

## Preface

Residents of the Sunny Valley—Wolf Creek area live in a rural, isolated region with a high risk student population. Since the downturn of the logging industry, the community has experienced significant poverty and concomitant social issues. The number of students eligible for Free and Reduced lunch was consistently so high at the former Wolf Creek Elementary School—over 90% of these students are considered at-risk due to their socioeconomic status—that all students received free lunch and breakfast.

An active founding group of parents and concerned community members has been meeting for over two years—at first to save the community school and then, when that effort failed—to design a charter school which will provide a high quality education for all Sunny Valley and Wolf Creek area students. The group has held meetings, distributed information via newsletters, and surveyed the community to gauge local support for a charter school. The founding group continues to secure numerous community partnership commitments from local organizations to support the school's concept with projects, volunteers and materials.

Sunny Wolf Charter School is designed as a K-8 community school. The curriculum will be centered on service-learning and place-based learning using a project-based approach to engage students in academic content and connect them to the culture, history and natural environment of the surrounding area. The charter school will also place a strong emphasis on character development by fostering a Community of Kindness that will be highlighted in all school activities and serve as a foundation for the service learning component of our education program. Personalized Education Plans for each student and multi-age, blended grade classrooms will provide developmentally appropriate instruction for all students by accommodating individual differences.

Sunny Wolf Charter School (SWCS) will open for 75 students (maximum limit is 85) with a Kindergarten classroom, three classrooms for grades 1-8, a technology lab, and a multi-media library in the empty Wolf Creek School building. SWCS's population

is expected to grow beyond 85 students within its first three years. While the charter school will be open to all area K-8 students, the targeted population will be students who currently travel outside of the Sunny-Wolf community to attend distant district schools, who have enrolled in a neighboring district, or who are home-schooled.

Sunny Wolf Charter School's academic goal is to motivate our students to ensure that they exceed the state benchmarks. We also aim to raise our community's historically low high school graduation rate by ensuring that our students are trained in critical thinking skills and practical study habits which are necessary for success at the secondary level. We envision a thriving school at the hub of our community providing educational choice for parents and a rich learning environment for students.

Community support for this school is overwhelming. Not only do a large majority of students' families and other community members look forward to revitalizing their school, but the school also enjoys total support from the many service organizations centered in the town of Wolf Creek including the library, the food bank, the all-volunteer fire district, our teen center, our preschool and parent center, the crisis response team, and other non-profit community support organizations. SWCS will connect rural students and families with these organizations and the surrounding natural environment by creating a community school that will instill its students with a sense of individual, social, and civic responsibility locally and within the larger world.

Twenty-seven organizations, business owners and individuals from the Wolf Creek and Sunny Valley community have written letters in support of Sunny Wolf Charter School. These letters can be found in Appendix F.

We also have a petition in support of Sunny Wolf Charter School with signatures of over 100 area residents who would like to see the school open in September 2010.

In addition, we have pre-enrollment forms from 59 students whose families have committed to having their children attend Sunny Wolf Charter School.

We are grateful to Three Rivers School District for the opportunity to present this Charter School proposal, and we look forward to a mutually beneficial application process.