

Section I: Community Charter School General Information

History

In 1997, Community Charter School was started by a group of teachers at Irwin Elementary and a group of people at Open Door Preschool. They wanted an extension of Open Door and a smaller version of Irwin. Irwin was large with 50 students in a classroom. Planning for CCS started in 1995. This group, of complementing strengths, completed the charter application and submitted it to the state in October 1996. The application was approved and a charter granted in February 1997.

The vision was small classrooms with few assistants where teachers would partner. The school would utilize an approach which incorporates the child directed learning; children learning through experiences of touching, moving, listening, seeing and hearing; children exploring; and children having opportunities to express themselves. This model would be used to allow students to develop higher level thinking skills. We endeavor to fulfill the dreams and ideals on which this school was founded.

Mission Statement

Community Charter School is a school whose classroom is the community: a partnership of parents, teachers, students, and community resources who come together as a collaborative group sharing a vision of hope for our school and our city. That vision is focused on a child centered philosophy that enhances and supports a child's development in the context of family and community.

Vision

Community Charter School is a non traditional arts integrated school whose classroom is the community. We are a committed partnership of families, teachers, and community resources who work together to develop independent learners and thinkers. At Community Charter School every child's individuality is respected and nurtured.

1. Families will be responsible and involved members of our school community.
2. Children will participate in the education of their peers and themselves.
3. Community Charter School is a model for future schools.

Instructional Methods

At Community Charter School, we view students as individuals. We do not believe in a "one size fits all" approach to learning. Because of this belief, we utilize various instructional methods in order to expose them to all the multiple intelligences in hopes of instilling a passion for learning. Below are the various methods we incorporate each day into the instruction.

Arts Integration

According to Arts Integration Assessor, Elda Franklin, "Authentic arts integration occurs when there is a natural connection between an arts area and another discipline, either through common concepts, processes or principals, or through large over arching ideas or themes. For example, the organizing principal of *repetition and contrast* is found in all arts areas as well as in poetry; *conflict and resolution* is an organizing principal of literature that might be compared to tension and release in music and/or dance. Some big ideas that could encompass several disciplines include *balance, communication, community, diversity, nature, and transformation.*"

Community Charter School utilizes an arts integration model. At Community Charter School we believe that incorporating arts is crucial to developing a well rounded student. Because of this, we have a full time music teacher and a full time art/drama teacher. These teachers spend half of their time working in the classrooms co-teaching and implementing true arts integration activities. An example of this is when teachers trained with Opera Carolina. They learned how to create and produce an opera as a class. The teachers then worked in collaboration with the music and art/drama teacher co-teaching the students. Students wrote, composed music, did the set production, and all the other elements of an opera. By doing this, they were able to incorporate various standards from the standard course of study into their instruction.

Interdisciplinary

In line with the arts integration model, Community Charter School utilizes an interdisciplinary approach. Interdisciplinary learning emphasizes and allows students to seek and discover existing connections between and among academic disciplines. Teachers utilize curriculum mapping at each trimester which focuses on a central theme, essential questions, and incorporates objectives in all academic disciplines. Teachers utilize the arts integration model in their curriculum mapping and the music and art/drama teacher assist the teacher teams in implementing arts integration activities that go along with their central theme.

Emergent Learning

At CCS, we believe that learning happens through a process. We pose questions to students and they work through it. Teachers and students are co-learners. The approach is cooperative, where students and teachers shape the classroom. Teachers pursue a set of curricular ideas and questions with students by engaging in conversation and negotiation. An example of this would be students expressing an interest in pirates. The teacher then incorporates the theme of pirates into the instruction and ties it to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Teachers and students together shape the classroom environment. Teachers must balance students' interests and purposes with curriculum requirements set by DPI through the standard course of study.

Learning Centers/Learning Stations/Think Shop

A learning center is a place or an activity in the classroom where the students explore the skills and content identified by both teachers and students. Teachers have at least one hour of center time per day with at least four centers at one time. Teachers incorporate the multiple intelligences into the centers. Centers allow for exploration and higher level thinking skills, versus sit and fill worksheets.

Community Based Learning

At Community Charter School, we believe that the community is the classroom. We utilize the community as a resource at least twice monthly. Classrooms have at least one community service project per year.

A+ School

Community Charter School is part of the North Carolina A+ Schools Network. These schools around the state integrate multiple intelligences and the four disciplines of the arts into all curriculum areas. The central vision of A+ is to create enhanced learning opportunities for all students. This is accomplished by using arts integrated instruction which incorporates Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, other intelligence theories, recent brain research findings, along with dance, drama, music, visual art and creative writing. For schools, A+ is a comprehensive education reform because other school practices (assessment, scheduling, collaboration, parent involvement and more) are re-formed as necessary to achieve this central vision. At CCS, our theme studies have been strengthened and more authentic assessment has occurred in the classrooms. Children are finding new and better ways to show what they are learning as they share with their peers, parents, and other adults in this community. Several times a year, parents join with students to experience "informances", presentation of learning with the arts and academics together. These have included Author Nights, class-written plays, readings, medieval fairs, classroom museums, and more traditional performances/displays of song, dance, and art. The hallways are full of children's creations and constructions and portfolios for each child show how learning progresses throughout the year.

Philosophy

- ❖ Improve student learning by identifying, validating, and developing each child's unique skills and knowledge;
- ❖ Encourage and support teachers and staff in acquiring and implementing creative and innovative teaching methods;
- ❖ Broaden each student's concept of knowledge to extend beyond the walls of the classroom;
- ❖ Schedule activities in which students will interact with social service providers, public sector employees, artists, professionals, and other community leaders;
- ❖ Support projects that allow students to make visible contributions to the good of the community;
- ❖ Encourage and reward teachers and staff for using individual initiative and creative teaching methods to reach state-mandated achievement goals;
- ❖ Provide parents and students with a viable alternative to traditional models of public education; and
- ❖ Serve as a conduit for all members of CCS to reach out, serve, and positively impact the community.

Goals

- ❖ **Love of learning:** wonder, joy and curiosity
- ❖ **Confidence:** risk-taking; making informed choices
- ❖ **Critical thinking:** analyzing; drawing from experiences; conscious
- ❖ **Perseverance:** taking on difficult work and rewarding the effort
- ❖ **Cultural literacy:** being aware of and respecting other cultures
- ❖ **Creativity:** experiencing all forms of the arts; using imagination to generate fresh ideas
- ❖ **Courage:** following convictions; accepting consequences
- ❖ **Peacemaking:** resolving conflicts and creating solutions based on reason and dignity
- ❖ **Connectedness:** serving the community; venturing out
- ❖ **Organization:** managing time and materials
- ❖ **Compassion:** empathizing; acting with care and concern.

Child-Centered Education Moves the Child

From	To
being teacher directed	being child and teacher directed
an authoritarian environment	an environment of mutual trust and respect
teacher as the primary source of knowledge	teacher as the facilitator of knowledge
a preconceived and linear curriculum	a dynamic, evolving curriculum
abstract learning	learning growing out of experience
evaluation as assessing deficits and errors	evaluation as discovering a learner's unique strengths
evaluation as a teacher task	the encouragement of child self-evaluation
a subject matter time schedule	a flexible, integrated curriculum organized around themes
errors viewed as something to be avoided	errors viewed as a natural and an important part of learning
Viewing learning as an independent or competitive endeavor	Viewing learning as a cooperative and interactive venture
An emphasis on what to teach	An emphasis on how children learn
The teacher being responsible for the child's learning	The child assuming responsibility for his or her own learning
Learning viewed as a product or a destination	Learning viewed as a process or journey

CCS Staff and Board of Directors

Kristi Dahlstrom, Principal

Maureen Roberts, Assistant Administrator

Suzy Moore

K/1/2 Teacher

Jodi Goodman

K/1/2 Teacher

Rachelle Roberts

K/1/2 Teacher

Alex Marinack

2/3 Teacher

Anissa Miller

3/4/5 Teacher

Jen Bourne

3/4/5 Teacher

Karen Ainsworth

3/4/5 Teacher

Susan Long, EC Director

Kristi Lanning

Title I, PE, Spanish Teacher

Lisa Carpenter

Art/Drama Teacher

Artie Denman

Music Teacher

John Martin

Guidance Counselor

Zondra Douglas
Crisis Specialist

Leslie Freeman
EC Assistant

Sloane Williams
EC Assistant

Naum El
Before School Staff, K/1/2 Assistant

Turjah Bush
After School Staff

Trista Massina
K/1/2 Assistant

Dany Eason
After School Staff

Community Charter School Board

Gilbert Bailey, Corey Nutting, Donah Ollila, Amy Sutton, Elbert Tolson, Mike Bernstein, Deborah Hopkins, Kathy Greene, Renee Bazzelle, Charles Thomas, Lynn Griffin-Roberts, Joe Parry, Andy Habenicht, Nick Triplett, Patsy Kinsey.

Section II: General Procedures

Admissions Policy

Community Charter School is a North Carolina public school open to all students residing in the state.

Application Process

- Parents must attend an information meeting prior to applying for admission.
- Applications for enrollment for the next school year are accepted beginning in January.
- New students are selected in a public lottery in the middle of March (please see application or website for date of lottery drawing).
- The date for the drawing is on the website and anyone may attend the public meeting.
- Applications are available on line or at the school during regular business hours.

Lottery Process

- Lottery procedures:
 - Held on a specific day as indicated on application and on website
 - Meeting follow NC Open Meetings law
 - Names are selected through a random drawing
 - Separate individuals will draw, record and verify the results of the lottery during the open meeting.
- The school gives enrollment priority to siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to Community Charter School in a previous year. Should the number of sibling applicants exceed the number of available openings, the siblings will go on a wait list.
- Following the completion of the sibling applicant process, a general lottery will be implemented using the same procedures for the remaining applicants. Students will be randomly picked and placed in the classrooms accordingly.
- Upon filling all positions, the acceptance by lottery procedures will continue, thereby, creating a school wait list.
- Any applications received past the enrollment application time period will be added to the wait list on a first-come, first-served basis. The wait list order is as follows
 - Sibling wait list
 - General lottery wait list
 - Application received beyond the established enrollment application time period
 - Applications received after the lottery process has been conducted.

Registration

- Once the lottery is finished, parents will be notified of their acceptance or wait list status.
- Parents register their student during the month of April. Acceptances after April register during the first two weeks of August.
- If a student is not enrolled at this time, the school will then move to the wait list.
- If an opening becomes available, the next applicant on the wait list will be contacted to accept or decline the available spot. If accepted, the parent has 48 hours to register the student. If declined, the next spot on the wait list will be contacted.
- If a parent accepts and does not register within 48 hours, the next student on the wait list will be contacted and the same rules apply.

CCS is committed to a school that is balanced by race, culture and gender and representative of the larger community. Our enrollment can increase by 10% each school year. Enrollment will continue until the 20th day of the school year. At this point, no other students will be admitted into Community Charter School until the following school year.

Kindergarten Requirements

All kindergarten students must be 5 years old before and including August 31st of the calendar year in which they enroll. All students new to the NC public school system (including kindergarteners) are required to provide the following prior to classroom attendance:

1. current immunization records
2. medical examination form, completed by physician
3. birth certificate
4. proof of residency (utility bill, etc.)

There are other forms, such as the General Permission slip, that must also be completed as part of the registration process. In some cases, the state imposes deadlines for their completion. All immunization and medical forms must be on file within 30 days of the first day of school.

Attendance/Absences/Tardies

Attendance/Absences

Children between the ages of 7 and 16 years of age must attend school in accordance with the NC Compulsory Attendance Law. The Board and Staff at CCS believe that every instructional day is important. There are 180 instructional days per school year. According to North Carolina state statutes, if a student has more than 10 absences it will result in retention of the student. Please make every effort to ensure that your student is in attendance each day. If transportation is a concern, contact the PTC or the school offices; we will make every attempt to find a solution. Parents will be notified in writing when their child has reached 5, 7 and 10 absences.

Tardies/Absences

The more a student attends school, the better they can benefit from instructional minutes. Please be certain that your student attends daily and attends for the entire school day. A student late 30 minutes a week misses 90 hours of instructional time in a school year.

Students may be dropped at school as early as 7am (see BEFORE SCHOOL). Students arriving between 7 am and 8 am will be sent to the school cafe to await their teacher's arrival. The rate for Before School Care is \$1 per day. Students arriving between 8:00 am and 8:15 am will be considered on time and admitted to their classrooms.

At 8:15 am, all classroom doors, as well as the front door, will be LOCKED. All students arriving after 8:15 am must be escorted to the office by their parent/guardian to be signed in. No student will be admitted to class without a slip from the school offices. Three accumulated tardies will be treated as one (1) unlawful and unexcused absence. Therefore, if a student is tardy thirty times it is considered 10 absences and the student will be retained.

A student entering school after 11:00 am, or a student leaving for the day before 11:00 am, will be counted as absent for that instructional day. Absences may be considered to be either *lawful* or *unlawful*. Lawful and excused absences are those which are verifiable as personal illness or injury; medical or dental appointments; court or administrative proceedings; religious observances; death in the immediate family; or approved educational opportunity. In order to be considered lawful, the student must present a note to the school offices on the day s/he returns to school. Notes must include the following: the student's name, dates of and reason for absence(s), and signature of the parent/guardian. For illness or injury to count as lawful, a signed note from a medical or legal professional must be submitted.

Unlawful and unexcused absences are those other than listed as lawful; additionally, an absence that would otherwise have been considered lawful, if unaccompanied by a note upon the student's return, will be considered unlawful. You will receive written notification upon your student's fifth, seventh and tenth unlawful absence. The school is required to report absences and tardies to the state on a daily basis. The accumulation of more than 10 unlawful absences will result in retention and possibly intervention by appropriate government agencies.

Please note, school personnel are required by law to respond to abuse and neglect. According to the law, a student who fails to attend school is considered neglected. Students should have less than 10 days per school year. Should a student have continual absences, we are obligated to contact social services.

If a student has more than 10 absences, they will be retained the following year.

Before School Program

The before school program was designed for parents who need to drop their students off before school begins. Students can be dropped off as early as 7:00 AM. The rate for before school is \$1 per day. Any student who arrives to school before 7:45 AM will be charged this daily rate. This can be paid daily or weekly. This fee applies whether the child is dropped off at the school by the parent or another daycare provider. During before school, children may take part in various activities such as an exercise release, yoga, and other activities assigned by the before school program director.

Fees that are unpaid after two weeks will result in termination of enrollment in the before-school program. Students that are terminated that arrive prior to 7:45am will be treated as abandoned and proper agencies will be contacted.

Afterschool Program

Program Description

CCS offers a traditional afterschool program. The afterschool program begins at 3:00 and ends at 6:00. All students not picked up by 3:30 will be sent to the afterschool program. The primary focus during the afterschool program is working on homework. Once students finish with homework, an activity occurs. Activities vary day by day. A light snack is provided each day.

Registration Fees

A registration fee will be charged upon enrollment of a student. All students attending afterschool are required to pay the registration fee. The registration fee for the afterschool program is \$20 for one student, and \$15 for each additional student per year. If a child attends afterschool at the drop in rate, the \$20 registration fee will also be due.

Rates for the afterschool program

	<u>Daily/Drop in Fee</u>	<u>Weekly (Full-time)</u>
One Student	\$15.00	\$ 50.00
Two Students	\$25.00	\$ 90.00
Three Students	\$35.00	\$125.00

Additional activity fees may apply. Afternoon snack is included in the cost of the program. Students attending three days or fewer will be billed at the daily rate

Rates for Students registered with in the afterschool program during teacher workdays

Children enrolled in Afterschool may receive care during Teacher Workdays and some school holidays. This care is provided from 8am to 5pm. Additional fees for this care are as follows:

	<u>Part-time</u>	<u>Full-time</u>
One Student	\$30.00	\$15.00
Two Students	\$50.00	\$30.00
Three Students	\$65.00	\$45.00

Late Pick Up Fees

Students who are not attending the afterschool program, but who are picked up between 3:30 and 4pm, will be assessed a fee of \$5.00 per child per day. Students who are picked up after 4pm will be assessed the full daily rate. Afterschool ends at 6:00 PM. The charge for being late for pick up is \$1 per minute. All late pick up fees are due by the next day.

Late Payment Policy

Fees that are unpaid after two weeks will result in termination of enrollment in the afterschool program. Students who are terminated and who have not been picked up prior to 3:30pm will be treated as abandoned and proper agencies will be contacted. Child will be reinstated once all fees are paid.

Discipline Policy

The discipline policy in afterschool is the same as the school discipline policy. Students who receive five discipline referrals will no longer be allowed to attend the afterschool program. The afterschool staff will communicate to parents anytime a discipline issue arises and give the parent written documentation of the incident.

Dress Code

CCS does not require uniforms. Students should be dressed appropriately for the weather and any scheduled activities. Comfort should be the primary concern because of the level of physical activity in which our children engage. The midriff, shoulders, back, and underwear must not be exposed. No spaghetti straps allowed. Skirts and shorts must be longer than the child's fingertips when the arms are at their sides. If skirts are worn, you must have shorts underneath. Hats or other headgear may not be worn inside the building. "Flip-flop" style sandals are not acceptable footwear. Shoes must fasten to your feet. It is recommended that you label your student's clothing, especially outerwear. Please check the "Lost and Found" in the school offices if an item is missing. The "Lost and Found" will be emptied on the Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, Spring Break and Summer Break. All items will be donated to charity.

Personal Belongings

Please label lunchboxes and book bags/backpacks. Notebooks, binders, and specific classroom supplies should also have your student's name on them. Students should never have cell phones, toys, games, or personal entertainment devices at school. Should a school activity require articles from home, the teacher will notify you. Please check the supply list furnished by your student's classroom teacher. Different classrooms will have different needs, and it is vital that your child has what s/he needs to participate each day.

Books/School Property

The school makes frequent visits to the Children's Library "Imaginon." If your child is old enough, please obtain a library card. The school also has book sets and other materials that may be taken home. Please ensure that your child returns these on time.

Celebrations

CCS recognizes and respects the diversity of our community, and the different beliefs and traditions of every family. For this reason, religious holidays and birthdays are not celebrated in our classrooms. Cupcakes may be shared (please limit refreshments to cupcakes only unless documented dietary restrictions apply). Any celebrations held, such as the Hundredth Day, will be tied to curriculum themes, community events, and dates special to the school.

School Prayer

CCS does not have any policy that prevents or otherwise denies participation in constitutionally protected prayer in public elementary schools, as per section 9524 of the No Child Left Behind Act. Among other things, students may read religious materials, say a blessing before eating, and pray or study with other students during non-instructional time to the same extent that they may also engage in nonreligious activities. No staff member may compel, encourage, or discourage such activity; neither may they participate in such activities with students.

Field Trips

A general permission slip is sent home at the beginning of the school year. Because of the emergent nature of our curriculum, and the academic freedom enjoyed by our students and teachers, impromptu field trips may take place without benefit of advance notice. These trips are limited to destinations reachable on foot or via the bus service. Other trips will involve more organization, and may utilize public transportation, chartered vehicles, or parent volunteer drivers.

Please send your child to school daily with a lunch so that he or she may participate fully in impromptu field trips.

Activity Fee

An activity fee of \$15/month will be assessed to cover field trips, snacks, and classroom supplies.

Communication

Community Charter School news will be provided through a variety of means. A school-wide newsletter will be published weekly, typically on Monday. Each classroom teacher will provide his/her updates via each child's folder; check it daily. Additionally, information available in these sources will be made available on the school's website, www.commchart.org. If you have information for the newsletter, please contact the school offices.

Nutrition

A morning snack is given each day. Periodically, you will be asked to provide snack in enough quantity to furnish the entire class. Good nutrition is essential to a healthy body and mind. We cannot accept candy or soda for classroom snacks; neither should be a part of your child's lunch. Contact your child's teacher for suggestions.

CCS does not provide lunch. Students are expected to bring a lunch to school daily. Please be sure to send your child with a lunch, as often times field trips may occur at the last minute.

Medication

School staff may only administer medication to students with written direction from the physician and written permission from the parent/guardian. Please complete and return the applicable form before you send in any medications to be dispensed. Medication form may be obtained in the school office.

All medicine, including inhalers, over-the-counter drugs, and prescription medications must be administered through the front office.

Computer/Internet Use

Computers are located throughout the school. Computers are instructional tools; they are integrated into the curriculum by the staff. Internet access is provided to these computers for research or other uses designated by the staff. Use of the computers and the internet is restricted to instructional purposes specifically permitted by the staff. Such usage is a privilege, not a right. Use for anything other than that which is specifically permitted will result in loss of this privilege.

Parent Participation

Parents/families are required to volunteer for 20 hours for the school year. There are many avenues for involvement in the school community. The PTC (Parent-Teacher Community) organization has monthly meetings and sponsors each month's Parent Night. Parents are invited to serve on the Board of Directors as well. Both the Board and the PTC have committees to which you may lend your time and talents. Volunteers are always welcome; check with your student's teacher for specific classroom or field trip needs.

Parent/Volunteer Policy

Community Charter School strongly encourages volunteers in our school. Volunteers bring a wealth of energy, talents, skills and caring to our schools. Their time and efforts make a significant contribution to our schools and students.

A priority for CCS's volunteer program is to ensure our students' safety in the school environment. For this reason, the following parameters apply:

- If a volunteer is working in the classroom, a staff must be present at all times. The only exception to this is if a criminal background check has been completed. Please see the Assistant Administrator if it is unclear if a background check has been completed.
- Any time a volunteer will be alone with students, (ie. An overnight field trip), a criminal background check must be completed.
- Volunteer expectations:
 - Volunteers are expected to discuss with the teacher when they want to volunteer to arrange the most beneficial time.
 - While in the classroom, parents should demonstrate behaviors that are consistent with the school's philosophy and model.
 - Volunteers are expected to assist in the classroom, be open to the teacher's directions, and demonstrate respect at all times.
 - At any point, a teacher has authority to decide to not allow a parent to volunteer in their classroom.
 - The role of a volunteer is an active one, not one of observation. If a parent has questions about the classroom or their role in it, they should have these conversations outside of the school day with a scheduled meeting with the teacher. Questions about instruction should not occur during the school day and/or in the presence of students.

Board Meeting Procedures

Postings of Meeting and Agenda

All official meetings of the board are open to the public: We are required to post these meetings. These meetings may be posted but is not limited to the website, weekly newsletter, school calendar and the e-mail tree.

The majority of board meetings occur on the second Thursday of the month from 6:15-8:00. Please see the school calendar or website for specific dates and times. The board can only vote during an open session board meeting. If a vote needs to occur outside the established board meeting dates, an emergency meeting may be called. Notice must be given to the community on these meetings.

Agenda items are sent to the Chairman of the board from board members at least a week in advance. If possible, the agenda will be posted in the PTC weekly and on the website on the Monday before the meeting, so the community is aware of the agenda.

Meeting Schedule

1. Call to order
2. Roll call of members present
3. Closed session
4. Open session
 1. Voting on closed session items
 2. Open parent/community concerns
 3. Treasurers Report
 4. Old business
 1. Approve meeting minutes from previous month
 2. Sub committee reports
 3. Unfinished business
 5. New business
 6. Principal's report
 7. Teachers report
5. Adjournment

Closed Session Rules

There are nine reasons for Closed Session. These are to (a) prevent the disclosure of information that is confidential, (b) discuss scholarships, (c) consult with an attorney, (d) discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of the school, (e) negotiate contracts, (f) discuss personnel issues, (g) review reports concerning investigations of alleged criminal misconduct, (h) formulate plans relating to emergency response to incidents of school violence, and (i) discuss and take action regarding plans to protect public safety.

Parent Community Concerns

Presenting to the Board

Community Members/Parents may notify the Principal/Assistant Administrator's Office to sign-up to speak to the School Board. This must occur within 24 hours of the start of the meeting. Contact may be made in one of the following ways:

- Phone: 704-377-3180
- Fax: 704-377-3182
- E-mail: info@commchart.org
- In person: 510 South Torrence Street, Charlotte, NC 28204

If the Community Member/Parent has not notified the Principal/Assistant Administrator Office within 24 hours of said meeting, the item will be moved to the next board meeting. The Principal will send the list to the chairman of the board and post prior to the meeting in said meeting place.

Procedures for Presenting

Persons speaking to the board may have three minutes, with extensions requiring a unanimous vote of the board.

Visitors may direct their questions only to the board as a whole. A board member may wish to question a speaker, or to make a comment for clarification, but can not respond to the community member/parent. There must be unanimous board consent to hear any person discuss a motion pending before the board.

Complaints against an individual school employee should be made to the board in writing (please see grievance policy) and signed by the person making the charge or complaint in order that rumors, untruthful statement and unjust accusations be eliminated from board consideration. The board will respond to any written complaint in writing within 30 days. Complaints about staff members will not be allowed during the parent community concern time allotted.

Any speaker who engages in defamatory or abusive remarks may be cut off in mid-address by the chairman of the board.

The board can never address or respond any parent or member of the community. The board must speak as an entity.

Other General Comments on the Board Meeting

1. Allow motions that are in order.
2. Have members obtain the floor properly.
3. Speak clearly and concisely.
4. Obey the rules of debate.

Most importantly, *BE COURTEOUS*.

Parent/Guardian Grievance Policy

Policy: Parent complaints will be addressed in a timely and consistent fashion. Disagreements should be solved whenever possible among the people most closely involved while preserving positive relationships. Therefore, when parents have complaints or disagreements with any parties at Community Charter School, they should observe the following guidelines:

1. If the complaint involves a situation in the classroom, parents should seek to resolve the issue with the classroom teacher or teacher assistant as is appropriate.
2. If a resolution with the classroom faculty is not possible, or if the complaint is with a school-wide policy or procedure, the parent should seek to resolve the issue with the Principal.
3. If resolution is not possible with any of the parties above, parents should address a complaint to the Board of Directors as follows:
 - a. Complaints should be made in writing. This allows all parties involved to work from a consistent body of information.
 - b. The Board of Directors, in general, will not address a complaint based on hearsay or made on behalf of another parent or family.
 - c. The Board of Directors, in general, will not address a complaint if resolution with the appropriate individuals in Items #1 and #2 has not yet been attempted in good faith.
 - d. The Board of Directors reserves the right not to address a complaint that is made anonymously.
 - e. The Board of Directors, in general, will not address specific complaints about the performance of individual school employees in a public meeting. If such a complaint is brought at a public meeting, the Board will take the complaint under advisement and will provide an appropriate response at a later time.
 - f. The Board of Directors reserves the right to notify individual school employees about complaints brought against them. Parents may request that they are not personally identified as the party bringing the complaint.
 - g. The Board of Directors will discuss said grievance in closed session and respond to said complaint via a written letter. This will occur within 30 days of receiving said grievance.
4. If a parent complaint is not addressed to the satisfaction of the people involved, parents have the right to seek resolution through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Complaints may be addressed to the Director, Office of Charter Schools, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 301 North Wilmington Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27601
5. This Grievance Policy is not designed to supercede or supplant federal law and parent rights under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as amended, 1996.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible student who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a person serving on the School Board; a person or company whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, speech therapist, or consultant); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

4. The right to file a complaint with the US Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20202-5920

Section III: Instruction

Curriculum

CCS, like all NC public schools, is responsible for following the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (SCoS) for each grade. The End of Grade testing (see ASSESSMENT) measures how well our tested students have mastered the goals and objectives delineated in the SCoS. The way our staff delivers the SCoS is what sets our school apart.

As mentioned at the beginning of the model, CCS uses an arts integrated, interdisciplinary, emergent approach to classroom instruction. Textbooks are employed sparingly. Classrooms are configured as multi-age/multi-grade environments with a focus on skill, rather than grade level. Each member of our staff is aware of the different styles of learning; open classrooms and centers-based instruction provides an opportunity for each student to get what s/he needs. Teachers work as team members; school- and community-wide collaboration are encouraged. The Arts are integrated into all content areas, and community service is emphasized. The teacher assumes the role of facilitator. Students are responsible and accountable for their own learning experience.

Assessment

Students are administered the Wide Range Achievement Test within the first month of school, before the Winter Break, and at the end of the school year. This allows the teachers to know the students reading and math level to provide small group instruction, as well as for us to assess the progress a student makes in a year at CCS. In addition to this, students are evaluated and assessed on an ongoing basis within the classroom. The learning process is monitored by checklist, observation, work sample collection, and student self-report. Portfolios track student development over the course of the year. Some methods are informal, and most are contained within the individual classroom.

Children with an IEP (see SPECIAL NEEDS) will receive an alternate assessment; all modifications and accommodations will likewise be observed. This will give us the data our staff needs to tailor instruction.

All third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders will take End of Grade tests in reading in math; fifth-graders will also have a science EOG. More information on the EOG testing will be provided in the spring of each year.

Grading Periods

CCS operates under a trimester reporting system. This is the primary reason that our yearly calendar does not totally align with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

Our school provides narrative report cards. Instead of a letter grade, your student's work will be measured as being on, above, or below grade level in each area of assessment.

Grades three and five are considered "gateways" for the purposes of the NC End of Grade testing program. Students in those grades who do not score at or above a "Level III" on the reading and mathematics tests may not be promoted to the next grade. Student portfolios and narrative report cards are valuable tools for determining whether retention or promotion is warranted.

Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held at the end of each trimester. The first conference will help you to understand the evaluation process and how your child is progressing. A parent may request a conference to discuss their child anytime during the school year. Please call or e-mail to schedule an appointment with your student's teacher(s). Each staff member has an e-mail account (first letter of first name, last name, eg. John Smith would be jsmith@commchart.org) and telephone voicemail which you may use to leave messages. While staff is always happy to discuss your concerns, please do not expect an impromptu conference during the school day. Our staff is not permitted to hold conferences at the expense of instructional time. Thank you for your cooperation.

Special Needs

CCS has students with a variety of special needs. These include such things as academic giftedness, specific learning disabilities, and health impairments. CCS uses the inclusion model of special education to meet the needs of our students. The school has an IEP team to administer our exceptional children educational program. This begins with evaluation and is followed through the receipt of services, annual reevaluation, and beyond. The 504 team assists in meeting the needs of those who do not meet the definition of exceptional but have circumstances that can be addressed in the regular classroom environment.

CCS participates in Project Child Find. If you know of a child who is in need of special education or related services, or if you wish to refer your own child, please contact the school's exceptional children teacher.

Section IV: School Safety

Discipline Policy

Positive Discipline

Community Charter incorporates the positive discipline model at the school. Positive Discipline is...

- A child-centered approach
- Focuses on teaching rather than on punishment
- Broaden each student's concept of knowledge to extend beyond the walls of the classroom;
- Treats children with respect and dignity
- Focuses more on what a child needs than on what adults want or need
- Based on the belief that adults do not have the right to use raw power over a child and that adults have a responsibility to help children learn to behave in acceptable ways and to develop self-discipline
- Requires being able to see things from the child's point of view and demonstrating empathy for the child.

Positive discipline...

- Increases a students self-esteem
- Allows students to feel valued
- Encourages students to feel cooperative
- Enables students to learn gradually the many skills involved in taking some responsibility for what happens to them
- Motivates students to change their strategy rather than to blame others
- Helps students to take initiative, relate successfully to others, and solve problems

Key points about positive discipline are...

- Children do better when they feel better
- Children will listen to you after they feel listened to
- There is a difference between being in control and being controlling –have faith in the students. They are able and willing to cooperate when treated with dignity and respect.
- Reward and punishments are not as effective: It teaches them to be good or bad only when someone is watching. Focuses on external versus internal control. Use strategies versus rewards and punishment.
- Use logical and natural consequences.
- Use limits. Knowing the boundaries of appropriate behavior provides comfort and safety.
- Be proactive versus reactive.

- Teachers know what they are going to do and then follow through with kind and firm action instead of lectures and punishment
- Discipline steps: Redirect, check it out, speak to the child about the problem, give choices, use logical or natural consequences, give time out if still out of control.
- Help develop social interests. Children who feel that they belong and are involved do better.

At Community Charter School...

- CCS staff members will not use a reward system, unless it is included in a child's behavior plan designed by parent, teacher, student, principal, and counselor
- CCS staff members will be kind, firm and consistent
- CCS staff member will employ natural consequences as long as they will not lead to safety issues
- CCS staff member will encourage students to take a positive time-out (sit off from group and find your happy place)

Peer Mediation for Non-Violent Acts

Community Charter School believes in developing a community of students. For this reason, peer mediation is a first step to non-violent acts. Non Violent acts include:

- Horse playing
- Arguments
- Name calling
- Cursing
- Taking other's property (under \$5)
- Challenging authority
- Disrupting community
- Disrespectful to staff or property
- Bathroom mayhem
- Physical/verbal threats
- Intimidation
- Verbal abuse
- Discriminating slurs

Any non-violent acts may be sent to the Peer Mediation Group. Students and/or teachers may request peer mediation. A form is completed by the teacher and/or student and submitted to the peer mediation box. Time is then scheduled on Tuesdays and Fridays between 2:00 and 3:00 to have peer mediation. The peer mediators consist of seven 4th and 5th graders identified by teachers. Two mediators meet with the students referred and the teacher assists as necessary. All peer mediators receive training in peer mediation.

The goal is for the peer mediators to work with students to come towards a resolution and seek peers for support.

Violent/Major Incidents

At Community Charter School, a student's safety is of the highest importance. For this reason, violent incidents and major incidents are not tolerated. Referrals are completed by staff for unacceptable behaviors at the school.

- Violent/Major Incidents:
- Intentionally harming another student (biting, kicking, hitting, tripping, etc.)
- Stealing (more than \$5)
- Leaving the campus or teacher without permission
- Non Violent Acts that have been to peer mediation more than three times
- Property Damage
- Bullying

First offense: Student referred to office, incident documented, parent/guardian called. Referral is made for peer mediation.

Second offense: Student referred to office and parent/guardian called to pick up the student for the remainder of the day. Student is considered suspended for the **one** day. The suspension day is the following day after the student is picked up from school. Parent/Guardian must schedule conference with teacher and administrator to create a behavior plan. Referral is made for peer mediation.

Third offense: Student sent home and suspended for a minimum of **three** days. Parent/Guardian **must** schedule conference to revisit and adjust the behavior plan. Failure to schedule this conference within the three days results in continued suspension. The student will not be allowed back in the school until the conference is held. Referral is made for peer mediation.

Fourth offense: Student suspended for a minimum of **five** days. Parent/Guardian **must** schedule conference including teacher, administrator, and school counselor to develop an alternative solution for the remainder of the year. This conference must be held for the child to return to school. Referral is made for peer mediation.

Fifth offense: Student suspended from school while **expulsion** proceedings begin. An expulsion hearing will occur before the CCS Board of Directors within ten business days. Student will not be readmitted to school until the finalization of the expulsion process, if at all. The Board of Directors reserves the right to take any action deemed prudent.

The staff member making the referral is responsible to making certain that the referral is communicated to the parent/guardian and copies are made as indicated on the referral form. Communication to the Principal about any referrals MUST occur.

Malicious (inflicting harm or injury out of hostility) behaviors to another person (student or staff member) will result in immediate suspension from school and a conference will be held with the parent/guardian, teacher, student, administrator and counselor to develop a behavior plan or alternative solution. The number of days for the suspension will be determined by the severity of the student's action.

Any student found to be in possession of a weapon is automatically suspended for 10 days.

State laws specify that possession of an explosive device will result in a 365-day suspension. No student who is excluded or suspended may enter another public school until the period of exclusion or suspension is over. CCS will act in accordance with the Revised NC State Guidelines for the Discipline of Students with Disabilities where applicable.

APPEALS PROCESS

A parent/guardian wishing to appeal a decision made by the Principal must contact the school offices in writing within 10 (ten) school days of the date of the decision. Appeals will first be heard by the Chair of the Board of Directors, who acts as Superintendent. Determinations made by the Chair may be appealed to the full Board of Directors. Notification of intent to appeal must be made within 10 (ten) school days, via written notice to the Principal. The appeal will be heard within 10 (ten) school days or at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the CCS Board of Directors.

Accidents/Injuries/Illnesses

Students who suffer a mishap or become ill during the course of the school day will be kept in the school offices, if possible, or be dispatched for emergency care. Every attempt will be made to reach the parent/guardian/emergency contact at all numbers on file. **This is why it is imperative that the school EMERGENCY HEALTH AND CONTACT CARD must be updated with the most current information available.** Please notify the school offices immediately of any change of employment, home address, or telephone contact information. Children with a communicable disease will not be able to return to school until they are certified as no longer contagious by a health care professional.

School Closings

CCS is more flexible than Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Also, we do not operate buses. Because of this, we will make decisions regarding inclement weather independent of CMS. CCS is listed separately on the television and radio stations we use to make announcements of early dismissal, delays, or closings. WBTV (CBS), WCCB (Fox), WCNC (NBC), and WSOC (ABC) will each be notified; radio stations WBT (AM 1110), WFAE (FM 90.7), WKKT (FM 96.9), WPEG (FM 98.1), WRFX (FM 99.7), WLYT (FM 102.9), and WEND (FM 106.5) will also air announcements. The school's telephone greeting message will also be changed to reflect any decision made. The absence of an announcement means that school will be open as usual.

For our purposes, a "2-hour delay" means that the school day will begin at 10am, with normal dismissal and Afterschool; "Early dismissal" is taken to mean 12:30 pm, with no Afterschool, but may be adjusted due to the severity of conditions; "Closed" means no school or Afterschool.

Release of Student Records

In accordance with North Carolina state law, parents/guardians may review their student's records at any time. However, the child's cumulative folder will not be released to anything other than a written request from the next school in which the student is enrolled. Please also see the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act section.

Dismissal Transportation

In order for anyone other than a parent/guardian to pick up a student at the end of the day, the school must have written permission with the parent/guardian's signature. In cases of a custody dispute, it is of the utmost importance that the school offices are notified in writing and a copy of any court order furnished. Except in cases of extreme emergency, students will be dismissed via their regular transportation.

The procedure for taking a student out during the school day is to come to the front office to sign the student out. The teacher is then phoned by office staff to dismiss. When signing a student out at any time during the school day, parents/guardians must report to the school offices to receive a slip. No one will be admitted to a classroom, and no student will be turned over, without a signed slip from the school offices.

Search and Seizure

CCS respects the rights of all students, especially the freedom from unreasonable search of their persons and seizure of their property. However, concerns for safety, order, and discipline may lead administration or staff to conduct a search of a student or a student's personal effects. These searches may result in the seizure of any unauthorized materials discovered in the search. Such searches must be based upon reasonable suspicion; reasonable suspicion is not required if a student freely and voluntarily consents to the search.

Fire Drills/Response

Periodically, CCS will practice our planned response to a fire emergency in the school. All building tenants are expected to participate in these drills. With the exception of the first drill of the school year, all fire drills are unannounced. Each class will leave the building in an orderly manner and mass up in a designated location; roll will be taken. All drills are timed. No one will re-enter the building until the "All Clear" signal has been given by the Administrator.

Tornado Plan

There is a weather alert radio monitored in the school offices. Staff is placed on alert if a tornado watch is issued for Mecklenburg County. The Tornado Plan goes into effect when the watch becomes upgraded to a warning. A large, hand-held bell is rung in the halls to activate the plan; the bell is distinguished from the fire alarm. First floor classrooms will evacuate to the parallel hallways outside the kitchen and bathrooms; second floor classrooms will gather in the first-floor stairwells. All students will sit with heads down and covered by their arms. CCS will practice the Tornado Plan at least twice per school year.

Center City Evacuation Plan

The Mayor's office has released a plan to get everyone within the John Belk/Brookshire I-277 loop to safety outside of the center city in case of dire emergency. Our designated place of assembly is the Carolina Pavilion Shopping Center at South Boulevard and I-485. Please look for your child/ren there in case of evacuation.

Child Abuse Reporting

Policy:

Background/Legal Requirements:

Child abuse reporting laws require that all employees working within a setting such as Community Charter School's are mandated reporters of child abuse. Each employee has a responsibility to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse.

Procedures:

Allegations of Abuse by Someone outside of Community Charter School:

The following steps are taken in the event that you have a reasonable suspicion of child abuse.

- 1) Contact the Principal immediately.
- 2) In consultation with Principal, contact should be made with Child Protective Services (CPS) within 24 hours. A written report must be forwarded to CPS within 36 hours.

Be prepared to provide the following information:

- a. Name and birth date of the child.
- b. Name, address and phone number of parents or guardians, if appropriate.
- c. The facts, including date and time of day and the nature of the suspected child abuse.

Record the name of the CPS worker responding and the time and date the call was placed.

In cases that are unclear, solicit the advice of the CPS worker regarding mailing a formal report. Forms are available in the Assistant Administrator's office. This is the legal responsibility of the reporting person. Give the original report to the Principal, who will maintain these documents for future reference.

Allegations of Abuse by a Community Charter School Employee/:

Inform the Principal IMMEDIATELY. This will trigger a series of actions taken which will include the following:

1. The employee against whom the allegation has been made will be placed on paid administrative leave. The Principal (or designee) will contact the employee, and will continue to maintain contact with the employee as appropriate.
2. The Principal (or designee) will contact appropriate Child Protective Services and outside parties, which may include: board members, local police/sheriff's department, the youth's county case manager, parent(s) or guardians, legal consult, and any other pertinent community contacts. The nature of the allegation will determine the extent to which external agencies (such as CPS and the police) will be involved.
3. CCS will stay in contact with child protective services until they complete their investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, a finding will be made regarding whether the allegation was unsubstantiated, inconclusive, or substantiated. If the allegation is determined to be

substantiated, the employee will be immediately terminated. In all cases, a plan of action will be determined regarding any personnel action. The Principal will be responsible for developing an appropriate treatment program protocol as follow-up for both staff and clients.

4. A file of all allegations (and their findings) involving employees will be maintained in the personnel files.

Community Relations

POLICY

Community Charter School works closely with community members, neighbors and other human service organizations in an effort to create positive community relationships in all communities where services are provided. The following procedures have been developed in order to help us maintain and build on these relationships.

PROCEDURES

Visitors to Programs

Visitors are encouraged to tour our school and familiarize themselves with our program. Visitors are asked to call the Principal or Assistant Administrator for an appointment. All visitors must report to the reception area and sign in. Phone inquiries are also welcomed.

Contact with the Press or Media

If a staff member is contacted by anyone from the press, or someone not known to them who is asking questions about the school, please refer that person directly to the Principal.

Hazardous Substances

Copies of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all hazardous substances to which employees of Community Charter School may be exposed are kept in the Principal's office. The Principal be responsible for obtaining and maintaining the data sheet system for Community Charter School.

The Principal will review incoming data sheets for new significant health/safety information. He/she will see that any new information is passed on to the affected employees.

The Principal will review MSDS for completeness. If an MSDS is missing or obviously incomplete, a new MSDS will be requested from the manufacturer. Cal/OSHA will be notified if a complete MSDS is not received.

Material Safety Data Sheets are available to all employees in their work areas for review. If MSDS are not available for new hazardous substances in use, please contact the Principal.

I have carefully reviewed the policies and procedures contained in the above document for Community Charter School. I further certify that I understand the policies and procedures of CCS.

Name

Signature

Date