

Caprock Academy Charter Application, October, 2006

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Caprock Academy Executive Summary

The Caprock Academy Organizing Committee is comprised of parents and community members seeking approval for a K-9 charter school in Mesa County Valley School District 51.

The vision: Strengthening the community through the involvement of parents, educators and community leaders working together to provide an environment that fosters academic excellence and develops strong character in our students. We shape global citizens who set life goals and practice lives of service and virtue.

The mission: Help *all* students achieve their highest academic and character potential using proven, accelerated academic programs while providing a safe environment.

Caprock's Core values:

- Academics: scholarship through the implementation of Core Knowledge in a Classical Education environment promoting academic excellence for all students
- Environment: purposeful character education, parent participation, modified uniform, and a firm code of conduct to enhance learning and citizenship
- Accountability: certified, passionate teachers, independent governing board, yearly surveys, effective assessments for students and staff, board training, and professional development for staff, board, and volunteers

Our goal of a challenging academic environment will be attained by utilizing research-based, proven curricula; hiring passionate, highly qualified teachers (as defined in the handbook, "Guidance for Highly Qualified Teachers in Colorado") who will help students master content and meet or exceed state standards; creating a motivational learning environment; and using effective evaluations to improve student performance. The Organizing Committee believes that our mission and educational goals will be best fulfilled through the implementation of Core Knowledge. Our curricula will include a balanced literacy program (explicit phonics instruction, spelling, comprehension, 30 minutes of reading time, vocabulary development, and daily writing instruction), Singapore Math, Core Knowledge Sequence for science, the social sciences, and liberal arts programs, Latin instruction beginning in kindergarten and Spanish instruction in third grade, the President's Award for PE, an integrated character education and technology programs.

An approval for chartering through the Institute is deemed valuable to Caprock due to the comparable missions and goals of both entities. The Organizing Committee wishes to promote quality school choice and increased quality parental involvement; the primary function of the Institute is the administration of charter schools thus the decision to apply is a logical step.

The Organizing Committee consists of Carrie Sherrill, parent, certified teacher, and former Idaho charter school employee; Erin Cornelius, parent, teacher, and business owner with experience in management and marketing; Shalene Galindo, parent, business owner, and assistant director for private preschool enrichment facility; Rob Hoeks, parent, teacher, and former middle school principal and private school board member; Tammy Martin, parent working in the technology

sector, writer, and involved in with civic organizations; and Hollie Castro, parent and business owner working in the field professional development. At least one member of the Organizing Committee will serve on the governing board. The other initial board members will be selected by the Committee to ensure the established mission and vision drives school operation and policy development.

Caprock Academy is a traditional school focusing on programs that have been proven to increase the academic achievement of all students. The implementation of a modified uniform, mandatory volunteer hours, highly qualified teachers who are excited to encourage learning and a strong character education program will create a learning environment that will be a unique opportunity in the Grand Junction area. It is the applicant's intention to conduct classes on one campus for Kindergarten through ninth grades. This application is for a charter for K – 9. We intend to start the work needed to develop a stellar high school charter in 18 months. The initial year will consist of grades Kindergarten through 7th grades, with K – 3 having two classrooms per grade. With each passing year another class will be added to the equation and another grade level. Caprock Academy will serve an average of 25 students per class, allowing for the needed flexibility especially in situations where all children from a family would attend Caprock. Interested families have already expressed interest in having monthly family events in order that we can begin to build our sense of family.

Section A: Vision/Mission Statement

The founding committee of CA(*hereinafter referred to as CA*) is pleased to submit this charter school application to Colorado Charter School Institute (*hereinafter referred to as CCSI*). The parents and community members submitting this application are eager to participate in bringing an additional educational option to the Grand Valley area. We seek to set high expectations for academic achievement, character development, accountability, and parental involvement.

Our Vision for Caprock Academy is...

Strengthening the community through the involvement of parents, educators and community leaders working together to provide an environment that fosters academic excellence and develops strong character in our students. We shape global citizens who set life goals and practice lives of service and virtue.

To accomplish this Vision, Caprock Academy's Mission is to...

Help *all* students achieve their highest academic and character potential using proven, accelerated academic programs while providing a safe environment.

To support our mission, Caprock Academy builds upon the foundational elements of...

- *ACADEMICS*
- *ENVIRONMENT*
- *ACCOUNTABILITY*

Academics

- We believe strongly that all children have the right to an education; any infringement on that right will not be tolerated.
- We believe that learned citizens draw on the knowledge of the Ancients (scholarship.)
- We will implement an accelerated, rigorous academic program which exceeds Colorado standards.
- We will incorporate Classical Education – a system of learning rooted in the developing stages of grammar, logic and rhetoric.
- We will promote various secondary languages including Latin instruction, which provides the foundation for language acquisition of American English, as well as European languages
- We will utilize the Core Knowledge curriculum, which provides solid, sequenced, specific, and shared learning.
- All chosen curricula reflect the mission of CA and are proven effective through solid research and proper implementation.

- We will assign relevant homework for the purposes of achieving academic excellence for all, providing a medium of communication between school and home, and developing the virtue of work.

Environment

- We will create a safe and nurturing environment that is essential to student achievement.
- We will integrate into classroom learning purposeful, proactive character education based on widely accepted virtues such as integrity, respect and honor.
- We will foster goal setting for students, guided by families and teachers.
- We will promote civic responsibility by actively participating in community service.
- We will engage parents as vital participants in all aspects of their children's educations.
- We will adhere to a firm code of conduct.
- We will implement a specific dress code incorporating a modified uniform.

Accountability

- We will recruit and develop highly qualified, passionate teachers.
- We will operate under an independent governing board.
- We will remain accountable to families and staff through yearly surveys.
- We will make ongoing professional development for faculty, board members, and volunteers a priority.
- We will utilize effective assessments of students and faculty to gauge how well we are meeting our goals.
- We will conduct ongoing training for our Board of Directors.
- We will form and support a School Accountability Council.

Section B: Goals, Objectives, and Standards

CA's primary goal is based upon the stated vision and mission incorporating rigorous academics and a strong character education program that increases student achievement for all. Research indicates that these two components are essential in creating a community of learners eager to meet high academic expectations. We will aim for academic excellence, which will be demonstrated with a body of evidence based upon multiple indicators of progress including:

- Imbedded Assessments, informal testing, and observations
- Progress in each student meeting requirements for NCLB and CBLA through AIMSweb, CSAP and NWEA assessments.
- Parent and Staff confidential surveys
- Return enrollment
- Virtuous students demonstrating their character.
- Parental/Guardian involvement and volunteering

The core beliefs of the proposed school focus on the prevailing idea that children will rise to the level of expectation placed before them. When the programs are challenging and developmentally appropriate, when children are purposely taught the values of the honesty, integrity, and respect, and when those values are practiced, you will have a child (of any background) who sees opportunity and success in his or her future.

One member of the committee has taught at various elementary levels, and has seen first hand the effects of setting academic and behavioral expectations that challenge children to reach for what looks initially, from their perspectives, like an impossibility.

Pupil Performance Standards

- Longitudinal educational growth--- students will gain at least one year's growth in one year's time measured by AIMSweb, CSAP and NWEA assessments.
- The percentage of students scoring Proficient (P) or Advanced (ADV) on CSAP will increase each year.
- Reduce achievement gap—students below grade level should increase more than one year's growth for each school year as measured by CSAP reading and math given once a year and AIMSweb and NWEA assessments administered at least twice per year.

CA does not know the achievement level of its initial or new student population; however, the appropriate staff members will, after enrollment, use Alpine Achievement and any other legal means to collect the students' CSAP scores from their prior school to assist staff in helping every child to have a year's growth in a year's time. The first year goal for CSAP scores resulting in a Proficient rating will be:

Elementary:	Middle School:
Reading: 77 %	Reading: 82 %
Math: 75 %	Math: 59 %

This first year goal is an average of AYP ratings for year 2003 and the results of Ridgeview Classical Schools' results for that year. Ridgeview's demographic population best matches the perspective enrollment for Caprock Academy and Ridgeview's educational plan is very similar to the proposed plan for Caprock Academy. It is the intent of this school to exceed the state standards using proven, researched-based practices and to have similar or better results, than those of comparable Colorado schools such as our mentor schools.

Our baseline will be set after year one and the teaching staff and administration will revise our objectives as needed using SMART terminology. SMART terminology means the following:

- **Specific** Specific and concise
- **Measurable** Measurable criterion is stated
- **Attainable** Attainable—within reason, but still a challenge
- **Research** Research/results-based methodology is identified
- **Time** Time-Specific

Furthermore, collecting and analyzing this body of evidence will form the foundation of our Data Management Plan. We will make data-driven, research-based decisions in order to continuously improve student achievement for all students.

The curriculum-embedded assessments are particularly important for subject areas where CSAPs are not given. We will ensure that all of our students are making progress toward the Colorado Model Content Standards (CMCS,) regardless of their age or CSAP-taking status.

Objective: Encourage consistent attendance and stability of the student body at our schools both daily and year to year.

Measurement: Achieve an average daily attendance rate of 98%.

Objective: Create an attendance policy and school calendar in keeping with state compulsory attendance laws and all other applicable state and federal law.

Measurement 1: A written attendance policy will be adopted within the first school year of the Charter and revised as necessary.

Measurement 2: The school calendar will be written and revised annually in advance of each school year.

Objective: Encourage stability of the student body at our schools both daily and year to year.

Measurement: Strive for at least a 95% re-enrollment rate. To make the data comparable to other neighborhood schools, students who leave the school because of out-of-district moves and transportation-related issues will not be counted in determining the re-enrollment rate.

Accreditation Indicators

CA will eagerly comply with CCSI's accreditation process. At this time we understand that the most important indicator in the accreditation contract is meeting AYP (adequate yearly progress)—if a school fails AYP two years in a row, that school is automatically placed on Accreditation Watch. There is no discretion or flexibility in that designation.

Table 1: Accreditation Indicators

	Colorado Accreditation Report Indicators	CA Addresses Indicator in Mission/Vision, Core Values, Policies/Practices
A	Educational Improvement Plan	YES
B	CSAP Goals	YES
C	Closing Achievement Gaps	YES
D	Value-Added (Longitudinal) Growth--Reading, Writing, Math	YES
E	Data Regarding Achievement in Other Curriculum Standards Areas	YES
F	Compliance with School Accountability Report	YES
G	Compliance with Educational Accreditation Act	YES
H	Compliance with Safe Schools Act	YES
I	Compliance with Colorado Basic Literacy Act	YES
J	Annual Assessment Review Will Include CDE Written Report	YES
K	Compliance with Budgeting, Accounting, etc	YES

Adequate Yearly Progress

CA will comply with mandatory accountability programs, comprising

- 1) Accreditation,
- 2) The School Accountability Report (SAR) program, and
- 3) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as defined in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.

The founders are confident of making AYP by the end of the 2007-08 school year. These targets, as defined by state law, are set forth in Table 2: AYP Proficiency Performance Targets by Grade Level, Content Area, and Year.

In Table 2, the targets are the percentages of CSAP test-takers who must score Partially Proficient, Proficient, or Advanced. Included also are CSAP-A students, whose target is Emerging or above, instead. These performance targets must be met statewide as a whole, for each school district as a whole, for each school as a whole, and for every subgroup of thirty or more students. If there are less than thirty in any subgroup at the school or district level, then performance targets do not need to be reached for that subgroup.

For these targets, the subgroups are: Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Native American / Alaskan Native, Asian / Pacific Islander, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and Limited English Proficient (LEP).

Table 2: Adequate Yearly Progress¹

Year	Elementary School		Middle School	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
2007-08	88.46	87.94	86.81	79.75
2008-09	88.46	87.94	86.81	79.75
2009-10	88.46	87.94	86.81	79.75
2010-11	94.23	93.98	93.41	89.88
2011-12	94.23	93.98	93.41	89.88
2012-13	94.23	93.98	93.41	89.88
2013-14	100	100	100	100

¹ Colorado Department of Education: *AYP Proficiency Targets and Safe Harbor*.
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/ayp/prof.asp#table>

Other Goals

In addition to the pupil performance standards listed above, CA has also identified the following goals as essential to achieving the school's mission.

Professional Development

A fully-trained staff is critical to the success of CA. The majority of this training will be completed by the end of the first year of operation, and will be ongoing in future years to target both full staff and individualized needs.

As prescribed in the Governance section (page 37) of this application, the Directors will participate in the staff professional development to gain knowledge of school curricula, character development, and other training necessary to effectively lead CA.

Volunteers (family members, community members, and mentors) who will be acting as tutors must be trained. The Organizing Committee has promised in word (through the venue of Informational Meetings) and print (written in brochures and on the website) that this objective will occur. Parents and community members have responded favorably to this program as it provides the volunteer a formal opportunity to learn how to effectively assist the classroom teacher and promotes a safe environment. This will better ensure a consistent delivery of curriculum and subsequent fulfillment of CA's vision in meeting individual student goals. Funding for volunteer training will be either a fee paid by the participant or through the eventual acquisition of grant monies and other fundraising efforts.

Parental Involvement

Parents will sign a Family Agreement in which they acknowledge their responsibility in helping students complete homework assignments and in reading to their children at home, among other agreements. Please see Appendix: Family Handbook. All parents must sign this letter of commitment.

Families will be asked to volunteer forty hours per year (or fifteen hours per year for single parent families). The goal is that 80% of families meet this target.

Secondary Language

Secondary language acquisition is a key component to a Classical Education school. It helps facilitate subsequent language acquisition, is often shown to increase student achievement, and provides an opportunity for students to learn about other cultures (increasing their cultural exposure leads to increased empathy and instructional time in Social Studies.) Therefore, CA students will be taught Latin beginning in kindergarten.

The successful implementation of a Latin language program will be measured by program-specific mastery tests and through the steady reading achievement indicated through various normed assessments. At least 85% of all students will master Latin unit exams before the teacher proceeds to the next unit. Additionally, we will teach Spanish beginning in third grade. Other secondary languages will be taught based upon a student needs assessment and ensuring our stance of teaching classically.

Attendance and Enrollment

It is the Organizing Committee's belief that the student should retain the bulk of responsibility in regular attendance. We understand that families will facilitate their transportation, but the student should take on the onus to attend, as responsibility and community are virtues that will create a mentally strong citizen. The measurement of this goal is reached through the Family Agreement and development of the school calendar.

Character Education

As indicated in CA's stated vision and mission, and based on both the views of families who support the vision and research-based data, it is our conviction that achievement for all students increases, and the community at large benefits, from the purposeful, relevant, and integrated implementation of a proven character education program. The measurement for this objective: decreased disciplinary referrals, citizens who are acting virtuously at home, school and in public, and a school environment in which surveyed respondents feel "safe."

Goal Setting

Goal setting is examined as an influence on student learning and self-evaluation. Goal setting results in increased motivation, on-task behavior, effort, and persistence and conveys information concerning individual performance capabilities and personal accomplishments. Parents and teachers will identify strengths and, with the child's input, will derive three goals to be accomplished during each quarter. All parties will monitor evidence of goal attainment and CA will provide three hours dedicated to "Goal Hour" per week to help students accomplish their goals.

Other Program Attributes

The success of all components of the school's program, including curriculum implementation, character education, parent involvement, second language instruction, professional development, school safety, discipline, communication, etc., will be measured annually via parent, teacher, and student satisfaction surveys.

CA's goals, objectives, and pupil performance standards were created by the founders through numerous, intensive deliberations. However, they remain open to modification by the future board of directors of CA. As with any school policy, they are subject to revision as the result of continuous improvement reviews.

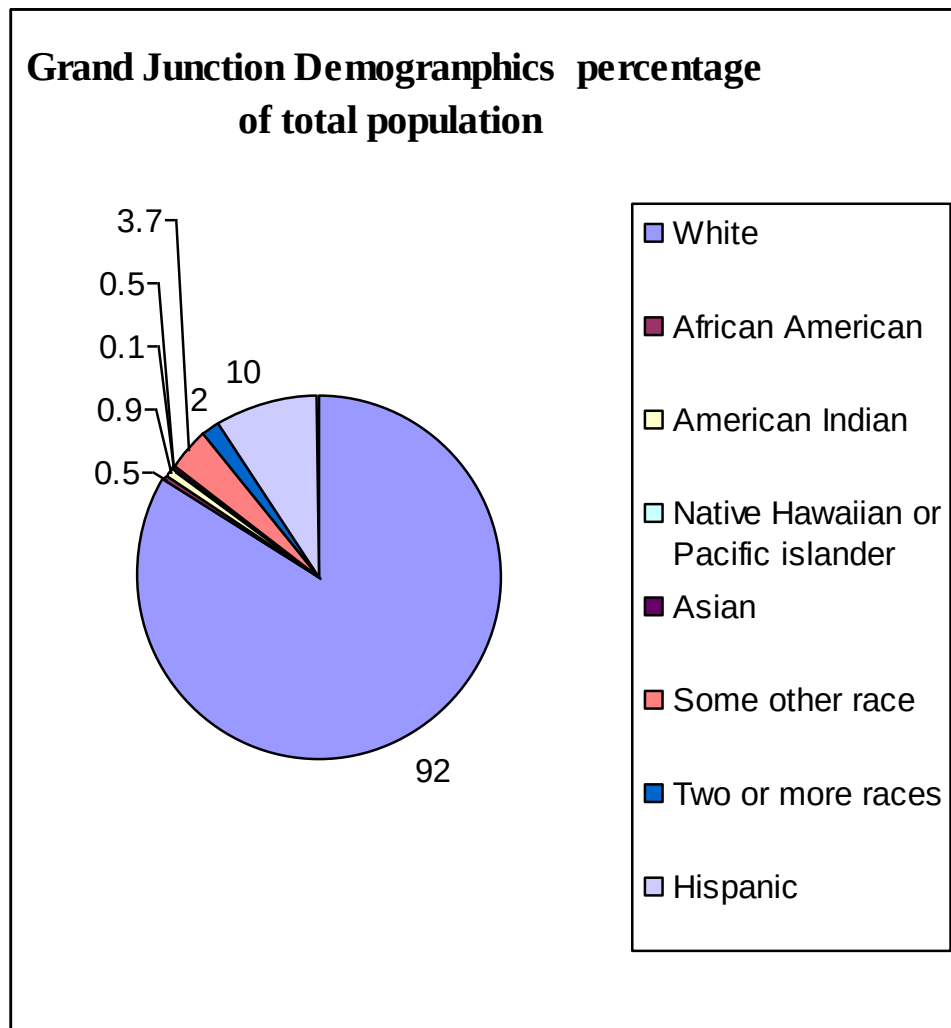
Section C: Evidence of Support

Community

CA's target audience encompasses Grand Junction and the surrounding area in Mesa County, Colorado, specifically Mesa County Valley School District 51.

Table three indicates the composition, regarding race, of Grand Junction. The Letters of Intent purposely do not collect information regarding ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other subgroup, and we will not pursue gathering that information unless required by law. It is our intent to show no preference to any one group of people, regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

Table 3 Grand Junction Demographics¹



¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census; ePodunk;
www.epodunk.com

Table 4 Prospective Enrollment numbers

Grade Level	Numbers of perspective students
Pre – K	10
K	17
1	13
2	17
3	11
4	10
5	5
6	9
7	6
8	6
Total	104

Table 4 indicates the outcome of completed Letters of Intent.

We have held public informational meetings in all regions of the Grand Valley. MCVSD 51 has allowed the Organizing Committee to use eight of their middle schools, we have hand delivered brochures and invited the public to informational meetings throughout the area. Public gathering places such as athletic fields, farmers' markets, and the Palisade Peach Festival are just a few of the venues we have utilized to provide information about our proposed charter school to the public.

Families continue to sign Letters of Intent, even as this application is being prepared; the past three weeks (September, 2006) has garnered an average of six new Letters of Intent per week, and with the

completion and delivery of this application, we can reasonably anticipate an even greater interest over the coming months.

We plan to continue disseminating information to the public and gathering additional support as this application is being considered by the Institute.

To further reach our community, the organizing committee is doing the following: We are seeking a qualified person that can translate and speak the Spanish language to translate brochures and posters into Spanish. Printed materials in English and Spanish shall be displayed in areas where a diverse people frequent and provide opportunities for interested parties to learn about Caprock. We also intend to make available a contact that speaks Spanish and that can fluently answer questions concerning Caprock Academy.

Section D: Educational Program

The essence of CA is implementing an educational program that moves all children, regardless of their race, gender, special needs, or social status toward academic excellence while exhibiting great strength of character. CA's Core Values Accountability element lists highly qualified, passionate teachers as a key component for delivering a quality educational program to the students. Caprock Academy will focus the elements of a Classical Education beginning in Kindergarten and will employ Core Knowledge for grades K – 8 and subsequent years will continue the classical training.

The founders believe, through the results of scientific research and interviews, that the educational program should be a Classical Core Knowledge foundation and implementing Core Values to ensure our goal of reaching all students who wish to learn in content rich, rigorous, exciting and safe environment. As the vision states, CA staff will be working as a partnership with the parents to provide guidance in helping students set and achieve their goals. The practice of setting goals encourages reflection after assessments and to evaluate and put together a plan of action on how to achieve academic and social excellence.

Students to be served.

CA plans to serve up to 25 students per class with 2 classes per grade level from kindergarten through grade 12. The first year we plan to open as a K-7 school, with two classes per grade level in kindergarten through third and one class per grade level 4-7 with up to 275 students. Each year, a grade level and a class will be added until the school is fully developed as a K-12 program. At full enrollment, the K-12 school could potentially serve up to 650 students.

We have selected the Core Knowledge Curriculum to serve K-8 students and a Classical Education model to serve 9-12 grade students because of:

- 1) the growing community need for new school options;
- 2) the success of Core Knowledge programs in reaching children early and developing a learning relationship between student, family, community and school that continues through the crucial middle school and high school years; and
- 3) the options the Core Knowledge and Classical Education curricula bring to the Mesa County School District (MCVSD) 51 educational landscape.

CA will be highly prepared to educate a diverse group of students, with effective instructional designs and programs in place to meet the needs of varied learners. All staff and leaders at CA

will complete intensive training in the Core Knowledge and/or Classical Education curricula, student diagnostic methods, development of individualized education plans (IEPs), and varied instructional methods.

CA will be characterized as a High Performing Learning Community (HPLC) by utilizing the assessments provided by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL). In a HPLC school, members of the school and community share a vision of high expectations for all students rooted in a set of core beliefs about how all students learn to high standards and about how the school promotes student success. In order to reach a shared vision of high expectations for all students CA will contract with Northwest Regional Education Lab. Professional Learning Teams will collaborate during designated time periods to examine student data, investigate research, analyze teaching practices, and determine instructional changes, to improve instruction for student success. Committing, implementing and assessing these actions school wide have been proven to lead to improved student achievement.

While many charter schools struggle for stability in their start-up years because of facilities problems and other insecurities, the CA Organizing Committee is confident in its ability to attract and maintain an excellent teaching and leadership staff because of the advantages of our proposed school: its rigorous program in academics, character education, and service orientation; its location; its classical education school model; and its vibrant community opportunities.

Curriculum and instructional design.

Overview

Caprock Academy will comply with all expectations regarding Colorado's academic standards.

Critical components of CA's educational program are described below. These components form the basis of CA's strategy for meeting the needs of each student and improving academic achievement.

CA's educational philosophy will embrace academic rigor and believes that providing the best educational opportunities for *all* CA students will be the best way to address the range of individual needs of students of differing backgrounds and resources. Thus, CA will implement the foundation of a classical education for all students and E.D. Hirsch's research-based *Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence* for grades for all K-8 students.

Students in all grades will be taught in the classical method. Classical Education promotes teaching students to understand a concept (grammar), analyze information (logic), and to synthesize various authentic texts and articulate in writing and speech what has been learned (rhetoric). This methodology encapsulates the desire for the learner to seek truth and share it in conversation with others. Each phase of the trivium builds upon prior knowledge. Classical education affords the student the opportunity to learn using a method that has been used for centuries, over the span of a multitude of western cultures and social stratum, and continues to reach learners that are from a variety of ages. This also provides a model for learning new subjects and pursuing new ideas throughout the span of life.

Classical schooling does not start at the ninth grade, but as early as the student is ready to learn. The grammar stage usually begins age four and is the stage where the child is learning a concept like reading. The first stage tapers off around age nine and then the student enters into the logic stage. The concept of reading has been mastered and then that skill is used in the logic stage of furthering the child's ability to delve into authentic texts to learn about a given topic, like Egyptian history. This logic stage is building upon the skill already developed in the grammar stage and is the foundation for the last stage of rhetoric, which is usually around age thirteen. When the student is forming their own opinion, based upon review of information gathered and analyzed, and the learner is articulating thoughts in a clear format.

The stages of classical education are not strict, nor are they compartmentalized. The learner passes through these stages continuously as they take in new content. Harvey & Laurie Bluedorn¹ explain this continual learning process: The learner will need to “receive and gather information” (grammar), “arrange and connect the information” (logic), and then put the “information into practical expression” (rhetoric) and is always seeking truth within all stages. (Reference: the “Trivium in a Capsule” from the Trivium Pursuit Online at www.triviumpursuit.com)

Review of the classical method strongly recommends that Latin instruction begin during the grammar stage because it is a “well-ordered language and many Latin words have been incorporated into other languages and making it a good jumping-off point to any of the Romance languages.” (www.classicalchild.com/classicaleducation.htm). Also, if a child is “classically educated”, then they need explicit instruction, using the Socratic Method with access to authentic texts and the graduated complexity of reviewing subject areas at later dates in math, sciences, history, and language arts.

Core Knowledge and a Classical education are two programs that work together. As indicated in the answer to question number one, there are several common threads that bind the two together, thus we are not waiting until the ninth grade to start teaching classically. The most common factors are:

- a) Core Knowledge encompasses the classical study of ancient cultures to modern.
- b) Provide the learner with a core of information learned early and then the subject is repeated at a later grade, delving into the subject while building upon prior knowledge.
- c) Helps student to progress in the development of thinking skills resulting in the learner developing opinions based on fact, not feelings.

Caprock intends to follow the Classical model throughout all grades and to use Core Knowledge in the applicable grades (K-8).

CA will also emphasize the building of character. Virtues such as respect, integrity, honor, compassion, courage, diligence, patience, responsibility, and perseverance will be clearly identified, taught, and modeled by administrators and teachers. Parents will be encouraged by CA's staff to recognize and promote the development of these traits so that all students will learn to practice them at home as well as at school. Community-based service projects and learning experiences will provide students real-world experiences in applying these virtues. The

development of these virtues will enhance student academic performance and facilitate student achievement.

CA will provide instruction that reflects the history, culture, and diversity of the students it is intended to reach. The *Core Knowledge Sequence* supports diversity and commonality in the teaching of various cultures. Students will learn differences among cultures as well as the universal aspects shared by all cultures. Students will come to understand that each individual is a valued member of CA's learning community within an environment of support as they work to meet the demands of CA's rigorous curriculum. Infusing this instruction throughout the curriculum, through literature, history, geography, art, and music, will facilitate the fostering of strong student identities rooted in the history of students' cultural heritage.

CA will use assessment data to drive instruction, to identify students performing below grade level, and to structure timely interventions for struggling students. CA will use multiple assessments to ensure the mastery of state standards in all curricular areas. The *Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence assessments*; the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), a standardized and criterion-referenced test aligned with Colorado state standards; and Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) will ensure mastery of curriculum content and skills. These assessments will be used to drive decision-making and teacher practice. With support from CA parents, teachers will develop individual learning plans (ILPs) for students who perform below grade level on standardized tests and curriculum-based assessments. ILP's will be created for those students who are not reading at grade level by the second semester of first grade. Tutoring assistance in specified academic goal areas will be provided according to the needs of the student.

As the vision states, CA staff will be working in partnership with parents/guardians to provide guidance in helping students to set and achieve their goals. The practice of setting goals encourages reflection after assessments and evaluation and establishing a plan of action on how to achieve academic and social excellence. Specifically, CA will establish voluntary covenants with parents/guardians to support their children's efforts to learn. These agreements will offer specific strategies that parents can implement at home (e.g., providing a consistent place in the home to complete homework, agreeing to work with teachers to implement ILPs designed for children who struggle to meet grade-level academic goals, etc.) The covenants will include a voluntary commitment from parents/guardians to check homework, to inquire about assignments, to attend parent/teacher conferences, and to volunteer regularly at CA. These covenants will also discuss the school's and the parents' commitment to the development of student character and the commitment to academic excellence.

Core Curricula

K-8—Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence

Caprock Academy will implement the Core Knowledge curricula in K-8 as outlined below. Alignments and grade level outcomes are readily available upon request.

In 1987, *Cultural Literacy* by E.D. Hirsch appeared. Hirsch made two very important contributions. He first showed that the skills which educators had designated as the goals of education were content-bound and could not be developed in the abstract or in vacuo. Secondly, he suggested a way to identify content which "all Americans need to know," the very thing many educators had despaired of doing.

Hirsch assumed that high school graduates should be able to read newspapers, magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, and books addressed to the general public—a perfectly reasonable assumption. All writers assume the existence of an "ideal reader" with whom they share a body of knowledge; hence, they explain some things and do not explain other things. What writers who write for the general public assumes readers know (and therefore do not explain) is an empirical question which Hirsch and his associates answered in as empirical a way as possible. The result was a list of 5,000 items "every American needs to know" to be literate. This list was subsequently divided into what kindergartners should know, what first graders should know, and so forth, through eighth grade. The result was a carefully organized sequence that came to be known as the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence (CKSS.)

The CKSS is now used in over 1,000 schools and is spreading to England. It is replacing what, in some schools, were fragmented and disorganized curricula full of gaps, inconsistencies, and repetitions. CA believes that the CKSS, together with instruction in high academic standards and inspiring teachers, will produce a high level of achievement for the population of students we intend to serve. The CKSS is based on the premise that a grade-by-grade core of common learning is necessary to ensure a sound and fair elementary education.

The Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence maps out a complete program that provides the student with a broad-based education that is free of significant gaps. It clearly defines the knowledge and skills that each student must master at each grade level and creates high levels of academic expectations. In addition, the CKSS not only eliminates some of the gaps and repetition characterized in standard curriculums, but it also aids in delivering cultural literacy in a systematic manner while leaving room for creativity.

Many people argue that knowledge is changing so fast that what students learn today will soon be outdated. While current events and technology are constantly changing, there is nevertheless a body of lasting knowledge that should form the core of a K-8 curriculum. Such solid knowledge includes, as examples, the basic principles of constitutional government, important events of world history, essential elements of mathematics and of oral and written expression, widely acknowledged masterpieces of art and music, and stories and poems passed down from generation to generation.

Children acquire knowledge by building on what they already know. A school that clearly defines the knowledge and skills required to participate in each successive grade can be fair for all students. CKSS helps ensure that children enter each new grade ready to learn, as well as preventing repetitions and gaps that characterize much current schooling. Further, all children, regardless of background, receive the knowledge they need to be included in a literate society.

The CKSS is the result of research into the content and structure of the highest performing elementary school systems around the world, as well as extensive consensus-building among diverse groups and interests, including parents, teachers, scientists, professional curriculum organizations, and experts from the Core Knowledge Foundation's advisory board on multicultural traditions. Provisional versions of the Sequence were reviewed and revised by panels of teachers, and, in 1990, a national conference was convened at which twenty-four working groups developed a draft sequence. That draft was fine-tuned during a year of implementation at Three Oaks Elementary in Ft. Myers, Florida, and the movement spread from there.

Research has been done in order to show whether or not Core Knowledge works and to provide evidence for its effectiveness. Studies have shown that the effects of the implementation of Core Knowledge in American schools have generally been very favorable.

A study in Oklahoma Public Schools in 2000 identified two groups of students, one being taught the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence, the other using the standard district curriculum. The experimental design involved careful matching of the students according to a number of variables: previous test scores (i.e., Iowa Tests of Basic Skills), grade level, sex, special education, free lunch, and Title I eligibility. Findings included a significant difference in test scores in seven out of eight categories on the ITBS (reading comprehension, vocabulary, science, math, and social studies) between the two groups of students. Those students taught using the CKSS scored significantly higher than their matched counterparts in the group that did not receive Core Knowledge instruction. The greatest differences were seen in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and social studies. The researchers then analyzed data from the previous year, using the same characteristic matches and found similar results. Students in the Core Knowledge classroom had scored higher in all seven areas tested.

In the journal, *Common Knowledge* (vol. 12, no.1, Winter, 1999), Michael Marshall states that “when Core Knowledge is really implemented, it really works.” Marshall’s article (“Three-Year National Study Confirms Effectiveness of Core Knowledge Sequence”) is an overview of the 148-page Johns Hopkins’ national evaluation of Core Knowledge (See Stringfield, Datnow, Borman, & Rachuba 1999, National evaluation of Core Knowledge sequence implementation: Final report. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools). One finding noted by Marshall is that classrooms using the Sequence had significantly higher scores on norm-referenced tests and on criterion-referenced than students at comparison schools. Further, the more fully the Sequence is implemented, the greater difference between Core Knowledge schools and comparison schools.

CA will implement at least 80% of the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence. This will enable CA to educate its students with an academically rigorous, content-rich, exciting, and complete education. Through its structured, sequenced nature, the curriculum will provide a clear and consistent progression of knowledge which will challenge the student while also building upon a grade-by-grade foundation in the areas of history, geography, science, math, language arts, visual arts, and music. CA believes that the 80% implementation of the Core Knowledge Sequence will facilitate high levels of achievement for all Academy students regardless of their background.

To supplement Core Knowledge Sequence in the core content areas, the staff at CA will be directly instructing students through the following curricula:

Reading

- **Riggs Instruction** – phonemic awareness and decoding for the pre-emergent, emergent reader and those needing intervention identified through standardized assessments.
- **Jr. Great Books** – comprehension skills for primary grades
- **Great Books and literature reviews from Core Knowledge Sequence** – comprehension skills for intermediate and middle schools grades. The choice to use these programs is because they are sequenced to increase comprehension and develop the classical mind in the area of logic for the intermediate through eighth grade students.
- Leveled reading books for reading aloud and for Self-guided, Sustained Reading (SSR).
- **Sadlier-Oxford Vocabulary** – increase vocabulary knowledge which increases comprehension and writing skills.
- **Fry Reading List** – individual spelling lists for Kindergarten and 1st Grades.
- **Words Their Way** – individual spelling lists for 2nd through 8th grades.
- **Read Naturally** – reading fluency

Language Arts:

- **Shurley English** – grammar instruction
- **Step Up to Writing and Six Traits + One** programs for writing instruction

Math:

- **Singapore Math** for all grades
- **Mad Minutes** – computational fluency

A number of studies and anecdotal evidence support CA's adoption of the literacy program in an effort to meet state reading standards and benchmarks for all CA students. One of the best known reviews of the effectiveness of various published reading programs is the National Reading Panel's 2000 study, which concluded that children must develop phonemic awareness, phonics skills, ability to read words in text, and the ability to comprehend as they read. Each student at CA will be able to read at grade level or above by the end of first grade and will develop a life-long desire to read, not only for educational purposes, but for their own personal enjoyment as well.

Riggs Instruction

The 120 collective years of research and experience that have produced this updated method began with Dr. Samuel T. Orton, the earliest neuroscientist to research the functioning of the human brain in learning language skills (1923-1948). Dr. Orton used a very similar phonics base

and collaborated with successful classroom teachers to combine his non-discriminating multi-sensory techniques with Classical Direct and Socratic instructional approaches to teaching.

The Riggs Method incorporates the phonics-based spelling with rules system dating from the Webster-Oxford standardization of English spelling, but also provides realistic phonemic / graphemic correspondences from contemporary dictionaries.

It is self-training for many teachers and parents, and gives them the practical help they need to teach the following language arts "strands" and cognitive development:

- *"Explicit" Phonics with dictated Initial Letter Formation*
- *The Alphabetic Principle*
- *Phonemic & Graphemic Awareness*
- *Correct Spelling w/47 Rules*
- *Fluent Oral and Silent Reading*
- *Oral and Print Comprehension*
- *Vocabulary*
- *Creative & Organizational Composition*
- *Grammar/Syntax/Punctuation/Capitalization*
- *Analytical & Inferential Thinking*
- *Auditory/Visual/Verbal/Motor Cognitive Development in:*
 - *Attention*
 - *Discrimination*
 - *Association*
 - *Memory*

Shurley English

The areas of Shurley English that provide frequency include the following skills:

- Writing
Journal, creative, expository, persuasive, descriptive, narrative, research
- Revising and editing
Sentences, paragraphs, essays, and letters
- Question/Answer Flow
Analysis of sentences
- Oral reading of sentences
Repeated exposure to various types of sentence structure and vocabulary

Neuroscience research, memory research, educational research, and effective strategy research all support the components and key elements implemented by Shurley English. Shurley English is a curriculum that merges a strong skills foundation with the writing process. According to E.D. Hirsch (1996), "Learning builds on learning." The more a person knows, the more that person can learn. Neuroscience calls this "making connections." Education calls it building on prior knowledge. Hirsch calls existing knowledge "mental Velcro," which allows new information to become attached to it. Shurley pedagogy is supported by a wide variety of research. It provides the "mental Velcro" that students require for ongoing learning. Teachers in classrooms throughout the country have found success and improved test scores by using Shurley English.

Six +1 Traits Model and Writing Assessment

CA teachers will adopt the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's 6+ 1 Trait Writing model for evaluating writing based on seven common characteristics: idea development, voice, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation.

CA students will receive appropriate developmental direct instruction and modeling in writing for each of these traits. They will learn how to include rich content in their writing by including examples, elaboration, events, evidence, and background information. They will receive instruction in the organization of narrative, expository, and creative writing using thesis statements, topic sentences, outlines, and notes. CA students will develop writing styles that indicate the audience and tone of the author. They will master purposeful sentence writing through logic, phrasing, absence of redundancy, and varying sentence length and structure. Students will learn how to complete final drafts that are free of mistakes by revising and editing for correct punctuation, spelling, grammar and usage, capitalization, and paragraphing.

The Six Traits Writing rubric is conducive to creating a rigorous work sample system which tracks each student's writing development. The traits can be graduated developmentally and articulated into a grade by grade sequence of instruction. Because it goes well beyond the standard five paragraph essay structure, it allows for the evaluation of literary devices such as voice, style, and word choice, creating a much more authentic method for grading writing.

According to the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, "The 6+1 Trait Writing Model is now used in virtually every state in the country, not to mention Great Britain, France, South America, China, Venezuela, Australia, Turkey, Bahrain, and other countries in the Middle East. It's the model or the source of the model used to score student papers in numerous state assessments and district assessments in virtually every state. Teachers from primary through college have embraced the 6+1 Trait model. The traits are used by teachers of mathematics, science, social studies, foreign language, art, music—anyone for whom writing is an important part of instruction."

Singapore Math

CA is eager to implement the successful and proven math curriculum of Singapore Math, the program that builds upon prior knowledge with word problems and fluency practice, is a back to the basic effort to build conceptual math concepts and strongly encourages teachers to be proficient in understanding the concepts they teach. It is logical, sequential, and is made easy for the student to understand. It starts with a concrete example (usually using an appropriate diagram), then moves on to more work on the concept, eventually ending with two- and three-step problem solving.

In 1995 and again in 1999, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) conducted what it calls the TIMMS tests — variously known as the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study or the Third International Mathematics and Science Study tests — to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of various countries' educational programs.

In both cases, Singaporean students came out Number 1 in math.

Science

The Core Knowledge science sequence continuously builds upon common strands of scientific concepts from grade to grade. A science textbook series or program that aligns with the Core Knowledge scope and sequence will be selected by the school's principal. The science resources that will be chosen will offer every opportunity for students to *be* scientists and to learn the many skills that scientists practice. Science instruction will also provide students with hands-on learning experiences. The specific content of the Core Knowledge science sequence will be examined against State standards to ensure alignment. Any State standards that are not included in Core Knowledge will be met through supplemental curriculum development.

Social Sciences

A large part of the CA's multicultural focus will be developed in the social studies curriculum. The CKSS covers a significant amount of content regarding diverse peoples and cultures, history, and geography. Since Core Knowledge covers civilizations across the globe, students will be equipped to compare histories, people, and cultures, and to find commonalities and to recognize what makes up the human experience. A social studies textbook series or program that aligns with the Core Knowledge scope and sequence will be selected by the school's principal. The specific content of the Core Knowledge social studies sequence will be examined against State standards to ensure alignment. Any State standards that aren't included in Core Knowledge will be met through further curriculum development.

Arts and Humanities

The founders believe, based on their research, that music and art are essential components of a liberal arts curriculum and integral subjects in the Core Knowledge Sequence. Therefore, the arts are not treated as an afterthought: music and art are completely integrated into the Sequence and relate to what is happening in the homeroom. For many students, music and art will be the vehicle to a better understanding of history and a deeper comprehension of readings. Teachers will work together to coordinate timing on the teaching of certain subjects to support an interdisciplinary focus. For example, when students are studying Renaissance poetry in language arts, they might also learn about Renaissance music and art that is appropriate to the developmental level of the students.

At CA the arts and humanities, and cross-curricular literacy initiative will pay significant dividends as young students travel through the K-8 school program and move on to high school. Research shows that including the arts in K-8 study contributes to higher grades, higher rates of retention in high school, higher test scores, and increased college enrollment. For example, SAT test scores show that students with four or more years of arts education scored 59 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 44 points higher on the math portion of the test.³ A UCLA study revealed that students studying and practicing the arts have grade point averages that are on average 10% higher than students who do not have had an arts education.⁴

Research has further suggested that arts education reduces the high school drop out rate among at-risk students. In a survey of at-risk adolescents, 50% stated that arts courses were a strong positive influence to stay in school.⁵ Additionally, through his research (1993) Elliot Eisner,

Professor of Art and Education at Stanford University, has demonstrated the interdependencies of arts education, the sciences, and economic growth.

³College Entrance Examination Board, 1995

⁴UCLA School of Education, 1997

⁵Florida State University, 1990

Physical Education

Instruction will be provided in physical education to build not only coordination and motor skills, but also the social components of teamwork and cooperation. Students will be exposed to a wide variety of sports, games, and activities. The school will ensure that the physical education program meets the district's standards.

Latin and a Secondary Language

CA will treat Latin as an integral part of the core curriculum, providing Latin instruction which is appropriate to the developmental level of the students. Latin instruction will start in kindergarten and build toward proficiency with each successive grade level. We will also provide instruction in Spanish beginning in grade 3. Communication will be lively and animated with vocabulary content tied thematically to the integrated curriculum. Multimedia resources (videos, CDs, CD-ROMs, children's books) in the target language will convey to students the cultural experiences of their peers in Spanish-speaking countries. The school will cultivate the natural facility of younger students for foreign language acquisition by beginning at an early age. Students will learn the basic distinctions between alphabets, numbers and sounds of various languages. Highly Qualified teachers will use the FLES (foreign language in elementary schools) program for teaching Latin two (2) times per week and in total no less than one (1) hour of instruction per week.

A number of publications, websites, and research guided the organizers to this decision. Among them are the following: "Establishing High-Quality Foreign Language Programs in Elementary Schools" published in December 2000; <http://www.memoriapress.com/articles/whylatin.html>; "The Effect of Elementary Latin Instruction on Language Arts Performance", Nancy A. Mavrogenes, *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (Mar., 1977), pp. 268-273; "Latin in the elementary school: A help for reading and language arts", Mavrogenes, N.A. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 60,675-77.

The curriculum has not been chosen, but will be selected based on guidelines offered by Memoria Press, The Classical Child, and by "Establishing High-Quality Foreign Language Programs in Elementary Schools".

Native Spanish speaking students at CA will be an essential component of Spanish class. Native speakers will work with non-Spanish speaking students as "teachers". This instructional method achieves the highest levels of learning for students as students evaluate their own knowledge in their need to teach others. For our native Spanish speaking students, those who are bilingual or LEP students, engaging learning in this structure reinforces their language and culture and increases their own native language skills.

Character Education

Character education is implicitly built into the Caprock Academy Curriculum. Founded in the Core Values curriculum, we begin with the assumption that students are capable of determining right from wrong and good from bad. It is our goal to build character by “doing,” rather than by “saying.” Students are taught personal responsibility by constructing their own knowledge and by doing hands-on activities. Sharing, cooperation, and respect are taught through team activities, a demand for classroom participation, and exploring content together.

Core Virtues is a literature-based program focusing on character education. It is a practical, non-sectarian approach to moral development. The goal of the program is to cultivate character through the promotion of basic moral, civic, and intellectual virtues. The virtues are introduced and emphasized through such vocabulary as: respect, responsibility, diligence, honesty, generosity, perseverance, courage, faithfulness, compassion, openness to inquiry and reason, and humility in the face of facts. This curriculum seeks to cultivate in the young the desire to act rightly and to discern virtue in striving towards being a person of high quality character.

Goal Hour

CA’s vision includes the development of goal setting. Four times a year the teacher, parents/guardians and student will develop three goals for the student to achieve during the quarter. If a student has been identified as needing remedial work in either math or reading (reading, writing, phonemic awareness, and/or comprehension), then during one of the three Goal Hour times offered the last hour of the day/three times a week, the student will attend a tutorial class. If a child has no remediation needs then all three Goal hour times are available for working toward the goals identified by the teacher(s), parents/guardians, and him/herself. During staff hiring and student enrollment periods there will be an opportunity for parents/guardians and prospective staff to share their talents and how they can help students achieve their goals. The opportunity to create extended programs in areas of debate, drama, sports, academic clubs and music will meet a need expressed by a majority of families (parents and their children,) and will also establish and ensure a stronger sense of community for Caprock families.

Instructional Methods

The Caprock Academy Core Knowledge and Classical Education program features the following aspects of the proven teaching and learning practices worldwide:

Effective Instructional Methods

Effective Teaching Strategies are research-based methods or techniques a teacher can use to deliver a lesson or a part of a lesson that will help his or her students succeed. Some of the effective methods to be used at CA include:

Flexible Ability Grouping

This homogeneous grouping by skill level has been demonstrated to be effective for instruction in the areas of mathematics and reading (Marzano, Pickering & Pollack, 2001).

Ability groups have proven effective for learning the core subjects of reading and mathematics. In reading, primary students will be formed into groups using Jr. Great Books. Intermediate readers will be grouped for open questioning, and advanced readers will be grouped for Socratic book discussions from Classical Book lists and Core Knowledge Sequence book lists.

In mathematics, K-7 students will be grouped by ability for Singapore Math. In grades 8-12, college preparatory math classes will be taught in ability groups with student placement based on formal evaluations and teacher observations. Placements will be made at intervals that will create pathways from one ability group to another when student achievement or emerging needs indicate a move is appropriate.

Differentiated instruction

Differentiated instruction will be used to provide students with a variety of options for taking in information, making sense out of ideas, and expressing what has been learned. At CA differentiated instruction involves using teaching strategies that connect with an individual student's learning strategies.

After CA teachers are trained, the use of differentiated teaching techniques will become part of the weekly classroom monitoring, conducted by the Principal, as well as part of the teachers' performance evaluation.

Multiple Intelligences

Multiple Intelligences, a term coined by psychologist and author, Dr. Howard Gardner, refers to seven domains of ability in which students can excel:

- Linguistic Intelligence- (speaking, reading, explaining things to others.)
- Logical-Mathematical Intelligence- (measuring recipes, balancing a checkbook, estimating distance.)
- Spatial Intelligence- (drawing, finding one's way around a room, picturing something in the mind's eye.)
- Musical Intelligence- (listening to music, singing, playing an instrument)
- Kinesthetic Intelligence- (playing sports, making things by hand.)
- Interpersonal Intelligence- (having friends, working or playing with a group)
- Intrapersonal- (enjoying time alone to think to wonder and to imagine.)

The last two intelligences, inter- and intrapersonal are comparable to "Emotional Intelligence," the determining factor for success in life delineated by Daniel Goleman, Ph.D. in his best-selling book by the same title. The first two intelligences outlined by Gardner, Linguistic and Logical-Mathematical, are those measured by standardized tests.

Teacher Developed Methods to Assist Students to Focus

CA staff will be involved in professional development activities based on proven practices and standards supported by the National Staff Development Council. Using collegial study

groups, action research, and peer observation, the staff will actively engage in discovering classroom-tested tools and methods that help students focus their attention during classroom instruction, transitions, and testing.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are tools that help students to sort, organize, summarize, retain, and recall important information. Since most learners are visual, graphic organizers provide a great alternative to print for a more conceptual, big picture. These tools also foster effective group brainstorming techniques.

Activating Prior Knowledge

Prior knowledge is activated when students use knowledge they already possess in order to construct and build further knowledge. When using prior knowledge, students are more likely to make connections and draw analogies. Students feel confident in learning because they feel that they already possess some of the knowledge. Using prior knowledge empowers students to learn more.

Personal Connection Journaling

Students accelerate their learning they are led into a topic by connecting to their personal experiences. Teachers guide them to share family histories, personal and current experiences, and anecdotal stories to make the content relevant. It may be used as a lead-in to a lesson, as a means of activating prior knowledge, or as a comprehension activity for students to understand on a personal level an idea or historical event.

Socratic Discussion

In a Socratic Discussion, the teacher uses logical, incremental questions to arouse interest and guide students in using their own insights to explore or decipher a complex idea or topic. Socratic Discussions can elicit excitement in the whole class and help all students to feel empowered so that they can discover the answers themselves.

Demonstration of Socratic Method

In the Socratic method, the teacher uses no other instructional tool other than question asking. The teacher skillfully guides her students through making observations, connections, analysis, and discoveries. Through the Socratic method, for example, students learn about the reasons for European exploration of North America, the quest for furs and wood, without the teacher ever explicitly saying so. When students answer questions for themselves, instead of passively relying on the teacher as a source of information, they construct the knowledge themselves. Students are more likely to remember and apply knowledge they construct themselves.

(A teacher shows his students an image of a map drawn of North America circa 1600. He is teaching a lesson on the first Europeans in this continent.)

Teacher: What do you see here?

Students: It looks like an old map.
Teacher: What does it look like a map of?
Students: I don't know. I've never seen that country.
Teacher: Do you recognize any landforms on this map that look familiar?

Students: Hm. Oh! Is that Cape Cod?
Teacher: What else do you recognize now?
Students: That must be the St. Lawrence River, and that's got to be Hudson Bay.
Teacher: So what is this map supposed to show?
Students: North America.
Teacher: What else do you see on this map?
Students: There are pictures of trees and animals.
Teacher: Why do you think they drew pictures of trees and animals on this map?
Students: There must have been a lot of trees and animals there.
Teacher: Why do you think someone would have drawn a map of North America in the first place?
Students: Probably because people wanted to go there and they needed to know how to get around.
Teacher: What could they possibly have wanted from North America?
Students: The trees and the animals?
Teacher: What good are trees and animals? Why would people want them?
Students: You can build things out of wood from trees.
Teacher: Like what?
Students: Houses, boats, furniture. Lots of things!
Teacher: Well what would someone want animals for?
Students: For pets?
Teacher: What animals are drawn on this map?
Students: Is that a beaver?
Teacher: Would you want a beaver as a pet?

Students: No!
Teacher: What do you think people wanted the beaver for?
Students: Maybe for its fur?
Teacher: What do you see on this part of the map?
Students: It looks like a group of men talking.
Teacher: How do they look?
Students: They look rich, and they look like they're making a decision.
Teacher: How do you think they got rich? Standing there in the middle of North America?
Students: Maybe by selling the wood from the trees and the fur from the beaver.

Almost every Caprock Academy Core Knowledge lesson makes use of the Socratic method. Teachers are trained how to ask these chains of questions, guiding students toward discovery, and students become very familiar with it.

Other effective instructional and structural practices:

Small School and Class Size.

A 1998 U.S. Department of Education report “Reducing Class Size: What Do We Know?” points to research concluding that reducing class size is related to increased student learning. Studies have shown that smaller class sizes result in increased student achievement, reduction in discipline problems, increased instructional time for teachers, and more individualized attention. Although all students benefit from smaller classes, research shows that effects are greatest for disadvantaged and minority students. At the elementary level, experts recommend class sizes of no more than 25 children⁶. Each CA class will contain no more than 25 students.

⁶Smith, Mary Lee, and Gene V. Glass. “Meta-Analysis of Research on Class Size and Its Relationship to Attitudes and Instruction”, *American Educational Research Journal* 1, Winter 1980, and Filby, Nikola, and others. “What Happens in Smaller Classes? A Summary Report of a Field Study.” *Class Size and Instruction Project*. San Francisco, CA: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1980

Integrated Social Studies/Humanities Program.

In addition to the rigorous core curriculum, we plan to use an integrated humanities/social studies curriculum which combines Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Core Knowledge, and international content standards with constructivist teaching practices and the philosophy of Dr. Howard Gardner (see below).

Teaching to Multiple Intelligences.

CA recognizes different domains of ability, or “intelligences”, as described by Dr. Howard Gardner⁷. Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences provides a foundation for recognizing the different abilities and talents of students. This theory acknowledges that while all students may not be verbally or mathematically gifted, children likely have expertise in other areas, such as music, spatial relations, or interpersonal skills. Approaching and assessing learning in this manner allows a wider range of students to successfully participate in classroom learning. Our program seeks to capitalize on children’s various skills, experiences, and talents to provide them with multiple opportunities to learn and succeed.

⁷Gardner, H. *The unschooled mind: how children think and how schools should teach* (1991); Gardner, H., & Hatch, T., *Multiple intelligences go to school: Educational implications of the theory of multiple intelligences* (1989) at 18(8), 4-9.

Personalized Learning Plans.

In a coordinated analysis of initial base-line test results, teacher assessments of student learning styles and current learning levels, parent input, student self-analysis, and any requirements delineated in existing IEPs, staff at the Academy will design personalized learning plans for every student. These plans become the basis for monitoring individual student achievement. As students grow and master skills, the learning plans are modified to reflect increasing levels of challenge or emphasize areas of weakness that require intensive focus. These plans allow the leadership, teachers, parents, and the students to consistently document and reflect on learning successes or on-going needs. The Professional Learning Teams and parents will be charged with identifying areas of need and developing strategies that will promote individual success.

Enriching After-School Experience

The first year of CA's existence will be devoted to academic excellence and stability. The Organizing Committee has received several requests for a community lead program that will be available not just during before and after school, but also during CA's breaks between quarters and possibly during the summer break. The After-School program has been developed to assist parents in providing their school-age children the opportunity to relax, study, and involve themselves in personal interests in a safe environment when they are not in school. The program does not duplicate the educational program, but rather supplements the program in a recreational manner.

Calendar, schedule, hours

Student hours for Caprock Academy will be from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Monday through Thursday. This is 8 hours per day and totals 128 instructional days, and 1024 instructional hours over a 32-week period. This schedule provides 38 hours above the state minimum of 990 hours for elementary schools. See Appendix: Calendar.

Within the school day, all students will spend at least two and half hours per day in Language Arts, one-half hour per day in Science, one-half hour per day in Social Studies, and one hour per day in Mathematics. For one hour per day, three days per week students will have *Goal Hour*; this time will be used for meeting the goals set by teacher, student, and parents prior to the start of the quarter. This program will be directed by a teacher/staff member/mentor to provide remediation and/or Gifted & Talented Exploration which keeps us accountable to Caprock's vision of reaching our students' highest potential and having all students gaining at least a year's growth in a year's time.

Caprock Academy's calendar well exceeds the minimum guidelines stated in C.R.S. 22-33-109(1)(n)(I). This fits within our stated goals of exceeding state standards and meeting the needs of our families. This schedule reflects our careful consideration of both state mandates and the needs for family time. By implementing this calendar our research shows that we can reasonably expect a 98% percent average daily attendance rate. The four day per week calendar affords many benefits.

- Only three weeks are shortened for either holidays or for getting students and staff settled to begin a new school year. Research item for bulk weeks
- Professional Development and parent-teacher conferences occur without interrupting instructional time.
- Families can better manage their schedules to enjoy their personal time together.
- Research has shown that, when strictly enforced, there are fewer disruptions to instructional time during the four-day week. Teachers, students, and parents are able to adapt to the longer day by planning creatively for and pacing the delivery of instruction. This is true even for younger children.
- The fifth day off provides opportunities to fulfill community service hours per Caprock Academy's vision statement.³

Dam, Ai. "The 4 Day School Week."

Colorado Department of Education 201 East Colfax Ave. Denver, CO 80203-1799 (July 2004) pp3-4.

Research Basis

Caprock Academy is modeling its efforts on the program and results of two Colorado Charter schools and one Denver area public school for curricula that has:

1. shown to be Scientifically Researched based.
2. proven to work in similar demographics as those to the Grand Junction area.
3. aligned to Colorado State standards.
4. academically accelerated
5. are in alignment to CA's vision and mission
6. proven to help all students obtain at least one years growth in a year's time.
7. supports a Classical Education Model.

Ridgeview Classical Schools in Ft. Collins is a Classical Core Knowledge charter school that has reached an "Excellent" Student Academic Report (SAR) for all the years of their existence and the distinguished award of the "John Irwin School of Excellence". The Classical Academy in Colorado Springs is a Classical Core Knowledge School that has also obtained the status of "Excellent" for their SAR. Normandy Elementary is a public school in Littleton, CO and has achieved an "Excellent" SAR rating and the "John Irwin School of Excellence" award.

Ridgeview Classical Schools and Normandy Elementary have a corresponding demographic make-up to that of Mesa County, Grand Junction, Colorado where Caprock Academy will reside.

All of these schools use Core Knowledge and the majority of supplemental programs that CA purposes to use. The Organizing Committee of CA strongly believes that our children are not guinea pigs and see a need to utilize the efforts of these three Colorado schools based on the criterion listed above. Chosen curricula measured against assessments and the listing above to determine if a program should continue to be used and if a program/curriculum is found to be falling short then the Curriculum and Instructional Committee will be charged with pursuing, obtaining and training staff with a replacement. CA is focused on educating in a Classical Approach first and then utilizing Core Knowledge Sequence and other programs to round out the educational program.

Section E: Evaluating Pupil Performance

Students of CA will participate in formal and informal assessments to provide the parents and staff with a thorough inventory of what each child knows, where interventions may be needed, and to better identify if a program adjustment is warranted. If an adjustment is necessary, then scientifically researched programs will be explored in order to help all students meet or exceed established standards.

The tests will be administered by teachers and other qualified staff in an environment best suited for success of the student.

Plan description of various assessments, frequency for the assessment and purpose is as follows:

<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Formal		
CSAP	Annual	To comply with Accreditation, AYP-NCLB, CBLA, and SAR Longitudinal data, norm-referenced test and comparative data with local district and state results.
NWEA:MAP	Semi-annual	
Formal/Progress Monitoring		
AIMSweb Assessment	Minimum three per year	Rapid and efficient assessment to aid in literacy instruction.
Words Their Way Qualitative Spelling Inventory	Maximum three per year	Skill assessment in spelling to aid in literacy instruction determined by grade
Informal		
Classroom discussions Student discussion Formative Student journals Students' self-evaluation sheets, and editing	Daily	Provide non-threatening testing environment and data for identifying gaps

The previous list comprises the core of CA's assessment program at its. The purpose of using these tools is to gauge progress towards achievement standards, provide frequent opportunities for students to learn to test-taking skills, and as a tool for instructional change as needed. Part of the mission of CA is to provide an accelerated academic program, and the assessments will be a tool to determine if our students are exceeding the state standards.

The following questions are used to determine which assessment will yield the most helpful results:

- What concept, skill or knowledge am I trying to assess?
- What should the students know?
- At what level are the students performing?
- At what level would we like them to be performing?

We intend to use NWEA assessment system with their MAP Test (Measures of Academic Progress) as the testing is aligned to Colorado Model Content Standards and the immediate results allow teachers to quickly modify instruction or to adopt an early intervention program that will promote mastery.

CA will use NWEA's *Dynamic Reporting Suite* for our Data Management. The *Dynamic Reporting Suite* collects the data from each student and disaggregates the data. Reports are available the day after assessment has been completed. This suite allows teachers and administrators to not only receive the disaggregated data, but also provides additional feedback in report format in topics such as areas in need of focus, instructional plan development, and percentage of students who have progressed within an area.

Formal assessments in addition to those listed may be administered. Those assessments will also need to serve a purpose, either for instruction or diagnostic purposes. Instructional assessments in the form of curriculum-generated tests will be identified after a curriculum has been chosen (like those of Singapore and Words Their Way weekly tests.) Examples of diagnostic testing that CA will administer are the Woodcock and/or Woodcock Johnson Batteries. Further diagnostic testing will shed light on students' abilities and identify learning disabilities, thus providing an early identification / intervention vehicle needed for students not meeting standards.

Accountability Targets

CA will comply with mandatory accountability programs, comprising:

- Accreditation,
- the School Accountability Report (SAR) program, and
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as defined in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.

CA is confident of making AYP by the end of the 2007-08 school year. These targets, as defined by state law, are set forth in Table 2 on page 5 of this application.

As indicated by Reading First and CORE, our strong commitment to helping children achieve their highest character potential, and the magnitude of importance of literacy to a child's development, CA will execute an Individual Literacy Plan for any student who is not reading at grade level by the third quarter of the student's first grade year. We believe that children with literacy deficits should be identified earlier in their academic careers and provided a natural source of positive self-esteem through a thorough, individualized literacy program.

Data Management

We will use Alpine Schools data management program.

Corrective Action

This section describes CA's procedures when academic achievement goals are not being met.

School Level

We will collect and use longitudinal assessment data to monitor and improve the academic achievement of students from year to year, as well as to guide instructional decision-making aimed at closing the achievement gap between disaggregated student groups.

At the school level, CA is bound by its AYP targets and other internal goals as listed in Section B on pages 3-8 of this application. Once baseline achievement data have been gathered at the end of the first operational year, we will create a formal school improvement plan.

Classroom Level

At CA, teachers do not teach in a vacuum. They are supplied with CSAP, NWEA, and curricular test results; they confer with colleagues and master teachers; they are evaluated by the administrator and the academic dean. In the course of this interaction, should student academic goals not be achieved in the classroom, attention will shift towards professional development, coaching, and remediation for the teacher.

Although we do not "teach to the test," teachers who know that one component of their performance pay is tied to such results are motivated to engage their students for maximum performance. Should classroom scores be consistently sub-par, a teacher may be placed on probation, but only if other correlating factors suggest that a teacher's competence is at fault.

Inasmuch as CA will support teachers' professional development and growth, we nonetheless will not long tolerate underachievement. There is neither tenure nor guaranteed employment at CA. As a last resort, the employment of ineffective teachers will be terminated.

Student Level

Our data management system will allow us to identify which students are not progressing at rates necessary for them to achieve their academic achievement goals. The practices described below address remediation and intervention steps for individual students.

If a student is in the appropriate differentiated group and still requires corrective action, as determined by low performance on internal assessments, the teacher will call for a parent conference to discuss possible interventions. This conference will explore specific measures for increasing the student's achievement, such as one-on-one or group tutoring after school, computer-based instruction, homework assistance from parent volunteers, special education assistance if warranted, or any combination of these. We will implement a pyramid of

interventions, and while one of the tools available will be retention, it will be chosen only as a last resort.

If a problem appears to be more rooted in a student's attitude and/or behavior, the staff will search for underlying causes in an attempt to refer students and families to resources that will address the issue. The corrective action plan will also be reviewed with the student and the student's parent or guardian. Students and parents will be asked to sign the plan to assure the school of their willingness to participate in corrective action.

Section F: Budget and Finance

CA recognizes the value and necessity of fiscal soundness and holds strong financial accountability as a goal. This responsibility to the community and to the charter authorizer will be met through the policies described in this section.

Of special note are the following fundamental guidelines:

- CA will maintain a balanced budget each year of its operation.
- As described in the *Audits* section on page 35, CA will have an independent audit conducted each year. Our goal for the audit is to find no major problems or exceptions in the school's finances, budgeting, or accounting practices.
- Timely prepared monthly financial statements including comparisons to projected budgets will be reviewed by the CA Board of Directors and Administrator, and will be shared with appropriate CCSI staff as requested.
- CA will promptly meet all appropriate CCSI requests for various financial reports.

CA agrees to maintain its financial records in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations, and make such records available to CCSI upon request or as required by the Charter School Contract. Revenue and expenditures will be consistent with the Colorado Department of Education's Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook and Chart of Accounts. CA will maintain a comparison of actual expenditures to budgeted expenses.

Financial Processes

Fiscal soundness has required that we develop not only broad strategies for accounting and auditing, but also policies for routine financial transactions such as accepting cash receipts, disbursing checks, managing petty cash, and authorizing purchases. Financial policies, procedures, and forms will be created by the Organizing Committee.

Accounting and Payroll

CA is seeking to contract with a local accounting firm for routine bookkeeping, payroll, and accounting services. In accordance, revenues and expenditures will be consistent with the CDE's Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook and Chart of Accounts. Among the timely management reports created will be balance sheets, income statements (P&L's or revenues vs. expenditures), cash flow and cash flow projections, and budget-vs.-actual reports. These working documents will be available for review in monthly Board meetings and will be made available to the district or CCSI upon request.

Our annual reports will add compliance with GASB-34¹, especially with regard to the MD&A and the capitalization and depreciation requirements. The MD&A will introduce the financial statements by presenting an analysis of CA's financial performance for the year, and its financial position at year end.

Purchasing

For purchases, a requestor will submit a requisition to the Administrator (or designee) for signatures. Authorized signatories will be the Principal and certain members of the Board of Directors as determined by the Board. For purchases under \$500, one signature will be needed. Purchases above \$500 require two signatures, including one Board approval; purchases above \$2,500 require three signatures, including two from the Board. The Principal will return the authorized request (along with a purchase order if necessary) to the requestor for processing, or forward it to the school's administrative staff if appropriate. When the order is received, the packing slip or requisition will be signed "received" and returned to the principal or his/her designate. If the school is not billed directly, the requestor will complete a check request for reimbursement, attach all receipts, and turn the packet in to the Principal or his/her designate. The Board and the Principal will be responsible for developing and implementing operational procedures to control and release funds in accordance with this policy and standard, accounting practices.

Audits

As described further in the *Audits* section on page 35 I have an independent audit of its financial and administrative operations conducted each year by an independent CPA. This audit serves to assure that the expenditures of public funds are properly made and that accounting procedures are properly completed. It will be conducted according to state regulations.

Contract Services

When Caprock begins its operations, certain specialized services will be contracted. Over time, as expertise and budgets permit, many of these services may be migrated to staff responsibilities. The administrative services may include such things as Special Education and Risk Management. The selection of contracted services will be open, transparent, and fair. The Board of Directors selects those contractors deemed best suited based on experience with charter schools, competitive pricing, and recommendations from disinterested third parties, such as the CDE, other charter schools, and the Colorado League of Charter Schools (CLCS.)

Budget

CA's budget is included as an electronic attachment to this application. The budget is based on Excel templates referenced in the Institute's *Request for Applications*. It includes a five-year operating budget. Operating budget assumptions are noted in the spreadsheet. Items requiring additional comment are listed below.

Per Pupil Revenue

The PPR is calculated using MCVSD 51's projected amount for FY 2007-08. The budgeted PPR is \$5,911 in year one, with a general 3% increase (2% inflation plus 1% from Amendment 23) used each year after. Year one includes a projected enrollment of 300 students, including 50 kindergartners, for a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) count of 275. Incremental increases in FTE over time reflect the addition of seventh and eighth grades, as well as progress towards creating two cohorts for each grade.

The budget includes 100% of PPR, with the individual buyback costs specifically indicated in the five year projected budget and in the following; to date, this buyback is the line item for CCSI retaining up to 5% of PPR. Although this percentage is subject to negotiation the use of 5% is conservative reflecting the maximum that the Institute is allowed to retain.

Variable Income

CA anticipates generating significant revenue from grants, donations, and fundraising. No fundraising income is listed, even though considerable fundraising activities will occur—prudent budgeting excludes this variable income source.

Reserve Funds

The budget recognizes the capital and insurance reserve fund of **\$000** per student in the first year. This amount will be used to offset anticipated building lease costs. It will be tracked in a capital and insurance reserve fund as required by state law. Also, as required by C.R.S. 22-54-105, at least \$165 per student per year will be spent on instructional supplies.

Capital Construction Funds

The budget for year one includes a per pupil funding of \$200. CA is not utilizing any district facility, we anticipate receiving the entire per pupil allocation for this line item. This line item will be addressed yearly as the funds are not a guaranteed revenue stream.

Fee-Based Programs

Revenue from activities such as field trips, after school clubs, and other similar activities is not specifically included in the budget, as any such activities will be offset by the same amounts in activities expenditures. The school's Parent/Teacher Organization will establish a scholarship fund for families who cannot afford these activity fees.

Tuition-Based Programs

CA anticipates offering a tuition-based full-day kindergarten option. A fee of \$245 per month for nine months is included for this program. The budget currently reflects one half-day kindergarten class and one full-day kindergarten class, although this configuration may be adjusted based on community need.

Expenditure Projections

Expenditure projections are explained in the footnotes of the projected budget. In general, the expenditure plan assumes 2% per year inflation, with any exceptions noted. CA will manage expenditures based on the revenue ultimately available.

Personnel costs merit a special note. The budget for administrative and instructional staff is set based on prevailing wages in public schools in the Mesa County area. Caprock salaries are projected to be near the range of these schools. Additionally, our budget includes a pool of 5% of total salaries to be awarded each year based solely on merit. Finally, in addition to inflation, an annual average merit pay increase of 3% for all staff is included in the budget. We are confident that these incentives are sufficient to attract the exceptional staff upon which CA will depend. Our school will be hiring 11.5 classroom teachers (as well as several specials teachers and aides) in the first year, adding two per year. Experience shows that high quality teachers seek high quality institutions, and indeed, we already have received statements of interest from several local teachers.

Audits

CA agrees to engage and participate in an independent, outside audit by a certified public accountant of its financial and administrative operations on an annual basis. The results of the audit shall be provided to CCSI in written form within the statutory time limits required by CCSI, and shall be published and posted as required by law. CA will adhere to the accounting, auditing, and reporting procedures and requirements that are applied to public schools operating in Colorado.

Anticipated Funding Sources

There are numerous national and state funds specifically available to charter schools, especially during their first three years. We intend to apply in October, 2006 for grant monies available through the CDE as part of the Federal Startup Grant and other startup grants that are offered through entities like the Daniels Fund. A very partial and preliminary list of other available grants for startup and/or operations that support charter schools follows:

Governmental

Federal Titles I-X
Javits Gifted and Talented
IDEA
Read to Achieve

Private

Local community fundraising and private donations
Albertson's Community Partners
Anschutz Family Foundation
Bacon Family Foundation
Box Tops for Education
Daniels Fund
Gates Family Foundation
Jared Polis Foundation
Tech Challenge Grant
Western Colorado Community Foundation

CA intends to recruit qualified volunteers to dedicate significant time to fundraising, and grant applications for the first year of the school's operation. If future budget projections allow, CA would support creating a position devoted to fundraising, including grant writing. All volunteers or paid positions devoted to fundraising will be supported by the Fundraising Advisory Committee, comprising interested and qualified parents and community members.

Given the qualified attention we will devote to seeking grants and donations, along with aggressive marketing and fundraising, we believe we will have significant grant funds in our school's budget for years two and beyond.

Financial Reserves

CA will maintain the required TABOR reserve in compliance with the minimum per pupil dollar amount specified in C.R.S. 22-54-105(2)(b). CA also has a goal of carrying an unrestricted reserve equaling 4% of expenditures in future years. The budget set forth as an attached Excel spreadsheet, reflects this reserve, labeled "contingency," being first reached in the second year of operations. Given that this contingency fund is unrestricted, CA would be free to use a portion of it should other revenues not materialize as expected. CA will establish a capital and insurance reserve fund as required by state statute. These reserves are included in the budget. Also, to the extent that any grant funds are earmarked for specific programs, such as library or technology purposes, CA will account for these expenses in specific reserve fund accounts.

Section G: Governance

This section addresses the governing structure of CA including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement.

The goal of CA is to exist to guide students in the development of their characters and full scholastic potential through academically rigorous, content-rich educational programs. In so doing, CA will help prepare students to become responsible, contributing citizens, able to compete in a global marketplace of ideas, goods and services.

Governing Board

CA will operate under the auspices of a governing board called the Caprock Academy Board of Directors (CABD or Board). The CABD will comprise from five to nine members and will always maintain a parent majority. The Board will be elected by the parents/guardians of the children who attend the school and will operate according to the by laws laid out by the school's organizing committee. The school's Administrator will be an advisory, non-voting member of the CABD.

The CA Organizing Committee will appoint the first Board. The Organizing Committee will construct the CABD upon approval of the application. After the Board is formalized, the official CABD will serve until the first parent election takes place in October, 2008. This timing reflects the belief that, in order to best cement the vision and mission of the CA founders, the initial appointed Board should serve at least the first full year of the school's operation. The initial CABD will serve staggered terms—one Director being replaced after year one, two more Directors after year two, and two more Directors after year three. Paid employees of CA (or household members of such) shall not be eligible to serve on the Board due to potential conflicts-of-interest.

Nominations for CABD members shall take place in August of every school year. A ballot of candidates for the Board shall be prepared by a Nominating Committee consisting of no fewer than three members, with the majority of the committee members not serving as a Director of the Board.

CABD elections will be held annually in October. Each family will have one vote for each open Board seat. Directors will elect the officers of the Board, which will be President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer. Terms of office for officers will be one year, and the Directors will reorganize each year following the election.

In the event of a dismissal, resignation, or other vacancy of the Board, if the Director has completed less than half of his or her term, the CABD will hold a special election to fill the vacancy. If the Director leaving the board has completed more than half of his or her term, the remaining Directors shall appoint a replacement. The Director or Directors so elected or appointed shall hold office until end of the term of the original vacated position and until his or their successor or successors shall be duly elected and qualified.

Attendance at CABD meetings by Directors is mandatory. Failure of a Director to attend three consecutive meetings will result in dismissal from the Board unless a majority of the remaining Directors determine that circumstances warrant retaining the member.

Operation of the Board of Directors

The Mandate of the Governing Board, consisting of stakeholders of CA, is to implement the guiding mission of CA as articulated in this charter. In order to do so, the CABD is empowered to operate as the decision-making body in regard to school-wide policies. The governing structure is designed to foster participation by all stakeholders and assure the effectiveness of local school accountability. As such, the CABD will exist to affirm or ratify policy recommendations made by the standing or ad hoc Committees established by the Board. As part of the school's mission and vision, it is vital that all pupils witness and participate in the school's collaborative process of policy development and decision making.

The day-to-day operation of the school will be left to the school Administrator. School policies will be available at the school office and on the school's website. School-wide policies under the purview of the Board include, but are not limited to:

- Strategic planning
- Annual budget development and approval
- Fiscal oversight
- Selection, evaluation, and when necessary, termination of administrators and managers
- Oversight in the hiring, evaluation, and when necessary termination of members of the faculty and staff
- School calendar
- Admission requirements
- Oversight of curricular and extra-curricular programs
- Community service programs
- Graduation requirements
- School facilities and safety
- Pupil behavior and performance, including but not limited to academic achievement and mitigation, attendance, dress and decorum, maintenance of a clean campus, open-campus and other privileges, and participation in extra-curricular activities
- School-Community relations
- Student Advisory Council

The Board will meet at least ten times per year (approximately once a month when school is in session). All Board meetings will be open to the public. A majority vote of the Directors present at a Board meeting will constitute legal action by the Board. The Board may not act unless a majority of the Board is present, which will constitute a quorum. The CABD will fully comply with the requirements of the Colorado Open Meetings Law.

Board Directors will begin serving their terms on November 1 of the year elected. An annual Board retreat will be organized each winter following CABD elections. This will include training and orientation for new Board members, a review of key documents for all Board members, and strategic planning for the coming school year.

Standing Board Sub-Committees

The Board and/or the Administrator may form additional standing committees to assist with policy setting and/or operation of the school. Policy-setting committees will report to the Board; operational committees will report to the school's administrator. Committee membership may consist of a combination of school staff, parents, community members, and at least one board member. Examples of committees the school may implement are listed below.

- Student Advisory Council: Helps evaluate the school's progress toward meeting its stated goals and objectives; develops school improvement plans; surveys parents, staff and students.
- Curriculum and Instruction Committee: Evaluates curriculum, instructional delivery, professional development, graduation, technology, school calendar and scheduling. All teachers are required to serve on this committee.
- Facilities Committee: Aids in the development of a long-term facility plan; assists with minor repairs and improvements on the school building; and, potentially, assists with the acquisition of property maintenance services such as trash removal, carpet cleaning, etc.
- Fundraising Committee: Supports grant writing; researches and develops other fundraising avenues.
- Student Services Committee: Supports school safety, security, attendance and student needs.
- Finance Committee: Administers the school budget, business needs and financial operations. Will be comprised of the business manager, Board Treasurer and a parent with financial experience.

Organizing Committee

The Organizing Committee consists of Carrie Sherrill, Shalene Galindo, Tammy Martin, Erin Cornelius, Robert Hoeks, and Hollie Castro. This organizing committee is committed to bringing educational excellence to the community. Brief bios of each of the committee members follow:

Carrie Sherrill holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Science and Elementary Certification from University of Northern Colorado. Her work experience includes teaching in private and public elementary schools in a variety of classroom settings. She receives immense enjoyment from connecting with kids to help them learn how to read and overcome educational obstacles. Carrie places high value on her family and personal life. She enjoys serving as a volunteer at church and school and spending time with her children and husband. She is currently directing

the development of Caprock Academy, teaching part time at a local early childhood enrichment facility and sits on the Student Advisory Council of her daughter's elementary school.

Shalene Galindo is a wife and mother of two young children. Shalene and her husband Josh and have been married for eight years. After graduating from high school she went on to cosmetology school where she obtained a license in Cosmetology from the State of Colorado. Working in a salon helped their family make a second income. Shalene volunteered as a gymnastics coach for Grand Junction Gymnastics for nine months. She also volunteered her time in her daughter's kindergarten class during the 2004-2005 school year, helping with the reading program set by the kindergarten teacher. She currently works for an early childhood enrichment facility as the office manager. She has been with this facility for the last 18 months, starting with volunteering in the classroom as an assistant teacher, and also keeping up with some clerical duties. In early 2006 the job became a near-full time position handling all of the administrative and accounting needs of the school.

Tammy Martin, a native Coloradoan, is a busy mother of two balancing family life, a career in two growing companies and numerous civic activities. She devotes time to a variety of community groups including The Tree House Youth Shelter, Kids Voting Mesa County, and the Grand Junction Community Homeless Shelter. She also serves on the PR Committee of Habitat for Humanity of Mesa County and on the Organizing Committee of CA Charter School. Among her personal passions, Tammy enjoys serving with the vocal music ministry of her church and is working on a novel. She co-facilitates a writers' group to encourage and support local writers. Tammy feels that a life of service is the most rewarding way to live and to build a stronger community. She hopes to model that passion for the children of the Grand Valley through Caprock Academy.

Erin Cornelius is a wife and a stay-at-home mother of two. She has been a student for the last ten years, working on her art education major and is currently pursuing opening her own photography studio. After high school she was a business manager for a cosmetic company until she had her son. Since that time she has worked in various assistant teaching positions and is now actively involved in the public school that her children attend. She also works as a teacher every Thursday in a private school. She and her husband have known each other for the last fifteen years and are about to celebrate their ninth year of marriage.

Robert Hoeks is the father of three school-aged children. He grew up in the Chicago area and graduated from Taylor University with a B.S. in Education. He is an educator of 15 years and is seeking employment in Colorado as an educator. In 2003 he received a MEd. in Educational Administration from National University in California. Rob has worked with students of all ages and has extensive experience with students considered at-risk. He has been involved in a variety of volunteer programs both at school sites and in the community.

Hollie Castro is a global business leader with expertise in leveraging technology, human capital strategy, and operations. She has 17 years of successful business experience working as an entrepreneur and for *Fortune 100* corporations Cisco Systems, GE, and IBM. She has significant experience coaching senior business leaders to translate vision and strategy into results. Hollie is results-driven with the ability to synthesize and connect disparate concepts into simple,

actionable information. Her background includes extensive experiences in Europe, Asia, India and South America with language fluency in English, Italian, Portuguese, French and Spanish. In her last corporate job, Hollie was Vice President of HR Strategy and Operations for Cisco Systems. Cisco Systems creates networking solutions for the internet and employees 51,000 people globally. In that role, Hollie managed a team of 300 people around the globe to forward Cisco's business and human capital strategy. Currently, Hollie is Founder & CEO of Global Rainmakers, a professional coaching company. Hollie holds a B.A. from Marlboro College and an International MBA from Thunderbird University. She is a wife and mother and enjoys living in Colorado. She loves spending time with family, global travel, exploring new cultures, gourmet cooking and following World Cup Soccer.

Open Records Compliance

CA will comply fully with the state Open Records Law (C.R.S. 24-72-201 *et seq.*) exempting, as required by law, personnel files, library records, addresses of public school children, medical data, and any other mandated exemptions. Likewise, CA will comply with the state Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. 24-6-401 *et seq.*), keeping, however, the following items closed as the law allows: social gatherings, property matters, attorney conferences, personnel matters, and student discipline records.

Board Training

The school's professional development plan includes not only administrators and faculty, but the Board as well. This ongoing and mandatory training includes various aspects of school curriculum, character development curriculum, program assessment practices, and other training necessary to effectively lead the school. As well, the Board will undergo training in personnel development, fundraising, financial management, and effective stakeholder relations. All Board Directors will undergo training in Board policy and effective governance within 30 days of starting their terms. A majority of the Board will also attend the annual Colorado Charter Schools Conference, especially for its Board training, leadership training, and coverage of issues directly related to charter schools. As well, the Board Treasurer will demonstrate expertise and/or attend the CDE conference on charter school finance to develop financial management and budgeting skills. Finally, an annual Board retreat will be organized each winter following Board elections. This will include training and orientation for new Board Directors, a review of key documents for all Board Directors, and strategic planning for the coming school year.

Administrative Structure

CA will open with a Principal who oversees academic, personnel, and facilities operations. An Administrative Assistant/Office Manager will help with routine financial and facilities oversight. An Academic Dean/Teacher Coach is slated to supplement the administrators' curricular expertise, with independent responsibilities to select and evaluate curricula, offer teacher

coaching, organize professional development, and assess the merits of the school's educational programs. This will possibly merit a half- time position.

Legal Status

CA has filed the articles of incorporation, received a tax identification number, and is completing requirements for 501(c)3 status. The CA Organizing Committee is in the process of developing by-laws to govern the school's Board.

Section H: Employees

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute Section 22-30.5-106(1)(i), CA's Organizing Committee submits the following explanation of the relationship that will exist between CA and its employees, including evidence that the terms and conditions of employment have been addressed with affected employees.

Employment Policies

CA's employment philosophy is to employ highly qualified, motivated teachers and staff who fully embrace CA's core values. These employees are critical to the school's success. They hold an important place in the education of our future leaders. The Board will administer a standing sub-committee which will focus on the creation, staffing, and continuous improvement of the employee model and the school's culture. The sub-committee will create a process for teacher and staff selection. This sub-committee will also focus on creating and improving the culture and a work environment of empowerment which we believe will be keys to the success of the school.

As CA will aim to employ exceptional educators and staff, our compensation philosophy will align accordingly. We will seek to pay above the 50th percentile for the local market as well as developing a number of traditional and non-traditional compensation elements to round out the overall package.

Hiring of Personnel

All persons who perform services for CA are considered "at-will" employees or volunteers of the school itself. CA will select its personnel directly, and without prior authorization from CCSI, subject to compliance with all federal and state rules and regulations, including, without limitation, requirements concerning the recruitment of applicants. The Principal will be responsible for human resource management. The Principal will remain responsible for the supervision, evaluation and termination of all employees on an annual basis.

No waivers will be requested for criminal and background checks. For positions subject to NCLB Highly Qualified requirements, appropriate training, certifications, and competencies will be required. We will be requesting a waiver from licensed instructional staff, but we, of course, will comply with the NCLB law as it defines Highly Qualified staff. Relevant waivers are noted in detail in Appendix: Waivers.

CA shall adopt its own policies (in compliance with federal and state law) concerning the recruitment, promotion, discipline, and termination of personnel; methods for evaluating performance; and a plan for resolving employee-related problems, including complaint and grievance procedures; provided, however, CA shall not have the authority, by virtue of such policies or procedures or other action of the CABD, to change the "at-will" nature of the employment relationship.

Staff Evaluation

The Board will conduct the formal evaluation of the Principal once a year. This formal evaluation will include such items as salary, performance, reviews, and areas for improvement and goals for the following year. Also, the Board will conduct an informal review with the Principal that will include adjusting or setting goals for the school year.

Staff at CA will be formally evaluated at least twice annually. The Principal will evaluate teachers and associate staff. These formal evaluations will include such things as salary, performance reviews, areas for improvement or where additional training is needed, and goals for the following year.

Payroll

CA reserves the right to hire its own business manager and/or private services to administer its own payroll. Either the business manager or outside accountant will record employee work hours, overtime, absences, leaves, vacation, and other adjustments as contained in applicable state policies and regulations.

Benefits

CA employee benefits shall be determined by the Board of Directors. Employees shall be entitled to receive the benefits described in the Budget. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, all benefit programs will be handled and administered by Principal or delegate.

PERA Membership

All CA employees shall be members of the Public Employee's Retirement Association and subject to its requirements. CA shall be responsible for the cost of the employer's respective share of any required contributions. The budget reflects these amounts.

Equal Opportunity Employer

CA affirms that it shall not discriminate against any employee on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, or disability in its recruitment, selection, training, utilization, termination or other employment-related activities.

Employee Welfare and Safety

CA shall comply with all CCSI policies, and applicable federal and state laws, concerning employee welfare, safety and health issues, including, without limitation, the requirements of federal law for a drug free workplace.

Employee Records

CA shall comply with all CCSI policies and regulations, and applicable federal and state laws, concerning the maintenance and disclosure of employee records, including, without limitation, the requirements of the Colorado Public Records Act, Colorado Revised Statutes Section 24-72-201 et seq.

Employee Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual

In conjunction with the initial Administrator and legal counsel, the CA Organizing Committee will develop an Employee Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual. At the time of hire, each employee will receive a copy of this manual. Appendix: Proposed Policy Manual, includes the proposed table of contents for this document.

Performance Pay

CA intends to implement a performance pay program for teachers as an incentive for quality teaching and to demonstrate to teachers that their efforts are valued at school. Performance pay will be based on the Principal's evaluation, parent surveys, students' standardized test scores, and other factors deemed appropriate by school staff and CABD.

Employee Conflicts of Interest

All CA employees shall comply with CCSI and CA's policies and regulations, and applicable state law, concerning employee actual and potential conflicts of interest.

Job Descriptions

Principal

The Principal shall report directly to the Caprock Academy Board of Directors. Personnel matters will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines prescribed by the Board. The Principal will be responsible for day-to-day decision making, human resource management, testing and informational requests from the Institute. Human resource management responsibilities include hiring, annual reviews, terminations, and staff meetings. The

Principal will also be responsible for personnel scheduling, arranging for substitute teachers, and other administrative functions as required. The Principal will delegate administrative work as appropriate.

The Principal shall be licensed by the State of Colorado, and/or shall have specific experience, training, and knowledge necessary to fulfill the duties of the position, including, but not limited to, the following: four-year degree, a knowledge of and responsibility for compliance with federal and state laws with matters concerning, but not limited to, child abuse reporting, the Open Meetings Law, the Public Records Law, student due process rights, nondiscrimination, and special education.

The CABD shall be responsible for hiring the Principal Administrator, and ensuring that the Principal's credentials meet certification, licensure, and/or specific experience, training and knowledge requirements.

Other Administrative Staff

CA will hire other administrative staff to support the Principal in running the school effectively. We have adopted a set of potential job descriptions that may or may not be filled as the Principal and Board determines appropriate at the time.

Teachers - Grades K Through 9

Teachers for grades K through 9 will be responsible for implementing curriculum, coordinating with classroom aides, maintaining current attainment level information, assigning additional studies to students not meeting or exceeding attainment, keeping accurate and concise records, establishing personal classroom procedures, assisting in teaching materials selection, and assigning students to appropriate ability groups. Teachers will also be responsible requesting parent volunteers, and reporting all education related activities to the Principal or designee.

All full-time teachers will be required to work a 36-hour workweek. Occasionally, after hours work may be required. Teachers will also be required to serve on committees and teach electives as assigned by the Principal.

All teachers must have at least a four-year degree in any discipline and a strong desire to work with an innovative educational program. Experience with developing curriculum, teaching in a Classical environment and experience with Core Knowledge is desirable. Master Teacher or a MEd is the preferred educational level we will seek.

Special Education Teacher(s)

The special education teacher or teachers will work with children one-on-one or in small groups for all grade levels. The special education teachers will be hired by CA in cooperation with CCSI. CA will hire related staff for services needed as required by IEP's such as: speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, and teacher of the learning disabled.

Classroom Instructional Assistants - Grades K Through 9

Classroom Instructional Assistants (CIAs) will help the teachers in the following areas: implementing curriculum; maintaining current attainment level information; reporting attainment levels below minimum or early attainment to the teacher; keeping accurate and concise records; following established classroom procedures; requesting teaching materials for the teacher; requesting supplementary education materials for the teacher; requesting parent volunteers; and, reporting all education related activities to the teacher. CIAs on occasion may teach, however their primary function is to work with children one-on-one or in small groups, so as to help each child fulfill his or her academic potential. All CIAs will be paid on an hourly basis. All CIAs must possess a strong desire to work with an innovative educational program.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

Definitions

- Full time employees: Any employee working 36 hours or more per week (or 30 hours per week for Special Education teachers) on a permanent basis.
- Hourly employee: Any employee whose pay rate is based on an hourly rate.
- Salaried employee: Any employee whose pay rate is based on an annual rate.
- Paid vacation days: None
- Non-paid vacation days: Holidays and other days as established by the school schedule. Hourly employees are not paid for non-paid vacation days.
- Personal days: Each salaried employee shall receive six paid personal leave days per school year, which can be carried forward except that such days may not exceed 30 days in any academic year.

Roster of Instructional Staff

Year	Elementary	Jr. High	Sr. High	PE	Arts	Music	Science	Latin	Computer	Instructional Aids
1	10.5	1	0	1	0.5	0.5	0.75	0.75	0.75	8.5
2	11.5	2	0	1	0.5	0.5	0.75	1	1	9
3	12.5	3	0	1.5	0.75	0.75	1	1	1	9.5
4	13.5	3	1	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	10
5	14.5	3	2	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	10.5

Section I: Insurance Coverage

CA will arrange to acquire the following types of insurance: comprehensive general liability, worker's compensation, errors and omissions, property (building, if appropriate, and contents), indemnity, D&O, and student accident and catastrophic accident insurance. CA, either directly or indirectly, will also hold a public official bond and an additional umbrella policy.

Section J: At Risk Students and Community Involvement

At-Risk Students

“At-risk” students are defined many ways in Colorado Law. In the Charter Schools Act⁴, they are defined as “those students who, because of physical, emotional, socioeconomic, or cultural factors, are less likely to succeed in school.” More specifically, among the possible groups that are sometimes referred to as at-risk are:

- Students who have scored “Low” or “Unsatisfactory” on a statewide assessment;
- Students who qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch under the federal “National School Lunch Act⁵”;
- Students who attend a school that has a SAR of “Low Performing”;
- Students who attend a Title I-designated school;
- Gifted students and all others not meeting academic expectations befitting their documented ability;
- Students whose dominant language is not English; and
- Expelled students and students not accessing educational opportunities.

CA will provide rich educational experiences for all students, whether or not they are viewed as “at-risk.” We will hold high expectations for every child, and we will address the educational needs of each enrollee. While this may not sound notable, all too often students perform only to the expectations that are held by their teachers and parents. If students have been in a learning environment where they were held to low expectations, then the fact that they have not yet blossomed is no surprise. Being held to high standards at CA will therefore represent increased learning opportunities for such students. We will set our students up to succeed—it will be hard work for some of the students, but they will succeed. Failure is not an option.

Community Involvement

Parents and the Grand Valley community members have been consistently informed of the Organizing Committee’s (OC) progress for the development of CA through various media. Some examples include mass emails to parents who have completed a Letter of Intent, holding public informational meetings beginning in April, 2005, and articles written about the mission and intent of Caprock in the two local newspapers and in a monthly family periodical.

Since April, 2006, all public meetings have included a request for any interested parent/guardian to complete a survey about education in Mesa County. Please see Appendix: Parent Survey to view this survey. Of the 425 copies hand-delivered, we have received over 380 completed surveys. The survey serves a two-fold purpose. One is to ascertain the perceived need for this type of school and serve as a springboard for further discussion regarding charter schools in general and the vision of Caprock Academy. The second purpose is to provide research-driven data for the development of CA.

This survey strategy was used in four public venues this past spring and summer. The participants represented a broad cross-section of socioeconomic strata and demographics from various locations throughout the Grand Valley. The surveys were distributed at Kite Day in Sherwood Park, Bike Day on the streets of downtown Grand Junction, at Chatfield Elementary soccer fields during Grand Mesa Youth Soccer Association game day, and at the Home school conference held in Canyonview Vineyard church. Requesting participants to complete a survey provided a catalyst for answering questions and then extending an invitation for the participant to get more information about the endeavor.

The results of the surveys have lead the Organizing Committee to move forward in developing Caprock Academy and fulfilling the tasks necessary to move the vision of CA into a reality for Fall of 2007.

Parents have been the driving force behind the efforts to develop Caprock Academy. Response from community members has been favorable as many business and political leaders view the vision of CA - strengthening the community - as a positive influence in the Grand Junction area and for the development of future leaders. The Organizing Committee has assembled a parent majority group to develop all the components of the charter application and has sought, and continues to seek, expert consultants in areas where there is a need.

The OC operates under a formal Code of Conduct and conducts meetings as if they are a Board of Directors. This effort has fostered trust between members and developed a strong sense of community within the group which infuses informal discussions with people interested in CA. The Committee has received informal and formal data that leads the group to pursue authorization through CCSI and reasonably expects that upon approval, there will be a large number of families desiring to enroll and participate in the operation of Caprock Academy.

The Committee is conducting valley-wide public informational meetings throughout the month of October. The meetings are scheduled in various locations throughout the Grand Valley. The Thursday before each meeting, a group of volunteers will be hand-delivering invitations within the areas adjacent to the meeting locations. These handbills, along with advertisements in the *Free Press* will increase our ability to reach all families. Supplementing the hardcopy printing is the announcement of upcoming events on CA's website at www.caprockacademy.org. We feel this multi-level approach reaches the maximum number of the families of Mesa County who might welcome this option for their children's education.

⁴ Colorado Revised Statute 22-30.5-103(a).

⁵ United States Code: Title 42—*The Public Health and Welfare*. Chapter 13—School Lunch Programs. Section 1751 *et seq.*

Section K: Enrollment Policy

Caprock Academy is a school of choice and parents must request enrollment in the school by filling out a Letter of Intent (LOI) form prior to or during CA's open enrollment period. Submission of this LOI does not guarantee enrollment for the potential student(s), nor does it legally bind families to enroll in CA. The completed form may be submitted to CA via personal delivery, mail, or by completing the form at an Informational Meeting held by CA's Organizing Committee. LOIs may be downloaded from CA's website at www.caprockacademy.org.

CA welcomes all students, recognizing diversity as a virtue. Thus, CA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, sex, or need for special education services. The enrollment policy is designed to meet the requirements of Colorado Revised Statute 22-30.5-104(3), ensuring equal access to the school for all. Such access encompasses academically low-achieving students, exceptional students, and students with special needs.

Open Enrollment Period

Open Enrollment will be held on January 31 prior to the upcoming school year. All LOIs received prior to or during the school's open enrollment period will be considered for enrollment for the upcoming school year.

If the number of the LOIs received is less than or equal to the number of student spaces available for any grade, the school will extend an invitation to enroll to every student with a completed LOI. Should the number of LOIs be higher than the number of available spaces, each student will be assigned a wait list number to be used in a lottery.

Once enrolled in CA, students are automatically enrolled for the following year unless CA is notified of the family's wish to withdraw the student(s).

Lottery policy

CA's open enrollment and lottery will be conducted on the first Tuesday of February. The public will be notified of the enrollment date at least two weeks prior through a variety of media outlets (*The Daily Sentinel*, *The Free Press*, radio ads, mailings to areas that have been identified as having high "At Risk" populations, and group emails.).

Should enrollment exceed capacity for any grade level, a blind lottery will be held within that group to determine the order that students will be admitted. If a student is chosen in the lottery and there is a sibling or siblings who want to attend the Academy, those siblings will be given preference so the family can all attend the same school.

This wait list will be maintained to fill vacancies during the school year and for space available in subsequent years. If a parent, whose child is on the waiting list, declines enrollment when

offered prior to the beginning of a school year the parent may choose to be dropped from the wait list altogether or for the child to be placed at the bottom of the appropriate grade's waiting list for the following school year. Should a parent decline to enroll a child for a midyear replacement, the child will not lose his/her spot on the wait list.

Priority for enrollment will be given to the families who have reached Founding Family status. This population may not exceed more than 10% of the total student enrollment. The following is a list of criteria used to establish Founding Family eligibility:

- Individuals within the family must provide a substantial contribution of hours for the establishment of CA or to the continuing success of the organization. Substantial contributions are defined as: 1.) Serving on the school's Organizing Committee during the development phase of the school and/or 2.) Contributing 200 individual or family volunteer hours by January 31, 2007.
- Attendance at parent and committee meetings will count toward total hours served.
- Volunteer hours must be reported monthly and approved by the Organizing Committee.
- The first families who successfully meet the above criteria will be recognized as Founding Families until the 10% enrollment cap is met.

Section L: Transportation:

CA will not provide transportation at this time. CA will facilitate the use of carpools by maintaining a central repository for interested parents. A carpool or transportation czar will coordinate transportation needs of all families, especially those at risk.

We recognize that transportation may restrict the ability of some students to attend, particularly those who are economically at risk. To address this, a portion of parents' mandatory volunteer hours may be satisfied by participating in certain carpools serving economically disadvantaged students. On the carpool form, parents who choose to participate will sign a liability waiver that absolves the Academy from any legal liabilities resulting from the carpool.

Section M: Facilities

August 3, 2006

Mesa County Valley School District 51
2115 Grand Avenue
Grand Junction, Colorado 81501

RE: CA Facilities Acquisition

Dear Board Members:

In consideration of Caprock Academy (CA), please find the attached facility plan. The information provided will demonstrate the viability of several proposed sites.

Located at 782 24 Road, this site is a great long and short-term opportunity for CA. It is approximately 8.85 acres and is centrally located with great access to the major arterials. On a temporary basis, this site could accommodate “temporary” units to meet the fast timeline associated with opening the school. On a long-term basis, the site could accommodate the full programmatic needs of CA with a permanent campus, capable of offering athletic programs.

The second alternative, located at 740 Gunnison Avenue, is a well-maintained, updated church facility that has great access to CA’s target student population. The facility contains a kitchen, gymnasium, classrooms and offices. Based on the program goals of CA, the facility would likely serve as a short-term solution for the program with approximately 19,027 SF available for use.

Both sites are optimally located in areas that will provide CA’s target student population with an attractive location to attend the school. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Best Regards,



Dustin Jones
720.528.6330

PROSPECTIVE PROPERTY REPORT & VIABILITY STUDY
COLORADO WEST MENTAL HEALTH BUILDING
740 Gunnison Avenue
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Size: 19,027 Finished Square Feet

Asking Price: \$799,000

Estimated Expenses: TBD

Parking Spaces: 31

Comments: This could accommodate CA with either a lease or a purchase. Although the site will limit the growth strategy of the school, it could serve as an attractive short term solution to help CA become an established entity. It offers a full gymnasium and multiple classroom opportunities.

PROSPECTIVE PROPERTY REPORT & VIABILITY STUDY
LAND SITE
782 24 Road
Grand Junction, CO 81505

Size: 8.85 Acres

Quoted Sale Price: \$800,000

Utility Access: In 24 Road

Comments: This site is a great opportunity for CA to get established as a successful charter school, while at the same time offering the capability of accommodating the long term growth structure at the school. In the initial years, CA is planning on placing “temporary” buildings on the site in order to prove the school’s model. As the school matures, it should be able to access funds to construct a permanent facility that will accommodate all of its program needs.

Section N: Amendment 23 One-Percent Increase

The Colorado State Constitution, in section 17 (Funding) of article IX (Education) explains the creation of a state education fund. Legislated to grow annually at least by the rate of inflation plus an additional one percentage point, this fund is proscribed for use only for certain educational reforms including meeting state academic standards, expanding technology, and for performance incentives for teachers, among others. In compliance with paragraph (4)(b) of this constitutional section, Caprock Academy intends to target these monies to fund the Merit Pay component of its employee benefits package. Our view is that this merit program, by recognizing outstanding teachers, leads to more effective classrooms and thus raises student academic achievement.

Section O: Waivers

Pursuant to the Charter Schools Act, Caprock Academy requests waivers of certain statutes. Each state statute for which a waiver is being requested, and the rationale for each, is listed in Appendix: Waivers. CA believes that these waivers will enable the school to better meet its mission, goals, and objectives, and implement its educational program.

Section P: Student Discipline, Expulsion, or Suspension

CA believes that a structured, proactive, and consistent design to discipline is effective and will enable educators to construct a safe and organized learning environment. We will have additional expectations of our students which will be outlined in our Family Handbook. High behavioral standards will be the hallmark of CA, and therefore considerable time will be dedicated to ensuring that all staff are consistently and appropriately enforcing the school's Code of Conduct. This includes a consistent set of rules throughout the school—prominent, authoritative, and universal.

The highlights of CSCA's discipline plan will be to:

- Meet all state laws and CCSI policies regarding student conduct;
- Maintain structured, systematic classroom management;
- Seek out and consistently reward positive behavior;
- Consistently and appropriately respond to all disruptive behavior;
- Train all administrators and teachers on the student Code of Conduct annually;
- Emphasize individual responsibility; and
- Encourage regular attendance at CA.

Student Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct will be developed in detail by the Organizing Committee and Board of Directors. Included in this application, under Appendix: Family Handbook. We feel that a positive learning environment, free from disruption, is the foundation of learning for our students, and our discipline principles are the key to this environment. Therefore, each subsequent year, all administrators and teachers will be trained to implement our Code of Conduct.

Further, all parents and students will have a copy of the Code of Conduct in the Family Handbook and it will also be on the school's website. All parents and students will be required to sign a document that states that they have read, understand, and will abide by the Code of Conduct and all of its associated consequences. This contract will highlight the responsibilities of all parties involved in the student's learning process. Parents, teachers and students will all share in the responsibility of providing a safe, positive, and well structured learning environment. All students will be expected to comply with the CA's Code of Conduct at all times. Violations of the Code will be dealt with uniformly and consistently in accordance with the policies set forth within the Code of Conduct and the limits established in state law.

Suspension/Expulsion

Caprock's disciplinary program is intended to minimize the need for suspension and avoid expulsion by emphasizing positive character development, assertive and proactive classroom management. CA will address the laws concerning students with special needs as identified by

an IEP or a 504 Plan. In the event such actions are necessary, they will be carried out in accordance with CA's handbook and applicable state policy.

Attendance

CA believes that consistent attendance at school is necessary to student achievement and deters discipline problems. We will have high attendance expectations of our students. Our attendance policy will be included in the document signed by both parents and students when they are made aware of our Code of Conduct. Parents will be expected to ensure their children are consistently present and punctual at CA. Consequences for repeated absences and tardiness will be incorporated into the Code of Conduct. As CA more fully develops its policies for discipline, expulsion, and suspension, it will use as guidance C.R.S. 22-33-106 (Grounds for suspension, expulsion, and denial of admission) as well as C.R.S. 22-33-203 (Educational alternatives for expelled students).

Section Q: Academic Achievement and Accreditation

CA is firmly committed to meeting all the accreditation indicators as required by the Accreditation contract between CCSI and CA. We will provide all necessary information CCSI may need in order to prepare the Accreditation indicator Annual Report to the CDE. It is generally accepted practice that the approved charter application, which is bound into the contract, serves as the school improvement plan for the first year of operation, while baseline student achievement data are being gathered. At the end of year one, we will create our first formal school improvement plan.

Section R: Serving Students with Special Needs

Caprock Academy will look at the individual students to assess their needs and comply with all Colorado State and Federal laws and regulations related to these students. The administration and staff will follow the procedures outlined in the manuals provided by Colorado Charter School Institute and provide adequate staff for the requirements of students with special needs.

Caprock Academy will provide the necessary services and find staff for students needing servicing in Special Education, 504, Gifted and Talented, and English Language Learners (ELL). Based on typical charter schools for this population, CA will provide the following staff for the first year and will adjust staff on needs of individual students: One full time Special Education teacher who will be working directly with students, one Speech/ Language Pathologist one full day per week (7 hours), one Occupational Therapist four hours per week and one school psychologist one full day per week (7 hours). With each passing year, Caprock Academy will revise the need for staffing based on expected growth in student population.

A registered nurse will be on site approximately 1 day a week to provide needed medical assistance, to train entire staff on the guidelines for dispensing medications and other needed training in the event the nurse is not available, and will oversee the required vision and hearing screenings.

Students who are new to Caprock will be administered the state CELA placement screening within the first month of enrollment. Each spring, students who are not yet proficient in the English language will be administered the state CELA assessment. Caprock Academy's affirmative language acquisition plans will match identified needs with services. Those needing additional instruction will receive services during the Goal Hour.

A range of services will be identified and delivered based on individual needs. All students, as well as those who are identified as ELL, Special Needs, and/or Gifted and Talented will participate in two programs identified in the Educational program section of this charter. The first area of meeting individual needs for Caprock students is through the thoughtful use of quarterly, grade specific, administered assessments for Flexibility Grouping during the whole school Literacy and Math blocks. Students will be placed in a setting that best matches their skills and provides a challenging, yet successful, grouping. The founders of Caprock Academy are strongly committed to moving students into a different group as the need arises either through a show of progress or need for more remediation. The second program that all Caprock students will participate in is the Goal Hour program, held during the last hour of school, three days each week. As more thoroughly examined in the Educational Program section, Goal Hour affords the opportunity of all students to have an additional time for tutoring, as identified by staff, parents, and the student and to provide a mentor driven experience that will explore and enhance each child's gift or talent. Those students who are ELL will participate in tutoring one hour per week, during Goal Hour, for needed help. This time could be used to build vocabulary in a whole class setting with multiple aged, common language users in the same room. Even though CA will be implementing Core Knowledge in a Classical approach that is considered already academically advanced, Gifted and Talented students will have Goal Hour to further enhance their talents and then use their talent to strengthen the community. ELL students may

find that their dominant language is also their talent and during Goal Hour, their talents could be furthered in the same manner as others with different strengths.

Caprock Academy will make every effort to meet the needs of all students with special needs. If it has been determined that Caprock cannot meet a child's need, then a meeting will be scheduled with the child's parent and the IEP team where a conversation and plan of action will be created. It is the intent of all staff to teach all students and as the vision and mission states, we will help *all* students.