

05 Educational Program

A review of 104 letters of intent to enroll forms for Two Rivers Community School collected last spring and again this fall indicate that the majority of interested families are looking for a small, K-8 school with an emphasis on dual language acquisition, applied learning opportunities, outdoor education /exploration as well as cross cultural student integration. Two Rivers Community School fully embraces these concepts within the school design.

Additionally, Roaring Fork School District has facilitated a series of community visioning meetings to determine what the local community's desire for their children's education. Preliminary summaries of these meetings and an early analysis of Roaring Fork RE1 School District Visioning (Fall 2013) indicate a high interest in hands-on experiential learning (See Section 3 Evidence of Support) Parents participating in several of these meetings have also voiced concern for crowded schools and crowded busses. Two Rivers Community School will offer an additional choice for parents in both the Roaring Fork and Garfield-Re 2 School District which includes an emphasis in experiential learning and could simultaneously minimize crowding in some schools.

As described within the application, teachers will receive in-depth training in the use of multiple programs, resources, and philosophies to create a highly rigorous curriculum with an emphasis on applied learning through Place-Based projects. The educational program of TRCS will require teachers to demonstrate content expertise and an ability to integrate the appropriate skills into Place-Based projects. Student input and talents will be solicited as they develop within the curriculum design. The result will be high levels of learning and ownership among students both visible to and celebrated by stakeholders.

5.1 Educational Philosophy

Two Rivers Community School engages students to become...

- Learners
- Leaders
- Thinkers
- Collaborators

... through in-depth study in English Language Arts and Math, interdisciplinary study of science and social studies, high-level Place-Based projects, second language acquisition and collaborative community focused action.

Pillars of School Design

Academic Excellence: Colorado Academic Standards are used as the centerpiece for instructional planning and research based curricula assure that students are proficient in math, science, and literacy.

Place-Based Projects: Community connections and research provide limitless opportunities for student engagement, projects, workshops, field studies, internships, and community initiatives to take place. 21st Century Communication Skills are embedded within this context. A school where community elders and experts will be called upon as resources to enhance student learning.

Respectful Climate: Embedded teamwork, multiage learning opportunities, and leadership development in a climate of respectfulness and inclusivity for both students and their families.

Community Connections and Caring: Nurturing students of character through integrated learning and community service experiences that foster civic responsibility through Place-Based projects.

Wellness Community: Creating a collaborative community that embraces the need for the individual growth and health of mind, body, and spirit through daily movement and an emphasis on physical and outdoor education.

Cross Cultural Understandings: Celebrating diversity and multicultural backgrounds. Spanish language instruction offered to all students. Language taught through the lens of culture and academics.

Family Support and Partnership: Early childhood programming and family services prioritized to support school readiness and parent involvement.

5.1.1 Academic Proficiency and Standards Alignment

TRCS will offer daily literacy, math, and integrated learning blocks. In-depth study of content including social studies and science shall take place during integrated learning blocks. Resources cross referenced to provide a road map for teachers to assure that adequate coverage and alignment of key content areas occurs grades K-8 include: Boulder Valley School District Curriculum (BVSD) Elementary and Secondary Curriculums in Math, ELA, Science and Social Studies standards/ skills; Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell's Literacy Continuums of Learning Grades PreK-8; Sundance/Newbridge Literacy Teacher Guides and Leveled Texts, Saxon Math grades K-8; and The National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) sponsored through the Colorado Legacy Foundation called Laying the Foundation (LTF). LTF will assist teachers in grades 6-8 to be certain that priority standards in math, literacy, science and social studies are vertically aligned. Content and strategy training will also occur in each subject area through NMSI each year.

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With training and guidance from the Academic Coach, teachers will use multiple programs subsequently described to support instruction and skill mastery within the CAS. Screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tests shall be administered in both literacy and math to inform instruction and differentiate education.

Teachers, school leaders, and school mentors will work together to ensure that all learning and curricular decisions are based on required standards and vertically aligned. Adjustments will be made as needed and based on assessment results. Standards will be prioritized for emphasis providing opportunities for depth and appropriate repetition of key skills and concepts.

Teachers, school leaders, and school collaborators will review measures of student achievement as indicators of how well the curriculum is addressing standards, and regularly make related adjustments to curriculum. The most recent and relevant CAS will be aligned with Place-Based projects for each grade level.

5.1.2 Multiage Groupings– Building Relationships, Respectful Climate and Leadership Opportunities

Many children today spend a majority of their time in an age-segregated milieu (Katz, Evangelou and Harman, 1990;McClellan, 1994) The results of this pattern of segregation are thought to contribute to a declining social support system and compromised development of children’s social and academic skills. With an educational design centered on relevance, relationships, and rigor, TRCS considers intentional multiage groupings one strategy for building relationships both peer to peer and teacher to student.

In multiage instruction, children of at least a two year grade space and diverse ability levels are grouped in a single classroom and are encouraged to share experiences involving intellectual, academic, and social skills (Goodlad and Anderson, 1987;Katzet.al. 1990; McCellan and Kinsey, 1996). Consistency over time in relationships among teachers, children and parents is viewed as one of the most significant strengths of the multi-grade approach because it encourages greater depth in children’s social, academic, and intellectual development. The concept of the classroom as a “family” is encouraged, leading to expansion of the roles of nurturing and commitment on the part of both students and teacher (Feng, 1994; Hallion, 1994; Marshak, 1994).. At TRCS, students will be placed in K/1, 2/3, 4/5, 6/7, and Grade 8 classroom. Aside from Grade 8, teachers will make a two-year commitment to each child nurturing their development over a lengthy period of time.

The positive working model of a multiage classroom and a small school, allow for the development of both academic and social skills as the teacher encourages cross-age interactions through tutoring and shared discovery. Social competence develops for both younger and older children out of their roles as leaders and nurturers. It provides

an important opportunity for students to observe and model the positive behavior of their peers.

5.1.3 Integrated Learning

TRCS will provide integrated learning blocks for field studies: Place-Based projects, team teaching, and multi-disciplinary connections. Emphasis is as follows:

Place-Based Projects Designed Around:

- **A Need To Know:** Entry events that engage interest and initiate questioning.
- **A Driving Question:** One that captures the heart of the project in clear, compelling language and gives students a sense of purpose and challenge. A question that is provocative, open -ended, complex and linked to the core of what students should learn.
- **Student Voice and Choice:** A continuum of student choices ranging from selecting the topic to study within the general driving question to deciding what products they will create and what resources they will use allows student input as appropriate for the age and maturing of the learner.
- **21st Century Communication Skills:** The 21st Century requires inventive thinkers. The students will be able to identify and react to changing conditions independently, in small groups, and all together as they investigate, research, and contribute to the community around them. Explicit teaching and assessing of collaboration, communication, and technological skills as dictated by the project scope are taught. Place-Based projects will peak students' curiosity, develop their creativity and encourage risk taking. Furthermore, students will use emergent reasoning skills and aptitude in order to plan, design, execute, and evaluate solutions—processes that are often initially developed in the early educational years. Students will know the joy of work well done by achieving real results that make a difference in the life of the school and the lives of the community members.
- **Inquiry and Innovation:** Real inquiry which requires students to follow a trail that begins with their own questions, leads to a search for resources and the discovery of answers. This ultimately leads to generating new questions, testing ideas, and drawing their own conclusions.
- **Feedback and Revision:** Student teams critique one another's work referring to rubrics and exemplars. A formal process of feedback and revision emphasizing the creation of high quality products and performances.
- **A Publically Presented Product:** Project exhibition nights invite diverse audiences including parents, peers, and representatives from the community. Students answer questions and reflect on how they completed their project with the assistance of their peers, next steps they might take, and what they gained in terms of knowledge and skills.

A Place-Based Context for Learning Supporting Community Connections, Relevance and Caring

Building Social Capital: Students interact with neighborhoods, workplaces, agencies and city council meetings. With these adults they can see themselves as fellow citizens with shared responsibilities. Students begin to care for their community as they get to know their community.

- Building Leaders: Through the study of real community based problems and the formulation of real solutions through project work, students can exercise leadership and address dilemmas within their sphere of influence.
- The Power of Relevance: Civic participation and environmental stewardship are inevitably integrated into both place and project based learning illuminating the critical nature of these forces in the community.

Internships and Relevance

Student Engagement and Equity: Job shadow and internship programs promote equity and reduce the experience gap by providing access to settings that are often closed to students from less privileged backgrounds. Students recognize the intrinsic value and meaningfulness of experiencing real world settings and places where real work is done. Project work culminates and is informed by job shadow and internship placements at grades 6, 7 and 8.

Scope and Components of Place-Based Projects (PBP)

- Place-Based Projects are usually 6-12 weeks in duration and comprise the integrated learning block for students.
- All PBP focus on building literacy skills in students, particularly in the reading and writing of nonfiction text.
- Teachers plan PBP that include the following components: learning targets, guiding questions, entry event, projects, lessons, fieldwork, experts, service learning, and a culminating event.
- PBP are interdisciplinary, but not necessarily with an equal balance of disciplines. On a secondary level they can be either co-led by a multidisciplinary team or led by a single teacher who builds a PBP within his or her subject area that includes interdisciplinary features. Science and Social Studies standards are central to PBP design as the curriculum for these two subjects is a culmination of Colorado Academic Standards merged with PBP.
- PBP integrate skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, numeracy, and research, as well as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration. Explicit literacy instruction, using appropriately challenging and non-fiction text, takes place in PBP at all grade levels.

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- PBP are constructed or customized by individual teachers or teaching teams and are also researched and assessed for quality through school-wide structures that involve leadership and professional service providers in critique and support.
- Teachers plan backwards, constructing calendars that begin with the end in mind. Whenever possible, students are brought into the process in class planning sessions during which they help choose and commit to deadlines. Teachers and students ensure that the planned components are realistic and that students will have time to complete projects and associated products and performances with quality.
- PBP begin with an entry event or immersion experience for students that ignite curiosity and sparks interest in a topic. Kickoffs build background knowledge in the learning expedition content, but are focused more on raising questions than answering them.
- After the entry event, PBP shift toward deepening students' study and research, allowing them to become experts in the topic. Students often build significant background knowledge before they begin deeper work with experts and fieldwork, maximizing the value of those resources.
- The PBP draws to a close with product creation, synthesis and reflection, and a culminating event that celebrates learning.
- PBP often involve issues of cultural diversity, equity, and social justice or environmental stewardship linked to science and social studies standards to engage students in compelling conversations about the ideas of right and wrong.
- Assessment toward learning targets takes place during all aspects of the project, not just at the completion of the final product. The project includes formative and summative assessments such as conferences, quizzes, tests, essays, and presentations.
- Assessment of the final product is typically focused not on content and skills, which have been assessed during the course of the project, but on craftsmanship and character learning targets.
- Technology is used appropriately in various phases of product development (e.g., recording and analyzing data, graphic design, presentation). Products are used as a compelling purpose for technology learning.
- Quality work is supported through explicit skills lessons and critique of models so that students gain expertise in a medium:
- Field Studies have a clear purpose that enriches the project (e.g., data collection, interviews, structured observations) and allows students to be researchers, not spectators. Procedures and skills for fieldwork are taught before the event. Fieldwork is modeled, as much as possible, on the authentic research of professionals in the field (e.g., zoologists, historians, anthropologists).

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- Students are prepared to be ambassadors for their school when on fieldwork. They are courteous, articulate, organized, and helpful.
- Teachers regularly engage with experts during fieldwork and as classroom guests.
- Teachers reach out to a range of experts, who may be professionals from a particular discipline or community members with firsthand knowledge of the topic being studied. Experts may work with just teachers or with teachers and students.
- Experts work collaboratively with students on projects and internships and they help students critique their work against professional standards.
- Often, teachers and students maintain ongoing relationships with experts. Whenever possible, students take a lead role in communication with experts before (to ensure alignment and focus), during (to keep the collaboration on track), and after (showing appreciation), to build student responsibility and skills to perform real-world work.
- Whenever applicable, Place-Based projects culminate in service to the community. See sample project outline *The Hispanic Diabetes Education Project 7th Grade Science and Technology* borrowed from [Project Based Learning Handbook: A Guide to Standards-Focused Project Based Learning for Middle and High School Teachers](#)- Buck Institute for Education outline (see Appendix 1, Sample Project).

The Harvard Graduate School of Education addressed the power of Place-Based learning in its monograph, [Learning in Place](#):

Pedagogy of place brings school and community together on a common pathway dedicated to stewardship and life-long learning. It is teaching by using one's landscape, family, and community surroundings as the educational foundation. Significant learning takes place outdoors and in the community. This community expands outward from local landscape and home, to regional realities, to international issues. In coming to know one's place, one comes to know what is fundamental to all places.²

Beginning the Thinking Process Around Place-Based Projects - Sample

As teachers involve students in the focus for PBP learning, they may start by analyzing the community through questions such as those provided and seek to create long and short term learning targets which integrate community resources, community needs, and standards from the core curriculum. Questions are modified based on the age of the student. Teachers work to isolate core curriculum standards which have the most potential for extended learning and application via projects so that students can make educated choices about the strategic integration of core curriculum with community

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and potential projects. The broader context for learning created in this way allows for student input and results in increased motivation for learning.

- What is one special place somewhere in your community that every local person ought to visit at least once?
- What are two service projects organizations in your community that would benefit from kid power and provide a valuable learning experience for students?
- Vision 2020: If you could look in a crystal ball and ask one question about what your community will be like in the year 2020, what would you ask?
- What are two opportunities for leadership roles in your community, both formal and informal? What preparation would youth need to fill them?
- What are three ways that parents and other community members could help in our school that is not already happening now?
- How does the story of our community connect to the “bigger stories” of the region, the nation or the world?
- What are the two most magical, attractive and fascinating places in our community for kids, either on the inside or the outside?
- What is one way you could use local public or private lands to teach a part of your present curriculum?
- What are three organizations in our community that might be interested in co-sponsoring an educational activity that benefits the community?
- Do you know of any unusual sources for interesting facts or photos about our community’s heritage or natural history?
- If you could bring a small group of children to spend an afternoon talking with one of our community’s residents, whom would you choose? Why?
- What two places would you bring a group of students to, if you wanted to demonstrate to them the underlying driving forces of the economy in our community?
- What are two valuable learning experiences that your class could have that could make some nearby public lands a better place?
- What do kids do after school in our community?
- What are two businesses in our community that would make good field trip destinations? Why?
- What is the relationship between the learning targets and curriculum in your morning block classes and your afternoon integrated learning classes?
- How could you apply learning targets from literacy and math block classes to a potential project?

For an extensive library of projects or research about Place-Based and project based learning refer to the Buck Institute for Education www.bie.org, www.promiseofplace.org, and www.coopecology.com. For planning templates school and classroom rubrics, (see Appendix 2, Templates and Rubrics).

5.1.4 Supporting College and Career Readiness

- Students develop the habits of learning to navigate the academic and social demands of college and contributing to the skills need for a respectful climate.
- All 8th graders will register for an account for College in Colorado and work through five online learning modules in preparation for high school.
- PARCC assessments designed to measure whether students are actually on track for college or careers.
- Core academic skills such as research skills and analytic thinking are taught in every subject area and at all grade levels.
- Internship programs for students grades 6-8 promote equity and reduce the experience gap by providing access to settings that are often closed to students from less privileged backgrounds. The programs aim to increase student engagement and promote skills and knowledge needed for achieving life, career and civic goals.
- Literacy instruction is a focus in every subject area and at all grade levels in order to prepare students for the complexity of college texts.
- Students in grades 6-8 have access to the courses and opportunities that prepare them for a college-bound high school curriculum utilizing Saxon Math Courses as well as the National Math and Science Initiative via Colorado Legacy Schools (CLS) training and resources for Advanced Placement (AP) courses at the high school level. CLS staff help build “vertical teams” by subject, enhancing communication and coordination between teachers, middle school through AP. These vertical teams work together to prepare students, from middle school on, for AP success. See appendix 3 for sample resources in math, science and English from NMSI, research based evidence for overall achievement and achievement related to minorities, as well as correspondence with the program manager regarding a philosophical match working with Two Rivers Community School.
- Teachers and school leaders make it clear to all students that they are on a path to college starting with the morning recitation cited in this application.
- Students have opportunities to visit college campuses, starting in 6th grade to build their knowledge of the multiple opportunities available to them.
- Teachers take advantage of technological innovations to extend student project work beyond the school day and the school building. Projects and assignments take advantage of the ubiquitous availability of information sources.

5.1.4 Technology

- Teachers ensure that technology literacy is routinely woven throughout all subject areas and grade levels using resources such as IXL Math, English in a Flash, Accelerated Reader and Khan Academy.

- Students use technology as a tool for original research and to produce high-quality products, performances, and presentations as part of their Placed-Based Projects.
- Students use new technologies (e.g., design and presentation software, social networking) to access and manage information and prepare for success in a knowledge economy.
- Students understand ethical and legal issues surrounding access to and use of technology.
- Teachers maintain high standards for the quality of work produced using technology. Learning targets for the technology skills (e.g., effective use of spreadsheet or presentation software) are distinct from learning targets for the quality of thinking and content presented in the project.
- Teachers take advantage of technological innovations to extend student project work beyond the school day and the school building. Projects and assignments take advantage of the ubiquitous availability of information sources.
- Teachers ensure that once students have a solid understanding of concepts, they are encouraged to take advantage of new technologies to amplify skills in research and problem solving.

5.1.5 Inquiry

Socratic questioning for dialogue and deeper content understanding will be a hallmark of TRCS. Teachers, community experts, and students will discuss projects in the community with the following kinds of questions.

Inquiry to Learn, Listen, and Deepen Understanding

Agree / Disagree

- Has anyone else had a similar . . . ?
- Who has a different . . . ?

Clarification

- I'm not sure I understand . . . ?
- Tell me more about . . . ?
- Do you see gaps in my reasoning?
- Are you taking into account something different from what I have considered?

Support Questions

- Can you give us an example of . . . ?
- Where in the story . . . ?
- What would be a good reason for . . . ?
- What is some evidence for . . . ?

Cause and Effect

- Why do you think that happened?
- How could that have been prevented?

- Do you think that would happen that way again? Why?

Compare / Contrast

- How are _____ and _____ alike? Different?
- What is that similar to?
- Can you think of why this feels different than . . . ?
- How does this (poem, book, incident, etc.) remind you of . . . ?

Benefits / Burdens

- What are some of the reasons this wouldn't (would) be a good idea?
- Would anyone like to speak to the opposite side?
- Those are some reasons this would work; what reasons might it not work?

Point of View / Perspective

- How might she/he have felt . . . ?
- What do you think he/she was thinking when . . . ?
- _____ has expressed a different opinion. Are there others?
- Do you have a different interpretation?
- How did you arrive at your view?

Structure / Function

- If that was the goal, what do you think about... (the action, reaction)?
- Why was she/he doing that? (Reply gives reason) What do you think of that approach?
- What better choices could he/she have made?

Counterexample

- Would that still happen if . . . ?
- What might have made the difference?

Different Situation

- Can you describe a situation that would . . . ?
- Suppose _____. Would that still be true? Why or why not?

Solicit Questions

- What are some things that you wonder about?
- What would you like to know about?
- Are there questions we should remember now?

Personal Experience

- What would you do in that situation?
- Has anything like that ever happened to you?
- In what way are you alike or different from . . . ?

See ELL section for parallel inquiry methods via Socratic questions.

5.2 Core Subject Curriculum and Instructional Design

English Language Arts

All grade levels will receive a minimum of 90 minutes of integrated language arts instruction each day. The literacy program will support a balanced approach in which teachers incorporate English Language Arts Content Standards with supporting

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curriculum guides, research based literacy programs and trainings. Through reference to the Boulder Valley School District Curriculum (BVSDC), teachers will be able to view all the Colorado Academic State Standards grouped into trimester areas of priority for each grade level K-8. Fountas and Pinnel’s Continuum of Literacy Learning provides a glance of the skill progression from PreK- Grade 8 categorized by thinking skills (within the text, beyond the text, and about the text). Using these resources, adequate attention to the breadth and sequence of state ELA standards will be given. See overview and sample BVSD grade scope and sequence in Appendix 4. Teachers will review grade level essential learnings as well as a literacy scope and sequence from which daily instruction to achieve proficiency can be planned utilizing the resources noted in this application. Through professional learning communities with membership from teachers, the Academic Coach, Head of School and School Mentors, instructional outlines for the year, trimester, and week will be created in grade level teams. The following areas will be integrated and balanced for daily instruction as well as project application.

Speaking (Oral Language)	Listening	Representing	Reading	Writing	Researching
vocabulary building, conversation, discussion, and directions, and presentation	active stance for task, purpose of task, nonverbal cues, and direction following	message/meaning communicated through a variety of media (e.g., drawings, pictures,	sounds, movements, created objects), awareness, phonics, fluency; vocabulary, comprehension, and genre study: fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and printed resource materials;	language structure/grammar, vocabulary building, spelling, writing forms/genre; writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising proofreading, publishing, and writing features: ideas/content, style/fluency, organization, language usage	sources, note taking, presentation

At the elementary level, instruction will be designed around a balanced literacy approach (Tompkins, G., Campbell, R., & Green, D, 2012) for each literacy block to include: read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, modeled writing, shared writing, guided writing, independent writing and spelling/word study.

Research based literacy support programs identified to assist with instruction will be leveraged to assure strong student outcomes. Teachers will become experts in the use of the following programs and strategies: The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser; Transforming Teaching through Reading/Writing Connections by Regie Routman; The Primary Comprehension Toolkit and the Comprehension Tool Kit by Stephanie Harvey Anne Goudvis and Judy Wallis, 6+1 Trait® Writing Model of Instruction & Assessment *Fountas and Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI)*, and Sundance/Newbridge Teacher's Guides for Common Core State Standards Readiness Sets. These programs will be used to assure proficiency on Colorado Academic Standard's in English Language Arts.

Daily literacy plans will include small-leveled literacy groups based on the results of individualized testing and teacher assessment. Groupings will be flexible, fluid and responsive to student needs. Teachers, including the Special Education Teacher and ELL Teacher, will facilitate targeted small group instruction to support classroom teachers and provide differentiated instruction. Fountas and Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention will be used as one guided reading structure for students who, in grades K-3, may need extra support as well as strong, predictable structures to develop literacy skills. Accelerated Reader will also be used for additional reading comprehension practice on a rotating basis in each classroom. Students can log on independently and receive immediate feedback on their level of understanding.

Sundance/Newbridge Grades K–5 CCSS Readiness Sets will be used as they provide opportunities for students to develop their English Language Arts skills while reading informational and literary texts at their reading level. A wide variety of rigorous, quality books related to Science, Social Studies, and Math topics will increase students' content-area knowledge and exposure to multiple literary genres. The program components include:

- **1 Read-Aloud fiction trade book** to introduce the standards-based theme concept, build background, and activate prior knowledge.
- **1 Shared Reading Nonfiction Big Book** to explore the concept in-depth and introduce basic nonfiction text features.
- **6 Little Book versions of the Big Book** for read-alongs and re-reading.
- **3 sets of Leveled Readers**—paired fiction and nonfiction texts to expand all students' understanding of the theme, plus Audio to help struggling readers and English Language Learning (ELL) students access information.
- **Trade Book Library** with carefully selected fiction and nonfiction to further students' understanding of the theme (6 books).
- **A Teacher Resource Book** per theme, that provides lesson plans, phonics and writing activities, assessment, and home connections. The PowerSkills component gives the below-level readers and ELL students the extra support they need to learn key curriculum concepts and vocabulary

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Books connected to Place-Based Projects will be prioritized for reading during literacy blocks. Fiction and nonfiction texts written with manageable vocabulary and concise sentences will allow students to access content without becoming overwhelmed, enabling them to improve their comprehension skills and gradually increase their reading level to become more proficient readers. Sundance/Newbridge Teachers' Guides for Common Core State Standards Readiness Sets will support teachers with instruction including common assessments. Students will participate in literacy activities on a rotational basis as teachers pull small groups and note progress using formative assessments. Students too, will be tracking their progress in individual charts and folders setting goals each week for continued progress..

Direct instruction will occur for specific literacy skills and comprehension strategies. Harvey, Goudvis and Wallis' Primary Comprehension (K-2) Toolkit and Comprehension Toolkit Grades 3-8 provide explicit small and whole group instruction in guided reading, RTI, as well as supports for special education and ELL students. These resources focus on comprehension and critical thinking skills and serve as a primary resource for teachers to help students comprehend increasingly complex text. Skills acquired here are easily transferable to Place-Based Project content reading.

At grades 6-8, the National Math and Science Initiative Laying the Foundation (LTF) will provide reference syllabus, training, lessons and teacher support for assessment and instruction in English Language Arts. Teachers will be able to access well developed lessons by experts in the content through membership in NMSI and access to their website. Training and support from NMSI will be ongoing and accessible in Grand Junction for each teacher. Experts from NMSI will assist teachers to review and align Boulder Valley School District Curriculum Essentials with resources used to deliver instruction. Grades 6-8 will also access all resources described above and needed to differentiate for students, but will rely primarily on the National Math and Science Initiative English Language Arts lessons and assessments linked to CAS and applied literacy skills within the framework of Place-Based Projects.

Raising a Reader book bags will be given to all students grades PreK-1. Students will receive a new book bag every week with four high quality books. At the Pre- K level, there are two English and two Spanish/bilingual read aloud books. At the Kindergarten/First level, book bags contain two leveled books and two read aloud Spanish/English books. Parents will be required to attend at least two parent education/literacy nights in order for their child to bring the books home each week. Parent sessions will focus on developing language and literacy skills at home with their child.

Meaningful engagement in reading and writing activities will be prioritized using project and Place-Based themes whenever possible and appropriate for the skills to be mastered. Assessment will be ongoing and embedded in instruction. Student progress will be monitored regularly using a body of evidence including: checklists, charts,

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running records, individual reading inventories, STAR Diagnostic and Benchmark Assessments, NMSI assessments, student work samples, anecdotal records, informal observations and project portfolios. Every classroom will have a print-rich environment including classroom libraries, which contain a variety of reading materials and levels for independent reading. Every classroom will contain abundant literature and leveled texts related to project themes. Original student work and exemplars will be featured and acknowledged by both the author and their peers.

While this learning period focuses primarily on developing language arts skills, it will be well-integrated with students' project work as students explore texts and compose and revise writing samples that align with the standards of focus within projects. (Cousins, Mednick, and Campbell, 2000). This literacy foundation will be extended and enhanced during the integrated learning block when students must interpret a broad range of text needed for project research as well as a wide range of writing and presentation venues afforded to students as they present what they have discovered and researched in the community. Students will also practice the Writing Process in every subject and articulate their understanding of subject by writing across the disciplines (Calkins, 1994).

Writing

The National Commission on Writing, in their article *The Neglected 'R'* (2011) stated the importance of writing, "If students are to make knowledge their own, they must struggle with the details, wrestle with the facts, and rework raw information and dimly understood concepts into language they can communicate to someone else. In short, if students are to learn, they must write." TRCS will integrate the expertise of Regie Routman's *Reading/Writing Connections with 6 +1 Traits* to meet state standards in writing and provide a framework for using writing as a demonstration of intelligence and creativity. Writing will occur in all grade levels and in all content areas.

The six instructional strategies taught through 6+1 Traits are: grammar, models, sentence combining, scales, inquiry, and free writing. Research has confirmed the importance of process in writing, and that what writers do as they write is at least as important as the products they produce (Tompkins 1993). Britton (1970), Emig (1971) and Graves (1975) investigated the thinking processes that young writers used as they wrote. They found that the process consisted of three basic activities: conception or prewriting, incubation or composing, and production or post writing. Flowers and Hayes (1977,1981) found these same basic stages, and added that the process is recursive, with writers moving between steps in the process freely. Sommers (1980,1982) described writing as a revision process in which ideas are developed, and pointed to the limitations placed on student thinking when teachers focus on mechanics rather than content.

Students will regularly meet in pairs and small groups to brainstorm, discuss, and receive feedback from peers and teachers on their writing. Students will frequently reflect on and revise pieces in their writing portfolios, understanding that writing is a continual and a learned process. Through the creation of multiple drafts, TRCS will stress

the quality and refinement of work over quantity (Calkins, 1994; Marzano, 2001). Writing will be one of the primary mechanisms through which Place-Based project learning will be communicated. Students will publish their learning in school newspapers and other community mediums willing to assist with student demonstrations of learning.

Mathematics

We plan to use Saxon Math as the foundation for our K-8 curriculum and supplement it with additional resources from the National Math and Science Initiative (see sample resources in appendix 3). Saxon Scope and Sequence will be cross-referenced with BVSD math curriculums to assure coverage of CAS. This curriculum employs a high level of intellectual rigor, provides frequent opportunities for deliberate practice and challenges students to think boldly by applying concepts to new contexts. Students in grades 6-8 will focus much of their mathematical studies on pre-Algebra and Algebra in preparation for high school coursework. Math will be taught during a dedicated math time each day (60 minutes in grades K – 8) and when relevant integrated into Place-Based projects to support the conceptual understanding and application of critical mathematical ideas. Saxon's instructional approach breaks complex concepts into simpler increments, recognizing that smaller pieces of information are easier to teach and easier to learn. The instruction, practice, and assessment of those increments are systematically distributed across a grade level. The distributed approach ensures that students gain and retain critical thinking concepts and use them in real-world situations.

Math will be taught in both a whole group setting and using flexible ability groupings. IXL, a computerized math skill practice program, will be employed as a practice tool for students and an additional common assessment tool for teachers. It provides easy differentiated instruction and computerized math practice, which is helpful for students taking STAR math tests online. IXL covers every concept in Pre-K through Geometry math curricula. Students can log on anytime, anywhere and practice math content as assigned by teachers. See Saxon Math Scope and Sequence Education in Appendix 5.

Classroom Snapshot

Walking into a TRCS primary classroom, a visitor observes two classroom teachers team teaching during literacy block. One is leading a guided reading group using LLI, while the other is working with a group reading leveled texts connected to community based projects using the workshop model. As students read leveled texts using Sundance/Newbridge readers, they make comparisons with a story they read the previous week, noting similarities in the sequence of the story's events. Another group is receiving small-group intervention (RTI Tier 2) with the ELL specialist as she previews key vocabulary terms that will be included in a lesson later in the day. Children are actively engaged on the rug, sorting words with the /ch/, /sh/ and /th/ sounds and noting the vocabulary words from their studies as they read each word aloud. Several students are practicing the *Daily Five -Read to Someone* while other students practice reading comprehension using Accelerated Reader on the computer. Several ELL

students are working on the computers using English in a Flash to increase vocabulary skills. Other students are involved in various stages of the writing process, developing and revising their own composition, which will be a component of their culminating product for a Place-Based project. Students are seen meeting in partners to share their work. With targeted small group instruction based on learning needs, integrating foundational skills with critical thinking skills, TRCS teachers will teach to all learners, supporting those students not meeting learning targets, and those who need a challenge. These activities occur on a rotating basis as teachers pull small groups to read with them and take notes on progress using formal assessment methods.

During literacy and math blocks, students will move through different learning experiences as they practice and apply skills. Teachers will meet with small language, reading and math skill groups, leading lessons based on students' individual academic and learning needs. When not engaged in small group work, students will continue to practice skills independently based on their skill development level, or revise their work, receiving feedback and assessment from peers.

Science and Social Studies- Rich and In-Depth Study - Integrated Learning

In-depth study of social studies and science shall take place during integrated learning blocks. Resources cross referenced to provide a road map for teachers to assure that adequate coverage and alignment of key content areas occurs grades K-8 include: Boulder Valley School District Curriculum (BVSD) Elementary and Secondary Curriculums in Science and Social Studies standards/skills; and The National Math and Science Initiative Laying the Foundation (LTF) sponsored through the Colorado Legacy Foundation. NMSI will also assist teachers in grades 6-8 to be certain that priority standards in science and social studies are vertically aligned. Content and strategy training will occur in each subject area through NMSI each year.

Through NMSI, teachers in grades 6-8 will have access to modules that connect content to AP readiness, concept development continuums, unit assessments, training videos and highly developed lessons by content experts. These resources can be used as stand-alone course work as well as training and skill building for applied learning through Place-Based projects. Integrated learning block time, scheduled each day, will integrate core content skills through NMSI resources in science, social studies and literacy with place-based project work.

Each year, students in grades 3-8 shall complete one science and one social studies Place-Based Project (PBP). Following CAS in science and social studies, students in 6th Grade will have a general focus on earth science and world geography, 7th Grade will have a general focus on life science and world geography, and 8th Grade will have a general focus on physical sciences and American history. Each PBP will require research whereby students read, write, speak, investigate and think critically about compelling topics. Compelling topics may engage students in current issues, controversies, social justice and/or cultural diversity and will often concentrate on an event, a place, a person or living history. In-depth investigations through case studies will lead students to

generalizations, concepts, and big ideas. Wherever possible, the practice and expertise of real professionals will be sought and the tools from disciplines and topics studied shall be used. Teachers will select a variety of engaging information sources beyond textbooks for research such as articles, biographies, primary sources original documents, interviews and fieldwork to build knowledge about the topic.

Teachers will model and make explicit use of subject-specific comprehension strategies using the Comprehension Tool Kit as a guide and Place-Based texts as a resource. Students will be given multiple opportunities to engage in complex, problem based activities, labs, and investigations, and to represent and analyze data. Teachers will ask students to articulate their theories, explanations, and understandings and to represent and reflect on their thinking (e.g., create analogies, make graphs, create pictures, build models). Students will be required to apply knowledge in diverse and authentic contexts, explain ideas, interpret texts, predict phenomena, and construct arguments based on evidence (instead of focusing exclusively on predetermined “right answers”). Students will be asked to take and defend positions and to consider multiple perspectives. As part of ongoing assessment, teachers will look for misconceptions and create experiences that challenge those misconceptions. Students will be required to generalize, transfer, and apply concepts and procedures to other contexts and problems.

Students will keep ongoing records of their learning in science and social studies through Passage Portfolios that will be presented to an authentic audience on a regular basis.

Passage Portfolios

Students are more motivated to learn and do their best work when they know their work is important. At TRCS our students spend more time on work that is meaningful—both because of its value to them and to the larger community. Passage Portfolios are one example of motivating students to do their best work. Their audience can include parents, peers, board members, or community members. Research indicates that student achievement is more closely tied to intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, motivation (Lepper, Corpus & Iyengar, 2005). By drawing on our students’ natural desire to contribute, then, we motivate them to work more thoughtfully and achieve at higher levels. Finally, because students know they ultimately will be presenting their work to a larger audience, they become much more invested in producing high quality work—whether it is a scientific report or the solution to a word problem. Griffiths (2008) found that instructional approaches that build intrinsic motivation are especially beneficial for English language learners.

Students will collect evidence of their mastery of academic standards and character traits as a qualitative summative assessment including student reflections on their overall growth. These assessments will be created over the course of each school year and presented to parents and other community members at the end of each multiage grouping, grades K-5, before moving on to the next multiage grouping. This will require

students to continuously interact with their data and take ownership for their progress. Presentations will occur at the end of 1st, 3rd and 5th grades and at each grade level in grades 6-8. See sample portfolio/passage assignment and rubric below.

Sixth Grade Passage Presentation (Adapted from Genesee Community Charter School)

The 6th Grade passage presentation is intended to be a rite of passage for our students as they move from elementary into middle school. The preparation of the passage portfolio will give students ample opportunity to reflect on their years at TRCS and on their academic, social, and emotional growth.

Components:

Letter of Introduction to the Community

This component will require students to write a letter to the community that describes themselves. Students will explain in what ways they are prepared to be actively contributing members of their community as they move into adolescence and adulthood.

Reflection on the Social Studies or Science component of their favorite PBP while a student at TRCS

This component requires students to reflect back on their previous PBP. Students will write a one-two page essay outlining the most important factors contributing to their development in science or social studies.

Reflection on the Elementary Years

TRCS' program provides students with a range of opportunities designed to deepen their academic and social development. Students will write a one-two page essay that answers the question, "What part of your education at TRCS do you think contributed the most to your growth during your elementary years?" This component allows students to reflect upon the experiences they have had and the people they have worked with, and to consider how those contributed to their academic and social development.

Myself as a Mathematician, Writer, Artist

Students will reflect on their particular skills and approaches to mathematics, writing, or art. They will write 2-3 paragraphs describing their strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, and dispositions regarding these disciplines. Students will also present a performance or visual arts piece.

Metaphor

Students will create a metaphor to represent their 6th Grade year. The metaphor will become the centerpiece of students' passage presentation; students will describe their journey through 6th Grade and give examples of how the metaphor illustrates their experience.

Academic Portfolio

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Students will prepare an academic portfolio that includes work samples that demonstrate accomplishment of math, reading, writing, and expedition learning targets.

Presentation

Students will prepare their academic and passage portfolios in advance, and these portfolios will be distributed to the members of the committee. Committee members will include at least one current classroom teacher, at least one former teacher, a school leader, a Board member, parents, and a community member. At the conclusion of the presentation, the committee will determine if the student has adequately met the criteria of the passage, or if revisions are required.

The format of the presentation will be:

- Introductions (5 minutes)
- Student description of metaphor (5 minutes)
- Student discussion of academic and social preparedness for middle school (10 minutes)
- Student responds to questions from the Committee (15 minutes)
- Committee deliberates (5 minutes)
- Committee informs student of outcome (5 minutes)

Portfolio Rubric Sample (Adapted from Polaris Expeditionary Learning School)

<u>Presenter</u>		<u>Date</u>		
Criteria	Exemplary	Accomplished	Developing	Beginning
<p>Organization and Neatness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover and Spine • Personal Section • Adventure, Service, Intensives • Academic Section • Current Transcript 	<p>In addition to the Accomplished category, the portfolio reflects a level of organization and neatness that could be considered “professional”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Portfolio is organized with sections and tabs that help lead the panelists through the materials ☐ All required materials are included ☐ Materials are edited and free of major errors. They are either typed or handwritten legibly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ An attempt has been made to organize, but more work is needed to avoid confusion ☐ Some required materials are missing ☐ Some materials need further editing to fix some major errors. Some materials need to be re-written for legibility or typed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Little attempt has been made to organize materials ☐ Many items are missing ☐ Many materials need major editing and/or are illegible
	Comments			

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<p>Reflections</p>	<p>In addition to the Accomplished criteria... Reflections are thoughtful and reflect on the process of learning. Final Portfolio Reflection is thorough and specific.</p>	<p>All four reflections... Explain how the work included in your portfolio meets the targets. Explain your growth over time toward meeting the targets. Final Portfolio Reflection is thorough and specific</p>	<p>Only three reflections reflect the criteria in the Accomplished category (issue of <i>quantity</i>). AND/OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reflections require some revision in terms of <i>quality</i> so that they better explain the first and/or second bullets from the Accomplished category. Portfolio Reflection is more general than specific and includes some realistic steps to reach Learning Targets. </p>	<p>Only one or two reflections reflect the criteria in the Accomplished category (issue of <i>quantity</i>). AND/OR The reflections require significant revision in terms of <i>quality</i> so that they better explain the first and/or second bullets from the Accomplished category. Portfolio Reflection is incomplete and/or vague.</p>
	<p>Comments</p>	<p>Portfolio Reflection Missing Pieces</p>		
	<p>Exemplary</p>	<p>Accomplished</p>	<p>Developing</p>	<p>Beginning</p>

<p>Quality of Work in Portfolio</p>	<p>The majority of work included is Exemplary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting documents, including drafts and assessment tools are included Work selected to demonstrate meeting learning targets is Accomplished or Exemplary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some work selected to demonstrate meeting learning targets is not Accomplished or Exemplary Some supporting documents, including drafts and assessment tools, seem to be missing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Many pieces of work selected to demonstrate progress toward the learning targets is not Accomplished or Exemplary ☒ Many supporting documents, including drafts and assessment tools are missing
<p>Academic Strengths</p>	<p>Academic Challenges</p>			
<p>Suggested Goals for Next Year</p>				

5.3 English Language Learner Instruction and Student Identification

As part of our registration process post enrollment, families will complete a home language survey to identify students whose primary or home language is other than English. Students whose families identify the primary language spoken at home as a language other than English, will be tested within the first 20 days of school to determine if the student requires ELL services.

Assessment and Placement

The WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test is an English language proficiency "screener" test which will be given to incoming students. It provides data in four domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing. **ACCESS** for ELLs is an English language proficiency

assessment, which will be given annually to Kindergarten through 8th graders who have been identified as English Language Learners. Students identified as ELL, will be provided with the appropriate services for English Language development. ACCESS, STAR Literacy, and PARCC will be used to gauge progress in the English language and triangulate achievement data. This data will also be used to create the student's ELA plan. Parents will be notified in their home language of a student's placement within the first 30 days of school.

Program Design and Curriculum

Standards for Effective Pedagogy articulate research-based principles and guidelines for effectively educating both majority and minority students across subject matters, curricula, cultures, and language groups (Tharp et al., 2000, as cited in Genesee et al., 2006). The standards do not endorse a specific curriculum but establish principles for instruction. The standards are (1) teachers and students working together; (2) developing language and literacy skills across the curriculum; (3) connecting lessons to students' lives; (4) engaging students with challenging lessons; and (5) emphasizing dialogue over lectures (especially through academic, goal-directed, small-group conversations, known as instructional conversations).

Many of the attributes of effective schools also support ELL achievement, according to the National Research Council. In its 1997 report, the Council identified 13 attributes of effective schools and classrooms that especially benefit ELL students: a supportive but challenging school wide climate; strong instructional leadership at the school level; a learning environment that is customized to meet the identified instructional needs of students; articulation and coordination of programs and practices; use of native language and valuing of home cultures.

Strategically addressed by TRCS and described within various sections of the application are: the identification of individual instructional needs, use of native language, valuing of home culture, developing language and literacy skills across the curriculum, connecting work to student lives and community, as well as emphasis on dialogue versus lecture.

ELL students will receive a combination of direct instruction in English coupled with support in their native language to expedite their ability to use English to accomplish the goals of TRCS as outlined in this application. A combination of pull-out and push-in methods will be used depending on the individual needs and language levels of students. Beginning level speakers will be pulled out for a minimum of 30 minutes a day. As students advance in the language, pull-out may be limited or non-existent as the ELL teacher spends more of his/her time in the regular classroom scaffolding (see descriptor below) for students. Similar to Spanish language acquisition, under the direction of the ELL teacher, parent volunteers may also assist in the process of learning English by providing additional opportunities for students to practice.

TRCS will use ***Avenues English Language Acquisition*** as its primary ELL curriculum. This program is proven to lead to demonstrable results amongst elementary ELL students. Students will receive regular support using ***Avenues***, which includes interim assessments conducted every six weeks to monitor student growth. See research findings through website noted below. ***Avenues*** are a product of National Geographic Learning. (<http://www.ngsp.com/RESOURCES/ProgramResearchandEffectiveness/tabid/164/Default.aspx>).

English in a Flash, a product of Renaissance Learning, will also be used in the regular education classroom to support vocabulary development and will be adjusted for the level of the student. This computer based program focuses on content-area vocabulary. This program is designed to improve listening, reading, writing, and speaking in English. It helps ELL students build Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and vocabulary necessary for Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Through meaningful exposure, students learn content-area and conversational vocabulary to aide in their understanding of daily instruction, as well as communicating with their teacher and peers. Students learn grammatical structures through exposure to specific words, phrases, sentences, and dialogue. This helps students quickly learn the content-area vocabulary necessary for success in specific subjects. Students will rotate to computers in their classroom for at least 15 minutes a day. The ELL teacher will be able to use student reports to gauge learning and inform classroom teachers. Vocabulary is an essential component to reading success and this program helps to bridge the gap for these students to become successful readers.

English language will also be taught while simultaneously delivering core academic content. Students will be able to access content in all subject areas alongside their peers through methods such as:

- Scaffold instruction using the ELL teacher (see descriptor below)
- Parallel instruction in Spanish in key academic areas using the Spanish teacher
- Use of literacy materials matched to the reading level of the student and recommended by the ELL teacher that allow students to read about core content in social studies and science alongside their peers and respond at their level of understanding.
- Participation in sophisticated dialogue and critical thinking through 21st Century Learning skills such as Socratic seminars, creative thinking as method of problem solving, community through the assistance of the Spanish teacher and peers. This may be done in Spanish, English or both depending on the ability of the child. (See rubric below)
- Application of reading, writing and thinking skills to projects which they find personally meaningful and that require them to develop the stamina and persistence to overcome academic challenges

Through these methods, the pace at which English language learners engage with grade level content will be accelerated. Engaging with grade level content alongside their peers is one important strategy for high performing second language learners according to The Center for Research on Education Outcomes, CREDO. Our emphasis on building content knowledge beginning in the early grades is especially effective for English language learners. ELL students, who often struggle with reading comprehension due to a lack of English vocabulary, are able to dramatically improve their reading ability when systematically exposed to content-specific vocabulary over time (Carlo, August & Snow, 2005). Furthermore, research indicates that ELL students benefit from the linking of language instruction to content and themes taught throughout the curriculum (Garcia & Godina, 2004; Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson, Collins, Scarcella, 2007).

Scaffold Instruction as Adapted from Montessori Del Mundo Charter Application

Scaffolded instruction helps each child to attain complex skills or an understanding of complicated concepts by breaking the final goal down into more manageable steps. It is widely used in Second Language instruction, and research has shown it to be an effective intervention as well as a mainstream strategy for boosting student achievement. Hogan and Pressley (1997) identify eight essential elements of scaffolded instruction.

- Pre-engage with the student and the curriculum: The teacher considers curriculum goals and the students' needs to select appropriate tasks.
- Establish a shared goal: Students become more motivated and invested in the learning process when the teacher works with each student to plan instructional goals.
- Actively diagnose student needs and understandings: The teacher must be knowledgeable of content and sensitive to the students (e.g., aware of the students' background knowledge and misconceptions) to determine if they are making progress.
- Provide tailored assistance: This may include cueing or prompting, questioning, modeling, telling, or discussing. The teacher uses these as needed and adjusts them to meet the students' needs.
- Maintain pursuit of the goal: The teacher can ask questions and request clarification as well as offer encouragement to help students remain focused on their goals.
- Give feedback: To help students learn to monitor their own progress, the teacher can summarize current progress and explicitly note behaviors that contributed to each student's success.
- Control for frustration and risk: The teacher can create an environment in which the students feel free to take risks with learning by encouraging them to try alternatives.

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- Assist internalization, independence, and generalization to other contexts: This means that the teacher helps the students to be less dependent on the teacher's extrinsic signals to begin or complete a task and also provides the opportunity to practice the task in a variety of contexts

Students, Grades 3-8, including ELL students, will build skills in critical thinking using Socratic Seminars. ELL and Spanish teachers will be trained alongside regular classroom teachers to help students think critically and be able to converse with peers and adults throughout all subject areas. The general rubric follows.

Socratic Seminar General Rubric

From: Expeditionary Learning 2010

	3	2	1
Analytic Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains the effect of literary elements. • Explains the relationship between text's content and meaning through specific quotations. • Builds upon points raised during classroom discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Identifies literary elements. ☐ Uses specific quotations to describe text's content and meaning, although treating these as unrelated categories. ☐ Either mimics or does not recognize points raised during classroom discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Lacks reference to literary elements or specific quotations. ☐ Offers some description of text's content and meaning without referring to relationship between them. ☐ Raises arguments disproved during classroom discussion.
Textual Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates emotional and intellectual understanding of text. • Provides logical reasoning about and persuasive evidence to support claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Demonstrates content understanding of text. ☐ Offers some reasoning and/or evidence to support claims. ☐ Limited knowledge of parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Demonstrates misunderstanding of text. ☐ Makes claims without support. ☐ Erroneous or lacking knowledge of parts of text and discussion statements.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates thorough knowledge of entire text and discussion statements. 	of text and discussion statements.	
Seminar Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments are focused, brief and to the topic, and always generate further understanding. • Consistently contributes well-supported claims. • Listens to everyone and responds fairly** to ideas and comments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Comments tend to be unfocused or repetitive, or focused on student's interest in the text. ☒ Contributions are inconsistent or lacking some support. ☒ Responses suggest partial listening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Comments tend to be lengthy and disconnected from discussion. ☒ Contributions are infrequent or offer unsupported claims. ☒ Responses suggest self-serving listening.

Closing the Achievement Gap- Serving Children at Risk

TRCS will provide immediate early intervention for students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs. We anticipate students from differing socioeconomic situations and with varied needs. A Place-Based, project oriented curriculum often has students engaged in kinesthetic, multi-sensory learning provided by its projects and hands-on approach. This gives the struggling student more anchors – oral, visual, sensory, and musical, etc. – to achieve understanding. Strong fundamental literacy skills combined with Place-Based development will increase learning connections for all students.

Essential basic skills will be consistently addressed and utilized during the myriad of community learning activities and field study projects. Many positive role models representing the diverse community in which we live will share their path to success. This link between fundamental skills and project relevance, when attached to authentic audiences and real timelines, will be a strong bridge to close the achievement gap. School wide inclusiveness and small group accomplishment will be hallmarks. This climate combined with a strong reading culture where students and teachers will evaluate their own reading strategies and potential through individual and group assessments and rubrics, will be a key component of the school design. Family participation and involvement, a strong emphasis at TRCS, will strategically support all

students. These strategies, coupled with early childhood programming, will be effective strategies for closing the achievement gap.

5.4 Curriculum Development

TRCS will involve a collaborative team of stakeholders in curriculum development and selection. School leaders (i.e. the Academic Coach, Head of School, working with our School Mentor, James Lewicki and team members from Colorado Legacy Foundations, Laying the Foundation) will initially engage in the curricular design, research, selection and refinement as the school prepares to open. As teachers are hired and summer work begins in preparation for the school opening, an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) will be formed comprising math/science and literacy/social studies expertise and teams. The teams will participate in an extensive review of Boulder Valley School District Curriculum (BVSD) Elementary and Secondary Curriculums in Math, ELA, Science and Social Studies standards/ skills; Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell’s Literacy Continuums of Learning Grades PreK-8; Saxon Math Grades K-8; and cross-reference these documents with the supporting programs and strategies previously noted (6+1 Traits Writing, Regie Routman’s Reading Writing Connections, Sundance/Newbridge Literacy Texts and Teacher Guides, Comprehension Tool Kit, and the Daily 5,). The teams will outline and connect instructional strategies and lessons from these resources to support skill acquisition and mastery. Teams will write both long term and short term student-learning targets for essential learning outcomes by trimester in each subject area. A common assessment calendar for math, reading, science and writing will be developed such that skill acquisition is measured every 6 weeks in each subject area.

The ILT will then preview exemplar projects at each grade level from the library of projects profiled at the Buck Institute for Education www.bie.org. and www.promiseofplace.org. Projects will be reviewed for literacy, science and social studies content as well as their connection to the Vision, Mission and goals of TRCS. The team will determine the extent to which the BVSD Curriculum Essentials Literacy Maps are reflected as well as life, physical and earth sciences and concepts from Colorado/ American history in Grades K-6. Those most closely matching the criteria set forth by the leadership group will be selected to be used as a resource for teachers as they begin to develop or refine Place-Based projects during the first year of operation in collaboration with our school mentor.

The Compelling Topic Rubric included below will be utilized to determine viability of topics chosen for projects. TRCS would prefer to open the school with highly developed projects in place and pilot / refine them with students for the first three years. At the end of that time and as teachers have been able to evolve within the PBP model, composing new PBP could be prioritized should the need exist.

Topic ranking matrix

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Attribute	Mastery (4)	Artisan (3)	Apprentice (2)	Beginner (1)	Score
This topic provides ample opportunities to link with state standards and benchmarks.	This topic provides exciting linkages to multiple disciplines and is easily aligned to grade level standards and benchmarks.	This topic makes linkages to multiple disciplines and can be aligned to grade level standards and benchmarks.	This topic aligns to at least one discipline at grade level standards and benchmarks.	This topic does not align well to appropriate standards and benchmarks at grade level.	
The topic engages the personal interests of our teaching staff.	I will pursue this topic regardless of whether we pick it for our expedition.	I see many connections with my life, my skills and my interests and am happy to be considering this topic.	I am willing to live with it and will do my best	I hate this topic.	
The topic is relevant to student's lives.	Many meaningful connections. Students have a sense of ownership and passion about the topic. Continued involvement with topic after the unit.	Multiple meaningful connections. Students can articulate how topic connects to their lives	Some or few connections to the lives of students. There is awareness but further description of connection is missing or limited.	No relevance Students have no awareness of topic.	
The topic has multiple curriculum connections and endless possibilities.	Even though the topic provides endless possibilities, there is a clear pathway that makes it manageable.	Cross-curricular connections are obvious and possibilities generate excitement.	This topic has some cross-curricular connections, but it's difficult to envision the possibilities.	This is a limited topic that lacks any real depth.	
This topic provides authentic fieldwork and a variety of experts.	There exist extensive, exciting fieldwork options with a variety of community experts.	There are numerous fieldwork options and community experts available.	There are limited fieldwork options and some experts are available.	There are no relevant fieldwork sites available but there may be experts.	

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This topic provides an uplifting and empowering response to a current social or environmental struggle.	There are multiple pathways for students to engage in positive, active responses to a relevant struggle / cause.	The topic could engage students in creative, positive and intelligent responses to current struggle / cause.	The topic provides an introduction to a current struggle / cause and explores solutions.	The topic could introduce a current cause / struggle.	
This topic is able to begin at the student level and connect to the global level.	The connections between the local/student level to the global perspective are natural and obvious to staff and students.	The connections between the local/student and the global level could be developed through expedition process.	The connections between local/student level and global are not obvious and perhaps contrived.	There is no apparent connection of the topic between student/global levels.	
This topic leads to historical roots in the region, connections to the community.	This historically relevant topic leads directly to multiple resources and experts in the community/region.	This topic has historical significance to multiple elements in the community/region.	There is evidence of historical roots in the topic.	There are no obvious connections to historical roots in the community/region.	
The topic provides opportunity for service learning.	Content is being learned through a process of an authentic audience /product /performance that provides benefit to the community beyond the classroom. (i.e. elder biographies, canal study and design).	Learning experiences or student work has direct and lasting benefit to the community beyond the classroom. (i.e. Health Fair with blood pressure, blood sugar testing, screenings etc.).	Contrived service project with a connection to the theme or topic. (examples, a single event with limited learning opportunity for students, i.e. a food drive while	Contrived Service project with no real connections with the expedition topics (i.e.-Picking up litter when studying immigration).	

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			studying the ethics of eating).		
This topic provides a unique perspective on common/timeless topic.	Learning is contextualized (connected to student experience) and allows a common topic to come alive.	This provides an interesting take on a common topic.	This isn't much more exciting than teaching the topic from a textbook.	The textbook does a better job.	
This topic provides engaging immersion/hook experiences on emotional level.	There are multiple immersion experiences that will immediately hook the students emotionally.	There is an immersion experience that will get the students' interest.	A contrived experience may peak the students' curiosity.	Hmmm - - I'm not sure what we could do.	
Topic engages issues of justice and social responsibility.	Topic is current, relevant, in the news, and of interest to the students –leading to some student action.	The topic addresses at least one issue of justice or social responsibility.	We might be able to connect this topic to a social justice.	My school won't allow me to teach anything that may be controversial.	
Topic provides for original/creative research and has access to primary sources for case study investigations.	There are lots of print and electronic resources. We have also discovered valuable primary sources for research.	With some work, we can accumulate sufficient resources for student research.	There are some textbooks the students can use on this topic.	Maybe we can find something on the internet?	

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As TRCS evolves, a continual process will be set into place to evaluate and refine the curriculum and ensure that rigorous and effective curricular supports are provided to all students. Curricular programs that may better meet the needs of TRCS' students and/or added grade levels will be identified, researched and piloted if appropriate based on their ability to integrate with Response to Intervention (RTI) methods and align with the Mission and Vision of TRCS. The ILT will also consider the success of the curricular program in other schools with similar student needs, and team members will visit those schools to observe its implementation when feasible. As the ILT expands, a curriculum committee will be formed to continue developing and refining the curriculum and mapping it to CAS, as well as to evaluate the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness in which it has been implemented across grade levels. For example, the K-8 math program, *Saxon Math*, was selected as it meets CAS standards, includes supports to reach diverse learners, and provides for both mastery of essential skills through deliberate practice and rigor through inquiry-based learning, making it well aligned with the Mission of TRCS. Before adopting a new program, the ILT will need to map the curriculum to CAS, and identify additional RTI supports to allow all learners to access the curriculum.

Curriculum and Assessment Alignment and Revision

Teachers will use student data during the curriculum refinement process to both measure effectiveness and identify additional supports that can better meet student needs during grade level team meetings. As previously described, curriculum materials are reviewed and selected by the ILT, linking materials to CAS and the mission and goals of TRCS. Assessments are identified or developed from the curriculum materials previously described. Teachers and school leaders will identify community resources to integrate into our PBP curriculum, providing students with access to high quality resources, making learning relevant and placing content in context.

Curriculum and Assessment Implementation and Evaluation

Teachers will engage in professional development opportunities throughout the year. Peer Observations as well as Instructional Rounds will be used to identify how successfully the curriculum is implemented across classrooms. Multiple measures (i.e. stakeholder surveys, classroom observations, student assessment data) will be used to determine how effectively the curriculum is meeting the needs of students, addressing CAS standards and the goals of TRCS. When areas of weakness in foundational standards and sub-skills are identified, the curriculum will be realigned to target them. Grade level data teams will further discuss the curricular supports in terms of student progress. Where academic weaknesses are identified, additional supports will be provided to students.

Inclusion Model with Support Specialists

The needs of all TRCS students will be met through an inclusion model that utilizes small group and peer learning structures in all classrooms. TRCS will hire a special education

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instructor and part time ELL teacher who will provide services for students in the classroom, integrating with classroom teachers.

TRCS will use a three-tiered Response to Intervention, RTI, approach to support our students. All students will receive both whole and small group differentiated lesson structures targeted toward individual student needs, and the teaching of both foundational and higher-order thinking skills across the curriculum, TRCS' RTI Tier 1. Multiple assessment measures (i.e. formative, summative, standardized and observational assessments) will be used at the beginning of and throughout the school year to identify students who need additional support. Based on this data, students with additional academic needs can begin to receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports anytime during the year. Tier 2 will include more targeted support through small group and one-on-one remediation instruction, re-teaching strategies, and additional application and practice to support skill mastery. Tier 3 includes more intensive interventions generally provided in a one-on-one setting by a special education or ELL teacher. As the school's Place-Based projects are designed to facilitate learning experiences across a range of skill levels, all tiers will take place in the classroom, where possible, to provide all students with equal access to the curriculum.

Beginning level English speakers may be pulled out initially for vocabulary and language acquisition skills and to best prepare them for regular classroom instruction. In addition to the primary ELL curriculum, Advantage English, teachers may front load students using the ELL portion of resources like the Comprehension Tool Kit so that students get a double dip of mainstream curriculum. This same strategy may apply for SPED students as needed.

Once a teacher fills out an RTI referral form, the RTI team will convene to discuss teacher and/or parent concerns. The team will look at student strengths and weaknesses and will develop a plan of action so that the student receives necessary support. This support will be in the form of intervention programs and strategies that help the student meet their intended goals. The team will reconvene after specific targeted intervention to assess whether the child is in need of further Tier 2 or Tier 3 RTI support, or if they have achieved desired competencies and can return to Tier 1 support consisting of core instruction.

An excellent tool utilized at the preschool level throughout the state is Teaching Strategies Gold, GOLD. GOLD has a built-in developmental continuum birth through age 8 that encompasses developmental progress descriptors for the whole child. These descriptors include: language, literacy, fine and gross motor, social emotional, cognitive and other skills, spanning the ages. Using this tool, teachers whose children, SPED or otherwise, are struggling to meet widely held expectations, can demonstrate where exactly the child is relative to the expectation. They can then outline a path for reaching the targeted goals. GOLD is strengths based and qualitative. Although it is primarily used at this point for preschool, it has been developed for kindergarten and provides excellent guidance for students needing TIER 2 or 3 interventions.

Embedded and Collaborative Evaluation and Development

TRCS teachers will primarily draw from the professional knowledge that exists in our own school, among colleagues (Wei et al., 2009), and through the collaboration of the Academic Coach, School Mentor and the Colorado Legacy Foundation to examine school-wide practices. Research-based practices (Killion & Roy, 2009; Lieberman, 2000) will be consulted. This may consist of grade-level, or “vertical” (i.e., across grade levels) teams of teachers engaging in “interactive, integrative, practical, and results-oriented” work (Fogarty & Pete, 2009, p. 32). Mentoring, coaching, lesson study, action research, peer observation, and examining student work will all be strategically utilized to elevate student outcomes. Instructional rounds will be organized when targeting specific practices. Walkthroughs, conducted by both peers and leadership members, will be utilized to gather school-wide data trends. These practices will provide multiple measures of teacher efficacy as well as valuable information about the professional development needs of TRCS.

Every Friday, teams will meet to assess student progress and determine next steps. See Assessing Student Performance section for more details.

High Quality Professional Development Opportunities

Beyond embedded professional development, teachers will also participate in high-quality, targeted trainings throughout the year that are developed internally or by our school mentor as well as the Colorado Legacy Foundation and the Charter School Institute.

Core curriculum training and PD will come in many forms. Leadership from our school mentor, and national Place-Based learning expert, -- James Lewicki, -- will provide information, resources, and mentoring around both project and Place-Based education. Lewicki will conduct a week-long summer institute for the TRCS educators preparing placed based units and building relations with a wide range of community elders and experts that are a key part of those units. During this week, TRCS educators will select 4 Place-Based learning platforms e.g., main street, habitat restoration, community fine arts, and technology innovations are the kinds of platforms often selected. (A Place-Based learning platform is a multi-subject place/focus of interest that is developed by faculty -- along with local experts -- into a series of experiential, didactic, and project-oriented experiences). During the 2013-2014 school year, Lewicki will coach the implementation of these Place-Based efforts as they are woven into the teaching and learning of TRCS (see Appendix F for MOU with Lewicki Education Consulting).

Another important aspect of effective schools Mr. Lewicki will work with school staff on the ability generate learning transfer efficacy. Lewicki has worked with over 150 schools nationwide in executing strong models of learning transfer as each school implements its vision. Burke and Hutchins (2007) suggest that a framework involving...(a) learner characteristics, (b) intervention design and delivery, and (c) application/workplace environment is key to effective learning transfer.

Learner Characteristics

- Cognitive ability (Ree & Earles, 1991)
- Personality (Herold, Davis, Fedor, & Parsons, 2002)
- Motivation (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005) have been shown to influence transfer
- Perceived utility of the training has also been shown to contribute to transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Ruona, Leimbach, Holton, & Bates, 2002)
- Learner views the training as relevant to personal or career goals
- Perceived self-efficacy, (e.g., Ford, Smith, Weissbein, Gully, & Salas, 1998)

Intervention Design and Delivery

Intervention design and delivery mechanisms involve both content and instruction. Several authors claim that having students develop their own learning goals can facilitate transfer (Gass, 1999; Taylor, Russ-Eft, & Chan, 2005; Wexley & Baldwin, 1986). Yorks, Lamm, and O'Neil (1999) suggest that instructors "can work with participants to develop goals prior to the start of an action learning program. Participants can be encouraged to reflect on these goals throughout the program and set subsequent goals for continuation of learning following the program" (p. 62). Action plans (Foxon, 1994; Yamnill & McLean, 2001) can also be used to identify how certain goals can be achieved and what variables might compromise their attainment.

Over learning, or the mastery of skills past the point of initial competency (Burke & Hutchins, 2007), has an impact on transfer of learning. In addition, practice, directly related to over learning, has been shown to lead to increased transfer (Donovan & Radosevich, 1999), as has the provision of feedback (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Gardner & Korth, 1997; Simons, 1999; Yorks, Lamm, & O'Neil, 1999).

Lee and Kahnweiler (2000) found that providing feedback to participants via direct interpersonal communication, reinforcement, and remediation opportunities resulted in significantly higher transfer scores on a specific work task.

Several authors suggest that using metaphor and analogy can facilitate transfer (Alexander & Murphy, 1999; Mayer & Wittrock, 1996). Metaphor is linked to transfer because participants must apply what they know in one situation, assess similarities and differences between two situations, and then make a cognitive link to approximate the two.

Application or Workplace Environment

The final category of transfer influences involves characteristics of the environment in which learning is applied or to which learning is transferred. Multiple and complex factors play a part in determining whether or not a transfer climate is positive. Transfer climate may be considered the holistic, system-wide atmosphere that either encourages or discourages students to use the skills they have learned (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Holton, Bates, & Ruona, 2002; Taylor, 1992). In addition, having opportunities to perform new skills is an important factor in whether or not learning will transfer

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(Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995; Gaudine & Saks, 2004; Lim & Morris, 2006), as is accountability for using those skills (Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995).

Implementing a PBP school builds upon each successful learning experience with more connections to the community, new elders and experts discovered by the student's inquiry, and new efforts from new learning. A developmental rubric similar to the one provided by the Buck Institute for Education will be used over a period of 3 years as a guide for full implementation of PBP school (see appendix 6).

The Colorado Legacy Foundation's Laying the Foundation in collaboration with the National Math and Science Institute will train classroom teachers grades 6-8 in content expertise and use of content plans and resources in Science, Math, Language, Arts, Trainings are offered in Grand Junction every year.

The Academic Coach will lead teachers using 13 video lessons provided by Regie Routman's Reading/Writing Connection package to elevate performance. A sampling of topics include: Applying an Optimal Learning Model to Teaching, Examining Beliefs about Reading/Writing Connections, Setting Up the Classroom for Independent Readers and Writers, and Reading to Writing: Creating Relevant texts The Academic Coach will also work with teachers in the use 6+1 Traits Writing, Comprehension Tool Kit, Sundance/Newbridge leveled texts and Teacher Guides as well as the Daily 5. Information and skill building will occur through book studies and peer observations demonstrating successful use of these resources within the context of a classroom.

5.5 Middle School

Early adolescence is a critical and unique time of development. Middle school students experience significant physical, cognitive, and emotional changes affecting them academically and socially. Because of these unique developmental needs, TRCS will strive to create a small learning community that supports and nurtures students successfully to navigate these years.

Students bring diverse backgrounds, experiences, abilities, maturity levels, and motivations to the classroom. All have a right to learn and be engaged in the learning process. There is much evidence to support the educational benefits of differentiated instruction, responding to different learning styles, and promotion of active engagement of learners (Allan & Tomlinson, 2000; Ellis & Worthington, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978). A growing body of research shows positive results for the use of differentiated instruction across a broad range of targeted groups (Rock, Gregg, Ellis, & Gable, 2008, cited from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb10/vol67/num05/Differentiated-Learning.aspx>).

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Project-based learning naturally facilitates different learning styles, interests, and ability levels. It provides students with multiple ways to acquire content, to process or make sense of ideas, and to develop products that demonstrate effective learning. Working in multi-age groups on projects also facilitates peer teaching and social aspects of learning (highly motivating to middle school students), and the needs of different learners.

At TRCS we believe that helping middle school students develop an understanding of their role in society as they make connections to their larger community, its environment, history, economy, culture, and diversity will increase the relevance of learning and nurture them as active citizens. A summary of research on community-based and service learning by Shelley Billig (Phi Delta Kappan, May 2000), states that "middle and high school students who engaged in high-quality service-learning programs showed increases in measures of personal and social responsibility, communication, and sense of educational competence" and that they perceived themselves as being more socially competent. Research cited in "Connecting Communities and Classrooms" by Elaina Loveland, Rural Roots Newsletter Issue Roots 3.4, August 2002 also supports this premise.

At TRCS we envision the role of the student, like the teacher's, is to be challenged, to be a sponge, and love the learning and the joy of learning with others.

- Each student will act and collaborate as an investigator. Imagine students studying the migratory pattern of birds and working with an ornithologist to build several appropriate birdhouses.
- Each student will act and collaborate as a researcher. Imagine students studying bicycle safety in town and presenting their findings to the city council, with recommendations for new signs and safety designations.
- Each student will act in a collaborative as a leader. Imagine every 8th grade student being a mentor to a 6th grade student or a big brother/sister to a 2nd grade student.
- Each student will act as a thinker; considerate of others, perceptive in knowledge, and empathetic in execution. Imagine students reading aloud each Tuesday and Thursday with their favorite elder through the Meals on Wheels program just down the street from the school.
- Each student will question and concern himself or herself with knowing more. Imagine students walking along residential Glenwood Spring neighborhoods, looking at historical homes and wondering how they were built and who lived there.
- Each student will act by connecting with others. Imagine students who design, prepare, and cook a lasagna dinner for a local church's free meal program.

The National Middle School Association, NMSA, has concluded that the success of a middle school depends upon key areas: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Leadership, Organization, and Culture / Community.

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Curriculum and instruction have been described in previous sections of this application; however content expertise contributes greatly to the success of both curriculum and instruction. Middle school staff will be hired who, at a minimum, have degrees in math, science, language arts, and/or history and meet the hiring priorities established in the goal section of this application. Sections of language arts and math will be taught independent of integrated learning blocks.

Teachers will team teach depending on their expertise so that students learn content from experts. Teachers will also plan and/or utilize multidisciplinary Place-Based projects in collaboration with one another. They will have common plan time each day. In this way, students will experience the interconnectedness of the subjects they are learning making lessons more meaningful and relevant.

Classroom management strategies will be adjusted to accommodate a collaborative approach (Cromwell, S. 2004). Structures and schedules will be created specific to the span of grades 6-8 during the first year of operation.

The results of several studies indicate that middle level grades 6, 7, and 8 obtain higher academic achievement in K-8 schools than in schools with middle school configurations. Studies also demonstrate that 6, 7, and 8 graders in K-8 schools have significant positive benefits over middle schools in the areas of attendance and suspension rates. K-8 schools enhance social capital and give at-risk students, in particular, greater opportunities at success by building relationships with staff over a course of nine years. The ongoing focus on relationships and a positive peer culture will be one driving force at TRCS. Children will feel safe, comfortable and supported in their surroundings and, as a result, feel more receptive to higher level thinking and learning.

Middle grades students in a K-8 school behave differently than in a middle school. They take on the role of protector and role model as opposed to having to establish new reputations upon entering a middle school. The small school setting creates a familiar and intimate environment for students to know their teachers and their peers. There is no anonymity. Adults, both teachers and parents, are constantly interacting, guiding, and mentoring students. They become allies in fostering student success. In such an environment, bullying and violence have little place to grow. Students typically experience strong personal bonds and feel a greater sense of engagement, belonging, and personal value when their classmates and teachers get to know them well.

TRCS will foster student engagement by knowing students well, tapping into student experiences and interest, and then building a strong sense of community. Students will have staff advisors who monitor the students' personal and academic development and serve as the point of contact for the family. These advisors may or may not be the classroom teacher. It may be a member of the leadership team or other staff. The goal is for each student to have a one-to-one relationship with an adult advisor at the school, as well as a consistent and ongoing small-scale peer community. Advisors will monitor and support student progress, serve as the student's advocate in difficult academic and social situations, and act as the primary contact point between parents and the school.

Advisory group meetings are frequently used for teambuilding exercises and for group discussions on topical issues to help establish a positive school culture.

To successfully complete 8th grade, an additional requirement will be that students participate in a multiday outdoor education experience designed around the founding principles of Outward Bound. Students will be required to focus on the 8 Habits of Mind earlier defined as points of reflection throughout the trip. Their portfolio passage will include photos, drawings, and written reflections on the 8 Habits.

5.6 Emphasis on Movement and Physical Activity - Wellness Community

Mornings at TRCS will begin with students raising their heart rates through rigorous movement in order to optimize their academic performance. These same principles are reinforced in the classroom as teachers infuse brain breaks and the use of active teaching and learning to optimize student engagement and academic performance. Teachers will orchestrate regular movement in the classroom through activities such as:

- Exercise play (aerobics, running, chasing, dance routines).
- Outdoor learning activities (digging, observing insects).
- Stand and stretch activities (tai chi, Simon Says).
- Group or team competitive games and activities (relays, cheerleading).
- Constructive play (building with blocks, model building).
- Exploratory play (hide and seek, scavenger hunts, make-believe).
- Functional play (purposeful play, such as practicing a new skill).
- Group noncompetitive games (earth ball).
- Individual competitive games (marbles, track and field, hopscotch).
- Adventure or confidence play (ropes courses, trust walks).
- Group noncompetitive activities (dance, drama).
- Walking excursions (outdoors, indoors).

Specials

Two Rivers Community School will offer Spanish and a combination of Movement, Outdoor Education, Sports as specials classes. Art and drama instruction will be included as a supplement to Place-Based projects where relevant and may require the support of community experts or collaboration organizations such as the Glenwood Springs Center for the Arts.

Movement, Sports, and Outdoor Education

Every student will engage in a minimum of 45–60 minutes of fitness each day. This time will be spread throughout the day to keep students' metabolisms active, maintain energy levels and provide breaks throughout the day. These periods include physical

education periods, morning movement, recess and classroom breaks. Teachers will organize brain breaks through movement, deep breathing, and other methods. Participation in rigorous cardiovascular movement activities increases the pliability and plasticity of the brain making it optimally ready to learn.

Eric Jensen's book, *Teaching with the Brain in Mind, 2nd Edition* provides research to support increased physical activity at school.

An astonishingly high 68 percent of high school students in the United States do not participate in a daily physical education program (Grunbaum et al., 2002). Why should we be concerned? Because in the same way that exercise shapes up the muscles, heart, lungs, and bones, it also strengthens the basal ganglia, cerebellum, and corpus callosum—all key areas of the brain. We know exercise fuels the brain with oxygen, but it also feeds it neurotrophins (high-nutrient chemical “packages”) to increase the number of connections between neurons. Most astonishingly, exercise is known to increase the baseline of new neuron growth. Rats grow more brain cells when they exercise than when they don't exercise (Van Praag et al., 1999). In addition, studies link this increased neurogenesis to increased cognition, better memory, and reduced likelihood of depression (Kempermann, 2002).

Researcher Terrence Dwyer is one of many who have conducted multiple studies suggesting that exercise supports success in school. His research found that exercise improves classroom behavior and academic performance (Dwyer, Sallis, Blizzard, Lazarus, & Dean, 2001).

TRCS will hire a full-time specials teacher to teach and coordinate movement, sports and outdoor education. This position will assist teachers in their daily planning for regular movement in the classroom as needed and will organize morning movement for the school each day. In addition, this teacher will facilitate movement and selected sports instruction as a special each day. Access to indoor and outdoor spaces and facilities will determine the emphasis in this area. Insofar as space permits, skills in the co-ed sports basketball and soccer will be developed each year. This will allow for possible competition with neighboring schools. Movement may include yoga, hiking, jogging, Tai Chi, Karate or other activities. This will depend on the skills the instructor brings to the school.

Skills will also be developed in outdoor education and, each year, a warm weather and cold weather outdoor adventure will be organized for all grades as appropriate to their age. Outdoor education will be linked with the habits of learning promoted by TRCS and Outward Bound as well as relevant expeditions. The Aspen Center for Environmental Education, Keystone Science School, Outward Bound and Canyon Lands Field Institute will be considered as possible partners in outdoor education depending on Place-Based project goals and funds raised to support field work.

Eighth graders will participate in a multiday outdoor education adventure as part of their passage into high school.

Additional Benefits for Special-Needs Learners

Many teachers have found that programs that include movement help learners with special needs. Several hypotheses may explain this phenomenon. Many special-needs learners are stuck in counterproductive mental states, and movement is a quick way to change them. Second, movements, such as those involved in playing active games, will activate the brain across a wide variety of areas. It may be the stimulation of those neural networks that helps trigger some learning. For other students, it may be the rise in energy, the increased blood flow, and the amines that put them in a better mood to think and recall. Some routines that call for slower movement can do the reverse, calming down students who are overactive, hence supporting a state of concentration.

5.7 Spanish Language Spanish Language- Cross Cultural Understandings

The American Council on the Teaching of Second Language lists the Benefits of Language Learning at an early age to include:

- Has a positive effect on intellectual growth.
- Enriches and enhances a child's mental development.
- Leaves students with more flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening.
- Improves a child's understanding of his/her native language.
- Gives a child the ability to communicate with people s/he would otherwise not have the chance to know.
- Opens the door to other cultures and helps a child understand and appreciate people from other countries.
- Gives a student a head start in language requirements for college.
- Increases job opportunities in many careers where knowing another language is a real asset.

At TRCS, we have chosen to develop literacy skills in Spanish grades K-8. Students, whose first language is Spanish, will enhance their reading and writing skills in Spanish and students, whose second language is Spanish, will learn to communicate in Spanish with an emphasis on speaking skills. Native Spanish speakers and native English speakers will maintain and develop their first language while acquiring native-like communication and literacy skills in a second language. Spanish speaking students will develop the ability to read, write, and communicate in their first and second languages, which prepares them for full participation in today's interconnected and increasingly competitive global context. The curriculum will enhance academic and linguistic abilities

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in two languages. Teachers will integrate multicultural content to promote the development of cross-cultural competence.

Working with speakers of English and Spanish, as well as students from different cultural backgrounds, provides authentic opportunities for students to learn from each other. Spanish speaking children will serve as both teachers and learners in the classroom and their cultural-linguistic heritage will be seen as an asset! English speaking families will have the opportunity to provide their children with a second language education beginning in kindergarten through the expertise of a full time Spanish teacher, Spanish speaking peers, and cross-cultural exchange.

Spanish will be offered to grades K-3 in year one and all grades by year two of operation. Literacy skills required to successfully complete projects would be emphasized for Spanish speakers. At TRCS we view this not only for its academic benefits, but also for its social and cultural benefits. By respecting language, we seek to facilitate intentional integration of cultures. TRCS believes schools should be a point of integration, and that students learn language the best from their peers who are native language models. As such, teachers will encourage students to work with student partners who may not share the same native language regularly through both Spanish and English classes as organized by those teachers. The Center for Research on Education Outcomes, CREDO, who examined charter school performance in 16 states, including states with a large Hispanic population such as Arizona, California, Florida, Texas, and New Mexico, recommends these practices. It compared the average academic growth of Latinos, ELLs, and other student groups to that of their peers in traditional public schools. High performing schools frequently provided programming in second language models similar to those outlined above.

We will use the Spanish Language Scope and Sequence for K-8 students provided by the Boulder Valley School District as a guide and have chosen to purchase and use the Sube teaching system for Spanish Second Language learners because of its emphasis on creativity and multiculturalism. See Appendix 7 for Sube scope and sequence. Sube, Learning Language through Art, Music and Games, includes step-by-step lesson plans, detailed activity descriptions, assessment tools and reproducible materials. The basic principle of SUBE is to teach around thematic units through art, music and collaborative play, in order to systematically engage the diverse learning modalities (kinesthetic, visual, auditory, interpersonal). Sube's unique scaffolding techniques are a proven method built in the games and focus on developing speaking comprehension, reading and writing and critical thinking skills. It also includes a multicultural focus to deepen appreciation for a student's own culture and the cultures of others. Kids dance to original Latin rhythms in the Sube Spanish music DVD, such as salsa and ranchera. Sube activities such as Around the World help develop cultural awareness and broaden perspectives. Both English and Spanish speaking students will merge together for multicultural focus activities like those previously described. Spanish speaking students may occasionally act as tutors for portions of the Spanish curriculum to their English-speaking peers.

For students whose first language is Spanish, reading and writing support will be provided in their native language. A progression of skills outlined in the BVSD Spanish Language Scope and Sequence and needed to be fully literate shall be used as guide. Leveled readers in Spanish will be purchased to align with place and Place-Based learning topics. The Spanish teacher will support learning targets in reading and writing from projects. The Spanish curriculum focus will mimic the curricular focus of place and project based learning at each grade level. As English speaking or bilingual students are able to access this Spanish curriculum alongside their peers, this class could be an option for them as well.

TRCS will solicit parent involvement in both the cultural and linguistic training of learning Spanish. This is an area where the stories, talents, and expertise of our Spanish speaking families will be acknowledged and celebrated.

5.8 Cultivating Discipline—Guiding Philosophies

The goal of behavioral expectations is to create a safe, respectful, and responsible environment where learning can take place. It is expected that TRCS students will behave responsibly and treat their peers, teachers, community and environment with respect. At TRCS, we view discipline as the set of habits, routines and beliefs that our students must develop in order to do great work and be successful. Students must know that they belong, are valued and are capable of succeeding at TRCS and in life. Every morning, students will recite the TRCS version of "We Believe" adopted and adapted from Urban Prep. (Robinson-English, 2006)

We are the students of TRCS. We are college bound. We are exceptional not because we say it, but because we work hard at it. We will not falter in the place of any obstacle placed before us. We are dedicated, committed and focused. We never succumb to mediocrity, uncertainty or fear. We never fail because we never give up. We make no excuses. We choose to live honestly, nonviolently, and honorably. We respect ourselves, and in doing so, respect all people. We have a future for which we are accountable. We have a responsibility to our families, communities and world. We are the keepers of our brothers and sisters. We believe in ourselves. We believe in each other. We believe in TRCS.

At TRCS, we deliberately practice improving behavior every day. All students are held to high expectations and are encouraged to connect their efforts to doing important work for themselves and their communities. Students are asked to reflect on their conduct using the 8 Habits of Learning applied to contexts both inside and outside their lives at school. TRCS students adopt and uphold 8 commitments to strengthen the school community as well as support their personal growth, life skills and academic achievement. Goals for these commitments will be set as learning targets for expeditions, other class work and school-wide activities. All nonacademic goals are translated by grade-level teachers into developmentally appropriate language to be used by teachers and students to evaluate progress. See rubric below. Students will

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reflect on their progress toward demonstrating these commitments informally on a regular basis and formally in student-led goal conferences as well as portfolio passages.

Habits of Mind Targets

(Adapted from Epic Academy and Arthur L. Costa and BenaKallick, *Habits of Mind: A Developmental Series*)

Habits of Mind	Which Means:	“Exceeding”	“Meeting”	“Developing”	“Beginning”
Collaboration Work Together.	<p>People working together to complete a task</p> <p>Fulfilling your role in group work</p> <p>People communicating well by actively listening and explaining clearly</p> <p>Working through disagreements</p>	<p><u>Always</u> completes assigned roles and tasks during group work, does not get distracted, and takes leadership to move group along.</p>	<p>Completes assigned roles and tasks during group work, and <u>usually</u> does not get distracted.</p>	<p>Pays attention to assigned roles and tasks but <u>needs re-direction</u> from the teacher or group sometimes.</p>	<p><u>Rarely</u> pays attention to assigned roles in group tasks and does not participate as expected, stubbornly holds on to his or her own ideas.</p>
Courage Do the Right Thing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trying to prevent conflicts, to solve them when they come up and to keep fights from starting Asking questions in class that might sound 	<p><u>Always</u> shows leadership by acting quickly to resolve conflict and stop escalation.</p> <p><u>Always</u> takes risks when learning something new.</p>	<p><u>Usually</u> acts quickly when conflict arises and stops escalation.</p> <p><u>Usually</u> asks questions and takes risks when learning something new.</p>	<p><u>Sometimes</u> speaks up when conflict arises and takes the right steps.</p> <p><u>Sometimes</u> asks questions and takes risks when learning something new.</p>	<p><u>Rarely</u> takes a stance to end conflict, or adds to conflict escalating.</p> <p><u>Rarely</u> asks questions or takes risks to try something new.</p>

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	<p>"stupid"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcoming your fear to take a risk at trying something new 				
<p>Progress Strive to Improve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving projects and grades Knowing that our work is never "done" but can always be improved Taking steps to improve without being asked 	<p><u>Always</u> revises work that doesn't meet or exceed learning targets, comes to office hours to figure out what he or she can do to improve projects and grades, moves on without needing to ask for help.</p>	<p><u>Usually</u> revises work that don't meet targets, comes to ask for help two or three times in a trimester, asks "what is next" to keep him or herself going.</p>	<p><u>Sometimes</u> works to improve a learning target score. Puts in effort or comes to office hours only just before grades are due. Usually waits for someone to tell them the next step. Accepts "passing" work as OK.</p>	<p>Does not seek out information on his or her current status. <u>Rarely</u> revises work that needs improvement. Waits for others to tell him or her what to do next. Does not express the need to set goals and improve.</p>
<p>Managing Impulsivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinks before speaking and acting Able to remain calm when stressed or challenged 	<p><u>Always strives to</u> Think before speaking and acting. Is able to remain calm when stressed or challenged.</p>	<p><u>Usually strives to</u> Think before speaking and acting. Is able to remain calm when stressed or challenged.</p>	<p><u>Sometimes strives to</u> Think before speaking and acting. Is able to remain calm when stressed or challenged.</p>	<p><u>Does not</u> Think before speaking and acting. Is able to remain calm when stressed or challenged.</p>

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<i>Listening with Understanding and Empathy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay attention to the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of others to show respect for another's point of view and feelings 	<u>Always strives to</u> Pay attention to the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of others to show respect for another's point of view and feelings	<u>Usually strives to</u> Pay attention to the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of others to show respect for another's point of view and feelings	<u>Sometimes strives to</u> Pay attention to the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of others to show respect for another's point of view and feelings	<u>Does not</u> Pay attention to the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of others to show respect for another's point of view and feelings
<i>Thinking Flexibly</i>	<p>Able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change perspective Consider the input of others Generate alternatives Weigh options 	<u>Always strives to</u> Consider the perspectives of others and seeks to gain their input regardless of individual characteristics, philosophical beliefs or backgrounds. Able to generate alternative methods to	<u>Usually strives to</u> Consider the perspectives of others and seeks to gain their input regardless of individual characteristics, philosophical beliefs or backgrounds. Able to generate alternative methods to	<u>Sometimes strives to</u> Consider the perspectives of others and seeks to gain their input regardless of individual characteristics, philosophical beliefs or backgrounds. Able to generate alternative methods to	<u>Does not</u> Consider the perspectives of others and seeks to gain their input regardless of individual characteristics, philosophical beliefs or backgrounds. Able to generate alternative methods to solving

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		solving problems and weigh the merit of all options	solving problems and weigh the merit of all options	solving problems and weigh the merit of all options	problems and weigh the merit of all options
Responsibility Take Charge of Your Life.	Take charge of your life and what you need to do to be successful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I turn in my best work on time. I am on time, on-task, and I participate . I take control of my actions and fix any damage (I did ____, it resulted in ____, and I am going to do _____ to fix it). 	Student <u>always</u> (100%) arrives on time and is engaged in classes from start to finish. Turns in strong work and meets all deadlines. Owns actions and makes up for mistakes without being asked.	Student <u>usually</u> (99%) arrives on time and is engaged in classes from start to finish. Turns in strong work and meets all deadlines. Owns actions and makes up for mistakes usually without guidance.	Student <u>sometimes</u> (90%) arrives on time and is engaged in classes. Work is sometimes late and/or not his or her best. Sometimes adults are needed for him or her to own actions and repair relationships.	Student <u>rarely (less than 90%)</u> arrives on time and is not engaged, requiring an adult to get him or her back on track. Work is incomplete and late. Often blames others for his or her mistakes.
Perseverance Never Give Up.	Never giving up including when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are tired or times are tough Personal problems could affect your work It feels impossible 	<u>Never</u> gives up. <u>Always</u> asks for help in different ways until he or she gets what she needs. Uses supports from friends,	<u>Usually</u> asks for help when he or she needs it. Takes most bad scores as a challenge to improve and works to find solutions to	<u>Sometimes</u> works past problems, but sometimes gives up if frustrated. Makes excuses for why he or she could not succeed.	<u>Rarely</u> does work after getting frustrated. If the work is confusing or hard, he or she does not ask for help. States many reasons why he or

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need to ask for help 	teachers and staff to work past problems and turn them into triumphs.	most problems.	Asks for help once or twice, but doesn't persist.	she does not succeed.
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Behavioral issues can be minimized or eliminated through strong Tier 1 interventions, instructional planning and differentiation as well as collaboration with parents, families, and positive reinforcement. Behavior concerns can be rectified through explicit instruction in school expectations as they relate to the 8 Habits. Deliberate practice may involve using common behavior scenarios that need to be addressed and allowing students to role play positive solutions and brainstorm possible outcomes. Disciplinary referrals will be tied to our school’s Eight Habits of Learning to reinforce our culture and mission. These referrals will go into a student’s portfolio and in order for it to be removed, the student will have to demonstrate mastery of specific character traits for a sustained period of time. Teachers will be responsible for maintaining discipline documentation within their classroom and log- in referrals as needed to keep a record as well as determine if any trends or patterns exist.

Additionally, Ruby Payne’s research surrounding under-resourced learners and the strategies that boost student achievement will be consulted. Her premise is that many students get identified as “at risk” when the issue is one of resources.

When you know the resources of an individual, then you can determine the interventions that will work best. These interventions work with the strengths of the students and strive to enhance their resources for succeeding (Payne, 2008).

At TRCS teachers will dedicate time at the beginning of the school year to explicitly teach students the correct procedures and behaviors for their classroom. Each day students will participate in classroom meetings. These meetings allow students to share how they are feeling and how they are experiencing the day. If they have conflict with anyone, positive peer support will be utilized for conflict resolution through the guidance of the teacher. Students can talk about what they need in order to be happy and successful at school. Students can acknowledge one another for positive actions surrounding the 8 Habits.

TRCS is committed to two-year relationships with students. Our structure includes multiage classes of K-1, 2-3, 4-5 that loop with one teacher every two years. This allows students to develop strong relationships with their peers and teachers. Likewise, it gives teachers time to acquire a strong understanding of each student’s individual learning needs. At TRCS, we believe you cannot teach a child well if you do not know the child well and care deeply about their success and future. Relationships are emphasized in our mission, which includes nurturing deep, supportive relationships through which

both students and teachers are transformed. The work of Ruby Payne underscores the critical need for strong, supportive relationships in order for under-resourced kids to thrive. According to her work, relational learning includes mutual respect, a peer group to belong to that is positive and not destructive, an advocate that helps students out, and a safe environment. (Payne, 2008) TRCS is designed to support her premise.

For steps in the conflict resolution process as well as behavior policies for serious infractions of school rules or state laws, refer to discipline section of this application.

5.9 Early Intervention, Community Partnerships, Parent Engagement and Family Support

Kindergarten—Should the state decide to fund full day kindergarten for all students as has been proposed, all students at TRCS will attend full-day kindergarten classes combined with first grade multiage classes. If this does not occur, students will be offered both a half and full day option. Tuition details are profiled in the budget section of the application. TRCS has a robust plan to allow students who wish to attend half day to do so regardless of their ability to pay. Half-day students will attend multiage classes but go home half way through the day. Schedules will be adjusted so that literacy and math will occur before these students go home. This will create smaller class sizes for the second half of the day.

Our partnership with Head Start will allow us to work closely with low-income students. This program will serve students ages 3–5, building the foundations of literacy, numeracy, and health and wellness during the brains most crucial period, the early years. TRCS seeks to minimize achievement gaps before students enter school through early intervention and work with families. Head Start will be an excellent partner in this pursuit. Head Start is a comprehensive program for children from age three to five and their families. The goal of Head Start is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in young children, in particular those of lower-income families. Social competence is defined as a child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both the present environment and later responsibilities.

The key principles of Head Start include comprehensive services to fully develop early literacy and social competence. Children and families receive comprehensive services including education, health, nutrition, social services, and parent involvement. Early childhood teachers and a family services coordinator provide these services. Head Start is family-centered and designed to foster parents' roles as the principal influence on their children's development and as their children's primary educators, nurturers, and advocates. Parents are encouraged to become involved in all aspects of Head Start, including direct involvement in policy and program decisions that respond to their interests and needs. Our collaboration with Head Start will comprise the first family service goal noted in the Wrap Around Service goals of TRCS.

During the 1960's, Betty Hart and Todd Risley were among many researchers who looked at the effects of poverty on the academic growth of young children and possible interventions during the early childhood years. One of the most significant variables

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they found among children living in poverty and those who were not was the size of their vocabulary. In other words, the sheer number of words they entered school possessing. Here is a summary of what they found: The 30-million-word gap by age 3.

Vocabulary gap among children of different socioeconomic backgrounds

	Size of Vocabulary	Number of Words Heard	Average IQ
Professional Families	1,100 words	30 million	117
Working-Class Families	750 words	20 million	107
Welfare Families	500 words	10 million	79

For some young children, an achievement gap exists before they enter the schoolhouse door. In particular, the language and cognition skills of young children living in poverty are often significantly lower than their peers from higher-income families. TRCS has planned collaborations with Head Start, Raising a Reader and a researched based curriculum called Motherhead to confront the achievement gap through early intervention utilizing high quality early childhood programming and parent education. Raising a Reader is a national organization with a local chapter. They provide bilingual book bags that contain high quality, culturally rich literacy for students to take home each week and read with their families. Our local chapter of Raising a Reader partners with Motherhead to provide a research based curriculum for parents to engage in stories and reading with their children every day. The present Executive Director of Raising a Reader, Rick Blauvelt, has agreed to serve on the board of TRCS.

The vision of Raising a Reader is that every child from Aspen to Parachute will enter kindergarten prepared for reading success, in love with books and excited about learning. Motherhead, Inc. is a nationally acclaimed, private, nonprofit organization that combines the teaching of literacy skills with child development, adult empowerment and professional skill development. Through Motherhead, adults and children learn to use the power of language to discover more about themselves, their families, and their communities. Motherhead courses are typically scheduled two hours per session and last for 8 weeks. Trained instructors facilitate these sessions.

Raising a Reader nationally has developed a book bag program for kindergarten and first grades. TRCS plans to offer the book program to our K/1 students such that every child pre k through grade one will take home a different bag of high quality, bilingual books each week. The K-1 bags contain both read aloud and leveled readers appropriate for these ages. Parent Education sessions will be required of all parents whose children take home the bags. The menu of sessions range from Dialogic Reading to Using Books to Build Family Connections. 100% of these parents will attend at least two of the six sessions offered.

Head Start and Raising a Reader represent the first series of Wrap Around Services listed in our goals intended to serve the families of TRCS upon opening our doors. Additional services will be identified to support families of TRCS so that they can best support the health and educational needs of their children. The goals of both Head Start and Raising

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a Reader prioritize family involvement and require a commitment from parents to participate in their child's education in order to receive services (see appendix 8).

At least quarterly, bilingual meetings will be held for parents. The purpose of these meetings will be to inform parents of the educational goals for their students, school outcomes, and opportunities to get involved. Parent interests and needs will be gauged through these meetings. Should interest and need exist, connections with Colorado Mountain College, CMC, will be made. GED or English as a Second Language classes may be organized for TRCS parents through CMC.

Intercambio, exchange, classes can be scheduled for parents to practice speaking in a second language, Spanish/English, with each other in a fun and informal atmosphere.

TRCS will organize two Demonstration Nights each year where students can share portions of their portfolios and expeditions with their families and school community. Other community nights will include: Back to School Goal conferences (two times a year), Family Math Night, and Literacy Nights. Bilingual brown bag lunches will be scheduled every quarter for parents to eat lunch with the administrative team and informally talk about TRCS. On occasion, guest speakers will be invited to share their expertise on topics of interest to families. Brown bag lunches will determine areas of interest.

Teachers will be required to visit at least three students and their families in their home each year. Visits will be prioritized for families with which the teacher feels least connected. It is a good faith effort to build relationships, trust, and collaboration with the family in order to create pathways for the child to succeed in school. These visits may be scheduled at any point during the school year.

5.10 Summer Programming

TRCS leadership will research the need and options for summer school programming during the summer of 2014 for the summer of 2015. 21st Century Grants, Aspen Community Foundation, and other potential funders will be examined. Collaboration with Roaring Fork School District allowing TRCS to access existing summer programs will also be reviewed. Ross Montessori, a CSI school in nearby Carbondale, has been able to enroll elementary students in a summer school program offered in collaboration with Roaring Fork School District each year called, Summer Advantage. This program has been offered at Glenwood Springs Elementary School for the past two summers for all elementary school kids in need at no cost to the students. TRCS will seek a partnership with this program for the summer of 2015.

5.11 After School Programming

TRCS middle school students will be able to participate in ACCESS Roaring Fork which presently provides low cost after school programming to students in Garfield County schools centered around five core concepts — safe, fun, educational, diverse and creative for grades 5-8. Programs include academic assistance as well as enrichment

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classes, taught by community members, focusing on health and safety, the arts, and physical fitness. Middle school students should be able to walk to Glenwood Springs Middle School (GMS) and participate in music, art, science and a multitude of other activities. ACCESS Roaring Fork was subsidized through local taxes and foundation support. All students in Garfield County have the opportunity to join for a low cost.

Middle school students will also be able to join middle school sports at GMS beginning in grade 7. This would include volleyball, basketball, football, baseball and other sports. Students would try out alongside their peers and participate for 6-8 weeks of intensive sports each day after school as well as weekend matches with neighboring schools.

Additionally, the Glenwood Springs Center for the Arts provides after school programming in dance, art, and music for all ages. See letter of support in appendix D, community partners. TRCS staff can help families organize carpools to the Art Center or walk students to the bus stop in West Glenwood Springs where they can catch the shuttle into town.

Second Shift, an after school program recommended by the HOS at Ross Montessori, will also be researched as a possible supplement for TRCS students. The cost is \$20 for 6 weeks per child. Other options would include computer time at TRCS using resources like IXL, English in a Flash, Accelerated Reader, or Khan Academy to support skill mastery. This would require TRCS recruiting a parent volunteer to oversee or a stipend for adult support and supervision using parents or teachers.

5.12 Staffing Plans, Management and Evaluation

All instructional and administrative staff members sign a yearly, at-will agreement of employment. Staff may be terminated at the sole discretion of TRCS at any time, for any reason, except any reason expressly prohibited by law. Staff may also terminate an at-will contract of employment.

Teacher Hiring Process

TRCS pays new teachers and staff members competitively according to the local school district salary schedules. Candidates for open positions are recruited beginning on March 1 of each year. We will open our recruiting with the Colorado Charter School Job Fair, and also utilize The Colorado League of Charter Schools, The Post Independent, TRCS Employment website, local and national colleges. Candidates who meet the qualifications of the open position will complete a phone screening, and candidates that pass this screen are invited for an in-person interview that involves teaching a sample lesson (in all years after 2014) and meeting with the Hiring Team.

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We are requesting a waiver from licensed staff. All applications will be kept on file for one year and a candidate will be contacted should a position arise. After this hiring process, a background check and three references checks occur before an offer is made.

In the first year of operation the Head of School will hire with input from the Board of Directors, BOD, to ensure a successful inaugural year. The HOS will report to the BOD concerning his/her teacher candidates and present qualifications including each prospective teacher's understanding of Project and Place Based Learning, passion for teaching, and other relevant information. In March 2014, the TRCS BOD will post teacher and staff job openings for the inaugural year, and hold applicant information for review by the HOS. Beginning year two, and henceforth, the HOS will hire staff without the input of the BOD.

Teacher Evaluation Process

Presently, CDE is piloting a framework system to evaluate teachers in several school districts in the state. This is the result of SB 191, and it proposes to be a tool for improving instruction, measuring professional growth, and providing a basis for decision making relative to teacher performance. 50% of a teacher's performance would be based on the academic performance of their students and 50% would be based on their professional practice including their ability to: establish a learning environment, facilitate learning, reflect on practice, and demonstrate leadership. A sample rubric is included in Appendix T and Appendix U. This tool provides a clear pathway for aligning teacher evaluation with measurable student outcomes. Because TRCS proposes to be an at-will employer, some elements of the new framework would not be relevant. Those include references to probationary and non-probationary classifications. Most quality standards fit very well with EL model and can be easily modified to fit the EL model without damaging the integrity of the tool now in its draft form.

Evaluation of teachers is the responsibility of the Academic Coach and Head of School. The Academic Coach observes teachers informally on a bi-weekly basis, provides written feedback of strengths and challenges, and conducts coaching conferences, if necessary or desired. Formal evaluations for each teacher will occur annually utilizing the CDE pilot framework. The framework is comprehensive and provides a format for discussion, mentoring, goal setting, and documenting performance. Consistently low performance would result in additional conferences with the Academic Coach, AC, and the Head of School, and a performance management plan with regular monitoring. If these measures did not improve performance, possible termination may result. The Head of School would consult with the School Board regarding any proposed termination and

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would be well informed about the status of any performance management plan. Termination would be handled in compliance with the Employee Handbook.

Head of School Evaluation

An instrument from New Leaders for New Schools will be used to annually evaluate the performance of Head of School by the Board of Directors. We will also be looking closely at the Colorado Department of Education's Principal Evaluation rubrics and tools. A sample rubric is included in Appendix T and Appendix U. The tools from CDE will closely align with the Teacher Evaluation tool noted above.

Responsibilities not included in these tools need to be defined for the unique position of Head of School. They would be specific to working and reporting to the Board of Directors and supervision of personnel not traditionally included in a principal's job description such as the Business Manager.

Evaluation tools for the Chief Academic Officer, Business Manager, and other non-certified staff, will be included. We will be reviewing tools from the League of Charter Schools, and other resources, before hiring for these positions.

Professional Development

TRCS is constantly striving to improve the education of our students as well as our teachers. We recognize that teachers must invest time on their own development as well as support the improvement of our school as a whole. We understand the need for professional development and have outlined our plan below.

Bi-Weekly Meetings

TRCS will have an AC to support teacher's instruction, trainings, and professional development. Each teacher will have a one-on-one bi-weekly meeting with the AC to help plan lessons, review data, discuss teaching strategies, and discuss student work

Professional Days

Students will have an early dismissal on the same day each week, Fridays, during which whole staff meetings will take place. Teachers will meet as professional learning community teams during this time to review student outcomes and performance. Reflection here will yield information about not only student strengths and weaknesses, but teacher needs. Instructional areas will be identified where teachers may need additional training and support. These areas will be addressed through team dialogues

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utilizing peer expertise, research and coaching by AC, or outreach to experts outside the school during professional days or via seminars/trainings. See Appendix G and Appendix G2 as well as Appendix M for schedules.

Seminars/Trainings

Teachers and staff members are encouraged to attend conferences/seminars/trainings that are relevant to their grade level and are in line with TRCS's mission. Project and Place Based Learning offers many opportunities for professional development, as well as classes through the local school districts. Teacher must fill out a Professional Development Request and submit to the Head of School.

School Visits

Teachers will spend two half days per year with the AC observing in other Project and Place Based Learning schools in our area. Teachers are encouraged to visit not only the level they are currently teaching at TRCS but also levels above and below their current level to get a better understanding of expectations and development at other grade levels. A meeting will precede visits with the AC in which areas of focus will be discussed.

Informal Observations

In order to enhance instruction, highlight areas of strength, and areas of improvement; classrooms will be visited frequently by the AC and the Head of School. Feedback will be through discussion of instruction and classroom environment. Additionally, peer observations will be used as a learning tool to deepen collaboration among teachers and improve student performance by leveraging teacher expertise. They will be organized during professional learning community, PLC, meetings and based on teacher needs. Specific learning targets will be addressed during observations.

Formal Observations

Teachers will have, at minimum, one formal observation each school year. Teachers in their first three years of employment at TRCS will have two formal observations each year. These will follow a submitted lesson plan and a pre-observation conference, and will be followed by a post observation conference and letter for their personnel file. The AC and the Head of School will give formal observations.

SMART Goals

Teachers will make their own SMART goals prior to each quarter. These goals will be reflected upon at the end of each quarter and reviewed with HOS and AC at the end of the year evaluations.

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