

10/10/14

**Superintendent David Holmes and
Members of the TRSD School Board
8550 New Hope Road
Grants Pass, Oregon 97527**

Dear Superintendent Holmes and Members of the TRSD School Board,

The Charter Council of Woodland Charter School respectfully requests the renewal of its three year charter for the school years 2015-2018. The Charter Council proudly presents the highlights of the two year history of success for our school, the goals towards which we strive, and some needed changes to our charter contract to ensure that those goals are met.

Waldorf Methods Education

Woodland Charter School came into existence in September 2012 through the efforts of its founders, who sought an alternative education for children in the Grants Pass area, and who directed their efforts to open a public charter school that uses a Waldorf methods curriculum to drive the learning process for students. Waldorf education uses a holistic approach, integrating the practical and aesthetic arts with a classical curriculum, and it places an emphasis on a connection with the natural world and its seasons, and on the development of human culture and history. Foreign language is introduced in the earliest grades through cultural and linguistic immersion, and is followed in the upper grades by the study of grammar, syntax and conversation. All students play musical instruments, sing, and participate in dramatic productions, in addition to a deep focus on academics. Students create their own textbooks through artistic portfolio-style renderings.

Celebrating Our History and Growth

In **2012**, Woodland opened in temporary quarters at the Gateway Church in Grants Pass. Three classrooms with **60 students** comprised the grades: a 1st-2nd mixed class, a 3rd-4th mixed class, and a 5th-6th mixed class. Two of the classroom teachers hired were licensed public school teachers with no Waldorf experience or training, and one was Waldorf trained and licensed under charter school registry. Administration was handled by four of the founding charter council members. Five special subjects teachers taught Spanish language, handwork arts, games/movement, choral and instrumental music, and nature studies. One of those teachers had Waldorf training. The school offered extensive professional development in Waldorf education for its main lesson teachers and specialty teachers, as well as training in school governance for the charter council. Parent education in Waldorf methods was offered throughout the year, along with festivals and school assemblies. In January 2013, the school moved to its permanent site at 301 Murphy Creek Road, Grants Pass, with two modular buildings holding the classrooms, and one small office modular.

In the summer of **2013**, Woodland sited a third modular building for classroom use, in anticipation of an increased enrollment of **96 students**. Ten students were on the wait list for various classes. We also

began construction on our first permanent structure, the multi-purpose Juniper Shelter. This building would be used for our new Woodworking program, as a shade structure during recess times, as an outdoor classroom, and as a small stage area for dramatic productions during good weather. The full-time faculty at Woodland included all Waldorf trained and licensed teachers, with a 1st grade class, a 2nd-3rd grade class, a 4th-5th grade class, and a 6th-7th grade class. Specialty classes included Spanish language, handwork arts, games/movement, nature studies, gardening, woodworking, choral music and string instruments. All of our teachers had some Waldorf training. The majority of the faculty were returning members. Faculty became familiar with the Alliance for Public Waldorf education's documentation of Waldorf and Oregon State Standards, and its use in preparation for testing. An administrator was hired who has both Waldorf training and public school administration training. Extensive ongoing professional development was offered to all teachers and to the charter council. A Parent Council was formed and their mission and vision statements clarified. Parent education offerings and community festivals and assemblies were held. Teachers began offering organized after school assistance for students struggling in math. Afternoon bus service was established.

In the fall of **2014**, Woodland has welcomed **124 students**. We started the year with 25 students on the wait list. We have a 1st grade class, a 2nd grade class, a 3rd-4th grade class, a 5th-6th grade class, and a 7th-8th grade class. In anticipation of Smarter Balanced testing, we provided our teachers with Oregon State Standards based homework books for their students. Math and language arts textbooks also reflect an emphasis on Oregon State Standards. Professional development in this year will focus on Diversity Training, Oregon State Standards and Waldorf Standards implementation, and Working With Special Needs Students. All of the faculty and staff received CPR/First Aid training. Woodland now has morning and afternoon busing. A trial School Lunch Program has been established with organic and local foods. We started an After School Enrichment Program, which includes: Science Fun (with Oregon State Standards focus), Cross Country/Track Club, Traveling Chorus, Photography, Alternative Instrument Exploration, and Math and Language Arts Support. We have already offered parent education, a community festival, and an in-school assembly with performances, with many more to come. We have expanded our driveway and parking lot to accommodate twenty five new families. We created a stipended Faculty Chair position to support the needs of the Faculty Council. Our threefold school governance is now fully established with the Charter Council, Faculty Council, Parent Council, and Leadership Committee with members from each fully established and working together to keep Woodland running smoothly. **(Please see attachment that describes the responsibility of each.)** Raised garden beds were created for each grade to accommodate the gardening component of our curriculum in an efficient manner. Grades 1-8 have all planted winter crops and have harvested fall crops from the community garden and hoop house.

Fiscal Prudence

In the first two years of operation, Woodland Charter School has maintained fiscal soundness by raising funds to make up for shortfalls. With tight margins in our budget, we have been able to deliver a high quality Waldorf methods education to students in a fiscally prudent manner. **Please see our attached five year budget, which reflects our continued plan to work with fiscal prudence.**

Future Goals/Plans

Improved Student Outcomes

Our greatest area of focus in the coming three years will be in **ensuring that our student body will be proficient according to Waldorf and Oregon State standards**. Our small and very new cohorts (over 50% of our students have been with us for only one school year or less) are, of course, not yet representative of what a Waldorf methods education can provide in terms of overall proficiency. All students improved in their test scores last year, but many were not yet testing in the proficient range. Knowing that many of our students are not yet proficient, we have created means for significantly improving the outcomes of low performing students. Firstly, our homework tools have been carefully chosen to reflect the type of work that our students will encounter on the Smarter Balanced tests. Secondly, we offer year-round after school preparation and pre-teaching (teachers pre-teach the main lesson to give the students confidence in meeting the material in the classroom setting) for these students, with their own teachers, in a safe and supportive environment. Thirdly, our testing cohorts will do practice testing during the year to become familiar with the test format. Lastly, Waldorf Standards are also carefully tracked with rubrics and written narratives from all teachers. Our teachers work with a document that matches Oregon State Standards and Waldorf Standards in order to focus fully on the many areas that coincide.

Breakfast and Lunch For All

We feel that increased student performance is related to good nutrition for all. We do have students who do not get breakfast in the morning, and they do not have adequate lunches, either. We hope to continue to expand our trial lunch program to include both breakfast and lunch for all, with an emphasis on high quality food that is local and organic.

New Classroom Building 2015

In the summer of 2015, we will need a new modular building to accommodate our expanding school population. First, second, third and eighth grade will be stand-alone classes, with combined 4th-5th and 6th-7th grades. A new main lesson classroom will necessitate a new modular building with two classrooms, one half of which will support special subjects teaching.

Expansion of Parking Lot 2015

With the increase in the number of students, we need to significantly expand our parking lot. More than half of Woodland students do not take the bus.

Expansion of Playground 2015

Our playground offerings are inadequate for the number of students we serve, and we hope to build a naturescape area for the younger students with much-needed shade trees, as well as the leveling of the upper field for games to be played by the older students. We also plan to double the size of our outdoor basketball court and install permanent hoops.

Irrigation System Installation For Fire Safety 2015

We currently only irrigate a small portion of our property, which leaves us vulnerable to fire issues. We hope to install a tiered irrigation system that will first protect and beautify our buildings and water the planned shade trees, then the playground area, then the whole property. Our gardening program would be greatly enhanced by this, as well, as we hope to have an orchard one day.

Needed Changes to the Charter Contract 2015-2018

Kindergarten

In order to prepare students for first grade at Woodland, we hope to offer a Waldorf-methods kindergarten. We would like for this option to be stated in the next three year charter agreement. A Waldorf-methods kindergarten onsite will allow for a seamless transition to first grade with appropriate handwork skills for reading and writing readiness, more connection to and comfort with the arts for the children, and for the families, a deeper understanding of exactly what Waldorf methods is and how it works. Offering kindergarten would require that the state be fully funding the kindergarten salary.

Increase in ADM percentage

Woodland Charter School came into existence without the benefit of classroom structures and the attendant facilities, such as a parking lot and playground. We have had to rent our classrooms and ramps, an expensive option that prevents us from adequately saving to prepare to build them in the future. With the expected growth of our school population (we are already enrolling students for first grade 2015, and expect to have a full stand-alone eighth grade in 2015, as well), we will very soon need funds for a larger parking area, and for constructing buildings, as well. We propose that the percentage of ADM funds for Woodland Charter School be increased to 85% to allow us to afford the construction of classroom buildings and supporting facilities.

Heartfelt thanks to the Superintendent and the School Board for the support you have given to our fledgling school. We are grateful for all that the Three Rivers School District has done to bring our initiative to fruition, and are grateful for your continued support. Our success would not be possible without you! We also wish to thank Dave Valenzuela, Lisa Cross, Stephanie Allen-Hart and the special education support team, and Shelly Quick for all they have done to help us in the past two years. We are pleased to be able to offer an alternative education to families in this area, and look forward to your continued support in doing so.

Sincerely,

**Lois Horan, Principal, with
The Charter Council
Woodland Charter School
PO Box 740
Murphy, OR 97533**

**Narrative for
Woodland Charter School Financials**

1. Notables for 2012-13:

- **Teacher salaries and benefits comprise the largest expense**
- **Significant amount spent on staff development for non-Waldorf teachers (from Federal Charter School Grant)**
- **Significant travel expenses for teachers being trained in Sacramento @ Waldorf teacher training (from FCSG)**
- **Instructional supplies- baseline items purchased included recorders, violins, painting boards, brushes, beeswax crayons, artist quality pencils, and other items specific to an arts-integrated curriculum**
- **Non-consumables comprise the desks, chairs and tables for three classrooms**
- **Much professional help needed to get the school off the ground: accountants, lawyers, grant writers, etc**
- **With no buildings provided, rent is high for buildings and ramps**
- **Renovations indicates the driveway, sidewalks, building platforms, and the location and erection of the classroom and office structures**
- **Negative net income is due to the fact that although we had 24 month terms for our renovations/building setup, for audit purposes we had to expense it all in the year that services were engaged**

2. Notables for 2013-14:

- **Teacher salaries and benefits comprise the largest expense**
- **Staff development costs remain high in order to fully train teachers in Waldorf education (FCSG)**
- **Travel expenses for teacher training (FCSG)**
- **Instructional supplies for the addition of one classroom plus an additional two special subjects classes per grade**
- **Non-consumables: purchased desks, chairs, tables in anticipation of a new grade to be added in 2014-15 (FCSG)**
- **Renovations were for the construction of a platform, sidewalks, and a permanent multi-purpose structure that houses the woodworking program , outdoor classroom space, playground shade structure, and a mini-stage area**
- **Rent went up with addition of new classroom new building**

3. Notables for 2014-15:

- **Teacher salaries and benefits comprise the largest expense**
- **Last year of high staff development costs to be paid for by FCSG**
- **Purchase of instructional supplies for new class**
- **Non-consumables indicate purchase of desks and chairs in anticipation of increase in enrollment next year (FCSG)**
- **Rent stabilized for one year- we worked with the curriculum to keep students in their main lesson classrooms during special subjects, eliminating the need for an additional building this year**
- **Renovations are for expansion of parking lot, building an outdoor stage area, and readying a new driveway, sidewalks and building platform for a new building (office and special education services) needed in 2015-16**

4. Notables for 2015-16:

- **FCSG is no longer available**
- **Teacher salaries and teacher benefits comprise the largest expense**
- **Staff development costs now at normal levels as Waldorf teacher training is completed for untrained teachers**
- **Supplies and equipment needs diminish as classrooms have much of what they need**
- **Rent increases as we add two classrooms for increased enrollment**
- **Renovations are for the addition of a new building to accommodate increased enrollment**

5. Notables for 2016-17:

- **Teacher salaries and benefits comprise the largest expense**
- **Staff development costs continue at normal levels**
- **Supplies and equipment continue at normal levels**
- **Renovations line item is in regards to land purchase expenses, which will become possible in the fifth year of operation**