Outreach Committee and Development Committee to encourage volunteers and build community morale by coordinating social events, work parties and clean up days.

Family participation is also crucial to the daily operations of CACS, with families/guardians volunteering their time and talents to support classroom activities, after school programs, fundraising events and the governance of the Charter 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 asked to contribute 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. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47605(n), the Charter School may encourage parental involvement, but shall notify the parents and guardians of applicant pupils and currently enrolled pupils that parental involvement is not a requirement for acceptance to, or continued enrollment at, the Charter School.

#### Family Volunteer Opportunities

CACS believes that at the core of any great community is a desire to make meaningful connections. It is upon this premise that we have created a robust system for volunteerism that focuses on creating meaningful opportunities for involvement. When a family joins the CACS community, they are provided with a survey about their interests, areas of expertise, and personal desires for making connection with the Charter School and their student's educational journey. Our Family Association works hard to connect families to the opportunities that are meaningful to them and allow them to gain a sense of connection to the Charter School, its mission, and its community. In addition, CACS chooses not to put the burden of major fundraising on its Family Association and instead relies on the Board of Directors, Executive Director and Director of Arts Programming and Resource Development instead. This allows our families to spend more time making connections and building lasting relationships all in support of student success.

CACS encourages families to donate volunteer hours to the community during the school year. Volunteer opportunities include ways for working families to help out with organizational or preparation tasks from home, and/or participation in school activities and volunteering including, but not limited to:

- Volunteering in the classroom
- Joining committees (family association, planning, diversity and outreach, data analysis, etc)
- Chaperoning Field trips
- Attending school meetings, including Board of Directors, Family Association, or various project committees
- Providing administrative or other programmatic support to teachers or other staff

- Supporting extracurricular activities such as dances, athletics, etc.
- Sharing relevant expertise that aligns with current curriculum
- Donating space for arts openings and events
- Sharing cultural heritage

CACS further builds family involvement into its structure through community meetings. The staff and Board hold meetings regarding Charter School matters, community issues, the Charter School's governance process, etc. All parents are encouraged to attend, with times and dates posted on the Charter School's website, in the online calendar and on the Charter School bulletin boards. No child will be excluded from CACS or school activities due to the failure of his or her parent or legal guardian to fulfill the encouraged 20 hours of participation.

## Element E: Employee Qualifications

*"The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the charter school." Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(E).*

### **Assurances**

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(1), the Charter School is nonsectarian in its employment practices and all other operations. The Charter School will not discriminate against any individual (employee or pupil) on the basis of 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, including immigration status or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics), or any other characteristic prohibited by state or federal law.

The Charter School complies with Education Code Sections 44237 and 45125.1 regarding the requirement to fingerprint and obtain background clearance of employees and contractors. Applicants for employment must submit two sets of fingerprints to the California Department of Justice for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. The Executive Director shall monitor compliance with this policy and report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis. The Board President monitors fingerprinting and background clearance of the Executive Director. Employees are assessed and examined (if necessary) for tuberculosis prior to commencing employment and working with students, and at least once each four years thereafter, as required by Education Code Section 49406. Employees must furnish all documents establishing legal employment status.

The Charter School complies with the provisions of ESSA as they apply to certificated and paraprofessional employees of charter schools. The Charter School employs or retains teachers who hold Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificates, permits, or other documents equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold.

### **General Employment Provisions**

#### ESSA and Credentialing Requirements

The Charter School shall ensure that all teachers meet applicable state requirements for certificated employment, including the provisions of Education Code section 47605(l) and the applicable provision of ESSA. The Charter School shall maintain current copies of all teacher credentials and make them readily available for inspection.

Pursuant to Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 80003, teachers with a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential may (a) teach all subjects in a self-contained class; (b) teach in a team teaching setting or regroup students across classrooms; (c) teach core classes to students in grades five through eight; (d) teach any of the core subjects he/she is teaching to a single group of students in the same grade level as the core classes for less than 50% of his/her work day; and (e) teach limited-English proficient pupils and English language development classes pursuant to the requirements under Section 80003(e)(1) and (2).

### **Qualifications of Employees**

All employees of the Charter School shall be employees of CACS, an equal employment opportunity employer. Unlawful discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law is strictly prohibited.

Employees' job duties and work basis are negotiated in individual contracts. General job descriptions have been developed for the administrative staff, teachers, other certificated staff, office personnel and classified staff.

The Board of Directors is responsible for hiring and supervising the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall embody, advocate, and put into operation the mission, vision and strategic direction of CACS, and oversee all aspects of the organization, including financial, operational, educational operations, and strategic planning. The Executive Director shall not be a member of the Board of Directors but shall fulfill the role of the corporation's general manager and shall have general supervision, direction and control over the corporation's business and officers, subject to the control of the Board of Directors.

### **Executive Director**

The Executive Director is responsible for the administration of the Charter School in all aspects of its day-to-day operations. He or she will work with the Board of Directors, the District, students, parents, and community members to ensure effective school operations and implementation of the educational program. The Executive Director is required to possess the following qualifications: a bachelor's degree, five years' experience in a public school setting as a teacher and/or administrator and an administrative credential. A master's degree is preferred. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors.

### **Lower School Administrator**

The Lower School Administrator is responsible for ensuring high levels of achievement for all learners (K-5) in their academic, artistic, social, and emotional development, in line with the CACS mission, vision, philosophy and values. The Lower School Administrator works collaboratively to oversee professional development for faculty, ongoing curriculum development and documentation, and the advancement of a comprehensive system for assessing the Charter School's institutional framework for teaching and learning. The Lower School Administrator is required to possess the following qualifications: a bachelor's degree, five years' experience in a public school setting as a teacher and/or administrator and an administrative credential. A master's degree is preferred. The Lower School Administrator reports to the Executive Director.

### **Middle School Administrator**

The Middle School Administrator is responsible for ensuring high levels of achievement for all learners (6-8) in their academic, artistic, social, and emotional development, in line with the CACS mission, vision, philosophy and values. In addition, the Middle School Administrator is responsible for instructional leadership for 6th-8th grade teachers and staff, school culture and climate leadership in the middle school, and the organizational management and operation of middle school in assigned areas, while collaborating with the

administration, staff and K-5 teachers. The Middle School Administrator is required to possess the following qualifications: a bachelor's degree, five years' experience in a public school setting as a teacher and/or administrator and an administrative credential. A master's degree is preferred. The Middle School Administrator reports to the Executive Director.

### **Director of Arts Programming and Resource Development**

The Director of Arts Programming and Resource Development (DAPRD) will play an integral role in the Charter School's institutional advancement efforts, by broadening community awareness and support of CACS. In line with the Charter School's increased focus on creating a network of supporters outside the school community, the DAPRD will identify and capitalize on opportunities to connect CACS to organizations and people who can financially support the school. In conjunction with these efforts, the DAPRD is responsible for providing leadership for the continued development of the arts program and the arts integration component of the Charter School's mission. The DAPRD is required to possess the following qualifications: a bachelor's degree and five years' experience in a public school setting as a teacher and/or administrator. Expertise in arts-integration best practices with familiarity with Harvard's Project Zero practices and a master's degree are preferred. The DAPRD reports to the Executive Director.

### **Director of Operations**

The Director of Operations is responsible for oversight in the following areas: HR compliance and support, admissions process and support, technology support, facilities maintenance and safety, emergency plan development and training, payroll & A/P, A/R and Executive Director support. The Director of Operations is required to possess the following qualifications: a bachelor's degree with five years' experience in a similar position. Previous experience in a public school setting is preferred. The Director of Operations reports to the Executive Director.

### **Administrative Assistant**

The Administrative Assistant is responsible for business support including payroll, accounts payable and receivable and overall administrative support for ongoing projects. The Administrative Assistant is required to possess the following qualifications: a bachelor's degree with previous administrative assistant experience is preferred. The Administrative Assistant reports to the Director of Operations.

### **Office Manager**

The Office Manager is responsible for being the main point of contact for all families at Creative Arts Charter School. They are responsible for all clerk duties, medication management, attendance record keeping and supply ordering for all staff. The Office Manager is required to possess the following qualifications: a bachelor's degree with previous office management experience is preferred. The Office Manager reports to the Director of Operations.

### **Librarian/Literacy Support Specialist**

The Librarian/Literacy Support Specialist serves as a resource for literacy support and, in collaboration with teaching staff, provides learning activities that are integrated into the Charter School's curriculum and teach information literacy skills to support and connect to projects and units. This position focuses intervention through push-in and pull-out services

to Kinder through second grade students. The Librarian is responsible for maintaining the collection of books and ensuring all students have equal access. The Librarian/Literacy Support Specialist is required to possess the following qualifications: MA Degree in Library and Information Science; Elementary Multiple Subject Teaching Credential; minimum of five years demonstrated teaching experience in a constructivist learning environment; and a background in interdisciplinary curriculum development. The Librarian/Literacy Support Specialist reports to the Lower School Administrator.

### **Math Intervention Specialist**

The Math Intervention Specialist serves in a professional capacity as an active member of the Charter School community and as a faculty team member of the school. This position has the primary responsibility of collaborating and supporting administrators and teachers to help identify and support students needing remedial math intervention. Intervention is done through both push-in and pull-out models. The Math Intervention Specialist is required to possess the following qualifications: a bachelor's degree, five years' experience in a public school setting as an upper grade (4th-8th) teacher with demonstrative success in math instruction. A master's degree is preferred. The Math Intervention Specialist reports to the Middle School Administrator.

### Qualifications

#### **Teachers**

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 47605(I). For the purpose of this section, core academic classes shall be mathematics, language arts, science, and history/social studies. All credential/certification documentation is maintained on file at CACS and shall be subject to periodic inspection by the District.

CACS also employs 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**

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

#### **District Employees**

San Francisco Unified School District shall not require any employee of the 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 IEPs.

## Element F: Health and Safety

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

- (i) That each employee of the charter school furnish the charter school with a criminal record summary as described in Section 44237.*
- (ii) The development of a school safety plan, which shall include the safety topics listed in subparagraphs (A) to (H), inclusive, of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 32282 and procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents.*
- (iii) That the school safety plan be reviewed and updated by March 1 of every year by the charter school.” Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(F).*

In order to provide safety for all students and staff, the CACS Board of Directors adopts and implements full health and safety procedures and risk management policies at the school site in consultation with its insurance carriers and risk management experts. These policies are incorporated into the Charter School’s student and employee handbooks and are reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Executive Director and Board of Directors. The Charter School shall ensure that staff are trained annually on the health and safety policies.

The following is a summary of the health and safety policies and procedures of CACS.

### ***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 Education Code Sections 44237 and 45125.1. Applicants for employment must submit two sets of fingerprints to the California Department of Justice for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. The Charter School shall not hire any person, in either a certificated or classified position, who has been convicted of a violent or serious felony except as otherwise provided by law, pursuant to Education Code Sections 44830.1 and 45122.1. The Executive Director shall monitor compliance with this policy and report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis. The Board President shall monitor the fingerprinting and background clearance of the Executive 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 employees will be mandated child abuse reporters and will follow all applicable reporting laws, the same policies and procedures used by the District. The Charter School shall provide mandated reporter training to all employees annually in accordance with Education Code Section 44691.

### ***Tuberculosis Testing***

Employees, and volunteers who have frequent or prolonged contact with students, will be assessed and examined (if necessary) for tuberculosis prior to commencing employment and working with students, and for employees at least once each four years thereafter, as required by Education Code Section 49406.

### ***Immunizations***

All enrolled students who receive classroom-based instruction will be required to provide records documenting immunizations as is required at all public schools pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 120325-120375, and Title 17, California Code of Regulations Sections 6000- 6075. All rising 7th grade students must be immunized with a pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine booster.

### ***Medication in School***

CACS adheres to Education Code Section 49423 regarding administration of medication in school.

### ***Emergency Epinephrine Auto-injectors***

The Charter School adheres to Education Code Section 49414 regarding the provision and use of emergency epinephrine auto-injectors, and training for staff members.

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

Students are screened for vision, hearing and scoliosis. CACS adheres to Education Code Section 49450, *et seq.*, as applicable to the grade levels served by CACS.

### ***Diabetes***

CACS provides an information sheet regarding type 2 diabetes to the parent or guardian of incoming 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, pursuant to Education Code Section 49452.7. The information sheet shall include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

1. A description of type-2 diabetes.
2. A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes.
3. A recommendation that students displaying or possibly suffering from risk factors or warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes should be screened for type 2 diabetes.
4. A description of treatments and prevention methods of type 2 diabetes.
5. A description of the different types of diabetes screening tests available.

### ***Suicide Prevention Policy***

The Charter School maintains a policy on student suicide prevention in accordance with Education Code Section 215.

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

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

### ***California Healthy Youth Act***

The Charter School shall teach sexual health education and human immunodeficiency virus (“HIV”) prevention education to students in grades 7-8, at least once, pursuant to the California Healthy Youth Act (Education Code Section 51930, *et seq.*).

### ***Comprehensive School Safety Plan***

The Charter School shall adopt a Comprehensive School Safety Plan, to be reviewed and updated by March 1 of every year, which shall include, but not be limited to: (1) an assessment of the current status of school crime committed on Charter School facilities and

at Charter School-related functions; and (2) identifying appropriate strategies and programs that will provide or maintain a high level of school safety and address the Charter School's procedures for complying with applicable laws related to school safety, which shall include the development of all of the following pursuant to Education Code Section 32282(a)(2)(A)-(J):

- child abuse reporting procedures
- routine and emergency disaster procedures
- policies for students who committed an act under Section 48915 and other Charter School-designated serious acts leading to suspension, expulsion, or mandatory expulsion recommendations[SHP3]
- procedures to notify teachers of dangerous students pursuant to Education Code Section 49079
- a discrimination and harassment policy consistent with Education Code Section 200
- provisions of any schoolwide dress code that prohibits students from wearing "gang-related apparel," if applicable
- procedures for safe ingress and egress of pupils, parents, and employees to and from the Charter School
- a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning
- the rules and procedures on Charter School discipline
- procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents [SHP4]

### ***Emergency Preparedness***

The Charter School maintains and adheres to a Comprehensive School Safety Plan, described above, drafted specifically to the needs of the facility in conjunction with law enforcement and the Fire Marshal. This Comprehensive School Safety Plan specifies response protocols to varied emergency situations, including but not limited to: fire, earthquake, active shooter, missing student, bomb threats, and incidents in the surrounding area. The Charter School adheres to this plan to address the need of the school site. Emergency drills are held periodically and as required for fire, earthquake and lockdown scenarios. Staff are provided training on emergency and first aid response annually with review throughout the year. All staff are required to maintain CPR and First Aid certifications with renewal every two(2) years.

### ***Blood Borne Pathogens***

CACS shall meet state and federal standards for dealing with blood borne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials in the workplace. The Board shall establish a written infectious control plan designed to protect employees and students from possible infection due to contact with bloodborne viruses, including human immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis B virus (HBV). All staff is trained on the handling of blood borne pathogens annually. All required equipment for handling blood borne pathogens is available on site. 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-, Alcohol-, and Smoke-Free Environment***

CACS shall function as a drug-, alcohol-, and smoke-free environment. This is included in our staff handbook and all staff review this policy together at the start of each school year.

**Facility Safety**

CACS complies with Education Code Section 47610 by utilizing facilities that are either compliant with the Field Act or facilities that are compliant with the California Building Standards Code. CACS tests sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms annually at its facilities to ensure that they are maintained in an operable condition at all times. CACS conducts fire drills as required under Education Code Section 32001 and in conjunction with the District.

**Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policies and Procedures**

The Charter School is committed to providing a school that is free from discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as any harassment based upon the actual or perceived characteristics of race, religion, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, national origin, ancestry, ethnic group identification, genetic information, age, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, sex and pregnancy, physical or mental disability, childbirth or related medical conditions, military and veteran status, denial of family and medical care leave, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. The Charter School has developed a comprehensive policy to prevent and immediately remediate any concerns about 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 is addressed in accordance with the Charter School's anti-discrimination and harassment policies. The full policy and associated procedures are included in the Staff Handbook.

## Element G: Means to Achieve Racial and Ethnic Balance

*“The means by which the charter 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.” Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(G).*

CACS seeks to reflect the increasingly diverse world in which our students live. We embrace differences and commonalities across race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender orientation, physical and learning differences, and socio-economic class, as well as other characteristics that construct our unique human identities.

In 2007, CACS established a Diversity and Outreach Committee comprised of administrators, teachers, Board members, and families charged with the goal of developing clear strategies and tactics for achieving the Charter School’s diversity goals and ensuring that all families feel included as part of the CACS community. The Committee established the following overarching vision for this work:

*CACS students, faculty, and board reflect the diversity of SFUSD families. Our students succeed and thrive in an equitable learning environment that values integration of multiple viewpoints and high expectations for all.*

- *CACS students, faculty, and board members reflect the diversity of SFUSD families in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender orientation, family structure, physical and learning abilities and socio-economic class.*
- *Family participation reflects the diversity of CACS through varied activities so that all families feel included, valued, and empowered to share their perspectives, cultures, talents, etc.*
- *The CACS community inclusively incorporates multiple viewpoints — including multiculturalism and social justice — in active and open dialogue.*

### **Diversity and Outreach Committee**

CACS works to inform families of its program and develop and implement appropriate student recruitment strategies to ensure an ethnic and racial balance among students that is reflective of the general population residing within San Francisco Unified School District. The Diversity and Outreach Committee actively recruits diverse families to apply to CACS and enrich the Charter School’s racial, ethnic, family lifestyle and socioeconomic diversity by implementing the following efforts as necessary:

- Bring diverse families 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;
- Make local school visits;

- Ensure an enrollment process that includes a timeline that allows for a broad-based recruiting and application process;
- Offer a range of evening tours to meet the needs of working families; and
- Invite local community members and SF residents to participate in school-wide events, including Fall Fair and Exhibitions of Learning.

In addition to its outreach efforts, a large portion of CACS Diversity and Outreach Committee's ongoing work is to ensure that all families feel included and informed. As such, the committee is committed to providing opportunities for community and family education around relevant topics. Some of previous events have included "Talking to your Children About Race" and "Gender Diversity and How to be an Ally." The Committee also seeks to create safe and inclusive spaces for our diverse populations in both affinity and as part of the broader school community.

## **Element H: Admission Policies and Procedures**

*“Admission policies and procedures, consistent with [Education Code Section 47605] subdivision (d).”  
Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(H).*

CACS admits all pupils who are eligible to attend the Charter School up to capacity. CACS complies with all laws establishing minimum and maximum age for public school attendance in charter schools. No test or assessment is administered to students prior to acceptance and enrollment into the Charter School. Admission, except in the case of a public random drawing, is not determined by the place of residence of the pupil or his or her parent or legal guardian within the state, with the exception of priority given to residents of San Francisco. In accordance with Education Code Sections 49011 and 47605(d)(2)(B)(iv), admission preferences shall not require mandatory parental volunteer hours as a criterion for admission or continued enrollment.

### **Documentation of Admissions and Enrollment Processes**

The Charter School shall maintain complete and accurate records of its annual admissions and enrollment processes, including but not limited to documentation of implementation of lottery and waitlist criteria and procedures in accordance with the terms of the Charter. These records shall be made available to the District upon request.

### **Homeless and Foster Youth**

The Charter School shall adhere to the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths. The Charter School shall provide specific information, in its outreach materials, websites, at community meetings, open forums and regional center meetings that notifies parents that the Charter School is open to enroll and provide services for all students and provides a contact number for access to additional information regarding enrollment. The Charter School shall comply with all applicable provisions of Education Code Sections 48850 – 48859.

### **Non-Discrimination**

The Charter School is nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, and all other operations, and will not charge tuition or discriminate against any student based upon any of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220. The Charter School shall not require a parent/legal guardian/student to provide information regarding a student’s disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, legal or economic status, primary language or English Learner status, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, or any other information that would violate federal or state law, prior to admission, participation in any admissions or attendance lottery, or pre-enrollment event or process or as a condition of admission or enrollment. The Charter School may request, at the time of, and as part of, conducting its lottery process, the provision of information necessary to apply specific admissions preferences set forth in this Charter.

The Charter School shall not request or require submission of a student's IEP, 504 Plan, or any other record or related information prior to admission, participation in any admissions or attendance lottery, or pre-enrollment event or process or as a condition of admission or enrollment.

### **Admission Process and Open Enrollment**

CACS follows the same admissions timeline as SFUSD with regard to open enrollment and a very similar date of initial admission offers. When the process differs, CACS ensures its dates are earlier than SFUSD's, not later.

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

### **Public Random Drawing Procedures**

When the number of applicants exceeds capacity, CACS will hold a public random digital drawing to determine admission for the impacted grade level, with the exception of existing students, who are guaranteed admission in the following school year. Admission preferences in the case of a public random drawing will be granted to students according to the following order:

1. Children of current staff members who reside in the district
2. Siblings of students admitted to or attending the Charter School who reside in the district
3. Entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade students who currently reside in San Francisco Public Housing as defined by the SF Public Housing Authority, not to exceed 5% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade capacity, and entering kindergarten students who currently reside in San Francisco Public Housing as defined by the SF Public Housing Authority, not to exceed 10% of kindergarten capacity
4. Residents of the San Francisco Unified School District

The Charter School and the District agree to adhere to the requirements related to admission preferences set forth in Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B)(i)-(iv).

The Board of Directors will take all necessary efforts to ensure lottery procedures are fairly executed. Lottery spaces are pulled in order of grade level by the designated lottery official (appointed by the Executive Director). Separate lotteries shall be conducted for each grade in which there are fewer vacancies than pupils interested in attending. All lotteries shall take place on the same day in a single location. Lotteries will be conducted in ascending order beginning with the lowest applicable grade level. There is no weighted priority assigned to the preference categories; rather, within each grade level, students will be drawn from pools beginning with all applicants who qualify for the first preference category, and shall continue with that preference category until all vacancies within that grade level have been filled. If

there are more students in a preference category than there are spaces available, a random drawing will be held from within that preference category until all available spaces are filled. If all students from the preference category have been selected and there are remaining spaces available in that grade level, students from the second preference category will be drawn in the lottery, and the drawing shall continue until all spaces are filled and preference categories are exhausted in the order provided above.

At the conclusion of the public random drawing, all students who were not granted admission due to capacity shall be put onto a waitlist according to their draw in the lottery. This waitlist will allow students the option of enrollment in the case of an opening during the current school year. In no circumstance will a waitlist carry over to the following school year.

Siblings and/or twins applying are placed in the lottery separately. Families must complete registration for the sibling who is offered a space, and then, at that point, the other sibling(s) will move to the top of the waitlist for their grade level.

Public random drawing rules, deadlines, dates and times are communicated in the application form and on the CACS website and any associated third party enrollment sites. CACS aligns its important application and enrollment dates with SFUSD to ensure families have all the information they need at the time of registration. Public notice for the date and time of the public random drawing is posted once the application deadline has passed. CACS has a representative from SFUSD at the lottery each year.

The lottery is done online with all priority tiers in place per grade level. Once the lottery is complete, it is reviewed carefully for accuracy. A waitlist is formed directly from the lottery and all families are notified of their place as a result of the lottery via email and/or (depending on their own preferences chosen at time of applying) regular mail within two(2) weeks of the lottery date.

In the case that all lottery names have been exhausted and an open position becomes available in a grade, another lottery will take place with any applications that have been received since the closure of the first application window. For any lottery that must take place after the first, the siblings will be placed in the lottery separately. Only the grade that has exhausted the waiting list will have a lottery.

After the lottery is held, enrollment and waiting list notifications will be mailed and/or emailed to applicants. Enrollment notifications will include enrollment paperwork and must be returned by the date indicated in the notification. If CACS does not receive the completed enrollment packet by the date required, CACS will deem the parent to have declined the spot and remove the student from the waiting list.

The enrollment packet (sent automatically online) includes the following documents:

- SFUSD registration form for Charter Schools
- CACS registration form
- Immunization requirements for public school entry and request for complete and up-to-date immunization records prior to school start date
- Medication form for Dr. if student takes medicine at school
- Emergency contact form

- A request for IEP, 504, or SST documents if the student has Special Education services
- “Tell us about your child” form for submission to teacher
- Family Agreement Form
- Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Uploads List; proof of birth for student, proof of residency, photo ID for parent/Guardian

When a space becomes available in a grade level for a current school year, the space will be offered to the first name on the waiting list for that grade level. Families/guardians will be notified of available spots via the phone number and email provided on the lottery application form. Families/guardians will have two (2) business days to accept the available space and schedule a start date. If CACS does not receive a response within two (2) business days, CACS will deem the family/guardians to have declined the available space and will remove the student from the waiting list.

### **Planned Application, Public Random Drawing and Admission Schedule**

Public random drawing rules, deadlines, dates and times will be communicated in the application website and on the Charter School’s website. The following timelines are estimates based upon the current calendar and are subject to change as necessary to accommodate school holidays and scheduling conflicts.

- September: Applications for the following academic school year are made available at CACS main office and online at CACS’s website (<https://creativeartscharter.org/application/>).
- Early-Mid January (aligned with SFUSD): Application window to be included in lottery closes
- First week of March: Public random lottery conducted
- Mid-March (aligned with SFUSD): Admission notification and enrollment packets distributed to parents whose children have been drawn in the public random drawing
- Early May (aligned with SFUSD): Completed enrollment packets due back to CACS for all first round offers. Families who wish to register must come to the school site at 1601 Turk St. to do so. CACS will work with any family that has extenuating circumstances to ensure they can still register if they are unable to come to the school site.

### **Waitlist**

The random public lottery determines applicants' wait list status. Those who apply after the initial lottery deadline in January will be kept in a separate pool, in the order received. As mentioned above, if the wait list generated by the lottery is empty, then another lottery for this additional pool will take place.

Vacancies that occur during the school year are filled according to the waitlist. When an offer occurs during the school year, families are contacted in the order of the waitlist and are given 48 hours to decide whether or not to accept a space at the Charter School and schedule a start date. In the event that no such wait list exists where the space is available, the space is made available on a first come, first served basis to the next interested family at the appropriate grade level.

The waitlist for the current school year remains active through the end of March at which point CACS no longer accepts mid-year transfers. Applications are only valid for the current year. Applicants must re-apply for the lottery annually if the Charter School is unable to offer them admission for the current year.

## Element 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.” Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(l).*

An annual independent financial audit of the books and records of CACS is conducted as required by Education Code Sections 47605(b)(5)(l) and 47605(m). The books and records of CACS are kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and as required by applicable law, the audit will employ generally accepted accounting procedures. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with applicable provisions within the California Code of Regulations governing audits of charter schools as published in the State Controller’s K-12 Audit Guide.

The CACS Board of Directors shall hire a qualified auditor through a request for proposal format. The auditor will have, at a minimum, a CPA and educational institution audit experience and will be approved by the State Controller on its published list as an educational audit provider. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars.

The annual audit will be completed and forwarded to the District, the State Controller, and to the CDE by the 15th of December of each year. The school’s audit committee will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the Charter School’s Board of Directors with recommendations on how to resolve them. The Board of Directors will report to SFUSD regarding how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved to the satisfaction of SFUSD along with an anticipated timeline for the same. 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.

Audit appeals or requests for summary review shall be submitted to the Education Audit Appeals Panel (EAAP) in accordance with applicable law.

The independent financial audit of CACS is a public record to be provided to the public upon request.

## Element J: Suspension and Expulsion Procedures

*"The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled from the charter school for disciplinary reasons or otherwise involuntarily removed from the charter school for any reason. These procedures, at a minimum, shall include an explanation of how the charter school will comply with federal and state constitutional procedural and substantive due process requirements that is consistent with all of the following:*

*(i) For suspensions of fewer than 10 days, provide oral or written notice of the charges against the pupil and, if the pupil denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence that supports the charges and an opportunity for the pupil to present his or her side of the story.*

*(ii) For suspensions of 10 days or more and all other expulsions for disciplinary reasons, both of the following:*

*(I) Provide timely, written notice of the charges against the pupil and an explanation of the pupil's basic rights.*

*(II) Provide a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer within a reasonable number of days at which the pupil has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate.*

*(iii) Contain a clear statement that no pupil shall be involuntarily removed by the charter school for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the pupil has been provided written notice of intent to remove the pupil no less than five school days before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian or, if the pupil is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the pupil's educational rights holder, and shall inform him or her of the right to initiate the procedures specified in clause (ii) before the effective date of the action. If the pupil's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder initiates the procedures specified in clause (ii), the pupil shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the charter school issues a final decision. For purposes of this clause, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions specified in clauses (i) and (ii)." Ed. Code § 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 Charter 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. CACS may seek guidance from, or work in conjunction with, SFUSD Pupil Services Department when handling student expulsion proceedings. All disciplinary actions are documented in accordance with existing State requirements and reported via CALPADs.

### **Restorative Justice Practices**

CACS adopted a Restorative Justice approach with the intention of reducing suspensions, increasing attendance, and improved academic achievement. Our Charter School staff was trained in August 2015 by Community Matters, a Bay Area organization whose mission is to "to equip and empower students and adults to create schools and communities that are safe, welcoming and inclusive."

Restorative Practices is an approach that offers both proactive and responsive strategies for strengthening relationships. Restorative Practices offers a means to develop relationships that are essential to building community so that conflict is lessened. When conflict does arise, since conflict is natural, Restorative Practices also helps build the skills needed to manage conflict and behavior, meet the needs of all impacted, and restore relationships.

Over the years, our approach to discipline and consequences has evolved as our work with Restorative Justice practices have evolved. We use Restorative circles with the intention for conflict resolution, healing, support, decision making, information exchange and relationship development and healing. Students, families, and staff have expressed a shared understanding moving forward after conflicts and sense of belonging as we attempt to keep students at school, in class, as opposed to out of school suspension of students.

### **Trauma-Informed Practices**

In addition to our restorative justice work, CACS has also trained staff in trauma-informed practices to ensure our staff and teachers have the skills and knowledge to support children who have faced significant trauma. CACS is currently using the UCSF Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools (HEARTS) program. The HEARTS program is a comprehensive, multilevel school-based prevention and intervention program for children who have experienced trauma. We focus on two main areas:

**School-based intervention and prevention work** with children and adolescents directly and indirectly affected by trauma.

- Tertiary interventions: trauma-informed therapeutic interventions for youth who are having post-trauma difficulties
- Secondary interventions: skill-building groups for at-risk youth
- Primary prevention: classroom presentations on coping with trauma and violence

**Training, consultation and support** for adult members of the caregiving system (school personnel and parents/guardians)

- Interventions such as psychoeducational and skill-building workshops for parents/caregivers
- Training and consultation in complex trauma and trauma-sensitive practices for teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and school mental health staff
- Aimed at building capacity in SFUSD personnel around more effectively working with traumatized students
- Support for school staff around stress, burnout and vicarious traumatization

### **Suspension and Expulsion Policy**

CACS's suspension and expulsion policy is set forth below. This policy has been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and wellbeing of all students at CACS. In creating this policy, CACS has reviewed Education Code Section 48900 *et seq.*, which describes the non-charter schools' list of offenses and procedures to establish its list of offenses and procedures for suspensions and expulsions. The language that follows closely mirrors the language of Education Code Section 48900 *et seq.* CACS is committed to annual review of policies and procedures surrounding suspensions and expulsions and, as necessary, modification of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension

or expulsion.

When the policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. This policy shall serve as CACS'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. CACS staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This policy and its procedures will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook and will clearly describe discipline expectations. 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.

The CACS administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline and involuntary disenrollment policies and procedures. The notice shall state that this Policy and Procedures are available on request at the Executive Director's office.

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

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom CACS has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) 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 general education students except when federal and state law mandates additional or different procedures. CACS will follow all applicable federal and state laws including but not limited to the California Education Code, when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom CACS has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in according due process to such students.

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five schooldays before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder, and shall inform him or her of the basis for which the pupil is being involuntarily removed and his or her right to request a hearing to challenge the involuntary removal. If a parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the Charter School shall utilize the same hearing procedures specified below for expulsions, before the effective date of the action to involuntarily remove the student. If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include

removals for misconduct which may be grounds for suspension or expulsion as enumerated below.

## **Procedures**

### **A. Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students**

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at any time including but not limited to: a) while on school grounds; b) while going to or coming from school; c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

### **B. Enumerated Offenses**

1. Discretionary Suspension Offenses. Students may be suspended for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
  - a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
  - b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
  - c) Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
  - d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
  - e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
  - f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property, which includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
  - g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property, which includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
  - h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
  - i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
  - j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
  - k) Disrupted school activities. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
  - l) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
  - m) 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.
  - n) 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.

- o) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- p) 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.
- q) Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property, which includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this section, “terroristic threat” shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family’s safety, or for the protection of school property, which includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases, or the personal property of the person threatened or his or her immediate family.
- r) 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.
- s) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- t) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- u) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
  - 1) “Bullying” means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students

that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
  - ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.
  - iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.
  - iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.
- 2) "Electronic Act" means the creation or transmission originated on or off the school site, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
- i. A message, text, sound, video, or image.
  - ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
    - (a) Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
    - (b) Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.
    - (c) Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile.
  - iii. An act of cyber sexual bullying.
    - (a) For purposes of this clause, "cyber sexual bullying" means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a pupil to another pupil or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a

nude, semi-nude or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.

(b) For purposes of this clause, "cyber sexual bullying" does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.

- 3) Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.
  - v) A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (1)(a)-(b).
  - w) Possessed, sold or otherwise furnished any knife unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director or designee's concurrence.
2. Non-Discretionary Suspension Offenses: Students must be suspended and recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
- a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director or designee's concurrence.
  - b) Brandishing a knife at another person.
  - c) Unlawfully selling a controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code Section 11053, *et seq.*
  - d) Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900(n).
3. Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students may be recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
- a) Caused, attempted to cause or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
  - b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
  - c) Unlawfully possessed, used, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
  - d) Unlawfully offered, arranged or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
  - e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.

- f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property, which includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property, which includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
- i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- l) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- m) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- n) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- o) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this subdivision, "hazing" means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this section, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- p) Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this section, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school property, which includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases, or the personal property of the person threatened or his or her immediate family.
- q) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this section, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.

- r) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- s) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- t) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
  - 1) "Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
    - i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
    - ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.
    - iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.
    - iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.
  - 2) "Electronic Act" means the creation or transmission by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
    - i. A message, text, sound, video or image.
    - ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
      - (a) Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
      - (b) Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.
      - (c) Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile.

- iii. An act of cyber sexual bullying.
  - (a) For purposes of this clause, “cyber sexual bullying” means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a pupil to another pupil or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.
  - (b) For purposes of this clause, “cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.
- 3) Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.
- u) A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (3)(a)-(b).
- v) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director or designee’s concurrence.
- 4. Non-Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students must be recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined pursuant to the procedures below that the pupil:
  - a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director or designee’s concurrence.
  - b) Brandishing a knife at another person.
  - c) Unlawfully selling a controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code Section 11053, *et seq.*
  - d) Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900(n).

If it is determined by the Administrative Panel and/or Board of Directors that a student has brought a fire arm or destructive device, as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, on to campus or to have possessed a firearm or dangerous device on campus, the student shall be expelled for one year, pursuant to the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994. In such instances, the pupil shall be provided due process rights of notice and a hearing as required in this policy.

The term “firearm” means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device.

The term “destructive device” means (A) any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, including but not limited to: (i) bomb, (ii) grenade, (iii) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (iv) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (v) mine, or (vi) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clauses.

### **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 Executive Director or the Executive Director’s designee with the student and his or her parent/guardian and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or Charter School employee who referred the student to the Executive Director or designee.

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

At the conference, the pupil shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against him or her and shall be given the opportunity to present his or her version and evidence in his or her defense, in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(J)(i). This conference shall be held within two (2) school days, unless the pupil waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization. No penalties may be imposed on a pupil for failure of the pupil’s parent or guardian to attend a conference with Charter School officials. Reinstatement of the suspended pupil shall not be contingent upon attendance by the pupil’s parent or guardian at the conference.

#### **2. Notice to Parents/Guardians**

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

#### **3. Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Expulsion**

Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension. Upon a recommendation of expulsion by the Executive Director or Executive Director's designee, the pupil and the pupil's parent/guardian or representative will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the pupil should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. This determination will be made by the Executive Director or designee upon either of the following: 1) the pupil's presence will be disruptive to the education process; or 2) the pupil poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the pupil's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing. In such instances when the Charter School has determined a suspension period shall be extended, such extension shall be made only after a conference is held with the pupil or the pupil's parents, unless the pupil and the pupil's parents fail to attend the conference.

### **Authority to Expel**

As required by Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(J)(ii), students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer to determine whether the student should be expelled. The procedures herein provide for such a hearing and the notice of said hearing, as required by law.

A student may be expelled either by the neutral and impartial CACS Board following a hearing before it or by the CACS Board upon the recommendation of a neutral and impartial Administrative Panel to be assigned by the 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 CACS's governing board. Each entity shall be presided over by a designated neutral hearing chairperson. The Administrative Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense, and the Board of Directors shall make the final determination.

### **Expulsion Procedures**

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

In the event an Administrative Panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the Board for a final decision whether to expel. The hearing shall be held in closed session (complying with all pupil confidentiality rules under FERPA) unless the Pupil makes a written request for a public hearing in open session three (3) days prior to the date of the scheduled hearing.

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:

- The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
- A statement of the specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
- A copy of the Charter School's disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;
- Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information

about the student's status at the Charter School to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;

- The opportunity for the student and/or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel or a non-attorney advisor;
- The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
- The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
- The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

### **Special Procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses**

CACS may, upon a finding of good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations that shall be examined only by CACS 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 (5) 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 entity conducting the expulsion hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which he or she may leave the hearing room.
4. The entity conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
5. The entity conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours he/she is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the entity presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The entity conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany him or her to the witness stand.
7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, the Charter School must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the Charter School. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the

- presiding officer from exercising his or her discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom he or she believes is prompting, swaying or influencing the witness.
8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.
  9. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in public at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have his/her testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are no alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing room by means of closed- circuit television.
  10. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the entity conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstance can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

### **Record of Hearing**

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

### **Presentation of Evidence**

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense. Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay. Sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the Board or Administrative Panel determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

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

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

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

### **Written Notice to Expel**

The Executive Director or designee, following a decision of the Board to expel, shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the Board's adopted findings of fact, to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall also include the following: (a) Notice of the specific offense committed by the student; and (b) Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with CACS.

The Executive Director or designee shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the authorizer. This notice shall include the following: (a) The student's name; and (b) The specific expellable offense committed by the student.

### **Disciplinary Records**

CACS shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at CACS. Such records shall be made available to the authorizer upon request.

### **No Right to Appeal**

The pupil shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from CACS as the CACS Board of Director's decision to expel shall be final.

### **Expelled Pupils/Alternative Education**

Parents/guardians of pupils who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including, but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence. CACS shall work cooperatively with parents/guardians as requested by parents/guardians or by the school district of residence to assist with locating alternative placements during expulsion.

If a Pupil has been expelled from his or her previous school for an act other than those listed in subdivision (a) or (c) of Section 48915, the parent, guardian, or Pupil, if the Pupil is emancipated or otherwise legally of age, shall upon enrollment, inform the receiving school district of his or her status with the previous school district. If this information is not provided to the school district and the school district later determines the Pupil was expelled from the previous school, the lack of compliance shall be recorded and discussed in the hearing required pursuant to subdivision (a).

### **Rehabilitation Plans**

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

### **Readmission**

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school district or charter school shall be in the sole discretion of the Board following a meeting with the Executive Director or designee and the pupil and parent/guardian or representative to determine whether the pupil has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the pupil poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Executive Director or designee shall make a recommendation to the Board following the meeting regarding his or her determination. The Board shall then make a final decision regarding readmission during the closed session of a public meeting, reporting out any action taken during closed session consistent with the requirements of the Brown Act. The pupil's readmission is also contingent upon CACS's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission.

### **Notice to Teachers**

The Charter School shall notify teachers of each pupil who has engaged in or is reasonably suspected to have engaged in any of the acts listed in Education Code Section 49079 and the corresponding enumerated offenses set forth above.

### **Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion or Involuntary Removal of Students with Disabilities**

#### **Notification of District**

CACS shall immediately notify the District and coordinate the procedures in this policy with the District of the discipline of any student with a disability or student who CACS or District would be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability.

#### **Services During Suspension**

Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year shall continue to receive services so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting (which could constitute a change of placement and the student's IEP would reflect this change), and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP/504 Plan; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, and behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

#### **Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination**

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP/504 Plan, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan.
- If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that either of the above is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP/504 Team shall:

- Conduct a functional behavioral assessment, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that the Charter School had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement;
- 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
- Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the Charter School agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and that the conduct in question was not a direct result of the failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan, then the Charter School may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

### **Due Process Appeals**

The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or the Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request an expedited administrative hearing through the Special Education Unit of the Office of Administrative Hearings or by utilizing the dispute provisions of the 504 Policy and Procedures.

When an appeal relating to the placement of the student or the manifestation determination has been requested by either the parent or the Charter School, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer in accordance with state and federal law, including 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k), until the expiration of the forty-five (45) day time period provided for in an interim alternative educational setting, unless the parent and the Charter School agree otherwise.

In accordance with 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k)(3), if a parent/guardian disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or if the Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, the parent/guardian or Charter School may request a hearing. In such an appeal, a hearing officer may: (1) return a child with a disability to the placement from which the child was removed; or (2) order a change in placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

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

- Carries or possesses a weapon, as defined in 18 U.S.C. Section 930, to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function;
- 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
- Has inflicted serious bodily injury, as defined by 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k)(7)(D), upon a person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

### **Interim Alternative Educational Setting**

The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP/504 Team.

### **Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services**

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

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

- 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.
- The parent has requested an evaluation of the child.
- 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 Executive Director 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 IDEA-eligible children with disabilities, including the right to stay-put.

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

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



## Element K: Retirement Benefits

*“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.” Ed. Code § 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 10.25% (10.205% PEPPRA) of gross wages and CACS pays an additional 16.28% of earnings. CACS will continue to contribute to STRS along the following schedule for the next 5 years: 2019-20; 18.13%, 2020-21 & 2021-22; 19.10%, 2022-23 & 2023-24; 20.25%. CACS works with a third party administrator to provide all employees with the option of contributing to a 403(b) retirement plan or other plan of their choosing.

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 Charter 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. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements for retirement coverage have been made for all employees.

## **Element L: Public School Attendance Alternatives**

*“The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools.” Ed. Code § 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 CACS 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 transfer policies. All parents/guardians and students will be informed on admissions forms that students have no right to admission in a particular school of a local education agency as a consequence of enrollment in the Charter School, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency.

## Element M: Return Rights of Employees

*“The rights of an employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter school.” Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(M).*

No public school district employee shall be required to work at CACS. Employees of the District who choose to leave the employment of the District to work at CACS will have no automatic rights of return to the District after employment by CACS unless specifically granted by the District through a leave of absence or other agreement. CACS employees shall have any right upon leaving the District to work in CACS that the District may specify, any rights of return to employment in a school district after employment in CACS that the District may specify, and any other rights upon leaving employment to work in CACS that the District determines to be reasonable and not in conflict with any law.

Sick or vacation leave or years of service credit at the District or any other school district will not be transferred to CACS. Employment by CACS provides no rights of employment at any other entity, including any rights in the case of closure of CACS.

## Element N: Dispute Resolution Procedures

*"The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter." Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(N).*

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

Should any section of this element pertaining to resolving disputes be in conflict with the District's policies or desired protocols, then CACS is amenable to resolving these conflicts in a Memorandum of Understanding that will be drafted and agreed upon by the District and CACS.

The staff and governing board members of CACS and the District agree to attempt to resolve all disputes regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section.

### **Dispute Within the Charter School**

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

The Charter School community reviews the CACS Dispute and Resolution Process each year. Procedures will be fair, specific and supported by the Charter School community. In the event of a dispute that is not covered by the Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures, 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 Executive Director. When appropriate, the Executive 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 Executive Director. The person about whom the complaint is made will be given a copy of the written statement. The Executive 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 Executive Director, first, bring the issue to the Executive 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 Executive Director.
- 6) If the Executive Director is unable to resolve the matter, you may appeal to the Board of Directors 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 SFUSD Board of Education and the District regarding a conflict at CACS until all of the relevant procedures listed above have been exhausted and documented. The District shall promptly refer all disputes not related to a possible violation of the charter or law to the Charter School.

### **Dispute Between the Charter School and SFUSD**

CACS and the District will be encouraged to attempt to resolve any disputes with the District amicably and reasonably without resorting to formal procedures.

In the event of a dispute between CACS and the District, CACS staff, employees and Board members of the Charter School and the District agree to first frame the issue in written format (“dispute statement”) and to refer the issue to the District Superintendent and CACS Executive Director, or their respective designees. In the event that the District Board of Education believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter in accordance with Education Code Section 47607, CACS requests that this shall be noted in the written dispute statement, although it recognizes it cannot legally bind the District to do so. However, participation in the dispute resolution procedures outlined in this section shall not be interpreted to impede or act as a prerequisite to the District’s ability to proceed with revocation in accordance with Education Code Section 47607 and its implementing regulations.

The Executive Director and Superintendent, or their respective designees, shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute, not later than 5 business days from receipt of the dispute statement. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, both parties shall identify two Board members from their respective boards who shall jointly meet with the Superintendent and the Executive Director of CACS, or their respective designees, and attempt to resolve the dispute within 15 business days from receipt of the dispute statement.

If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the Superintendent and the Executive Director, or their respective designees, shall meet to jointly identify a neutral third party mediator to engage the parties in a mediation session designed to facilitate resolution of the dispute. The format of the mediation session shall be developed jointly by the Superintendent and the Executive Director, or their respective designees. Mediation shall be held within sixty business days of receipt of the dispute statement. The costs of the mediator shall be split equally between the District and CACS. If mediation does not resolve the dispute either party may pursue any other remedy available under the law. All timelines and procedures in this section may be revised upon mutual written agreement of the District and CACS.

## Element O: Charter School Closure Protocol

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

Closure of CACS will be documented by official action of the CACS Board of Directors. The action will identify the reason for closure. The official action will also identify an entity and person or persons responsible for closure-related activities. The Executive Director shall be the closure entity, unless the Board selects a different individual for that role.

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

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

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

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

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

As soon as reasonably practical, CACS will prepare final financial records. CACS will also have an independent audit completed within six months after closure. CACS will pay for the final audit. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant selected by CACS and will be provided to the District promptly upon its completion. The final audit will

include an accounting of all financial assets, including cash and accounts receivable and an inventory of property, equipment and other items of material value, an accounting of the liabilities, including accounts payable and any reduction in apportionments as a result of audit findings or other investigations, loans, and unpaid staff compensation, and an assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to CACS.

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

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

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

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

As specified by the current financial projections (**Appendix K**), CACS will utilize its fund balance to undertake any expenses associated with the closure procedures identified above.

## Miscellaneous Charter Provisions

### 1. Budget and Financial Reporting

*“The petitioner or petitioners also shall be required to provide financial statements that include a proposed first-year operational budget, including startup costs, and cashflow and financial projections for the first three years of operation.” Education Code Section 47605(g).*

Attached, as **Appendix K** please find the following documents:

- Budget narrative
- A projected budget
- Financial projections for the next three years of operation
- Cash flow projections for the next three years of operation

CACS shall provide reports to the District as follows as required by Education Code Section 47604.33, and may provide additional fiscal reports as requested by the District:

1. By July 1, a preliminary budget for the current fiscal year.
2. By July 1, an annual update required pursuant to Education Code Section 47606.5.
3. By December 15, a first interim report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through October 31. Additionally, a copy of the Charter School’s annual, independent financial audit report for the preceding fiscal year shall be delivered to the District, State Controller, State Department of Education and County Superintendent of Schools.
4. By March 15, a second interim report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through January 31.
5. By September 15, an unaudited actuals report for the prior year. The report submitted to the District shall include an annual statement of all the Charter School’s receipts and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year.

The Charter School shall provide reporting to the District as required by law and as requested by the District including, but not limited to, the following: California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), actual Average Daily Attendance reports, all financial reports required by Education Code Sections 47604.33 and 47605(m), the School Accountability Report Card (SARC), and the LCAP.

The Charter School agrees to and submits to the right of the District to make random visits and inspections in order to carry out its statutorily required oversight in accordance with Education Code Sections 47604.32 and 47607.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604.3, the Charter School shall promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries including, but not limited to, inquiries regarding its financial records from the District.

### 2. Insurance

CACS finances and maintains general liability, workers compensation, and other necessary insurance of the types and in the amounts required for an enterprise of similar purpose and circumstance. Coverage amounts are based on the signed MOU with the District. SFUSD shall be named as an additional insured on all policies of CACS. CACS will provide evidence

of the above insurance coverage upon request.

### 3. Administrative Services

*“The manner in which administrative services of the charter school are to be provided.” Education Code Section 47605(g).*

CACS provides or procures its own administrative services including, but not limited to, financial management, accounts payable/receivable, payroll, human resources, and instructional program development either through its own staff or through an appropriately qualified third- party contractor.

CACS may discuss the possibility of purchasing administrative services from the District. If the District is interested, the specific terms and cost for these services will be the subject of a memorandum of understanding between CACS and the District and subject to District availability and willingness to provide such services.

### 4. Facilities

*“The facilities to be utilized by the charter school. The description of the facilities to be used by the charter school shall specify where the charter school intends to locate.” Education Code Section 47605(g).*

CACS is located at 1601 Turk Street, San Francisco, CA, 94115, a campus with two school buildings. CACS currently occupies the Main Building of the Golden Gate Campus. We share the use of the cafeteria/multipurpose room with Gateway Middle School (which occupies the Annex Building). Title 5 CCR Section 11969.9(c)(1)(F) requires a facilities request to provide information regarding the charter school’s educational program that is relevant to the assignment of facilities. CACS’s educational program has unique facility needs. As you are aware, CACS has a major focus on the arts and requires facilities that are sufficient to carry out this key educational component.

In order to provide this aspect of our educational program, CACS requires facilities that provide for collaborative and project-based spaces, including:

- 18 traditional classrooms
- 1 visual art studio
- 1 music room
- 1 dance room
- 2 after school program rooms
- 1 library
- 1 faculty lounge
- 1 LSP/guidance counselor room
- 2 RSP/learning center rooms
- 1 cafeteria/assembly room
- Office space to accommodate all administrative staff

## **5. Potential Civil Liability Effects**

*"Potential civil liability effects, if any, upon the charter school and upon the school district." Education Code Section 47605(g).*

CACS is operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 23701(d).

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), an authority that grants a charter to a charter school operated as a non-profit public benefit corporation shall not be liable for the debts or obligations of the charter school or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors or omissions by the charter school if the authority has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law. CACS shall work diligently to assist the District in meeting any and all oversight obligations under the law, including monthly meetings, reporting, or other District- requested protocol to ensure the District shall not be liable for the operation of CACS.

Further, CACS and the District shall enter into a memorandum of understanding, wherein CACS shall indemnify the District for the actions of CACS under this charter.

The corporate bylaws of CACS provide for indemnification of CACS's Board, officers, agents, and employees, and CACS maintains general liability insurance, Board Members and Officers insurance, and fidelity bonding to secure against financial risks.

As stated above, insurance amounts are determined by recommendation of the District and CACS's insurance company for schools of similar size, location, and student population. The District is named as an additional insured on the general liability insurance of CACS.

The CACS Board institutes appropriate risk management practices as discussed herein, including screening of employees, establishing codes of conduct for students, and dispute resolution.

## **6. Transportation**

The Charter School does not provide transportation to and from school, except as required by law.

## **7. Attendance Accounting**

The Charter School shall maintain an attendance recording and accounting system, to ensure contemporaneous record keeping, which complies with state law.

## **8. Oversight**

Pursuant to California law, the District shall be required to provide oversight and performance monitoring services, including monitoring school and student performance data, reviewing the Charter School's audit reports, performing annual site visits, engaging in any necessary dispute resolution processes, and considering charter amendment and renewal requests. In accordance with Education Code Section 47613(a), the District may

charge for the actual costs of supervisory oversight of the Charter School not to exceed one (1) percent of the revenue of the Charter School. The District may charge up to three (3) percent of the revenue of the Charter School if the Charter School is able to obtain substantially rent free facilities from the District. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47613(f), "revenue of the charter school" is defined as the amount received in the current fiscal year from the local control funding formula calculated pursuant to Education Code Section 42238.02, as implemented by Education Code Section 42238.03.