Westwood Charter School

Charter Proposal, 2013

March 22, 2013
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AFFIRMATIONS AND ASSURANCES:

Westwood Charter shall:

- Be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations.
- Not charge tuition
- Not discriminate against any student on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race, or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code
- Admit all who wish to attend the school. EC 47605 (d) (2) (A). An existing public school that converts to a charter school shall adopt and maintain a policy giving admission preference to pupils who reside within the former attendance area of the school. EC 47605 (d) (1)
- Determine admission by a public random drawing, if the number of pupils who wish to attend the school exceeds the school capacity, and preference shall be extended to pupils who currently attend the Charter School and pupils who reside in the District EC 47605 (d) (2) (B)
- Not enroll pupils over nineteen (19) years of age unless continuously enrolled in the public school and making satisfactory progress toward high school diploma requirements.
- Not require any child to attend the charter school or any employee to work at the Charter School.
- In accordance with the Education Code Section 482100, if a pupil is expelled or leaves the charter School Shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil’s last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card, and health information.
To the Board of Education: An Overview

Westwood Charter School, an affiliated charter school of the Los Angeles Unified School District, is applying for its fourth charter renewal. One of the first charter schools in the District and the state, Westwood was granted its first charter by the School Board in 1993, renewed in 1998 and 2003, 2008 and seeks renewal again in 2013.

Our vision of quality education has remained constant, as has our belief that students need to triumph academically, socially, and emotionally.

Fundamental to our school is the notion of teamwork. We call our teams “Families.” Each teacher belongs to a grade-level Family that serves as a center for planning, collegial support, lesson study, the pre-intervention process, coaching, brainstorming, goal setting, curriculum development, and operations – every aspect of our school. Our school is composed of teams because we believe that the whole is much more than the sum of its parts, that teachers and students working collaboratively can far surpass teachers and students working in isolation.

Our 2013 charter petition includes thorough descriptions of our approach to teach curricular area, particularly our ability to address the California State Content Standards and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in ways that we know are effective. We prescribe a clear curricular focus on social science, because, as the study of people, it naturally forms the core of our curricular planning.

This latest document includes a strong emphasis on professional development, which we see as a critical part of the work of practitioners. Professional growth occurs through attendance at conferences and workshops but also thorough informal dialogue about teaching and learning with our colleagues.

Our focus as a charter school has been on excellent curriculum and instruction, which has resulted not only in increased student achievement, but also in the steady narrowing of the achievement gap among our students who are learning English and students who participate in special education. Our instructional program and methods strive, successfully, to meet the needs of all students. We will continue to use the program evaluation models we have developed to ensure accountability to all stakeholders.

We believe our documented successes and our clear and comprehensive plan for the future qualify us for charter renewal.
Introduction

Westwood Charter School is close to commencing twenty years of charter school status. During that time, the staff has created and worked in a learning laboratory atmosphere that has allowed us to take educational theory and the latest research and apply it to our daily practice. The lessons we have learned have been invaluable in raising the bar for our own professional growth, as well as the achievement of our students. We have had the remarkable good fortune of being practitioners in a setting in which we have been able to continually realign our thinking and our practice according to what we have seen on a daily basis in our work with children.

Our charter documents define the work and the workplace. These documents have given us the opportunity to construct a mission together, define our goals, and use our collective good thinking to initiate the blueprints for instruction and operation that guide the school forward.

Reflecting on the past five years has helped us to clarify our strengths as a school so that we may build upon those in the future. Westwood Charter School has a spirit that guests always comment upon when they visit. The primary source of Westwood’s vitality is the concept of team that is the underpinning and strength of the school. The notion of team is present in every formal and informal structure of the school. We call this team a “Family” throughout the charter document. The model of Family has not only withstood the test of time at Westwood, but also has become stronger throughout our years as a charter. Family teams meet once or twice weekly to collaborate on all components of instruction in all core curriculum areas. The Family serves as the center for planning, collegial support, lesson study, the pre-intervention process, coaching, brainstorming, goal setting, curriculum development, and operations. The notion of team is predicated on the conviction that teachers are better and smarter collectively than in isolation. Our practice is modeled upon this conviction that we are better together than alone. There is no “private practice” teaching at Westwood because it is contrary to our belief system about how to provide the best instruction possible. The Family model of organization has been a part of our charter since its inception.

During the third year of each five-year term of our charter, we conduct a comprehensive satisfaction survey among all Westwood stakeholder groups. This survey consists of questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. The responses are then analyzed and presented to staff members and leadership groups for discussion about making programmatic changes to reflect those areas needing change. This Midpoint Evaluation is an essential tool in our process of self-evaluation and the resultant change process. The staff very highly values the information presented in this document. This document is taken very seriously by staff. The results of the Midpoint Evaluation conducted during our current charter tell an important story about Westwood. Teachers should be very proud that the number one area of satisfaction among all of our parents is the teaching staff. Parents feel that the teachers provide a balanced instructional program that focuses not only on the academic achievements of young people, but also the social and emotional growth necessary to provide well-rounded, comfortable, productive citizens. Parents are proud to have their children attend Westwood. Many parents give willingly and generously of their time to ensure that the school sustains its high level of parent involvement. The second area of satisfaction noted in the Midpoint Evaluation refers to parents and the work they do on behalf of the children and the school. The Westwood community highly values the work of the school leaders as well. These key groups--teachers, school leaders, and parents--
work in concert to accomplish the vision that drives the academic, social, and ethical achievements of our children. The sense of team permeates the school.

Our vision to provide quality education remains constant. Our belief that students need to triumph academically, but also socially and emotionally, remains constant. Our desire to provide leadership experiences for students remains constant. Our dedication to providing an environment for our children and ourselves that allows us all to be learners in a relatively risk-free environment remains constant. Our commitment to excellence remains constant.

The last five years have been a period of change. Our enrollment has increased by 9.5%, and we have met the challenge of meeting the needs of our new population. We have experienced change in school leadership and teaching staff. As experienced staff has moved on to new positions, have embraced an influx of young, energetic teachers. This has resulted in a flow of creative juices and a desire to further refine our practice and develop professionally. We spent these years working, refining, reflecting, thinking, examining, and sharing. They have been years well spent. We are ready to move into the next five-year period of growth and challenge. The new charter reflects dedication to our basic philosophy of how we see children and what we hope for them.

The charter we are submitting will guide us through the next five years. This petition continues our clear curricular focus on social science. Social science will provide us with the vehicle to use the strategies we have carefully laid out in the new document. Social science lends a perfect framework in which we can put our theme of interdependence to work. The interdependence of people will be reflected in our work with social science, social values and ethics, and service learning. Interdependence is a perfect theme because it talks to the notion of how we affect each other; the relationship of people to each other; the dependence of all systems on one another. We will learn in a meaningful context that carefully reflects the Common Core Content Standards.

There is a strong emphasis on professional development in our new charter. There is an articulated dedication to the belief that professional development is a critical part of the work of practitioners and must go on consistently, in a variety of ways, so that teachers are always talking about teaching and learning. Over the last several years, we have explored innovative, research-based strategies such as Reading and Writing Workshop, the CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures Program, Council, English Language Development strategies, differentiation, and Constructivist based lesson design.

We have always been joyful about our work and we will continue to be exemplary. The next five years will bring us an abundance of opportunities to be better than we are today and to build a stronger school than we have right now. The way we have chosen to build the better, stronger school is reflected in the fourth charter renewal document presented to the Board of Education on behalf of the Westwood stakeholder family.
ELEMENT 1: Description of the educational program
The address of the Charter School is 2050 Selby Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90025.
The phone number of the Charter School is (310) 474-7788.
The contact person for the Charter School is Scott Whitbeck, Director.
The term of this charter shall be from August 13th 2013-June 30th 2018.
The grade configuration is TK-5.
The number of students this year is 875.
The grade levels of the students are TK-5.

“The operational capacity will be: 900
The instructional calendar will be: Traditional Calendar.

If space is available, traveling students will have the option to attend.”

1. (A)

STUDENT POPULATION
Westwood Charter School, an affiliated, dependent charter school of the Los Angeles Unified
School District, is applying for its fifth charter and fourth renewal. One of the first charter
schools in the district and the state, Westwood was granted its first charter in 1993, renewed in
1998 and 2003 and 2008, and seeks renewal again in 2013. The school is located at 2050 Selby
Avenue in West Los Angeles, in WEST Education Service Center of the Los Angeles Unified
School District. Westwood includes grades K-5 and operates on a traditional school calendar.
We currently serve 875 students, most of whom reside within our residential boundaries.

As an affiliated charter and a neighborhood school, our first obligation is to enroll our resident
students. Since the last renewal, the school population has increased from 801to 875, a direct
result of the increase in local residential density that began about twenty years ago. Thus,
children admitted by charter permit now comprise a miniscule percentage (4%) of the school
population, mostly in the upper grades. In grades one and two, only five students entered the
school by charter lottery, prior to the 2007-2008 school year, and no students were admitted
through the lottery during the 2011-2012 school year.

We hope, over the next five years of this renewal petition, to reduce the school population to no
more than 750 students. “The physical environment profoundly influences developmental
outcomes including academic achievement, cognitive, social and emotional development as well
as parenting behavior” (Kopko, 2007). By reducing the number of charter permits we hope to
stabilize the population and alleviate crowded conditions on the playground and in the lunch
area, and the accompanying noise levels. Presently, we have no set asides for intervention in
small groups, science or arts instruction, or itinerant teachers. Westwood Charter is significantly
larger than surrounding schools.

Identify and Describe Students

Westwood’s curriculum rests firmly on the notion of interdependence and the belief that we are
all connected to one another and to our planet. As such, we develop students’ understanding of
social structures and institutions, beginning with their own families, extending to the school and
local community, city and state, and finally to national and global understandings. However, those understandings must begin on a personal level. The diversity of our students and their families provides an ideal atmosphere in which to develop tolerance and appreciation for each other’s background and culture. “Our experience supports that all schools can use existing resources, structures, and strengths to help diverse students make the right decisions for the right reasons and to create positive influences that extend well beyond school walls” (Stein et al, 2000 p. 6).

Our student body of 875 is multicultural and multilingual, and represents cultures from over 32 different countries. Walking into Westwood Charter, the rich and diverse population is immediately noticeable. On paper, our student body is 70% Caucasian, implying that the majority of our pupils fit into a definable category. However, when we enter the campus, a different picture emerges. Currently, our students comprise a group that is approximately 70% white, 16% Asian, 9% Latino, 4% African American, and, 1% Filipino. Within the 70% “other white” are children of Middle Eastern heritage, children of mixed racial heritage, recent immigrants from Russia, a large Iranian community, and students from Azerbaijan, Canada, The Netherlands, France, Italy, Germany, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Serbia, Dubai, England, Israel, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Lebanon, South Africa, Switzerland, Australia, India, Pakistan, and Iraq. African students come from Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria, while Hispanics come from Mexico, Argentina, Peru, and Brazil. Within our student body classified as Asians, students are from Vietnam, Cambodia, China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and Taiwan. Families identify culturally as European, Gypsy, Latino, African, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Christian, Polynesian, Asian, and Filipino.

The main language groups represented by our students who are learning English, who make up 8% of the school’s population, are Farsi, Spanish, Korean, Hebrew and Japanese. English learners were reclassified at an average rate of 13.5% in the 2011-2012 school year, compared to 7.06% in LAUSD, and 7.08% in Education Service Center West.

![Figure 1](image)

Our students also represent a diversity of learning styles: 106 students classified as Gifted and Talented Learners comprise 12.1% of the school population; English Language Learners...
are 6.8% of our student population; Students with Disabilities make up 9.9% of the total school population; in grades 2 through 5, 60 Students with Disabilities are 6.9% of the total population.

Specific Educational Interests, Backgrounds, and Challenges

Our goal is for every child to meet or exceed the standards for his/her grade level. That is, however, only part of the picture. We want to guide students to be balanced in their academic, social, and emotional growth. Beginning with our social science-based curriculum, we believe that every child must have a solid understanding of social systems and his/her place in the world, but that’s only the beginning of the journey. We want every child to be a voracious reader, and to appreciate and practice the craft of writing. We want each child to delve into the mysteries of science and tackle challenging mathematics problems just for the sheer joy of discovery. We want every student to embrace the performing arts as a means of self-expression, both as an audience and a participant. Recognizing that learning is a social activity, we provide opportunities to solve problems and create projects together. Through special school events such as field trips, Back to School Night, the Halloween Hoot, Multicultural Week, Poetry Night, Jump Rope for Heart, Council, Spring Sings, and Open House, each student and their family finds their place in the Westwood community. As they participate in service learning and community service, each child learns they can make a difference in their world. Each student brings special interests and abilities to the classroom and school, and our responsibility is to nurture all children, honor their backgrounds, and help them tackle their challenges.

In a neighborhood of ever increasing density, much of our student body has changed, from children of single-family homes and two-parent households, to children who live in apartments with two working parents or single parents. Alternative households where students are raised by grandparents or close relatives are not uncommon. Children new to the school have a range of educational backgrounds and English proficiency. The reputation of Westwood’s inclusive special education program provides for families whose children have special needs. Students who may have been educated in a more restricted environment at other schools thrive in the general education setting at Westwood, as their needs are met in a classroom with general education peers. “Inclusive programs are those in which students, regardless of the severity of their disability, receive appropriate specialized instruction and related services within an age appropriate general education classroom in the school that they would attend if they did not have a disability. NASP believes that carefully designed inclusive programs individualized to meet the needs of students with disabilities represent a viable and legitimate option on the special education continuum that must be examined for any student who requires special education” (National Association of School Psychologists, 2007).

To meet the needs of our ever changing and increasing population, we now concentrate more resources in the following areas: professional development to train new teachers who have been added as a result of the expansion; professional development to provide teaching assistants with instructional strategies to use with small groups and individual children, some of whom may need extra support to master grade level standards; training for special education assistants and general education teachers to give them tools to meet special needs in a general education classroom; additional office and administrative time to monitor attendance and assist families in supporting their children and ensuring they attend school regularly and on time; parent education
classes for incoming families and continuing families to help them assist their children at home and give them opportunities to connect with the school community. We operate intervention programs for all grade levels, K-5, using a variety of models during the school day.

Teachers engage continually in collaboration and professional development to meet the needs of students with diverse learning styles. Walking into a Westwood Charter classroom, one sees a variety of activities designed to help students access the curriculum, be it hands-on experiences with experiments or manipulatives, individual, group or partner work, small and large group discussion, or teacher modeling. Field trips also provide the experiential base for learning, and students are called upon to use their life experience and prior knowledge to build new understanding and solve problems. Attention to individual needs is evident in the ways students work; at any given time we may observe students in the same classroom or grade level accessing their curriculum by means of direct teacher instruction in large or small groups, collaboration with a peer partner or group, the use of resources such as manipulatives and varied texts, the use of assistive technology, and participation in hands on experiences to be used as a basis for developing conceptual understanding of a big idea or principle. “[Humans] make personal meaning for ourselves and we create shared meanings with others. Thus, humans construct knowledge; we do not receive and internalize predigested concepts without simultaneously reacting to them within our own mental maps and previous experiences” (Gagnon, Collay, 2001).

At any given time, we may see a variety of support personnel co-teaching, collaborating, or consulting with the general education teacher. The school psychologist, the resource specialist teachers, paraprofessionals and special education assistants, as well as Designated Instructional Services personnel such as the speech teacher or occupational therapist, all work with the general education teacher to ensure that the needs of students are met in the classroom. Adult resources are assigned and concentrated in areas of need to maximize student success.

**Progress Report: 2008-2013**

The primary goals set forth in Westwood’s 2008 charter were to promote the achievement of all students and to prepare children for the 21st century. To successfully reach these goals, the school aimed to increase student academic achievement, nurture their social and emotional development, and instill in students a service ethic.

Over the last five years, Westwood staff has worked hard to meet the goals of our last charter renewal. We have, and will continue, to make learning meaningful and impact students by making connections to the real world: students participate in simulations and reenactments of historical events and eras; they develop critical thinking skills by solving problems and exercising choice in their learning; they practice listening and empathy through Council, PAWS and social lessons; and, they understand they can make an impact on their community and world by participating in service learning projects. We improve our use of Constructivist methodology, acknowledging that every child comes to school with an understanding of their environment and its systems, we provide common experiences and vocabulary so students build on their understanding collaboratively. In Westwood classrooms, every child and adult learns from one another in a variety of groupings, recognizing the interdependence of the academic, social, and emotional domains.
**Academic Achievement**

*Academic Performance Index*

Results of state mandated tests reflect the academic rigor of our program. During the last five years, Westwood’s Academic Performance Index has risen a total of 35 points overall, from 905 in 2008 to 940 in 2012. Every year since our last renewal we have met or exceeded our API growth target, with the exception of 2012, and exceeded the state API benchmark of 800. In years for which data is available, we have ranked in decile 10 on the API and ranked in deciles 4 to 10 inclusive for a demographically comparable school. Westwood consistently tests over 99% of its eligible student body, regardless of ability or program, including English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. Finally, our API scores have ranked at or above the median score for those schools within a two-mile radius, including those that have neither the neighborhood population density nor the overcrowded conditions our school faces.

Figure 2 shows the Academic Performance Index for the years 2008-2012.

**Figure 2**

*Academic Performance Index, Westwood Charter School 2008-2012*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>API</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>940</td>
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</table>

We are proud of our 900+ API Ranking for there has been a steady increase of 35 points with a small dip of minus 5 points in 2012. We continue to recognize that our population continues to change in the last five-year period. Our neighborhood has transformed from mostly single-family homes to include a greater number of apartment buildings, bringing increased density, more new students, and larger numbers to the school population. To address the needs of our population, new teachers, who have been added as a result of the expansion receive extra support through professional development and collaboration; teaching assistants are trained in instructional strategies to use with small groups and individual children to provide extra support during the school day; and, training is provided for special education assistants and general education teachers to give them tools to meet special needs in a general education classroom. We also encourage regular attendance and assist families to ensure students attend school regularly and on time. We hold parent education classes at convenient times for all families to help them support their child at home and give them opportunities to connect with the school community. To address the social/emotional adjustment and health needs of children in their new environment, we have added additional psychologist time.

*English Language Arts*

Over the last five years, Westwood has earned solid gains on the English Language Arts portion of the California Standards Test. At every grade level, the overall percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced has increased over the past five years. Figures 3 through 6 show the progress.
### Figure 3
**CST Levels of Proficiency, English Language Arts**
**Grade 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Advanced</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Proficient &amp; Advanced</td>
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<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Far Below Basic</td>
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### Figure 4
**Grade 3**

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<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>% Advanced</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient &amp; Advanced</td>
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### Figure 5
**Grade 4**

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<td>57%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<td>75%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient &amp; Advanced</td>
<td>86%</td>
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### Figure 6
**Grade 5**

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<td>44%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>69%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient &amp; Advanced</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Based on data analysis, and to address concerns about our students’ development of phonemic awareness and spelling skills, we have made the following adjustments in our instructional program. In the fall of 2005, we adopted a consistent phonics and word study program to ensure coherence throughout the grade levels. The Fountas and Pinnell Phonics Lessons have made it possible for students to consistently apply phonemic awareness and phonics skills from one primary grade to another and have improved their reading fluency and spelling as evidenced in daily reading and writing as well as formal assessments. The percentage of second grade proficient and advanced students has increased 8 percent between 2008-2012. More specifically, by looking at the impressive gains made by our 4th and 5th grade students, we can attribute that to the quality instruction being delivered by the teachers using both Fountas and Pinnell for phonics as well as in reading comprehension through Reading Workshop. Fourth grade students scoring proficient and advanced increased by 9% and fifth grade saw an increase of 13% from 2008-2012.

During the summers of 2006 and 2007, teachers participated in extensive staff development in the Reading and Writing Workshop program to address individual needs and teach core content. During the years of 2010-2012 the teachers engaged with Growing Educators to further their expertise in Reading and Writing Workshop. Teachers consistently evaluate their English Language Arts instruction in their weekly planning time by examining student work, systematically analyzing data, conducting lesson study, and attending ongoing professional development. Teachers plan for Reading and Writing Workshop with a focus on explicit skills to be taught and modeled, and on differentiating instruction for all learners. In site based professional development aligned to the Common Core State Standards, weekly planning sessions, and vertical teams, continue to help the teachers refine their practice with their colleagues.

**Response to Intervention**

We have expanded our commitment to assisting students by providing a targeted intervention program that helps students in mastering grade level standards. We have a clear focus on early intervention, as well, which has proven successful in past years. Teachers work in concert with school leaders, instructional aides, and special education staff to instruct students who need extra support in fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension.

**Figure 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students Served</th>
<th>Sessions per week</th>
<th>Total sessions Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2x</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2-5x</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4-5x</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4-5x</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the last five years of the charter, we have tripled the number of students who are served per year and more than doubled the number of sessions per week. That is, moving from 32 sessions per year to 327. As our program develops, we hope to see a decrease in below basic and far below basic scores within our second and third grade. As a result, we have seen specific
increased skill mastery in the incoming third graders and thus increased this successful model to our fourth and fifth grades.

Parents and community volunteers also teach Junior Great Books, a reading enrichment program. As parents and volunteers work with Great Books groups, classroom teachers are available to work with children who need extra assistance.

**Mathematics**

Over the last five years, Westwood students have also shown gains on the Mathematics portion of the California Standards Test. Figures 8 through 11 show the progress.

---

**CST Levels of Proficiency, Mathematics**

**Figure 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Advanced</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient &amp; Advanced</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Basic</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below Basic</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Far Below Basic</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Advanced</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient &amp; Advanced</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Basic</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below Basic</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Far Below Basic</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Advanced</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient &amp; Advanced</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Basic</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below Basic</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Far Below Basic</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Every grade level has made gains in the number of children scoring at Proficient or Advanced. Fourth and Fifth grade made especially impressive gains, with a 16% increase in fourth graders scoring Proficient and Advanced. Fifth grade students increased by 14% over the past five years. We can attribute some of the increase to the newly formed differentiation model based on assessment data. We began offering math intervention classes for fourth and fifth graders at risk. Students worked in groups of 5 or 6 children with the assistance of an adult to rotate through four 20 minute instructional sessions. Here they participated in explicit, directed, and targeted instruction, hands-on learning, fact practice, computation skills at their skill, and independent practice of newly taught concepts.

Given that multiplication is such an essential skill to success in fourth and fifth grade math and throughout middle and high school, we are now giving increased attention in third grade to conceptual understanding of multiplication and division, and to mastering the facts to automaticity. Teachers and paraprofessionals employ a variety of strategies including use of manipulatives, cooperative games, and explicit connection of hands-on activities to mathematical concepts, as well as traditional methods such as paper and pencil and drill/practice, to ensure that every student has facility with multiplication and division. Parents participate in sessions designed to give them tools and strategies to work with their children at home. Students are monitored frequently and the results are used to guide teaching practice.

**Science**

Figure 12 shows the California Standards Test results for Science. During the five-year period, the number of fifth grade students scoring Advanced or Proficient has increased from 75% to 95% of those tested. In the same period, students scoring basic, below basic and far below basic have decreased an impressive 20%.

---

**Figure 11**

**Grade 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Advanced</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient &amp; Advanced</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Basic</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below Basic</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Far Below Basic</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Figure 12**

**Grade 5 CST Levels of Proficiency, Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Advanced</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient &amp; Advanced</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Basic</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below Basic</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Far Below Basic</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Westwood Charter continues to improve its science curriculum to ensure that all students master their grade level standards. Vertical and grade level teams have articulated how and when each branch of science is taught based on the California state standards.

**English Language Learners**

Of 498 Westwood Charter students tested on the CST in spring of 2012, 36 students, or 8.2% of the student population, were English Language Learners.

**Figure 13**

**English Language Learners Scoring Proficient or Above, CST 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English Language Arts</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Valid Scores</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Advanced</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Advanced &amp; Proficient</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Basic</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below Basic</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Far Below Basic</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at our CST scores of the subgroup of English Language Learners we see that 27.3% of the students learning English scored advanced or proficient on the English Language Arts section. In the Mathematics section 45.5% of the students learning English scored proficient or advanced. Teachers continue to meet the needs of the students learning English through the use of sheltered English techniques, SDAIE strategies, pre-teaching and re-teaching content vocabulary, and providing a rich experiential curriculum through which to develop understanding in English.

**Students With Disabilities**

Of 498 Westwood Charter students tested on the CST in spring of 2012, 37 students, or 7.4% of the student population, were Students with Disabilities. 2% of the students took the California Modified Assessment (CMA).

**Figure 14**

**Students with Disabilities Scoring Basic or Above, CST 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English Language Arts</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Valid Scores</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Advanced</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Advanced &amp; Proficient</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Basic</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below Basic</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Far Below Basic</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Westwood Charter has met the goal of the Los Angeles Unified School District in meeting the outcomes of the Modified Consent Decree, regarding achievement test scores. The goal was to increase the percentage of Students with Disabilities in Grades 2-11 participating in the California Standards Test (CST), whose scores place them in the combined rankings of Proficient and Advanced, to at least 51% in English Language Arts and at least 36% in Mathematics. In 2012, 94% of the students with disabilities participated in STAR testing. We reached these goals earning 54.1% in English Language Arts and 59.4% in Mathematics.

Comparison with Neighboring Schools

Westwood Charter’s permit students come from a variety of schools in Los Angeles. Figure 15, below, compares the California Standards Test results of Westwood with selected resident schools students would have attended if they were not at Westwood Charter.

Figure 15
Westwood Elementary vs. Selected Resident Schools, California Standards Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>English Language Arts</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below &amp; Far Below Basic</td>
<td>Proficient and Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canfield El</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Heights El</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clover</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairburn</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overland El</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warner</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westwood El</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident Schools Average</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In English Language Arts and Mathematics, Westwood students significantly outperformed their counterparts at their resident schools.

The following chart (Figure 16) compares the results at Westwood with those of surrounding LAUSD elementary schools within a two-mile radius. It should be noted that while these schools are close by, they represent neighborhoods with varying demographics. These schools also varied in the number and percentage of students tested, as well as the individual needs of those students (English Language Learners, Special Education, Gifted and Talented). Westwood falls in the middle range as compared to neighboring schools, which range from 897 to 975 on the Academic Performance Index.
Figure 16
Westwood Charter School Comparison of API with Neighboring Schools, 2012

While all the above schools lie within a three-mile radius of Westwood Charter School, they represent differing populations. It is worthy of note that, according to the School Accountability Report Card for 2011-2012, Westwood tested 12% of students with disabilities, higher than all comparable neighborhood schools except for Castle Heights who tested 13%. Westwood Charter tested 498 students, almost double that of Fairburn, Overland and Nora Sterry and significantly greater than the other surrounding schools listed above.

The following chart shows a comparison of demographic and achievement of Westwood Charter School with District surrounding schools.

Figure 17
Demographic Information for Prospective Site
(Surrounding Schools Data)
Attendance
“School attendance is vital to student’s achievement. Students who develop patterns of good attendance are much more likely to be successful both academically and socially.” (LAUSD, 2007) As a measure of student and parental commitment to education, the average daily attendance rates for the last five years are contained in Figure 18. Westwood has continued to improve its attendance rate over the last five years of the charter. As evidenced in the attendance rates, children want to be here; the curriculum is challenging and exciting, and parents frequently report that their child doesn’t want to miss school for any reason.

Figure 18
Attendance Rates of Westwood Students, 2007-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Stability Rate</th>
<th>Transiency Rate</th>
<th>Actual Attend Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>98.50</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>97.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>97.56</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>96.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>96.61</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>96.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>96.04</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>96.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>96.13</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>96.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We believe when appropriate behavior is the prevailing force in a school culture, discipline problems decline, academic performance and school attendance improve. At Westwood Charter School, the teaching of social and community ethics and values has always been a cornerstone of the curriculum. We have implemented a School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Plan that encourages students to attend school. We focus on key expectations that are used across the grade levels and throughout the school community to establish our commitment to the teaching and reinforcement of positive behavior. These expectations are enforced throughout the Westwood Charter community, both at school and at home, to maintain a common language that reflects our school values and expectations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SW-BSP “P.A.W.S.”</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Stay</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compass</td>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the implementation of our School Wide-Behavior Support Program in 2008 office referrals have declined. The SWBSP committee created a new office referral system based on our school-wide expectations to gather baseline data regarding behavioral incidents. In the spring of 2010, the staff used this data to target areas of need. We identified the two highest areas as Compassion and Safety, which encompassed emotional well being, and physical safety. An anti-bully focus was set to address the two domains. The next fall, the staff participated in multiple professional development sessions, from tier one classroom interventions to dealing with significant or
repetitive behaviors in positive and effective ways. In addition to positive behavior intervention, structures were put in place to support teachers. Referrals in those areas dropped significantly that year. In the fall 2011, we continued to target the emotional well being of our students and bought additional counseling time with the school psychologist. Referrals in the area of Compassion again decreased. In 2011-2012 staff focused on physical safety expectations throughout the school encouraging teachers to refer all students involved in any type of physical altercation which we believe is the reason for the increase in numbers in this area.

Figure 19
Suspensions at Westwood, 2007-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AI/Alsk</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Pac Isl</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Other White</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suspension data shows a decrease. Our school discipline policy embraces the concept of progressive discipline. Westwood Charter school leaders generally refrain from issuing formal discipline (i.e., suspension or expulsion) as first response to student misconduct, and instead use the problem solving office referral form to develop a plan of action for the future. The teaching of new positive behaviors to replace misbehavior has also resulted in fewer repetitions of problem behaviors. Formal methods of discipline should only be used after all alternative consequences have not had the desired effect.

Other Applicable Characteristics of Target Population

Since we are a neighborhood school and 96% of our student population lives within our residential boundaries, the makeup of our student body is determined largely by the families who live in the neighborhood. However, we make every effort to be inclusive with our student population. One group for whom this is especially true is our Students with Disabilities. We no longer have special day classes therefore we have a inclusion population who have a variety of disabilities, including, but not limited to: developmentally disabilities, autism, other health impairments, orthopedic impairments, intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbances, specific learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and speech and language impairments. This success happens in the general education setting because classroom teachers and special education teachers collaborate to accommodate and meet the needs of each student. Social lessons in the general education classrooms assist other children in developing an understanding for children with disabilities and help them appreciate the diversity of learning styles represented in the classroom.
1. (B)

Mission
Connected through the theme of interdependence, students are challenged to construct knowledge through meaningful interactions with each other, the community, and the world. Creative and purposeful experiences that nurture the curiosity, potential, and uniqueness of each child are the hallmarks of our collaborative learning environment.

Vision
We will retain our commitment to experiential learning and developmental curriculum so that all students become proficient, critical thinkers. As responsible global citizens, students will be compassionate, inclusive, resilient, perseverant, resourceful, and ethical.

Teacher Goals
To promote our mission and vision, teachers will:
- create a school-wide, grade level specific scope and sequence of social studies themes and concepts,
- expand project based learning opportunities,
- encourage resilience by modeling and honoring the learning process not just the “right answer” and multiple approaches are welcomed,
- develop a community service ethic so that students will learn the values of helping others and maintaining strong community,
- involve the entire community: students, parents, schools, and businesses, with each element being accountable to all other elements of the community,
- support the purposeful use of technology in advancing the learning process,
- guide children in developing skills and conceptual understanding in the core content areas, and
- further our own learning by pursuing professional development opportunities.

Students Goals
To promote our mission and vision, students will:
- use multiple strategies to solve problems,
- play an integral role in developing curriculum,
- appreciate and honor diversity in a global society,
- become intrinsically motivated, resilient, lifelong learners who initiate progress and change,
- service their global community as an integral part of their education,
- become effective problem solvers and communicators who adapt to changing environments, and
- think independently and formulate questions about the world around them in order to become agents of change.
**What does it mean to be an educated person in the 21st century?**

Given that the purpose of public education is the development of the whole child as well as the development of genuine learning skills, we believe that children of the 21st century must be engaged in experiences that lead to insightful, inclusive, meaningful, productive, flexible, and adaptable learning. The students of Westwood Charter School will be actively involved in their learning, both in determining the nature of their educational extensions and in being active participants in the learning experiences provided.

At Westwood Charter School, we understand that society in the 21st century is both global and technological, where change is the only constant. Our students must be prepared to solve a range of intellectual and technological problems. Our students must be resilient and adaptable, able to process and evaluate information quickly and judiciously. They must embrace ethnic and cultural diversity as the farthest corners of our world become accessible. They must respect divergent viewpoints and alternative learning styles, as well. The world will need compassionate and conservation minded problem solvers who will be equipped with the tools to solve the as-yet unknown problems in our future.

Through our theme of interdependence, Westwood students’ learning experiences give them repeated interactions with the 21st Century concept of “systems thinking,” in which students must “analyze how parts of a whole interact with each other to produce overall outcomes in complex systems,” from (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009, p. 4). They know their actions are a part of a larger consequence; they know they have an essential role in society.

The global mindedness and the technology-propelled nature of society tells us that graduates of Westwood Charter School must be able to think critically, reason, question, conserve, empathize, and adeptly employ the scientific methods of investigation. They must also remain intellectually flexible, think about complex systems, and think holistically, abstractly, and creatively. They must be risk takers.

They must be able to navigate the exponential increase in information and technology and decide what is essential, valuable, and useful.

Westwood Charter graduates will be sensitive to the notion that we must conserve the world’s dwindling natural resources, as well as be sensitive to others with whom we share this planet. Westwood students must understand the complexity and fragility of the natural world.
How Learning Best Occurs

Westwood Charter School believes that learning best occurs when students are highly motivated and actively participate in constructing knowledge through inquiry, observation, hands-on activities, field study, and collaboration. Children use their knowledge base, particularly in social science, and build new understandings with teachers’ guidance and a challenging curriculum. Children are encouraged to think critically and creatively within an environment that is stimulating, yet safe and nurturing.

Westwood Charter School believes that learning best occurs when teachers participate in ongoing, quality professional development, when teachers articulate regularly, when teachers review assessment data and plan accordingly, and when teachers collaborate within Families and across Families.

Westwood Charter School believes that learning best occurs when parents, aides, volunteers, and other staff are valued members of the Westwood Charter community. Their contribution to the community is recognized as an integral element of the success of the school.

Westwood Charter believes learning best occurs when:

- Students learn in an environment that is safe, clean, and risk-free
- Students participate in the arts and in physical education
- Students pursue knowledge based on their own experiences and interests
- Students engage in challenging activities and purposeful investigations
- Students share what they know, how they know it, and what they want to learn
- Students are encouraged to build on strengths and improve areas of need
- Students read quality literature related to content study
- Students work well as individuals and as group members
- Students use appropriate social skills and problem-solving strategies in curriculum study and everyday situations,
- Students value all types of learners in the classroom as they work with all learners
- Students are encouraged to go beyond the Common Core Standards in subject areas
- Students are seen as whole individuals, in which their emotional and social growth is addressed as well as their intellectual growth
- Students know there are clear standards and consequences for behavior
- Students develop lifelong behaviors as readers, writers, and critical thinkers
- Teachers work collaboratively to provide quality instruction
- Teachers differentiate instruction based on the needs of the learners
- Teachers use modeling, direct instruction, and questioning as teaching methods
- Teachers guide instruction based on the Common Core Standards
- Teachers identify students’ strengths and help students to optimize them
- Teachers identify students’ need areas and help to strengthen them
- Teachers assess students regularly in a variety of ways
- Teachers use assessment data to drive, adapt, and scaffold instruction
- Teachers are involved in ongoing professional development
• Teachers provide challenges for students, asking them to think critically and problem solve
• Teachers structure units of study based on student interests; the curriculum is dynamic and evolving
• Teacher Assistants assist in small group and one-on-one instruction and in reteaching and reinforcing concepts presented by the teacher
• Teacher Assistants support classroom instruction, supervision of students, and assist in student conflict resolution
• Teacher Assistants support teachers in helping create engaging classroom environments
• School leaders support the work of teachers and students
• School leaders hold high expectations for all students regarding academic, social, and emotional growth
• School leaders set high standards for professionalism, commitment, and productivity of the staff
• School leaders serve as instructional leaders for the school by maintaining high expectations, promoting the vision of the charter, and providing the resources to ensure the vision is implemented
• School leaders ensure that the Common Core Standards are being addressed through professional development that promotes best practices, teacher articulation, and evaluation of assessment data
• Parents support the charter vision and the work of teachers to provide the best possible education
• Parents are actively involved in their children’s education and understand how to best assist in their learning
• Parents actively participate in the life of the school by volunteering, keeping informed through reading Constant Contact /The Westwood Window, participating in parent-teacher conferences and attending Westwood community events, parent education and information meetings, and attending Westwood Charter Community Council
• Parents are involved in the WISE and in the School Based Management Board
• Office staff maintains a smooth-running and organized office
• Plant manager and custodial staff maintain a clean and safe campus
• Nurse and psychologist help support the emotional, behavioral, and physical well being of the students
• Nurse, psychologist, and speech teacher ensure that IEP processes move along in a timely manner
SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Overview

The school is organized around clusters of classrooms, called Families. Being part of a family is vitally important for children in all parts of their lives. We know that families support children and provide a nurturing, accepting environment for them to grow. We also know families provide supervision, limits, and opportunities for socialization. Moreover, in a family, children learn that each member brings unique individual strengths to the group, and that everyone works toward the goals of growth and well-being of everyone in the family. Westwood Charter School’s Families are designed to simulate the support that families give to children at home.

The spirit of collegial Family organization has proven to be a critical component to the success, growth, and development of the collaborative staff team we have created. Over the course of the past twenty years, collegial Families have provided the foundation and strength of curricular development, instructional delivery, technical support, professional development, mentoring, staff morale, communication and camaraderie.

The school has a minimum of six Families. Teachers within a Family work together to plan their curricula, while working toward umbrella goals for all school Families.

Families interact with other children and teachers in their own and other Families across grade levels. They may work with other teachers within the Family on teacher-selected areas of the curriculum, to support instructional grouping such as in reading or math, for special interest studies, or on special Family-wide activities. (Reading Buddies is one example of cross grade level interactions.)

The Composition of Families

Collegial Families are composed of teachers who teach the same grade level or multi-aged groupings of consecutive grades. The collegial Family provides support for each of its members in all areas of school life.

At the end of the preceding school year, each Family chooses a Family Chair for the following school year, who represents the Family at Family Chair meetings with the Leadership Team. Additionally, the Family Chairs choose a Chair of Chairs who assists the Leadership Team in setting agendas. The Family Chair acts as a facilitator at Family meetings and also as a liaison between the Leadership Team and the Family.

Collegial Practices

Teachers in each Family meet on a weekly basis for collaborative planning. We believe this practice supports thoughtful and effective teaching within our classrooms. We value this time, knowing that expertise in teaching comes from a process of sharing, discussing new ideas, reflecting on practice, and developing new approaches. As stated in Stanford University’s School Redesign Network website, “…at successful schools, teachers work together to develop the
curriculum, to develop lessons that will work with their students, to look at student work, and to evaluate their lessons and troubleshoot for future classes. If teachers do not work together, it is impossible to develop a collective perspective in the school. This means that curriculum will be fragmented, problems of practice will not be addressed, and students will fall through the cracks” (Stanford University School of Education, 2002).

At weekly Family meetings teachers accomplish a variety of tasks, such as:

- discussing/planning grade level curriculum; creating and developing curriculum aligned with Common Core State Standards that supports needs of all learners, using latest research-based educational strategies,
- analyzing and reflecting upon student work,
- reflecting on lessons and examining teaching practices,
- meeting to discuss individual students in an intervention process, to collaborate in designing action plans to enhance student achievement and accomplishment,
- reporting and discussing dialogue from Family Chair meetings regarding professional and curricular development,
- developing means of enhancing home-school communication,
- providing general support and guidance to each other,
- reporting and discussing activities from School Based Management meetings, and
- planning special activities or school events.

In addition to curricular planning, our collaboration outside of Family meetings includes peer coaching and observation.

**Vertical Teams**

We will use flexible, vertical teaming as a staff development strategy to discuss and solve school wide problems as needed. We will also use teacher teaming and dialogue across primary and upper grades or with adjacent grade levels for articulation purposes or to discuss other appropriate curricular and social issues. Committee work at Westwood Charter is done within the structure of vertical teams, as teachers address issues of safety, service learning, ethics and values, behavior standards, and curriculum.
**Student Placement**

The classes within a *Family* are formed according to grade level and may include multi-age or looping. The classes are built to be heterogeneous and reflect a balance of children’s academic strengths and needs, social maturity, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, language needs, and gender.

The teachers in each grade level work together in the spring to make groupings of students to go into the following grade. Great care and thought is taken to be sure the classes are balanced with equity in mind. Teachers use their knowledge of the students to create appropriate groupings. These class groupings are given to the principal who assigns a teacher to each one.

**Time Banking**

Westwood Charter uses a Tuesday/Thursday banked day schedule for professional development per our time/bank waiver request to the Los Angeles Unified School District. This “time banking” provides the staff with invaluable time to meet as a group or in *Families* to discuss to engage in professional growth that forward the educational success and achievement of our students. We will continue to submit a yearly time/bank waiver request to the district.

**Programmatic Review**

A thorough evaluation will be conducted during the third year of the charter implementation using focus groups, interviews and written questionnaires. Parents will be surveyed about their satisfaction with the overall program of Westwood Charter School: the school's organization, curriculum, and instruction; their child's education; their child's participation in programs and activities, and suggestions for improvement (see sample parent survey, Appendix B). Teachers will be interviewed about the school's progress in meeting the goals of the charter, changes that have been successful or unsuccessful, as well as changes that should be implemented, and priorities for the future. This will be our Midpoint Evaluation and will have a significant impact on program direction in our current and future charter petitions.

Another evaluation component will be a survey of Westwood Charter School graduates to find out their opinions of how well the school prepared them academically for middle school. Each year, all 6th-graders who graduated from Westwood the previous June, their parents, and their middle school teachers will be surveyed about students' preparation in different subject matter areas as well as preparation in study skills (see sample middle school survey, Appendix B). Teachers and administrative staff will use information from this survey to assess the academic preparation of Westwood students: to determine which programmatic emphases are working well and should remain highlighted in Westwood's curriculum and instruction, and to determine which areas should receive greater focus to help prepare students better for middle school.
A TYPICAL DAY AT WESTWOOD CHARTER SCHOOL

Lower grades

A visitor may see the following on any given day at Westwood Charter School. Students at all grade levels are engaged and active in learning as teachers facilitate the process. Primary students are involved in daily calendar work in the morning, tracking the number of school days and then using this number in math thinking and activities such as tallying the days in groups of fives, tens, and ones, creating money combinations, exploring odd and even, and creating number sentences that equal that number. Students create word problems based on weather graphs and fellow students solve them.

After morning calendar, language arts instruction follows. Students are engaged daily in language activities wherein they correct sentences by applying proper punctuation, grammar, spelling, and capitalization. The lessons allow students to practice proofreading skills and to share grammar rules with fellow students. Talking, sharing, and explaining ensure that all students practice communication skills in meaningful contexts. Students participate in Reading and Writing Workshops. Teachers present a mini-lesson, often using a piece of quality literature as a springboard, and then students spend long uninterrupted blocks of time reading and writing. Teachers circulate the room, conferencing with students and making anecdotal notes and recording observations regarding the children’s progress. Teachers conduct small group lessons in phonics, spelling, fluency, literary elements, and comprehension strategies. These lessons are based on the students’ developmental levels and areas of need. Instructional aides assist and support the classroom teachers and the students. Students are reading and writing, sharing observations with partners, small groups, and the class. They move about the room independently, retrieving books and supplies as needed. They use Thinking Maps for reading comprehension and for the organization of their ideas. They learn in a print rich and talk rich environment, making connections and discoveries all the time. Students share their reading observations and writing with the class. Students also sing, chant poetry, and are involved in dramatic play. Teachers support students who are learning English by providing hands-on activities and using Sheltered English techniques, such as Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE). Parent and community volunteers are welcome. They read with children and support classroom activities.

Mathematics instruction follows language arts. Teachers provide direct instruction in mathematics guided by the California Common Core State Standards. Children engage in problem solving, such as the problem of the day. The students share how they reach solutions, consistently talking about ideas and strategies with classmates. They may record these thoughts and strategies in math journals. Talking about math is an essential part of the instructional day. Teachers are always asking questions and children are always encouraged to share their thinking. Other math activities and investigations follow. Often, games and manipulatives are used to engage children. Children participate in timed drills to practice fluency with known operations and number facts.
Students participate in social science and science in the afternoon. Students may be constructing a model community or learning about and acting out the parts and functions of a tree. They may sort rocks by size, run their own post office or restaurant, or teach another class about the layers of the earth. They participate in Council and study the works of contemporary artists. Physical education, music, social and community ethics and values, Council, and art are also part of the primary school day. They compose the Daily News as they reflect about the events of their day. The environment is inclusive. Children of varied abilities work together in educational pursuits. Program Support Personnel may be present and work in concert with the classroom teachers to facilitate the learning process. Children work individually, in pairs, small groups, and as a whole class. Teachers provide direct instruction or circulate the room, working with groups, encouraging and giving feedback. Children are busy-thinking, talking, moving, writing, singing, drawing, connecting, and constructing.

**Upper grades**
A visitor may see the following at any given day at Westwood Charter School. Children are engaged and active in upper elementary classrooms, as well. The day begins with language arts activities. These include spelling activities, word study activities, and Writing Workshop. Many teachers follow the Lucy Calkins’s *Units of Study*. Students write and conference with peers and with the teacher. They study fine literature as models for writing. They use a variety of writing techniques in a low risk, supportive environment. Oral language skills are incorporated throughout the language arts, as students share published and in-process pieces with the class. Students also use technology to research, edit, and present work. Teachers provide direct instruction to the whole class and small groups. Teachers also guide and facilitate learning activities and investigations. Criteria charts and modeling are used to provide explicit instruction and promote quality standards. The school day includes Literature Circles and Reading Workshop. In Reading Workshop, the teacher presents a mini-lesson, often using a fine work of literature to teach a strategy, skill, or literary technique. Students spend long periods of uninterrupted reading time, applying the skills they have learned while the teacher circulates in the room and conferences with students. Students reflect on their reading and share thoughts with partners and with the class. In Literature Circles, students read and reflect upon fine literary works alone, in pairs, or in small groups. When students finish reading a novel, they complete a culminating project such as creating a multimedia presentation on literary elements or turn the novel into a short picture book to share with young readers.

Math instruction follows. In math instruction, students may be grouped by ability. As we transition to Common Core Standards, the State standards are at the core of the curriculum, but each group’s pacing is set by the needs of the students, as are supplementary activities. Writing, connecting, and talking about math are an integral part of the Westwood Charter math curriculum. As with primary classrooms, students begin with a problem of the day. Students problem solve, share their strategies and new thinking emerges. Students participate in hands-on activities, employing manipulatives to demonstrate their mathematical thinking. Lessons often are taken from Marilyn Burns *About Teaching Mathematics: A K-8 Resource*. New concepts are presented and homework may be corrected together with the students. Students participate in timed multiplication tests to promote fluency with facts.
Students participate in social science and science instruction in the afternoon. Social Science themes and units are often reflected in the works that students read. Students conduct social science research and share their findings with the class. They may be studying the Westward Movement or The Age of Exploration. They may be reading *The Sign of the Beaver* and then creating an “Alone in the Wilderness” portfolio in which they make a plan as how they will survive by themselves for a month, just like Matt did in the story. The students keep a diary, design his/her home, choose a way to measure time, and determine how they will gather enough food to stay alive. After reading *Johnny Tremain*, the students create their own version of a Boston newspaper. The students examine artifacts used by the Gabrielinos and make inferences about how they were used based on their shapes and materials. Then they compare and contrast them with their modern day counterparts using a Thinking Map. Students spend time silently reading books of their choosing, as teachers recognize the importance of individual book choice in creating lifelong readers. Students enjoy classroom libraries as well as visits to the school library.

Students are involved in science investigations and employ the scientific method by creating pendulums to investigate the relationship between its length and the number of cycles it will complete within a set time period. Here they are studying the effects of different variables on a scientific outcome. Students research biomes and the animals best suited to survive there. They apply researched information about ecosystems to create their own food chains and food webs, determining which animals in the chain are producers, consumers, decomposers, etc.

Students are also involved in music, art, physical education, Council, social and community ethics and values, and health. Students learn in an inclusive environment where all students are valued. Here, too, Resource Specialist Teachers and aides work cooperatively with classroom teachers to ensure that all children access the curriculum. Teachers keep in mind the needs of students who are learning English by using Sheltered English strategies. Instructional aides and parents assist in supporting the educational program. Students use an assortment of resources to build and share knowledge and information. They collaborate, use technology, research books and websites, query teachers and other adults, make connections, construct new learning and share this with the larger learning community of which they are a part.
Sample Daily Schedule

Sample Daily Schedule- Individual classrooms vary somewhat, but this offers a general idea. As we strive for an integrated curriculum, many content area lessons are incorporated in language arts activities and vice versa.

Kindergarten: Schedule

8:05 – 9:05 Divided Day – “Early Birds” Arrive
  Reading Workshop or ELA Small Group Instruction, Writing Workshop
9:05-9:50 Morning Meeting/Opening – “Later Gators” Arrive
  Songs, Roll, Flag, Lunch Count, Schedule, Calendar (Math Their Way)
  activities
9:50 – 10:10 Snack
10:10 – 10:30 Yard/Play
10:30 – 11:20 Mathematics
11:20 – 11:40 Lunch
11:40 – 12:00 Yard/Play
12:00 – 12:15 Shared Reading/whole group ELD
12:15 – 1:15 Social Science / Science
  cont. ELD in small groups
1:15 – 1:35 Closing
  Songs, Schedule, Share, Job Responsibilities, Daily News
1:35-1:40 Dismissal of “Early Birds”
1:40 – 2:40 Divided Day – “Later Gators” Remain
  Reading or ELA Small Group Instruction, Writing Workshop

(Kindergarten runs a divided day schedule which fulfills district required minutes.
  Total Kindergarten minutes exceed the half day Kindergarten model. )

Kindergarten Family Schedule Rationale

“STAR data indicated that small classes led to statistically significant improvements in reading and mathematics, and benefits were greatest for students who started in small classes early (full-day kindergarten or first grade). While small classes benefit all kinds of students, much research has shown that the benefits may be greatest for minority students or students attending inner-city schools. For these students, smaller classes can shrink the achievement gap and lead to reduced grade retention, fewer disciplinary actions, less dropping out, and more students taking college entrance exams. The most dramatic impact seems to be achieved by reaching students early. Ideally, students should experience small classes of 13 to 17 students when entering school, in either kindergarten or first grade.” (American Educational Research Association, 2007)

In order to maximize learning time in small groups and facilitate differentiated instruction for all kindergarten students, Westwood Charter School’s Kindergarten Family will operate on a split day schedule. Half the kindergarten students will begin their school day at 8:05 and be dismissed
at 1:45. The other half will begin their school day at 9:05 and be dismissed at 2:45. All kindergarten students, then, will be in the classroom from 9:05 to 1:45. We believe that such a schedule encourages children’s maximum social, emotional, physical, and academic growth by allowing a teacher to get to know each child both in the whole class setting and in smaller groups. This way the teacher is better able to address individual needs. Having a group of ten students for an hour each day will allow time for targeted, explicit, individualized instruction. We believe this model will serve all learners well, but especially our at risk children, as they will have a smaller class size for a period of time every day, and an opportunity to acquire and master specific grade level skills.

**Transitional Kindergarten**
Affiliated Charter Schools will implement Transitional Kindergarten (K) in accordance with District policy.

**Lower Grade Daily Schedule**
- 8:05 – 8:25 Opening Calendar and Daily Oral Language
- 8:25 – 9:25 ELD
- 9:25 – 9:45 Mad Minute
- 9:45 – 10:05 Recess
- 10:05 – 11:00 Writing Workshop/Spelling/Phonics/Reading Workshop
- 11:00 – 12:00 Math Groups
- 12:00 – 12:45 Lunch
- 12:45 – 1:05 Independent Reading/Read Aloud
- 1:05 – 1:25 Physical Education
- 1:25 – 2:30 Social Studies/Science
- 2:30 – 2:45 Pack Up
**Third, Fourth and Fifth Grade Daily Schedule**

8:10 – 9:10 ELD Instruction  
9:10 – 10:10 Math  
10:10 – 10:30 Recess  
10:30 – 11:30 Writing Workshop/Reading Workshop  
11:30 – 12:30 Social Studies/ P.E.  
12:30 – 1:15 Lunch  
1:15 – 1:40 Read Aloud  
1:40 – 2:40 Science/Health  
2:40 – 2:45 Pack Up

We provide large blocks of instructional time for language arts and mathematics. We instruct in the content areas daily and provide students with independent reading time. We read to our students every day and ask them to share orally with the class each day, as well. Students participate in weekly Council for approximately a half hour to an hour. They also participate in Second Step and health lessons weekly. Students participate in physical education for 100 minutes each week. Physical education teachers provide the majority of this instruction; the classroom teachers provide the remaining instruction. All students participate in bi-monthly, one-hour art lessons given by the art instructor, as well as participating art lessons given by the classroom teacher. A music teacher offers music instruction weekly for half-hour sessions; as with art, classroom teachers incorporate music instruction in the integrated curriculum. Children in grades four and five can participate in Instrumental Music instruction for 45 minutes weekly. All students spend 32 weeks in physical education.

California Education Code 47612.5 states: “(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law and as a condition of apportionment, a charter school shall do all of the following:

(1) For each fiscal year, offer, at a minimum, the following number of minutes of instruction:
   (A) To pupils in kindergarten, 36,000 minutes.
   (B) To pupils in grades 1 to 3, inclusive, 50,400 minutes.
   (C) To pupils in grades 4 to 8, inclusive, 54,000 minutes.”

At Westwood, the instructional minutes for an average week is as follows:

TK & Kindergarten: 1,475 minutes per week  
Grades 1-5: 1,595 minutes per week

Westwood Charter will offer at minimum, the number of daily, weekly and annual minutes of instruction set forth in Education Code 47612.5.
SCHOOL CALENDAR

August
14-First day of school
31-No School

September
3-No School Labor Day
17-No School Rosh Hashana
26-No School Yom Kippur

October
5-Minimum Day
8-12 Conference Week (Minimum Days)

November
12-No School Veterans Day
19-23-Thanksgiving

December 17-January 7-No School Winter Break

January
21-No School-Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February
18-No School-President’s Day

March
11-15-Conference Weeks (Minimum Days)
25-29-No School-Spring Break

April
1-No School-Ceaser Chavez Day

May
27-No School-Memorial Day
31-Last Day of School

School Hours:
Grades 1–5
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:05 am–2:45 pm
Tuesdays and Thursday and Minimum Days, 8:05 am–1:45 pm

Kindergarten
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:05 am–2:45 pm
Tuesdays and Thursday and Minimum Days, 8:05 –1:45 pm
1. (D)

Framework for Instructional Design

Set Goals
Westwood Charter School teachers design instruction based on the California Common Core State Standards and the needs and interests of the students. We set goals that are developmentally appropriate for the students and goals that will bridge the students’ connections from prior knowledge to new understanding. We keep in mind the affective and social goals that we set for our children and design opportunities for effective cooperative learning and the development of positive interpersonal relationships. We design lessons that foster all kinds of communication, questioning, dialogue, and role-playing.

Use Common Core State Standards
We strive to provide a rich framework for the standards so that the content comes alive and is meaningful for students in their everyday lives.

Charter School assures that the school will transition to and implement the Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessments according to LAUSD established timelines.

Know Learners
Teachers at Westwood design and differentiate curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. There are multiple entry points, extensions, and re-teaching opportunities. We design and differentiate curriculum that teaches to the high achieving students while supporting the students at and below grade level by providing explicit instruction, scaffolding, and a variety of instructional strategies that will allow them to access the curriculum successfully. We design a curriculum based on the student’s personal schema. This personal schema is the blueprint for the culture of the classroom. We ask students to access prior information so that we know their basis for understanding. We assess students to gauge their abilities in skill areas such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Create Learner Outcomes
We identify clear learner outcomes by noting what is to be assessed, under what circumstances the learning should be demonstrated, and what the criteria is for learning to be achieved successfully. We focus on the learning of big ideas and processes that can be applied to various investigations. For example, we teach children how to describe an object by focusing on its qualities such as texture, color, size, and shape, so this skill of describing can be applied to many objects and in many situations. We focus on a big idea such as survival. Children can then apply this notion to many areas of science and social science, from animal adaptation to the Jamestown Colony.

Develop Instructional Strategies and Materials
Westwood teachers employ instructional strategies that help all learners, including students who are learning English, students who are at-risk, and students who need added support to access curriculum. All learners benefit from hands on instruction, the use of manipulatives, songs, chants, realia, field study, cooperative group work, partner work, and multi-media presentations.
We provide a variety of methods including direct instruction and immediate feedback for particular lessons, ensuring that students grasp the concept or skill before moving forward. We provide on-going assessment, both formal and observational, while fine-tuning pacing and adjusting content. Again, we ask students to recall prior knowledge and draw relationships to what is being learned. Personal meaning is an important component of effective learning. We use social science as the basis of our curriculum and a constructivist approach to teaching. These elements clearly assist children in creating both meaning and connections with their learning.

We allow students to access curriculum based on different learning styles by providing visual, audio, and kinesthetic input. Total Physical Response (TPR) and other SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) techniques are particularly important for students who are learning English. We decide how portions of the lesson should be best delivered; students may observe, read a text, interview, view a multimedia clip, or receive direct instruction from the teacher. We decide how technology should be best integrated into each lesson. We use a variety of instructional materials including, but not limited to, textbooks, primary sources, and internet sources. Visual support for ideas is very important for children who need additional support, students who are learning English, and students who are at-risk. We keep in mind varied skill abilities and gather resources that include varied reading levels.

We teach children to read and think with a critical eye. We teach children where resources come from, the frame of mind of the author, and the author’s purpose. We challenge them to be alert to biases, stereotyping, and prejudice in published resources and in the world around them. Additionally, we encourage them to examine multiple perspectives and then create their own.

**Implement Instruction**
Teachers at Westwood create a learning environment that is inclusive and risk free. All students must feel valued as learners and have their learning processes validated. We value the process of learning and the product. We recognize that mutual respect is key to creating this environment and we are committed to this goal.
We believe in accountable talk so that children can build conceptual understanding, often with the help of other students through discussion. We challenge children to identify misconceptions as well as new understandings.
We provide clear modeling and guided and independent practice to ensure that students develop the skills and outcomes. We give consistent feedback to students about their performance. We scaffold instruction to support all learners.

**Assess Learners**
At Westwood, we assess students in a variety of ways and emphasize authentic, real world application of knowledge. We use assessments to adapt teaching strategies and learning activities to help our students become successful. We assess affective goals as well, such as cooperative behavior and communication.

**Teacher and Student Reflection**
Teachers and students reflect on the learning process. Teachers and students self-reflect and teachers reflect together during Family meetings about all elements of instructional design. Teachers revise instruction based on reflection and dialogue. All students are asked to consider how and when they can be most effective learners, such as what physical environment, grouping
configuration, and materials work best for them. Students’ reflections lead them to develop their own rubrics for assignments and guide them in leading conferences with teachers and parents. Teachers model reflection in the classroom so that the community is reminded that we are all learning and growing.

**Instructional Philosophy**

We have chosen **interdependence** as our school wide theme, specifically, the interdependence of real life systems, such as the social, emotional, ethical, political, and environmental systems surrounding us. Interdependence means that related elements within these systems influence each other as well as the relationships among these whole systems. At Westwood Charter, children learn that their actions directly impact those around them, and that each individual’s contribution is vital for the whole group to succeed. Our theme is evident every day in our classrooms as the children participate in activities that mirror the constructs of family, community, the nation, and the world. In Social and Community Ethics and Values and Service Learning, two areas of our curriculum that directly address interdependence, teachers help students understand how their behavior towards others affects the larger community. At the earliest grade levels, we want children to develop a conceptual understanding of interdependence and a sense of responsibility as a part of these real life systems. A particular focus for the present is an understanding of our interdependence with the natural world and our environment and how this vital and fragile relationship affects other systems in our world. Ultimately, our children will understand that they are not only affected by, but directly affect, these systems through their choices and actions.

**Learning Theories as a Base for Instructional Approaches**

The work of Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, Jean Piaget, and Perkins and Salomon form the underpinnings for our instructional approaches.

**Vygostky and Social Cognition**

The social cognition model asserts that culture is the prime determinant of individual development. Culture makes two kinds of contributions to a child’s intellectual development. First, through culture a child acquires much of the content of his/her thinking. Second, the surrounding culture provides a child with processes or means of thinking, what Vygotskians refer to as intellectual adaptation. In short, culture teaches a child both what to think and how to think. Cognitive development results from a dialectical process whereby a child learns through problem-solving experiences shared with someone else, often a teacher or peer. Initially, the person interacting with the child assumes most of the responsibility for guiding the problem solving, but gradually the responsibility transfers to the child. As learning progresses, the child’s language comes to serve as her primary tool of intellectual adaptation. Eventually, a child can use internal language to direct his/her own behavior. A difference exists between what a child can do on his/her own and what the child can do with help. This is called the zone of proximal development. Factors that contribute significantly to a child’s intellectual development are: social interactions with surrounding culture and social agents, parents, teachers, and more competent peers. Since children learn much through interaction, we design curriculum to emphasize the interaction between learners and the learning tools.

How does this look in the classroom?

- Students engage in problem-solving activities.
- Students work with partners and in small groups.
- Students engage in hands-on, experiential activities.
• Students respectfully challenge each other’s thinking and ideas through dialogue.
• Teachers provide explicit instruction and clear modeling.
• Teachers and students dialogue about the learning process.
• Teachers and students use criterion charts and rubrics.

*Jerome Bruner and Constructivist Theory*

Bruner states that learning is an active process in which a learner constructs new concepts or ideas based on his/her prior and developing knowledge, “The learner selects and transforms information, constructs hypotheses, and makes decisions relying on a cognitive structure to do so. Cognitive structures, such as a schema and a mental model, provide meaning and organization to experiences and allow the individual to go beyond the information given” *(Toward a Theory of Instruction, 1966)*. The role of the teacher is to engage the student in active dialogue, and in doing so, allows the learner to discover principles on his or her own.

• Instruction must be concerned with the experiences and contexts that make the student willing and able to learn.
• Instruction must be structured so that the student can easily grasp it.
• Instruction should be designed to facilitate exploration and/or fill in the gaps.
• Instruction helps students make personal and shared meaning from concepts, processes, and attitudes.

How does this look in the classroom?

• Teachers design learning tasks that are relevant and experience rich.
• Students access prior knowledge when exploring a topic of study.
• Teachers and students share questions, ideas, and observations before, during, and while reflecting upon a lesson/unit of study.
• Teachers build upon children’s experiences or create a common experience from which children can build meaning and knowledge.
• Students make connections and come to new understanding based upon new learning.

*Piaget and Child Development*

According to Piaget, children move through cognitive states, structures, or maps that are used for understanding and responding to the world. These cognitive structures become more sophisticated as children develop, moving from basic reflexes to very sophisticated mental activities. *We provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum that coincides with the students’ conceptual and logical growth. We provide opportunities for students to interact with their environment because we understand the critical role that experiences play in student learning and growth.*

How does this look in the classroom?

• Teachers provide differentiated instruction and multiple entry points to a lesson.
• Students engage in concrete explorations before abstract thinking.
• Students use manipulatives, realia, dramatic play, field study, and hands-on experiences to develop conceptual understanding and intellectual growth.
**Perkins and Salomon and Transfer of Learning**

According to Perkins and Salomon, “Transfer of learning occurs when learning in one context enhances (positive transfer) or undermines (negative transfer) a related performance in another context…Transfer is crucial in education, which generally aspires to impact on contexts quite different from the context of learning” (Transfer of Learning, Perkins and Salomon, 1992).

What conditions of learning encourage transfer?

- Learners are engaged in activities that directly approximate the performance desired.
- Learners are encouraged to abstract, search for possible connections, and reflect on metacognition.

Westwood Charter Teachers are a fully credentialed and have met the requirements of the Multicultural and Master Plan Course Work. In addition, we have credentialed teachers working as paraprofessionals to support our students who are learning English and students who have been identified as at risk.

**Instructional Strategies**

At Westwood Charter School we will enable our students to meet and exceed the California Common Core State Standards (CCCSS) in all curricular areas. We will guide our students as they develop the ability to generalize skills gained in curricular areas to real-life situations. We will do this by using exemplary teaching practices that connect theory with real world situations. To this end, we will continue to make use of the following strategies:

**Modeling:** Teachers model appropriate and productive behaviors and habits in the classroom, such as problem solving and time management. We also model our thinking processes and strategies as we apply them to a host of academic, social, and behavioral scenarios. We model discrete skills as well as the general behaviors demonstrated by effective citizens in a democratic society.

**Clear Expectations:** We explicitly define what we expect students to learn, and clearly communicate this information to other school professionals, families and community members, and most importantly, to our students. In our classrooms, we display both descriptive criteria and models of work that meet the standards we set forth. Our students participate in evaluating their own work and setting learning goals for themselves.

**Academic Rigor:** We teach subject matter in a way that challenges students to pose and creatively solve problems. We challenge them to construct explanations and justify arguments. Our curriculum encourages students to gain a deep conceptual understanding of topics and maintain a high level of engagement throughout the learning process. The students use higher order thinking skills such as Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating.

**Criteria Charts:** We work with students to develop criteria charts. These charts clarify teaching goals and objectives as well as delineate an exemplary process and product. When students develop a clear understanding of the expectations for which they are held accountable, they are
able to self-monitor their progress, draw from concrete examples and visuals, edit and revise their work, and take ownership for their learning.

**Immediate Feedback:** We provide immediate feedback when possible, such as additional questioning, restating directions, praising, and clarifying expectations. Teacher-student and small group conferencing is a vehicle for feedback especially in language arts and math. As we confer, we uncover children’s thinking and reasoning. This allows our students to replicate successful actions and to adapt close approximations.

**Grouping:** We use flexible grouping to meet the needs of our students. Examples of grouping strategies include, but are not limited to: heterogeneous, homogeneous, whole group, small group, cooperative, and partner work. Working in groups gives students ample opportunities to interact with other students and materials, to provide immediate feedback, and to allow them to work on more complex tasks. This encourages them to explore their own and other students’ ideas and fosters learning and intellectual growth. When students are able to collaborate with others in a variety of groups, it encourages them to develop diverse perspectives and stronger interpersonal skills. Solving problems with others also helps students develop teamwork skills. Grouping allows teachers to make observations and assess students while facilitating their work. It also allows for differentiation of instruction as teachers can plan for targeted lessons based on a small group need, a supplementary activity, or an extension. Grouping assists English Language Learners and students with different learning styles to access the curriculum.

**Appropriate Guided and Independent Practice Time:** We provide students with the adequate, guided practice time that is essential before they can be expected to be successful at independently applying or demonstrating a particular concept or skill. Teachers use discretion regarding what is appropriate practice time, varying this for the needs of the students and the difficulty level of the lesson. This allows students to be engaged because they have been given the adequate background and support before working independently.

**Time for Teacher and Student Reflection:** We believe that exemplary teaching and learning requires that both teachers and students have adequate time to reflect on their experiences and learning. Teachers reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching to influence their future teaching practices. This is an individual process as well as a group process as teachers reflect on practices during Family meetings. Students self-assess and reflect independently and with the teacher during conferences. Students also reflect to integrate new information into their existing knowledge constructs, as well as to form additional questions from their exposure to new subjects and skills. Students use reflection in real-life problem solving, in academic pursuits, in social interactions, and in making behavioral choices.

**Accountable Talk:** Our goal is for “Student Talk” to drive the learning forward as much as possible. We encourage and facilitate students’ ability to apply new conceptual understanding as they talk with peers and teachers about their learning and thought processes. When students develop new constructs and share these, the process is interactive, allowing others to respond with new thoughts that challenge and move the learning community to a new level. We believe that giving children time to explain **how and why** they understand subject matter allows them to internalize concepts. Students acquire facts based on a variety of reliable sources and are able to prove why something is true or untrue.
**Experiential Learning:** We emphasize hands-on learning, where students discover, through direct experiences, how to make sense of the world, solve problems, use reference materials, and ascertain relationships for themselves. These experiences can take the form of simulations, field study, drama, and explorations.

**Interdisciplinary Instruction:** Our collegial Families design curriculum around themes so that basic disciplines like reading, math, social science, and science are integrated, as much as possible, with the exploration of broad subjects and ideas such as survival or adaptation. We know that children learn best when they acquire knowledge in the context of a coherent “whole” and when they can connect what they are learning to the real world. In addition to this real-world connection, students apply and develop other academic skills. For example, when students study the post office, they not only explore a social science concept, they also incorporate reading, writing, listening, speaking, and mathematics. Different models of instruction are used in this approach. They include simulations, investigations, role-playing, and others.

**Teacher Collaboration:** An essential part of our philosophy is teacher collaboration. We are committed to weekly meetings with our instructional Families, (described in the School Organization section) to engage in a collaborative and reflective process to meet the needs of our students as well as our own professional goals. The nature of effective teacher collaboration fosters inspiration, creativity, accountability, and innovation.

**Developing Higher Level Thinking Skills:** In preparing students to be effective citizens, we believe our task is to help them develop the critical thinking skills that will enable them to think flexibly, solve complex problems, and make sense of the world around them. We encourage our students to move beyond the rudimentary Remembering level of Bloom’s Taxonomy successively towards the more sophisticated levels of Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, and Evaluating, and finally to Creating. As our students progress through Bloom’s categories, they develop the strong intellectual capabilities necessary to become successful college and career ready adults.

**Questioning:** We use various questioning techniques that allow students to demonstrate thinking and conceptual understanding of content. For example, we pose open-ended questions, guiding questions, questions that require further research, and assessment questions. In our classrooms, both teachers and students are asking questions of themselves and others, to dig deeper, make connections, think about learning processes, and ultimately, to come to new questions.

**Extended Learning:** We provide our students with opportunities to extend their learning. For example, students may choose to research or investigate a particular content area in depth and then share their learning with the rest of the community.

**Student-Facilitated Learning in the Classroom:** Our classrooms are structured so that students are able to take full responsibility for certain kinds of learning activities. Examples may include morning routines, book choices, and writing choices. In addition, students research topics and create projects to teach new information to their peers.
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Common Core
The Charter School assures that the school will transition to and implement the Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balance Assessments according to LAUSD established timelines.

English/Language Arts
Westwood Charter School will meet and exceed the Common Core State Standards for English language arts at each grade level. As stated in the Common Core State Standards Handbook, “The Common Core State Standards for English language arts (ELA) articulates rigorous grade-level expectations in the areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing to prepare all students to be college and career ready, including English language learners” (CCSS, 2010, Introduction). Westwood Charter School has adopted Reading and Writing Workshop as our core language arts curriculum. Students read a diverse and rich selection of books and materials that include challenging informational texts and well-loved classics. Through literature and a variety of other resources, students widen their perspectives, acquire knowledge, and develop powerful insights that allow them to be reflective, critical thinkers. Additionally, in writing, students craft pieces that show evidence of competent and accurate research and solid arguments based on sound evidence and logical thinking. Students write informational, explanatory, and narrative texts with an attention to clear purpose and audience. As students progress through the grade levels, they present increasingly complex oral presentations all the while participating in informal academic discussions that strengthen their communication skills. Students use Standard English as they engage in conversations; they develop new and rich vocabulary; they skillfully summarize, quote, and critique texts. They exit Westwood Charter armed with the English language arts skills to successfully continue their educational journey.

Westwood Charter School is committed to a comprehensive, balanced, integrated, and innovative kindergarten through fifth grade language arts program. Our students will become competent readers and writers who access all types of text, acquire knowledge, enjoy and value literature, communicate clearly and effectively, and think critically so as to be productive, creative members of the community in which they live.

Westwood Charter School strives for an instructional balance between discreet skills development such as decoding and fluency, and developing comprehension skills. We teach children to both learn to read and read to learn, through curriculum and instruction that recognizes the importance of the building blocks of reading and the pleasure and practicality of reading itself. As stated in the Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, (2007) “…the framework recognizes that the advanced skills of comprehending narrative and informational text and literary response and analysis and the creation of eloquent prose all depend on solid vocabulary, decoding, and word recognition skills fostered in the early grades and sustained throughout the school years” (p.5).

Language Arts Integrated with Social Studies

Language arts instruction at Westwood Charter is marked by innovation. Reading and writing activities purposefully link to skill development and concept understanding.
within the content areas, particularly social studies. This level of integration encourages students to practically and directly apply reading, writing, listening, and speaking, to learning about themselves and their world. There is an explicit link between reading and writing activities. Students read a variety of genres--fiction and nonfiction alike--that are directly related to the content of study. Students understand that the purpose of reading is to extract and extend meaning. Students write in a variety of genres, such as narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive forms that are based on and extensions of content study. The California Reading/Language Arts Framework clearly states that these essential connections between Language Arts and content instruction produce solid learning. “The goal of language arts instruction, must, therefore, be to ensure that component parts (skills, strategies, structures) are identified; are carefully sequenced according to their complexity and used in more advanced writing applications; are developed to mastery; and are progressively and purposefully connected and then incorporated with authentic learning exercises, including those presented in the study of history-social science, mathematics, and science” (p.31).

**Language Arts Taught in Constructivist Model**

Children construct their own meaning by accessing prior knowledge and building upon that schema to construct new meaning. Reading and writing activities come directly from the students’ experiences. “Readers take the written word and construct meaning based on their own thoughts, knowledge, and experiences.” (Harvey and Goudvis, 2000, p.5) Students participate in language arts activities in a child-centered classroom, fitting with constructivist learning theory. Children are able to access and use a wide variety of language arts materials that match their abilities and interests. Classrooms have large and organized leveled libraries. Children and teachers share ownership of the classroom materials as well as the classroom space, where multiple uses like reading, writing, or conferencing can all be done on the carpet or at a table. Children take responsibility for accomplishing projects and assignments within a large block of uninterrupted language arts time. Teachers provide direct instruction and individual conferencing. As well, teachers and students are engaged in purposeful and informal talk that is related to lessons. Students are encouraged and expected to interact with peers, initiate ideas, and make connections to what they already know. Errors are acknowledged as opportunities for new learning.

**Language Arts Instruction is Inclusive**

Language arts instruction is tailored to meet the needs and abilities of all students. One hallmark of Westwood Charter is our inclusion of students with special needs. Language arts instruction and materials are differentiated so that access and understanding occurs for all students: special needs, students who are learning English, and students who are identified as gifted and talented. Differentiated instruction allows for the essential multiple entry points into a lesson and concept. It allows for true depth of understanding, peer tutoring, and success for all students and promotes tolerance, compassion, and flexibility. The inclusion model benefits all community members in the classroom. “…inclusive schools are based on the belief that the world is an inclusive community with people who vary not only in terms of disabilities but in race, class, gender, and religious background. To prepare students to live in an inclusive world, it
is important for them to learn and grow within communities that are similar to the world they will live in as adults” (Mercer and Mercer, 2005, p.18).

**Language Arts Taught Within the Family Structure**

Westwood teachers plan language arts curriculum together and articulate continuously about the effectiveness of their program. Teachers meet, reflect upon student work, evaluate assessment data, make adjustments, and support each other. Teachers teach collaboratively and share in the creation of instructional materials. Teachers working in concert promote success for their students and are inspired by each other. As stated in the framework, “Effective language arts programs are dynamic and involve professionals, policies, instructional materials, and practices that interact in complex ways. The best practices of any profession are not gained in a vacuum, but are implemented and sustained in environments that support, enhance, and reinforce those practices and include several dimensions” (Framework, 2007, p. 13).

Reading instruction at Westwood Charter is based on Reading Workshop, which includes Guided Reading, Shared Reading, Partner Reading, Oral Reading, Independent Reading, Literature Circles and Read Alouds.

Reading instruction begins with explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding. It follows a natural progression as word attack skills, spelling, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills are taught. Students are also taught contextual skills, and other strategic reading skills. Students are instructed in writing, listening, and speaking skills and in the application of these skills. Assessment of these skills and strategies is ongoing. The components of a balanced reading program are listed below. These elements are not isolated, but are interwoven.

**Delivery of Instruction**

Teachers may deliver language arts instruction in a variety of ways: to a whole class, a small group, or to an individual child. Teachers use dynamic groupings based on a need area, or mini-lessons with supporting literature. Children may be involved in student-directed literature circles. Teachers may form flexible groupings of children based on student interest.

**Direct Instruction**

Westwood Charter School provides direct instruction in specific skill development. Children acquire certain skills when they are taught explicitly, to their skill level, and are given immediate feedback. Teachers identify the skill to be taught and move through the lesson, careful to model, check for understanding, and provide time for guided practice and independent practice. Teachers check for understanding and adjust instruction time and delivery based on their ongoing assessment. (Madeline Hunter Direct Instruction Model)
Materials

Teachers may use the following materials in the delivery of instruction: core literature sets, trade books, leveled readers, basal readers, anthologies, content area texts, magazines, newspapers, internet sources, multimedia presentations, published phonics and spelling texts, teacher generated charts and books, student-generated materials, novels integrated with social studies or ethics and values curriculum, published language arts texts, published theme curricula, personal spelling lists, dictionaries, and encyclopedias. Given our documented success in language arts, we will continue to retain the right to choose whether or not to participate in District-mandated assessments and pacing plans. Our participation will depend on how these assessments and plans correspond to the curriculum at Westwood Charter School.

Listening and Speaking

The ability to listen well and speak clearly is a goal of our comprehensive and balanced language arts program. “The ability to communicate through language is perhaps an individual’s most vital and complex characteristic.”(Mercer and Mercer, 2005 p. 209) Westwood teachers recognize the importance of teaching listening and speaking skills in order for students to be productive citizens. Westwood teachers give students multiple opportunities to communicate in the classroom; literature circles, Readers’ Theater, Council, Readers’ Celebrations, book shares, and poetry recitations are a sampling of the activities in which Westwood students engage. Reading Workshop calls for student-to-teacher and student-to-student dialogues that are purposeful and authentic. SDAIE strategies are employed and teachers and peers model appropriate communication skills.

Teachers at Westwood read aloud daily to students. They model proper intonation, expression, think aloud, questioning, reading with expression, visualizing, and predicting. They impart a love of reading and of books. They teach the skills of discussing literature.

Word Study

Westwood teachers recognize that instruction in word analysis and fluency, along with systematic vocabulary development, form the essential building blocks in a balanced language arts program. We work to develop a firm sense of phonemic awareness in our students before we present them with a solid base of phonics skills. As the Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools (2007) states, “The most essential element of language arts instruction in kindergarten is the development of phonemic awareness; that is, teaching students the sound structure of language” (p. 35). Furthermore, the phonological awareness of children entering school may be the single most powerful determinant of reading success or failure” (Mercer and Mercer, 2005, p. 284). Mindful of this predictor, primary teachers are committed to teaching students to manipulate and manage spoken language.

Phonics, the relationship between phonological aspects of language (the sounds) and graphic signs (letters) is very important information for beginning readers. In Becoming Literate (1991) Marie Clay writes, “Research has shown that the good reader uses not
just the sounds of letters but phonological information from several levels of language. He can provide phonological identities for letters, diagraphs, clusters, syllables, prefixes and suffixes, root words, phrases, and non language strings” (p.290). Westwood Charter teachers provide students with systematic and explicit phonics instruction. As stated in Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks of Phonics Instruction (2003), “Key findings from the scientific research on phonics instruction include the following conclusions of particular interest and value to classroom teachers:

• Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves kindergarten and first-grade children’s word recognition and spelling.
• Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves children’s reading comprehension.
• Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is effective for children from various social and economic levels.
• Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is particularly beneficial for children who are having difficulty learning to read and who are at risk for developing future reading problems.
• Systematic and explicit phonics instructions is most effective when introduced early” (pp. 13-15).

We teach phonics in functional units, like word families, and in context, so that children build phonological identities as they build their reading and writing vocabularies. To this end, as well, students have many experiences with the graphonological system by developing word walls, with interactive writing, guided reading experiences, and the like. In addition to visual cues, children are guided to use the other cueing systems, that is, meaning cues, and structural or syntactic cues, to decode words and make reading meaningful. As students become more proficient readers, they build on strategies that include deconstructing words, using root words, prefixes, suffixes, studying of Latin root words, etc.

Written and Oral Language Conventions

Teachers explicitly address the state standards for written and oral language conventions. Our instruction includes the components of sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling. Much of our spelling instruction takes into account developmental spelling theory. “Spelling instruction is based on two fundamental tenets: 1. Students’ learning of spelling and vocabulary is based on their developmental level. 2. Students’ learning is based on the way they are naturally inclined to learn, on their natural course of conceptual learning.” (Bear, Templeton, Invernizzi, and Johnston, 1996, p.11) Spelling instruction may include temporary spelling techniques, developmental spelling activities such as word hunts and sorts, Making Words activities, spelling lists generated from the students’ own writing, pre and post testing of lists, and dictionary skills. Students are also taught to use a thesaurus, word families, and root words.

Vocabulary Development

Westwood teachers know that vocabulary instruction is important in the primary grades
and in the upper elementary grades. “Vocabulary plays an important part in learning to read... Vocabulary also is very important in reading comprehension” (Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, 2003, p. 34). All Westwood students learn vocabulary; hear, read, and analyze exemplary literature, practice dictionary skills, and highlight context clues.

Teachers give special attention to teaching academic language to students, that is, the language of books, tests, and formal writing. (Framework, 2007) “Proficiency in decoding and encoding skills is necessary but not sufficient for comprehending and writing about academic subject matter. Students also have to understand, use, and ultimately live the academic language of books and schooling” (p. 22). The pre-teaching and reteaching of content area and academic language is especially effective for students who are learning English, students who are at risk, and students with special needs.

Teachers read aloud to students to teach sensory details, rich language, as well as content vocabulary. Providing field trips and hands-on experiences for students builds vocabulary as well. Students strengthen vocabulary skills by reading independently, and teachers facilitate this by providing independent reading time and a variety of fine literature to support this practice. “Children learn many new words by reading extensively on their own. The more children read on their own the more words they encounter and the more word meanings they learn” (CIERA, 2003, p. 35). In addition, many Westwood classrooms have reading buddies of another grade level with whom they read weekly.

**Fluency Instruction**

Westwood Charter School guides students to be fluent readers. Students read passages several times and teachers provide feedback. “Repeated and monitored oral reading improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement. Students who read and reread passages orally as they receive guidance and/or feedback become better readers” (CIERA, 2003, p.24).

**Comprehension**

We recognize the very important duty to build strong and strategic readers who acquire information, and understand and apply what they read. “Comprehension means that readers think not only about what they are reading but what they are learning. When readers construct meaning, they are building their store of knowledge. But along with knowledge must come understanding” (Harvey and Goudvis, 2000, p.9). Our students comprehend to gain information and insight. In Westwood classrooms, teachers model, guide, and practice clear, specific, and effective reading comprehension strategies. Our program includes showing students how to use background knowledge and fix up strategies, connect, question, visualize, infer, determine importance, and synthesize information, as key aspects in what good and successful readers do (Harvey and Goudvis).
**Literary Response**

Students have opportunities to respond to literature from a variety of genres. As they explore both the structural and literary elements of texts, they create and share with peers their personal reactions, for example, through book shares, written responses, literature circles, peer discussions as in Reading Workshop, plays, Readers’ Theater, questioning, Thinking Maps, Council, and author studies. Within a differentiated instructional approach, these activities involve deeper levels of complexity. The value of literature response activities are immense. “Once they have heard a wealth of stories and narratives, they begin to connect themes, characters, and issues from one book to another. When children understand how to connect the texts they read to their lives, they begin to make connections between what they read and the larger world. This nudges them into thinking about bigger, more expansive issues beyond their universe of home, school, and neighborhood” (p.68).

When possible, trained parent volunteers lead Junior Great Books, a literature appreciation program where children read and respond to stories and participate in extensive activities that promote higher thinking.

**Writing**

Teachers at Westwood Charter School are committed to guiding children to become fluent, proficient writers. Through the school wide use of Writing Workshop, all students are actively involved in writing, from emergent and beginning writing in kindergarten, to specialized stages of writing in the lower and upper elementary grades. They move from writing words, simple sentences, and stories, to more complex sentences, and then to paragraphs and multi-paragraph essays that support a main theme. They write in a variety of genres. Students are guided to experiment with the beauty and power of the written word by writing descriptively, creatively, and by developing a personal view. They learn to write from multiple perspectives including first and third person. Students learn to outline, take notes, and write research papers. We are careful to guide students to write with a command of Standard English, always giving attention to audience and purpose.

Students see themselves as writers and writing as an activity that is part of daily life. They employ the writing process consistently. Students may brainstorm or take notes as a prewriting activity. Council and field trips often provide ideas for writing. Students may use Thinking Maps to help organize these ideas, as well. Drafting follows and students revise and edit with peers and teachers. Published pieces may be typewritten and may be displayed in the classroom. Students participate in Writers’ Celebrations and share their work with others in the school community. As Gail Tompkins noted in *Teaching Writing*, research has shown that “the process is cyclical” (1994, p.9). A student’s own writing is often the genesis for more authentic and purposeful writing. Classrooms participate in Writing Workshop, as well. This structure can be a powerful avenue for students to write and find their personal voice. They support fellow writers in the process. “Writing groups provide a scaffold, or supportive environment, in which teachers and classmates can talk about plans and strategies for writing and revising” (p. 17). Students use published authors as mentors, constantly connecting reading and writing. Teachers challenge
students to read as a writer, that is to transfer an author’s style and techniques into their own writing.

Writing instruction may include shared writing, modeled writing, journal writing, Writing Workshop, writing in all genres and extensively in the content areas, biographies, essays, and research writing. Teachers emphasize instruction in both mechanics and content. Many classrooms compose the Daily News on the computer and teachers model and guide the appropriate use of technology.

**Kindergarten English/Language Arts**

In kindergarten, students will acquire knowledge about letters, words, and sounds and apply this knowledge to reading and writing. They will be able to use comprehension strategies to recall basic facts and ideas, as well as make meaningful connections between texts, themselves, and the world. The students will write words and letters legibly. Finally, they will engage in oral communication through listening and speaking clearly and coherently. Teachers use Reading and Writing Workshop as components of a balanced literacy program. These workshops give the children an opportunity to interact with reading and writing while receiving support from teachers and friends. Reading Workshop is a child centered approach to teaching reading in which the students select their own reading materials, read at their own pace, and discuss what they have read. Writing Workshop encourages independent thought and writing for authentic purposes, audiences, and topics. “The purpose of reading and writing workshop is to promote a true love for reading and writing, while scaffolding instruction to meet the learner’s specific needs. During workshop, the students make choices about their reading and writing and are allowed to be in control of their own learning.” –Lucy Calkins

Balanced literacy also includes phonics instruction. The kindergarten family supports this with our phonics program by Fountas and Pinnell, which assists students in learning about letters and sounds. Solid research supports the practice of kindergarten teachers to provide a print-rich environment. Kathy Collins, in *Growing Readers* states, “A classroom with strong reading and writing work going on is inevitably print-rich. There are charts around the room written by teachers and students that detail the work of the class” (p. 9). Kindergarten teachers use a variety of ongoing assessments. Such assessments include portfolios, documentation, observation, teacher conferencing, informal reading inventory, peer conferencing, Fountas and Pinnell Phonics Assessments, CORE Assessments, Dibels Next, and teacher created assessments.

**Grade One English/Language Arts**

First graders will develop the strategies and habits of lifelong readers and writers in a balanced and comprehensive language arts program. Teachers will use the adopted phonics program by Fountas and Pinnell. In this program, first graders practice blending, study word families, and engage in a variety of phonemic awareness games. Teachers recognize the importance of explicit phonics instruction. As stated in Fountas and Pinnell in *Phonics Lessons*, “The true purpose and promise of phonics instruction is to expand and refine children’s reading and writing powers” (p.1).
First grade uses a Reading Workshop approach to read a range of text types with varying degrees of complexity. Lessons include: describing key ideas, using illustrations and details, comparing genres, comprehension strategies such as making connections and retelling the story, and examining story elements. Students respond to text by asking and answering questions.

Through the Writing Workshop program, first grade students write narratives, opinion pieces, realistic fiction, informational texts, and poetry. Teachers also teach Standard English convention lessons that include punctuation marks, capitalization skills, and parts of speech. Students also learn how to structure writing pieces by using temporal words and transitional phrases. They can further develop focus by identifying meaning, purpose, and audience.

First grade students will also engage in an individualized spelling program. Students generate personalized word lists based on a common spelling pattern. The ultimate goal of instruction is to help students become better spellers in their daily writing.

Some of the instructional approaches include Reading and Writing Workshop, literature circles, Shared Reading and Writing, interactive reading and writing, book shares, and differentiated small group instruction. First graders participate in small and large group discussions on a variety of grade level topics. Students focus on speaking in complete and detailed sentences in these groups.

First grade teachers use multiple assessments to guide our Language Arts instruction. These assessments include Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Words Their Way, Fry Oral Reading Assessment, CORE Assessments, Dibels Next, Dolch Word List, informal and formal assessments through Reading and Writing Workshop Conferences, and teacher created assessments.

**Grade Two English/Language Arts**

Developing as lifelong readers and writers begins early in students’ lives and involves a unique balance of competence, motivation, accessibility, and experiences with print. In the second grade, language arts curriculum and instruction are focused on enhancing students’ use of basic features of reading (phonics, syllabication, etc.) to improve reading accuracy and fluency in support of reading comprehension. Comprehension strategies include predicting, making connections, summarizing, and analyzing text, questioning, and forming opinions. Students will read grade level materials and above, to extend understanding of narrative and informational text, enhancing students’ ability to read and respond to a variety of children’s literature.

Research supports our work as we understand the reciprocal benefits of Reading and Writing Workshop. “Many of the skills and strategies our students need to control in order to be successful readers are also taught during the Writing Workshop. As children compose writing, they have another way of learning about letter-sound relationships, the structure of texts, reading with fluency and comprehension, and the joy of literacy.” (Collins, 2004 p. 36)

Our students are engaged daily in Writing Workshop. Students are immersed in various genres through read-alouds and guided reading such as realistic fiction, memoirs, folktales and fables,
poetry, non-fiction, biographies, and persuasive text. Children study features of text, such as plot, character, conflict-resolution and then apply their knowledge in their own compositions. They write a variety of texts, keeping in mind audience and purpose. Student authors become independent creators of their work moving through the process of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Students also learn to conduct shared research and writing projects and to use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing. They study authors’ styles and apply their learning to their own pieces to create a personal voice.

Integrated into Reading and Writing Workshop are Literature Circles, explicit phonics lessons (Fountas and Pinnell), Thinking Maps, genre studies, content area reading, reading response journals, writing about shared classroom experiences, and the writing process.

We use a variety of assessments to verify if our students have learned the skills we teach. Some of the assessments we use include: Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Words Their Way, Fry Oral Reading Assessment, CORE Assessments, Dibels Next, teacher-created assessments, and informal observations.

Grade Three English/Language Arts

In third grade, reading and writing becomes more content oriented and the emphasis shifts from learning to read, to reading to learn. As third graders, there is an expectation that children will become confident and capable readers and writers across the core subjects. Based on thematic instruction that is rooted in social studies, students utilize reading and writing skills to successfully explore and understand their greater community.

In reading, students are introduced to a variety of genres including myths, poetry, realistic fiction, and nonfiction. Students are actively engaged through Reading Workshop and participate in the analysis of character, theme, and plot through self-selected “just-right” books. Students also engage in small, flexible reading groups using leveled texts. Children learn strategies to employ while reading by questioning, making predictions, visualizing, and making inferences as they read.

Comprehension is a major focus in third grade as the goal of reading is always to understand content. Students use Thinking Maps and other graphic organizers to comprehend. They identify main ideas and supporting details, show cause and effect, sequence, or compare and contrast to build meaning from their reading. As they read, children attend to word structure, prefix and suffix meaning, verb tense, and word families. They come to know the usefulness of resources within a book, such as a table of contents, word glossary, or index.

Through Writing Workshop and the daily commitment of explicit writing instruction, students learn to be expressive, clear communicators. Writing is purposefully connected to other academic areas, allowing for many natural opportunities for children to compose. With thoughtful modeling and support, our young authors write personal narratives, persuasive essays and letters, informational reports and booklets and expository text. Teachers carefully guide students through the steps of the writing process, and mentor texts are frequently employed as models of exemplary writing. Children analyze the work of significant authors to learn writing strategies and are referred to as authors themselves in a respectful, validating way. Through our
word study program as well as the authentic opportunities students have for editing and proofreading their own work, children gain a sense of how exceptional writing looks and “feels.”

Speaking and listening skills are also incorporated across the curriculum. Students engage in collaborative discussions on a variety of third grade topics, with diverse partners and in different groupings. They write and prepare book shares, social studies reports, or math and science presentations using the same Standard English language conventions for speaking that are developed in their writing. Oral language and performance skills are also honed through the practice of Council, book buddies, PAWS assemblies, and drama, poetry, or chorus performances.

In addition to using LAUSD Periodic Assessments for all grade levels, language arts assessments are utilized strategically and come in multiple forms including: teacher observation, authentic assessment, criteria reference charts and rubrics, CORE assessments, Dibels Next, and CST data.

**Grade Four English/Language Arts**
The set of essential language arts skills that students in the fourth grade need to acquire include understanding grade level vocabulary and comprehending grade level text. Students will read fluently and independently. They will write with clarity, confidence, organization, and complex sentence structure. They will create cohesive oral presentations. Teachers use a variety of strategies and materials to teach these necessary skills. These include word sorts, Making Words, Thinking Maps, a variety of texts from the content areas, nonfiction, core literature, periodicals, and web sites. Teachers use the Writing Workshop model to teach writing. Literature Circles, core literature studies, self-selected reading, think aloud, think-pair-share, shared inquiries, modeling, conferencing, direct instruction, graphic organizers, peer dialog, and criteria charts are all part of a balanced fourth grade language arts program.

As stated by Cunningham and Allington in *Classrooms That Work*, “Children who are successful at becoming literate view reading and writing activities as authentic activities from which they get information and pleasure, and by which they communicate with others…The literary rich classroom communicates the importance of real reading and writing activities by engaging children in a variety of print activities and not relegating reading and writing to a brief period…The first and most basic component of classroom instruction is offering children a variety of real reading and writing encounters” (2000, p. 21). Language arts assessments are utilized strategically and come in multiple forms including: teacher observation, criteria reference charts and rubrics, CORE assessments, LAUSD Periodic Assessment, and CST data.

**Grade Five English/Language Arts**
Grade Five students will read fluently and independently while comprehending grade level text and vocabulary. They will write with clarity, confidence, organization, and with complex sentence structure. They will create well-developed oral presentations. Fifth grade teachers employ such strategies and materials as Thinking Maps, a variety of texts including nonfiction, content area material, literature, periodicals, and technology based materials such as web sites. Teachers use a Writing Workshop model to teach writing. Literature circles, think alouds, and shared inquiries are also part of a balanced language arts program. Teachers recognize the important elements of a strong language arts curriculum. As Cunningham and Allington write in
Classrooms that Work, “To create powerful classroom environments in which all children learn to read and write, teachers need to be concerned with models, materials and motivation” (p. 25). Teachers use a variety of assessments to gauge student learning. These include student portfolios, teacher created tests, and informal observations. Language arts assessments are utilized strategically and come in multiple forms including: teacher observation, criteria reference charts and rubrics, CORE assessments, LAUSD Periodic Assessment, and CST data.

Mathematics

Westwood Charter school students will meet and exceed the Common Core State Standards in mathematics. We are committed to students’ conceptual understanding of math concepts and recognize the immense value of true understanding and the importance of articulating that understanding. As stated in The Common Core State Standards Handbook, “One hallmark of mathematical understanding is the ability to justify, in a way appropriate to the student’s mathematical maturity, why a particular mathematical statement is true or where a mathematical rule comes from. There is a world of difference between a student who can summon a mnemonic device to expand a product such as \((a+b)(x+y)\) and a student who can explain where the mnemonic comes from. The student who can explain the rule understands the mathematics, and may have a better chance to succeed at a less familiar task…” (2010, p. 3). Westwood students are engaged in learning that emphasizes depth and meaning and the ability to prove how and why they know something to be true.

Along with firm concept understanding, our primary goals in mathematics education are to facilitate our students’ mastery of basic computational and procedural skills and ensure that they are competent problem solvers. We want Westwood students to synthesize and apply these skills and conceptual understanding to all areas of their lives. Westwood recognizes that a commitment to standards-based curriculum will forward this goal. As stated in The Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools, “By meeting the goals of standards-based mathematics, students will achieve greater proficiency in the practical uses of mathematics in everyday life, such as balancing a checkbook, purchasing a car, understanding the daily news. This process will help the citizens of California understand their world and be productive members of society” (CA Dept. of Education, 2005, p. 3).

A rigorous mathematics program is essential for students to be successful in their daily lives as well as to engage successfully in the global village of which they are a part. “To ensure that tomorrow’s leaders are equipped to compete in our global economy and are able to make connections between mathematics and everyday life, California needs to educate all students in mathematics at levels consistent with their counterparts throughout the world”(p. vi).

Westwood teachers strive to balance computational instruction with conceptual and problem solving opportunities. A balanced instructional approach is important and most effective when students can efficiently use basic skills to solve new problems and strengthen their conceptual understanding as well (p.5). Westwood teachers equip students with a variety of strategies to solve problems. Teachers guide students to develop logical thinking skills and use the language of mathematics to communicate about relationships and quantities using mathematical terms and symbols. Additionally, Westwood teachers strive to make connections between mathematics and other curricular areas. This integration of math with other core subjects occurs when possible and
With these goals in mind, our mathematics curriculum is designed to introduce, practice reinforce, and extend such basic mathematical skills as counting, patterning, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, in order to apply these skills comfortably and appropriately in real-life situations and to other new and interesting problems. As stated in the second paragraph, we wish to enable all learners to develop proficiency in each of the three components of mathematics: basic computation and procedural skills, conceptual understanding, and problem solving.

As students progress through the curriculum, teachers build upon previously learned content in a recursive fashion, with extensions and more in-depth applications. Teachers schedule a daily block of uninterrupted mathematics instruction time and employ differentiated instruction so that all learners access and acquire skills and knowledge. Students are assessed frequently using valid and reliable measures that are aligned with mathematics standards (p. 8).

Westwood teachers are also guided by the Standards for Mathematical Practice and seek to foster these in the students:

- make sense of problems and persevere in solving them,
- reason abstractly and quantitatively,
- construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others,
- model with mathematics,
- use appropriate tools strategically,
- attend to precision,
- look for and make use of structure, and
- look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

From: Common Core State Standards, (pp.5-6)

We teach the domains outlined in the CCSS: Counting and Cardinality, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Number and Operations in Base Ten, Number and Operations--Fractions, Measurement and Data, and Geometry. We do this within the structure of developing children’s conceptual understanding and mathematical reasoning. We do this through conceptually-based experiences that encourage students to actively participate in their learning by using prior knowledge, exploring, questioning, and posing problems of their own.

Our mathematics instruction progresses from concrete to abstract, where students develop skills and knowledge through the use of manipulative materials. This practice is supported by Mary Baratta-Lorton in Mathematics Their Way. “A page of abstract symbols no matter how carefully designed or simplified because of its very nature cannot involve the child’s senses the way real materials can. Symbols are not the concept, they are only a representation of the concept, and as such are abstractions describing something that is not visible to the child. Real materials, on the other hand, can be manipulated to illustrate the concept completely, and can be experienced visually by the child” (1976, p. xiv).

For example, through the use of Hands-on Equations many of our students learn how to compute algebraic equations and solve for a variable, using dice, pawns, and balance scales.
Teachers use Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) to allow students to share and use the knowledge that they bring to the math learning process. Students are encouraged to explain their math thinking and reasoning; the emphasis is that there are multiple ways to solve a problem. Problem solving, and the students’ intuitive understanding about math are encouraged, not simply computational competence. Keeping in mind each child’s mathematical thinking, teachers guide individuals towards reaching their highest potential within their zone of proximal development. Through CGI, “students not only need to learn the big ideas of mathematics; they need to learn the mathematical ways of thinking that are entailed in generating these ideas, in deciding how to express them in justifying that they are true, and in using them to justify the mathematical procedures they are learning” (Carpenter, et al., *Thinking Mathematically*, 2003, p. 6).

As stated earlier, our curriculum emphasizes the connection of mathematics to daily life and work to solve real-world problems. For example, in all grade levels, students participate in developing skills in patterning, equivalent values, place value, graphing, money, and configuration of numbers. Students use these skills to purchase consumer items, make predictions about a variety of events in their lives based on patterns they have studied, and countless other real-world situations.

We approach our mathematics curriculum using a variety of innovative strategies and materials to meet the needs of the students. These may include district-adopted textbooks, teacher-created materials, manipulatives and supplementary materials.

When appropriate, teachers integrate technology, such as calculators or computers programs, enhancing our instruction. We keep in mind that, “The students’ use of technology must build on these (basic) skills and understanding; it is not a substitute for them” (p. 18).

**Kindergarten Mathematics**

Kindergarten students will understand the relationship between numbers and quantities. They will understand simple addition and subtraction using a variety of approaches. Students are introduced to the foundations of place value. Students develop their measurement and classifying skills by directly comparing objects and measurable attributes. They also study the concepts of time and use tools that measure time. Kindergarteners identify and describe two and three-dimensional objects in their environment. Teachers use strategies such as: direct instruction, small group instruction, one-on-one instruction, hands-on experiences, working with manipulatives, and observing and analyzing real life situations. Kindergarten teachers emphasize conceptual understanding and strategies to prepare students to apply math to their everyday experiences. Teacher assesses students using a variety of measures such as observation and documentation, teacher-created tests, anecdotal notes, one-on-one conferences, oral discussion, and informal and formal assessments. We utilize the CORE K-12 Math Assessments to create a grade level cumulative standards based test. We will create and administer these assessments three times a year to track student data.
Grade One Mathematics

The essential skills that first grade students need to acquire includes learning to add and subtract within 20, develop an understanding of whole numbers and place value within 100, numbers and operations in base 10, measure and order objects by length, interpret data, and work with shapes and partition shapes to create “equal shares”. To master these skills, students will need to rely on their understanding of a concept and not only on procedures. Students will use the Standards for Mathematical Practice which includes defining how students develop mathematical understanding as they make sense of a problem, reasoning abstractly, constructing arguments, modeling with mathematics, using tools strategically, attending to precision, and looking for structure and repeated reasoning. Manipulatives, modeling, and cooperative games are some of the strategies that teachers use to solidify these skills. One of the goals of instruction in mathematics is for students to become numerically powerful. To facilitate this, teachers highlight relationships among numbers and operations, stressing conceptual understanding as well as computational procedures. In *Math Matters*, “(Charles and Lobato 1998) define a numerically powerful child as one who, ‘…develops meaning for numbers and operations, looks for relationships among numbers and operations, understands computational strategies and uses them appropriately and efficiently and makes sense of numerical and quantitative situations’” (p.1). Assessments in the first grade mathematics program include teacher observation, teacher created assessments, and Pearson Envision assessments. We utilize the CORE K-12 Math Assessments to create a grade level cumulative standards based test. We will create and administer these assessments three times a year to track student data.

Grade Two Mathematics

In second grade, the math curriculum and instruction are focused on the following essential math domains: operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations in base 10, measurement and data, and geometry. Students understand place value and number relationships in addition and subtraction. Students can model, represent, and interpret number relationships to create and solve problems involving addition and subtraction. Students explore measurement and data by collecting, recording, organizing, displaying, and interpreting the data on bar graphs and other representations. In addition, they will also estimate and measure standard units of length, and explore time and money. Students explore plane and solid geometric shapes. They describe the shapes by attributes, draw the shapes, and partition shapes into equal shares.

Students use concrete models or drawings and various strategies to solve problems. Students are given opportunities to verify the validity and accuracy of their answers. Students add up to four digit numbers and mentally add or subtract ten or one hundred from numbers between one hundred and nine hundred. Students learn to regroup using two digit and three digit numbers with a solid understanding of base ten.

Some of the strategies we use to teach these skills include: math games, hands-on manipulatives, modeling, journal writing, small group activities, realia, role playing, and Read It, Draw It, Solve It.

Our classrooms encourage students to both persevere and learn a variety of strategies to solve problems.
The research that supports our practices includes Marilyn Burns’ *About Teaching Mathematics*. She states the importance of knowing the elements that promote learning. “The source of learning to understand mathematical ideas is internal. Being aware of children’s maturity levels, providing experiences with physical materials, and supporting social interaction are all important aspects of helping children think, reason, and make sense of mathematical ideas” (p. 28).

We use the following assessments to know if students have learned the skills we have taught them: State Assessments (CST), teacher created, assessments, journal writing, Pearson Envision assessments, and informal observations. We utilize the CORE K-12 Math Assessments to create a grade level cumulative standards based test. We will create and administer these assessments three times a year to track student data.

**Grade Three Mathematics**

Third grade students develop a deeper understanding of relationships and properties between multiplication and division, while developing their skills in basic facts and algorithm. Students explore arithmetic patterns and choose correct operations to problem solve. Third grade students learn and understand values up to four-digits. With these, they learn to round, estimate, read, and write large numbers. Students investigate the basic concepts of fractions such as equivalent fractions and fractions as numbers. In addition, third grade students measure, estimate, and convert in standard units. They develop math reasoning skills to represent and interpret data, and acquire knowledge of geometric figures which include solid and plane figures.

Third grade students use various strategies to teach these skills, such as the use of manipulatives and hands-on activities, cross-curricular thematic units, math art, and a variety of groupings, such as small groups, whole groups, ability groups, and pull out groups. Third grade teachers facilitate discussions with and among students that encourage not only talking, but also thinking, as well as writing about math concepts. Teachers teach strategy and problem solving skills and reinforce math skills with appropriate class work and homework. Math games, incorporating real-life experiences, math journals, and literature all play a role in third grade math instruction.

The research that support our practice includes: Burns and Silbey (2000) in *So You Have to Teach Math?* state, "For starters, writing can enhance math learning. It pushes children to examine and express their thinking" (p.66). Further, in *Classroom Discussions: Using Math Talk to Help Students Learn* by Chapin, O'Connor and Anderson (2003), they state, "For over a decade, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) has been urging teachers to emphasize communication--talk and writing-- as part of mathematics teaching and learning. Their arguments make sense: the mathematical thinking of many students is aided by hearing what their peers are thinking. Putting thoughts into words pushes students to clarify their thinking" (p.5).

The assessments that teachers use to monitor growth include, but are not limited to asking students to apply skills to real-life problem solving, time drill practice, observation, performance assignments, criteria charts, T charts, discussions, math journals, and projects.
Grade Four Mathematics

In the fourth grade, instruction will be centered around the four main elements of mathematical thinking: problem solving, mathematical and deductive reasoning, computation and application to everyday life experiences. Instruction will bring students to a higher level of thought in which they are challenged to integrate the core math concepts with experiences in their everyday lives. Students are expected to defend the reasoning used to derive a response. According to Marilyn Burns (2005), “Mathematics teaches gain a wealth of information by delving into the thinking of students’ answers, not just when answers are wrong but also when they are correct” (pg. 26). Students are also encouraged to solve mathematical problems using multiple approaches and strategies. Students will increase their knowledge in the following domains, as per the new Common Core State Standards: Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Number Operations and Base Ten, Number and Operations with Fractions, Measurement and Data, and Geometry. Students will use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic with whole numbers, and to solve multistep word problems. They will work with factors and multiples, and broaden their ability to generate and analyze patterns. Students will extend their understanding of fractions including equivalence, ordering, building fractions using smaller unit fractions, multiplying fractions, understanding decimal notation for fractions and comparing decimal fractions. Students will use measurement, including geometric measurement, and conversion of measurement to solve problems, represent data, and interpret data. Students will draw and identify lines and angles and classify shapes using properties of lines and angles. In addition to using LAUSD Periodic Assessments all grade levels, students will be assessed using teacher generated tests, Envision performance assessments, math portfolios, informal assessments, discussions, classroom observation, projects, concept lessons, and teacher analysis of individual problem solving approaches used. We utilize the CORE K-12 Math Assessments to create a grade level cumulative standards based test. We will create and administer these assessments three times a year to track student data.

Grade Five Mathematics

In fifth grade, students continue to increase their facility with the four basic arithmetic operations applied to decimals, fractions, and positive and negative integers. They use grids, tables, graphs, and charts to record, synthesis, and analyze data. When approaching the geometric concepts, they use appropriate tools and formulas to determine length, area, and volume. Fifth grade teachers recognize the importance of making connections between mathematical concepts and use real-life situations when designing individual and group projects. Skills are taught using varied strategies which include direct instruction, small group instruction, small group discussion and problem solving, student pairs for discussions, games, scaffolding of lessons to target varied levels and abilities, and open-ended questions of inquiry and research. As Stein et al (2000) state “Students need engagement with a variety of tasks so that connections can be made to the concepts underlying the mathematics, so teachers need to provide opportunities for students to engage with the content. Tasks that can ask students to perform memorized procedures lead to only one kind of learning while tasks that demand students to make connections with concepts and mathematical ideas lead to multiple kinds of learning that are purposeful and meaningful for the student” (p.16). Teachers measure student progress using a variety of assessments: teacher-made, Envision, informal, online and LAUSD. They also use math portfolios, observation, Marilyn Burns’ activities, LAUSD concept lessons, and individual/group projects. We utilize
the CORE K-12 Math Assessments to create a grade level cumulative standards based test. We will create and administer these assessments three times a year to track student data.

Science

The goal of the TK-5th grade science program is to provide all students with challenging, standards-based science instruction that promotes state requirements while preparing college-ready, career-aware students. According to the California Science Framework, 25% of science instruction should be hands-on. This type of instruction in the science classroom provides students with multiple opportunities to practice reading, writing, listening and speaking skills thus promoting the four domains of literacy. Since mathematics is also the language of science, occasions to practice numeracy are frequent. The application to social studies assists students in making the very important decisions about how to preserve resources and protect our natural world, and about their responsibilities as global citizens. Teachers strive to highlight connections between social studies and science; that the study of the natural world influences the culture of the social and political world. Instruction is based on explicit instruction in the earth, life, and physical science strands in grades TK-5th. We underscore the significance of science instruction in this century so that, “students gain the knowledge and skills necessary for California’s workforce to be competitive in the global, information-based economy of the twenty-first century” (CA Department of Education, 2004, p. 2).

We also believe that solid science instruction challenges students to observe, analyze, question, and evaluate. The thinking skills that are honed through scientific experimentation and observation will hold students in good stead beyond their elementary years and in many areas of their life. “Science education in kindergarten through grade twelve trains the mind and builds intellectual strength and must not be limited to the lasting facts and skills that can be remembered into adulthood. Science must be taught at a level of rigor and depth that goes well beyond what a typical adult knows. It must be taught “for the sake of science” and not with any particular vocational goal in mind. The study of science disciplines the minds of students; and the benefits of this intellectual training are realized long after schooling, when the details of the science may be forgotten” (pp. 5-6).

At each grade level, science instruction is driven by student inquiry, facilitated and guided by teachers, and based on the California Content Science Standards and the California Common Core State Standards. Our content instruction reflects the three sciences: physical, earth, and life. We begin our instruction of children in the primary grades by emphasizing the scientific process skills of observation, questioning, and communicating using appropriate scientific vocabulary. We guide students in developing the additional scientific process skills of comparing, ordering, categorizing, relating, inferring, and applying.

As students study earth, physical, and life sciences, they gain an understanding and appreciation for the natural world as environmental education weaves these sciences together. We want to instill in our students an awareness of our social responsibility to humanity and our interdependence with the environment so that students are conscious, thoughtful stewards of the earth. The study of science must include the study of the environment. “The Legislature has declared ‘that [we have] a moral obligation to understand the world in which [we live] and protect, enhance, and make the highest use of the land and resources [we hold] in trust for future
generations, and that the dignity and worth of the individual requires a quality environment in which [we] can develop the full potentials of [our] spirit and intellect‖ (p. 9).

Teachers currently use a variety of materials, with an emphasis on hands-on instruction and experimentation. These include trade books and literature, teacher resource books, guest speakers, textbooks, commercial kits (e.g. FOSS, STC, Carolina Biological Supplies) as well as teacher-created materials. As much as possible, technology and technological tools are used in science investigations. “Effective science programs use technology to teach students, assess their knowledge, develop information resources, and enhance computer literacy…Effective science programs have adequate instructional resources as well as library-media and administrative support” (p. 12).

Kindergarten Science

In Kindergarten we emphasize the value of nature in our environment and life cycles. The children are scientists: exploring, observing, and documenting. We capitalize on the children’s natural curiosity and develop curriculum based on their interests. Activities are student-centered and hands-on. Children are encouraged to think critically and hone their high-level thinking skills.

Grade One Science

In grade one children use scientific methodology to explore the various strands of science. First graders make predictions, develop hypothesis, and use inferential thinking as they investigate and participate in hands-on activities that teach scientific concepts and vocabulary. The students learn physical science through the exploration of solids, liquids and gases. Through experiments and observations, students illustrate the similarities and differences between the properties of solids, liquids, and gases. The students focus on life sciences by studying how plants and animals survive in different environments. Furthermore, students learn about the relationship between plants and animals’ structural forms and functions. Finally, in the area of earth science, students learn about the weather and its effects on land, air, and water. Throughout the school year students record the weather and analyze the data on weather changes.

Grade Two Science

Students practice observation and inquiry based learning as a means to gain a conceptual understanding of the natural world around them. Students can observe patterns associated with changes in objects and events. Students can use these patterns to make simple predictions based on observation and not random guessing. They will ask meaningful questions, such as how humans have impacted the Earth and conduct careful investigations to build on their knowledge and construct meaning as they learn. In the physical sciences, students in grade two learn about forces and some common phenomena. In the life sciences, they learn about the life cycles of animals and plants and the basics of genetics. In earth sciences, students learn that rocks are composed of different combinations of minerals, that smaller rocks and soil are made from the breakage and weathering of larger rocks and that soil also contains organic materials. Students learn that scientists use tools such as magnifiers to extend their powers of observation. They practice writing, measuring, simple graphing, and making drawings to record, organize, interpret, and display data.
Grade Three Science

In grade three, students continue to develop their abilities to hypothesize, predict, observe, question, analyze, and experiment. These skills are strengthened throughout various scientific units of study including light, matter and energy, animal adaptations, biomes, and space. For example, the students examine the diverse forms of life found within biomes and the specialized adaptations that allow organisms to survive there, as well as the interdependence of species within ecosystems. While studying matter and energy, students perform hands-on experiments with various forms of matter, observing that these various forms can change from one form to another. The curriculum consistently provides hands-on and authentic experiences that encourage students to continually question the natural world.

Grade Four Science

Our curriculum focuses on the following themes: ecology, ecosystems and habitats, rocks and minerals, as well as magnetism and electricity. Students study food chains and webs, decomposition, and ecological relationships. In addition, they learn about weathering, erosion, and rock formation. Students also study the properties of electricity and magnetism by experimenting with electrically charged objects and designing and building electrical circuits and electromagnets. Finally, students are immersed in scientific inquiry; specifically, the process by which scientists ask questions, hypothesize, develop and carry out investigations, analyze data, gather evidence to support conclusions and communicate results. Experiments are incorporated into each science unit to promote thinking as scientists.

Grade Five Science

The science curriculum revolves around three themes: living things, chemistry, and weather. Students study living organisms, body systems and plant systems. Along with weather systems, students study the solar system and the hydrologic cycle. In chemistry, we will study chemical processes and properties, atomic/molecular structure, and organization of elements. Finally, students are immersed in scientific inquiry; specifically, the process by which scientists ask questions, hypothesize, develop and carry out investigations, analyze data, gather evidence to support conclusions and communicate results. Experiments are incorporated into each science unit to promote thinking as scientists.
History/Social Studies

Our history-social science curriculum is based on our belief that social science is the interactive and integrated study of people, and therefore should be at the core of curricular planning. We believe that social science influences the selection and introduction of related and supporting concepts in language arts, mathematics, science, visual, and performing arts. For example, when students study habitats in science, they also study the Native Americans that have populated these habitats. We also believe that the “…knowledge of the history-social science disciplines—history, geography, economics, political science, anthropology, psychology, sociology, and the humanities is essential in developing individual and social intelligence, preparing students for responsible citizenship; comprehending global interrelationships; and understanding the vital connections among past, present, and future…with a firm grounding in history and the related disciplines, they should have the capacity to make wise choices in their own lives and to understand the swift-moving changes in state, national, and world affairs” (CA Dept. of Ed., 2005, p. 3). Based on the students’ understanding and exploration of these disciplines, they come to know that their individual actions can make a difference in the world.

At all grade levels, Westwood teachers use purposeful planning and curricular integration to guide students in common activities that promote the same social science theme or understandings. Westwood teachers keep in mind the goals of the History-Social Science Framework in social science curriculum by fostering a sense of cultural understanding, a sense of civic duty as part of a democratic society, and the skills necessary to participate as an effective and responsible citizen (p. 10).

Westwood students demonstrate historical and social sciences analysis skills such as chronological and spatial thinking, by placing key events and people of the historical era they are studying within a spatial context. They also demonstrate these skills by applying terms related to time such as past and present, explaining how the present and the past are interrelated, and how some things change and some things remain constant. They are engaged in using map and globe skills, and judging the relative location of a place. Students differentiate between primary and secondary resources in their research, pose relevant questions about historical events, and distinguish fact from fiction.

Students display historical interpretation skills by summarizing key events of eras, identifying the unique character of places that they are studying, identifying and interpreting multiple causes and effects in historical events, and conducting cost-benefit analyses of historical events. (CCSS)

We believe a balanced and integrated curriculum in all grades, based on our school-wide theme of interdependence, prepares our children for the world by allowing them to investigate the interdependence of elements in their own lives, as well as how their lives relate to the world around them. We continue to articulate and refine our curriculum, especially in regards to overarching themes and ideas.

Our social science curriculum is based on the History/Social Science Framework (2005), and the History-Social Science Content Standards and the Common Core State Standards that include standards for literacy in history/social science. We also draw from the research of Jean Piaget,
Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner and more recently, the work of Perkins and Salomon and their *Transfer of Learning* theory.

Westwood teachers recognize the importance of the twelve curriculum strands in the teaching of social science (p.11). These are Sociopolitical Literacy, Economic Literacy, Geographic Literacy, Historical Literacy, Cultural Literacy, Ethical Literacy, National Identity, Constitutional Heritage, Civic Values, Rights, and Responsibilities, Participation Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, and Basic Study Skills.

As a school community, teachers, students, and parents participate in Council. This is a practice that values the contributions of individuals—their feelings and their stories. This practice speaks directly to the Ethical Literacy strand whose emphasis is to teach children to, “Recognize the sanctity of life and the dignity of the individual. At the core of ethical teaching is respect for each person as a unique individual” (p.14). Council has both social and academic benefits. Council encourages students to speak freely and share stories and thoughts based on their individual experiences. They grow to understand that everybody’s life experience and perspective is different, but that we all share the common goals of being heard, understood, and respected. In the context of a social science lesson, students may assume the role of a specific historical figure such as John Smith or Powhatan, or a modern-day community worker such as a postal carrier or store merchant and share their story and their perspective in a Council forum.

We guide our students to gain a firm sense of Civic Values, Rights, and Responsibilities through the study of historical events such as the American Revolution, the writing of the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights. Students also evaluate historical figures such as Rosa Parks and Cesar Chavez who boldly fought for civil rights. Our social values and ethics curriculum reinforce civics lessons that are taught in the social science curriculum.

Historically literate students have a keen sense of historical empathy. As explained in the *Framework*, “Historical empathy is much like entering into the world of drama, suspending one’s knowledge of “the ending” in order to gain a sense of another era and living with the hopes and fears of the people of the time” (p. 12). Students read a variety of texts, including primary and secondary sources, historical fiction, and other documents as an essential part of their learning experiences. For example, fourth and fifth grade students read primary sources written in Revolutionary times, take on the role of a revolutionary and they debate whether to declare independence from England or not. When students study early California, they “become” Pobladores (the first people to travel to Los Angeles and settle there) and re-enact their journey from Mexico to Los Angeles, debating decisions made by these people that ultimately led to their success in the new pueblo, failure, or death. Primary students interview family members across generations to learn about their own histories and to create family trees and timelines of their lives.

To help students build a sense of Geographical Literacy as well as Cultural, Economic, and Historical Literacy, children study the landscapes of our local, city, state, and national boundaries. Students build a model of the geographic features of the land. They build a replica of the local community—with blocks and other materials, they take observational walks around the community, noting multicultural contributions and economic aspects, interviewing community workers, and exploring changes over time. They visit Downtown Los Angeles, noting the same
features. They study our state and the states of the Union, gaining insight and appreciation. They also participate in activities to learn about and admire workers who shape today’s world. They visit a working farm and pick crops while exploring a farm unit. They sort mail and take on the jobs of postal workers as part of a post office unit. They visit commercial, residential, industrial, and rural areas within our community, developing an admiration for the natural world and the contribution and complex interaction of natural and man-made materials. In doing so, students will understand, “…the ways people and environments interact in the human modification of the landscape…Later, students learn that this process of environmental modification in the development of cities, resort areas, and farmlands has been a dominant theme throughout human history…Students should develop understanding of the major environmental issues confronting modern societies and of the consequences, intentional and unintentional, of human decisions that affect the environment” (pp. 16-17).

Our foundation of instructional methodology is the belief that children learn by creating in an experiential context that promotes social interaction. “…social exchange is seen as essential in learning. Throughout shared activity, communication, cooperation, and even conflict, children co-construct their knowledge of the world, using one child’s ideas to develop another’s, or to explore a path unexplored. Because social development is seen as an intrinsic part of cognitive development, the space is planned and set up to facilitate encounters, interactions, and exchanges among children” (Carlina Rinaldi in First Steps to Toward Teaching the Reggio Way).

Westwood teachers understand that learning is a multi-sensory pursuit; we are dedicated to providing students with varied ways to access the curriculum. Field study is an integral part of social science curriculum at all grade levels at Westwood Charter School. Fieldwork ranges from trips to Riley’s Farm, where students experience a re-enactment of the Revolutionary War, to exploring nineteenth-century rancho life at a working adobe ranch, to visiting a community business such as a restaurant and a fire station.

Teachers work as Families to plan and engage students in grade-level simulations, re-enactments, and dramatic representations to assist students to make connections to both current and historical events. Teachers may introduce units of study with “initiations” to spark children’s interests, activate prior knowledge, and “set the stage” for further questions and explorations. We use multi-resource lessons to allow students with varying talents and skills to use a variety of resources to gather information. We may conclude units with “culminations” to promote internalization of concepts they have studied. First graders are introduced to a vital part of their community as they participate in an initiation of the restaurant. Students act as servers by setting a fancy table and as customers by ordering from the menu. They also create their own menu and sort food into its proper course. Finally, students culminate their study of restaurant by opening their own restaurant. They develop their menu, cook the food, and work in all positions involved in running a restaurant. Students participate and reflect, talk and construct, and dramatize, and recreate. The students of Westwood Charter are not passive observers of history. Through these interactive and thoughtful simulations, students experience and feel what it could have been like during a particular time period. As fourth grade students participate in an Ellis Island simulation and have to answer questions that will determine whether or not to be allowed into America, students will feel acceptance, rejection, stress, and opportunity. When passionately debating about whether or not to sign the Declaration of Independence, the students tap into the emotional drive of people from history and make meaning from these simulated experiences. An important component of our simulation process is in the debriefing; where students reflect on their shared
experiences and come together to collectively identify common themes, ideas, and concepts. In turn, these reflections provide a springboard for students to make connections to other avenues or contexts in past and current history.

To present, guide, and assess instructional content, teachers use a wide range of reference and media materials, including, but not limited to textbooks, literature, realia, internet sources, multimedia presentations, videos, C.D.’s and D.V.D.’s, and guest speakers. Our program materials reflect a balanced use of published and teacher-created materials. Whenever possible teachers encourage children to use primary resources to access information. Primary sources are particularly useful in motivating children to challenge traditional notions of history and offer alternative perspectives.

Kindergarten Social Studies

Children enter school with a wide range of experiences and knowledge about the world around them. Building on this wealth of knowledge allows children to develop a sense of place that is both anchored in what they know and firmly connected to their ever-expanding new knowledge. With this “child-center” in mind, our curriculum begins with a study of the self as related to the community, in order to answer the question, “How am I affected by the community?” Children learn to work together, to take turns, share, problem solve, think critically, and analyze problems and consequences. They learn these norms by experiencing them in the group environment. The kindergarten curriculum continues with an exploration of the child’s relationship to the classroom and school, exploring school grounds, personnel, and environment. This foundations forms the basis for the next question, “How do I experience my community?” to include a study of cultures, resources, and the surrounding neighborhood. Students hear and discuss stories from the past and become familiar with how people live and how communities have changed over time. The students act as researchers by going on field trips and applying their knowledge through Block Work, mapping, sketches, and dramatizations. This leads to the next curricular question, “How do I affect my community?” as students investigate their social role through service learning projects, taking on both individual and group responsibilities to initiate change.

Grade One Social Studies

Students explore rights and responsibilities in their world. Within the classroom setting, students learn about playing fairly, being a good sport, and examining and solving the social problems and dilemmas that arise in the classroom. This approach allows students to learn that problems are a normal reoccurring part of their social life.

Through our election unit, students learn about respecting the rights and opinions of others and being a responsible citizen. Students choose a candidate, run a campaign, and conduct a Family-wide election.

Students learn about and understand American symbols such as the bald eagle, the Statue of Liberty, and the Liberty Bell. Students will also learn about the importance of national holidays and the people associated with them. As students learn about these people, an emphasis will be placed on recognizing how certain aspects of life change over time while some things stay the same.
In first grade, students develop a basic understanding of economics. Through our restaurant and post office units, students learn about the use of money to purchase goods and services and how these goods and services are manufactured, transported, and sold. Students also learn how the specialized work that people do contributes to the success of the business.

Our mapping unit helps build conceptual knowledge of the community and the world in which they live. Students develop a sense of place and spatial relationships as they build geographic literacy.

Grade Two Social Studies Narrative

Children in second grade explore through investigation people who make a difference in their own lives today and in the past. They explore history through primary and secondary resources. This includes members of their community as well as current and past heroes. Children compare understanding of the immigrant experience and appreciate lifestyle changes overtime. Children compare and contrast the lives of their ancestors with their own lives. They create timelines to develop an understanding of their own history and how they fit into the larger community. They create family trees to help them understand the hierarchy of generations. Once students have explored the history of their own families, they apply this knowledge to the greater world. Students explore and create various maps after learning mapping skills, including geographic features and land uses. They connect their new learning with geographic knowledge of North America and the continents. Students are introduced to the ways countries are governed.

They explore geographic environments and types of communities. They compare and contrast the similarities and differences between rural, urban, and suburban communities. Within the community, they study community workers as well as the good and services that people consume.

Students are taught basic economic concepts and their individual roles in the production and consumption process. They will learn basic economic reasoning skills by applying these concepts in their everyday lives (e.g. allowance and spending; savings). They investigate a business in depth and learn the importance of interdependence of various systems within an institution. That is, students understand that each part contributes to a successful whole. Our service learning projects stem directly from our investigations in social science.

Students learn to appreciate and celebrate cultural diversity. They experience the various cultures within the classroom, school, and world thought that school year. This instills both pride and value for the unique backgrounds of every individual.

Because Family 1-2 students participate in a two year social studies curriculum, they also explore the theme of from farm to table, create a working restaurant, run their own postal system, build their green community.

Grade Three Social Studies

Grade Three students investigate the features of continuity and change in our local region. The physical and human geography of the region is explored in a thematically integrated curriculum that follows a timeline format, beginning about 20,000 years ago with prehistoric Los Angeles.
Our studies move on to the Tongva tribe (indigenous people), European explorers in our region, the founding settlers of Los Angeles, The Rancho Period, industrialization, and civic expansion to modern day Los Angeles. We emphasize the ways in which environmental, cultural, and political systems have influenced regional development, and how they have worked interdependently, both in the past and today. Experiential lesson design and multiple field trips support a deeper and broader understanding of the Core Standards.

Fourth Grade Social Studies

In grade four, students learn the history of the land, the people, the cities, and the cultures that have combined to become present-day California. They begin with an analysis of California’s geography and then investigate the history of the first Californians. Later, they study the Spanish explorers and settlers and Mexican California. Students end the year by examining the effects of the California Gold Rush, Westward Movement, and the economic, the political, and the technological developments of California statehood.

Fifth Grade Social Studies

In grade five, students extend their studies of the history and geography of the United States, focusing on making a new nation. They begin with the explorers and early settlers of the New World. They study colonial America, which in turn helps them understand the cause of the Revolutionary War. When they understand the issues and conflicts of that time period, they can understand the purpose behind our Constitution and the three branches of government. They study the many cultures and people that immigrated to form this country as they know it today.

For each grade level, there are complete listings of standards, materials, and assessments in the Appendices.

Social and Community Ethics and Values

At Westwood Charter School, we believe that the teaching of social and community ethics and values is an essential part of a progressive curriculum. We believe in a community that fosters independence of thought, intellectual integrity, and personal and social morality. A vital component of our curriculum is encouraging our students to think independently and develop a positive self-concept and resolve conflicts effectively. Once our students understand and respect themselves, we expect them to accept and celebrate the differences of others. We strive to meet the six goals of the program.

**Celebrate a community in which all individuals recognize their interdependence with one another.** We believe in the development of good character in all students because, “when good character is the prevailing force in a school, discipline problems decline, academic performance improves and school pride is visible” (Brooks, 1998, p. 1). As students practice positive social behaviors, these “become part of a person’s self-concept, and indeed [part of] the whole school’s identity…these behaviors are unifying rather than divisive” (p. 1).

**Continue to use a school-wide shared vocabulary to identify positive behaviors that foster an inclusive community and promote character development.** We use common vocabulary
that reflects our school values and expectations. Our school-wide expectation/vocabulary is based on our principles of “PAWS.” PAWS stands for Practice Compassion, Act Responsibly, Work Hard and Stay Safe. PAWS represents behavior and social expectations in a school environment as well as in the students’ everyday lives. We believe in empowering children to become positive influences in the community at large; as Mohandas Gandhi said, “If we are to teach real peace in this world...we shall have to begin with the children.”

Recognize and celebrate students who exemplify positive behavior and school expectations, within the classroom and our school community. Teachers visibly celebrate student achievement in the classroom setting through praise and positive reinforcement. We hold monthly school assemblies to recognize students for demonstrating good character and for those who “Practice PAWS.” These assemblies promote pro-social skills and reinforce our SW-PBS (School-Wide Positive Behavior Support) plan. Students are given the opportunity to compose speeches, songs, and/or skits relating to behavior expectations and perform them for the student body.

Nurture an environment that embraces positive conflict resolution, pro-social skills and safety for all students and staff. We have developed clear expectations for school wide student behavior in the classroom and on the yard, explained by our school-wide positive behavior support program. Teachers review these principles and expectations at the beginning of each year through classroom discussions, lessons, and demonstrations. The PAWS Expectations and Safety Contract is sent home every August for parents and students to review together and sign. While on the yard, students can stay safe by visiting the problem solving station and/or filling out a “PAWS-itive Problem Solving Slip.” We have also developed an office referral form and grade level specific consequence guideline grids based on the principles of PAWS.

Provide direct instruction in PAWS. Instilling social and community ethics and values in our students has positive effects in the classroom. “Teachers who take the time to teach pro-social skills and conflict resolution techniques have much more cooperative and conflict-free classrooms.” This instruction “promotes a calmer classroom environment... [and] creates a setting where consideration of others and trust is the norm...” (Canter, 1995, p. 4). Teachers will define, explicitly teach, and acknowledge and reinforce behavior expectations.

Provide the staff with the training and tools needed to ensure that all students’ character development is supported. Teachers are given the opportunity to increase their skills and knowledge through staff and/or grade level professional development sessions. They have been provided with multiple trainings and grade appropriate curriculum including Second Step: A Violence Prevention Program - Committee for Children, Council for Educators/LAUSD and Health & Wellness by Macmillan/McGraw-Hill. Additionally, we have created a bank of PAWS based lessons for each grade level and have compiled a list of literature that highlights characters that promote PAWS. Teachers are encouraged to utilize these and other resources to support the education of our Social and Community Ethics and Value Goals.
Service Learning

At Westwood Charter, service learning is a structured teaching approach that enriches learning by engaging students in connecting classroom content, literature, and skills to local and/or global community needs. In the lower grades, teachers model the process. In the upper elementary grades, students are encouraged to lead the process with adults as partners, applying critical thinking and problem-solving skills to issues of social justice.

Students grow as individuals, gain respect for their peers and enhance civic participation. Students will gain a deeper understanding of themselves, their community and society and experience success at every ability level. Our students will develop as leaders who take initiative with solving problems, work as team players, and demonstrate their abilities through service to others.

“Simply put service learning connects school based curriculum with the inherent caring and concern young people have for their world - whether on their school campus, at a local food bank, or in a distant rain forest. The results are memorable, lifelong lessons for students and foster a stronger society for us all.” (From The Complete Guide to Service Learning, 2004). Because service learning stems from content, as well as from the hearts of young learners, the projects differ across grade levels and change over time.

The following are descriptions from past service learning projects:

Family 1 engages in a science investigation on the heart and related practices to maintain a healthy heart and lifestyle. Through research the students learn about the heart including its effect and relationship to the body as a whole. The first graders use their research to write and give daily school-wide announcements teaching important heart facts. In addition, they perform a reader’s theatre activity, which educates students how to maintain a healthy heart, and explains why they raise money for the American Heart Association through a school-wide activity Jump Rope for Heart. The students write informational posters, advertise, and then lead the school in the Jump Rope for Heart event.

Family 1-2 conducts an integrated science and social studies investigation Farm to Table. The students study in depth where food comes from. This involves research, field trips, creating a realistic farm, and investigating possible problems faced by farmers. A unit on restaurant follows, culminating with the opening of class restaurants. Much of the food used in the restaurant is grown in the class garden. Students perform the cooking and additional restaurant related jobs and the parent community is invited as customers. Charges for the dining experience are donated to Heifer International - a fund that provides farm animals, garden materials, and training for agricultural families around the world. Upon completion of the unit, students calculate the profits and vote on which animal to purchase with their earned funds.

Family 4-5 engages in a science investigation of electricity and its role in our everyday lives. The students research fossil fuels, electric generators, the growing expense of electricity, and its effect upon society, as well as, pollution concerns for the environment. In addition, students are involved in a variety of research exercises, including interviews and field trips to DWP, Energy Star, and other environmental agencies. Students learn how to read meters, record, and graph
energy usage within their households. After weekly comparisons they incorporate a conservation plan and analyze its effectiveness. Upon completion, students compose a list of ways in which people can reduce electricity usage and then distribute the lists throughout the local community. Students reflect before, during, and after providing service. Reflection encourages critical thinking and is a central force in the design and fulfillment of curricular objectives. We feel it is important that students’ service work is acknowledged, celebrated, and validated. Some of the reflective methods include: presentations, artwork, discussions, and written expression. It is through this reflection process that student learning is measured.

**Health**

Physical, mental, emotional, and social health are critical components of a student’s ability to learn, achieve and succeed. We believe that a positive, health-oriented school climate recognizes that health is intimately linked to learning. According to the *Health Framework for California Public Schools* (CA Dept. of Education, 2003), “Emphasis must be placed on developing life-long, positive, health-related attitudes and behaviors. Such attitudes and behaviors begin to be developed in the home. But the school, working in close partnership with families and communities is also an appropriate arena for development and reinforcement.” Furthermore, “Health education in the schools must be supported by a comprehensive school-wide system to promote children’s health and must be developed and maintained by the collaborative efforts of school personnel, parents, school board members, and community leaders…” (p. 2).

Our health education curriculum is designed to help students develop attitudes, life skills, and practices furthering their health literacy. At Westwood, we take the active role called for by the *Health Framework for California Public Schools* by integrating health concepts, such as personal health, environmental health, and drug prevention into the science curriculum. Units may include nutrition, the food pyramid, body systems and human development. Our school participates in health awareness activities like Red Ribbon Week and Jump Rope for Heart to promote the students’ understanding that “they must play a role in protecting, maintaining and promoting their health and the health of others through healthy behaviors and choices” (p. 2). Our participation in Council is an integral element of our social values and ethics curriculum. Second Step, Too Good for Drugs, and Macmillan/McGraw-Hill textbooks are used to support our health curriculum.

**Physical Education**

We believe that every student in our school should have the opportunity to participate in quality physical education. As mandated by the California State Board of Education, our students receive a minimum of 200 minutes of physical education in a ten-day period. Our program allows our students to develop health-related fitness, physical competence, and cognitive understanding about physical activity so that they can adopt healthy and physically active lifestyles. Students are instructed in body management, locomotor movement, manipulative skills, rhythmic skills, movement concepts, aerobic capacity, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, body composition, self-responsibility, social interaction, and group dynamics.

We also provide learning experiences that meet the developmental needs of young children, which help improve a child's mental alertness, academic performance, readiness to learn and
enthusiasm for learning. Our physical education program includes the following components: opportunities to learn skills, meaningful content, appropriate modeling and instruction, and the chance to apply this knowledge in a supervised setting. Children are also taught all rules and regulations associated with each sport, with a major emphasis on facilitating students to work as a group to achieve a common goal. Self-image, personal development, and social development are also a part of this program. Furthermore, participation in physical education and the development of sportsmanship skills are emphasized. Healthy competition and athletic ability are also acknowledged and supported.

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Our physical education curriculum is integrated into regular classroom planning and is one of the elements of our enrichment program. A professional, certificated teacher teaches the physical education skills and standards to the students. Accordingly, physical education at Westwood focuses on students developing necessary skills and movement knowledge. To assess their mastery of these skills, fifth grade students participate in all state mandated physical fitness testing.

Through the curriculum, we fully endorse the belief that “Physical education is an integral part of the overall education program for every student and provides one of the few opportunities for every student to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to lead a physically active lifestyle” (The Physical Education Framework for California Public Schools, CA Department of Education, 2009, p.7). Furthermore, students learn to work as a team resulting in the development of interdependence.

**Visual and Performing Arts**

Westwood Charter School recognizes the essential role that the visual and performing arts (dance, drama/theater, and music) play in a visionary and well-rounded curriculum. We commit ourselves, through instruction and exploration, to provide children with these exceptionally powerful avenues for creative self-expression, self-discovery and for discovery about the world of which they are a part. Our visual and performing arts curriculum invites students to channel emotions into creative forms. We believe it is of great importance that our children develop a sense of beauty, truth, and tolerance provided by the very humanizing world of art. Our curriculum incorporates five components of arts education. These are: (1) artistic perception: processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to the arts, (2) creative expression: creating and performing in the arts, (3) understanding the historical and cultural contributions and cultural dimensions of the arts, (4) aesthetic valuing of the arts, (5) and connecting and applying what is learned in the arts to other art forms, subject areas, and to careers.

Our goal is for Westwood students to mature into culturally literate people whose value and pursuit of the arts is life-long. Through the visual and performing arts curriculum, students at Westwood will add to their body of knowledge in the core content areas, apply thinking skills, and acquire artistic skill and style. They will integrate skills and concepts amongst the arts disciplines and the core content areas. Our visual and performing arts instruction will engage students with varied learning styles and allow exceptional learners to fully participate in a curriculum that is often not dependent upon verbal or written responses. As stated in the Visual and Performing Arts Framework, “They (the arts) foster students’ abilities to create, experience,
analyze, and reorganize, thereby encouraging intuitive and emotional as well as verbal responses” (CA Dept. of Education, 2004, p. 2).

Our teachers and enrichment educators provide us with our music, drama, dance, and visual arts instruction.

**Dance**
Children at Westwood Charter School are involved in dance and movement education. They engage in activities that encourage them to respond to sound through movement, strengthen motor efficiency and control, communicate ideas through movement, acknowledge the multicultural heritage of dance, and develop an appreciation for its aesthetic value.

**Drama/Theatre**
Drama provides Westwood Charter School students with opportunities to explore language, refine communication skills, develop self-esteem, and further investigate their world and themselves. “Because drama is concerned with the uniqueness of the individual, students who are guided in drama and theatre activities acquire knowledge of and regard for themselves and others as individuals.” (p. 37). Our drama education aims to expose students to the elements of drama, the development of skills in storytelling and playwriting, the appreciation for the multicultural and historical tradition, and the appreciation for the aesthetic value of theatre. Our children participate in classroom skits, reader’s theater, poetry recitations, improvisational theater classes, and musical theater productions. Additionally, dramatic play is used to reinforce and teach social studies and science concepts as well as facilitate conflict resolution.

We strive to maintain a balance between process and product. Some drama productions are “in process” and shared within the classroom and some are “produced” and shared with the larger community.

**Music**
Our students learn about many aspects of music. We recognize the multiple benefits, both intellectual and spiritual, of such educational experiences. Music enriches the social studies program and reinforces math and language arts skills. “Music expresses spiritual and emotional values that are both personal and universal, expands the creative capabilities of each person, integrates and harmonizes the mind and body, promotes a sense of well-being, and contributes to increased learning capacities in diverse subject areas.” (pg. 65).

Students at Westwood Charter School explore and analyze many of the elements of music, such as sound, pitch, rhythm, harmony, form, tempo, notation, and more. As with the other arts, Westwood students learn the important role and value of music in their lives and the lives of others. All students participate in weekly choral music classes and upper grade students have the opportunity to receive instrumental music instruction. Students enjoy viewing performances as well as engaging in their own performances of choral and instrumental music and musical theater productions. Music is often part of our multicultural week.

**Visual Arts**
Westwood Charter students take part in visual arts education, often in conjunction with their learning in the core content areas. The visual arts consist of two-dimensional and three-
dimensional creative expressions, such as painting, drawing, graphic arts, printmaking, sculpture, photography, ceramics, architecture, and using technology to create art. A primary goal is to assist students in understanding the creativity of others as well as their own by emphasizing the creative process and the product. Students use the senses of sight, smell, sound, and touch to develop an understanding of the characteristics of artworks. They learn to identify the elements of art emphasizing line, color, shape/form, texture, and space. Students develop visual arts skills by creating developmentally appropriate, original works of art in a variety of media. Children analyze and respond to their own artworks and those of others in order to understand the feelings and ideas expressed in art created by artists of many cultures, places, and times.

Our students are involved in a variety of classroom-based visual arts activities as well as museum-sponsored programs. These include participation in MOCA’s Contemporary Art Start program, visits to L.A. County Museum of Art, The Getty Museum, Watts Towers Art Center, The Skirball Museum, The Rediscover Museum and The UCLA Fowler Museum.

**Technology**

Our vision at Westwood Charter School is to use technology to enhance communication within our community, to globally connect with people and information, and to engage children, individually and cooperatively, in problem-solving activities that simulate real-life situations. “Over the last twenty years, computer technology has assumed an increasingly prominent role, and schools have gradually responded by helping children develop the computer technology skills needed in the global workplace” (Dooling, 2000, p. 21). We are aware that national and global information interdependence exists in our world and technology continues to play a central role in our lives as it becomes more powerful, accessible, convenient, and complex. We believe that technology’s place in the curriculum is that of an integral resource for teachers and children. Students and teachers use technology as a basic everyday tool to enhance learning. At Westwood, technology enhances learning but does not direct it. We use technology to access information, write, create, problem solve, research, communicate, and publish. In addition, technology allows students to strategize, gather and organize ideas, and inspires students to share learning in a variety of ways. Technology is not a subject that is taught separately. By using technology as a tool, students see the big picture and use technology for the purpose of helping them learn (Roscorla, 2010). Today, students use complex multimedia products and advanced networking technologies to learn interactively and work collaboratively on projects; to gather, organize, and analyze information; to solve problems; and to communicate information (Ringstaff & Kelley, 2002). As a result, students have access to technology at various times throughout the day to apply their skills.

As addressed in the California Common Core Standards, technology is integral to our instruction of the writing process and of information-gathering methods. “Effective tech integration must happen across the curriculum in ways that research shows deepen and enhance the learning process. In particular, it must support four key components of learning: active engagement, participation in groups, frequent interaction and feedback, and connection to real-world experts” (Edutopia, 2008). Russell and Sorge (1999) point to how technology can give students “more control over their own learning,” facilitating the analytical and critical thinking and the collaboration championed in the constructivist approach to education (pp. 1-2). Their conclusion, that integrating technology into instruction tends to move classrooms from teacher-dominated environments to ones that are more student-centered, is supported repeatedly in the literature.
Although student achievement outcomes in these learning environments are difficult to measure because many existing assessments do not adequately capture higher order thinking skills, in such constructivist classrooms, students tend to work cooperatively, have more opportunities to make choices, and play a more active role in their learning (Mitz and Gibbons, 2000; Page, 2002; Waxman, Connell and Gray, 2002). Furthermore, technology allows teachers to differentiate instruction more efficiently by providing a wider variety of avenues for learning that reach students of divergent readiness levels, interests, and learning styles. For students who need academic intervention, online learning programs allow students to both learn independently and succeed at their own pace.

Westwood Charter School integrates technology into all curricular areas and addresses the California Common Core Standards. In grades Kindergarten through five, teachers use technology to deliver instruction. Some teachers utilize document cameras with projectors, and almost all teachers have computer desktops connected to projectors or large screen monitors. In addition, several teachers also have tablets that are used for educational purposes. Therefore, you will see teachers using technology to show visual realia and educational videos to support a variety of content areas, particularly social studies and science. Often students take virtual field trips and visit sites of places that are relevant to student learning. In reading for all content areas, students read text from digital sources and determine the main ideas or key details. Students analyze primary and secondary sources online, conduct research, and compare and contrast different sources of digital information. For writing, students work individually and collaborate with peers to produce and publish pieces using a variety of digital tools. With technology, students use glossaries, dictionaries, and thesauri as tools to enhance the writing process. Paint programs enable students to provide illustrations and visuals for writing assignments. Students use oral language skills to document learning and publish Daily News that is shared with parents and the larger community. In addition, digital recorders are used to develop and sequence podcasts that are both aural and visual. Technology is used by students for communication in the form of email, blogging, and publishing ideas on classroom and school websites. In the upper grades, spreadsheets are used to organize data or to create charts and graphs so that results can be displayed and interpreted. Students in various grade levels use keyboarding software and applications to enhance technology use as well. Overall, technology resources help Westwood Charter students access information and address standards for learning and achievement. Teachers use technology for research and development of lessons and curricular units. Teachers search the internet for resources and information, use a variety of programs, and create engaging multimedia presentations for their students. Teachers and students use the intranet to share files and information.

It is our goal during the next five years to actively seek out new opportunities to engage our students in the most cutting-edge technological experiences. We are continuing to integrate new technology and adapt as it becomes available to enhance our teaching and learning. Over the next five years, our goal is to use, but not limit ourselves to, the ideas on the following list:

**Instruction with Technology**

- We will use tablets to enhance research and to facilitate whole group instruction of technology skills. Tablets will be available in the library and/or by checkout.
- Each classroom will have a document camera, projector, and laptop computer to facilitate instruction on a daily basis.
There will be desktops/laptops/tablets in each classroom at a 4:1 student to computer ratio.
   - Access to technology enables students to immediately and efficiently apply skills modeled in the classroom.

There will be networked laser printers with cartridges distributed throughout the school to provide ease with publishing student work.

There will be space saving furniture and mobile technology to be used more seamlessly within classrooms. Security for mobile technology must also be taken into account.

There will be software to facilitate the teaching process. This includes updated versions of programs already in use, as well as new software that are applicable to meeting grade level standards in a variety of content areas. Applications can also be used for assessment and intervention purposes.

There will be additional hardware equipment (Smartboards, webcams, digital video cameras, digital still cameras, microphones, audio recorders, NEOs) to enable teachers to enhance instruction and to give students other avenues for publishing work and communicating ideas to enhance the learning process.

There will be increased opportunities to communicate with the community in the form of podcasting, video conferencing, blogging, and frequent updates to classroom and school websites.

**Professional Development**

There will be professional development for teachers to promote innovative use of technology that will enhance and support use of cutting-edge technology practices.

**Technical Support and Upgrades**

- There will be weekly hardware support to maintain and repair equipment on campus.
- There will be the ability to maintain upgrades with technology equitably within each Family.

1. **(E)**

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Westwood Charter School is a safe learner-centered environment. We recognize the wealth of knowledge, experiences, and attitudes students possess as they approach learning tasks. In a learner-centered environment, students make observations, predictions, and hypotheses about the topic or investigation they are to study. These are shared with the learning community. The teacher may act as diagnostician and facilitator to help students clarify thinking and correct misconceptions. Learning tasks are designed to be challenging, so the students will be interested and engaged but not so challenging they are overwhelmed. As Westwood students engage in study, they continually share new thinking, answer questions, raise new ones, and make connections. In learner-centered environments, teachers strive to instill independence in students.

When students come to a new understanding as a result of a challenging task, we ask them why or how they know. As stated in *How People Learn*, “Overall, learner-centered environments include teachers who are aware that learners construct their own meanings, beginning with the beliefs, understandings, and cultural practices they bring to the classroom. If teaching is conceived as constructing a bridge between the subject matter and the student, learner-centered teachers keep a constant eye on both sides of the bridge. The teacher attempts to get a sense of what students know and can do as well as their interests and passions—what each student knows, cares about, is able to do, and wants to do. Accomplished teachers ‘give learners reasons,’ by respecting and understanding learners’ prior experiences and understandings assuming that these...
can serve as a foundation on which to build a bridge to new understandings” (Duckworth’s study (as cited in Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999, p.124).

As a social science based school, Westwood teachers guide students to make connections between past and present events in our local, state, national, and global settings. We strive to help children see history as a continuum, see cultures as unique and similar, see individuals as history makers, see themselves in this epic story, and realize the power and responsibility this knowledge embodies. Cross-curricular instruction plays an important role at Westwood, so that children extend their social science knowledge base across disciplines and subject matter.

Teachers use the California Common Core State Standards to focus content instruction. Students discover mastery of standards through multiple paths. The instructional environments at Westwood reflect a wide range of structures, from directed to guide to experiential to independent. Teachers provide direct instruction for specific skill learning as well as acting as flexible mentors who guide students to observe, experiment, and discover. Creativity, inquiry, clarity of thinking, multiple viewpoints, problem solving, and self-management are valued. We also value hands-on experiences, multi-sensory learning tasks, and field study as essential in Westwood classrooms.
1. (F)

**MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS**

Westwood Charter School is dedicated to meeting the needs of all learners in an inclusive environment. We instruct students with disabilities, English Language Learners, gifted students, students achieving below grade level, students of low socio-economic stats, and other special populations with the goal that all will successfully meet and exceed the Common Core Standards.

*English Language Learners*

**English Learners** (including reclassification):
As a District affiliated charter school, the Charter School shall implement the provisions of the District’s Master Plan for English Learners and comply with all applicable federal and state laws, District policies and procedures related to the implementation of the English Learner Master Plan."

As a District affiliated charter school, Westwood Charter shall implement the provisions of the Master Plan for English Learners and comply with all applicable federal and state laws, District policies and procedures related to the implementation of the English Learner Master Plan.

Westwood will meet the needs of English Learners by implementing instructional practices that are proven effective and are supported by the LAUSD. These strategies include but are not limited to: scaffolding the presentation of concepts, clarifying learning objectives specific to language development, differentiating instruction base on each child’s readiness to benefit, enhancing vocabulary instruction, providing as-need interventions for English Learners who are struggling with concepts, and developing a positive relationship with the parents of English Learners to keep them informed of their children’s progress and to assist them with supporting at home.

In addition we will also continue to set achievable goals for these and all students. Interventions for students who are learning English may include: realia, poetry, peer buddies, modeling, group work, small group instruction, pre-teaching/re-teaching, preferred seating, one-to-one conferencing and instruction, checking for understanding, puppets, choral reading, books on tape, interactive play, gesturing, visual cues, total physical response, repetition, repeating directions, leadership roles, differentiated and tiered instruction, Council, teaching of phonics and vocabulary in meaningful contexts.

We will continue to be committed to quality professional development to successfully educate our students who are learning English. We will apply research-based practices in classroom and also share innovative, best practices with colleagues. We will continue to provide quality language arts instruction that facilitates our students who are learning English moving through the ELD levels and becoming re designated as fluent English speakers. We will also follow all district and state guidelines regarding initial and annual CELDT testing and reclassification for students who are learning English.
We create a supportive environment, which encourages risk taking. Skills are taught in ways that are contextually meaningful to students and often based on personal and shared experiences.

The needs of students who are learning English are also supported by school-wide programs and Bilingual Council. In addition, during the course of the year we celebrate cultural differences and similarities both within the classroom and throughout the school.

**Gifted**

Westwood Charter School will continue to use LAUSD’s GATE identification process and policy and reimburse the District for testing and processing on a fee-for-service basis. Students who participate in the Gifted and Talented Program (GATE) are clustered in academic peer groups within each class. Because of the large number of identified GATE students, teachers deliver whole-class instruction at or above grade level, and then differentiate the curriculum for those students whose needs dictate challenge and higher-level instruction. This differentiation can take the form of individualized extension of the curriculum, both teacher and student initiated, increased complexity and depth of curriculum, accelerated pacing of instruction and, higher expectations for student production that are appropriate to individual learning interests, needs, and abilities. Instruction for students who are identified gifted and talented includes opportunities for them to practice critical thinking and creative problem solving in conjunction with subject matter acquisition and content mastery.

**Low socio-economic status**

Westwood Charter is committed to meeting the needs of students of low socio-economic status. We ensure that all the basic educational needs of all students are met. We ensure that all students have the appropriate supplies and materials. We also ensure that all students are given the same educational opportunities. We provide support and scholarships for field trips and provide tickets so that all students can be part of community events. Students of low socio-economic status are given the same access to after-school enrichment programs. Students are also provided with free and reduced lunches. We provide scholarships for field trips and tickets to participate in our community events when needed. Westwood offers after school enrichment programs such as Drama and Art Share.
1. (G)  

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Common Core Application to Students with Disabilities

Students eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)--must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum and be prepared for success in their post-school lives, including college and/or careers.

Promoting a culture of high expectations for all students is a fundamental goal of the Common Core State Standards. In order to participate with success in the general curriculum, students with disabilities, as appropriate, may be provided additional supports and services, such as:

- Instructional supports for learning--based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)2--which foster student engagement by presenting information in multiple ways and allowing for diverse avenues of action and expression.
- Instructional accommodations (Thompson, Morse, Sharpe & Hall, 2005)-changes in materials or procedures-which do not change the standards but allow students to learn within the framework of the Common Core.
- Assistive technology devices and services to ensure access to the general education curriculum and the Common Core State Standards.

Some students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will require substantial supports and accommodations to have meaningful access to certain standards in both instruction and assessment, based on their communication and academic needs. These supports and accommodations should ensure that students receive access to multiple means of learning and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, but retain the rigor and high expectations of the Common Core Standards.

Reference: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 34 CFR 300.34(a) / 300.39(b) (3) (2004)

**Inclusive Practices**

“We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”


Westwood Charter School’s special education program is founded on the ideal that separate cannot be equal. Not only are we willing and able to accommodate and modify as necessary, but we believe it is the right and moral thing to do. Our experience accommodating the needs of students with disabilities gives our staff a well-stocked toolbox to meet the needs of all learners in all programs.

Westwood is unique in its ability to serve children with moderate to severe disabilities included in the general education classroom. Westwood Charter teachers have had professional
development and on-the-job training in working with children with a wide spectrum of
disabilities. Students benefit socially, ethically, and academically from being a model for a peer
with significant needs. Students come to realize that we all have strengths and weaknesses, and
each child has something important to offer to their community, whether on the playground or in
the classroom.

“The need to feel that one belongs is a basic human need, according to Abraham Maslow’s
theory of psychology. Maslow pointed out that belonging was an essential and prerequisite
human need that had to be met before one could achieve a sense of self-worth. For children who
have difficulty learning, it becomes critical that this sense of belonging provides the basis for
self-worth. Belonging also has a social context and implications for the child’s future
performance in society” (Moore, 2000).

At Westwood Charter, we believe that beyond the right to be included, every child has a right to
belong. In our belief system, the child with disabilities is better served by having typical peer
models. As students interact with a peer with a disability, they are all developing pro-social
skills that extend way beyond the classroom. Every child is valued in his or her classroom and is
expected to give something back to the community, and their contribution gives them a sense of
belonging.

Exposure to diverse styles helps us appreciate differences and value every member of the
community. Inclusive practices help us realize that while we were not all born with the same
skill set, we all have a skill set and something of significance to contribute. Instead of breeding
ignorance, we give all children the opportunity to know how to greet others and not judge the
worth of their peers by physical appearance, ability to communicate, or unique limitations. Our
students develop a moral compass that says all people should have a sense of belonging.

Parents also have a right to belong. Parents of students with significant disabilities see their child
as part of a community and know that outside of school, their child is recognized and respected
in their neighborhood, park, or grocery store. When their child attends the neighborhood school,
parents have the opportunity to meet peers and partake fully in the social aspect of their
community.

**Westwood Charter RSP Model**

Resource Specialist Teachers (RST) work closely with general education teachers to support the
academic, social, and behavioral needs of students with disabilities. A personalized program is
developed based upon the students' area(s) of need. Regular collaboration between the RST,
General Education Teacher, Program Support Staff and other DIS service providers is essential
to each student’s academic success and sense of belonging. This collaboration takes many forms
which may include: consultation, co-teaching, and modeling of specific academic and behavioral
strategies. Services may be delivered 1:1, small group, or whole class both in and outside of the
general education classroom.

Resource Specialist Teachers use many programs to support students in the special education
program. The programs may include research-based intervention materials, nationally recognized
programs, LAUSD provided materials, or targeted alternate curriculum designed by the RSTs.
Technology is essential and used to differentiate intervention and support teacher directed lessons. Westwood’s use of Reading and Writing Workshop provides natural opportunities for students with special needs to participate in classroom curriculum.

Whole and small group lessons are delivered to support positive social thinking and pro-social skills. These lessons support the development of an inclusive classroom by teaching conflict resolution, social and friendship skills. At the same time, these lessons align with and support the school-wide positive behavior program PAWS.

Westwood has developed special education programs for serving students with disabilities. One program primarily serves students with mild to moderate disabilities in a more traditional academic remediation program; the other primarily serves students with moderate to severe disabilities in their inclusive environment.

In the more traditional model, students may receive small group instruction at their ability level outside the general education classroom or receive push-in academic support in the general education classroom. Instruction targets student needs in reading, writing, math and critical thinking. Social and behavioral skill lessons may also be delivered individually, in small group, or in the general education classroom. These services increase self-esteem, social and academic competence, and the students’ ability to access grade level curriculum while meeting their specific IEP goals.

Another model primarily serves students with moderate to severe disabilities who are included in the general education classroom. Students in this program tend to have more global deficits that impact many, or all, academic, behavioral, and social areas. Students on this caseload may receive classroom modifications. Some students also require the development of an alternative curriculum to meet the goals stated in their IEP. Social, behavioral, and academic lessons may be delivered individually, in a small group, or in the general education classroom. Students may also be pulled out for individual academic skill instruction. Regular collaboration between the RST, General Education Teacher, Program Support Staff, DIS service providers and parents is a vital component for the success of these students.

Special Education

The District shall continue to serve the needs of special education students enrolled in District Affiliated Charter Schools in the same manner as at any other public school of the District, and shall be responsible for meeting all the requirements of the Modified Consent Decree along with the District Affiliated Charter School.

Conversion Affiliated Charter

1. District Affiliated Charter School’s Special Education Responsibilities

   a. General Requirements

   The District Affiliated Charter School will adhere to the provisions of the IDEA and California special education laws and regulations to ensure that all students with
disabilities are accorded a free appropriate public education ("FAPE") as is required of all District authorized schools. The District Affiliated Charter School will also ensure that no student otherwise eligible to enroll in the District Affiliated Charter School will be denied enrollment on the basis of their special education status.

The District Affiliated Charter School will comply with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and all Office of Civil Rights mandates for students enrolled in the District Affiliated Charter School.

The District Affiliated Charter School will adhere to the requirements of the Chanda Smith Modified Consent Decree and court orders imposed upon the District pertaining to special education and will submit documents and information, participate in reviews, and attend informational sessions and meetings at the District’s request.

The District Affiliated Charter School will use District forms to develop, maintain, and review assessments and Individualized Education Programs ("IEPs") in the format required by the District and will enter accurate assessment and IEP data into the District’s designated data system (Welligent) in accordance with LAUSD policies and procedures. The District Affiliated Charter School will maintain copies of assessments and IEP materials for District review. The District Affiliated Charter School will submit to the District all required reports, including but not limited to CASEMIS, SESAC and Welligent IEPs, in a timely manner as necessary to comply with state and federal and Modified Consent Decree requirements. The District Affiliated Charter School shall keep daily attendance for each student which shall be reported and certified according to District policies and procedures.

The District Affiliated Charter School will participate in the state quality assurance process for special education (i.e. verification reviews, coordinated compliance self-reviews, complaints monitoring, procedural safeguards, and the local plan). The District Affiliated Charter School will participate in internal validation review ("DVR").

The District Affiliated Charter School is responsible for the management of its, personnel, programs and services. The District Affiliated Charter School will ensure that its special education personnel or contracted personnel are appropriately credentialed, licensed or on waiver consistent with California laws and regulations. The District Affiliated Charter School will implement the programs and services, including providing related services, required by the IEPs of the students enrolled at the District Affiliated Charter School.

b. Transferring Students

For students transferring to the District Affiliated Charter School from other school districts, District-operated schools or District authorized charters, the District will provide those related services required by the students’ IEPs immediately upon the students’ enrollment regardless of the types of service provider (i.e. school-based, NPA or private. District Affiliated Charter School will ensure that IEP team meetings for such students will be held within thirty (30) days of the student’s enrollment in accordance with state
and federal law if there is a change in the supports and services set forth in the transfer student’s IEP.

c. Assessments

The referral process shall include Student Success Team (SST) meetings to review prior interventions, accommodations and modifications and to recommend further interventions as appropriate. The referral process shall be supported by the Response to Intervention (RtI) model approach using data to identify student strengths and weaknesses. Upon review of accumulated data, observation and review of records, the District Affiliated Charter School may determine that assessment is necessary to determine possible eligibility for special education programs and related services.

Upon a parent’s request for assessment, the District Affiliated Charter School will convene a meeting to review and discuss the request in light of student records, acquired data and student performance to agree with or deny the request for assessment. If the District Affiliated Charter School determines that assessment for special education eligibility is not warranted, prior written notice must be given to the parent/guardian with a clear rationale for such refusal within 15 days of the request. If the District Affiliated Charter School concludes that there are suspected disabilities, the school must develop an assessment plan in Welligent for each student with suspected disabilities within the 15 day timeline. The LAUSD assessment plan describes the types of assessments that may be used to determine the eligibility of students for special education instruction and services. Assessments will be conducted, within legal timelines, after receiving the parents’ written consent. The District Affiliated Charter School shall conduct an IEP team meeting that includes required team members within mandated timelines for each student assessed to discuss results, determine eligibility, and (if eligible) specify special education instruction and services. The District Affiliated Charter School will make decisions regarding eligibility, goals, program, placement, and exit from special education through the IEP process according to federal, state and District timelines.

d. Alternative Placements

Under limited circumstances when a District Affiliated Charter School student’s needs may not be provided at the District Affiliated Charter School, the District Affiliated Charter School will consult with the District to discuss placement and service alternatives. The IEP team convened at the District Affiliated Charter School shall have the authority to make offers of a FAPE and decisions regarding the staffing and methodology used to provide special education and related services at the District Affiliated Charter School pursuant to an IEP.

e. Least Restrictive Environment

The District Affiliated Charter School will support movement of students with disabilities into less restrictive environments and increase interactions of students with disabilities with non-disabled students. The District Affiliated Charter School general program of instruction for students with disabilities shall be responsive to the required sequence of
courses and related curricular activities provided for all students in the District Affiliated Charter School. Assessment and standardized testing procedures shall be implemented, including guidelines for modifications and adaptations, to monitor student progress.

f. Staffing Requirements

The District Affiliated Charter School shall participate in available appropriate District trainings to support access by students with disabilities to the general education classroom, general education curriculum, integration of instructional strategies and curriculum adaptations to address the diverse learner, and interaction with non-disabled peers.

The District Affiliated Charter School will maintain responsibility for monitoring progress towards meeting specified IEP goals. The District Affiliated Charter School will assess, develop, and implement Individual Transition Plans to help students with disabilities transition to adult living in accordance with District policies and procedures.

g. Student Discipline/Inclusion

The District Affiliated Charter School will ensure that it makes the necessary adjustments to comply with the mandates of state and federal laws, including the IDEA regarding discipline of students with disabilities. Discipline procedures will include positive behavioral interventions and the District’s Discipline Foundation Policy. Prior to recommending expulsion and/or prior to the eleventh day of cumulative suspension for a student with disabilities, the District Affiliated Charter School will convene a manifestation determination IEP set forth in the District’s Policies and Procedures Manual. The District Affiliated Charter School will collect data pertaining to the number of special education students suspended or expelled.

The Charter is committed to achieving population balance that includes students with disabilities. The Charter will conduct outreach activities to attract and enroll a range of mild to severe special education students that is diverse and comparable with resident schools with similar demographics. The current District-wide average percentage of students with disabilities is 10-13%. The District Affiliated Charter School’s outreach efforts should be geared toward aligning with the District-wide average. The District Affiliated Charter School may not refuse to admit a student based on special education eligibility, needs or services identified in the student’s IEP. The District will make available to the District Affiliated Charter School MCD reports indicating range of services and number of students served at individual District Affiliated Charter Schools.

2. Procedural Safeguards/Due Process Hearings

The District may invoke dispute resolution provisions set out in the charter petition, initiate due process hearings, and/or utilize other procedures applicable to the District Affiliated Charter School if the District determines that such action is legally necessary to ensure compliance with federal and state special education laws and regulations or the Modified Consent Decree.
In the event that a parent or guardian of a student attending the District Affiliated Charter School initiates due process proceedings, both the District Affiliated Charter School and the District will be named as respondents. Whenever possible, the District and the District Affiliated Charter School shall work together in an attempt to resolve the matter at an early stage (informal settlement or mediation).

3. Complaints

The District will investigate and respond to all special education complaints the District receives pertaining to the District Affiliated Charter Schools including the District’s Uniform Complaint Procedures, Office for Civil Rights and California Department of Education Special Education Compliance. The District Affiliated Charter School will cooperate with the District in any such investigations and provide the District with any and all documentation that is needed to respond to complaints.

4. Funding of Special Education

The District Affiliated Charter School will adhere to all District policies and procedures regarding special education and special education funding, as they may be amended from time to time. The District shall retain all state and federal special education funding for District Affiliated Charter School students which is allocated to the SELPA. The District shall be responsible for providing all appropriate special education and related services in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws.

5. District Responsibilities Relating to District Affiliated Charter School Special Education Program

To the extent that the District provides training opportunities and/or information regarding special education to other school site staff, such opportunities and/or information shall be made available to District Affiliated Charter School staff as well.

*Modified Consent Decree Requirements

All District Affiliated Charter Schools chartered by the Los Angeles Unified School District (“LAUSD or the District”) Governing Board are bound by and must adhere to the terms, conditions and requirements of the Chanda Smith Modified Consent Decree (“MCD”) and other court orders imposed upon District pertaining to special education. The MCD is a consent decree entered in a federal court class action lawsuit initially brought on behalf of students with disabilities in LAUSD. It is an agreement of the parties approved by the federal court and monitored by a court-appointed independent monitor. The MCD includes nineteen statically measurable outcomes and facilities obligations that the District has to achieve to disengage from the MCD and federal court oversight. All District Affiliated Charter Schools are required to use the District’s Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual and Welligent, the District-wide web-based software system used for online IEPs and tracking of related services provided to students during the course of their education.
As part of fulfilling the District’s obligations under the Modified Consent Decree, data requests from any schools that are not connected to the District’s current Student Information Systems (“SIS”) are made on a regular basis. The requested data must be submitted in the Office of the Independent Monitor’s required format and are as follows:

# The Independent Charter School Suspension/Expulsion Report, due monthly throughout the school year.

# Paper SESAC Report and Welligent Student Listing Verification, due monthly throughout the school year.

# CBEDS, which is due at the end of October of Each School Year.

# All Students Enrolled December 1 of Each School Year, due at the end of December every school year.

# Graduation Status of 12th Grade Students Enrolled on December 1, due at the end of June every school year.

Schools that are currently on SIS can disregard the above data requests.

The MCD requires all District authorized schools, including District Affiliated Charter Schools to implement the District’s Integrated Student Information System (“ISIS”). ISIS is a suite of applications designed to capture all District student data and includes the Welligent IEP Management Systems, EESIS, SIS and LAUSDMAX.

**Description of the Implementation Plan for the School’s Instructional Program** (including a timeline for implementation of various components of the plan):

The District shall continue to serve the needs of special education students enrolled in the affiliated Charter Schools in the same manner as at any other public school of the District, and shall be responsible for meeting all the requirements of the Modified Consent Decree.
Professional Development
Westwood teachers decide each spring for the following school year on one or two areas of professional development focus for the whole staff, based on school-wide need. Areas of need are determined by analyzing student work and assessment data. We first look to experts within our staff that has expertise to share. We draw upon District personnel, as well as other outside resources, to enhance our professional development. Our most recent examples of staff development sessions included topics such as: phonics instruction, developing literacy through Readers’ Workshop and Writers’ Workshop, English Language Development instruction and the use of Thinking Maps, Differentiated Instruction such as tiered lesson planning, using the TTLC (Thinking Through a Lesson Protocol) and Constructivist Learning Design. During the 2007-2008 school years, we have had extensive professional development in the implementation of the Council program and continue to perfect our implementation of the program. In 2010-2012 we had extensive professional development with Growing Educators focusing on Writer’s Workshop.

Our professional development program’s effectiveness rests on its impact on student learning. With that goal in mind, our choices are driven by student achievement data, both formative and summative. Community feedback through such instruments as the LAUSD School Performance Meter and the Mid Charter Evaluation. The last three years have brought new programs and innovations such as Readers’ and Writers’ Workshop, Growing Educators and social lessons through our positive discipline plan (PAWS). The next few years will be a time to engage in reflective practice, hone our new skills, and refine instruction to maximize student learning. With that in mind, we anticipate ongoing sessions devoted to examining student work and conducting lesson study. Teachers will need the opportunity to assess student learning, design lessons, observe one another, and refine instruction based on their collaborative work. We hope to explore math through Cognitive Guided Instruction (CGI) and explore Project Based Learning strategies.

Utilizing additional knowledge within the school, we may hold "round robin" staff development sessions, where teachers with expertise formally share what they know in a series of workshops that other teachers attend, according to their needs and interests. Administrators and the curriculum coordinator also provide staff development in their areas of expertise. Also, within the school, teachers identify an area in which they are particularly knowledgeable, and may offer office hours or opportunities for classroom observation. Teachers support colleagues in various areas by volunteering to serve as unofficial mentors, thus extending the mentoring process beyond what the District is currently able to provide new teachers. We also build into our staff professional development schedule time to discuss articulation across grade levels, to ensure consistency from kindergarten through grade five. As a charter school, we establish our own professional development agenda for District Buy-Back Days.

The role of teachers is central to student learning and other community members play an important role as well. We provide regular professional development for our special education assistants, both in group training sessions each month and in conferences and mentoring sessions held with the resource specialist teachers. Paraprofessionals and supervision aides are trained at
the beginning of the year and periodically throughout the school year in safety and social skill facilitation such as conflict resolution.

Substantial time and resources are essential to supporting a quality professional development program. In addition to our Tuesday afternoon professional development time, teachers meet on Thursdays to plan with their Families. Budget monies are allocated for teachers to seek outside professional development either as a Family or as an individual.
Element 2-Measurable pupil outcomes

The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. ‘Pupil outcomes,’ for purposes of this part, means the extent to which all pupils of the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school’s educational program. Ed Code 47605 (b)(5) (B)

Schools that implement alternate or replacement formative/periodic assessments will be asked to provide the following information in their charter petition.

1. Replacement assessments are standards aligned, valid, reliable, and to cover content.
2. A process is in place for data collection, sharing and analysis
   a. A data platform is in place for teachers, counselors and administrators to use
   b. A system is established to score, print, produce and share results
   c. Formative assessments are implemented at least three times per year in the specified course or content area.
3. Professional development is provided to staff on the formative assessment process.
4. Evidence of implementation is available and ready to use during Performance Dialogues with Instructional Directors.
5. Evidence that processes are in place to determine effectiveness of the replacement assessments (i.e. student participation, teacher buy in, correlation to summative assessments, etc.) What is the evidence of successful plantation?

Schools that are granted assessment autonomy will be responsible for all costs related to implementation.

The Charter School will work toward meeting the student outcome goals as outline on LAUSD’s Performance Meter.

Recognizing that reading, writing, listening and speaking are essential disciplines, Westwood Charter School places the highest priority on developing fluent readers, skilled writers, confident speakers, and thoughtful listeners. We provide support and specialized instruction for students who are learning English to meet the standards so that all children are working toward the same goal. We recognize that reading, writing, listening, and speaking each exist in context and in relation to the others. These skills are not taught independently of one another but are geared toward achieving these standards and also applying language arts skills to achieve success in other curricular areas.

In the context of a rich curriculum, students develop skills in:

- Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development,
- Reading Comprehension,
- Literary Response and Analysis,
- Writing Strategies,
- Written and Oral English Language Conventions,
- Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics),
- Listening and Speaking Strategies, and
- Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics).
Westwood Charter’s goal in mathematics education is for students to:

- develop fluency in basic computational skills,
- develop an understanding of mathematical concepts,
- become mathematical problem solvers who can recognize and solve routine problems readily and can find multiple ways to reach a solution or goal where no routine path is apparent,
- communicate precisely about quantities, logical relationships, and unknown values through the use of signs, symbols, models, graphs, and mathematical terms,
- reason mathematically by gathering data, analyzing evidence, and building arguments to support or refute hypotheses, and
- make connections among mathematical ideas and between mathematics and other disciplines.

We emphasize computational and procedural skills, conceptual understanding, and problem solving. These three components of mathematics instruction and learning are not separate from each other; instead, they are intertwined and mutually reinforcing.

Westwood Charter’s approach to science includes the essential skills and knowledge students will need to be scientifically literate citizens in the twenty-first century. We provide the foundational skills and knowledge for students to learn core concepts, principles, and theories of science. Students have the opportunity to learn science by receiving direct instruction, by solving standards-based problems, by reading textbooks and supplemental materials, and by doing laboratory investigations and experiments. Investigation and experimentation directly and specifically support the teaching of the content strands and disciplines (physical, life, and earth science). Investigation and experimentation allow students to make concrete associations between science and the study of nature and provide many opportunities to take measurements and use basic mathematical skills. Science is strongly connected to community health, population, natural resources, environmental quality, natural and human-induced hazards, and other global challenges. Science provides a foundation for understanding these issues.

Westwood Charter School requires that students not only acquire core knowledge in history and social science, but also develop the critical thinking skills that historians and social scientists employ to study the past and its relationship to the present. During their years at Westwood, students learn to distinguish the important from the unimportant, to recognize vital connections between the present and the past, and to appreciate universal historical themes.

The use of primary sources such as original documents, diaries, letters, interviews, legends, speeches, and other artifacts from our past fosters students’ understanding of historical events by revealing the ideas, values, fears, and dreams of the people associated with them. As our program uses social science as a basis for integrated curriculum, we enrich the study of history through the use of literature, both from and about the period being studied. Social Science is the connective tissue that runs through our English language arts and science curriculum.

Students are assessed using both formative and summative measures to ensure their success and to inform instructional practice. Benchmark assessments will be conducted regularly in all academic areas and encompass a variety of instruments including publisher-provided tests,
teacher-developed tests, portfolio assessments, district tests, writing samples based on a given prompt, demonstrations, performance assignments, and rubric-scored assessments and presentations. The advantage of benchmark assessments is the immediacy of gathering results and adapting instruction accordingly.

In addition to using LAUSD Periodic Assessments for all grade levels, we are adopting school-wide researched based language arts and math assessments to enable us to track students’ progress over time. In language arts, K through 3 students will be tested in decoding skills, fluency, comprehension, and literary analysis using the mCLASS and DIBELS Next Assessments. Students in grades 3 through 5 will be assessed using the District’s Literacy Assessments. The results for both of these assessments will be accessible through My Data, allowing children at risk to be identified for intervention. Students’ mathematical understanding and computational skills will be assessed through cumulative assessments from CORE K-12 created by each grade level to correlate with their curriculum. Again, results are easily accessible through My Data, allowing us to track students’ progress over time.

A full listing of additional benchmark assessments is included in Element 3. In the primary grades, Kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers use a variety of ongoing assessments. These may include portfolios, documentation, observation, teacher and peer conferencing, anecdotal records, CORE reading assessments, teacher created assessments, informal reading inventory, DIBELS, and the Fountas and Pinnell Phonics Assessments. All K-2 teachers keep track of their students’ reading levels using The Fountas and Pinnell assessments, DIBELS Next, and the Words Their Way spelling inventory, address phonemic awareness and spelling patterns. The DIBELS helps teachers track students’ reading levels, including comprehension, fluency, and decoding skills, facilitating targeted instruction to all children. Writing benchmarks, or “on demands” are given four to five times yearly, with each one focusing on a different writing genre. Mathematics assessment tools include Pearson Envision topic tests, as well as teacher created Envision tests, weekly fact quizzes, daily mad-minute fact practice, Marilyn Burns project assessments, and other teacher created standards based tests. In addition, grade level teams have met to create CORE K-12 cumulative assessments that correlate with their curriculum. These assessments track students’ understanding throughout the year. Teacher-created science and social science assessments are given in each unit of study to determine student understanding, and Foss science assessments are used as well. Student journals and teacher observation help teachers adjust instruction on a daily basis to ensure students understand the concepts being taught.

In upper grades, third through fifth, teachers use CORE Assessments and District Literacy Assessments to inform them of fluency, comprehension, and decoding skills and to guide students toward level-appropriate literature. Weekly word study/spelling/dictation tests focus on a spelling pattern (spelling) or a certain punctuation, grammar, or syntax skill (dictation). Teachers use information from pretests on Mondays, final tests at the end of the week, as well as informal observation of in-class writing to assess student progress and needs and modify or create curriculum for upcoming weeks. Writing benchmarks in varied genres are given, and portfolios provide an ongoing record of student work and progress. In mathematics, unit pre- and post-tests determine student mastery of the standards taught and determine the instructional groupings. Cumulative grade level CORE K-12 assessments will also be given to enable school-wide tracking of student progress. Embedded science and social science assessments are given
periodically, as are end-of-unit exams and projects. Journals in all areas provide immediate, ongoing feedback about student understanding. Projects and benchmarks are scored using teacher and student created rubrics. Data are used by teachers to develop review or enrichment groups, and to seek out alternate teaching strategies, if needed. Students may evaluate their own academic performance in a student-led parent conference.

Teachers collect and analyze data regarding student achievement on a continual basis. In addition, teachers often analyze data during weekly Family meetings, particularly data for students who need extra support. Teachers formally conference with parents two times a year and also schedule informal conferences as needed. Students, parents, and teachers participate in student-led conferences, as well. Each year parents receive two progress reports. When necessary, parents receive mid-semester progress reports.

At the beginning of the school year, Westwood Charter’s staff analyzes the California Standards Test scores from the previous school year. Teachers note students who scored at the Basic, Below Basic, and Far Below Basic levels in specific subjects such as language arts and mathematics. These scores, in addition to benchmark and initial assessments, are used to identify at-risk students who would benefit from extra support during the school year. At this time teachers note high-achieving students and identify other student achievement subgroups. Teachers analyze data on subgroups such as students who participated in intervention programs the previous year, students in Special Education, GATE students, and English Language Learners. Teachers use this information to plan and differentiate instruction across the curriculum. Students who are at-risk are monitored consistently in both formal and informal ways, and are provided targeted intervention and support.

Assessment data drives professional development at Westwood Charter School. Teachers identify student needs, resources, the teacher support, and training necessary to best assist all student populations. Often, the staff focuses on one or two areas of curriculum each year that will improve instruction and student achievement. School leaders and teachers participate in quality professional development whose goals are consistent with a constructivist, integrated, and inclusive social science based curriculum.

**Academic Performance Index Growth Target**
In each of the five years since the last renewal petition, Westwood met its Academic Performance Index goal as set forth by the California Department of Education. Working from a base of 940 in the year 2012, we hope to increase our API by an average of 1-2 points per year, and to advance between 945 to 950 by the final year of this renewal term.

**Adequate Yearly Progress Target**
In the 2010-2011 school year, Westwood Charter met 9 of 9 AYP criteria. In the 2011-2012 school year, Westwood Charter met 9 of 9 AYP criteria. Over the next five years, we anticipate that we will continue to meet, and exceed, requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress, as established by federal accountability criteria.
California Standards Test Target
Over the next five years, our highest priority is to maximize the academic achievement of every student. We are dedicated to continuous improvement and expect Westwood’s results on the California Standards Test to climb over the next five years. Figure 19 below indicates our goals for the term of the charter renewal. (Note: our only significant subgroups are English Learners and Students with Disabilities.)

Figure 19
California Standards Test Target

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Students (% Advanced &amp; Proficient)</th>
<th>English Learners (% Advanced &amp; Proficient)</th>
<th>Students With Disabilities (% Advanced &amp; Proficient)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts (2012)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Year Target</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics (2012)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Year Target</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science (2012)</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Year Target</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional specific, measurable student outcomes
In addition to mastering the content standards, we constantly assess the ability of students to apply their skills and knowledge. Are they able to access prior learning to build new understandings? Do they use content knowledge in one area to deepen their understanding in other disciplines? Do they comprehend both written and oral communication fully, and are they able to infer and reason when responding to text or discussion? Do they know when and how to use their skills and knowledge to solve problems and investigate new ideas?

We are concerned not just with a child’s academic success, but also with their social development and work habits. Do they know how to study? Do they enjoy learning? What is their sense of responsibility to themselves individually and to their community? Do they have a service ethic, and do they know they can make a difference? Do they place more value on effort than ability, and have they developed an attitude of persistence? Are they developing appropriate social skills: do they form friendships; are they cooperative; are they able to work collaboratively; are they able to resolve conflicts peacefully? As these skills develop, academic achievement also rises.

Benchmarks to Assess Pupil Progress
Westwood Charter will use LAUSD Periodic Assessments for all grade levels.

Primary Growth Measures
Growth in student achievement is the primary measure that will be used to determine whether the school has been an academic success in its renewal period. The growth of the charter school will be measured annually against the growth of the comparison schools.
Element 3-Method for measuring pupil progress

“The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured”. Ed Code 47605 (b) (5)(C).

The Charter School agrees to comply with and adhere to the State requirements for participation and administration of all state mandated tests. As District affiliated charter school, the Charter School will test with the District and adhere to District testing calendars and procedures for all state mandated assessments.

To determine the effectiveness of our educational and instructional program, Westwood Charter will use a variety of measurement strategies to gauge student progress in meeting and exceeding defined student outcomes. These assessments are consistent with the goals of our instructional program, that is, students will meet and/or exceed the Common Core State Standards for their grade level. Westwood Charter will conduct CST/STAR testing along with the District and will use District Periodic Assessments for all grade levels. Westwood will incorporate Smarter Balanced as the District rolls it out.

Assessment Tools and Strategies Assessments will be conducted regularly in all academic areas to determine student progress in mastering grade-level standards. These assessments encompass a variety of instruments including publisher-provided tests, teacher-developed tests, portfolio assessments, writing samples based on a given prompt, demonstrations, performance assignments, and rubric-scored assessments and presentations.

In house assessments include, but are not limited to the following. (See Curriculum Charts, Element 1, for a complete list):

**Kindergarten:**
- Letter name/sound assessment
- Fifty sight words
- Writing benchmark
- Portfolios
- Student conferences
- Teacher-created assessments for language arts
- Fountas and Pinnell Phonics Assessments
- Reading Workshop teacher-student conferences
- Writing Workshop teacher-student conferences
- Teacher-created math assessments
- Fry Oral
- CORE Reading Assessment
- DIBELS Next Phonics Assessment
- CORE K-12 Math Assessment

**Family 1:**
- Letter name/sound assessment
- Fry Oral Reading Assessment
- Dolch 150 sight word list
- Developmental Reading Assessment
Running records
CORE K-12 Math Assessment
Teacher-created math assessments
Mad Minute
Writing benchmark
Pre and Post On-Demand Writing Assessments
Words Their Way Spelling Assessment
Spelling and dictation tests
Phonemic awareness
Teacher-created science and social studies assessments
CORE Phonics Survey
CORE Graded High Frequency Word Survey
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next)

**Family 1/2:**
Dolch 150 sight word list
San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading
Letter name/sound
DIBELS Next Phonics Assessment
Running records
Developmental Reading Assessment
Words Their Way Spelling Assessment
Weekly spelling and dictation tests
CORE Phonics Survey
CORE MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures
CORE Graded High Frequency Word Survey
Writing on-demand and published writing—according to genres
Houghton-Mifflin Math Readiness for grade one and two
CORE K-12 Math Assessment
Teacher-Created Second Grade Math Readiness
Teacher-created math topic tests
Pearson Envision topic tests
Daily Mad Minute test
Weekly fact quizzes mixed signs for grade one and two
Teacher created science and social science assessments
Foss assessments

**Family 2:**
DIBELS Next Phonics Assessment
Developmental Reading Assessment
CORE Phonics Survey
CORE MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures
CORE Graded High Frequency Word Survey
San Diego Quick Assessment
Writing on-demand assessment
Words Their Way Spelling Assessment
Spelling and dictation tests
Teacher-created math assessments
Mad Minute math drills
CORE K-12 Math Assessment
Teacher-created social studies and science assessments
Science journals
Science unit exam

**Family 3:**
CORE Phonics Survey
CORE Reading Maze Comprehension Test
CORE MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures
CORE Vocabulary Assessment
CORE Graded High Frequency Word Survey
DIBELS *Next* Phonics Assessment
Language Arts LAUSD Periodic Assessment
San Diego Quick
Scholastic Fry Oral Reading Assessment
McLeod Assessment of Reading Comprehension
District Literacy Assessments
Classroom Oral Presentations
Spelling Word Study
Developmental Reading Assessment
Writing Benchmarks
Published Textbook Math Inventory
Published Textbook Topic Assessments in Math
CORE K-12 Math Assessment
Weekly timed multiplication quizzes
Envision topic assessments
Teacher-created weekly and unit assessments as needed
Social science projects throughout and at the conclusion of each unit
End-of-the-unit social science exams
Embedded science assessments throughout and at the conclusion of each unit
Science journals-weekly

**Family 4/5:**
CORE Reading Maze Comprehension Test
CORE MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures
CORE Vocabulary Assessment
Language Arts LAUSD Periodic Assessment
On demand reading/writing assessments
Portfolios-ongoing
District Literacy Assessments
CORE K-12 Math Assessment
Weekly timed multiplication quizzes
Envision topic assessments
Teacher-created weekly and unit assessments as needed
Social science projects throughout and at the conclusion of each unit
End-of-the-unit social science exams
Embedded science assessments throughout and at the conclusion of each unit
Science journals-weekly
**Frequent Monitoring** will be used to determine the levels of mastery and will provide information in identifying specific areas of need. This method relies on pacing instructional objectives and enables teachers to individualize instruction more readily. Consistent monitoring allows teachers to provide feedback to students, parents, and support personnel. Adjustments to the instructional program can be made in a timely manner.

A **variety of assessment instruments** will be used to address the various learning modalities of our students and will provide a more complete picture of program and student strengths/areas of need. Instruments will include standardized, authentic, and criterion-referenced assessments. Teacher-developed and publisher-provided tests will also be given. These tests are given to determine pupil mastery of material specifically taught and related to the content standards.

**Individual and group formats** will be used to determine a student’s progress in relation to grade level standards as well as to identify specific areas of need. Teachers use this data to differentiate instruction and provide explicit direct instruction and extra support.

**Standardized tests**, including the state-mandated CST/STAR and District-mandated CELDT provide objective, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced data to formulate program objectives and to measure mastery levels of student achievement at a given point in time. The California Standards Tests will directly assess Common Core State Standards. The advantage of standardized assessments is the fact that a student’s performance can be compared to others because of the controlled conditions of the test’s administration. Standardized data also provides objective data for determining school and program strengths and areas of need compared to our previous performance as well as to other schools in the city, state, and nation.

**Authentic assessments** are used throughout the grade levels. “Assessment is authentic when it corresponds to and mirrors good classroom instruction. When students participate in authentic assessment neither they nor an observer in the classroom should be able to tell any difference between the assessment and other interesting and engaging instructional activities. A key element in authentic assessment is informed teacher judgment, or judgment in which your professional evaluation of the results is valued and respected. The assessment is also authentic when the results can be used to improve instruction based on accurate knowledge of student progress. This is essential when making assessment authentic because both you and your students should find assessment to be important for improving teaching and learning. Authentic implies that tasks used in assessment are valued in the real world by students” (O’Malley and Pierce, 1996).

**Criterion-referenced assessments** use specifically defined criteria to describe a student’s level of proficiency in any given area. Levels of proficiency are usually quantitative and can be used to identify specific areas of strength and areas of need. Criterion-referenced assessments may be task/assignment specific and enable a student to actively participate in his/her learning. Often students and teachers develop criteria charts for an assignment or task together. Assessments for measuring student progress in acquiring program goals will include observation, checklists, rubric scoring, and pupil progress reports. Students use these tools for self-assessment as well.
Progress Monitoring
Teachers collect and analyze data regarding student achievement on a continual basis. In addition, teachers often analyze data during Family meetings, particularly data for students who need extra support. Teachers formally conference with parents two times a year and also schedule informal conferences as needed. At some grade levels, students, parents, and teachers participate in student-led conferences, as well. Each year parents receive two progress reports.

Assessment is two-fold. It drives instruction for the individual student as well as for the whole class. Timely feedback informs students of their own achievement and progress towards goals.

At the beginning of the school year, Westwood Charter’s staff analyzes CST/STAR scores from the previous school year. Teachers note students who scored at the Basic, Below Basic, and Far Below Basic levels in specific subjects such as language arts and mathematics. These scores, in addition to benchmark and initial assessments, are used to identify at-risk students who would benefit from extra support during the school year. At this time teachers note high-achieving students and identify other student achievement subgroups. Teachers analyze data on subgroups such as students who participated in intervention programs the previous year, students who receive special education services, students who are identified gifted and talented, and students who are learning English. Teachers use this information to plan and differentiate instruction across the curriculum. Students who are at-risk are monitored consistently in both formal and informal ways.

Assessment data inform instruction consistently and continually. At-risk and low achieving students are given extra support and instruction through differentiated instruction in the classroom, leveled grouping, peer tutoring, one-on-one instruction, small group instruction, and reading intervention.

Assessment also informs instruction as teachers group students for subject areas or specific lessons. Initially, students may be grouped for reading instruction or identified by their reading levels and directed to books appropriate for their instructional level. Phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, word study, and math instruction are often taught to the students in skill level groups. Students are tested periodically to determine current reading level, math achievement, and writing proficiency. Based on this data, students may be given extra support within the classroom or provided with extensions or challenges or assigned to a different skill group. Students who are achieving above grade level are always challenged to delve more deeply into a subject matter, to research, to question, and share these findings with the class.

Assessment data drives professional development at Westwood Charter School. Teachers identify student needs, resources, teacher support, and training necessary to best assist all student populations. Often, the staff focuses on one or two areas of curriculum each year that will improve instruction and student achievement. School leaders, teachers, and aides participate in quality professional development whose goals are consistent with a constructivist, integrated, and inclusive social science based curriculum. The school administrators monitor and analyzes data throughout every school year to determine the planning their professional growth. Informal observations during classroom visits provide valuable and timely information. The principal also participates in Family meetings where student work is examined and discussed in order to inform instruction. Yearly analysis of standardized tests results are used to plan interventions for
individual students at risk for not meeting grade level standards; the administrative team monitors those students throughout the school year in collaboration with teaching staff and the coordinator. Other valuable sources of data for the principal are: office referrals, which are examined each semester to evaluate the success of our social values and ethic curriculum and the staff satisfaction survey and principal evaluation (see Appendix) in which teachers express their level of satisfaction with professional development.

Testing
The Charter School agrees to comply with and adhere to the State requirements for participation and administration of all state mandated tests. As a District affiliated charter school, Westwood Charter will test with the District and adhere to District testing calendars and procedures for all tae mandated assessments.
Element 4 Governance

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

Westwood Charter is subject to the governance of LAUSD Board of Education which has fiduciary responsibility of Westwood Charter. Governance at the school site level shall be in accordance with the provisions of this petition and will be consistent with all applicable state, federal laws and regulations and the provisions of collective bargaining agreements (CBA’s). Any governance model in conflict with the above shall be null and void unless the appropriate parties have agreed to a waiver or exemption. Absent agreed upon waivers between the District and UTLA, Article XXVII of the LAUSD-UTLA CBA must be adhered to, particularly in regards to Local School Leadership Council composition and responsibilities.

In the event that Westwood Charter changes from affiliated charter status to independent charter status, Westwood Charter and/or its non-profit corporation will be a separate legal entity and will be solely responsible for the debts and obligations of the Charter School. If Westwood Charter changes its status to an independent charter school, Westwood Charter shall submit a petition for material revision with articles of incorporation and bylaws for District’s approval. Westwood Charter will comply with the Brown Act and other laws governing public meetings.

Westwood Charter will comply with the Brown Act and other laws governing public meetings.

Members of the Westwood Charter governing council, any administrators, managers or employees, and any other committees of the Charter School shall comply with Federal and State laws, nonprofit integrity standards and LAUSD’s Charter School Policies and regulations regarding ethics and conflicts of interest.

The District reserves the right to appoint a single representative to the Charter Governing Council.

LAUSD Charter Policy Westwood Charter will comply with District policy related to Charter Schools, including the Affiliated Charter Schools bulletin (BUL-5439.0), as it may be changed from time to time.

Grievance Procedure for Parents and Students As a District Affiliated charter, Westwood Charter shall comply with District’s Grievance Policy and Procedure for parents and students.

Responding to Inquiries Westwood Charter shall promptly respond to all inquiries, including but not limited to, inquiries regarding financial records. Westwood Charter acknowledges that it is subject to audit by LAUSD including, without limitation, audit by the District Office of the Inspector General. If an allegation of waste, fraud or abuse related to the Charter School operations is received by the District, the Charter School shall be expected to cooperate with any investigation undertaken by the District and/or the Office of the Inspector General, Investigations Unit.
Notifications
Notification is to be made to the Educational Service Center and Charter Schools Division of any notices of workplace hazards, investigations by outside regulatory agencies, lawsuits, or to her formal complaints, within one week of receipt of such notices by Westwood Charter.

Westwood has submitted a waiver to request to be allowed additional members to participate in their governance body. Until the time if and when that waiver request is granted, Westwood will comply with all District Required Language above concerning Governance in affiliated charter schools.

Westwood is a district-affiliated charter school. The School Based Management Council (SBM) is the governing body of the school. As one of the first schools in the District to implement School Based Management, Westwood has been a successful model for 20 years, with all but two of those years under the charter structure. We intend to continue this model of governance under the renewed charter.

Most matters pertaining to school operation fall under the purview of the School Based Management Council including budget, safety and discipline issues, and facilities upkeep and policies. In addition, the council approves the school calendar, fundraisers and events, develops solutions for areas of need within the school (including before- and after-school programs), and acts in an advisory role to the school’s administration.

Westwood Governance Plan

Over the next five years we plan to develop a strong, effective and collaborative School Based Management. The following goals were created by a joint group of parents and staff who will continue to meet and develop the new structure further:

- Create a structure that integrates SBM, WISE (parent organization) and staff
- Identify the scope of policy decisions to be made in regards to school operations
- Develop a communication structure to share information needed for decision making to and from each party (faculty / SBM/WISE)
- Identify the goals and clear responsibilities of each parent body (SBM/WISE)
- Align school faculty committees with parent committees and evaluate their need and function
- Improve the collaborative culture of the members and committees
- Identify officers as well as their duties and responsibilities in SBM
Governance Council Composition

Westwood has submitted a waiver to request to be allowed additional members to participate in their governance body. Until the time if and when that waiver request is granted, Westwood will comply with all District Required Language above concerning Governance in affiliated charter schools.

Meetings

Council meetings are held monthly throughout the school year, the second Thursday of the month, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. Stakeholders and interested parties are encouraged to add agenda items by contacting their elected representatives (e.g. parents should contact SBM parent representative) no later than 72 hours in advance of the meeting.

The council meetings are led by the School Principal and will adhere to the posted agenda. Items can be raised during the “public comment” period and will be added to a later agenda for official discussion. Public comments are limited to three minutes per speaker, per issue.

Westwood Charter School will comply with the terms of the Brown Act. Meetings are open to the public, and parents, guardians, and all members of the community are encouraged to attend. To provide access to the School Based Management Council, meeting dates will be published in the school calendar and be made known via email blasts and the school marquee. Agendas will be posted on the SBM board in the main hallway of the school. SBM minutes are published regularly in the Window, after approval by the Council.

Decision-Making Process and Organizational Chart

Decisions are reached by consensus and the opinions of all those present are considered. In the event that consensus cannot be reached after a reasonable amount of time and an opportunity for all stakeholders to be heard, the SBM will make a decision by voting, with a simple majority determining the outcome.

Committees

These committees meet separately from the full Council, but report their progress at the regular monthly Council meetings. Committee meeting notices will be made public in the Westwood Window and Constant Contact, as well as posted on the SBM board.

Our standing committees include:

- Executive (includes the Principal, one parent representative and one teacher representative)
- Budget & Finance
- Safety and Discipline
- Technology
- Fixtures, Furnishings & Equipment
Site Committee

Ad hoc committees will be established when a specific issue requires a dedicated team to conduct research before a governance decision is made.

Elections

Election of Parent Representatives
In accordance with the CBA.

Election Procedures for Employee Representatives
Westwood will adhere to Article XXVII of the LAUSD-UTLA CBA.

Members of Westwood Charter School’s School Based Management Council, any administrators, managers or employees, and any other committees of the School shall comply with federal and state laws, nonprofit integrity standards and LAUSD’s Charter School policies and regulations regarding ethics and conflicts of interest. The District reserves the right to appoint a single representative to the Charter School governing council.
Element 5 Employee qualifications
“The Qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the School.” Ed. Code 47605 (b)

Westwood Charter believes that all persons are entitled to equal employment opportunity. Westwood Charter School shall not discriminate against qualified applicants or employees on the basis of race, color, religion sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, or any other characteristic protected by California or federal law. Equal employment opportunity shall be extended to all aspects of the employer-employee relationship, including recruitment, hiring, upgrading, training, promotion, transfer, discipline, layoff, recall, and dismissal from employment to the same extent as all LAUSD schools.

Personnel
Westwood Charter shall follow all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and collective bargaining agreements. Any conflict with the above shall be null and void unless the appropriate parties have agreed to a waiver or exemption. Absent agreed upon waivers between the District and UTLA, Article XXVII of the LAUSD UTLA CBA must be adhered to particularly in regard to Local School Leadership Council composition and responsibilities. As a District affiliated charter school, certificated HR will process all employment monitoring of credentials and assignments on an annual basis.

Staff Selection
Principal selection is the purview of the Superintendent. Westwood Charter School is subject to District decisions regarding reduction in force, mandated furloughs, layoffs, and any other District decisions regarding salaries, classifications, and assignments.

Teachers
Position description: The teacher is responsible for providing an educational atmosphere where students have the opportunity to fulfill their potential for intellectual, emotional, and physical growth. The teacher is also responsible for organizing and implementing an instructional program that results in students achieving academic success.

Primary Responsibilities:
- implements instructional activities that contribute to a climate where students are actively engaged in meaningful learning experiences,
- identifies, selects, and modifies instructional resources to meet the needs of the students with varying backgrounds, learning styles, and special needs,
- assists in assessing changing curricular needs and offers plans for improvement,
- provides a positive environment in which students are encouraged to be actively engaged in the learning process,
- communicates effectively, both orally and in writing, with students, parents, and other professionals on a regular basis,
- collaborates with peers to enhance the instructional environment,
- models professional and ethical standards when dealing with students, parents, colleagues, and community,
• establishes and maintains cooperative working relationships with staff, students, and parents, and
• meets professional obligations through efficient work habits such as: meeting deadlines, and honoring schedules.

Selection
Certificated Personnel
Selection of certificated staff will be aligned with current Education Code, District Policy, and collective bargaining agreements. Westwood Charter will have the autonomy to interview and select teachers and school-funded support staff from District approved lists of eligible candidates. Available lists will be determined by Human Resources and may be limited to Priority Placement Lists (displace teachers) and Rehire Lists depending on the current hiring situation in each subject area. While every effort will be made to avoid assigning any certificated employee to any Charter School campus, the District retains the right to make such assignments in cases where no other alternative is available (i.e. Reasonable Accommodations).

Certificated applicants for openings, as they occur, will go through the following selection process: A selection committee will be created to interview, evaluate, and select new faculty for the Charter School. This committee will be composed of a school leader, the School Coordinator(s), the Family or Families of teachers where openings exist, at least one parent, and one member of the classified staff when possible.

During the site selection committee process, we will adhere to all court mandates and state and federal laws, including the Rodriguez Consent Decree and the Office of Civil Rights guidelines. Credentialed teachers interested in filling a position will submit a letter of intent, a resume, and at least 2 letters of recommendation (see Appendix A for Pre-Employment Packet). A list of references may also be requested for submission. A copy of the charter will be provided to an applicant being considered for selection. The applicant will then be asked to present a demonstration lesson at Westwood Charter School.

An applicant who is being considered for selection will be interviewed by the selection committee. Members of the committee will prepare questions specifically directed to the applicant’s understanding of the practices indicated in the Los Angeles Unified Teaching and Learning Framework. The selection committee will determine by consensus, which applicants will be selected. When the applicant is selected, he/she must be processed through LAUSD.

Commitment
All current and newly hired faculty of Westwood Charter School will sign a Commitment Contract (Appendix A) at the beginning of each school year (or upon being hired if not at the start of the school year) indicating their agreement with the vision and goals of the Charter, and a commitment to the Los Angeles Unified School District Teaching and Learning Framework (see below). At this time, teachers will also be required to identify a goal (or goals) on the LAUSD Teaching and Learning Framework(s) Form (Appendix A) that they would like to work towards achieving during the course of the school year. This document will be kept in their personal Professional Growth File. (See page 273 for description of Professional Growth File.) The administrator and the new teacher will discuss the most appropriate placement in hiring a candidate if more than one Family is interested in the candidate.
Westwood Charter School shall continue to follow all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and Collective Bargaining Agreement. Any conflict with the above, shall be null and void unless the appropriate parties have agreed to a waiver or exemption.

**Evaluation**

**Teachers will be evaluated using the LAUSD/UTLA Collective Bargaining Agreement. Additionally, Westwood may use their site developed professional growth process.**

**Evaluation Process**

Additionally, all teachers will be required to:

A. Participate in a yearly self-evaluation, using the LAUSD Teaching and Learning Framework (Appendix A). This self-evaluation will be completed during the twelfth week of school for all teachers. (See Appendix A for Timeline of Surveys & Responsibilities.)

Teachers will also be required to maintain a personal Professional Growth File. This Professional Growth File is a compilation of all evidence of professional growth such as in-service classes, courses taken, conferences, committee work, partner coaching, curriculum development, pupil progress and administrative review related to evaluations. The Professional Growth File provides documentation of all experiences that enable the teacher to move along the continuum to highly effective on the LAUSD Teaching and Learning Framework, as well as the personal goal(s) established by the teacher at the start of the school year.

In addition to the District/Collective Bargaining Agreements Performance Evaluation System, teachers being evaluated for the year must select their model of evaluation by the twelfth week of school from the options presented below

B. New Teachers

All teachers new to the Charter (first and second year) will be evaluated by a school leader for two consecutive years by: (see Administrative Mandated Packet, Appendix A.)

- submitting the self-evaluation to a school leader during the 12th week of school,

- establishing goals and objectives for growth through collaboration with a school leader,

- documenting evidence in their personal Professional Growth File,

- having observation(s) done by a school leader indicating the progress of goals and the implementation of objectives, and

- participating in a post evaluation conference with a school leader.
C. Tenured Teachers
Every two years, tenured Charter teachers will review their personal Professional Growth File and select their own form of Westwood Professional Growth Evaluation.

**1. Partner Coaching:** (see Partner Coaching Packet, Appendix A)

- select a partner/coach approved by a school leader,
- submit a self-evaluation for review by the school leader during the 12th week of school,
- share self-evaluation with partner/coach and establish 1-2 specific goals with him/her based on the Framework, (teachers may use the SMART Goals format for lesson planning) (See Appendix A.)
- meet with principal to share goals, 
- document evidence of progress towards goals in personal Professional Growth File, such as student work samples, benchmark assessments, and teacher created units and materials,
- participate in observation(s) by partner/coach indicating progress of goals and implementation of objectives, 
- submit copy of post-conference or professional development plan/form with partner/coach to school leader,
- **OPTIONAL:** prepare and deliver a professional development to staff on topic directly related to self-selected goals.

**2. Administrative Coaching:** (see Administrative Coaching Packet, Appendix A) 

- submit a self-evaluation for review by the principal during the 12th week of school,
- establish goals and objectives in collaboration with the principal and submit a formal lesson plan, 
- document evidence of progress towards goals in personal Professional Growth File, such as student work samples, benchmark assessment, and teacher created units and materials,
- participate in observation(s) will be documented indicating progress of goals and implementation of objectives,
- receive a copy of post-conference file, consisting of pre and post conference notes, forms, and/or reports.
- **OPTIONAL:** Prepare and deliver a professional development to staff on topic directly related to self-selected goal, including student work samples.
**Teacher Selection of Grade Level**

*New Teachers*
If a new teacher is to be hired to fill an opening, the remaining teachers in that Family will be part of the Teacher Selection Committee, and will have an active voice in the selection process. Members of the Teacher Selection Committee will observe and respect the confidential nature of the hiring process. The Teacher Selection Committee will also include a school leader, parent representative(s), and a classified representative when possible.

*Current Teachers*
Before an opening at the school is advertised, current Westwood teachers may indicate interest and intent. It is the principal’s responsibility to notify current staff members of a staff opening, and to allow a reasonable amount of time (1 week) for staff to consider the position. If a current teacher applies for an opening in another Family, he or she will conference with the school administrator regarding the appropriateness of the move. If two or more current teachers apply for such an opening, seniority will determine the order in which they will be considered.

*Job Sharing*
Half-Time Leave:
A regular Half-Time Leave shall be granted to allow a permanent employee or probationary Children's Center Teacher to continue service for half of each working day. At the elementary level, a complementary partner with permanent status is required. At the secondary level, if one is required due to the master schedule, it must be a complementary partner with permanent status, or an appropriately credentialed auxiliary teacher approved by the site administrator. In the case of non-classroom health and human services employees, the total number of approved half-time leaves shall not exceed a maximum of 10% of the full-time equivalent positions in the classification. Current Health and Human Services employees on a Half-Time Leave will be grand parented for purposes of such a leave. Exceptions to the "half of each working day" requirement, including the above-mentioned grand parented employees may be made in special circumstances but shall require written special approval of the Local District Superintendent upon recommendation of the immediate administrator. In any event, the assignment and service shall be for the equivalent of one-half of the number of hours required for full-time employment for each pay period. Applications must be on file in the Human Resources office by April 15 for the fall semester and by November 15 for the spring semester.

Half-Time Assignment
a. New employees hired effective July 1, 1993 or later may be employed full-time and work one -half time with the other one-half time covered by a half-time leave pursuant to this section.
b. In the event the half-time assignment cannot be arranged, the half-time leave will be cancelled and full-time service shall be required.
c. If the employee is unable or unwilling to accept a full time assignment in such circumstances, the employee shall submit a voluntary resignation.
d. New employees hired pursuant to this section shall receive District paid health benefits pro-rated to the hours of paid service provided the employee contributes the balance of the full cost pursuant to Article XVI. Section 3.0 c.
Administrators

Selection
Principal selection is the purview of the Superintendent.

When a principal is needed at Westwood Charter School, the selection committee will be composed of all the Family Chairs, the Coordinator(s), the UTLA Site Chairperson, two elected parent members of the School Based Management Council, two elected WISE representatives, and one elected classified staff member.

The Selection Committee will follow district guidelines for developing the flyer and posting the position. Candidates will be expected to read the Charter prior to being interviewed. Selection committee members will be expected to participate in committee training, and the establishment of appropriate interview questions. The Selection Committee, by consensus, will make the final recommendation to the director.

In the event that an APEIS selection committee is needed, it will include all of the above members, as well as the current principal, Special Education certificated staff, and one SBM parent will be replaced with a parent whose child is in the Special Education program. When possible, a DIS staff member will join the committee. The selection committee, by consensus, will make the final determination.

Feedback

In addition to evaluation from his/her immediate supervisor, administrators will participate in a process based upon feedback from the staff aligned to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, and their commitment to carry out the goals and objectives of the Westwood Charter. After feedback is given to administrators, the specific results and comments remain confidential. However, the administrators should acknowledge receipt of the results to the staff.

Feedback Criteria

Administration will initiate and carry through the goals and objectives of Westwood Charter School. They will support the Teaching and Learning Framework adopted for teachers, in relationship to the school as a whole and will adhere to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders.

Administrator Support Criteria:
- Organizing and managing the school–creating a positive learning environment (Domain 1)
- Facilitating the planning and designing of innovative instruction (Domain 2)
- Enhancing subject matter knowledge through in-service classes, demonstrations, conference availability, and providing necessary materials (Domain 4)
- Assessing student learning (Domain 5)
- Participating as a member of the learning community (Domain 6)
Administrator Effectiveness Criteria:

Communication: The extent to which the school leader is able to express ideas clearly and communicate verbally and in written context in an effective manner.

Decision-making: The extent to which the school leader is able and determined to use reasonable judgment on an issue under consideration resulting in a positive conclusion or solution.

Fairness-objectivity: The extent to which the school leader is able to direct and manage in a manner that is uninfluenced by emotion, assumption, or personal opinion.

Judgment: The extent to which the school leader is able to develop alternative courses of action and make decision which reflect factual information; are based on logical assumption and take organization resources into consideration.

Problem-solving: The extent to which the school leader demonstrates ingenuity and/or creativity in solving problems or working toward results. The extent to which the school leader deals well with unexpected issues and problems.

Follow-up and responsiveness: The extent to which the school leader is able to respond, initiate, change or set new priorities, and communicate the same to all involved; to ensure all tasks and projects are seen through to completion.

Extra-organizational sensitivity: The extent to which the school leader perceives the impact and the implication of decisions on various ethnic groups; understanding of and sensitivity to various cultural and ethnic groups.

Leadership: The extent to which the school leader leads in a positive manner, demonstrates integrity, sense of purpose and fosters teamwork and positive morale.

Coaching: The extent to which the school leader supports, trains, encourages, and mentors staff. The extent to which the school leader encourages others to seek information in and outside of the District for career development.

Planning and organizational skills: The extent to which the school leader establishes a course of action for self and staff to accomplish the objectives of Westwood Charter regular staff meetings and sets goals and time frames in which to accomplish tasks.

Self-improvement/development: The extent to which the school leader has taken self-initiative and self-responsibility to improve, grow, work on weaknesses, and develop career.

Flexibility/adaptability: The extent to which the school leader can adapt to change, undergo change or fit to a new, temporary or special situation.

Self-Evaluation Process

All administrators will be required to participate in a yearly self-evaluation using the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders Survey (PSELS)–principal only–and the APEIS Essential Responsibilities Survey (ERS)–APEIS only. (See Appendix A.) The self-evaluations will take place during the nineteenth week of school. Administrators will also be required to maintain a personal Professional Growth File. This Professional Growth File is a compilation of all evidence of professional growth such as in-service classes, courses taken, conferences, mentor coaching, and curriculum development.

Feedback Process

New Administrators (Years one and two at Westwood)

All new administrators will receive feedback using the following process:
Fall Feedback Process
By week 12 of the new school year, the staff will complete the Professional Teaching Standards for Educational Leaders Survey (PSELS or ERS). The Administrative Liaison* will be responsible for delivering the compiled results of the Feedback Process directly to the administrators. The purpose of these instruments is to provide the administrators with feedback on areas of strength and/or need and to support their professional growth. Administrators will be rated on a score of 0-10. The staff will be informed by the Personnel Committee that the results (which remain confidential) are completed and will be disseminated. A cumulative score of 6 or above will indicate that the leaders’ work is aligned toward the vision and the mission of the Westwood Charter. A cumulative score of below 6 will result in the growth model. The growth model is a ten-week collaborative process. At the beginning of the growth model, the principal, administrative liaison, and district director will create a plan to address the areas of need identified by the week 12 surveys. The principal will also be expected to select an administrative mentor for assistance. The principal’s goals of the growth model will be shared with the administrative liaison, the district director, and the administrative mentor in effort to support the principal through this process. If the APEIS receives a total score of below 6, the administrative liaison, the principal, and the APEIS will create a plan for the 10-week growth process.

Winter Feedback Process
By week 22, the teachers will complete the PSELS for the second time for the principal and the ERS for the APEIS. This is given as a follow-up to identify progress made by the administrator. By week 24, the results will be tabulated through the Personnel Committee. The administrative liaison and the district director will discuss results of the feedback process with the administrator. The staff will be informed by the Personnel Committee that the results (to remain confidential) are completed and will be disseminated. A cumulative score of 6 or above will ensure that the leaders’ work is aligned to the vision and the mission of the Westwood Charter. If an administrator receives an overall score of below 6, a second 10-week growth period will begin. The administrative liaison and district director will discuss the results of the second feedback survey. The District Superintendent will also be notified of these results.

Spring Feedback Process
By week 34, the Personnel Committee will meet with the District director to discuss growth and/or the need to request a formal Stull.

*Administrative Liaison
The Administrative Liaison is a teacher elected by the teaching staff (two-year position) and will also be a member of the Personnel Committee. The election process will be completed by the end of the school year in correlation with staff committee assignments, but will be facilitated by the Personnel Committee. The purpose of the administrative liaison is to provide support to the administrators. In the event that an administrator enters the growth model of the feedback process, the administrative liaison will also collaborate with the administrator and district personnel on addressing the areas of need identified by the PSEL or ER Surveys.
Tenured Administrators

Tenured Westwood Charter administrators (years 3 or more) will receive results from the PSELS or ERS yearly from the Personnel Committee. Every two years, the results will also be shared with the administrative liaison. Administrators have the option of choosing one or more of the following additional models of evaluation:
- Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)
- Mentor Coaching

Teacher’s Assistants/Supervision Aides/BII’s

Selection

Selection of Classified staff will be in compliance with the current merit system provisions of the education code, personnel commission rule, and applicable collective bargaining agreement. Teacher’s assistants are interviewed and selected by the teacher. Criteria for selection are based on LAUSD guidelines and the specific needs of the class and teacher.

Evaluation

All support staff working with children in the classroom or yard will be evaluated annually using the district evaluation form. This process will be completed by the principal with input from the general education teacher working with the paraprofessional.

BII’s are evaluated annually by the principal with input from the resource teacher and general education teacher.

Classified Personnel

Selection of classified staff will be in compliance with the current merit system provisions of the Education Code, the Personnel Commission rules and applicable collective bargaining agreements. Unless valid reemployment lists exist, Westwood Charter will have autonomy, when selecting employees for regular assignment, to select from the top three eligible candidates on current valid eligibility lists promulgated by the Personnel Commission. When valid reemployment lists, every effort will be made to avoid assigning classified staff to Westwood Charter, however, the Personnel Commission retains the right to make such assignments in cases where no alternative is available (e.g. reductions-in-force or reasonable accommodations required in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.)

Unless the District has assigned all employees in a classification to a specific basis, Westwood Chart will have autonomy in assignment positions to specific working basis

In selecting classified personnel, Westwood Charter School will abide by LAUSD practices, procedures, promotion lists, and collective bargaining contracts.

Professional Development

In addition to any District-mandated professional development, Westwood Chart shall have full autonomy in the selection of professional development programs for their employees of meet
their site-specific needs. Any professional development required by the District for newly-adopted curriculum selected by Westwood Charter will, in turn, be funded by the District consistent with its practice for other District schools.

**Personnel Committee**

We believe that reflection of our practices and programs must be gathered regularly to ensure personal and professional growth among our staff. We will use the information from the surveys to improve our practices and create a better working and learning environment for the Westwood community.

The Personnel Committee, comprised of three people, including the administrative liaison was established to facilitate and oversee an objective survey process throughout the school year. Survey forms are found in Appendix A. The committee will disseminate surveys, collect and compile data when warranted, and provide results to appropriate personnel (see Table of Surveys & Commitments, Appendix A). Responses on all surveys, when viewed by any committee member, shall remain strictly confidential.

**Description of Surveys**

**Workplace Reflection Surveys** will be given to all LAUSD school-site employees (certificated and classified) once a year. The purpose of this survey, given by the Personnel Committee is to gather information and determine the systems and protocols that support staff in fulfilling their job duties and responsibilities, as well as the obstacles that hinder staff from fulfilling their job duties and responsibilities.

**Professional Expert Satisfaction Survey** will be completed once a year by the teachers and school management team. The surveys will give instructors feedback regarding their programs and give time to make improvements, if necessary, and set new goals for the school year.

**Professional Standards for Educational Leaders Survey and APEIS Essential Responsibilities Survey** will be completed by the teachers two times annually. The purpose of these surveys is to support the professional growth of the administrators and to ensure that the leaders’ work is aligned to the vision and the mission of the Westwood Charter.

**Leadership Performance Inventory** feedback may be used by the tenured administrators as a tool to assist them in setting goals to work on for the school year. To maintain confidentiality, the Personnel Committee will collect the surveys and the administrative liaison will give them directly to the administrators who will use the LPI scoring guide to analyze the results.

**The Los Angeles Unified School District Teaching and Learning Framework** will be used by teachers to set goals for the school year. The administrators will be responsible for overseeing the teacher evaluation process.

The timelines and surveys can be found in Appendix A.
Element 6 - Health and safety

“The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall include the requirement that each employee of the school furnish the school with a criminal record history as described in Ed. Code 47605 (b)(5)(F).

As an affiliated charter school, Westwood Charter will adhere to District’s Health, Safety and Emergency Plans. Westwood Charter will ensure that Staff has been trained in health, safety, and emergency procedures and will maintain a calendar and conduct emergency response drills for students and staff in line with District’s procedures.

Westwood Charter, its’ employees and officers will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) at all times.

As an affiliated charter school, in order to guarantee the health and safety of pupils and staff, Westwood Charter will ensure that all employees follow the procedures of LAUSD Human Resources Department concerning, criminal background checks, examination of faculty and staff for tuberculosis, immunization of pupils as a condition of attendance, screening of pupils’ vision and hearing and screening of pupils for scoliosis.

Westwood Charter will comply with all regulations as required by the federal state, county, and city laws, such as fire and safety code Westwood Charter shall comply with District policy related to reporting suspected child abuse or neglect as mandate by District policy related to reporting suspected child abuse or neglect as mandated by District guidelines, federal and state law, and local agencies. In addition, Affiliated Charter School shall comply with LAUSD policy on Employee to Student Sexual Abuse and Related Investigation and Notification (BUL 5736.0) in reporting sexual misconduct allegations by certificated employees within 72 hours to parents and guardians of students in the school. Affiliated Charter school shall also comply with any other policy as established by the District with regards to reporting of child abuse and notification to parents and guardians related to classified employees.

Insurance Requirements
Coverage shall be provided to Westwood Charter by the District under any of the District’s self-insured programs or commercial insurance policies. The District shall secure and maintain insurance, to protect Westwood Charter from claims which may arise from its operations, as provide to all other schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

It shall be the District’s responsibility, to monitor the Charter School vendors, contractors, partners or sponsors for compliance with district insurance requirements for third parties, Westwood charter shall adheres to current District Procurement Manuel policies and procedures prior to accepting any services from vendors, partners or sponsors.
Element 7 Achieving a racial and ethnic balance
“The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted.” Ed Code 47605 (b)(5)(G).

Court ordered Integration
The Charter School shall continue to comply with all requirements of the Crawford v. Board of Education, City of Los Angeles court order and the LAUSD Integration Policy adopted and maintained pursuant to the Crawford court order by the Office of Student Integration Services (collectively the “Court-ordered Integration Program”. The Court ordered Integration Program applies to all schools within or chartered through LAUSD. Upon request by the District, the Charter School will provide a written plan outlining how it would achieve and maintain the LAUSD’s ethnic schools goal of 60:40. Westwood Charter shall be responsible for following the requirements of the Crawford desegregation court order, and shall take all reasonable steps to attract and maintain a racially integrated student body. Integration Program resources currently provide certain affiliated charter schools (Magnet, Permits with Transportation, Transportation) are subject to change, whole or in part for budgetary and other reasons. Our active recruitment includes letters sent to area preschools, an "Open House" evening meeting at Westwood for families of prospective kindergarteners, banners posted outside the school, and flyers distributed to the school community. Notices are posted in local papers, and we continuously accept names for our enrollment lottery. Prospective parents are welcome to visit the school each Wednesday. Many of our applications for the lottery are people who learned about Westwood by word of mouth.

Federal Compliance
As part of the Los Angeles Unified School District which is a recipient of federal funds, Westwood Charter has agreed to meet all of the programmatic, fiscal and other regulatory requirements of The Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Westwood is a neighborhood school that is near enrollment capacity just from neighborhood children. There are very few spaces available for other children whose parents wish to have them attend Westwood through the lottery protocol. With this being stated, it is recognized that Westwood’s enrollment of children who meet the criteria of Predominantly Hispanic, Black, Asian or Other (PHBAO) is below the 70:30 district goal.

Multiple activities are conducted annually with the intentions of reaching out to families of PHBAO children to interest them in attending Westwood Charter, as well as supporting the school’s social studies-based curriculum. Activities will be posted on the school’s website, both to inform current Westwood families and to increase interest among people of color and non-majority cultures to become prospective families. It is our hope that when parents of PHBAO children see the diverse activities in which their children would be able to participate as Westwood students, they will be more likely to make Westwood their school of choice. Activities include the following:
- Fall harvest season: Field trips to farms. Students in the grades 1 and 2 multi-age family visit actual working farms. The purposes are to experience a way of life in a rural setting, very different from what Westwood children experience in urban LA; and, to learn about the social and environmental issues involving farms. Issues include the science of irrigation and its effect on the earth, and working conditions for farm laborers.

- Second week of December: Multicultural week. This is a celebration of several cultures from around the world, including African, Hispanic and Asian cultures. Community members are recruited as presenters, facilitators and participants. Children observe, participate in and learn about dance, modern and traditional clothing, foods, languages, and honoring diversity while breaking unfair stereotypes.

- Mid-February: Black History Month celebration. On the calendar for Feb. 19, 2014 is a jazz group that will perform for the Westwood community, to learn about the contributions of African-Americans to the birth and development of jazz over the decades, as well as to develop an appreciation for this musical genre.

- Also in mid-February in support of Black History Month, students in grade 2 visit the Watts Towers in South LA. The purpose is to understand the cultural and historical significance of the towers and the surrounding neighborhood.

- In April, students in grade 3 visit downtown LA. The purpose is to study the ethnic and cultural context of various neighborhoods.

- The “STAR” Program runs a beyond-the-school-day program, offering enrichment and multi-cultural activities including learning to speak Spanish. To make it more enticing to families of diverse economic means, scholarships are available to offset the costs of tuition.
Element 8 - Admission requirements

Admission Requirements, if applicable. Ed. Code 47605 (b)(5)(H).

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
Westwood Charter will adhere to the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless assistance Act and ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths.

Westwood Charter School will admit all pupils who wish to apply. (Education Code 47605 section (d)(2)(A)). However, as a conversion charter, Westwood Charter must admit students who reside in the attendance boundary of the school as established by the District hereafter referred to as “resident students”. (Education Code section 47605(d) (1)). Students cannot be required to attend a charter school. Education Code section 47605 (f) If Westwood Charter school reaches its school wide operational capacity, a public random drawing/lottery will be conducted. Resident students shall have preference so as to be exempt from the lottery. Currently enrolled students (regardless of residence) shall also have preference so as to be exempt from the lottery.

The lottery shall provide preference for student residing in LAUSD boundaries, but not residing within the attendance area of the charter school.

Students not selected through the lottery process will be waitlisted until a seat becomes available. This waitlist is effective for one year.

In the event that Westwood Charter reaches capacity and is unable to enroll incoming students who reside in the attendance boundary of the school, affiliated charter schools will consult and coordinate with its Education Service Center administration to identify the appropriate receiver school(s).

If Westwood Charter determines that fraudulent address information was used to establish resident status in the attendance area, the student may be withdrawn and the student will be referred back to her/her school of residence, in accordance with District policy.

Our active recruitment includes letters sent to area preschools, an "Open House" evening meeting at Westwood for families of prospective kindergarteners, banners posted outside the school, and flyers distributed to the school community. Notices are posted in local papers, and we continuously accept names for our enrollment lottery. Prospective parents are welcome to visit the school each Wednesday. Many of our applications for the lottery are people who learned about Westwood by word of mouth.
In order to reserve places for our resident children, as agreed upon with the LAUSD Charter Division, Office of Demographic and Education Service Center West, we will hold some available seats at the beginning of the school year, for students who reside within our attendance area. School Management Services will calculate the operating capacity for Westwood. The operating capacity should be recalculated annually. The number of seats to be held will be determined in collaboration with the District. We will hold a public random drawing, in the spring, for spaces that might be available in each grade level the following academic year.

At the time of application for the lottery, the rules will be communicated in written form to all families applying. A parent and teacher representative of the School Site Governance Council will monitor lottery procedures to ensure they are fairly executed. Westwood accepts continuous applications throughout the year for lottery. In the event a public lottery will be held during the spring, families who have students entering the grade where openings exist will be notified by phone call and U.S. mail five calendar days in advance of the lottery. The lottery will occur on the school campus and all parents whose children are entered in the lottery will be encouraged to attend. Every name of a child applying to the grade level where openings exist will be drawn in the lottery to establish a priority list, but only those children whose priority numbers fit within the existing number of openings will be offered admittance. Remaining students will be placed on waiting list. Those students selected in the lottery will be notified by phone and U.S. mail within twenty-four hours of the offer of admission and must accept within one week of receiving the notification to secure a spot at the school.
Element 9. Annual Financial Audits

Affiliated charter school will follow Board District Policy relative to the annual audit.
Element 10. Student suspension or expulsion

As an affiliated charter school of the Los Angeles Unified School District, Westwood Charter will follow all discipline procedures established by the District and will comply with Education Code 48900, et. Seq. In LAUSD, the Student Discipline and Expulsion Support Unit provides technical assistance to schools considering recommendations for expulsion, ensures that students recommended for expulsion are afforded a fair and impartial hearing and all due process rights, and provides for post-expulsion placement/rehabilitation plans and services as required by law.

Westwood Charter shall provide due process for all students, including adequate notice to parents/guardians and students regarding the grounds for suspension and expulsion and their due process rights regarding suspension and expulsion, including rights to appeal, in accordance with District policies and procedure.

Westwood Charter shall utilize alternatives to suspension and expulsion with students who are truant, tardy or otherwise absent from compulsory school activities. Westwood Charter shall also comply with the District’s Discipline Foundation policy.

Outcome Data
Westwood Charter shall maintain all data involving placement, tracking and monitoring of student suspensions, expulsions, and reinstatements, in the Districts’ student Information system and make such outcome data readily available to the District upon request in accordance with District policies and procedures.

Readmission
The Charter School shall follow District policies and procedures with regard to request for readmission and the process for the required review of all expelled pupils for readmission.

Special Education Students
In the case of a student who has an IEP, or a student who has a 504 Plan, the charter will ensure that follows the correct disciplinary procedures to comply with the mandates of state and federal laws, including IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Plan of 1973 and the Modified Consent Decree. An IEP team, including a District representative, will meet to conduct a manifestation determination and to disuses alternative placement utilizing the District’s policies and Procedures Manual. Prior to recommending expulsion for a student with a 504 Plan, the charter administrator will convene a LINK Determination meeting to ask the following two questions: A) Was the misconduct caused by or directly and substantially related to the student’s disability? B) Was the misconduct a direct result of the Charter’s failure to implement 504?

Gun Free Schools Act
Westwood Charter School shall comply with the federal Free Schools Act.
**Element 11- Employee Benefits**

Employees of Westwood Charter will continue to receive compensation and benefits for their services according to the provisions of the collective bargaining agreements of their respective bargaining units with LAUSD incisive of, but not limited to, salaries, unemployment benefits, and retirement benefits including organizations such as STRS/PERS, health insurance, life insurance and all other assigned compensation and benefits.

As LAUSD employees administrators, faculty and staff will receive all appropriate benefits in compliance with state and federal laws regarding employee benefits.
Element 12 – Attendance Alternatives
Pupils who choose not to attend Westwood charter may choose to attend other public schools in their district of residence or pursue an inter-district transfer in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of the District.
Element 13- Return rights of employees
As an affiliated charter school, all administrators, faculty and staff of Westwood Charter are LAUSD employees. All employees will be hired by the District and maintain the same relationships in all bargaining units.
Element 14 – Mandatory Dispute Resolution

The staff of Westwood Charter and LAUSD Board of Education agree to resolve any claim, controversy or dispute arising out or relating to the Charter agreement between the District and Westwood Charter, except any controversy or claim that is in any way related to revocation of the Charter, (“Dispute”) pursuant to the terms of this Element 14.

Any Dispute between the District and Westwood Charter shall be resolved by a collaborative team from the Educational Service Center and the Charter Schools Division in accordance with the procedures set forth below:

1) Any Dispute shall be made in writing (“Written Notification”). The Written Notification must identify the nature of the Dispute and any supporting facts. The Written Notification shall be tendered to the other party by personal delivery, by facsimile, or by certified mail. The Written Notification shall be deemed received (a) if personally delivered, upon date of delivery to the address of the person to receive such notice if delivered by 5:00 PM or otherwise on the business day following personal delivery; (b) if by facsimile, upon electronic confirmation of receipt; or (c) if by mail, two (2) business days after deposit in the U.S. Mail. All Written Notifications shall be ad-dressed as follows:

    (b) If by facsimile, upon electronic confirmation of receipt; or (c) if by mail, two (2) business days after deposit in the U.S. Mail. All Written Notifications shall be addressed as follows:

To Charter School:       Westwood Charter School
                          c/o Scott Whitbeck
                          2050 Selby Avenue
                          Los Angeles, CA  90025

To Director of Charter Schools:  Director of Charter Schools
                                  Los Angeles Unified School District
                                  333 South Beaudry Avenue, 20th Floor
                                  Los Angeles, California 90017

2) A written response (“Written Response”) shall be tendered to the other party within twenty (20) business days from the date of receipt of the Written Notification. The parties agree to schedule a conference to discuss the Dispute identified in the Written Notice (“Issue Conference”). The Issue Conference shall take place within fifteen (15) business days from the date the Written Response is received by the other party. The Written Response may be tendered by personal delivery, by facsimile, or by certified mail. The Written Response shall be deemed received (a) if personally delivered, upon date of delivery to the address of the person to receive such notice if delivered by 5:00p.m., or otherwise on the business day following personal delivery; (b) if by facsimile, upon electronic confirmation of receipt; or (c) if by mail, two (2) business days after deposit in the U.S. Mail.
(3) If the Dispute cannot be resolved by mutual agreement at the Issue Conference, either party may then request that the Dispute be resolved by Superintendent’s designee.
Element 15 – Exclusive Public School Employer

The Los Angeles Unified School District is the exclusive public school employer of the employees of Westwood Charter for the purposes of the Educational Employee Relations Act (EERA)
Element 16 - Closure Procedures

“Westwood Charter reverts back to a District traditional school in the event of a closure.

Revocation

The District may revoke the charter if [Charter School] commits a breach of any provision set forth in a policy related to Charter Schools adopted by the District Board of Education and/or any provisions set forth in the Charter School Act of 1992. The District may revoke the charter of the [Charter School] if the District finds, through a showing of substantial evidence, that the Charter School did any of the following:

- [Charter School] committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter.
- [Charter School] failed to meet or pursue any of the pupil outcomes identified in the charter.
- [Charter School] failed to meet generally accepted accounting principles, or engaged in fiscal mismanagement.
- [Charter School] violated any provision of law.

Prior to revocation, and in accordance with Cal. Educ. Code section 47607(d) and State regulations, the LAUSD Board of Education will notify the [Charter School] in writing of the specific violation, and give the [Charter School] a reasonable opportunity to cure the violation, unless the LAUSD Board of Education determines, in writing, that the violation constitutes a severe and imminent threat to the health or safety of the pupils. Revocation proceedings are not subject to the dispute resolution clause set forth in this charter.”

The decision by the LAUSD Board of Education to revoke or not renew affiliated charter school constitutes a Closure Action. The Closure Action shall be deemed to have been automatically made when either the Charter is revoked, non-renewed by the LAUSD Board of Education, or the Charter lapses. In the event of such a Closure Action, or as soon as Charter School’s site-based governance informs the District of its intent to voluntarily revert to non-charter status, the following steps are to be implemented:

1. If the affiliated Charter School’s site-based governance votes to revert to non-charter status the LAUSD Board of Education will hold a public meeting officially terminating the charter. The Board of Education will direct the Superintendent or his designee to determine implementation of the closure procedures.

2. The Charter Schools Division will notify the California Department of Education that Westwood Charter has terminated its charter, and the effective date.

3. Upon closure, all of the assets of the Charter School are transferred to LAUSD. A copy of the stamped order of business showing the action taken by the LAUSD Board of Education will be included in the notification to the CDE.
4. The LAUSD Board of Education or its designee will determine the distribution of any remaining balance in the Categorical Block Grant Account of the Charter School upon returning.

5. LAUSD reserves the right to conduct a close out audit by the LAUSD auditor.

6. Written notification to parents/guardians/caregivers of the enrolled students of the Westwood Charter will be issued by LAUSD within 72 hours after the determination of a Closure Action and the effective date of the termination of the charter.

This Element 16 shall survive the revocation, expiration, termination, cancellation of this charter or any other act or event that would end Westwood Charter to cease operation as a Charter School or cause Westwood Charter to cease operation.

**Facilities**

K-12 school sites remain subject to use by the District and possible space allocation under Proposition 39 and implementing regulations.

**Requirements for Schools Obtaining Independent Status**

In the event that Westwood Charter changes its status to independent charter school, during the term of this Charter, Westwood Charter shall submit a petition for material revision for District’s approval. Westwood Charter shall meet all requirements of an independent charter that occupies LAUSD facilities; Westwood Charter shall enter into facilities use agreement with the District and adhere to District guidelines including:

- Proposed Charter School Location_2050 Selby Ave. Los Angeles 90025____________________________
- Names of District school sites near proposed location
- Proposed Charter School to be located with boundaries of LAUSD

**District-Owned Facilities:** If Westwood Charter is using LAUSD facilities as of date of the submittal of this charter petition or takes occupancy of LAUSD facilities prior to the approval of this charter petition, Westwood Charter shall execute an agreement provided by LAUSD for the use of the LAUSD facilities as a condition of the approval of the charter petition. If at any time after the approval of this charter petition Westwood Charter will occupy and use any LAUSD facilities, Westwood Charter shall execute and agreement provided by LAUSD for the use of LAUSD facilities prior to occupancy and commencing use.

Westwood Charter agrees that occupancy and use of LAUSD facilities shall be in compliance with applicable laws and LAUSD policies for the operation and maintenance of LAUSD facilities and furnishings and equipment. All LAUSD facilities (i.e., schools) will remain subject to those laws applicable to public schools which LAUSD observes. In the event of an emergency, all LAUSD facilities (i.e., schools) are available for use by the American Red Cross
and public agencies as emergency locations which may disrupt or prevent Westwood Charter from conducting its educational programs. If Westwood Charter will share the use of LAUSD facilities with another LAUSD user group, Westwood Charter agrees it will participate in and observe all LAUSD safety policies (e.g., emergency chain of information, participate in safety drills).

As a condition to the approval of the charter petition, Westwood Charter will enter into a Public School Choice Facilities Use Agreement with the LAUSD prior to occupying or using the LAUSD facilities.

The use agreements provided by LAUSD for LAUSD facilities shall contain terms and conditions addressing issues such as, but not limited to, the following:

- **Use.** Westwood Charter will be restricted to using the LAUSD facilities for the operation of a public school providing educational instruction to the public school students consistent with the terms of the charter petition and incidental related uses. LAUSD shall have the right to inspect LAUSD facilities upon reasonable notice to Westwood Charter.

- **Furnishings and Equipment.** LAUSD shall retain ownership of any furnishings and equipment, including technology, (“F&E”) that it provides to Charter School for use. Charter School, at its sole cost and expense, shall provide maintenance and other services for the good and safe operation of the F&E.

- **Leasing; Licensing.** Use of the LAUSD facilities by any person or entity other than Westwood Charter School shall be administered by LAUSD. The parties may agree to an alternative arrangement in the use agreement.

- **Minimum Payments or Charges to be paid to LAUSD Arising From the Facilities.**
  (i) **Pro Rata Share.** LAUSD shall collect and Westwood Charter School shall pay a Pro Rata Share for facilities costs as provided in the Charter School Act of 1992 and its regulations. The parties may agree to an alternative arrangement regarding facilities costs in the use agreement; and

  (ii) **Taxes; Assessments.** Generally, Westwood Charter School shall pay any assessment or fee imposed upon or levied on the LAUSD facilities that it is occupying or Westwood Charter School’s legal equitable interest created by the use agreement.

- **Maintenance & Operations Services.** In the event LAUSD agrees to allow Westwood Charter School to perform any of the operation and maintenance services, LAUSD shall have the right to inspect the LAUSD facilities and the cost incurred in such inspection shall be paid by Westwood Charter School.

  (i) **Co-Location.** If Westwood Charter School is co-locating or sharing the LAUSD facilities with another user, LAUSD shall provide the operations and
maintenance services for the LAUSD facilities and Westwood Charter School shall pay for the Pro Rata Share. The parties may agree to an alternative arrangement regarding performance of the operations and maintenance services and payment for such in the use agreement.

(ii) **Sole Occupant.** If the Charter School is a sole occupant of LAUSD facilities, LAUSD shall allow the Westwood Charter School, at its sole cost and expense, to provide some operations and maintenance services for the LAUSD facilities in accordance with applicable laws and LAUSD’s policies on operations and maintenance services for facilities and F&E. NOTWITHSTANDING THE FOREGOING, LAUSD shall provide all services for regulatory inspections, which as the owner of the real property is required to submit, and deferred maintenance and Westwood Charter School shall pay LAUSD for the cost and expense of providing those services. The parties may agree to an alternative arrangement regarding performance of the operations and maintenance services and payment for such services in the use agreement.

**Real Property Insurance.** Prior to occupancy, Westwood Charter School shall satisfy those requirements to participate in LAUSD’s property insurance or, if Westwood Charter School is the sole occupant of LAUSD facilities, obtain and maintain separate property insurance for the LAUSD facilities. Westwood Charter School shall not have the option of obtaining and maintaining separate property insurance for the LAUSD facility IF Charter School is co-locating or sharing the LAUSD facility with another user.

**Facility status:** The charter petitioner must demonstrate control of a facility such as a commitment from the landlord, to ensure that the property is actually available to the charter developer, and that the facility is usable with or without conditions (such as a conditional code permit.) The Charter School facility shall comply with all applicable building codes, standards and regulations adopted by the city and/or county agencies responsible for building and safety standards for the city in which the Charter School facility. The Westwood Charter School cannot exempt itself from applicable building and zoning codes, ordinances, and ADA requirements.

**Occupancy of the Site:** The charter petitioner or developer shall provide the District with a final Certificate of Occupancy issued by the applicable permitting agency, allowing the petitioner to use and occupy the site. The Westwood Charter School may not open without providing a copy of the Certificate of Occupancy for the designated use of the facility. If the Westwood Charter School moves or expands to another facility during the term of this chapter, the Westwood Charter School shall provide a Certificate of Occupancy to the District for each facility before school is scheduled to open or operate in the facility or facilities. Notwithstanding any language to the contrary in this charter, the interpretation, application, and enforcement of this provision are not subject to the Dispute Resolution Process outlined in Element 14.
Health & Safety: The school will comply with the Healthy Schools Act, California Education Code Section 17608, which details pest management requirements for schools. Developers may find additional information at: www.laschools.org/employee/mo/ipm

Asbestos Management: The Charter School will comply with the asbestos requirement as cited in the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), 40CFR part 763. AHERA requires that any building leased or acquired that is to be used as a school or administrative building shall maintain an asbestos management plan.