

Petition for the Renewal of Live Oak Charter School by the Petaluma Elementary School District

Adopted by Live Oak Board of Directors, May 4, 2009

Adopted by the Petaluma City School District, May 26, 2009

This petition by the Live Oak Charter School requests approval from the Petaluma Elementary School District under the provisions of the State of California Charter School Law. This renewal would begin with the expiration of the existing charter, which is June 30, 2009. The renewal, under California Charter Code, would extend until June 30, 2014.

A. Educational Program

1. Mission

The mission of Live Oak Charter School is to provide public school students of Southern Sonoma County with a K-8 whole-child program inspired by Waldorf Education. The school embraces a developmental approach to learning that strives to bring forth from each child his or her innate capacities through an age-appropriate curriculum. Live Oak seeks to educate the whole child – head, hands and heart – through an education that cultivates and integrates each child’s creative, intellectual, emotional, physical, and social capacities. The school offers an artistically rich and experientially-based program that enlivens student curiosity about the natural world and human culture as the foundation for fostering academic achievement.

Live Oak Charter School creates and maintains a vital learning community that provides the children with a secure sense of place in the world by grounding them in the unique cultural, historical, and natural attributes of their locale and leading them out towards global citizenship. Cultivating this sense of place includes a direct experience of the seasonal rhythms and life cycles of the world via school-based and local agriculture and outdoor adventures informed by the natural sciences. As the world “shrinks” and global interconnectedness becomes ever more apparent, it is also essential that our educational efforts help children learn to recognize, appreciate, and navigate the diversity of human experience and culture. Consequently, efforts to increase cultural awareness are infused in curriculum. The school envisions pedagogy led by professional educators with a commitment to a program inspired by Waldorf Education, and a program strongly supported and augmented by the talents of parents and the resources of the greater community. Live Oak is committed to helping each child grow into a creative, independent-thinking individual with a positive self-image, a sense of social responsibility, a refined capacity for cross-cultural communication, a love of learning, and a respect for the planet and its myriad life forms. Graduates will emerge ready to meet life’s challenges and to pursue further educational goals.

2. Educational Program Goals

- To create and maintain a dynamic, nurturing learning environment that attends to the developing needs of the whole child.
- To engage students with a curriculum inspired by Waldorf Education that provides the foundational knowledge and skills, required for successfully navigating the demands of a multicultural society.
- To develop a school culture that values creative and academic achievement and that enables students to be self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.
- To maintain a community-based school that incorporates the unique qualities of Southern Sonoma County, with high levels of parent participation, and opportunities for learning both within the classroom and in the greater community.

3. Attributes of an Educated Person in the 21st Century

Live Oak Charter School's educational program helps children develop the abilities and attributes required of an educated person in the 21st century. From the perspective of the Live Oak Charter School, these include:

- The ability to think creatively and logically
- The ability to communicate clearly through written and spoken language
- The ability to communicate in more than one language
- Strong skills in mathematics
- An understanding of the scientific process and the various scientific disciplines
- The ability to observe phenomena, and to gather, organize, analyze, and synthesize perceptions
- The ability to solve problems by analyzing issues from multiple perspectives
- The ability to concentrate, focus, and follow a complex task through to completion
- Knowledge of world history and culture
- The ability to respect and understand the viewpoints of people from different cultures
- The ability to work cooperatively with others
- A demonstrated sense of responsibility, compassion, and conscientiousness
- A sense of social justice
- A deep respect for the environment
- Self-motivation and a passion for life-long learning

4. Components of an Optimal Learning Environment

Live Oak Charter School was founded on the belief that learning best occurs in an educational environment that includes the following essential components:

- Developmentally appropriate curriculum that is designed to promote responsibility and confidence
- Teachers who respect each child's individual abilities and development
- Educational approaches that focus on developing capacities for self-motivated learning
- Lessons that are imaginative and engaging, and that address multiple learning styles

- Attention to intellectual, emotional, and physical development
- Teaching methods that place high value on relational experiences and interpersonal interactions as well as on the capacity for self-reflection
- Beautiful, vibrant, hands-on classrooms
- Parents deeply involved in their children’s education and in school decision-making

5. Description of the Educational Program

Live Oak’s Educational Program is a whole-child approach that rests on a foundation of pedagogy inspired by Waldorf Education and is supported by a commitment to cultural awareness and parent participation.

a. Pedagogy Inspired by Waldorf Education

Live Oak’s whole child pedagogical approach cultivates and integrates the student’s capacities for thinking, feeling, and will-based action (or head, heart, and hands) in a developmentally appropriate manner. Multi-sensory learning modalities are incorporated into daily lessons to create a learning approach that is supportive, challenging, and meaningful to each student. Daily, weekly, and seasonal rhythms help provide additional structure to the educational process.

The school’s pedagogy emphasizes imaginative and creative play in kindergarten and builds in complexity as the child progresses through the grades. The stimulation of the child’s imagination and creativity is viewed as foundational for the child’s capacity for abstract reasoning. Opportunities for the synthesis of artistic expression and for the acquisition of academic skills and knowledge abound throughout the grades. The school year is organized into two- to three-week multidisciplinary units thematically linked to developmentally appropriate educational standards, and when possible, to the natural phenomena associated with the seasons. Primary academics are embedded within a daily two-hour main lesson. Following main lesson, the students have specialty classes or practice periods. Teachers use textbooks minimally. The students’ learning and skill development are documented and enriched by their creation and ongoing maintenance of individualized main lesson books that blend academic learning and artistic expression.

Live Oak Charter School teachers understand and address the different developmental stages of childhood while respecting each child’s individual abilities and progress. Lessons and activities blend cognitive, auditory, visual, and kinesthetic approaches to address the students’ various dominant learning styles and multiple intelligences, with a high priority placed on students’ “learning how to learn.” Alternative activities and more complex projects with attention to social groups create opportunities for students to use their individual strengths in understanding course material. Teachers also help the students cultivate an appreciation for the wonder and beauty of nature and strive to create a beautiful outdoor and classroom environment for the students.

b. Cultural Awareness

The changing demographics of California and the United States, the permeability of national borders, and the trend toward an increasingly complex global society suggest that multicultural awareness remains a critical component of education. Perry and Fraser (1993) believe that educational institutions can and should be the places where a new vision of society is created. In order for this vision to be congruent with the reality of our multicultural society, we must rethink the very value system upon which our schools are built, and follow with the necessary school reform. Our schools must really work for all children, not just some. A school that works for all children must be grounded in a value system of cooperation and relationships. Live Oak encourages the development of cooperation and relationship-building via classroom structures including class meetings, and the Compassionate Campus program, which is designed to promote healthy social values and interactions in the school across the whole school community: students, staff, and parents.

While our children spring from different cultures, they are rapidly becoming engulfed by the cultural hegemony of the emerging global consumer monoculture (Erikson, 1997). To counteract this trend, Live Oak provides exposure to a diversity of histories, values, philosophies, languages, and cultural practices, and discourages exposure to mass media, for young children.

c. Parent Participation

A significant body of research (Henderson & Bera, 1994; Olmstead & Rubin, 1983) indicates that when parents participate in their children's education, the result is an increase in student achievement and an improvement of students' attitudes. Increased attendance, fewer discipline problems, and higher aspirations also have been correlated with an increase in parent involvement.

The active participation of parents, both within and outside of the classroom, is essential in creating and implementing the school's educational program and maintaining its supportive environment. Parents are strongly encouraged to share their time and talents with the school. They provide a bridge between home and school life, giving their children's education greater meaning and purpose by integrating the children's school life into their family life and into their community.

In addition to classroom assistance, the school relies on parent volunteers to perform many non-classroom responsibilities including serving on the board and board committees, fundraising, outreach, and supporting festival life, as well as school maintenance and improvement, and clerical duties. However, the school acknowledges that circumstances may not allow some parents to be involved to the extent that they might wish. Therefore parental involvement is not a requirement of school enrollment.

d. The Curriculum

Live Oak uses a curriculum inspired by Waldorf Education as the basic curriculum structure for kindergarten through 8th grade. Areas of study include English, Spanish, Literature, History, Geography, Sciences, Mathematics, Art, Textile Crafts,

Gardening, Physical Education, Drama, Music, and Movement. Teachers utilize activities designed to allow each child an intellectual, emotional, physical (thinking, feeling, and willing) connection with the material. The breadth of the curriculum is supported by the work to deepen each child's capacity for self-reflection that leads, in turn, to the birth of independent thought and abstract reasoning. State standards are incorporated into the curriculum in an age-appropriate manner.

The curriculum invites children to engage with three essential questions: "Who am I?" "How do I fit into the world?" and "How do I express myself to others and react to the self-expression of others?" These questions serve to organize three tiers of understanding through which the children move as they mature:

SELF: How the child internalizes the information he or she receives and incorporates the information into his or her intelligence and the picture of self that subsequently develops. "Who am I?"

SELF IN THE WORLD: How the child externalizes information he or she receives (skills), how the child relates to the world, and the picture of the world the student demonstrates. "How do I fit into the world?"

INTER-RELATIONAL: How the child utilizes both personal development (self) and extra-personal development (self in the world) to interact with others and to express his or her individual voice in the social community. "How do I express myself to others and react to the self-expression of others?"

e. Educational Program Enrichment

Live Oak Charter School's educational program is enriched and vitalized by incorporating the following:

1. High Level of Support: Children are fully supported by teachers, classroom aides, and parent volunteers. Volunteer and paid enrichment specialists from the community, as well as parents and grandparents, are scheduled into the classroom day to share and assist with learning activities.
2. Peer and Cross-Age Interaction: The children support each other in many ways including small-group learning and peer tutoring. Mixed-age grouping provides opportunities for older and younger children to interact. In addition, students learn conflict resolution and interpersonal problem-solving skills.
3. Self-esteem Development: The self-confidence of children is fostered through positive discipline, display of student work, performances, open houses, and many experiences of success.
4. Creative Expression: Numerous opportunities for creative expression are made available throughout the curriculum with an emphasis on the visual, dramatic, and musical arts.
5. Crafts and Hands-on Expression: Handicraft projects are incorporated into the curriculum. These projects typically relate to the cultures that the students are

currently studying, reflect the cultural backgrounds of particular students, or draw from local history and culture.

6. Physical Activity: Movement activities are infused into the everyday curriculum. Classrooms, as much as possible, are organized around maximizing the children's opportunities for movement and physical expression through games, circle-time activities, folk dance, and physical education.
7. Non-Dominant Cultural Exposure: The children receive consistent exposure to a variety of non-dominant cultures through geography, music, poetry, folklore, mythology, history, attire, and visual and dramatic art.
8. Community Involvement: Classes participate in planning and implementing cooperative group projects for the benefit of the school and greater community. Field trips, "days out," and similar activities expose the students to the diversity of community life. The Middle School students pursue specific community service projects.
9. Special Events: Careful attention is given to the celebration of seasonal festivals with special focus on events that can be appropriately observed in the school setting and on events that recognize the "world's diversity" of celebration. Live Oak Charter School strives to honor and represent the cultures of all the students in the school through festivals and celebrations.

6. Whom the School Will Educate

Live Oak Charter School is a full-time, classroom-based program chartered for Kindergarten through 8th grade. In any given year, the actual grades offered are determined by having a critical number of students enrolled for each class.

B. Measurable Student Outcomes

Live Oak Charter School seeks to cultivate lifelong learning capacities that are embedded in the nine-year span of the curriculum. These include logical reasoning, information synthesis, problem solving, positive social interaction, conflict resolution, leadership and teamwork, and citizenship.

Furthermore, Live Oak expects students to demonstrate that they have attained the following knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits by the time of their graduation:

1. Core Academic Skills:

Language Arts:

1. Students will be able to read, infer, and interpret multiple forms of expression, including literature, poetry, newspapers, references, texts, and graphs.
2. Students will be able to respond to various forms of literature and identify literary elements.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to write in various formats and employ various writing strategies in order to communicate effectively.
4. Students will demonstrate strong listening, speaking, and presentation skills.

Mathematics:

1. Students will be able to reason logically and to understand and apply mathematical processes and concepts.
2. Students will apply critical mathematical thinking skills during problem-solving activities.

Science:

1. Students will demonstrate an ability to use observational methods and materials to investigate a scientific question.
2. Students will present scientific information clearly in a written format, utilizing observations to form conclusions.
3. Students will demonstrate reverence and respect for the natural world.

History/Social Sciences:

1. Students will demonstrate cultural literacy through knowledge of myths, legends, the history of multiple civilizations, forms of government, biographies of key historical figures, and geography.
2. Students will demonstrate civic values and behavior, including community service.

2. Non-Core Academic Skills:

Second Language:

1. Students will learn basic skills in listening, comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish.
2. Students will become familiar with Spanish-speaking cultures.

Visual and Performing Arts:

1. Students will demonstrate an awareness of a variety of styles and forms in the fine arts of music, drama, and dance.
2. Students will participate in yearly class plays and assemblies.
3. Students will be able to express themselves through drawing and painting.
4. Students will demonstrate artistry, care, and accuracy in their main lesson books.

Practical Arts:

Students will be able to express themselves creatively through hand-work, which includes knitting, crocheting, sculpting, sewing, woodwork, leather craft, and other handicrafts.

Physical Education:

1. Students will develop skills necessary for physical fitness and health.
2. Students will develop group interaction skills, such as sportsmanship, and will participate in recreational activities.

3. School-Wide Performance Goal:

At least 70% of Live Oak Charter School students will show one grade or skill level worth of progress each academic year, as evidenced by STAR scores and/or successful completion of required portfolios and exhibitions.

4. Refinement:

In order to serve our students and community, Live Oak Charter School continues to examine and refine its list of student outcomes over time to reflect the school's mission and any changes to state or local standards that support such mission. Live Oak Charter School will submit to the Petaluma Elementary School District a description of any changes to the above student outcomes as an amendment of the charter. Petaluma Elementary School District agrees to hear and render an amendment decision pursuant to the timelines and processes as specified in the Educational Code Section 47605 (b).

C. Methods of Assessment

Live Oak Charter School assesses students in each of the core academic skill areas through authentic assessment and state-mandated standardized tests. Assessments do not include letter grades in the lower grades. Live Oak Charter School meets statewide content and performance standards in a developmentally appropriate manner and conducts pupil assessments required pursuant to the Charter Schools Act (section 47605(c)).

Our assessment strategies reflect our commitment to recognizing individual strengths and challenges and to assessing students in academic and non-academic areas using a variety of assessment tools. At regular intervals, we provide in-depth assessment to LOCS families in order to maintain clear communication between parents and teachers.

The assessment tools used to evaluate student progress include:

Records of teacher observations and assessments for each child are maintained. These include a record of individual growth and achievement in all three areas of development (intellectual, physical, and emotional).

Teachers maintain frequent contact with parents through regular class letters and parent education meetings. *Parent conferences* occur at least once a year. Parents, teachers, and students may request additional conferences.

Comprehensive student *portfolios* are collected throughout each year. They include samples of main lesson work, practice papers, tests, written work and reports, artwork, etc.

Completed *student projects*, both individual and group, are documented. Samples of these are displayed in public exhibitions.

Norm-referenced standardized tests are administered in compliance with state law regarding charter schools.

Oral recitations, presentations, reports, performances, and demonstrations occur regularly in the life of each class and involve group and individual work.

A *school-wide assembly and open house* is planned at least once a year, during which student work is displayed and samples of class work are exhibited. Members of the Petaluma School District and general public are invited to attend.

A *comprehensive assessment* is prepared and provided to parents at the end of each school year for each child. This includes an overview of the course work for the year and a discussion of the child's achievement, performance, and growth in each of the various curriculum blocks and enrichment classes, as well as in social skills and work habits.

Students are comprehensively assessed for *first grade readiness*, using specific criteria developed by the faculty and administration. Agreement between parents and teachers regarding the outcome of this evaluation must be reached prior to enrollment in first grade.

D. Governance Structure of School

Live Oak Charter School is a California nonprofit public benefit corporation. Subject to the limitations of this charter and of the Live Oak Charter School bylaws, the governance of the school is under the authority of the Charter School Board of Directors and its duly appointed representatives. At least one parent of a student or former student from Live Oak Charter School will sit on the Charter School Board of Directors as further specified in the bylaws. The Petaluma Elementary School District has the right to appoint a representative to serve on the Charter School Board of Directors. The nonprofit corporation confers on this representative all rights and responsibilities exercised by any other director of the corporation.

The Charter School Board of Directors' responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- Approving all major educational and operational policies
- Approving all major contracts
- Monitoring the financial condition of the school and ensuring that the school has adequate resources
- Determining faculty compensation
- Approving the school budget

- Hiring the school administrator and reviewing the administrator's performance
- Approving major curriculum changes
- Approving termination of faculty members' contracts
- Serving as a court of appeal for disputes
- Monitoring the performance of Live Oak Charter School and taking necessary action to ensure that the school remains true to its mission and charter

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

The Charter School Board of Directors may execute any powers delegated by law to it and shall discharge any duty imposed by law upon it and may delegate to an officer or employee of the Charter School or any third party any of those duties. The Charter School Board of Directors, however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated.

The Charter School Board of Directors hires a School Administrator who is responsible for the following in addition to other responsibilities as further specified in the bylaws, employment contract, and job specification:

- Overseeing the implementation of the curriculum
- Evaluating the performance of all current staff and, if necessary, recommending discipline for staff members
- Developing the annual budget
- Developing and improving facilities
- Developing the annual school calendar
- Day-to-day operations of the school

The Live Oak faculty play an integral role in school governance through their individual participation on school committees and their collective input on pedagogy as well as school policy and procedures. Up to two faculty members may also serve as ex-officio members of the Board of Directors.

Parent participation is essential to the success of the Charter School. Parents are expected to contribute a minimum of 40 hours a year in volunteer activities. Parents share their expertise and capacity in any number of ways, including classroom and playground support, outreach, fundraising, maintenance and improvement of the physical plant, participation in Parent Education programs and class meetings, service on committees, as well as board member roles on the Board of Directors and the Friends of Live Oak Charter fundraising board.

Live Oak Charter School also has a Class Coordinator Council that coordinates volunteer efforts and advises the School Administration and Board of Directors. The Council also works with the Parent Representative on the Live Oak Board of Directors.

Live Oak Charter School and Petaluma Elementary School District pledge to work in cooperation with all local education agencies (LEAs) and special education local plan areas (SELPAs) to ensure that a free and appropriate education is provided to all students with exceptional needs. Details regarding compliance with federal special education laws are further specified in a mutually agreeable memorandum of understanding.

Live Oak Charter School is non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practice, and all other operations; does not charge tuition; and does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Live Oak Charter is on a regular academic calendar. The annual instructional minutes for all grades are calculated on an annual basis to exceed state requirements. Hours of operation are normally 8:00AM to 4:30 PM.

E. Employee Qualifications

The educators employed by Live Oak Charter School hold appropriate California teaching certificates, permits, or other documents issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. These teachers teach the core academic classes of mathematics, language arts, science and history/social studies. These teachers are responsible for overseeing the students' academic progress and for monitoring grading and matriculation decisions as specified in the school's operational policies. Enrichment specialists and teacher aides are not required to have California certification unless required by law. The Charter School Board may further specify other qualifications for employees.

F. Health and Safety Procedures

The Charter School has a comprehensive set of health, safety, and risk management policies developed in consultation with the school's insurance carrier, RESIG. They include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- A requirement that all enrolling students and staff provide records documenting immunizations to the extent required for enrollment in non-charter public schools
- Policies and procedures for response to natural disasters and emergencies, including fires and earthquakes
- Policies relating to preventing contact with blood-borne pathogens
- A policy requiring that all full-time staff will maintain current CPR certification and be schooled for response to natural disasters and emergency situations
- Policies relating to the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines

- A policy that the school will be housed in facilities that have received state or local Fire Marshal approval and that have been evaluated by a qualified structural engineer who has determined that the facilities present no substantial seismic safety hazard
- A policy establishing the school as a drug-, alcohol-, and tobacco-free workplace
- A requirement that each employee of the school submit to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Section 44237

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

G. Means to Achieve Racial/Ethnic Balance Reflective of District

Live Oak Charter School will strive to achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its student population that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the Petaluma Elementary School District through an open enrollment policy.

H. Admission Requirements

Live Oak Charter School will actively recruit a diverse student population who understand and value the school’s mission and are committed to the school’s philosophy.

Prior to applying to Live Oak Charter School, parents will be asked to read the school handbook and to agree to the terms that are identified therein. Live Oak Charter School will request support on the following items:

- Commitment to provide a home environment that is nurturing and conducive to learning
- Limitation of electronic media influences such as television, movies, video games, computer games, etc.
- Willingness of the parent to gain understanding of the Live Oak Charter School curriculum and willingness of the parent to support the education in the home
- Attendance and participation in school activities and festivals for both parents and students

Live Oak Charter School will accept students using these preferences in the following order:

1. Students returning from the previous year
2. Siblings of students returning, or currently enrolled students
3. Children of the school staff and Board of Directors
4. Children residing in the Petaluma Elementary School District with at least one parent

- who has completed a three-hour Admissions Orientation to Live Oak Charter School
5. Children with at least one parent who has completed a three-hour Admissions Orientation to Live Oak Charter School
 6. Children residing in the Petaluma Elementary School District
 7. Children residing in the following Districts: Cinnabar, Cotati-Rohnert Park, Durham, Liberty, Old Adobe, Two Rock, Waugh, Wilmar, and Wilson
 8. Children residing in Sonoma and Marin Counties
 9. Children residing in the State of California
 10. All other applicants

Applicants will be admitted to the school using the above criteria in accordance with the process outlined below. The yearly admission cycle is conducted between April 1 and May 15 of each year. The school administrator determines the specific application deadline and notification date for each specific school year.

The steps for selecting applicants are:

1. Students returning from the previous year will be admitted.
2. Siblings of returning students will be admitted. If the number of applicants in this group who wish to attend an individual grade exceeds the available openings for that grade, a lottery will be conducted among this group of applicants for that grade. This lottery will be used to generate a preference order for students in this group that were not selected for admission. This preference order will be used to establish a waiting list for each grade.
3. Children of the school staff will then be admitted using the same procedure used for admitting siblings of returning students.
4. Children residing in the Petaluma Elementary School District will then be admitted using the same procedure used for admitting siblings of returning students.
5. All remaining applicants (i.e. those not in a preference group not admitted because of a lottery) will then be admitted using the same procedure used for admitting siblings of returning students.
6. A single waiting list will be established for each grade except for kindergarten, which may have separate waiting lists for children in the one-year program and the two-year program. The order of the waiting list will be based on the different preference groups and any lotteries within those groups.
7. Late applications will be allowed to fill any available openings. If no openings are available, late applicants will be placed on the waiting list.

Applicants qualifying for multiple preference groups may participate in the selection process for all preference groups for which they qualify.

Students who have been expelled from another school or have school records showing recurrent behavioral/disciplinary problems will require special consideration by the Charter Board of Directors and may not be accepted.

Admission to the school will be open to any child residing in the state of California and no student will be excluded based on racial or ethnic background, gender, or disability.

I. Financial Reporting and Annual Audit

Live Oak Charter meets all mandated financial reporting deadlines, including preliminary and final annual budgets, and the first and second interim reports, as stipulated in the General Memorandum of Understanding with the Petaluma Elementary School District.

An audit of Live Oak Charter School is conducted annually. The Charter School Board of Directors selects an independent auditor and oversees the completion of an annual audit of the school's financial affairs.

The audit reviews the school's internal controls and verifies the accuracy of the school's financial statements, accounting practices, attendance, and enrollment. The audit is conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school. The annual audit is completed within six months of the close of the fiscal year. Copies of the auditor's findings are forwarded to the chief financial officer of the Petaluma Elementary School District as well as to county and state agencies as required by law.

The Live Oak Board of Directors reviews any audit exceptions or deficiencies and decides how to resolve them. The Charter School Board of Directors reports to the Petaluma Elementary School District, and to any other required county or state agencies, regarding how any exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved. Audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the District.

J. Pupil Suspension and Expulsion

Students of Live Oak Charter School may be suspended or expelled for persistent non-compliance with the terms of the school handbook or for any of the reasons enumerated in Education Code 48900. The school handbook clearly describes Live Oak Charter School's expectations regarding attendance, participation, mutual respect, substance abuse, violence, safety, and work habits. The parent or guardian of each student will be required to verify that he or she has reviewed and understands the handbook prior to enrollment. Any student who engages in repeated violations of the school's behavioral or academic expectations will be required to attend a meeting with his or her parent or guardian, her or his teacher, and the school's administrator. The school will prepare a specific, written remediation agreement outlining future student conduct expectations, timelines, and consequences for failure to meet the expectations, which may include, but are not limited to, suspension and expulsion. The school's administrator will have the authority to suspend students who fail to meet the school's expectations. The authority to expel rests with the Charter School Board of Directors, with the recommendation of the school administrator. A student who represents an immediate threat to health and safety

may be immediately suspended pending the meeting with his or her parent or guardian, her or his teacher, and the school administrator. Federal due process requirements for special education will be observed.

K. Retirement System

Staff at Live Oak Charter School participates in the Federal Social Security System and have access to other school-sponsored retirement plans according to policies developed by the Charter School Board of Directors and adopted as the school's employee policies. The school retains the option for employees to participate in the State Teachers Retirement System and/or Public Employees Retirement System and to coordinate such participation, as appropriate, with the social security system or other reciprocal systems in the future.

L. Attendance Alternatives

Students who choose not to attend Live Oak Charter School, and live within the Petaluma City Schools attendance boundary, may attend their school of residence or submit an Intra District Transfer Request to attend a different District School. Students from outside the Petaluma City Elementary Schools attendance boundary can return to their district of residence or submit a Request for Inter District Transfer to attend one of the Petaluma City Elementary School District's schools.

M. Description of Employee Rights

Live Oak Charter School staff who have left permanent status employment in the Petaluma Elementary District to work at Live Oak Charter School will have the right to return to a comparable position in the Petaluma Elementary District during their tenure at the school as agreed upon between the employee and the Petaluma Elementary District. To the extent allowed by the school's adopted personnel policies, staff may be granted or opt to purchase employee benefits from the Petaluma Elementary District.

N. Dispute Resolution Process

1. Public Comments

The staff and Charter School Board of Directors and the Petaluma Elementary School District agree to attempt to resolve all disputes regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section. Both will refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

2. Disputes Arising from within the School

Disputes arising from within Live Oak Charter School, including all disputes among and between students, staff, parents, volunteers, advisors, partner organizations, and governing board members, will be resolved pursuant to policies and processes developed by the school or that are stipulated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Live Oak Charter Teachers Association. The Petaluma Elementary School District will not intervene in any such internal disputes without the consent of the Charter School Board of Directors. The Petaluma Elementary School District will refer any complaints or reports regarding such disputes to the Charter School Board of Directors or the Live Oak Charter School Administrator for resolution pursuant to the school's policies. The District agrees not to intervene or become involved in any dispute unless the District has reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this charter or related laws or agreements has occurred or unless the Charter School Board of Directors has requested the District to intervene in the dispute.

3. Disputes between Live Oak Charter School and the Petaluma Elementary School District

In the event that Live Oak Charter School and the Petaluma Elementary School District have disputes regarding the terms of this charter or any other issue regarding the school's and district's relationship, both parties agree to follow the process outlined below.

In the event of a dispute between Live Oak Charter School and the Petaluma Elementary School District, the parties agree to frame the issue in written format and refer the issue to the Superintendent, or designee, of the Petaluma Elementary School District and to the Live Oak Charter School Administrator. In the event that the Petaluma Elementary School District believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter, this will be specifically noted in the written dispute statement.

The Live Oak Charter School Administrator and the Superintendent, or designee, of the Petaluma Elementary School District will informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute relating to the provisions of the charter. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools will be asked to serve as a mediator and to render advisory arbitration. As a final step in the process, the Petaluma Elementary School District Board of Education will have authority to make a decision. The Live Oak Charter School board of Directors retains all rights for redress under the law.

O. Labor Relations

Live Oak Charter School will be the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Education Employment Relations Act.

P. Phasing Considerations

Live Oak Charter School will offer Grades K-8 in the 2009-10 school year. In any given

year, the actual grades offered are contingent on having adequate numbers of students in any given grade.

Q. Term and Renewal

The initial term of this charter renewal will begin on July 1, 2009 and expire five years thereafter.

At least 90 days prior to the expiration of this charter, the Petaluma Elementary School District will perform a review as to whether it considers the charter school to be making satisfactory progress toward achieving the goals in this charter. The Live Oak Charter School Board of Directors will be given a minimum of 30 days to respond to this review and to remedy any potential deficiencies found in the review.

Upon agreeing that satisfactory progress is being made toward the goals in this charter, the Petaluma Elementary School District will renew this charter and any mutually agreeable amendments for a period of no less than five years.

This review process applies to any subsequent five-year renewal terms.

R. Amendments

Any amendments to this charter will be made in writing by the mutual agreement of the Charter School Board of Directors and the Board of Directors for the Petaluma Elementary School District. All modifications and amendments must specifically state the intent to modify or amend this Charter. Material revisions and amendments will be made pursuant to the standards, criteria, and timelines in Education Code Section 47605.

S. Severability

The terms of this charter contract are severable. In the event that any of the provisions are determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the charter will remain in effect, unless mutually agreed otherwise by the Petaluma Elementary School District and the Charter School Board of Directors. The district and the school agree to meet to discuss and resolve any issues or differences relating to invalidated provisions in a timely manner, based in good faith.

T. Facilities

Live Oak Charter School is housed at the Sonoma-Marin Fairgrounds and currently has a three-year renewable lease. Maintenance is conducted on a contracted basis and by the students and parents. It is still the long-term intention of the school to find and purchase

land to build a permanent site with acreage for a small farm that serves as part of the educational program.

U. Closing Plan

If Live Oak Charter School closes, there shall be an audit of programmatic and financial operations for the final fiscal year. The Charter School Board of Directors, in accordance with the asset disposition provisions of the school's bylaws, Article V, Section 1, will dispose of the assets and liabilities of the school, and the board treasurer shall ensure that a final audit of the school's assets and liabilities is performed. All files, records and documentation shall become property of Petaluma Elementary School District.

V. Communications

All official communications between the Charter School Board of Directors and Petaluma Elementary School District will be sent via First Class Mail or other appropriate means to the following addresses:

Live Oak Charter School
100 Gness Concourse, #1
Petaluma, CA 94952

Petaluma Elementary School District
200 Douglas Street
Petaluma, CA 94952-2575