

The Watershed School



**A Charter School Application for the
Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District**

March 24, 2008

The Watershed School Charter School Proposal

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The Watershed School

Section 1- Description of Educational Program

Mission:

The Watershed School will foster the development of students with a strong sense of place who will be prepared to serve as stewards of their community. By gaining a understanding of the history, government, culture, and ecology of Alaska's interior, students will achieve academic excellence and expand their competency to the rest of the world. At every opportunity, we will provide students with meaningful explorations and activities outside the classroom. We will teach each child with care, encouraging imaginative work and play, analytical and critical thinking skills, and a sense of social and ecological responsibility.

Place-Based Education:

Place-based education is a significantly different approach to teaching and learning from that offered in the Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District. It is an approach that brings to the front the goal of developing connections between students and their community. A place-based charter school will help students come to know and care for the place in which they live. It is a way to take fuller advantage of the unique characteristics of the Tanana Valley.

Place-based education involves using the local community and natural landscape as a reoccurring theme to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and the arts. Place-based education relies heavily upon authentic real-world learning experiences to increase student achievement. Place based education is good for both the students and community.

Through a balanced focus on economic development and environmental preservation, the community and its businesses get revitalized, state curriculum standards are met, and students are given valuable opportunities to learn in real-world settings...

David Sobel, *Connecting Classrooms and Communities* (2004)

Many children in 21st century towns and cities lack the opportunity to feel part of any local community or neighborhood. A feeling of disorientation and disconnection pervades our youngest generation. Who am I? What does it mean to be part of this place where I live? I am a Fairbanksan. Is that a good thing? What does that mean?

Children's connections within our society increasingly rely more on technology than on authentic personal experience. Artificial realities are beginning to replace direct experience with neighborhoods and natural landscapes. This existence does little to nurture a sense of roots, affiliation, and belonging to community and environment. Under this scenario, children and adults alike can become alienated and apathetic. When children travel these days, they are presented too often with a human-made world that looks much the same as the one they left behind.

For most Americans, to reflect on "homeplace" would be an unfamiliar exercise. Few today can announce themselves as someone from somewhere. Almost nobody spends a lifetime in the same valley, working alongside the people they knew as children.

(Gary Snyder, 1990, *The Practice of the Wild*)

Children need to find their place in their immediate world. Schools can take an active role in developing this sense of place. Decades ago, Lewis Mumford (1938), an American historian of technology and science, hoped for this reality in America's educational system:

...students will learn in detail where they live and how they live: they will be united by a common feeling for their landscape, their literature and language, their local ways, and out of their own self-respect, they will have a sympathetic understanding with other regions and different local peculiarities.

Taking a lead from a new movement among academics and in-the-trenches educators, the Watershed School has been designed based on locally relevant curriculum. Dr David Sobel of Antioch New England Graduate School of Education defines place-based education as "... the process of using the local community and environment as a starting

point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects across the curriculum."

Relying on this philosophy of place-based education, our curriculum will be multidisciplinary and thematic. It promotes team teaching among educators, parent volunteers, and community resource people. School and community walls will come down. Learning for our children will be experiential and community-based. This will often include projects and service learning components that directly benefit our community. Students will be motivated to learn as they see the obvious relevance of the curriculum and this motivation will lead to academic excellence.

Place-based education does not by any means promote the elimination of non-local knowledge or the creation of a provincial outlook. When children become intimately connected to and knowledgeable about their own home place, they can intelligently apply this understanding to the rest of the world. An understanding of self and community is the bedrock on which an in-depth understanding of the greater world will be built.

Like all real treasures of the mind, perception can be split into infinitely small fractions without losing quality. The weeds in a city lot convey the same lesson as the redwoods; the farmer may see in his cow-pasture what may not be vouchsafed to the scientist adventuring in the South Seas. Perception, in short, cannot be purchased with either learned degrees or dollars; it grows at home as well as abroad, and he who has a little may use it to as good advantage as he who has much.

Aldo Leopold (1949), *The Sand County Almanac*

Landscape, in other words, shapes mindscape (Orr, 1992). Just as we are a product of our families of origin, we too are a product of our community. Lack of understanding of community and regional uniqueness diminishes the potential for maturation and inheritance of a cultural identity.

Place-based education seeks to develop our children into more than mere residents. We seek to allow children to grow into inhabitants. A resident is an impermanent occupant. Residents avoid putting down roots, put little into their communities, understand little of their town, and care for only what the community can offer to them. In comparison, an inhabitant lives in a shared relationship with their community.

Place-based education recognizes that cultural diversity is as important to human ecology as biodiversity. It is the diversity of the human solutions in each terrestrial environment that has been the foundation of our success as a species. Within our community, we find a rich spectrum of unique individuals and racial, cultural, and ethnic groups. Diversity does not imply that a healthy community has no common cultural narratives. Rather, it is the shared experiences of a culturally diverse populace that paint a rich mosaic of life in the Tanana Valley.

People think about “roots” and assume that this means knowing only about your own historical roots and a synopsis of the local history. But in place-based education it means knowing where you live. Children can learn their place, but the learning is long and hard, and mass-produced culture seeks to obliterate it with concepts that develop distant and artificial allegiances. Everyone wants quick and superficial identification.

Many educators are beginning to understand the importance of place-based education and are applying its premises to modern educational situations. James Lewicki (1997) of the Kickapoo River Institute in Wisconsin, spoke of pedagogy of place as a science that:

...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. Respect and reverence for one’s immediate place, land stewardship, gives one respect and reverence for all places...The role of each student rests on academic and social foundations requiring active, competent citizenry, balancing the rights of individuals and the ecological rights of place within the larger civic order.”

A curriculum of place provides children with a deep sense of history of their home-place and an intricate understanding of the landscape and culture surrounding them. Place-based education is a powerful educational philosophy that brings student interests into play in the educational setting to enhance student learning, improve achievement, and contribute to community vitality.

Place-Based Education at

The Watershed School

As we have illustrated, place-based education is a powerful educational philosophy that brings student interests into play in the educational setting to enhance student learning, improve achievement, and contribute to community vitality. Inspired in part by the work of Gregory Smith, of Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, who is a national leader in the field of place-based education, a group of parents and teachers in Fairbanks are proposing to create a school with a locally relevant curriculum focused on these central elements of place-based education:

- 1) Cultural studies
- 2) Watershed studies
- 3) The public process
- 4) Local economy

1. Cultural studies

How might people everywhere learn to become “native” to their places? Such questions provide a local focus for sociological inquiry and action that, because of interrelated cultural and ecological systems, is potentially global in reach. In other words, place-consciousness suggests consciousness not only of my place, but of others, and the relationship between places.”

Dave Gruenewald (2008)

The Watershed School’s curriculum grounds itself in learning activities that develop a sense of place through the study of local knowledge and the investigation of our community. Educational explorations of our regional history are woven throughout our curriculum. By developing a social and historical framework for what it means to be inhabitants of the Tanana Valley, our school will instill in our children respect for their home place. Utilizing study and direct experience of our local and regional cultures, The Watershed School has designed its curriculum in a progression of continually widening circles leading children to a deeper understanding and appreciation of world cultures and issues.

**Family ➡ Classroom ➡ School ➡ Neighborhood ➡ Community ➡
Tanana Valley ➡ Alaska ➡ United States ➡ North America ➡ World**

Community-based projects enrich the students' educational experience by building partnerships between children's homes, school, and the Fairbanks community. The local community becomes a living textbook, vibrant and relevant, with endless opportunities. Children look upon their cultural surroundings as a rich source of opportunity to learn. This philosophy of education is sometimes referred to as "community as textbook." Each member of the community presents possibilities of a new chapter in a living text. The opportunities are endless. We find that the educational dialogue moves from individual objectives towards the communal goals. What can our community give to our children and in turn what can our children give to the community?

The Watershed School will partner with local community resources such as nonprofits, artists, government agencies, the University of Alaska, and will also link with informal social networks. By placing learning in the context of the local community, talent and expertise are more readily incorporated into instruction. Pulling community talents into the school beyond the occasional "guest speaker" is our goal. Community resources will be fully incorporated into the curriculum of the school, allowing the place-based program to grow in a sustainable manner. In short, our place-based curriculum will create social capital, a concept referring to the value of social connectedness within a community.

Each member of the community is expected to give, and gains status and pleasure from doing so. On other occasions, each is expected to receive as well. Each person in the community is sensed as capable of providing something of value to another member of the community. Contributions to collective projects, from parades to the volunteer fire department and Girl Scouts, are defined as "gifts" to all...Absence of social capital is characterized by extreme isolation of residents from one another. In these communities there is little trust, and, as a result little interaction. Such communities tend to have frequent population turnover and high levels of conflict.

(Flora and Flora, 1996, p. 219)

Through all areas of the curriculum of The Watershed School, community members begin to see young people improving the quality of life, and adding to the social capital, of the community. Counteracting the inclination toward "anywhere but here" and the resulting brain and cultural drain of youth leaving in search of "greener pastures," our young people begin to see their community differently. This renewed sense of place encourages young people to stay, and when leaving, to often return to their home

communities. When children and community members engage in joint projects, bonds are created between young and old, walls dissolve, and lasting relationships are created. Our older residents, who may have previously viewed adolescent students as a nuisance to be tolerated, value their interest in local history and are impressed at the quality of work they can produce. Likewise, students develop a renewed respect for their elders.

We now see that place-based education is confronting many of the factors that have contributed to the weakening of communities. It becomes a strategy to address the disconnection of young people from the rich diversity of community members and from the children's own local history. Rather than socially destructive practices and high drop-out rates, positive outcomes grow from this re-weaving of the community and school.

Ultimately, The Watershed School will assist students in the development of a sense of mutual responsibility. Community is solidified when values are sustained by its members.

These values include sharing among friends and neighbors, mutual help, cooperation, and consolation-not for want of self-reliance, but because self-reliance is best served in the context of neighborly support and concern. Without the values that make for true community, it is difficult to come home or to make a home...The members of that community must be aware of its history and must make a commitment to the place itself as something beloved, not unlike the commitment to marriage.

(Esbjornson, p. 85, 1996).

The Watershed School realizes a strong school community will develop when students take responsibility for themselves and each other. The more the children learn to feel part of a school community the more they become part of the larger adult community. In the long-run, we will foster successful members of the adult community. This is what makes for a strong culture. This sense of belonging is critical.

2. Watershed Studies:

Within the space of a few decades, the way children understand and experience their neighborhoods and the natural world has changed radically. Even as children and teenagers become more aware of global threats to the environment, their physical contact, their intimacy with nature, is fading. As one suburban fifth grader put it to me, in what has become the signature epigram of an emerging children and nature movement: 'I like to play indoors 'cause that's where all the electrical outlets are.

(Richard Louv, Author, *Last Child in the Woods*, in US House Hearing, 2007)

As we've indicated, whether it is in math, language arts, science, or creative arts, the local culture of community will pervade all areas of the Watershed School curriculum. So too will the study of our stunning natural environment. As Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, so aptly points out in his writings and public testimony, our children are being raised in a world of great disconnect from the natural systems that both sustain and enrich us as human beings. Biologist and nature writer, Rachel Carson, coined the phrase "sense of wonder" to describe the enchantment and curiosity for learning that must be instilled in children at a young age.

If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength.

(Carson, 1956, pp. 42-3)

As we enter into the waning years of the first decade of the 21st century, more people have opened their eyes to an awareness of the fragile relationship we share with the planet earth. There is much to be gained from redeveloping our human rapport with the natural world and its ecological systems.

The Watershed School will base much of its science content and interdisciplinary thematic units on the natural sciences including biology, geology, anatomy, physics, astronomy, and chemistry. Using the natural sciences as a framework for multidisciplinary studies is solid educational pedagogy. We only need glance at the range of science activities taking place on the hill which was once called Troth Yeddha' (Wild Potato Hill) by the Tanana Athabascans to see the implications. Resting along this ridge, the University of Alaska campus buzzes with its array of world class natural science buildings, laboratories, and programs. The excellence of our local university demonstrates the potential of a school based upon a strong natural science philosophy. Peter John, the late Athabascan chief, and naturalist in the most applied sense, saw the importance of education in the natural sciences many years ago.

Our people used to come to this hill to pick Troth. They would paddle up the creek, Troth Yeddha' No, and camp by the lake, Troth Yeddha' Mena. Troth Yeddha' was important, a meeting place. The grandfathers used to come to talk and give advice to one another about what they were going to do. When they learned this place would be used for a school, the university, they came here one last time, to decide what they should do. They decided that the school would be good and would carry on a very similar traditional use of this hill--a place where good thinking and working together would happen. They placed an eagle feather on a pole. This was to let all the people know that the Dena would no longer be using the ridge for a meeting place or to pick wild potatoes. They were also giving a blessing to their grandchildren who would be part of the new school.

Chief Peter John

The concept of a place becoming the mentor for inhabitants is nothing new, as the Chief Peter John aptly observed. The notion of using a geographical region as an educational model provided the historical foundation of most educational systems until the last century or so. We were traditionally educated to our place. Citizens developed skills necessary to live well within their own region. To understand the natural systems of home places meant survival. Unfortunately, children are coming to live in a virtual world that leaves them as inhabitants of nowhere.

In Wendell Berry's essay "The Unsettling of America," he points out that the way the economic system works now, you're penalized if you try to stay in one spot and do anything well, "...and any person or group of people who tries to stay there and do some one thing well, long enough to be able to say, "I really love and know this place," stands to be penalized. The economics of it works so that anyone who jumps at the chance for quick profit is rewarded--doing proper agriculture means not to jump at the most profitable chance--proper forest management or game management means doing things with the far future in mind--and the future is unable to pay for it right now. Doing things right means living as though your grandchildren would also be alive, in this land, carrying on the work we're doing right now, with deepening delight.

Gary Snyder, 1995, pp. 189-190)

There are many exciting developments lending directly to place-based educational practices. The psychologist, Howard Gardner, of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, who largely responsible for the theory of multiple forms of intelligence, has added "naturalist intelligence" to his original list of seven modes of intelligence. It is described as a person's ability to identify and classify patterns in nature. Alaska retains some of the last remaining hunter-gatherer societies that rely heavily on naturalist intelligence. In a modern cultural setting, naturalist intelligence describes the ways we relate to our environment and the role each part of our surroundings plays in our lives.

People who are sensitive to changes in weather patterns or are adept at distinguishing particulars between large numbers of similar objects may be expressing naturalist intelligence abilities. At the Watershed School, we feel that all types of intelligence, including the often undervalued naturalist intelligence, must be respected and nurtured.

The Watershed School chose its name in part due to the pragmatic implications of the natural science and interdisciplinary thematic units designed based upon the ecological systems within our Tanana Valley watershed. The word Watershed lends itself to the metaphor of an interconnected community of people as well.

A watershed is the area of land that catches rain and snow and drains or seeps into a set of linked marshes, sloughs, rivers, lakes, and our groundwater. All of us are sitting in the Tanana Valley Watershed right now. Homes, farms, forests, villages, even large cities can make up watersheds. Some watersheds cross county, state, and even international borders. Watersheds come in all shapes and sizes. Some, like ours, are over 25,000 square miles, while others are just a few acres. The Tanana Valley watershed is rich in water, with the Borough containing 9000 miles of its tributaries. Just as creeks drain into rivers, watersheds are nearly always part of a larger watershed. Ours is part of the Yukon River Watershed. The Tanana River begins with the headwaters of the Chisana and Nabesna River in the Wrangell Mountains and then flows by Northway, picks up the Chena River in Fairbanks before joining up with the Nenana River in Nenana, and eventually becomes a part of the big waters of the Yukon River near village of Tanana. This vast drainage system comprises our watershed, our natural community, and the foundation on which we have built our natural sciences and multidisciplinary curriculum.

Using our watershed as a backdrop, The Watershed School will utilize solid educational strategies that will lead to high levels of student learning in a highly motivating atmosphere. One successful strategy proven to get results is called *environment as an integrating context (EIC)*. This is a curricular approach that uses the natural ecological systems and cultural components of the world as a context for learning. According to Lieberman and Hoody (1998), who conducted a 3-year study on best practices, "...it (EIC) combines these approaches in a way that: breaks down traditional boundaries between disciplines; provides hands-on learning experiences, often through problem-solving and project-based activities; relies on team-teaching; adapts to individual students

and their unique skills and abilities; and develops knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for the environment, community and natural surroundings.” Included in the findings of the Lieberman and Hoody’s study of forty schools implementing EIC strategies were:

1. Better performance on standardized achievement tests in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies
2. Reduced classroom management problems
3. Increased student engagement in learning
4. Greater enthusiasm for learning
5. Higher level of student pride
6. Increased student ownership of the learning process and accomplishments

3. The Public Process

Problem Solving:

There are three ways of trying to win the young. There is persuasion. There is compulsion and there is attraction. You can preach at them; that is a hook without a worm. You can say "you must volunteer." That is the devil. And you can tell them, "You are needed." That hardly ever fails.

Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound

As outlined in our proposal under “Principles of Child Development Followed by The Watershed School,” we feel strongly about place-based topics being cognitively and emotionally appropriate for the age of the child. As mentioned earlier, The Watershed School models its philosophy on the notion that children are capable of understanding immediate experiences when they are young and then gradually expand their awareness to larger and more distant topics of study as they mature. As early as kindergarten, our students will be encouraged to take part in problem solving activities. In kindergarten it may take form as solving the challenge of “cleanup time,” or perhaps they may determine the best way to organize a class set of leaf samples. By third grade children will address school-wide challenges such as recycling, conserving energy, and other positive issues. By fifth grade, students might be solving schoolyard habitat restoration challenges along Deadman Slough and come up with an environmentally sound erosion control plan. Sixth graders could address needs of the local food bank. Our middle school students might

choose to explore opportunities to address an invasive plant species issue in the University of Alaska Arboretum. Although Watershed School's 7th and 8th curriculum has students studying state, national, and international topics by this age, the focus of engaged hand-on projects appropriate for "community problem solving and decision making" will still primarily be local.

... people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second-hand, and without examination, from authorities who have not themselves examined the questions at issue but have taken them at second-hand from others

Mark Twain

Engaging children in meaningful problem-solving curriculum involves the use of some thoughtful structures. It is a well thought out curricular technique that leads to meaningful student outcomes.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is "focused, experiential learning (minds-on, hands-on) organized around the investigation and resolution of messy, real-world problems...PBL includes three main characteristics: engages students as stakeholders in a problem situation; organizes curriculum around this holistic problem, enabling student learning in relevant and connected ways; and creates a learning environment in which teachers coach students thinking and guide students inquiry, facilitating deeper levels of understanding.

(Torp and Sage, 1998. p. 14)

Throughout the curriculum, The Watershed School will present opportunities for students to address real-life problems and issues of classroom, school, and community. The basic steps of this process are:

- 1) Students identify a problem or challenge that is of direct relevance to our home-place
- 2) The students receive guidance from teachers as to developmental appropriateness of this problem as a potential project
- 3) The selected problem(s) become a class project
- 4) Students research, discuss, and investigate the problem
- 5) The students work together to develop possible solutions
- 6) The class works together to implement the selected solution(s)
- 7) The Watershed School staff is responsible for guiding the project and developing relevant curriculum to parallel the students' topic

Problem-based learning is a combination of high quality curriculum content that is meshed with a process of analysis and inquiry. The curriculum consists of carefully selected and designed problems that demand from the learner acquisition of knowledge of content, problem solving proficiency, self-directed learning strategies, and team participation skills. The process is designed to build skills used in a general approach to resolving problems or meeting challenges that are encountered in life and career.

In problem-based learning, the traditional teacher and student roles change. Depending on the age and skill level of the students, they assume increasing responsibility for their learning, which gives them more motivation and more feeling of accomplishment, setting the pattern for them to become successful life-long learners. Students involved in problem-based learning acquire knowledge and become proficient in problem solving, self-directed learning, and team participation.

Decision-making skills:

Here The Watershed School will engage students in the policy-making processes of their communities and governmental institutions. In the field of place-based education students explore the process by which groups of people make decisions. Political science will become an integral part of our 5-8th grade social science curriculum. The study of political behavior will be examined and the acquisition and application of power will be explored through actual local scenarios and played out in classroom role-playing simulations. Although focus will often be applied to the operation of government, with first emphasis on local government, in reality, at The Watershed School the democratic political process will be observed in all of the children's group interactions, including classroom structure, community organizations, informal social groups, corporate and educational institutions. When studying the governmental actions of our local institutions, students in the intermediate through middle school grades will explore the political realities, with focus on case studies, simulations, and current events. Critical analysis will consist of investigation into the methods and tactics used to develop and apply public policy in our community. In the middle school years this will expand to focus more specifically on the students' actual future roles as both policy-makers and constituents.

If it is true that people attain civic virtues through practices, and if it is true that many people gain such education outside the public arena, the obvious question is, what can be done to establish practices that would teach people to act and speak in public in a truly public way? The question has no simple answer. But one part of the answer may merge from understanding how important to practices is the concrete, the specific, the tangible. It is precisely that element of concreteness which gives to practices their capacity to present values as something objective, and therefore something public.

Daniel Kemmis, former mayor of Missoula, Montana

4. Local economy:

If kids could see themselves as viable citizens solving real problems in their communities, then they would have, upon leaving these communities, a clearer understanding of not only their sense of place but how they could improve their communities, work in their communities, or live in their communities as adult citizens.

(Pam Fischer, 1998, Director of the Great Maine Schools Project)

The Watershed School intends to help combat loss of young people from our community due to the perceived lack of viable economic opportunities. We will address the perception that youth must leave our valley to find fulfilling lifestyles and meaningful adult employment. This is not an easy task. It requires unique approaches to education crossing traditional boundaries of community. The avenues between school and community must be open to empower community resources. At The Watershed School educators will regularly reach out solicit support from community members to further curriculum goals. By doing this, students will become aware of the great professional diversity we have in the Tanana Valley. In addition, students must become aware that they are a valuable resource to the community. By creating useful products of their education, students will “give back” to the community and understand that they are valued members of this community. This will help create a two-lane between school and the community rather than perpetuating one-way street out-of-town it often is for our young people today.

We cannot overlook the importance for educational purposes of the close and intimate acquaintance got with nature at first hand, with real things and materials, with the actual processes of their manipulation, and the knowledge of their special necessities and uses. In all this there is continual training of observation, of ingenuity, constructive imagination, of logical thought, and of the sense of reality

acquired through firsthand contact with actualities. The educative forces of domestic spinning and weaving, of the sawmill, the gristmill, the cooper ship, and the blacksmith forge were continuously operative.”

(Dewey, 1900, p. 11)

Principles of Nature Education Followed by The Watershed School

What's important is that children have an opportunity to bond with the natural world, to learn to love it, before being asked to heal its wounds.

David Sobel (1997)

A significant curricular component that distinguishes The Watershed School from other schools is our emphasis on combining stimulating classroom science lessons with outdoor explorations and studies with direct connection to our community. This is a trend that is regaining national attention.

While we move forward with the creation of this charter school, two congressional bills, House Bill 3036 and Senate Bill 1981, labeled the No Child Left Inside Act, are working their way through subcommittees amid enthusiastic testimony. The bills, with support of over 50 senators and representatives to date, originated from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in 2007. They state:

- 1) In order to qualify for environmental education grant monies under Title II and Title V, states must submit a K-12 plan to the US Dept. of Education that will ensure that students are environmentally literate.
- 2) The acts create an environmental education grant program for teacher professional development and student programs modeled on the math/science partnership in Title II of NCLB. One hundred million dollars are authorized to be spent for fiscal year 2009 (the year of our proposed start up) and two years afterward.
- 3) The acts propose an environmental education grant program to help build national capacity under NCLB Title V. This environmental grant program will help

provide funds for the development, improvement, and advancement of environmental education.

These bills make the argument that climate change, depletion of natural resources, air and water pollution, and other environmental challenges are pressing and complex issues that threaten human health, economic development, and national security. Finding wide-spread agreement rewarding specific steps we need to take to solve these problems is difficult. Environmental education helps ensure our nation's children have the knowledge and skills necessary to address these complex issues.

Yet, environmental education is facing a national crisis. Many schools are scaling back or eliminating environmental programs. Fewer and fewer students are able to take part in related classroom instruction and field investigations, however effective or popular. State and local administrators and teachers point to two factors behind this recent and disturbing shift: the unintended consequences of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and a lack of funding for these critical programs. Even so, with the new interest in ecological issues, and the resulting financial support for environmental education, schools like ours are poised to be on the cutting edge of change.

The Watershed School realizes that children move along a basic, though uneven, developmental pattern as they work their way through elementary and middle school. Just as we notice identifiable stages of growth in educational development, we notice patterns in the way children relate to and make sense of the natural world.

The current approach to teaching ecological sciences in schools can be emotionally draining to the students. The Watershed School intends to focus primarily on the wonders, enjoyment, and fascinating science of the natural environment as an action-based response to the negative messages inherent in curriculum that focuses heavily on topics of environmental destruction. A barrage of electronic media compounded by the heartfelt efforts of ecologically sensitive teachers has resulted in children who are familiar with deforested Amazon rainforests, melting ice packs, drowning polar bears, and toxic dumping of industrial sludge in China before they reach third grade. While we certainly acknowledge the importance and gravity of the environmental problems we face today, The Watershed School is taking a strong stand to counteract the current trend

towards the “negative and far away” by teaching developmentally appropriate natural science education grounded in students immediate experiences.

David Sobel, in his book *Ecophobia* (1987) tells the story of an initiative in the 1980s to address the problems of acid rain in Europe through school-wide educational efforts.

Sobel summarized the failure of this approach:

As a result of the curriculum initiative, education officials found that students felt hopeless and disempowered. The problems were seemingly so widespread and beyond their control that the students tended to turn away from, rather than face up to, participating in local attempts at problem solving...What's important is that children have an opportunity to bond with the natural world, to learn to love it and feel comfortable in it, before being asked to heal its wounds. John Burroughs(17th century) cautions that, "Knowledge without love will not stick. But if love comes first, knowledge is sure to follow." Our problem is that we are trying to invoke knowledge, and responsibility, before we have allowed a loving relationship to flourish....

Sobel (1987)

Developers of The Watershed School feel very strongly that inasmuch as solutions to problems such as oil spills, global warming, and groundwater contamination are critical to the future of the ecosystems of which our children are a part, these issues are not developmentally appropriate for study by young children. The Watershed School will concentrate first on educating children about things close at hand—the schoolyard habitat, the boreal forest and its inhabitants, the role of permafrost in the arctic ecosystem. By acquiring a strong understanding of, appreciation for, and connection to natural systems of the Tanana Valley, our children will develop an expanding foundation of knowledge about the environment as well as evolving more meaningful and evolving understanding of the challenges that it faces.

Principles of Child Development Followed by The Watershed School

There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One is roots; the other, wings.

Hodding Carter

Over the past century, consensus has developed among scholars that there are some fairly consistent patterns of child development. Chip Wood, in his book *Yardsticks: Children in the Classrooms*, (p. 12-13, 2007) noted that though children progress along a basic developmental continuum, there are some variations that help guide our understanding of this process:

1. Children's physical maturation, language acquisition, social and emotional behavior, cognition, and ways of approaching their environment follow reasonably predictable patterns.
2. Children generally go through predictable stages in the same order, but they will not all go through them at the same rate. Although children's developmental patterns do seem broadly similar the world over, important details in their development are deeply influenced by culture, personality, environment, and place. All children are different as all their families. These differences along with particularities of local cultures and local landscapes have marked affects on children's development.
3. The various developmental components do not proceed at the same rate in each child. A child who develops slowly compared to peers in cognitive areas may advance behind his/her peers in music or physical abilities. Another child might cognitively be a year a head of peers in reading, but may lag behind in the ability to make sense of social situations. The struggling math student might excel at empathy towards the wild creatures of our boreal forest.
4. Growth is uneven. Like the tides of our seas, children seem to surge in growth and then ebb. This dance goes on in adults as well. We know that some days, some weeks, some months, things come easily for us while at other periods we seem to be treading water. Understanding this principal in children is as important as understanding our own life rhythms. Children are not computers. They do not process data the same from one month to the next.
5. Children's physical maturation, language acquisition, social and emotional behavior, cognition, and ways of approaching their environment follow reasonably predictable patterns.
6. Children generally go through predictable stages in the same order, but they will not all go through them at the same rate. Although children's developmental patterns do seem broadly similar the world over, important details in their development are deeply influenced by culture, personality, environment, and place. All children are different as are their families. These differences along with particularities of local cultures and local landscapes have marked effects on children's development.
7. The various developmental components do not proceed at the same rate in each child. A child who develops slowly compared to peers in cognitive

areas may advance beyond his or her peers in music or physical abilities. Another child might be a year ahead of peers in reading, but may lag behind in the ability to make sense of social situations. The struggling math student might excel at empathy towards the wild creatures of our boreal forest.

8. Growth is uneven. Like the tides of our seas, children seem to surge in growth and then ebb. This dance goes on in adults as well. We know that some days, some weeks, some months, things come easily for us while at other periods we seem to be treading water. Understanding this principle in children is as important as understanding our own life rhythms. Children are not computers. They do not process data the same way from one month to the next.

Children are all individuals and at the Watershed School will be treated as such. Growing up is a complicated process, and our teachers will match curriculum and classroom structures with developmentally appropriate pedagogy..

The developmental characteristics below, shown in italics, are adapted from *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom, Ages 4-14*, by Chip Wood. Each quoted characteristic is followed by details about the Watershed School, explaining how we will meet the developmental needs of our students.

Five year olds (early kindergarten)-

Like all children, these children need lots of physical activity, the more the better.

- Teachers will take the children out for a daily walk where the students will engage in free exploration and nature play.
 - Students will engage in traditional activities such as skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, sledding, and biking.
 - Students will observe and collect objects for use in measuring, sorting, categorizing, artwork, charts, imaginative play, and classroom discussion.
 - The students will have field notebooks that they can use to draw pictures and write notes. (20-45 minutes — this activity does not take the place of recess.)
 -

Early aged kinders like to help, live for routines, and enjoy learning rules as long as they involve fair, clear, and simple expectations. These predictable structures help the children feel safe.

- Daily leader
 - Each day a different child is scheduled to be the daily leader. For example the daily leader might help the teacher lead the lessons and with classroom

routines. This student could bring in the snack and an object or guest to help with the day's lesson.

- Classroom jobs
 - Students will rotate through a chart of classroom jobs
- Class meetings
 - This is a time for the class to come together. It is a time for community building activities. This meeting provides an opportunity for students and the teacher to discuss any emotional and or social problems that have been occurring in the classroom and to brainstorm solutions.
- Daily calendar
 - This is a time to learn the school's daily and weekly routines as well as to practice the days of the week. This is also a time to keep track of the daily weather and seasonal changes.

It's important that we realize these children take things very literally. They take things adults say very seriously so it's essential to say what we mean without inferred meanings. We often find them expressing themselves through actions and imaginative play rather than words, and often give life and movement to inanimate objects.

- Dramatic Play Center
 - The teacher will have a dramatic play center set up in the classroom with costumes that appeal to both genders and kitchen furniture that the children will visit as a choice during choice time.
- Boreal Forest Corner
 - Teacher and students will choose and cut down a birch tree to be used all year as a prop. The teacher and students will change this area of the room to reflect seasonal changes with animal and plant props to be used as part of the dramatic play center
- Interpretive Musical Production on Adapting to Alaska
 - Students will create simple costumes, props, and set. Students narrate, sing, or dance across the set to music in ways that depict the sun/moon/earth relationships, seasons, as well as animals, plants and their adaptations.

The treatment of animals, both real and inanimate is very emotional to these children, so we must be careful what nature topics we address with them.

- Students will study animals in the environment around the school grounds as well as during some of the social studies and science units.
 - Pet Unit
 - The children will study the natural history of pets. They will study how cats and dogs are descendents from wild animals as an introduction to genetics. The students will study canine nutrition and bake homemade dog biscuits to bring on a field trip to the animal shelter.

Early kinders learn best through repeated activities, stories, and science tasks such as nature walks over familiar schoolyard terrain that involve direct experience. They need ample free choice time as they learn best through active exploration of materials such as blocks, manipulatives, clay, sand, soil, rocks, sticks, and water. Exploration is essential

for the children's educational and emotional development as they express thoughts through action and as such need opportunities to play in housekeeping or dramatic play centers.

- Daily Walk/ Outdoor Exploration,
- Choice Time (minimum 25 min. per day)
 - Students visit stations around the classroom on a free choice basis.
 - Some stations will be set up on a continuous basis throughout the year such as: kitchen and costumes, doll house, Legos, art center, dance props, silk scarves, blocks, and library. The teacher will offer one novel choice each day.

Though learning activities in short sessions are best, these kids are capable of working at quiet sitting activities for 15-20 minutes. Direct instruction should also be limited to 15-20 minutes.

Six year olds (late kindergarten, early first)-

We find children at this age becoming a nosier and hurried as they gain more confidence at exploring their environment, selves, and others around them. Though speed is a characteristic of six, these children tire easily. Competition begins to become a more important issue and they tend to want to be first, competitive, enthusiastic, though sometimes their anxiety to do well may cause them to cheat at things. Nonetheless, like the five-year-olds, they thrive on encouragement, and like surprises and treats. As they explore their own expanding individuality, they can be bossy and critical of others, easily upset when their feelings are hurt and can be apt to complain about both physical and emotional discomfort. Since severe criticism can especially damage these children, we must remain aware of how we address classroom issues.

- Class Meetings: (see above)

More and more they care a great deal about friends and may have a best friend. These kids are becoming less influenced by happenings at home than at school now. Like the five-year-olds, they learn well through discovery, dramatic and cooperative play, and love to ask questions, while enjoying the process more than the product.

- Opportunities for cooperative play and discovery will be available through:
 - Dramatic play center (see above for details)
 - Interactive Map of Focal Region:
 - Create a large interactive map constructed on a table of the region between Noyes Slough to Chena Ridge, and Large Animal Research Station to Chena River. Explore this region during field trips. Allow children to add figurines such as animals, houses, and people in order to use the map as a prop for dramatic play

Six-year-olds are beginning to understand past and present and how and why things happen, so begin to ask questions regarding more abstract topics both in and out of school.

- Units of study investigating how and why things happen are incorporated throughout the science and social studies curriculum:

- Light in Nature
 - Investigate as a class the concepts of reflection, refraction, and absorption. Build a periscope as a class. Students will find examples of these concepts in the field such as the fact that ravens absorb light with their black feathers to stay warm.
- Family History
 - “The Story of Me” Students create a simple and brief autobiographical book to share with the class which has been illustrated and written by them (teacher can take dictation) Parents provide information.

As has been mentioned, late kinders and early first graders are comfortable with a busy level of noise and will often work standing, so we must encourage them to produce better work by encouraging them to slow down and limit their tasks. Music as always is a wonderful learning medium, and these kids really enjoy and learn from games, poems, riddles, and songs.

- Music will always be a part of our daily routine as well as being incorporated into some of our curriculum units:
 - Plants in Winter
 - Study how trees and other plants survive the harsh winter conditions in the Interior. Work with a local musician to help compose an original piece of music and a dance that portrays this kind of adaptation

In the visual arts, they experience a serious artistic explosion and try all sorts of art, produce great quantities or work w/o regard to quality. Due in part to the high energy and natural tendency of our first graders to explore many different things at once, curriculum must be organized in part to meet children’s energy level and exploratory phases.

- Many various art activities will be available during choice time as well as woven throughout the science and social studies curriculum:
 - Dinosaurs of Alaska
 - Study the dinosaurs of Alaska’s past. Emphasize the local. Consult with local experts. Learn about the habitat, ecology, and behavior of several dinosaur species. Create paper mache” masks of these dinosaur species and props depicting their habitats. Put on a production to teach others about these dinosaurs including drama, dance, and singing.

The Watershed School will arrange the natural sciences and community explorations to satisfy the children’s natural curiosities.

Seven year olds (late first grade to early second grade)-

Second graders can be a bit tenser than the younger children and are becoming more inward-looking and sometimes moody. Whereas the six year olds were risk takers and competitive, these children now partially shy from this intensity. They may feel as though nobody likes them, so we must provide them with security along with constant reassurance. With these emotional changes we begin to notice them gaining increased

awareness of other's feelings. At this age they begin to develop their personalities more intently and exhibit strong likes and dislikes.

- Class Meetings (see above)

Listening skills begin to improve so they are capable of more in-depth conversations and teacher-directed content delivery. Becoming neater, they begin to enjoy repeated activities that coincide with a more solid grasp of math facts.

- Choice Time will provide ample opportunity for students to work on repeated activities. In addition to our daily math lessons, there will be hands-on math activities available during choice time.

Rapid vocabulary development is noticed and children begin to want to know more names of things in the natural environment.

- We will be naming and labeling things in our natural environment throughout many of our curriculum units
 - Changes in Local Animal Physiology In Fall and Winter
 - Study will include changes in body systems that allow animals to cope with seasonal change. Compare and contrast these changes to those of humans. Study how harsh conditions effect human digestion, mucous membranes,, lungs, skin, and muscles
 - Pond Life
 - Study pond ecology. With the help of local artist Mark Ross of Creamer's Refuge, create field sketches depicting the life cycle of a frog, dragonfly, and mosquito. Display the sketches at the Watershed School. It would also be an option to create a play about the life cycles of these animals.

To the teacher's pleasure, they begin to like to work independently more often and finish what they started more frequently. Due to the need for closure to learning activities, the teachers must give ample time for work to be fully completed and it's important for children at this age to be given plenty of warning when work time is going to be over. They still very much enjoy hands on exploration and taking things apart and discovering how they work. Now that they are increasingly able to reflect on their own learning they begin to prefer smaller group activities with peer feedback.

- Students will work in small groups during many of the curriculum units.
 - Interactive Map of Focal Point
 - Create a large interactive map out of clay, paper maché, paint, etc, constructed at a table which will be at working height for the students.

Time to engage in self-directed exploration is still very important, but they now begin to enjoy more complexly organized centers such as inquiry learning pods and discovery centers.

Eight Year Olds (late second grade to early third grade)

The kids at this age are full of bountiful energy, needing physical release through time outdoors to play. They enjoy group activities and cooperative work even more than last year.

- Students will learn to appreciate and participate in traditional outdoor physical activities, as teachers regularly take students outdoors to hike, snowshoe, ski, bike, etc., as a part of the Watershed School Physical Education program. The P.E. schedule is able to fluctuate with the physical and academic needs of the students.
- Cooperative activities are incorporated throughout the science and social studies curricula. Students work in small groups to complete several outdoor projects in both science and social studies.
 - Map Makers
 - Students will apply their understanding of various types of maps by working in small groups to navigate and create maps of the school area and surrounding neighborhood.
 - History of Fairbanks (Walking Tour)
 - Student groups work collaboratively to create a walking tour brochure of historic downtown sites.
 - Tools of Alaska's Past (Simple Machines)
 - Student groups use early mining tools to explore concepts in physical science. They apply their understanding of concepts to perform some of the tasks of historic miners in the Fairbanks area.
 - Animals of the Boreal Forest
 - Students work in pairs to write paragraphs and create scientific sketches that they will compile into a classroom field guide.

They now begin to get better at adjusting to change as self confidence is regained somewhat, and they once again are better at bouncing back from mistakes or disappointments. They listen well but have so many ideas they often may forget what they've learned. Bursting with industriousness and impatience, their heads are spinning full of ideas. Working quickly, they often take on more than they can handle. Often with observable growth spurts, they can become restless and still need lots of physical activity and short exercise breaks both in and out the classroom can help with classroom concentration.

- Outdoor education is one of the primary pillars of the Watershed School. Teachers will regularly be instructing in the outdoors where physical activity can be integrated into learning activities. In addition, while short exercise breaks are not written directly into the curriculum, teachers will be able to tailor the P.E. program to accommodate the physical needs of their students.

With their industrious, but distracted positive energy, it's reasonable to expect students at this level to complete more short assignments, rather than a few long ones. The process is as important to third graders as the product and with their increasing logical thought processing, they're becoming more sophisticated in understanding how things are put together, how things work, the natural world and classification.

- This developmental yardstick is well represented throughout the third and fourth grade science and social studies curricula. Students are constantly engaged in

exploring how things work, investigating the natural world around them, and further developing their sense of place. In third grade, students will participate in the following units:

- Animals of the Boreal Forest
 - Students will learn how to classify, sort and identify Alaskan animals of the Interior using dichotomous keys, Venn diagrams and other tools.
- The Food We Eat
 - Students will understand how food distribution has changed over the course of our community's history. Students will also learn how to produce and preserve various foods themselves.
- Power Grid of Interior Alaska
 - Students will learn how electric current works and how it is produced and distributed throughout our community.
- Tanana Valley Watershed Water Cycle
 - Students of The Watershed School will learn what a watershed is and what factors contribute to its health.

Responding well to classroom and community traditions highlighted by projects that build a sense of community and unity, they begin to develop a growing sense of moral responsibility beyond themselves and throughout their classroom.

- Looping will help a sense of community to grow within the classrooms from year to year as students will be familiar with each other, their teacher, and the expectations and atmosphere of the school.
- While teaching science and social studies content, two of the key third grade projects also involve developing the understanding and appreciation of the school and local community. The preparation and maintenance of a school garden will help students “develop a growing sense of moral responsibility beyond themselves.”
- In the third and fourth grade science and social studies curricula, students will be developing projects that will be utilized by others outside of the classroom. For example, students will create a website that help teach others about the Native cultures of Alaska. The Fairbanks history project will create a brochure to be used by other educators, students, and visitors to Fairbanks. The school garden will provide fresh food to the Fairbanks Food Bank. These projects will all help students gain awareness of personal and moral responsibility beyond themselves.

Kids at this age become more interested in fairness issues of a more expanded scale than their classroom world and may begin to become aware of and curious about other cultures.

- In third grade, as a part of The Watershed School's focus on understanding one's sense of place, one quarter of the social studies curriculum focuses on learning about the various Alaska Native cultures present in our community.

Nine Year Olds- (Late third grade to early fourth grade)

Becoming more individualistic and self-critical than their former selves, these children can be sullen and moody. Building upon the awakening they began last year regarding

social issues to do with justice, they now begin to transfer the awareness to a bigger world beyond their classroom walls.

Fourth graders are increasingly able to handle more than one concept at a time, such as long ago and far away, which opens up some great opportunities for geological concepts and state history.

- The fourth grade science and social studies curricula include the following state history and geological units.
 - Alaska History – A History of Immigrants
 - Students learn how Alaska was populated from the first immigrants who crossed the Bering Land Bridge, through statehood to today's immigrants who arrive from other states and countries.
 - Carving Alaska – Land formation of Alaska and the Interior
 - Students will learn how landforms are created and how these geological processes have created the topography of the Tanana Valley Watershed.

These kids are looking hard for explanations of facts, how things work, why things happen as they do. We are entering the age for scientific explanation.

- At The Watershed School, students will be constantly engaged in exploring how things work and investigating the natural world. Fourth grade students will participate in the following units:
 - Plants of the Boreal Forest – Introduction to Plants
 - Students will learn the basic needs of garden vegetables and natural vegetation, how they grow, and how they are adapted to our local environment.
 - Midnight Sun, Noontime Moon
 - Students will learn about their place in the solar system and how our location on Earth determines the seasons and climate in our community.
 - Salmon Ecology on the Chena River
 - Students will learn about life cycles, sustainable natural resources, and aquatic ecosystems through the study of salmon.
 - Carving Alaska – Land formation of Alaska and the Interior
 - Students will learn how geological processes shape our Earth.

Ten Year Olds- (Late fourth grade to early fifth grade)

Children of this age generally do well in groups with both cooperative and competitive activities. Truthfulness is highly valued, as their sense of right and wrong has matured substantially over the last two years.

- Cooperative activities and some competition are incorporated in both the social studies and science curricula.
- Students will form teams to set up natural history experiments outdoors, monitor them over time, and evaluate the results.
 - Beyond Earth: Student teams work together to develop rockets then test their capacities against other groups.

- Boreal forest study: Student teams establish and monitor plots in different plant communities.

Questions of fairness and other social issues are of high interest. The increased ability to think abstractly opens up more learning options for teachers.

- Students in The Watershed School will explore real world topics in the social studies and science curricula that allow them to explore all sides of an issue and determine its effects on a community.
 - Our Mineral Resources unit: Guest speakers representing all sides of mining issues visit the classroom. Students read and evaluate current media on this issue.
 - Students participate in mock public hearings to explore mining's potential benefits and detriments for a community.

The time is ripe for an increasingly sophisticated curriculum around natural sciences with more collecting classifying and organizing than in the past years. Children of this age enjoy skills involving memory and facts, so it's appropriate to increase the complexity of social science and natural science explorations. Fourth and fifth graders enjoy and learn much from working on collections and science and math projects.

- Students in The Watershed School will be involved in setting up complex experiments and study plots, monitoring them over time, and collecting and interpreting data.
- Expertise will be gained in using a variety of scientific instruments.
- Boreal Forest study: Student teams will set up and monitor plots to compare and contrast environmental factors that create different plant communities.
- Beyond Earth: Students perform indoor experiments and outdoor observations to learn about their solar system.

Like all children, they need a great deal of physical activity and many opportunities to use large muscle groups as they are developing quickly. They need outdoor time and physical challenge.

- Hiking, snow shoeing and skiing will be a regular part of the science curriculum as students participate in outdoor studies and travel to and from outdoor study plots.

Eleven Year Olds- (late fifth grade to early sixth grade)

Students at this age need lots of time to talk with peers. Entering the age of indecisiveness, they will have trouble making decisions and enjoy arguing and debating. They continue to get better at abstract concepts and are keen to study moral issues and social justice topics. The ability of many of the kids to see world from different perspectives is evident.

- The Watershed School strives to develop a strong sense of place among the students by incorporating their community and physical environment into the curricula. Students will have ample opportunities to explore, discuss, and debate social justice topics with their peers and instructors.
 - Alaska History Unit-Social studies activities focusing on state history will contain an exploration of cultural issues as a result of Native land claims and land use.
 - Our Neighbors Unit- Students will compare and contrast our political systems and social justice issues with those of neighboring countries.
 - Local Government unit-Students identify a local issue or need and present it to the City Council.

This year the kids really start to refine their fine motor skills, which make it a good time to explore art and other more complex tasks.

- Hands on exploration of increasingly complex social studies and science topics are an integral part of the philosophy of The Watershed School.
- Students will be continuously encouraged to apply what they learn to new and challenging tasks.
 - Alaska's Climate unit-Students will perform complex experiments in the classroom and conduct scientific observations outside to learn about their local climate.
 - Building for the Subarctic unit-Students will apply what they learn to create their own outdoor structures and test their insulative capacities.

They're interested in toying with the world from an adult perspective and imagine themselves in adult roles, which can make biographies and current events critical components of a challenging curriculum.

- The Watershed School will make extensive use of community experts and guest speakers to incorporate current events as an important part of the social studies and science curriculum.
 - Tanana Valley Careers unit- Students choose several local careers that interest them, conduct research and interviews, and participate in job shadowing.
 - Students write a biography of a local expert to learn about factors that influenced their career choices and formed their worldview. Examples could include Alaska Pioneers, Native Elders, scientists or artists.

School-wide Philosophy of Management

A democracy is an organizational system in which the ultimate power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation. Is a school a democracy? The Watershed School believes the answer to this is yes and no. Without solid structure, the school would be a chaotic and unproductive environment lacking a consistent purpose. As we discussed above, children pass through complicated developmental stages on their way to adulthood and are capable of particular cognitive decisions at different points in their school career. Adults in supervisory roles have a responsibility to make many decisions, both academic and behavioral, for the good of the maturing students. Children are, however, able to make certain decisions at different stages of their development. This decision-making power gives a sense of ownership in the system of management and structure to the educational program.

What is the best way for children to learn to control their own actions? Nearly a century ago, in *Democracy and Education*, John Dewey observed that children are not born with self control. He asserted that all learning is a dynamic process, a journey of choices. The Watershed School will adhere to strategies which empower children to have a safe and successful educational journey, assisting them in making constructive choices that are beneficial both to the individual students as well as their schoolmates. We believe that a successful school should share a common approach to student management that will be practiced consistently throughout the entire school. In the classroom, at recess, traveling the hallways, and on our frequent community-based learning experiences, The Watershed School will use the same strategies. Teachers, support staff, and volunteers will approach school-wide management in a fair, firm, and consistent manner.

In November, 2007, John Carlson, director of the nonprofit, The Watershed School, attended a workshop on *The Responsive Classroom*® in Vermont. This intensive training was put on by the Northeast Foundation for Children (NEFC). John followed this intriguing training with a trip upstate to visit Morrisville Elementary School. Morrisville adopted the Responsive Classroom program and was willing to share their experience and ideas with John. While visiting with staff, observing classrooms in session, and speaking with children, he was struck by the student's extent of ownership in the learning process and in the classroom management of the school.

In *Teaching Children to Care* (2002), published by NEFC, the authors list two basic goals of school-wide management plans:

- 1) Children need to develop self-control
- 2) Children need to develop a sense of community

The Watershed School believes that in order for children to follow school rules and adhere to community expectations they must understand the rules. Chip Wood (1998) of NEFC notes that we don't expect students to complete challenging mathematical computations, read trade books, sing in the Christmas concert, and cross country ski safely down a hill without instruction and practice. We should not expect children to accomplish the extremely difficult and complicated task of self-control through "osmosis," as he puts it. We so often lack the practice component of teaching self-management. At The Watershed School, behavioral expectations and techniques of self-management will be practiced again and again under the guidance of trained adults.

We all know that just because children can articulate the rules doesn't mean they will follow them. Far from it. Controlling impulses, expressing feelings in a constructive way, and putting personal needs aside momentarily for the good of the group are complex, demanding skills – skills that even adults struggles with."

Rules in School (2003, p. 49)

The Watershed School will adhere to the following guidelines when it comes to the practicing of rules (*Rules in School*, 2003, pp. 50-77):

- 1) Always strive to further students' understanding of rules
- 2) Translate global rules into concrete actions
- 3) Develop students' skills in following rules, especially when it's hard
- 4) Establish clear behavioral expectations for various settings (reading groups, meeting area, recess, when there's a substitute teacher, etc.)
- 5) Encourage ethical thinking and internalization of the rules
- 6) Acknowledge the fact that living by the rules can be hard and support children in correcting and learning from their mistakes

There are different ways we can teach correct school-wide behavior. The Watershed School will focus of the following key components:

- 1) Teachers must model rules for children. This procedure will be used to show the students what is expected of them and how to be successful in different situations.
- 2) Children must be given opportunities to role play correct behavior. Appropriate behaviors will be reinforced repeatedly in safe and predictable situations.

The Watershed School acknowledges that these goals cannot be accomplished without trained, highly qualified educators able to meet professional expectations that are as high as those they set for the students. The Watershed School will train staff on consistent language patterns to enable them to work on self-management with children. These expectations will be met by all teachers, support staff, and volunteers.

“I’ve come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom...As a teacher, I have tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.”

(Ginott, H, *Teacher and Child*).

The Watershed School will provide specific in depth training for all staff in class management techniques prior to the opening of the school. Annual in-services to train new staff and volunteers and reinforce the school’s vision of school-wide management will be provided once the school is open. (Appendix 1)

Inspired by the philosophy of *Responsive Classroom*, The Watershed School will follow these eight guiding practices.

- **Morning Meeting** — gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead
- **Rule Creation** — helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals
- **Positive Teacher Language** — using words and tone as a tool to promote children’s active learning, sense of community, and self-discipline
- **Logical Consequences** — responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity

- **Project-Based Learning** — introducing concepts through thematic study using a format that encourages independence, cooperative problem solving, creativity, applied knowledge.
- **Differentiated Instruction** — adapting instruction to accommodate the needs of students with varying learning styles and abilities
- **Classroom Organization** — setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, productivity, and reinforces the place-based mission of the school
- **Working with Families** — creating an open environment that encourages parental involvement in their child's classroom experience

This general outline is only a brief overview of some of the principles we have adapted from *Rules for Schools* and *Responsive Classroom®* philosophies. While The Watershed School will utilize many of the *Responsive Classroom®* and *Rules for Schools* techniques, our school's program will be an eclectic combination of other techniques as well. We do not believe that any one educational program can successfully meet the needs of the diverse student population and creative curriculum of our school.

Parent Volunteer Policy and Program:

All parents who enroll students in the school are required to contribute volunteer efforts to The Watershed School. Parents may choose from a wide array of opportunities to become engaged in the day-to-day operation of this exciting and innovative school. Flexible opportunities will be organized to fit into the time schedules of parents. With the opportunity to choose their own volunteer experience, and on a schedule that fits different parent's family and professional demands, The Watershed School is confident that parents will have a positive and enjoyable experience. Opportunities will include in-school tutoring, small group instruction, assisting in recreational and community-based activities (both inside and outside the school), clerical tasks, classroom organizational activities, car pooling, cooking, and fund raising. School staff will provide volunteers with a sign-up sheet for each semester's volunteer needs. As a rule-of-thumb, an average voluntary contribution by a family would be approximately 10 hours per semester.

Physical Education Philosophy and Program:

Classroom teachers will teach physical education to their students. The teachers will be responsible for leading their students in physical activity a minimum of 120 minutes per week (double the district requirement), excluding recess. In addition, our school has taken the innovative stand that 75% of physical education will take place outdoors. On severe weather days, the teachers will conduct physical education in the school's multi purpose room. An additional opportunity for exercise will take place when science and social studies units are created to relate to the local community. Every science and social studies unit will include getting students out of the school building and into the community or the outdoors.

The Watershed School believes a solid component of a child's education is physical education. The State Education Standard is the policy journal of the National Association of State Boards of Education. In 2004 it released "The Role Schools in Preventing Childhood Obesity." It begins with this sobering introduction:

While the U.S. Surgeon General has identified the obesity epidemic as one of the greatest health problems facing the nation today, educators have had their attention elsewhere. Today's schools face intense pressure to focus on standardized tests and consequently have placed less emphasis on the broader view of a healthy mind in a healthy body. However, an increasing number of educators and school board members are realizing, as the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) has written: "Health and success in school are interrelated. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students and staff are not healthy and fit physically, mentally, and socially.

(The State Education Standard, 2004, p2)

Since 1980, the percentage of children who are overweight has more than doubled, while rates among adolescents have more than tripled. According the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the number of overweight Americans increased over 60 percent between 1991 and 2000! An even more disheartening statistic is that the percentage of overweight children between the ages two and five increased by almost 36 percent in the same time period. A decade ago, type 2 diabetes was almost unheard of among young people, but in some communities it now accounts for nearly 50 percent of new cases of diabetes among

children or adolescents. Diabetes is a risk factor for heart disease and an estimated 61 percent of overweight young people have at least one additional risk factor for heart disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure.

In the United States children who watch the most TV and play the most video games are the most overweight. Curiously enough, all during the same period in which American youth have had the highest rates of participation in organized sports in history. The missing element in children's lives is the extensive outdoor recreational and educational time that until recently was a major part of the childhood routine.

Being overweight in childhood is also associated with social and psychological problems, such as discrimination and poor self-esteem. Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (2005), pointed out the role of outdoor recreation in children's emotional development. He states, "Nature is often overlooked as a healing balm for the emotional hardships in a child's life. You'll likely never see a slick commercial for nature therapy, as you do for the latest antidepressant pharmaceuticals. But parents, educators, and health care workers need to know what a useful antidote to emotional and physical stress nature can be...A 2003 survey published in the journal *Psychiatric Services*, found the rate at which American children are prescribed anti-depressants almost doubled in five years; the steepest increase-66 percent-was among preschool children." Outdoor exercise, coined, "Nature's Ritalin," by author Stephen Putnam (2001) is becoming more frequently introduced as a treatment for attention deficit disorder. Putnam points out that movement in outdoor spaces can help satisfy the "wanderer, hunter, farmer, and gatherer in all of us."

While recreational activity in natural outdoor settings may not be the cure-all for children with the most severe attention deficit disorder, it certainly will be a powerful tool. At The Watershed School, outdoor recreation will be a significant component of our physical and emotional wellness curriculum. With our teachers setting the example for our children by being the primary instructors for physical education and outdoor recreation, our children will be on their way to a healthy lifestyle.

Creative Arts Program:

While the educational program at The Watershed School places a great emphasis on the natural sciences and community, we believe that creative arts are crucial to healthy child development and a well-rounded educational program. Our classroom teachers will be responsible for incorporating a vibrant creative arts program into their teaching routine. The arts program at The Watershed School will include exposure to and appreciation of varied art forms, both within the local community and world-wide, while allowing guided experimentation with different materials and building skills in various media.

The creative arts program will include the following areas: visual arts, music and movement, and dramatic and literary arts. Teachers will incorporate creative arts into daily classroom activities, and attempts will be made to tie art projects to school-wide and/or classroom themes. We will draw on community arts resources for project ideas, teacher guidance and mentoring, and at times direct work with students. The Watershed School will assemble a panel of interested (volunteer) community artists representing the three different creative arts areas. This panel will be asked to help generate project ideas for each grade level in the artists' respective artistic areas, again keeping in mind the school themes of local ecology and culture. The school will generate a list of local artists with interest in helping with project implementation and teacher and curriculum guidance. Creative art activities will be developmentally appropriate, and will encourage both individual creativity and collaboration with peers.

Students and their families will also be actively encouraged to attend local arts events, such as concerts, museum exhibits, native arts festivals, poetry or story readings, and dramatic productions. The school will facilitate these activities by including local arts events calendars in school and classroom newsletters, obtaining student/group discounts whenever possible, and organizing field trips and visiting performances and artists.

While The Watershed School may not be able to provide individual or group music instruction (i.e. band/orchestra/chorus) due to budgetary constraints, we will assist families in coordinating private instruction and offer practice and/or lesson space in the facility outside school hours as we are able. We will also partner with other community

performance groups and schools to allow students with more advanced musical and dramatic interests a venue for instruction, practice, and performance.

Language Arts Curriculum:

The Watershed School will largely follow the components of the Fairbanks North Star Borough K-8 English Language Arts Curriculum adopted May 3, 2005. The writers of the districts curriculum, along with the FNSBSD Curriculum Department, crafted a solid system of Mastery Core Objectives based upon current language arts pedagogy.

Setting The Watershed School apart from most language arts programs will be the direct connection to our science and social studies curricular units. This is based on The Watershed School's strong philosophy of thematic instruction. As stated in Section 2, Specific Levels of Achievement, 50% of language arts instruction time will reinforce and relate to concepts covered in the science and social studies curriculum.

Math Curriculum:

The Watershed School will largely follow the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Mathematics K-8 Curriculum adopted May 2, 2006. This curriculum, reinforced through a solid mathematics series, will compose our strong mathematics program. At the time of this proposal, our Academic Policy Committee is leaning towards adopting the district's math program, McGraw Hill's *Everyday Math*, as our primary K-6 math series. This is based on two rationales. For one, the series works. The second justification is based on the realization that the students enrolling at The Watershed School will, for the most part, come from existing schools in the district and will be familiar with the series. This will provide for a smooth transition for these students. At this time, our APC's curriculum team is still reviewing 7-8 math series.

Mathematics, in much the same way as language arts, will be connected to our natural science and social studies themes. Due to the technical demands of math instruction and the complicated and very specific Mastery Core objectives, we will, as stated in our

Specific Levels of Achievement, strive for 25% of our mathematics content reflecting our units of science and social studies.

Middle School:

At The Watershed School, we will have a high emphasis on academic excellence in all grade levels. This, along with the sense of community developed over elementary school years and the children's close relationship with natural surroundings, will support our middle school aged place-based philosophy.

Research has shown that in schools where real-world academic assignments require higher order thinking skills, student achievement is higher. The following principals of a developmentally appropriate middle school aged curriculum, developed by the National Middle School Association (2003, pp.20-24), closely parallel the philosophy of The Watershed School.

1. Relevant to the everyday lives of adolescents and what they wonder about themselves, the world or a content area. Their interest should generate questions upon which study will be based, while still exposing them to new concepts and ideas as their interests expand.
2. Challenging yet achievable. Teachers should assist students to examine values, assumptions, and alternate viewpoints, addressing why and how things happen, as they become thinkers with their own ideas.
3. Integrative without arbitrary subject boundaries since real life issues are naturally transdisciplinary. Content subjects should infuse reading and writing as they apply.
4. Exploratory, providing broad experiences and exposure affording the opportunity to discover their interests and talents and to become more well rounded individuals.

At the Watershed School the seventh and eighth grades will operate somewhat differently than the elementary grades. The Watershed School strongly believes that in elementary school our students should have the same teacher all-day-long for two years (looping model). In 7th and 8th students will rotate between two teachers, both with full time aides. There are two reasons for this. For one, we can have highly qualified content area

teachers who focus on specific areas of curriculum. The second advantage is that it will help students prepare for the multiple teachers they'll encounter in high school. At any given time, we will have slightly fewer than fifty students in seventh and eighth grades. By using creative scheduling our two middle school teachers will provide a stimulating mix of language arts, social sciences, sciences, and beginning and advanced math classes. For advanced students, we will attempt to offer independent study. For our learning disabled students, resource support will be integrated throughout the content areas.

Another unique feature of The Watershed School, when compared with larger stand alone middle schools, will be the opportunity to increase student involvement in planning the educational programs. In keeping with our place-based philosophy and project-based emphasis, students and teachers can plan activities around math and science that the students find interesting and relevant. In the social sciences, the students work with teacher guidance to plan service-learning projects that bring meaning to their education.

As the oldest students in a K-8 school, seventh and eighth graders will also have the opportunity to serve as mentors and leaders within the school. Taking on this role helps build students' self-esteem during this critical adolescent period. Middle school aged students want to feel that what they do matters and that they have the ability to make a difference. When students this age work with younger students they begin to see themselves as role models and strive to contribute positively to the education of the younger students.

As in all grade levels of The Watershed School, the involvement of parents and the relatively small size of the school will give it much of its character. Three things parents traditionally feel are priorities: school-wide intimacy, a solid educational program, and a safe and positive learning environment, all can be achieved through a small school running on the K-8 model. If children are known by every teacher in the building, and most children have a relationship of nine years' duration with staff, you end up with an exceptional educational focus and intensity. Research overwhelmingly suggests that it is essential for middle grade students to have an adult in the building with whom they have a supportive relationship. With our seventh and eighth grade model of two teachers, supported by other teachers who have known these students for years, our children will not fall through the cracks. The National Middle School Association (2003) recommends

home rooms as an essential component of middle schools. The Watershed School can exceed the intimacy of the home room, as our small student numbers and small staff will provide a family-like atmosphere.

In addition, 7th and 8th graders in K through 8 schools are less likely to fall victim to negative peer pressure than they are in large stand-alone middle schools and junior highs. According to Colleen Smith (2006), the Exploration Coordinator for FNSBSD's Barnette Magnet School, they have found that, "Instead of two close transitions, first from elementary into middle school and then soon after into high school, a K-8 school reduces the transitions to only one and delays it until a more stable period of psychosocial development after the tumultuous time of adolescence has passed." Less social pressure, an emotionally safer environment, and more opportunities for autonomy and leadership are prevalent in a small school model. With the lower social pressure, staff can look for higher expectations because students already know and are comfortable with this group of peers, and teachers already know to what standards students are capable of rising.

Block Scheduling is another element made possible by the small school structure of The Watershed School. We can provide for large blocks of uninterrupted time to conduct large-scale projects and out-of-building investigations, which are hallmarks of our school. For instance, in the middle school, rather than having every class each day for a short period of time, The Watershed School has the flexibility to have only two or three classes in one day, each for a longer time period, resulting in fewer transitions for students. High quality work and less wasted time will be the end result. This model also allows time for students who need remedial help or enrichment without affecting the daily schedule.

The curriculum examples in this proposal reflect the current elementary school make-up of The Watershed School Academic Policy Committee. Upon charter approval by the FNSBSD and the State of Alaska, The Watershed School will fill out our teaching staff with the remaining teachers interested in the open positions. This gives us one year to complete curriculum, including the middle school elements.

Exceptional learner needs:

Children with different learning abilities will receive a high quality education at The Watershed School. John Carlson, Principal Teacher of the school, has over twenty years

working with children with disabilities, of which half were in secondary education and half in elementary education. In addition, he has worked with English language learners from as far south as New Mexico and far north as a Yup'ik community on the Bering Sea. Whether it is learning disabled students, communication delayed students, or children from diverse language backgrounds, the curricular approach at The Watershed School is an excellent match for their diverse learning styles.

Teaching through multiple strategies and allowing for flexibility in ways to display mastery of classroom work is a hallmark of good instruction. Project-based learning, one of the main components of The Watershed School, involves learning through experiences. Many of our projects will focus on ecological concepts, while others will have a strong service-learning component. Highly relevant concepts like these, which use hands-on, flexible performance, and authentic experiences, work well with all children. They also allow for alternative approaches that address students' individual differences, variations in learning styles, intelligences, abilities, and disabilities.

The scheduling of educational blocks associated with the project-based model also allows time for students who need remedial help or enrichment to get it from the classroom teacher, classroom aide, and resource specialists without affecting the daily schedule. In addition to the sound pedagogical approach in our classrooms, The Watershed School will utilize small group instruction to meet differentiated instructional needs. These smaller groups will be possible by using our full-time aides, special education resource specialists (as children on IEP are identified), and parent volunteers. As children on IEPs and those qualifying as English language learners are identified, they will become the caseload of our principal teacher, John Carlson, who will see that our special education students and ELL students received a high quality, individualized education.

Cultural Diversity:

The mission of the Effie Kokrine Charter School serves as a powerful argument for the formation of The Watershed School:

... provide educational opportunities for students to succeed in the world by developing a strong sense of purpose, identity, place and community through cultural and academic empowerment. One emphasis of this new school is a strong

connection between what students experience in school and in their communities. The school will provide many cultural activities and other opportunities for real-world learning. Another emphasis is that this school will focus on academic excellence by utilizing a curriculum that accommodates individual learning styles of students in an active, project-based learning environment.

The Watershed School is an obvious choice as a powerful feeder school to Effie Kokrine Charter School. Both schools place a heavy emphasis on authentic learning tasks that bring the real world into the classrooms and take the classrooms out into the real world. Any child, whether it is an Interior Athabascan Indian, Yup'ik Eskimo of Southwest Alaska, Latino immigrant from Mexico's Copper Canyon, or a transplant from Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula, will benefit from our curriculum's heavy focus and embedded respect for all cultures and a specific focus on developing a deep connection to local cultures. This grounding is essential for our children from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The Watershed School will meet or exceed all of the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*. A review of these standards clearly illustrates how our place-based curriculum is a perfect match to the diverse cultural origins of our community of children.

A. A culturally responsive curriculum reinforces the integrity of the cultural knowledge that students bring with them.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) recognizes that all knowledge is imbedded in a larger system of cultural beliefs, values and practices, each with its own integrity and interconnectedness;
- 2) insures that students acquire not only the surface knowledge of their culture, but are also well grounded in the deeper aspects of the associated beliefs and practices;
- 3) incorporates contemporary adaptations along with the historical and traditional aspects of the local culture;
- 4) respects and validates knowledge that has been derived from a variety of cultural traditions;
- 5) provides opportunities for students to study all subjects starting from a base in the local knowledge system.

B. A culturally responsive curriculum recognizes cultural knowledge as part of a living and constantly adapting system that is grounded in the past, but continues to grow through the present and into the future.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) recognizes the contemporary validity of much of the traditional cultural knowledge, values and beliefs, and grounds students learning in the principles and practices associated with that knowledge;
- 2) provides students with an understanding of the dynamics of cultural systems as they change over time, and as they are impacted by external forces;
- 3) incorporates the in-depth study of unique elements of contemporary life in Native communities in Alaska, such as the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, subsistence, sovereignty and self-determination.

C. A culturally responsive curriculum uses the local language and cultural knowledge as a foundation for the rest of the curriculum.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) utilizes the local language as a base from which to learn the deeper meanings of the local cultural knowledge, values, beliefs and practices;
- 2) recognizes the depth of knowledge that is associated with the long inhabitation of a particular place and utilizes the study of “place” as a basis for the comparative analysis of contemporary social, political and economic systems;
- 3) incorporates language and cultural immersion experiences wherever in-depth cultural understanding is necessary;
- 4) views all community members as potential teachers and all events in the community as potential learning opportunities;
- 5) treats local cultural knowledge as a means to acquire the conventional curriculum content as outlined in state standards, as well as an end in itself;
- 6) makes appropriate use of modern tools and technology to help document and transmit traditional cultural knowledge;
- 7) is sensitive to traditional cultural protocol, including role of spirituality, as it relates to appropriate uses of local knowledge.

D. A culturally responsive curriculum fosters a complementary relationship across knowledge derived from diverse knowledge systems.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) draws parallels between knowledge derived from oral tradition and that derived from books;
- 2) engages students in the construction of new knowledge and understandings that contribute to an ever-expanding view of the world.

E. A culturally responsive curriculum situates local knowledge and actions in a global context.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) encourages students to consider the inter-relationship between their local circumstances and the global community;
- 2) conveys to students that every culture and community contributes to, at the same time that it receives from the global knowledge base;
- 3) prepares students to “think globally, act locally.”

At Risk Students-

According to The Rural School and Community Trust (2008) smaller schools have lower rates of crime and violence, and greater rates of parental involvement and community support. Teachers, students, and parents report greater satisfaction with the quality of their school relationships. In addition, where school enrollments are small, the numbers of parents participating in the democratic governance of the school is higher. Where schools are small, there are more citizens who directly take responsibility for the process of schooling in their community through participation in things like parent-teacher groups, community fundraising efforts, boosters clubs, and school activities and events. Interested parents are involved parents.

As we’ve outlined previously, the personal nature of the K-8 model is a perfect fit for at-risk children. Long-term relationships are forged and a two-way communication is developed.

Rites of Passage:

It’s our opinion that we still appear to be failing to meet the emotional and physical needs of our children, particularly boys, in our current education system. More than that, we appear to be failing at a time when an increased burden of responsibility for the emotional and social education of our children is shifting to the school. Worse still for

our boys and girls, we in Western society have lost some of the most significant emotional and social educational tools – initiation and rites of passage.

Two educators from Australia that are instrumental in the field of rites of passage, Fletcher and McMinn (2008), observe that, "With the exception of obtaining a driver's license, the rights, privileges and responsibilities of growing up are usually achieved by reaching certain birthdays rather than by successfully making one's way through a series of real-life 'growing up' scenarios." What The Watershed School proposes to do is develop an annual spring adventure camp which will test and reinforce our children's physical skills, applied knowledge of natural science curriculum, and cultural knowledge. Equally important, it will serve as a pivotal stage of physical and emotional development from one grade level to the next. Although in the early stages of development, The Watershed School brainstormed some example Rites of Passage for our students.

(Appendix 2)

Staffing:

Kindergarten: 1 teacher, 1 full time aide per grade level

Grades One – Six: 1 teacher per grade level, 1 full time aide per grade level (looping model- 1-2 loop, 3-4 loop, 5-6 loop)

Grades 7-8: 2 teachers, 2 full time aides (1 teacher highly qualified math/science, 1 teacher highly qualified language arts/social sciences). Children move between teachers for content instruction.

Our Schedule:

(To be determined by FTE enrollment, budget and community interest)

Option One-

Student Schedule- 9:00-3:30, M-F

Staff Schedule- 8:30-4:00, M-F

Option Two-

Student Schedule- 9:00-3:30, M-Th,

9:00-12:00, F

Staff Schedule- 8:30-4:00, M-F

Section 2-Specific Levels of Achievement for the Educational Program

"... the great waste in school comes from the child's inability to utilize the experiences he gets outside the school in any complete and free way within the school itself; while at the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning at school."

John Dewey, The School and Society (1899)

The Watershed School Charter School has nine program goals with specific levels of achievement for each.

1. Thematic material:

- 50% of language arts instruction time will reinforce and relate to concepts covered in the science and social studies curriculum.
- 20% of math instruction time will involve applied mathematics related to the science and social studies curriculum.

2. Outdoor Education/Recreation -

- 75% of physical education will take place outdoors.
- Classroom teachers will be responsible for students participating in physical activity a minimum of 120 minutes per week (double the district requirement), excluding recess.
- Science and social studies units will be related to the local community. Every science and social studies unit will include getting students out of the school building and into the community or the outdoors.

3. AYP: The Watershed School will meet State benchmarks in Math, Reading, Writing, and Science. We will meet all federal and state assessment requirements associated with NCLB and Alaska QSI (per AS 14.03.075

4. Stable Enrollment: Excluding those who move out of the area, the school will aim for a voluntary re-enrollment rate of 80% the after the first year and 90% in the in subsequent years.

5. Community Involvement: The School has set a goal of involvement by community members to equal 20% of the total teaching hours budgeted each year. Community members are defined as families and volunteer teachers from throughout our community. Volunteers will include local scientists, historians and other specialists.
6. Parent Satisfaction: The school has a goal of having 90% of the parents agree that the school meets their children's needs per parent survey.
7. Small School Size with Low Student to Adult Ratio: In order to maintain a family-like atmosphere, increase learning and meet the individual needs of students, The Watershed School will maintain a small enrollment. The school will be limited to approximately 200 children. The teacher-student ratio will be 1:22 with full-time classroom aides.
8. Family Volunteering: 80% of families will volunteer at the school.
9. Teacher Training: All teachers will be trained in components of *The Responsive Classroom*.

Section 3- Admission Policies and Procedures

The Watershed School vision will be realized joint effort between staff, students, parents, and the residents of the Tanana Valley.

Admission Process:

Prospective families of The Watershed School will follow a three-step process:

1. During the application process, parents and guardians must attend one orientation meeting to learn about the philosophy, curriculum, and daily operation of the school. In addition, they must observe the school in session. Dates for the orientation meetings and visitation arrangements will be posted on the school's web page which is linked to the School District site at <http://www.northstar.k12.ak.us/>. The orientation and in-

session observation (if applicable) should occur before completing the application so that students and their families understand the Watershed School's unique vision and its requirements.

2. Parent(s) or guardian(s) will read, complete and sign The Watershed School Application Form (Appendix 3)
3. Once completed, the application, along with a completed lottery form, will be reviewed by The Watershed Application Committee. If more students apply than can be accommodated, applicants will be drawn by lottery for admission. Lottery drawings will be held on April 15 each year.

Orientation Meeting

Parents, students, and guardians will attend one of the mandatory orientation meetings as scheduled by The Watershed School. School staff and Academic Policy Committee members will explain the school philosophy of place-based education and expectations of our children and parents.

Orientation Meeting Topics:

- School application, lottery, and reenrollment
- Explanation of the Alaska charter school concept
- School hours
- Parent involvement (requirements)
- Student behavioral expectations
- Community-based education
- Thematic instruction
- Outdoor education
- Place-based education and education for an interconnected world
- State standards and place-based education
- Physical education

Outdoors

Indoors

- Tanana Valley as a focal point of arts
- Etc.
- Transportation/carpooling

Admission Criteria:

The Watershed School Charter School is a parent choice school. A student enrolling at The Watershed School must be within the age of five and fourteen. In order to be eligible to apply to attend kindergarten, children must be five years old on or before September 1. Children must be 6 years old on or before September 1 to attend first grade. A copy of the child's birth certificate is required for each pupil entering kindergarten or first grade. All new students must submit proof of immunization before being admitted into school. At least one parent, or legal guardian, must be a resident of the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

The Watershed School Charter School may, upon written notice to the FNSB School District, decline to accept students who have been determined after due process, to have violated FNSB School District Policies 1042.61 (Firearms and Other Guns) or 1053.3 (Alcohol and Other Drug Violations).

All parents who enroll students in the school are required to contribute volunteer efforts to The Watershed School. Parents may choose from a wide array of opportunities to become engaged in the day-to-day operation of this exciting and innovative school. Flexible opportunities will be offered organized to fit into the time schedules of parents. With the opportunity to choose their own volunteer experience, and on a schedule that fits different parent's family and professional demands, The Watershed School is confident that parents will have a positive and enjoyable experience. Opportunities will range from in-school tutoring, small group instruction, assisting in recreational and community-based activities (both inside and outside the school), clerical tasks, classroom organizational activities, car pooling, cooking, to fund raising. School staff will provide volunteers with a sign-up sheet for each semester's volunteer needs. As a rule-of-thumb, an average voluntary contribution by a family would be approximately 10 hours per semester.

Selection Process

Enrollment at The Watershed School is voluntary. As per AS 14.03.265 (b) the school shall strive to enroll all eligible students who submit a timely application. In the event of too many eligible applicants, the school will follow Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Lottery Procedures for Open Enrollment. The lottery will be held on April 15 of every spring, for enrollment for the following fall, and will be conducted in accord with district policy.

We expect more applicants than The Watershed School has room to enroll. In this case, all students will be enrolled following a lottery process. Lottery drawings will be held on April 15 each year. The lottery determines the waiting list for the following school year.

The Watershed School keeps a waiting list of students that have applied, but were unsuccessful in being chosen through the lottery. When there are openings in the school between the annual lottery, the waiting list is used to fill the vacancies.

In keeping with the Watershed's School philosophy of long-term connection to family, community, and geographical place, in subsequent years all students who have previously attended The Watershed School are automatically re-enrolled in the program. Siblings are admitted as a unit so that families can attend the same school. Families with multiple siblings wishing to attend will fill out a single "family" lottery form with the specified number of grade-level slots requested. Although all new applicants must meet application requirements, future students who already have siblings enrolled in the school are given priority to enroll in the Watershed School, given that space is available at the sibling's grade level. Siblings are defined as permanent, immediate family members, seven years old or younger, who are living in the home.

Although all applicants must meet application requirements, children of staff members and of the Academic Policy Committee are given preference.

In order to maintain balanced grade level classrooms, and to keep classroom enrollment stable, The Watershed School will adjust available enrollment slots to reflect grade level openings as needed.

Once enrolled at the Charter School, parents or guardians will complete an “Intent to Reenroll” form (Appendix 4) for succeeding school years, and are expected to notify the school of any change in plans. If students withdraw from The Watershed School to attend another school, they are required to complete the application and lottery process again before readmission to the school.

Nondiscrimination Disclosure

The Watershed School does not discriminate toward any individual as defined in District Policy 1011 nor does it require any student to attend the program

The Watershed School will not discriminate by race or special needs or other inappropriate criteria. No student shall be denied participation because of a learning disability, handicapping condition, or special need. However, due to budget and facility restrictions the Charter School must refer severely handicapped students to the School Districts Special Education Department where specialized staff is available.

Student Behavior

While behavioral guidelines at The Watershed School will reflect a community-based philosophy that develops an ethos of citizenship among its students, the school will utilize and incorporate the School Districts disciplinary policies regarding student discipline.

“We need an education for the young people that gives them pride in their culture and their place... They must become well informed about the workings of governments, banking, and economics.... We need an education that places them firmly within biology

but that also gives them a picture of human cultural affairs and accomplishments over the millennia.

Gary Snyder, “*A Place in Space*”(1995)

Section 4-Administrative Policies

Principal Teacher:

The Watershed School Charter School will have a principal teacher. This teacher will share a part-time teaching load with administrative responsibilities. The principal teacher is the representative of the Charter School responsible for administrative duties and communication between the Charter School and the FNSB School District administration. The principal teacher:

1. Shall select, appoint, evaluate, or otherwise supervise employees of The Watershed School
2. If the PT does not possess an Alaska Type B administrative certificate, then the FNSBSD school board shall designate (with The Watershed School APC’s approval) a school district administrator to evaluate the teacher(s) and staff of The Watershed School.
3. Oversee coordination of school-wide thematic projects and oversee community contacts
4. Oversee communications between The Watershed School and the School District
5. Shall keep financial records of The Watershed School
6. Shall oversee the operation of the charter school to ensure the terms of the contract are being met
7. Shall meet regularly with parents and with teachers of the charter school to review, evaluate, and improve operations of the charter school
8. Shall meet with the Academic Policy Committee at least three times each year to monitor progress in achieving the committee’s policies and goals.

Academic Policy Committee (APC):

The Academic Policy Committee recognizes its obligation on behalf of The Watershed School to act as trustee for public and private funds provided in support of the School. In keeping with this obligation, the Charter School will utilize the administrative and financial policies and procedures provided by the School District.

The members of the Watershed School Academic Policy Committee will mirror the current “Watershed School” nonprofit (AK entity #105741) board as listed with the State of Alaska at the time of the application to FNSBSD for charter school approval.

1. Maria Berger- Parent/biologist
2. John Carlson- APC President/Principal Teacher, FNSBSD teacher
3. Laurel Devaney- Community Member/biologist
4. Jarrod Decker- FNSBSD teacher/parent
5. Sara Masterman- FNSBSD teacher/parent
6. Jana McAninch- Parent
7. Dave Merrill- FNSBSD teacher/parent
8. Abigail Paul- Parent
9. Rae Trainer Wright- community member
10. Susan Campbell- FNSBSD teacher
11. Open

The academic policy committee supervises the academic operation of the Charter School and ensures the fulfillment of the mission and specific levels of achievement for the educational program of The Watershed School. This Board meets at least six times per year. When vacancies occur, Board members will be selected by the remaining APC by a 2/3 majority. The APC will consist of a minimum of nine members and not more than eleven members. A minimum of four APC members shall be parents of students at The Watershed School at the time of their seat. A minimum of six seats will be held by current teachers of the charter school. Staff members that are also parents or guardians of Watershed School students and hold seats on the APC shall hold one of the teaching seats. Terms of office will be two years. The initial APC board terms will begin the date of nonprofit status determination.

The APC will function in an advisory role to the academic operations of The Watershed School. It will be responsible for overseeing the mission and vision of The Watershed School and provide an important link between the school and community. Supervising staff, budgetary responsibilities, and day-to-day operations of The Watershed School will be the responsibility of the principal teacher and staff.

The APC will select the principal teacher of The Watershed School.

School District Policies:

The FNSBSD, as the chartering agency for The Watershed School, makes its policies available on its web site and provides pertinent regulations and school rules and procedures in staff and student handbooks. The Watershed School will adopt those School District policies, except as waived in the contract between it and the FNSBSD, and operate in compliance with the terms of the contract. As employees of the School District, all employees of the school will be guided by School District personnel policies.

Staff Evaluation:

The principal teacher will evaluate classroom teachers and employees using the evaluation system specified by the FNSBSD and its union agreements. Agreements negotiated by the School District and the FEA and ESSA will determine evaluation dates and timelines. The teachers' contracts shall be issued in a manner following the negotiated agreements and current School District policy.

Student Competency Testing:

The Charter School will perform competency testing of its pupils as specified by the School District and in AS 14.03.075 and other state as

Section 5- Funding Allocation

(Appendix 5)

Section 6- Accounting

“A human being is part of the whole, called by us the universe. A part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison to us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures.”

Albert Einstein

The Watershed School Accounting Practices:

All Watershed School funds will be allocated for the educational purposes of the school and to those purposes required by The Watershed School. The Academic Policy Committee will require appropriate and careful fiscal planning and management and it will periodically examine the school's compliance with its policies and procedures and those of the School District.

The Watershed School Charter is responsible for certifying all payroll information to the District in compliance with timelines that allow for the sequential processing of all employees' data and the preparation of payroll checks consistent with FNSBSD requirements.

The Watershed School reserves the right to re-allocate funds from one line item to another as a result of budgetary changes. Any money not encumbered at the end of the physical year is automatically rolled over to the following year's operating budget.

The Watershed School Charter School agrees to maintain appropriate financial records in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations, and make such records available to the district for auditing purposes.

The Watershed School agrees to cooperate in the annual independent financial audit of district records.

Accounting Services Provided by FNSBSD:

The District provides appropriate assistance to The Watershed School Charter School in the areas of finance, budgeting, insurance, and instructional in-services to help ensure the most economical and sensible decision making process in the utilization of The Watershed School budget funds. The District assists with technical details of budgeting and accounting. All purchase orders, expenses and payroll are routed to the District for payment.

Proceeds from public funds, such as state foundational revenue, are forwarded directly to the District for credit to the Charter School account.

The District provides payroll functions for the Charter School similar to those provided for other employees of the District, including the preparation of W-2's and other reports that are required by state or federal law to be given to employees or filed with such agencies. '

Purchasing:

Goods and services purchased by The Watershed School Charter School shall be paid by purchase order in accordance with applicable FNSBSD policies and purchasing rules.

'The The Watershed School is obligated to obtain competitive bids for goods and services except as otherwise provided by FNSB School District policies.

Services to the District available at low, reduced or no cost are made available to The Watershed School. The FNSBSD will disseminate information about such goods or services available to the District to the Charter School.

Compliance with Current Accounting Laws:

The Charter School will comply with AS 14.17.910, Restrictions Governing Receipt and Expenditure of District Money, and conduct its business activities using the accounting principles, standards and procedures under the standards of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

All money, including state aid, will be received, held, allocated, and expended by the Charter School under applicable local law and state and federal constitutional provisions, statutes, and regulations, including those related to ethical standards and accounting principles.

Recording and Reporting Requirements:

As requested through this application, the School District will maintain and provide timely and accurate financial records to the Academic Policy Committee upon the receipt and disbursement of state aid, money acquired from local effort, and other money received or held by the Charter School.

Notification to School District on Grant or Other Supplemental Funding: Since the academic focus of the Charter School is on community and our local natural sciences, the Charter School will seek funds in addition to the School District allocation for its operations.

Payroll, Purchasing and Property Control:

The Charter School will utilize the services of the School District for payroll and purchasing. Property acquired by the Charter School will be appropriately recorded in a property control inventory ledger including cost, vendor, location, condition, and status. Annually a report will be prepared and submitted to the School District. Biannually, Charter School property will be physically inventoried. Property considered at the end of

its useful life, lost, stolen or damaged will be removed from the inventory list using School District approved procedures.

Student Fees:

The Watershed School may elect to charge fees to students for special events and special programs as established by School District Policy 1025. The Watershed School will appropriately account for and report any such fees. These fees will be retained by the Charter School and included in the annual budget. The school recognizes that application of such fees may impose a burden on the students and their families. Therefore, Charter School will exercise restraint in the requirement for such student fees and may make accommodations for those that qualify for free and reduced lunches.

Access to School Records:

All school records will be made accessible, physically and electronically, to the School District for the purposes of auditing, inventory control as well as student assessment during regular business hours throughout and following the close of each School District fiscal year.

Section 7- Facility

Location Requirements

The Watershed School will be in a location suitable to our specific curriculum needs. Minimum specific requirements include:

1. Natural area of trees and indigenous vegetation on or adjacent to school grounds
2. Near Borough bus line
3. Safe walking access to bike path(s)
4. Location central to the community with easy highway access from all directions of the valley

5. Safe walking access to sizeable natural block of public land for recreation and scientific study
6. Safe walking access to a waterway for scientific investigation
7. Near the University of Alaska not required, but preferable

An appropriate location is essential in order to support our place-based educational program. The building will provide a safe and appropriate environment.

The school facility will meet the following minimum requirements: According to the State Fire Marshall's office, the minimum allowable square footage for a building designated "E occupy" is 100 square feet per person. The Watershed School expects a minimum of 160 students and a maximum of 198 students. Based off of this figure, we would need a facility of approximately 20,000 square feet.

The building or renovation of a school facility will attempt to incorporate "Green Building" techniques and materials to the extent that our budget allows. "Green building" utilizes environmentally-friendly and recycled materials and designs buildings to maximize natural lighting, conserve water and energy, and ensure healthy air circulation. These techniques, when used in schools, have been shown to save considerable money long-term, and improve the health, performance, and retention of students and staff. These efforts are also consistent with the values and mission of the Watershed School.

Safety Codes and Inspections

The facility we lease will meet and maintain federal and state building, fire, health and safety requirements applicable to public buildings or other public schools in the district. The facility owner will have primary responsibility for proper maintenance of the leased building. The Charter School will ensure appropriate inspections are conducted and see that deficiencies are corrected to maintain code-compliance throughout the school years.

Facility Lease Arrangement

The Academic Policy Committee, with the help of legal assistance, will negotiate the lease of the facility with the building owner.

Maintenance and Janitorial Services

The Watershed School is budgeted for one custodian position. This position is responsible for coordinating the maintenance and janitorial services of the building.

Section 8- Staff

The Watershed School will provide an option to FNSBSD families that is presently unavailable. Due to the unique curriculum of our school, staffing assignments will be filled by uniquely qualified individuals. Employment at The Watershed School is contingent upon approval by the principal teacher with input from the school's hiring committee (made up of current certified teachers and two additional APC members). In addition, all new staff must agree to and sign an agreement of understanding regarding school philosophy and job requirements. This applies to all openings including new hires, voluntary and involuntary transfers.

All provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements apply to staff members at The Watershed School, unless otherwise waived in this charter. All teachers will be evaluated in an equivalent manner as all other teachers in the district.

The Watershed School will have 9.5 certified staff:

John Carlson- Principal Teacher/half time teacher, Currently FNSBSD Teacher

Jarrold Decker- Teacher, Currently FNSBSD Teacher

Sarah Masterman- Teacher, Currently FNSBSD Teacher

Dave Merrill- Teacher, Currently FNSBSD Teacher

Certified Teacher- job search pending charter approval

Certified Teacher- job search pending charter approval

Certified Teacher- job search pending charter approval

Certified Teacher- job search pending charter approval

Certified Teacher- half time position, job search pending charter approval

Resumes of teachers and job descriptions (Appendix 6)

Other staff members include seven classroom paraprofessionals, one custodian, one administrative secretary.

Section 9- Teacher-to-student ratio

Based upon an anticipated student population of 198 and a budgeted staff of nine teachers, we will have a ratio of 1:22. That ratio is reduced to 1:11 when teacher paraprofessionals budgeted are included in the formula. The teacher-to-student ratio will be kept as low as possible. In keeping with the philosophy of our school, our classroom instruction will be supported by enhanced by additional instructional resources that form integral parts of our curriculum. These resources include parents and other family members, community members, and others.

Section 10 - Number of Students Served

The Watershed School is a medium-sized charter school designed around an exciting thematic curriculum of the natural and social sciences. At 198 children, the size will be large enough to allow for a diverse spectrum of our community to take part, while small enough to allow all of our children to feel that they are a integral part of the school family. With our one to eleven instructor/child ratios, it will be intimate enough to meet individual student needs.

Section 11- Term of contract

The Watershed School requests a ten year approval of this charter application, commencing in the 2009/2010 school year and continuing through school year 2019/2020 school year. This charter will be renewable upon the FNSBSD's approval of an application during the ninth year of operation.

Section 12 – Termination Clause

At the termination of this contract, any unexpended or unobligated funds shall lapse to the General Fund balance.

If there is evidence of a breach of contract, FNSBSD or the legally designated representative of The Watershed School shall have a right to investigate this breach of contract and make a recommendation to the Board of Education regarding its remedy.

Section 13- Compliance of receipt of public money

The Charter School will comply with AS 14.17.910, Restrictions Governing Receipt and Expenditure of District Money, and conduct its business activities using the accounting principles, standards and procedures under the standards of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

All money, including state aid, will be received, held, allocated, and expended by the Charter School under applicable local law and state and federal constitutional provisions, statutes, and regulations, including those related to ethical standards and accounting principles.

Section 14- Other requirements or exemptions

Operational Powers

The Watershed School Charter School is responsible for its own operations within the limitations of any funding provided by the district and other revenues derived by the school consistent with law, and has authority to independently exercise, also consistent with federal and state law, the following powers (including such other powers as provided for elsewhere in this charter): Contract for goods and services, prepare a budget, select personnel, procure insurance, lease facilities for school purposes; purchase, lease, or rent furniture, equipment and supplies and accept and expend gifts, donations or grants

of any kind in accordance with such conditions prescribed by the donor as are consistent with law and not contrary to any terms of this Charter. The Watershed School is subject to applicable FNSB School District Policies relating to gifts and grants. Donations to The Watershed School become the property of the District at the termination of the contract, unless the terms and conditions of the donation provide otherwise.

Commitment to Nondiscrimination Practices

The Watershed School shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations, including, without limitation, the constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, age, race, color, gender, national origin, religion or ancestry.

Nonsectarian Status

The Watershed School agrees that it shall operate, in all respects, as a nonsectarian public school. The Charter School shall not be affiliated with any sectarian school or religious organization.

Special Education

The Watershed School Charter School delivers special education services that comply with School District policy and state and federal law.

Any student may attend The Watershed School. The Watershed School provides services for resource students and gifted and talented students. Other services, such as intensive resource, severely handicapped, and deaf, are provided by the School District.

Travel Policy

An important component of The Watershed School is the access to our community and natural areas. Our curriculum consists of weekly, if not daily excursions into the forests, fields, gardens, business centers, and neighborhoods of our region. During travel, we will attempt to have a person with a first aide certificate accompany the students. All teachers will create appropriate safety plans for use when on off-campus learning experiences. Parental permission slips will be collected for both daily and overnight learning activities. Health insurance statements and special medical treatment instructions will be collected.

For overnight trips, an itinerary will be given to each family, and they will be required to attend an information meeting.

The Watershed School agrees to notify the FNSB Risk Management Department of any activity or trip which carries a risk of injury or harm to students or staff greater than normally associated with travel or classroom activities. Notice of and such activity or trip shall be given to the FNSBSD and FNSB Risk Management Department not less than seven days in advance of the planned activity or trip.

Rights and a Public School

As a public school within FNSBSD, The Watershed School receives full access to District resources which are normally available to any other public school in the District. The district makes available films, books, software, art kits, reference materials, audio visual and other equipment as is normally provided to other public schools. The District provides Library Media Services to The Watershed School the same as it does for other schools in the District. We will have access to inner-school mail services and participate in the equipment surplus program. Staff members may attend classes for FNSBSD teachers and apply for special grants and programs the same as any the teacher in the District.

School Calendar

The Watershed School reserves the right to alter our calendar based on the needs if parents and our educational program. Our staff may attend any inservice, but are not required to attend those inservices if our school determines the subject to be not applicable to our curriculum and school. Our staff will attend any inservice mandated by the state and federal government.

The Watershed School operates under a quarter system, with students attending the required 180 days.

Waivers

The Charter School Act permits charter schools to operate free from specified state and local rules and regulations in order to effect innovative educational reform. The Watershed School requires that it be permitted to operate free from those specified policies. Our school will operate in compliance with all other district policies and regulations and all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations, unless specifically waived. Waivers from specific District policies or regulations may be requested by The Watershed School by submitting a written request to the Board of Education. The request shall include the reasons the Charter School is in need of or desires the waiver. Waivers of the policies and regulations may be granted only to the extent permitted by state law. In the event the District policy or regulation from which the Charter School is requesting a waiver is required by state regulation, the District agrees to jointly request such a waiver from the State Board.

The waivers requested by The Watershed School of Natural Sciences are subject to the following assumptions:

1. The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Board of Education policies, and their accompanying regulations, may be waived by the FNSB Board of Education or by the contract between the Charter School and the Board of Education.
2. By not receiving a waiver for a Board policy or regulation, it is understood that the governing board of the Charter School has adopted the policy or regulation as its own. Compliance will be consistent with federal and state law and the contract between the Charter School and the Board of Education. It is further understood that the premises, services, resources, personnel, students, etc. contained in the policy or regulation pertain to Charter School premises, services, personnel, students, etc. unless it is otherwise specifically agreed to by the Board of Education. Subsequent changes to such policies and regulations also apply to the Charter School unless waived by the Board of Education.
3. Waivers are requested for three reasons: 1) to delegate governing authority from the FNSB Board of Education to The Watershed School Academic Policy Committee; 2) to change the substance of a policy or regulation; 3) to delete a policy or regulation.

Waivers from the FEA negotiated agreement.

401 Transfer and Reassignment

603 Preservice University/College Students

Rationale:

Teachers on our Academic Policy Committee are taking teaching positions and the principal teacher position in the school. Any teachers who transfer to The Watershed School will be capable and willing to implement job descriptions specific to our school, including, curriculum, teaching responsibilities, philosophy, mission, and general program which are unique to The Watershed School. These specifics of our teaching assignments applies also to preservice University/College students

510 Preparation Period

Rationale:

Due to scheduling demands specific to our school we may schedule elementary preparation periods for daily blocks longer than 60 consecutive minutes and schedule secondary preparation periods for daily blocks longer than 100 consecutive minutes.

Waivers from the ESSA negotiated agreement:

8.1d Vacancies

Rationale:

Any teacher aides, secretaries, and custodial staff who transfer to The Watershed School will be capable and willing to implement job descriptions specific to our school, including job responsibilities, philosophy, mission, and general program which are unique to The Watershed School.

Waivers from FNSBSD Board Policy:

310 Administrative Organization

325 Line and Staff Relations (Superintendent)

330 Administrative Committees (Superintendent's approval)

- 340 Principals (Policy Implementation)
- 341 Handbooks (Superintendent's approval)
- 1143 Principal's Advisory Committee

Rationale:

Our school has its own school administrative organization and administration team. Our Academic Policy Committee will function in an advisory role to the academic operations of The Watershed School. It will be responsible for overseeing the mission and vision of The Watershed School and provide an important link between the school and community. The teaching staff of The Watershed School is responsible for developing administrative policies specific to The Watershed School. Supervising staff, carrying out administrative policies, budgetary responsibilities, and day-to-day operations of The Watershed School will be the responsibility of the principal teacher.

- 900 Curriculum and Instruction Philosophy
- 921 School Calendar
- 940 Curriculum Development
- 941 K-12 Student Assessment
- 955 Student Activities (Fundraising, travel, competition)
- 960 Instructional Arrangements
- 970 Instructional Materials
- 971 Selection of Instructional Materials
- 972 Request for Reevaluation of Instructional Materials
- 973 Disposal of Outdated Instructional Material
- 978 Elementary Grading
- 979 Junior High Grading

Rationale:

The Watershed School is waiving these policies according to the Alaska State Charter School Law which states that charter schools are exempt from District curriculum and scheduling policies. The Watershed School has its own school day and instructional year which provides time and flexibility in organizing scheduling and class sizes. The Charter School has developed its own curriculum and schedules and class sizes. The Charter School has its own policies concerning

educational materials, and has its own assessment, grading system, and reporting system. The Charter School will have its own policy concerning student activities.

1123.5 School Publications

1154 Parent Involvement

Rationale:

The Charter School has its own parent involvement and communication policies as stated in the Charter.

1231 Student Teaching and Internships

1250 External Educational Research in Schools

Rationale:

The school will coordinate its teacher interns and student teachers with the University of Alaska Fairbanks or other appropriate institutions. The Watershed School will be responsible for screening and supervising research projects in the school.

741 Building Security

742 Use of Building

1160 Use of District Facilities

Rationale:

The Charter School will not be housed in a School District facility and will be responsible for its own policy on building usage. Routine building and maintenance services will be performed or contracted by The Watershed School.

1032.1 Establishment of Boundaries

1032.2 Attendance Out of Transportation Zone

Rationale:

We are a choice school. It is open to all students in the District. Students with special needs may be transported according to state and federal regulations.

1048.7 Firearms and Other Guns

1048.72 Weapons other than Firearms or Guns

1049 Alcohol and Other Drug Violations

Rationale:

As there is a limit on the number of students who may attend The Watershed School and likely will have waiting list, any violation of these policies, after due process, will be grounds for our school to bar the student involved from its programs and facilities.

1043 Student Involvement in Decision Making

1044 School Clubs

1045 Student Behavior

1045.2 Student handbooks

1063.2 Homebound Instruction

1074 Contests and Awarding of Prizes

Rationale:

Although incorporating the bulk of FNSBSD Student Behavioral Standards, The Watershed School may have its own policies concerning student participation, involvement and behavioral expectations.

Section 15- Risk Management

To the extent permitted by its policies currently in force, the FNSBSD will arrange for Comprehensive General Liability, Errors and Omission, Blanket Occupational Accident, and Excess Workers Compensation Insurance Coverage to extend to The Watershed School, its site, the Academic Policy Committee and employees, and school activities.

The Watershed School will purchase and maintain a primary general liability policy of \$1,000,000 for each occurrence and \$1,000,000 general aggregate. The Watershed School agrees to comply with all state and federal regulations considering risk management. This includes the prompt reporting of any and all accidents, pending or threatened claims, filing of timely notices of claims, cooperating fully with the FNSBSD in the defense of any claims and complying with the defense and reimbursement provisions of the District's applicable insurance policies. The Watershed School shall neither compromise, settle, negotiate, nor otherwise affect any disposition of potential claims asserted against it without FNSBSD's prior written approval.

Indemnification

The Watershed School agrees to indemnify, hold harmless and defend the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, its board members, employees, and agents from any liability arising through the actions and inactions of the Charter School, its Academic Policy Committee, teachers, employees, volunteers and students.

Section 16- Breach of Contract

If there is evidence of a breach of contract, the FNSBSD administration or the legally designated representative of The Watershed School shall have a right to investigate this breach of contract and make a recommendation to the Board of Education regarding the remedy.

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Appendix 1

Rules in Schools

Rules in Schools

“In using their language to teach children to live by the rules, many teachers find it useful to think in terms of the “three Rs” (*Rules in School*, pg 65). The “three Rs” are:

- 1) Reinforcing language
 - Used when giving positive feedback rather than general praise.
 - A child’s specific actions should be named.
 - Avoid generic statements of broad praise such as “good job.” Good job doing what? Be specific.
 - Don’t use other children as examples to get desired behaviors out of kids. This can cause resentment.
- 2) Reminding language
 - This can be useful as a prompt to get children to use self-management skills previously learned before the fact.
 - Very useful to help children maintain behavior when they are faltering.
 - At this stage the teacher asks the child to name or show an alternate behavior
- 3) Redirecting language
 - This comes into play when a child is clearly not self directing his or her own behavior
 - We have moved beyond the reminding stage and now the adult must “firmly, clearly, and matter-of-factly” (keep the emotion out of the mix) tell the child to stop the unacceptable behavior.
 - Spell out what behaviors the child should do instead
 - We are past asking the child to name or show an acceptable behavior. Now the adult names the acceptable behavior.
 - Though these steps follow a three-step sequence, certain behaviors result in going immediately to redirecting

In regards to professional and constructive language patterns, The Watershed will follow these ten language tips (*Rules in School*, pg 71-76).

- 1) Be direct
- 2) Pay attention to the small things- what’s really going on? Have you missed something? How’s the tone of your voice?
- 3) Keep it simple and clear

- 4) Be firm when needed
- 5) Don't ask a question when you mean to give a command
- 6) Expect the best
- 7) Invite cooperation
- 8) Be sincere
- 9) Pay attention to tone, volume, and body language
- 10) KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR

Appendix 2

Rites of Passage

The Watershed School

Annual Rites of Passage

(these are the result of a group brainstorming session- the sky is the limit!)

Kindergarten- Pond Celebration!

- Games, exploration, hiking
- Parents are served dinner in outdoor picnic

First Grade- A Night in the Woods

- Day “Camping” Trip (close to home/ town)
- 3 mile hike
- scavenger hunts
- animal watching
- animal tracking

Second Grade- River Adventure

- Sternwheeler trip to Howard Luke’s camp
- Overnight in cabins/wall tents
- Focus to enjoy the boreal forest with someone that has lived their life close in contact
- Story-telling
- Still focus is getting kids to connect with the outdoors

Third Grade- Camp Chena

- Overnight Camp trip on upper Chena
- Still don’t get too scientific-focus is still on gaining comfort level in the wilderness

Fourth grade- Camp White Mountain Wilderness

- 3 day-two night trip
- make use of Lee’s Cabin or another Chena Rec area cabin for kitchen
- This will be the first trip with heavy emphasis on natural science content

Fifth Grade- Sourdough Camp

- Gold Miner Pioneer reenactment in wilderness setting

- Significance prep weeks ahead to prepare the kids for this trip
- Focus- how sourdoughs dealt with surviving in the wilds of Alaska at the turn of the century

Sixth grade option 1- Chilkoot Trail Camp

- Can this be done in April- Maybe? At least on the lower altitudes- what other venues? Something in Skagway... maybe Bennett Lake?
- Imagine the themes that could be worked on the month(s) ahead of time
- Or....

Sixth Grade option 2- River Rats!

- Take a barge trip to Tanana- learn the ways of the river

Seventh Grade- Trail Savers Camp

- Southcentral trail maintenance project and backpack trip (something close to the ocean would be ideal as our kids will need direct contact to learn this ecosystem that is so far away from the Tanana Valley

Eight Grade- Speaking for the forest!

- Kids travel to Juneau to give a presentation to the legislature on nature education in public schools
- Observe legislature in session

Appendix 3

Application



The Watershed School

Street Address
Fairbanks, AK 997____
(907) ____-____

ENROLLMENT APPLICATION 2009-2010

Student Information (Please print clearly in ink)

Last Name First Name Middle Male/Female
Circle One Date of Birth

Street Address City State Zip Code

Last school/program attended: _____ Grade Entering 2009-10 school year _____

Siblings

Names of siblings _____ Grades for 2009-2010 School year _____

In order to meet your child's educational needs, answer the following questions:

Does the student have an active IEP? Yes No (If yes, please attach a copy of the IEP to this application)
Does the student have an active 504 plan? Yes No (If yes, please attach a copy of the 504 plan to this application)

Parent/Guardian Information (Please print clearly in ink)

Last Name First Name Middle

Street Address City State Zip Code

Home Phone Number Work Phone Number Cell Phone Number E-mail Address

Last Name First Name Middle

Street Address City State Zip Code

Home Phone Number Work Phone Number Cell Phone Number E-mail Address

Signature of Parent/Guardian

I certify that the information on this application is true and correct. I understand that the Watershed School can deny or revoke my child's admission/enrollment if any information is found to be incorrect or inaccurate. I also understand that the Watershed school is a school of choice, and by signing this application, upon admission I agree to learn and abide by all policies and procedures outlined in student and parent hand books.

Signature

Date

2009-2010 School Year Application Deadline: March ____, 2009

This application must be filled out completely and accurately by a parent with custodial authority or by a legal guardian. Incomplete applications will not be processed. Please hand deliver applications to the Watershed School. A separate application must be submitted for each child in the family.

Appendix 4

Intent to Reenroll

Insert Date

Dear Watershed School Parents:

Please list your current Watershed School student(s) and indicate whether they plan to return to Watershed School next year. Also, list any siblings (including those still on the waiting list) who plan to attend Watershed School in the future.

Please note the Watershed School policy adopted on 3/1/08 on siblings:

The Watershed School has a sibling preference policy. Siblings are defined as legal, permanent, immediate family members who are living at home.

Kindergarten cut off date: _____, **2009** (child must be five on or before this date)

Student/Sibling Name	Grade in 08/09	Return in 09/10	
		☐ YES	☐ NO
		☐ YES	☐ NO
		☐ YES	☐ NO
		☐ YES	☐ NO
		☐ YES	☐ NO

Parent / Legal Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO THE OFFICE BY **ENTER DATE 22**
THANK YOU

Appendix 5

Budget

**ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING
FY2008-09**

			<u>Variables</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Variables:				
FTE Enrollment				198.000
Is program funded as a separate school per statute (Yes or No)				Yes
ADM if funded as separate school				269.940
ADM if funded as included in largest school (per statute)				166.320
Estimated State Foundation Funding				
FTE Enrollment				198.000
ADM as adjusted for school size per above category				269.940
ADM as adjusted for district cost factor	Cost factor at --->		5.50%	284.787
ADM as adjusted for special needs (*1.2)				341.744
Adjusted ADM				341.744
Base student allocation	BSA at --->		5,480	\$5,480
Estimated State Foundation Funding				\$1,872,757
Quality schools funding (adjusted ADM x \$16)				\$5,468
Total Estimated State Per Capita Funding				\$1,878,225
Less:	Indirect rate at --->		6.42%	\$(113,308)
Total State per capita funding				\$1,764,917
SUMMARY (Rounded)				
Initial Discretionary Budget Allocation				\$1,608,860
Initial Special Education Allocation	% set aside --->		50.0%	156,060
Total Charter School Budget				\$1,764,920

School Size Table:

Base =	39.6		
10.00		39.60	
20.00	1.62	39.60	20
30.00	1.49	55.80	30
75.00	1.27	122.85	75
150.00	1.08	218.10	150
250.00	0.97	326.10	250
400.00	0.92	471.60	400
750.00	0.84	793.60	750

The Watershed School Budget – 198 Students

Salaries	2009/2010
9.5 Teachers	522,500
11 Support Staff	242,000
Extra Duty	0
OT and Shift Differential	
Substitutes	18000
Temporary Support	2000
Total Salaries-	<u>784,500</u>
Fringe Benefits	<u>321,115</u>
Services-	
Professional and Technical	6,500
Legal	3,000
Communications	4,000
Insurance and Bonding	13,000
Travel	0
Mileage	0
Student Travel	15,000
Electricity	15,000
Heating	22,860
Water/Sewer	3,000
Garbage	3,000
Purchased Services	10,000
Rentals	324,000
Building Repairs	1,000
Equipment Repairs	2,000
Total Services-	<u>422,360</u>
Supplies-	<u>46,000</u>
Equipment-	<u>34,085</u>
Other-	
Awaiting Budget	
Total Other-	
Program Total	1,608,860
Initial Discretionary Budget	
Allocation based on 198 students	1,608,860

9.5 teachers
9 full time aides
1 administrative secretary
1 full time custodian

**ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING
FY2008-09**

			<u>Variables</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Variables:				
FTE Enrollment				178.000
Is program funded as a separate school per statute (Yes or No)				Yes
ADM if funded as separate school				248.340
ADM if funded as included in largest school (per statute)				149.520
Estimated State Foundation Funding				
FTE Enrollment				178.000
ADM as adjusted for school size per above category				248.340
ADM as adjusted for district cost factor	Cost factor at --->	5.50%		261.999
ADM as adjusted for special needs (*1.2)				314.398
Adjusted ADM				314.398
Base student allocation	BSA at --->	5,480		\$5,480
Estimated State Foundation Funding				\$1,722,903
Quality schools funding (adjusted ADM x \$16)				\$5,030
Total Estimated State Per Capita Funding				\$1,727,934
Less:	Indirect rate at --->	6.42%		\$(104,241)
Total State per capita funding				\$1,623,693
SUMMARY (Rounded)				
Initial Discretionary Budget Allocation				\$1,480,110
Initial Special Education Allocation	% set aside --->	50.0%		143,580
Total Charter School Budget				\$1,623,690

School Size Table:

Base =	39.6		
10.00		39.60	
20.00	1.62	39.60	20
30.00	1.49	55.80	30
75.00	1.27	122.85	75
150.00	1.08	218.10	150
250.00	0.97	326.10	250
400.00	0.92	471.60	400
750.00	0.84	793.60	750

The Watershed School Budget – 178 Students

Salaries **2009/2010**

9.5 Teachers	522,500
7 Support Staff	154,000
Extra Duty	0
OT and Shift Differential	
Substitutes	18000
Temporary Support	2000
Total Salaries-	<u>696,500</u>

Fringe Benefits **274,475**

Services-

Professional and Technical	6,500
Legal	3,000
Communications	4,000
Insurance and Bonding	13,000
Travel	0
Mileage	0
Student Travel	13,000
Electricity	15,000
Heating	22,860
Water/Sewer	3,000
Garbage	3,000
Purchased Services	15,000
Rentals	324,000
Building Repairs	1,000
Equipment Repairs	2,000
Total Services-	<u>425,360</u>

Supplies- **50,500**

Equipment- **33,275**

Other-

Awaiting Budget
Total Other-

Program Total **1,480,110**

Initial Discretionary Budget
Allocation based on 178
students **1,480,110**

9.5 teachers
5 full time aides
1 administrative secretary
1 full time custodian

**ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING
FY2008-09**

			<u>Variables</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Variables:				
FTE Enrollment				155.000
Is program funded as a separate school per statute (Yes or No)				Yes
ADM if funded as separate school				223.500
ADM if funded as included in largest school (per statute)				130.200
Estimated State Foundation Funding				
FTE Enrollment				155.000
ADM as adjusted for school size per above category				223.500
ADM as adjusted for district cost factor	Cost factor at --->		5.50%	235.793
ADM as adjusted for special needs (*1.2)				282.951
Adjusted ADM				282.951
Base student allocation	BSA at --->		5,480	\$5,480
Estimated State Foundation Funding				\$1,550,571
Quality schools funding (adjusted ADM x \$16)				\$4,527
Total Estimated State Per Capita Funding				\$1,555,099
Less:	Indirect rate at --->		6.42%	\$(93,814)
Total State per capita funding				\$1,461,285
SUMMARY (Rounded)				
Initial Discretionary Budget Allocation				\$1,332,070
Initial Special Education Allocation	% set aside --->		50.0%	129,210
Total Charter School Budget				\$1,461,280

School Size Table:

Base =	39.6		
10.00		39.60	
20.00	1.62	39.60	20
30.00	1.49	55.80	30
75.00	1.27	122.85	75
150.00	1.08	218.10	150
250.00	0.97	326.10	250
400.00	0.92	471.60	400
750.00	0.84	793.60	750

The Watershed School Budget – 155Students

Salaries	2009/2010
9.5 Teachers	522,500
3 Support Staff	66,000
Extra Duty	0
OT and Shift Differential	
Substitutes	18000
Temporary Support	2000
Total Salaries-	<u>608,500</u>
 Fringe Benefits	 <u>227,835</u>
 Services-	
Professional and Technical	6,500
Legal	3,000
Communications	4,000
Insurance and Bonding	13,000
Travel	0
Mileage	0
Student Travel	15,000
Electricity	15,000
Heating	22,860
Water/Sewer	3,000
Garbage	3,000
Purchased Services	10,000
Rentals	324,000
Building Repairs	1,000
Equipment Repairs	2,000
Total Services-	<u>427,360</u>
 Supplies-	 <u>41,000</u>
 Equipment-	 <u>27,375</u>
 Other-	
Awaiting Budget	
Total Other-	
 Program Total	 1,332,070
Initial Discretionary Budget Allocation based on 155 students	 1,332,070

9.5 teachers
1 full time aide
1 administrative secretary
1 full time custodian

Appendix 6

Teacher Resumes and Job Descriptions

JOHN STEPHEN CARLSON

360 Acadia Dr
Fairbanks, AK 99712
Home Phone: (907) 457-2144
johncarlson@gci.net

Education:

B.S. Degree - 1979, Northern Michigan University:
Major: Mental Retardation, Minor: Psychology
Certification: Elementary K-6, Special Education K-12:
Masters Degree - 2000, University of Alaska Fairbanks:
Major: Cross Cultural Education
Type B Administrative Certificate - 2005, Principal K-8, 7-12

Employment:

- *1994 August to Present* - Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
Teacher – Special Education Resource, ELP
- *2002 September to Present* – University of Alaska Fairbanks
Adjunct Instructor: Ed 681- Place Based Education; ED 630- Curriculum Development
- *1992 August to 1994 May* - Southwest Region School District, Togiak, AK
Teacher - Grades Preschool through 12 Learning Disabled, Speech and Language Delayed, Preschool Disabled, Physically Handicapped, and Emotionally Impaired Students
Coach – Head Cross Country, Assistant Wrestling
- *1993 September to May 1994* - Togiak Traditional Council, Togiak, AK
Program Director - Togiak Educational Reindeer Herd
1988 August to 1992 June - Bark River-Harris Schools, Harris, MI
- *1988 August to 1992 June* – Bark River-Harris School District, Bark River, MI
Teacher - Grades 9-12 Learning Disabled, and Mentally Impaired Students
Coach – Head Track
- *1984 August to 1988 June* - Bend-LaPine School District, Bend, OR
Teacher - Grades 9-12 Learning Disabled, and Mentally Impaired Students
Coach – Head Track and Cross Country
- *1981 August to 1984 June* - Sultan High School, Sultan, WA
Teacher - Grades 8 -12 Learning Disabled Students and 8th Grade Math
Coach – Head Track and Cross Country
- *1981 June to 1981 August* - CETA, Seattle WA
Director, Counselor - Project for the Community Services for the Handicapped
- *1981 March to 1981 May* - Woodway High School, Edmonds, WA
Teacher - 12-19 year old Mentally Impaired Students
- *1980 January to 1980 December* – Gallup, New Mexico
Teacher – Grades 10-12 Learning Disabled Children

INTERESTS:

Community Service, Community Planning, Running, Hiking, Canoeing, Cross Country Skiing

HONORS AND AFFILIATIONS:

2006-present Chairman, The Watershed School
2003 - 2004- Anne Wien Elementary School Title One Planning Committee
2000 - 2004 Chairman, FNSB Trails Advisory Commission
1998 - 2004 Director, Noyes Slough Action Committee
2003 Presenter, National Environmental Educator's Conference
1993 + 1994 Presenter, Alaska State Special Education Conference
1992 - 1993 Regional President, Council for Exceptional Children - Upper Michigan
1991 - 1992 Coordinator, Cultural Exchange Program - Hannahville Indian School.

REFERENCES:

My present teaching references are available upon request from Fairbanks North Star Borough School District 520 Fifth Avenue Fairbanks, AK 99701. Feel free to contact School Principal, Kathie Cook (451-1700), for personal references.

Certification:

Alaska State Elementary Education (K-8) - Expiration: July 2010

Education:

Master's of Education - Curriculum and Instruction - Expected Date: December 2008

University of Alaska Fairbanks GPA: 4.00

Bachelor's of Arts - Anthropology, May 1999 (cum laude)

University of Alaska Fairbanks GPA: 3.81

Teaching Experience:

Weller Elementary (Grade 3) August 2007 - Present

- Developed and instructed units and lessons in all content areas of elementary curriculum
- Co-coordinated school-wide science fair.
-

Salcha Elementary School (Multi-Age: Grades 3-4), Salcha, Alaska, August 2005 – May 2007

- Developed and instructed lessons in all content areas of elementary instruction.
- Assisted in creating schedule change allowing for more focused mathematics instruction.
- Initiated school's Coho Salmon Incubation Project in conjunction with Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Rocky Mountain School (Multi-Age: Grades 4-6), Goodnews Bay, Alaska, August 2002 – May 2005

- Taught at Title I school in a rural Yup'ik (Alaska Native) community
- Developed and instructed units and lessons in all content areas of elementary curriculum
- Instructed high school and junior high level classes in math, reading, and writing
- Assisted in developing and revising School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- Coached junior high co-ed and high school boys' basketball teams
- Represented district at 2004 Alaska Quality Schools Initiative Winter Symposium
- Volunteered as Site Technician for two years

Lower Kuskokwim School District's Alaska Roadside Science (Teacher Leader - Junior High) June-July 2004

- Assisted in leading and supervising groups of 16 rural students on two-week science field trips on Alaska road system
- Developed and taught hands-on science lessons, outdoor recreation and camping skills
- Organized meetings and presentations with professional scientists

Student Teaching/Intern Experience:

Ladd Elementary (Grade 3), Fairbanks, Alaska, August 2001 – May 2002

- Conducted inquiry research project examining instruction strategies for student with special needs
- Assumed full responsibilities of classroom teacher for two-week student teaching assignment
- Co-organized and supervised climbing club for first and second grade students

Other Work Experience:

Research Technician, Oral History Program, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1998-2001

- Conducted oral history interviews
- Designed interactive, web-based CD-ROM programs
- Presented projects to local and rural communities and schools

Skills:

Web page design, photo scanning and manipulation, video recording and editing, word processing, public speaking, utilization of Microsoft Office software, cross-cultural communication, outdoor/survival skills, certified in CPR and First Aid.

Volunteer Experience:

Member, Wilderness Search and Rescue, October 2005 - present

Awards/Honors:

UAF Anthropology Student of the Year, 1998
Golden Key National Honor Society, 1998

Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, 1998
Chancellor's List, 1998

Sarah Swift Masterman

(907) 457-3792
ssmasterman@hotmail.com

P.O. Box 296
Ester, AK 99725

RELEVANT EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

From 9/07 **Science Explorations Teacher, Barnette Magnet School,**
To Present **Fairbanks North Star Borough School District**

- Teach science explorations to students in 4th – 8th grade.
- Fairbanks representative on Science Consortium Executive Council, January 2008 to the present

From 10/05 **ERII Reading Tutor, University Park School**
To 8/07 **Fairbanks North Star Borough School District**

- Tutored students in 1st – 3rd grade who had been identified as needing help learning to read.

From 8/04 **Adult Education Teacher, Adult Basic Education and English as a Second**
To 11/04 **Language Program, Great Basin College, Elko, NV**

- Taught an intermediate level reading and writing course to English Language Learners and Adult Basic Education students.
- Tutored adult basic education and adult ELL students in English and math.

From 9/00 **Volunteer English Teacher, Centro Educativo 83006, Baños del Inca, Peru**
To 5/01

- Taught beginning English lessons to 5th and 6th grade students in a Peruvian public school. Was responsible for obtaining or creating materials and teaching lessons as well as all classroom management during lessons

From 8/92 **Teacher, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District**
To 5/00

- Taught 3rd and 4th grade at Ladd Elementary, 7th grade science at North Pole M.S., Marine Biology, Human Physiology, and Biology at West Valley H.S. and 7th grade Science, English and Reading at Tanana M.S.
- Participant in POLARIS (Project on Leading Alaska Restructuring in Science), a four-year program to effect comprehensive science education reform in schools from Kenai to Fairbanks.
- Organized Family Science Nights at Ladd Elementary and science fairs at Tanana Middle School
- Taught a two day inservice on marine science and science teaching methods for the Pribilof Island School District in 1996, sponsored by Alaska Science Consortium and Alaska Sea Week.
- Alaska Science Teachers Association secretary 1994- 1996
- District Teacher Representative for Alaska Science Consortium in 1994
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Science Consortium Steering Committee 1993-96
- Received Alaska Science and Technology Foundation Grant in 1993 for “Using Radio Telemetry to Study Raven Movement and Behavior,” a project in which 7th grade students worked with local scientists to monitor raven behavior and movements in the Fairbanks area
- Coached cross-country skiing at Ryan M.S., Tanana M.S. and North Pole M.S.. Assistant track coach at Tanana M.S.

Summer 1994 **Teacher Leader, Science Consortium Basic Institute in Sitka, AK**

- With co-leader gathered, organized and presented instruction on science teaching methods to K-12 teachers from around Alaska.

From 8/90 **Science and Math Teacher (Grades 5-12), Adak Region School District**

To 5/92

- In addition to teaching duties sponsored Science Fair, Science Olympiad and Science Club. Member of Middle School Faculty Advisory Committee

EDUCATION:

From 1989 To Present	Continuing course work at the University of Alaska Spanish, Alaska Science Consortium, "Math: A Way of Thinking," Alaska Writing Consortium Invitational Institute among many others. GPA 4.0
From 2000 To 2004	Continuing course work at Great Basin College and University of Nevada, Reno Art courses, German, and Educ. 445 "Teaching ESL Students in K-12 Classrooms" GPA 4.0
From 8/88 To 7/89	Teachers for Alaska Program, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Student taught 18 weeks in Platinum, AK GPA 4.0
From 9/83 To 6/87	Carleton College, Northfield, MN, BA in Biology, June 1987 Honors: Magna Cum Laude, Honors in Biology, Distinction in Biology, Sigma Xi, Certificate of Advance Study in German Language and Literature, Special Team Award –Cross-country Skiing GPA 3.5

David Weld Merrill

806 Lancaster Drive
Fairbanks, Alaska 99712
(907) 451 - 1700 (W) (907) 474 - 3659 (H)

Certification

State of Alaska Type A – Regular Classroom K-8 *August, 1998 to Present*

Professional Experience

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District *August, 1998 to Present*
Fairbanks, Alaska

Classroom Teacher 3rd or 4th Grade Ladd Elementary

September, 1996 to July, 1998

Experience

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District *September, 2000 to May, 2006*
Fairbanks, Alaska

Mentor Teacher for UAF Interns

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District *November to March, 2003 to 2008*
Fairbanks, Alaska

Ski Club Coordinator Ladd Elementary

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District *November & April, 2002 to*
Fairbanks, Alaska *November & April, 2004*

Climbing Club Coordinator Ladd Elementary

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District *October to December, 1997 to 2000*
Fairbanks, Alaska

Basketball Coach Ladd Elementary

Bristol Bay Borough School District *January, 1998 to April, 1998*
Naknek, Alaska

Student Teacher 1st Grade Naknek Elementary

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District *August, 1997 to December, 1997*
Fairbanks, Alaska

Methods Student 6th Grade Ladd Elementary

Education

University of Alaska Fairbanks *2003 to 2007*
Fairbanks of Alaska
Masters of Education - Curriculum and Development

University of Alaska Fairbanks *1996 to 1998*
Fairbanks of Alaska
Teacher Certification Program

Bowdoin College *1992 to 1996*
Brunswick, Maine
Bachelor of Arts – Cum Laude

SUSAN M. CAMPBELL

1042 Eldorado Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709
(907) 474-0362
scampbell@northstar.k12.ak.us

EDUCATION

Bemidji State University - Bemidji, Minnesota
Bachelor of Fine Arts: Ceramics, 1984, Summa Cum Laude
Bachelor of Science: Elementary Education, 1980, Summa Cum Laude
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Deaf Education-Sign Language, 1978
University of Northern Colorado - Greeley
Deaf Education-General Education, 1975-76
Northland Collage - Ashland Wisconsin, 1974-75
Oshkosh West High School - Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 1974

WORK EXPERIENCE

2005-present **3rd Grade Teacher:** Anne Wien Elementary School, Fairbanks, Alaska
2000-2002 **Intermediate Multiage Teacher, grades 4-5-6:** Anne Wien Elementary School
1999 - 2000 **6th Grade Teacher:** Anne Wien Elementary School, Fairbanks, Alaska
Jan.1998 - Dec.1998 **International Teaching Fellowship Exchange Teacher to Australia**
Multiage Teacher, grades 3-4: Surfside Primary School, Ocean Grove, Victoria
1995 - 1998 **6th Grade Teacher:** Anne Wien Elementary School, Fairbanks, Alaska
1993 - 1995 **4th Grade Teacher:** Joy Elementary School, Fairbanks, Alaska
1990 - 1993 **5th Grade Teacher:** Joy Elementary School, Fairbanks, Alaska
1989 - 1990 **Substitute Teacher, K-6:** FNSBSD
1987 - 1989 **Multiage Teacher, grades 1-2:** Prescott Elementary School, Lincoln, Nebraska
1986 - 1987 **Hearing Impaired Kindergarten Teacher:** Prescott Elementary School
1985 - 1986 **Hearing Impaired Interpreter:** Bemidji Public Schools, Bemidji, Minnesota
1984 - 1985 **Head Start Preschool Teacher:** Bemidji, Minnesota
1984 - 1986 **Advocate:** Northwoods Shelter for Battered Women, Bemidji, Minnesota
1981 - 1982 **Title 1/English as a Second Language:** Lincoln Model School, Staples, MN
1979, 81, 82 **Head Counselor/Supervisor:** Camp Thunderbird, Bemidji MN. (June-Sept.)
1980 - 1981 **Preschool Teacher:** Bloomington Child Development Center, Bloomington, MN
1980 **Environmental Education and Recreation Coordinator:** Wilderness Canoe
Base, Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota

SPECIAL TRAINING/AWARDS (with the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District)

ETEP Mentor Teacher (Elementary Teacher Education Partnership: University of Alaska-
Fairbanks and Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD), 2001-02
FNSBSD Math Cadre 2001-2002
Science Fair School Coordinator, 1991-2002, Joy School and Anne Wien School,
FNSBSD Science Fair Over-judging Team, 1994-2008
Strategic Planning Site Facilitator for Anne Wien Elementary, 1999- 2000
BP Teacher of Excellence Award, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, 1996

REFERENCES: On file with Fairbanks North Star Borough School District- Human Resources



The Watershed School	
<i>Job Title:</i> Principal Teacher	
<i>Supervisor:</i> Academic Policy Committee	<i>Classification:</i> Certified (FEA)
<i>Days/Months:</i> 9 Months	<i>Grade:</i> Per FEA negotiated agreement

General Responsibilities: The Principal Teacher provides leadership, management, and supervision for a high quality learning environment in a place-based charter school implemented in cooperation with the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District in a manner consistent with the law, board policies, and administrative regulations, as stipulated in the charter for the Watershed School. In addition, the Principal Teacher administers all phases of school operation and curricular offerings, as well as provides supervision for staff and students and instructs students in areas of expertise.

Principal Teacher Duties:

Leadership:

Promotes shared academic vision with parents, students and other community members. Facilitates teamwork and a positive working environment with school teaching and support staff. Oversees compliance with stated goals, established priorities, and develops action plans to accomplish The Watershed School mission. Provides leadership in promoting strong expectations of high student achievement and communicates effective instructional practices.

Curriculum:

Understands and facilitates implementation of Alaska cultural and content standards aligned with place-based curriculum pedagogy. Familiar with implementation of project-based curriculum models. Uses current principles, concepts, and skills to assist staff to deliver place-based curriculum. Successfully implements assessment policy compatible with The Watershed School's mission and goals and state and federal requirements.

Teaching Position: Teaches a student caseload as required. Meets all expectations required of other teachers in the building.

Student Support:

Acts to ensure safety and security of students, personnel, and school property within the school facility, on school grounds, and in school-related activities off school property. Coordinates programs and services that promote student safety, growth, development, and responsibility in a manner consistent with the stated school's vision.

Staffing:

Coordinates with FNSBSD in the interview and selection process to identify and recommend quality personnel for hire. Assigns staff appropriately and responsible for staff evaluation.

Communications:

Recognizes and uses varied methods to communicate effectively with the school community and local media. Acts as a liaison between the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District and The Watershed School.

Laws, Policies, Procedures, and Good Business Practice:

Administers and acts in accordance with federal and state laws, Board/APC policies, and regulations. Works within district policies, procedures, and directives.

Coordinates with FNSBSD administration for procurement of goods & supplies.

Coordinates with district special education program to implement processes required for district's compliance with special education and civil rights laws and regulations.

Knows, understands, and acts in accordance with the terms of negotiated agreements for certified and classified employees.

Administers discipline according to Watershed School policies, district policies, and regulations in a fair and consistent manner.

Social, Cultural, Political, and Economic Factors:

Recognizes and acts with understanding of the cultural, social, racial, political, and economic forces that influence a positive school environment.

Parents & Community:

Actively solicits the involvement of diverse family and community members in all facets of the school program. Provides a supportive and respectful school environment. Coordinates and supervises volunteer participation of parents and community members which is a significant feature of The Watershed's School curriculum. Coordinates panel of community artists. Facilitates use of community resources in all aspects of The Watershed School curriculum.

Facilities Maintenance and Operation:

Coordinates with FNA and FNSBSD administration to ensure that facilities are safe, clean, orderly, and well maintained.

Technology Skills:

Computer, printer, fax machines, copy machine, Internet, telecommunications, multi-media.

Supervision Received and Exercised:

The Principal Teacher is supervised by the associate superintendent and the Principal Teacher supervises certified and classified staff in his/her building(s).

Unusual Working Conditions:

Attendance at evening/weekend meetings and activities required; workload may be stressful; confidentiality required. Outdoor supervision of staff and students required.

Evaluation:

Written evaluation, annually or more frequently, in accordance with district policy.

Principal Teacher Qualifications:**Required:**

Must possess or be eligible for an Alaska Type B administrative certificate prior to employment. Must possess an Alaska Type A endorsement in elementary education.

Must possess good knowledge of content, curriculum, methods and materials of grade level(s) or instructional specialty(ies) to which assigned; good knowledge of child growth and development; ability to establish culturally appropriate and invigorating learning environments; ability to apply knowledge of current research and theory to instructional programs; ability to plan and implement curricula based on school and district objectives and the needs and abilities of students to whom assigned; ability to utilize multimedia and computer technology as appropriate; ability to manage widely dispersed sets of educational activities involving personnel from throughout the community; ability to utilize positive, restorative and effective student discipline procedures; ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with students, peers, parents, and community members; skill in oral and written communication; strong culturally adaptive human relations skills.

Must have knowledge or access of the following as they apply to teaching duties:

- Alaska Compiled School Laws
- Administrative Directives
- Building Policies/Handbook
- Curriculum Guides/Cultural Standards
- Negotiated Agreement
- Rules & Regulations of the Department of Education
- School Board Policies and Regulations
- Student Rights, Responsibilities and Behavioral Consequences Handbook
- Evaluation Handbook
- PTPC Code of Ethics

Preferred:

Three years experience as classroom teacher. Ability to teach in multiple subject areas. The incumbent should possess demonstrated skills in focusing staff and students on promoting academic excellence; creating a culturally responsive learning environment; computer literacy with knowledge of instructional technology; demonstrated skills in staff motivation, development, and supervision; strong interpersonal skills; awareness of positive student discipline procedures and skills in parent relationships and community involvement.



The Watershed School	
<i>Job Title:</i> Certified Teacher	
<i>Supervisor:</i> Principal Teacher	<i>Classification:</i> Certified (FEA)
<i>Days/Months:</i> 9 Months	<i>Grade:</i> Per FEA negotiated agreement

Philosophy:

Demonstrates consistency between educational philosophy and actual practices. Understands and facilitates implementation of Alaska cultural and content standards aligned with appropriate curriculum, pedagogy and technology. Comfortable with nontraditional teaching responsibilities.

Learning & Development:

Teaches to the developmental abilities of students and applies teaching strategies that adapt to students' intelligence, learning style, individual, and special needs. Demonstrates respect for and promotes maximum growth of each student by identifying and providing for individual and cultural differences.

Content Area:

Uses current principles, concepts, and skills in planning and delivering instruction, and relates content to place-based pedagogy where applicable. In keeping with the philosophy of The Watershed School, a teacher uses local culture, history, economics, and the natural environment as a theme from which to teach all content areas.

Instruction and Assessment:

Selects printed, multi-media, and other support materials which are appropriate for attaining the instructional objectives and/or educational needs of a student.

Assigns, corrects, and returns homework to students in a timely manner.

Devises and uses authentic evaluation measures and procedures for the assessment of student performance. Assesses student's progress and communicates with parents when students exhibit a lack of progress and/or difficulty in school.

Maintains accurate and up-to-date attendance records, disciplines records, grades, IEPs, etc.

Technology Skills:

Computer, printer, fax machines, copy machine, Internet, telecommunications

Learning Environment:

Has primary responsibility for creating learning environments conducive to a variety of instructional techniques ranging from individual learning activities to cooperative learning and long-term project-based instruction.

Manages the students engagement with the learning environments and communicates to students the standards of conduct expected. Develops and maintains a learning environment that is guided in a positive and effective manner reflecting the goals, practices, and mission of the school.

Parents and Community:

Communicates with parents regarding student academic progress or lack thereof, behavior, class expectations, and the instructional program. Actively involves parents in implementation of instructional activities.

Participates in school-wide efforts to communicate with the school community and local media.

Professionalism:

Acts in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations; district and building policies, procedures, and rules; and the PTPC Code of Ethics.

Works with the Principal Teacher and other staff toward maintaining a positive and safe learning environment.

Attends and participates in professional development and staff meetings.

Maintains a professional attitude and appearance that does not detract from the learning objective.

Shares in the supervision of school activities during the teacher work day and serves on building and/or district level committees.

Attends open houses, parent conferences, and staff meetings as scheduled by the Principal Teacher and Academic Policy Committee consistent with the provisions of the negotiated agreement and The Watershed School Charter.

Performs other duties as assigned.

In addition, to teaching responsibilities in math, language arts, social sciences, and science, is responsible for:

- Physical education, inside and outside
- Outdoor life-skill recreation instruction in varying weather conditions
- Walking, skiing, snowshoeing, and human-powered travel in natural environments, including, but not limited to, natural forest environments
- Music
- Visual Arts, and other duties as assigned by principal teacher



The Watershed School	
<i>Job Title:</i> Teacher Assistant	
<i>Supervisor:</i> Principal Teacher	<i>Classification:</i> Classified (ESSA)
<i>Days/Months:</i> 9 Months	<i>Grade:</i> 5

General Responsibilities

The teacher assistant assists the teacher with grading, evaluating student work, and tutoring that supports The Watershed School's curriculum and meets student needs.

Example of Duties

Collaborates with the certified teacher and principal teacher in order to implement lesson plans.

Provides special tutorial assistance as directed by the teacher.

Implements lesson plans and appropriate student activities.

Maintains bulletin boards and prepares written materials as directed.

Carries out supervision of students in a prompt and responsible manner to ensure a safe, nurturing, and healthful environment.

Other job-related duties as assigned.

Equipment Used

Standard office equipment, including computer, printer, copy and fax machines, and other teaching related equipment.

Independent Decisions

Decisions of a routine, job-related nature.

Primary Working Contacts

Daily contact with students and school staff; occasional contact with parents.

Responsibility for Cash, Equipment, Safety

Safety of students under supervision in the classroom or playground.

Supervision Received and Exercised

The teacher assistant receives daily assignments from the teacher or building principal.

Unusual Working Conditions

Outdoors in varying weather conditions

Walking, skiing, snowshoeing, and human-powered travel in natural environments, including, but not limited to, natural forest environments

Assist in classroom music instruction including singing

Recess and outside duty as assigned

Evaluation

Annual written evaluation. Job performance is reviewed by the principal or the teacher.

Qualifications

Education: High school diploma or GED is required. Elementary and/or secondary education training preferred.

Experience: Experience working with students at the appropriate grade level is required.

Knowledge: Knowledge of high school level subjects required.

Skills: Proven proficiency in oral and written communication skills.

Abilities: Ability to relate and work successfully with students and adults. Ability to work as a team in developing and delivering academic programs for students. Demonstrated ability to assist students in one or more subject areas, i.e. reading or math, may be requested.

Appendix 7

Curriculum Samples

The Watershed School: Science and Social Studies: Grades K-2

**Prepared by: Abigail Paul
Rae Trainor-Wright**

March, 2008

Introduction:

Learning at The Watershed School in Grades K-2 will be distinguished by the following characteristics: (1) Curriculum and instruction will be consistent with the most current research on child development (2) Students will learn to be empathetic with local people, life forms and landscapes (3) Students will gain local knowledge and learn universally applicable concepts through the study of local subject matter (4) Students will engage in active, outdoor learning experiences (5) Students will engage in projects that serve their community. (6) The arts will be integrated throughout the curriculum.

The K-2 Watershed School curriculum is also characterized by a model called spiral learning. A spiral learning model allows students to build upon prior knowledge and experience without the added challenge of learning a new format. An example of spiral learning in The Watershed School K-2 curriculum would be the project entitled *Interactive Map*. This project involves identifying a local region and creating a horizontal map of that region using paper mache and other materials. Students will refer to the map throughout the year as they study the region it represents. The map will also serve as a prop for imaginative play with small toy animals, boats, trees, etc. Spiral learning provides students with the opportunity to engage in a similar experience repeatedly throughout their education, utilizing and building upon their knowledge and expertise. Spiral learning is an authentic learning model – it is the way people learn in their everyday lives.