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Performance Management Plan re: Charter Renewal, 2011/ 2012
Part I

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I. Documentation of Academic Oversight.

This section contains minutes, reports, agendas, and an explanation of this past year's principal replacement. Minutes of our school board meetings for the past year are attached, as are last year's principal reports. As a policy-making body, our school board did not address grades. Nor do grades appear in any reports from our former principal, Dr. Shirley Sullivan. Dr. Sullivan stated that she was recording and documenting grades in another format. After she left, we discovered that our former principal left no documentation of any academic monitoring. The specific documentation of grade progress, however, appears in the informal notes that our present principal took last year when she was serving as our ELL teacher and overseer of testing (DIBELS and NWEA). Our current academic oversight plan and our principal replacement situation are listed below as A. Current Academic Oversight Plan and B. Former Principal Difficulties / Present Principal Promise. C. Board Meeting Minutes / Agendas / Principal Reports Attachments.

A. *Current Academic Oversight Plan.*

In the 2009-2010 school year CNCMS was placed in the "school improvement" category. During this year we collected data regarding goals, lesson plans, assessments, and assessment results. We excelled and became a "Performing" school. It was at this time that our former principal slacked off in supervision and teachers did not keep up their standards.

Last year, Dr. Betty Chester and the academic coach led teachers into developing a scope and sequence curriculum guide. This guide is now being applied. The scope lays out curriculum by month for a year. The subjects are correlated to the Arizona State Common Core Standards and the Montessori plan. Sequence is determined by grade

level and by children's needs. Though it is too early in this academic year for Galileo test results, indications from our benchmark data look promising. We are also performing teacher evaluations that will include looking for student achievement and academic success.

This year's work includes other tools to assist teachers in developing lesson plans and following through with assessments. Professional development has been restored. Each week the current principal, Ms. Donovan, is evaluating lesson plans for content, standards, effectiveness, progress monitoring, and assessments. She is offering the teachers more support in areas like SEI strategies, RTI, common core planning, ELL and Title 1 assistance, computer assessments, and progress monitoring. She is also emphasizing the need for students to be aware of their own grades as well as teachers to be more complete and constructive (at least one positive comment) in their corrections of student work.

Last year teachers were hesitant to come to the principal's office. They were, of course, also hesitant to mention that problem. This year's administration has worked hard to make teachers feel more welcome to come in and discuss alternative teaching strategies, progress, and possible peer instruction. Work on scope and sequence and quarterly assessments is going much better than it did last year.

Last years weekly meetings with principal and teachers became sidetracked. Less and less emphasis was put on student achievement. The principal began to push agenda items aside and talk about her own interests regarding establishing another school.

B. *Former Principal Difficulties / Present Principal Promise.*

Former Principal Difficulties. We feel it is appropriate at this point in our charter renewal application to explain what happened with our 2011 AIMS testing process and what is being done to correct the situation. Our most recent past principal difficulty evolved as our former principal, Dr. Shirley Sullivan, tried to impose her own agenda on school matters. Her agenda was a growing concern that the school director, Dr. Betty Chester, did not see coming.

On the Monday following AIMS testing, April 19, 2011, DeAnna Rowe, Director of the State Board for Charter Schools, and Irene Hunting, Director of State Test Administration, Assessment Section, visited our campus as a follow-up to reports of irregularities in the testing procedure. Unknown to Dr. Chester, prior to testing, our principal, Dr. Shirley Sullivan had made some remarks during a meeting she called that compromised the integrity of our entire testing procedure. Dr. Sullivan suggested that teachers place "smart" students next to lower performing students so the lower performing students could copy answers. This process, which necessarily called for teachers to be sure both students would be taking the same tests, was suggested and encouraged by Dr. Sullivan. The administration had no idea of this planning, and the teachers were disturbed by it. Inevitably, word got out, and most of our AIMS tests were confiscated and our AIMS scores invalidated for the 2010-2011 school year.

As soon as the matter was disclosed, the administration followed up with a group questionnaire asking teachers exactly what they heard during the principal's meeting and if any of them followed Dr. Sullivan's instructions. Although the questionnaires and our further investigations indicate that the actual giving of the tests was not compromised, we feel that the invalidation of the AIMS tests was justified.
The following weekend, as a result of a short meeting between Dr. Chester and Dr. Sullivan, Dr. Sullivan was asked to resign. Dr. Chester believed that the situation warranted this resignation request. On April 21, 2011, Dr. Chester sent Ms. Rowe a letter explaining our actions and declaring Dr. Sullivan's resignation. Dr. Chester offered at that time to present the results of the investigations we conducted, including the survey questions.

We have since conducted further investigating and believe we can see a trail of deterioration in Dr. Sullivan's performance that was not visible at the time. This investigative information is available to any charter or state school personnel who wish to review it, but we are not including it here. We feel that our conclusions as to how Dr. Sullivan came to display such unprofessional behavior are related to her personal agenda and were no longer relevant to the operation of our school.

We sent a letter to parents informing them of the situation. We told them that, while the matter was quite serious for the school itself, their children's education was not invalidated in any way, and kindergarten graduation and grade 1st – 5th promotions would proceed as scheduled. We also outlined our plan, as we have done in this application, for fixing the problem. Our 2012 AIMS testing process will be much more closely guarded. Training will be given to all who test, and rules followed and enforced. This letter also urged parents to pay more attention to homework and asked them to sign for completed homework returned to school. We are sending a follow-up letter asking parents to encourage their children to work harder on homework, respect their teachers, and follow school rules.

During the last five years, there was a noticeable drop in test scores. Chester Newton Charter and Montessori School was rated Performing Plus during the 2004-2005 school year. We worked for more accountability from our principal Dr. Shirley Sullivan and thought we were getting it. As Dr. Chester tried to believe in what her principal was saying, she noticed that documentation became scattered and scores continued to drop. Dr. Sullivan showed only bits and pieces of information. We began to suspect that Dr. Sullivan was showing a small sample as a decoy that did not represent thorough student performance. Gradually Dr. Sullivan's neglect forced her to move toward a kind of cover-up where she tried to impose her own standards of curriculum that did not correlate with the Montessori curriculum. Her methods for group (faculty and staff) control became detrimental. Teachers were reluctant to talk to her. She would hide behind her computer in a flurry of activity. We now suspect that much of her computer activity involved a personal "Performing Arts" project that she described from time to time and that had no connection with our school.

The big picture began to take focus. As more and more of Dr. Sullivan's activity yielded less and less student progress, we knew something was askew. Only toward the end of last year did teachers begin to report communication difficulties to the school director.

Present Principal Promise. Months before the AIMS testing, Dr. Chester and Dr. Sullivan had several discussions about Dr. Sullivan's winding down her principal's position, possibly within the next year. Fortunately, Dr. Chester had already hired Loretta Donovan, as an academic coach and ELL teacher. Bringing with her a principal's certificate, Ms. Donovan was able to step into the principal's position that next Monday without missing a day of school. Ms. Donovan's certificate covers elementary and early childhood; she has her SEI endorsement, along with a special education certificate. She has also been a state trainer for DIBELS, SEI, and RTI.

Several reassurances are in place that our new principal will do a better job with student assessment. The new principal's commitment, the director's increased observation of principal's performance, with our new principal's full consent, offer reassurance that we have successfully resolved our former "principal" difficulties. She welcomes this observation and wants to be a part of it. The new principal's role in communicating to teachers will directly impact student progress.

A revised student evaluation plan has been put into place. Dr. Chester and Mr. Keven Chester will review the principal's weekly teacher meeting agendas on Thursday (we operate a 4-day week). A conference will then be held the following Monday morning to review student progress as reflected in the agendas. Is the principal successfully leading the teachers to teach effectively and evaluate accurately? Do the teachers know that the principal knows when a student's performance is at risk? They will check the DIBELS, Galileo reports, Saxon Math, and Open Court reading assessments, along with daily scores and comments on students, turned in with lesson plans.

In the past, teacher-principal communication broke down. With Dr. Chester and Mr. Keven Chester now making sure the principal specifically communicates each student's track to each teacher on a weekly basis, the teacher-principal communication gap, and the resulting gap caused in student progress, is being repaired.

Both teaching staff and administration will evaluate the principal annually. Parents are going to evaluate teachers and administration once a year.

C. Attachments