

LIBERTY CHARTER SCHOOL

“...We held on to our central truth - that it is not possible to change significantly what happens in schools unless you change significantly the nature of the human relationships that form the educational experiences.”

-Olds & Pearlman, Designing the New American School

INTRODUCTION

This proposal was made possible by Idaho Code, Chapter 52, Title 33, passed by the Idaho Legislature in 1998. It provides opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a method to accomplish all of the following:

- Improve pupil learning;
- Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low-achieving; (Attachment 1: ISAT scores for lower achieving students)
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site;
- Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- Hold the school established under this plan accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, both behaviorally and academically.

We respectfully submit this proposal to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission to sponsor Liberty Charter School, which will allow parents the opportunity to qualify for the lottery in accordance with the Charter legislation.

Our proposal for a charter school is an alternative educational opportunity that offers students the promise of a Kindergarten through Grade 12 education which will lead to a successful post high school experience and/or admission to an institution of higher education. This promise is made with the understanding that an education is a shared responsibility of the public schools, the parents, the community and the individual learners. The authors of this Charter value the commendable energy, dedication and success of all schools.

We believe that our charter school status provides a unique and additional opportunity to address the educational needs and desires of our children.

Unique Aspects

The distinctive aspects of Liberty Charter include the addition of seventh through twelfth grade, the study of a second language, piano lessons for Kindergarten through third-grade students, enriched gifted and talented services, high school humanities opportunity, career guidance and development, integration of community, school and family service into the learning process.

Seventh/Eighth Grade Opportunity - Realizing that the junior high years are critical to a child's self esteem, the focus of the seventh and eighth grades is to provide a different environment where students experience less stress. There is less movement from room to room, fewer teachers and students, therefore a smaller arena that is not as threatening to a student's self esteem when taking risks or making mistakes.

High School Humanities Opportunity – Students enter high school with a multitude of budding dreams and desires. At the heart of Liberty Charter High School is encouraging the imagination, curiosity and inspiration in students to enable them to create meaning and purpose from their knowledge, the willingness to grapple with concepts and information until they're their own, and the gaining of a self-respect and initiative. And at the heart of the high school is the opportunity to expand upon essential content standards, at the state and district level, using substantial technology, and a myriad of hands-on/application experiences in order for high-level understanding and life skills to also become the goals of each student. On a broader scale, the empowering goal of the high school is to provide a substantial academic foundation so that all its graduates possess key advantages upon entering college or applicable to any post-high school/professional field.

Foreign Language - The study of a foreign language is an integral and distinguishing aspect of the Liberty Charter curriculum. Research demonstrates that the study of a second language boost English proficiency, improves memory and self-discipline and enhances verbal and problem-solving skills. Studies also show that learning a foreign language actually contributes to better SAT and ACT scores. Most colleges and universities require a second language for incoming students. In addition:

- ...knowledge of a second language is essential in over 60 occupations
- ...each of the major U.S. corporations routinely employs 500 to 5,000 persons abroad
- ...commercial language schools now have waiting lists, due to increased demands in business and industry for people with strong language skills
- ...1,261 companies surveyed reported 60,687 positions requiring a second language

The initial emphasis was with intermediate level learners (ages 9-13), but now starts at the second-grade level. At the high school level, French, Spanish and Sign Language classes are available to our students. An expected outcome is that learners will communicate and interact effectively in a second language.

Music; Piano Lessons - Kindergarten through third grade. .5 hours per week - It is our belief that early musical training - particularly on the piano - will dramatically boost a child's brain power, building the kind of skills necessary to succeed in high level math and science. Recent studies of California and Wisconsin showed that after only six months, pre-school piano students

out-performed those who had not studied by 35% on measured intelligence tests. Further studies have shown the best time to boost brainpower through music is between the ages of two and ten.

The explanation for this phenomenon is simple: when a child makes music, brain cells begin firing in patterns - linking with each other and forming a network of lasting connections. This exercises and strengthens the same bridges in the brain that are believed to lay the framework for logic, order, and abstract reasoning.

Therefore, we have created a piano lab where primary students (grades K - 3) learn the basics of playing the keyboard. High school students have continued their musical instruction through expanded jazz choir and instrument programs. It has not been our intent to turn every child into a Mozart or an Einstein. But it has been our desire to stimulate as much brain activity as possible, for the stimulus a child receives early in life will determine how well their brain functions through life.

Gifted and Talented Enrichment - In a society based on democratic principles, each person has the right to learn at the most appropriate level where growth will take place. Because gifted and/or talented students have special needs, they have been provided educational experiences that have met those needs in the regular classroom as well as in special classes, seminars or workshops. The charter environment will allow areas to be pursued beyond the scope of the regular curriculum - regardless of their areas of giftedness or talents. This has been accomplished through, but not limited to, clustering, competitions, consultations, curriculum compacting, honors classes, and independent study to date.

Liberty Charter School has used the following outline of identification procedures for our gifted and talented program:

1. Intellectual/Academic – see attached matrix (Attachment 2)
2. Specific Academic – see attached student profile (Attachment 2)
3. Creativity – see attached student profile (Attachment 2)
4. Visual/Performing Arts - portfolio/audition; expert recommendation; teacher rating form
5. Leadership - portfolio; teacher recommendation; parent questionnaire; student questionnaire.

Career Development and Guidance - Participating in a myriad of job-shadowing opportunities, Liberty Charter High School has enabled students to receive and formally document and develop job-skills portfolios. Special time and attention has been devoted to scholarship application and experience, on-going resume development, as well as career studies completed by each student.

Community, School and Family Service - Community service is a vital and distinctive element of the Liberty Charter curriculum. Learners reap the rewards that come from being active, contributing community members. They experientially discover the interrelationships of community members. They feel the satisfaction of seeing their activity produce positive changes in their community and their lives. Moreover, it is critical that our children develop into young adults who possess a deep sense of loyalty and responsibility for the family that has invested in them. Daily homework include students being expected to invest back into their families by voluntarily satisfying needs within their homes, as well as complete specific projects with or for

their families. Additionally, students are expected to find ways to invest back into their school by applying to work for various staff in order to learn how to be responsible to job-related expectations. The purpose of School Service is also to help our students realize that the excellence of any school is dependent on a *team* of workers, of which the students constitute key members.

The community, school and family service requirement are designed to instill a sense of individual, social, and civic responsibility. It enables learners to become whole people whose presence in society is valuable because of their development of values and newly found knowledge to solve for the needs of others. Specifics of the program are determined by the learners and school staff during the initial weeks of each school year, based on current community needs and interaction with parents, community and governmental leaders.

Technology - Technology provides learners with skills that prepare them for future employment. The term “technology” includes learning tools such as computers, interactive video equipment, audio-visual aids, scientific equipment and networks linked to local and nationwide resources. These tools help students guide their own education. They support a child’s natural way of learning through individual and group discovery, and through seeking solutions to real life challenges. “Learning how to learn” is the real purpose of education. Those who succeed in this goal become lifelong learners. Interactive technologies properly used for this goal leap the barriers of time, space and limited attention span and bring the world to our fingertips. Computers will be tools used for activities such as:

- Research - Access information via electronic reference books, databases, networks, etc.
- Career Development – Exploring professional / workplace requirements, opportunities and investigation; job-skill assessments; formal portfolio development.
- Instruction – Using visual manipulation with technology such as SmartBoards to personalize study and allow for daily, efficient integration of content areas.
- Authoring - Create and illustrate stories and reports to share with others in media such as printed documents videos and digital film.
- Drill, Practice, Remediation - Computers take over tedious routines, providing instant feedback on mistakes and how to correct them. It is possible to evaluate learning needs and take learners back to foundation knowledge they may have missed.
- Computation - Learning mathematical skills through spreadsheets and other software applications helps prepare learners for future careers.
- Record Keeping and Storage - Charter learners discover that computer databases are effective tools for tracking school and business records, schedules, inventories, etc.
- Communication - Network link learners at school with their homes, other schools and national resource centers.

ELEMENT ONE: EDUCATIONAL THOROUGHNESS STANDARDS FULFILLED

The Educational Learning Program is accomplished within the context and focus of the Thoroughness Standards as defined in section 33-1612, Idaho Code. The architects of the Liberty Charter School understand that a “thorough system of public schools” in Idaho is one in which:

- A safe environment conducive to learning is provided.
- Educators are empowered to maintain classroom discipline.
- The basic values of honesty, self-discipline, unselfishness, respect for authority and the central importance of work are emphasized.
- The skills necessary to communicate effectively are taught.
- A basic curriculum necessary to enable students to enter academic or vocational post secondary educational programs are provided.
- The skills necessary for students to enter the work force are taught.
- The students are introduced to current technology.
- The importance of students acquiring the skills to enable them to be responsible citizens of their homes, schools and communities is emphasized.

Liberty Charter School achieves the Thoroughness Standards through its basic curriculum and the unique aspects, which includes the unique aspect of technology integration in all major high school subject areas. The instruction of the curriculum is accomplished by using an aligned proactive method. A combination of a strong emphasis on kindness, the “golden rule”, and a reward system (Citizen of the Week and Citizen of the Month) which honors children who are hard working, responsible, honest, respectful, etc., creates an environment allowing for student peace of mind which then maximizes learning potential. We will focus on the memorization and dramatization of classic poetry rich in moral education. Through daily recitation, discussion, and application to life situations, this aligned proactive approach will create sensitivity for mankind in staff and students. (Attachment 3)

Liberty Charter School’s curriculum is taught, reviewed, and practiced within the context of the mission, ***“Liberty Charter School’s mission is to develop students who are competent, confident, productive, and responsible young adults who possess the habits, skills and attitudes to succeed in life and be offered the invitation of a post-secondary education and satisfying employment.”***

This mission seeks to develop an educated citizenry for the 21st century through a dynamic, interactive, academic program where pacing is driven by student capabilities, not textbooks. Our students will be well grounded in the basics, such as, reading, writing, math, science and social studies. In addition, our students will evolve into citizens who will develop the following academic habits:

- ...curiosity;
- ...lifelong learning;
- ...clear oral and written communication;
- ...thinking creatively, thoughtful reflection, and purposeful investigation
- ...cooperative and independent problem solving
- ...thinking logically and making informed judgments;

- ...effectively using technology as a tool;
- ...adapting to new situations and responding to new information;
- ...finding, selecting, evaluating, organizing and using information from various sources;
- ...making easy and flexible connections among various disciplines of thought;

They will develop personal habits and attitudes of:

- accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions;
- investment in and awareness of the needs of others;
- academic honesty and the ability to face challenges with courage and integrity;
- a healthy lifestyle;
- empathy and courtesy for others and respect for differences among people and cultures;
- self-confidence and willingness to risk setbacks in order to learn;
- concentration and perseverance;
- seeking a fair share of the workload
- managing time in a responsible manner
- working cooperatively with others, which includes the ability to listen, share opinions, negotiate, compromise and help a group reach consensus.

The development of the above noted habits and attitudes require a climate that is conducive for learning. The philosophy of the Liberty Charter School is that learning occurs when:

- ...learners construct meaning;
- ...learners see connections between what they learn and the real world;
- ...learners are actively engaged in purposeful tasks;
- ...activities are integrated and meaningful;
- ...learners are allowed to make mistakes in order to achieve success;
- ...a positive and productive learning environment is provided;
- ...learners are given opportunities to build new knowledge;
- ...learners are given time to reflect on the value and purpose of what they learn;
- ...learners work individually and as members of a group;
- ...learners work side-by-side with community and family members to develop solutions and opinions on issues that can be presented to local policy makers;
- ...learners are expected and encouraged to learn with their hearts as well as their minds;
- ...learners internalize that what they learn and do in school makes a positive change in the community;
- ...challenged learners have an individual plan and support is an intrinsic part of the educational program;
- ...learners are supported with coaches, mentors and advocates;
- ...all learners have advanced learning opportunities.

The philosophy of the Liberty Charter School is grounded in the belief that when there is low threat and content is highly challenging, accelerated learning takes place.

Each child has the right to come to school without fear of taunting, teasing or violence. Each parent has the right to expect a school to provide a safe, kind environment for his/her child. Each staff member has the right to teach without fear of violence. Students, parents and teachers will experience peace of mind in the Liberty Charter School setting. We believe that a “kind” environment should be extended through the potentially tumultuous junior high years.

A BASIC CURRICULUM:

In keeping with the Liberty Charter School’s mission to prepare learners to be functional citizens of the 21st century, we recognize that such preparation is more than the assimilation of facts. Proficiency in a discipline means that the learner becomes a capable practitioner and has a sufficient foundation to pursue advanced study. Liberty Charter emphasizes the exploration, acquisition and application of knowledge.

The Liberty Charter curriculum contains both traditional academic subjects and additional language areas that make the charter unique. The Idaho State Department of Education’s curriculum serves as the starting point and is enhanced with unifying themes and other creative methods.

The subjects that comprise the curriculum are listed and briefly discussed below. The traditional core curriculum areas - language, arts, math, science, social studies - remain strongly emphasized. They are augmented by music, theater, art, health, physical, and environmental education. Liberty Charter School utilizes the basic elements of the Idaho State Department of Education adopted Standards and Benchmarks.

CORE CURRICULUM

Language Arts (English and Foreign) - The goal is to develop learners who are effective communicators, who love literature, and are lifelong readers and writers. The curriculum is literature based. Comprehensive skills, grammar and vocabulary are integrated within the literature program. Specifically, *Spalding Writing Road to Reading* is used in Phonics and Spelling Grade K – 8. *Shurley Method Program* is used for English Grade 1 – 8.

Dramatization and memorization of accelerated vocabulary is a motivational aspect of the language arts experience. Writing includes self analysis connected with student learning goals through a personal journal, as well as, creative, expository and professional writing. Communication skills include speaking and writing, and expand into presentation skills, using modern technological tools.

Science and Health - The Liberty Charter science curriculum is a multi-year sequence, which emphasizes hands-on experimentation and functional knowledge of scientific phenomena. Science must take students beyond the factual approach of reading, reciting, drilling and testing science to actually “doing” and “feeling”. This process approach lets students experience the excitement of science so they can better understand facts and concepts.

Kindergarten through third-grade students focus on the basic science process skills of observing, inferring, measuring, communicating, classifying and predicting. Fourth through eighth-grade students add the integrated science process skills of identifying variables, constructing tables of data, constructing graphs, describing relationships between variables, acquiring and processing data, constructing hypotheses and designing investigations. Ninth through twelfth-grade provide more academically and individually challenging situations in which to use the above skills by having students conduct individual and team lab studies.

Math - Kindergarten through eighth grade students will master the arithmetic processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals through Hall of Fame Drills. Our math program has been developed by the Liberty teachers, K – 8. The program is taught in a fast-paced, direct teaching method. However, since mathematical learning is not a spectator sport, we will continue to have concept and manipulative experiences that engage students in exploring, conjecturing and thinking. This is taught using manipulative materials compiled from a variety of sources. Through these hands-on activities, students view and use math as a tool for reasoning and problem solving in purposeful ways.

Social Studies and Community Service - Kindergarten through eighth grade follow the basic elements of the state adopted standards and benchmarks. Social Studies is taught utilizing grade level reading novels taught through a thematic approach. In addition, there is a strong emphasis on community service in the seventh and eighth grades as students apply their understanding of and their contributions to the world around them. We seek out ways for the students to discover and experience responsibilities and rights as members of our democratic community. Our community service starts at the school site.

Environmental Education – Liberty Charter School emphasizes responsibility towards the health of our cities and our planet. We believe that environmental education starts at home and is more than a once a year activity. Learners will start at the school site, participating in daily activities which will instill lifelong awareness of the critical relationships between the individual and natural environments. Learners will study and debate real life issues such as coping with diminishing resources. Consistent participation in Nampa community projects will show learners how they can affect the future quality of our cities and health of our green spaces.

Technology – Liberty Charter School emphasizes the area of technology. (Attachment 4) This will provide our learners with skills, which will prepare them for future employment. This supports a child’s natural way of learning through individual and group discovery and seeking solutions to real life challenges. Learning how to learn is not only the real purpose of education, but also leads to our goal of becoming lifelong learners.

ELEMENT TWO: THE EDUCATIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM

All students experience a common core of learning which fulfills the school’s mission to produce students who possess the academic and personal habits and attitudes desired of an educated citizen in the 21st century. It is the intent of Liberty Charter School to remain aligned with the general standards and benchmarks of the Idaho State Department of Education.

Our students will be able to:

- develop their aesthetic talents in music, visual arts or performance;

- develop oral and written skills;
- have the opportunity to develop oral and written skills in a non-native language;
- possess the ability to use knowledge and skills, think logically and solve problems related to mathematics;
- use their knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses in order to create individual processes/methods of study and retain what they learn;
- have sufficient knowledge of science to be responsible users of scientific information;
- participate in a comprehensive program of community service that reflects responsible citizens in a democratic society and an inter-dependent world;
- understand and apply the knowledge, concepts, principles and themes embedded in each of the social studies - history, geography, political science and economics.

Liberty Charter School’s learning program is built on the belief that all children can learn, but not in the same way, or equally well from the same sources. It recognizes that children are variously gifted. It is based on the work of Howard Gardner of Harvard, who has identified the following seven capabilities or “intelligences”:

- linguistic
- mathematical/logical
- intrapersonal (self)
- interpersonal (others)
- bodily-kinesthetic
- spatial
- musical

Although all seven areas will be examined and encouraged through instruction and the gifted and talented program, Liberty has retained the traditional focus on linguistic and mathematical/logical areas, and has implemented a unique musical component, a piano lab.

One way of accomplishing this focus has been through the Personalized Learning Goal. Working together, student, parent and educator consider learner strengths and weaknesses. They then identify an academic and a personal goal for each learner. These goals capitalize on learner strengths and shore up areas of weakness, while enhancing parental involvement. The Personalized Learning Goal Plan will be signed by the student, parent, and teacher.

The personalized goal encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning, while encouraging teachers, parents and the community to share in that responsibility. Through the use of this personalized goal, the Liberty Charter School ensures that children are not penalized for the rate at which they learn. The faster learner is continuously presented with new challenges, while the slower learner benefits from extra adult help, multiple methods and multiple environments.

The learning program supports the Liberty Charter’s mission of developing “lifelong learners.” It is designed to stimulate the desire to learn, and it is based on the belief that all learners possess an innate and unique creativity that can be developed given the appropriate environment. It allows for the joy of knowledge, self-expression and the thrill of exploration. It is flexible to

accommodate the individuality of learners and to evolve as Liberty learns and grows.

The staff and parents of Liberty Charter School believe that children do not develop character in a vacuum. Character education is provided through expectation training, memorization and dramatization of classic poetry and historical passages, as well as staff who model essential traits of good character. The staff at Liberty Charter School has ensured a safe, kind environment which has allowed students to acquire essential information and attitudes that will help them lead productive lives.

Methods

Liberty Charter School is distinguished by the multiplicity of ways in which it seeks to ensure student learning. Some of these are highlighted in the sections that follow. Not all students have equally successful outcomes. The charter uses uncommon means to achieve common ends. Through its multiple methods, all students are successful, capable of fulfilling their potential.

The *Subject Matter Method* presumes that an educated learner needs to know clearly-defined skills and concepts that can best be learned in an organized sequential fashion. Traditionally, this approach has been predominately lecture based. Liberty has added computer-based learning to increase the efficiency of this method and provide the opportunity for drill, which is sometimes necessary.

The *Inquiry and Problem Solving Method* suggests that learning occurs when individuals think critically and solve problems. The predominant premise of this method is that it is important to know how to retrieve and use the information, not just to have instant recall and possession of the information. *Dimensions of Learning* will be the centerpiece of this method.

The *Individualized Learning Method* attempts to personalize the learning process to the interests of the individual, by allowing students to develop goals for their self-study. The reasons for learning thus become one's own curiosity and personal applicability of the information learned.

The *Discussion Method* encourages learning through sharing of information and concepts within a group, with the thinking process playing an important role. A discussion leader is prepared to recognize each learner's level of understanding and can respond at the level most helpful to the learner.

Learning Opportunities

The most significant learning opportunity for our students is the number of times they have to learn any given concept. The general principle which our teachers impress upon the learners is ***“If you don't get it today, you'll get it tomorrow. If you don't get it tomorrow, you'll get it next month. If you don't get it next month, you'll get it next year.”*** This learning advantage alleviates student anxiety, the feeling of desperation if the student doesn't get it quickly enough.

Other learning opportunities are afforded Liberty students. Some are familiar, some are novel, but all strive to make learning relevant and purposeful and to actively engage the learner.

Problem-solving groups apply knowledge they have acquired and to practice new skills by tackling both real world problems and problems stimulated to model the current work-world. Peer teaching provides an opportunity for learners to become educators and reinforce their own knowledge and mastery of new skills through presentation of their own work and “learning buddy” activities.

ELEMENT THREE: THE MEASURABLE STUDENT EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Liberty Charter School lists below the standards, which are driven by the philosophy and mission of the charter. Liberty’s guiding coalition has clearly defined the essential knowledge and skills for student learning in each program area making standards subject specific and focusing on one subject area at a time. The technology unique aspect strand will be evidenced throughout the following standards.

STANDARDS

Personal Responsibility

Students will have positive attitudes and perceptions about creating quality work, striving for excellence and interpersonal skills.

Students will develop strategies and techniques to use self-regulation, critical, and creative thinking when presented with a task and personalized learning goals.

Expanding and Integrating Knowledge

Students will acquire and integrate knowledge and experiences from different subject areas.

Students will gather and use subject area information effectively in order to gain new information and knowledge, classify and organize information, support inferences, and justify conclusions appropriate to the context and audience.

Communication Skills

Students will communicate with clarity, purpose, and an understanding of audience using a variety of communication forms and skills.

Students will develop their talents in music, visual arts, and/or performance.

Students will develop oral and written skills in a non-native language.

Thinking and Reasoning Skills

Students will utilize, evaluate, and refine the use of multiple strategies to solve a variety of problems.

Students will reflect on, reconsider and re-evaluate the significance of information and their own learning.

Social Responsibility and Skills

Students will deal with disagreement and conflict caused by diversity of opinions and beliefs.

Students will evaluate and manage their behavior as group members.

Students will participate in community service that reflects responsible citizens in a democratic society.

ASSESSMENT

The purpose of assessment is to support and guide the learning process. It is a tool to recognize accomplishment and certify that knowledge has been gained. Assessment also discerns those areas where understanding is still incomplete and enables students to focus their efforts where they will produce the greatest benefit.

Assessment is a means of measuring each learner's progress according to clearly recognizable standards. It is a tool for helping students learn more about their own strengths and weaknesses without intimidation, fear, or feeling there are winners and losers. It is a source of motivation for the learners and a guide for helping them achieve personal mastery.

Standards and standardization are the basis of assessment. Learners are shown exemplary performances for given tasks. An assessment of their efforts reflects how closely it matches this performance. The goal is not only to give a grade, but also to encourage students to do their personal best and show them their own improvement throughout the year.

Self-assessment is a unique learning opportunity for Liberty Charter students. As active participants in assessment of their own work, learners are encouraged to develop intrapersonal understanding of their strengths and deficiencies and an objective view of their accomplishments. In addition, a score on a piece of work can be improved if the learner is willing to accept the challenge for improvement put forth by the assessment.

Performance will be assessed on at least three levels. Student progress relative to previous performance will be assessed through portfolios of video taped oral presentations, written reports, individual and group projects and via computer learning packages. In addition, we will assess the attitudes and personal /academic habits listed in Element 2 through teacher evaluations of projects and video presentations, as well as parental input. Performance will be assessed relative to state developed standards. Liberty Charter School will assess our students on the assessments implemented statewide at the direction of the Idaho State Board of Education.

ELEMENT FOUR: METHOD STUDENT PROGRESS MEASURED

Liberty Charter School learners are exposed to some traditional examination methods. As required by the Charter, student performance is assessed relative to other learners of the same age, up through the twelfth grade, through state and national testing.

Students at Liberty Charter School will:

- ...meet the statewide performance standards developed by the Idaho Department of Education. These standards include the subjects of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Physical Education;
- ...achieve developed standards for age levels, content areas and outcomes addressed by the State Department of Education. These standards will be measured by student products, performances, exhibitions and any future tests developed by the Idaho State Department of Education.

We will meet the goals identified in this Charter petition when students demonstrate the following;

- score in the top quartile on standardized tests on the national, state, and district levels;
- reading at grade level by 3rd grade;
- computing math at grade level by 3rd grade;
- student absenteeism is less than 4%;
- student tardies are less than 2%;
- 7th through 12th grade students will receive a positive evaluation when completing the community service piece of the charter which is designed to instill a sense of individual, social, and civic responsibility where learners will use new found knowledge of solve community problems;
- samples of student work depicting acquired, integrated, extended, refined and meaningful utilization of knowledge.
- students reflect positive growth on self-assessment surveys done yearly on attitudes and habits toward task performance.

Special Note: Those students not reading at grade level or computing grade level math will be identified and receive a variety of services including, Special Education, Title 1 (if funded), tutoring by volunteers, and the opportunity with parental support to attend school during one or more intercessions.

Annual reports will be made to the Charter Commission, providing formative and summative data to demonstrate that the school is meeting all the performance standards prescribed by the State. The data will include emerging Idaho State Department Education standards, benchmarks and Liberty Charter School developed criteria.

ELEMENT FIVE: STANDARDIZED TESTING

Liberty Charter School students will be tested with the same standardized tests as other public school students.

ELEMENT SIX: STATE ACCREDITATION

Liberty Charter School will be accredited by the Idaho Department of Education as provided by rule of the Idaho State Board of Education. A copy of the Accreditation Certificate will be provided annually to the authorizing entity.

ELEMENT SEVEN: THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL

The Governing Board will direct Liberty Charter School and will be organized and managed under the Idaho Nonprofit Corporation Act. There are five members of the Governing Board. Each governing board position will be appointed as provided by and in accordance with Idaho Non-profit Corporation law. Board members will serve a three-year term.

The Liberty Charter School Governing Board is legally accountable for the operations of the school as required by Idaho Code 33-5205(3)(f).

Liberty Charter School is on a modified year-round, single-track schedule. The calendar will be presented to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission.

Ancillary support personnel, including clerical and custodial, are hired and supervised by the administrator employed by the charter school. The state funding formula will provide the money to hire staff through the regular budgetary process. Volunteers, particularly parent volunteers, will provide additional help.

ELEMENT EIGHT: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents of the students who attend Liberty Charter School will be involved at many levels. Parents bring an in-depth understanding of their children's personalities, learning styles and strengths and weaknesses, which will be central to the creation of the personalized learning goals.

The process to ensure parental involvement will be as follows:

1. Parents sign the following eight specific policy letters: fighting and its consequences, liability issues concerning supervision on the premises, field trips, bus safety, insurance and student injuries, homework policy, dress guidelines, and the discipline plan.

2. Parents fill out an in-depth student profile based on Cynthia Ulrich Tobias's book, *The Way They Learn*.

3. Parents are encouraged to attend two parent teacher conferences a year, as well as attend annual student presentations, specifically at the high school level, which provides a forum for conveying and evaluating the school's commitment to its mission, and to celebrate each student's academic achievement.
4. Parents will complete one survey each year addressing one of the following issues; Student safety, classroom discipline, school-wide discipline, child's response to classroom atmosphere, parent's perception of the learning environment, or the positive impact of their high school child's investment in family teamwork projects.

In addition, parents will be encouraged to provide an appropriate learning environment at home for their child to study, to volunteer at the school setting, and to participate in home-projects with their child.

ELEMENT NINE: QUALIFICATIONS TO BE MET BY INDIVIDUALS TO BE EMPLOYED BY THE CHARTER

All individuals to be employed by Liberty Charter School must possess the personal characteristics, knowledge base and successful experiences in the responsibilities and qualifications identified in the posted job description. Administrative and instructional staff will be certified teachers as required by Idaho Code Section 33-1201 or a waiver or another certification option will be obtained as provided by rule of the State Board of Education. The charter school will follow the same personnel policies, procedures, and practices, including recruitment, selection and hiring of the Idaho Code. Liberty Charter School will follow the supervision, evaluation, and dismissal as detailed in the Idaho Code.

ELEMENT TEN: HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS AND STAFF

Liberty Charter School will follow procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff as required by Idaho Code 33-5205(3)(h). (Attachment 6) Each new employee having contact with minor pupils and not possessing a valid Idaho State Teaching Credential must submit two sets of fingerprints to the State Department of Law Enforcement for the purpose of obtaining a criminal background check. This requirement is a condition of employment.

ELEMENT ELEVEN: ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Admission Preferences I.C. 33-5206 & 33-5205(3)(j)

Liberty Charter School has established an admission preference for students residing within the primary attendance area of the school. In addition, Liberty has established admission preferences for returning students, for children of founders and full-time employees of the 2010/2011

school, for siblings of students already attending the school, and for students residing outside the primary attendance area.

Priority of Admission Preferences

Preferences for admission to Liberty Charter School shall be as follows:

- a. First, to pupils returning to Liberty in the second or any subsequent year of operation. Returning students are automatically enrolled in the appropriate grade and do not need to be selected by a lottery.
- b. Second, to children of founders and full-time employees provided that this admission preference shall be limited to not more than ten percent (10%) of the capacity of Liberty Charter School.
- c. Third, to siblings of pupils already enrolled in Liberty Charter School.
- d. Fourth, to prospective students residing in the primary attendance area of Liberty Charter School, defined as:
North Boundary: The center of Lake Lowell Avenue (turning into E. Amity Avenue) to include only property on south side of road(s). [Approx. 3 miles north of school.]
East Boundary: The center of Happy Valley Rd. to include only property on west side of the road. [Approx. 3 miles east of school.]
South Boundary: The center of Missouri Rd/Kuna Rd to include only property on north side of road(s). [Approx. 2 miles south of school.]
West Boundary: The center of Midland Rd to include only property on east side of road. [Approx. 2 miles west of school.]
- e. Fifth, to prospective students residing outside the primary attendance area of Liberty Charter School.

Equitable Selection Process for the Liberty Charter School Waiting List

The Liberty Charter School Governing Board shall determine its waiting list by conducting a lottery. The procedure, unless otherwise determined by the Governing Board and then approved by the school's authorizer, shall be conducted as follows:

The name of each prospective student on the waiting list shall be individually affixed to or written on a three by five (3x5) inch index card. The index cards shall be separated by grade. The selection procedure shall be conducted one (1) grade level at a time, with the order of grade levels selected randomly. The index cards containing the names of the prospective students for the grade level being selected shall be placed into a single container.

A neutral, third party shall draw the grade level to be completed first and then draw each index card from the container for that grade level, and such person shall write the selection number on each index card as drawn, beginning with the numeral "1" and continuing sequentially thereafter. In addition, after selecting each index card, the name of the person selected will be compared to the proposed attendance list to determine whether any preferences are applicable to such person.

All returning students will be indexed as “A,” (returning students).

Students on the waiting list shall be indexed as follows: If the name of the person selected is the child of a founder or full-time employee, the letter “B” shall be written on such index card. If the name of the person selected is the sibling of another student that is already a Liberty student, the letter “C” shall be written on such index card. If the name of the person selected resides in the primary attendance area of the public charter school, then the letter “D” shall be written on such index card. If the name of the person selected resides outside Liberty’s primary attendance area, then the letter “E” shall be written on such index card.

With regard to the sibling preference, if the name of the person selected has a sibling in a higher grade who has already been selected, but the person previously selected did not have the letter “C” written on his or her index card (because a sibling had not been selected for admission prior to the selection of the index card of that person), then the letter “C” shall now be written on that person’s index card at this time.

With regard to the founders and full-time employees’ preference, a running tally shall be kept during the course of the selection procedure of the number of index cards, in the aggregate, that have been marked with the letter “B”. If the number of index cards marked with the letter “B” equals ten percent (10%) of the capacity of Liberty Charter School for the school year at issue, then no additional index cards shall be marked with the letter “B,” even if such person selected would otherwise be eligible for the founders and full-time employees’ preference.

After all index cards have been selected for each grade, then the index cards shall be sorted for each grade level in the following order: “A”, “B” index cards, based on the chronological order of the selection number written on each index card; “C” index cards, based on the chronological order of the selection number written on each index card; “D” index cards based on the chronological order of the selection number written on each index card; “E” index cards based on the chronological order of the selection number written on each index card.

After the index cards have been drawn and sorted for all grade levels, the names shall be transferred by grade level, and in such order as preferences apply, to the final waiting list.

Notification and Acceptance Process

Liberty Charter School will comply with Idaho State Board of Education Rules Governing Public Charter Schools IDAPA 08.02.04 for the Notification and Acceptance Process.

Prior to admission, all parents/guardians will sign a letter indicating they understand the Charter outcomes, philosophy and program. An admissions test will not be required.

ELEMENT TWELVE: REQUIREMENT FOR ANNUAL AUDIT AND PROGRAMMATIC OPERATION OF LIBERTY CHARTER SCHOOL

Liberty Charter School will follow the requirements set forth by Idaho Statutes regarding an annual audit.

The accounting records will be kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as dictated by Idaho Statutes. Liberty Charter School will follow the requirements set forth by the Idaho Department of Education. The same format for account numbering will be used as set forth by the Department of Education.

Liberty Charter School will submit to the Charter Commission copies of all accounting reports that are required to be submitted within the same time frame as required by the Department of Education. Budget reports will be submitted to the School will present a programmatic operation report on or before the November monthly board meeting to the Charter Commission. Liberty Charter School will be responsible and accountable for the learning program, student standards, measurable educational standards, and unique aspects of the contract.

ELEMENT THIRTEEN: PROCEDURES FOR THE SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF LIBERTY CHARTER SCHOOL PUPILS

The procedures for suspension and expulsion at Liberty Charter School will follow Idaho Code 33-205 and 33-206.

ELEMENT FOURTEEN: THE MANNER BY WHICH LIBERTY CHARTER SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS WILL BE COVERED BY PERSI OR FEDERAL SOCIAL SECURITY

All employees are currently members of PERSI and will continue their participation. Employees will contribute at the rate established by PERSI. All employees shall contribute to the Social Security System. Liberty Charter School will make all employer contributions as required by PERSI and Federal Social Security. Liberty Charter School will pay for workers compensation insurance, unemployment insurance and any other payroll obligations of an employer.

ELEMENT FIFTEEN: PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVE

This element is not applicable as Liberty Charter School is not a conversion charter school and/or its attendance area is the Nampa School District.

ELEMENT SIXTEEN: TRANSFER RIGHT OF EMPLOYEES

Any current school district employee in Idaho who becomes an employee of Liberty Charter School, certificated and non-certificated, will not be considered employees of any other school district and therefore do not have transfer rights. If a Liberty Charter employee wishes to return to another school district, he or she must apply through that district's employment procedures for new employees.

ELEMENT SEVENTEEN: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND MINIMUM SALARY BENEFITS

The certified staff of Liberty Charter School will be considered a separate unit not associated with any other school district for purposes of collective bargaining.

The members of an education association and non-union members of the charter school staff will have at minimum the same salary and health benefits as the state's allocation.

ELEMENT EIGHTEEN: PROCEDURES RESOLVING DISPUTES RELATING TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE CHARTER CONTRACT

The Charter Commission shall retain the right to evaluate at any time the degree to which the Charter School is meeting the terms of the contract. The Commission may identify an independent evaluator to:

1. Visit the charter school to observe day-to-day operations;
2. Review the charter school records and data;
3. Directly survey the charter school's parents/guardians, students, employees;
4. Audit the books of the charter school;
5. Review, evaluate, and coordinate the administration, scoring, and distribution of the testing program to assure consistency with the Idaho State Dept. of Education.

Liberty Charter School will ensure a prompt exchange of pupil records, follow local school districts' practices and procedures in the areas of transitioning students from elementary schools into middle schools and middle schools into high schools. Liberty Charter School will provide transcripts identifying only those courses which the student achieved at least 1 credit in order for other district high schools to accurately determine course placement. At the high school's request, the student's Academic File (actual work achieving objectives) and Objectives File (actual objectives with completion identified) can also be sent.

ELEMENT NINETEEN: STUDENT SERVICES OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL POPULATION

Liberty Charter School will identify special needs students, including LEP (Limited English Proficient), special education, gifted and talented, compensatory education, and provide successful special needs education for them and adopt and comply with the "Special Education Manual" from the State Department of Education as now adopted or as amended.

The Liberty Charter School Special Education administrator will be the Section 504 Compliance Officer.

If a student at Liberty Charter School is found to be eligible for special education services at the charter school, services will be provided for that student in one or more of the following ways:

Liberty Charter School will form a multidisciplinary team to consider a student's eligibility for special education. If a team determines the need for an evaluation by personnel, such as a school psychologist, speech therapist, or occupational therapist, not currently employed by the Liberty Charter School, such evaluations will be contracted with a private provider.

A certificated special education teacher will be responsible to monitor Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and supervise the implementation as written. The special education teacher, or an educational assistant under his/her guidance, will provide services in an inclusion or a pull-out model depending on the degree of intervention necessary to meet the student's needs. The special education teacher will consult with the general education staff to utilize effective classroom interventions, adaptations, and modifications.

Related services, such as speech or language therapy, occupational therapy, or transportation, refer to those services necessary for a student to benefit from their special education. The Liberty Charter School will contract with a private provider for the provision of related services. Direct speech, language, or OT services may be provided by a paraprofessional under the direct supervision of a licensed therapist. The supervision of paraprofessionals will be outlined in the student's IEP.

The disciplinary policies of the school shall apply to special education students unless the infraction is disability based. Special education students on an IEP will not be suspended from school until a team meeting, including a parent, has been conducted and a Manifest Determination completed. If a student exhibits a consistent inappropriate behavior, Liberty Charter School will employ a variety of techniques to address the behavior. A team meeting, including the parent, is called. A student may be put on a behavior plan. If the team determines that the behavior is disability based, the team will determine if this plan needs to be added to the IEP through an amendment.

Daily discipline is handled through the classroom teacher in conjunction with the special education teacher in order to determine, based on the student's disability, the best way to address issues with the student.

In the event that the IEP team determines that the student's academic needs cannot be met on site, the Liberty Charter School will contract with a local school district to provide services.

ELEMENT TWENTY: LIBERTY CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITIES

The primary learning space is 37,000 square feet building located at 1063 East Lewis Lane, Nampa, Idaho. The facility, built in 2002, will be maintained to code and will ensure that all existing codes are met. The facility will be open to the public at large for inspection at any time.

ELEMENT TWENTY ONE: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Governing Board shall employ an administrator to operate the school on a day to day basis. The administrator will have all the responsibilities of the superintendent and principal. (Attachment 8)

ELEMENT TWENTY TWO: POTENTIAL CIVIL LIABILITY

Liberty Charter School will be liable for all acts, omissions, debts or other obligations. Liberty Charter School shall defend, hold harmless and indemnify the Board against any claim, action, loss, damage, injury liability, cost or expense of any kind or nature, including, but not limited to, attorney's fees and court costs, arising out of the operation of Liberty Charter School and/or arising out of the acts or omissions of the agents, employees or contractors of Liberty Charter School.

There will be no liability for the approving authority, the Idaho Public Charter School Commission. Liberty Charter School may sue or be sued, purchase, receive, hold and convey real and personal property for school purposes, and borrow money for such purposes, to the same extent and on the same condition as a public school district. All employees, directors and officers shall enjoy the same immunities as employees, directors and officers of public schools.

ELEMENT TWENTY THREE: IDAHO NONPROFIT CORPORATION ACT

The Governing Board of Liberty Charter School is organized and managed under the Idaho Nonprofit Corporation Act. The Governing Board has provided copies of the articles and bylaws of this to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission. (Attachment 9) The Governing Board is deemed the public agents to control Liberty Charter School. The Governing Board has all the power and duties afforded to a Board of Trustees. Liberty Charter School will be considered a public school for all purposes and, as such, shall be responsible to identify and comply with all statutory requirements affecting the operation of a public school. Therefore, the Governing Board meetings follow the open meeting laws, keeping accurate minutes and making said minutes available to the public.

Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, the assets of the Corporation shall be distributed to creditors pursuant to Sections 30-3-114 and 30-3-115 of the Idaho Code. Upon winding up the dissolution of this corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the corporation, the remaining assets shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation, or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, education, religious, and or scientific purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. In addition to the requirements contained in Idaho Code, the Governing Board shall include in its plan for dissolution a procedure for transferring all records of students with notice to parents of how to request a transfer of student records to a specific school.

ELEMENT TWENTY FOUR: INSURANCE FOR LIABILITY AND PROPERTY LOSS

Liberty Charter School will maintain insurance for liability, errors and omissions, and property loss. Documentation of insurance coverage will be filed with the Idaho Public Charter School Commission by August 1 of each year.

ELEMENT TWENTY FIVE: GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

The Liberty Charter School environment allows areas to be pursued beyond the scope of the regular curriculum – regardless of the students’ areas of giftedness or talents. This will be accomplished through, but not limited to, clustering, competitions, consultations, curriculum compacting, honors classes, independent study, and pull out classes.

Liberty Charter School uses the following outline of identification procedures for our gifted and talented program:

- Intellectual/Academic
- Specific Academic
- Creativity – see attached student profile
- Visual/Performing Arts portfolio/audition; expert recommendation: teacher rating form
- Leadership – portfolio; teacher recommendation; parent questionnaire; student questionnaire

ELEMENT TWENTY SIX: PARTICIPATION IN DUAL-ENROLLMENT

Eligible Liberty Charter School students will participate in dual-enrollment in local school districts in which they reside as provided for in Chapter 2, Title 33, Idaho Code and Liberty Charter School’s policies regarding dual enrollment. When appropriate the students will enroll in the non-charter school or charter school within their attendance zone. Transportation will be provided to students by their parents when exercising dual-enrollment opportunities. Reimbursement when appropriate for these dual enrollment opportunities will be the same amount as all students who enroll from private schools, home schools, and other public schools.

ELEMENT TWENTY SEVEN: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SERVICES

Liberty Charter School will identify LEP (Limited English Proficient) and provide a successful education for them.

Liberty Charter School’s potential LEP students will use a home-language survey upon the student’s registration. In addition, the “Woodcock Munoz” test will determine the student’s eligibility and language level – L1, L2, and L3. The “Woodcock Munoz” test will be used as a

pre-post test to document the progress in both content areas and English language development.

Once identified, the Liberty Charter School Special Education teacher will administer the LEP program. If a student at Liberty Charter School is found eligible for services will be provided onsite in an inclusion method.

ELEMENT TWENTY EIGHT: TRANSPORTATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Transportation is provided to Liberty Charter School students who reside in the school's attendance area, or contiguous area, defined as the Nampa School District. If a special needs student residing in the defined contiguous area needs transportation while attending Liberty Charter School, it will be provided if the student is not capable of getting to school in the same manner as other students.

ELEMENT TWENTY NINE: INTERNET SAFETY POLICY

The attached parent/student/staff agreement internet procedure for minors includes the operation of a technology protection measure with respect to all computers at Liberty Charter School with Internet access that protects against access through computers to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, and /or harmful to minors. (Attachment 11)

ELEMENT THIRTY: STUDENT ENROLLMENT OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL

The enrollment capacity will be 500 students at Liberty Charter School.

ELEMENT THIRTY ONE: ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, AMENDMENTS, & MODIFICATIONS OF THE CHARTER

Any material revisions of the Charter must be approved by the Idaho Public Charter School Commission. Any element of the Charter that, through legislation or legal ruling, is deemed to be outside the intent of Idaho Code, Section 33-5205, shall be removed from the Charter.

ELEMENT THIRTY TWO: REVOKING THE CHARTER

The Liberty Charter School Charter may be revoked by the authorizing entity if the charter school:

1. Fails to substantially meet one or more of the student educational standards identified in the charter contract.
2. Commits a material violation of any condition, standard or procedure set forth in the charter petition or contract.

3. Fails to meet generally accepted accounting standards of fiscal management.
4. Loses substantial support of the school's parents, staff, and/or community; or violates any provision of law.

ELEMENT THIRTY THREE: HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM ADDITION

All teachers will be accredited in one of the following fields: mathematics, science, language arts or social studies. Additionally, all coursework (e.g. content) will be designed in light of Northwest Regional accreditation and state standards. The emphasis of the high school's curriculum will be humanities, allowing for consistent integration of literature, writing and reading with historical study. Science and mathematics will likewise be consistently integrated in both group and individual lab study projects in order for students to explore, analyze and solve for community needs. Students' learning in every curricular area will be most notably advanced using independent learning projects in order to achieve the individualized learning goals of each student. Mini-labs, conducted weekly in small groups, will specifically address student needs in the areas of reading, vocabulary, spelling and writing mechanics. Additional assessment and academic challenge opportunities include Advanced Placement exams in areas of Composition, Literature and U.S. History. Students will also be encouraged and given opportunities to pursue and satisfy dual enrollment requirements for local universities. It is the goal of the high school to ensure that each graduating student who has college as a goal will have obtained a minimum of 9 college credits.