



Yuba River Charter School

SINGLE PLAN FOR STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT

April 14, 2010

13026 Bitney Springs Road - Nevada City, CA 95959 - 530-272-8078

SINGLE PLAN

This is a plan of actions to be taken to raise the academic performance of students and improve the school's educational program. For additional information on school programs and how you may become involved, please contact the following person:

Contact person: Caleb Buckley
Position: Director
Telephone number: 530-272-8078
Address: 13026 Bitney Springs Road, Nevada City, CA 95959

The purpose of this plan is to provide a single, comprehensive plan to improve the academic performance of students. Its use requires YRCS to collect student data and analyze student progress while setting goals for improvement. This plan helps to put structures in place to meet state standards. YRCS is not a Title One school and is funded through state block grant funding.

School Vision and Mission

The Yuba River Charter School endeavors to develop free human beings who are able to impart meaning and direction to their lives. We are a community of teachers and families who inspire a love of life and learning for the whole child to serve the whole world.

Our mission is to provide a Waldorf methods curriculum to K-8 students using a child development model that nurtures the head, heart, and hands of each individual. The social life of our community is supported by a class teacher who stays with their students as they progress through the grades, festivals, and school performances. The curriculum is inspired by the arts and a sense for the dignity of each subject and how it is integrated through the day. Our school strives to have a balance of movement and intellectual work. Our teachers are state certified and have training in Waldorf methods to create a charter school model of Waldorf education that is available to the public through open enrollment.

School Profile – SARC (ROCS description)

Yuba River Charter draws students from throughout Nevada County with the highest concentration coming from the Grass Valley School District (80) and Nevada City School District (90). Other students come from North San Juan and Penn Valley.

YRCS was founded in 1994 and currently serves 255 students K-8. Yuba River is a Waldorf methods school. It stresses the development of a student's artistic and academic skills, preparing them for any subject they may wish to pursue in high school. We hope to have the imagination supported in the early grades through physical and emotional development. In the middle grades we introduce strings and a leveled math program. In the upper grades we have a drama program and a full menu of art classes.

Our authorizing district is Nevada County Superintendent of Schools which is located in Nevada City. Nevada County offers several charter school choices through Twin Ridges and we are the only Waldorf methods school in the county. The administrators meet with the associate superintendent each month to help coordinate district activities, budget encroachment, and special education services. The district also has oversight responsibility and has just completed a review of YRCS policies.

Roughly 20% of our families live below the poverty line and are a part of our economically diverse student body. We are not a Title I school and do not offer federal programs such as free lunches. Nevada County is approximately 95% Caucasian and the student body at YRCS largely mirrors the community. Our students are 86% Caucasian, 1% African-American, 8% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 2% American Indian. There are no non-English speakers currently enrolled.

The school is located at the Bitney Springs Center in Nevada City which is approximately 180 acres of forested hills. Our school is renting building 3 which is approximately 25,000 square feet and has three playgrounds with a total footprint of 3 acres. Each class has its own room

and there are two kindergarten classrooms plus a library and tutoring room. Our site also has a privately run pre-school which is licensed through Twin Ridges.

Staff consists of 10 full time teachers, ten specialty teachers, and instructional aide, a special education resource specialist, four office staff, business manager, and administrator. Annual instructional minutes by grade are:

K	=	36,750
1 & 2	=	50,820
3	=	51,800
4 - 8	=	54,145

Thursdays are minimum days so faculty can meet to work on pedagogical issues facing the school.

School Accountability Report Card

YRCS has a student success team (SST) which is comprised of the class teacher, administrator, school psychologist, and resource specialist. This team can be mobilized in support of students who are struggling academically or who have a combination of behavioral problems or who require testing for special education purposes. YRCS also has a speech therapist who meets with students regularly as a part of our IEP services.

The faculty also runs a discipline committee which meets weekly to discuss trends in playground activity and tries to find solutions to ongoing student disruptions. We have had great success this year in sharply curbing misbehavior in between classes and during students breaks. Teachers may also refer students to this committee for support. Overall, student conduct is exemplary and there are very few discipline issues in the school. There have been no expulsions this year and seven one day suspensions.

Our grades 1-3 are under class size reduction (CSR) and have two credential teachers in the room. Our grades 4-8 maximum class size is 29.

Students use text books in middle school Spanish and math but generally create their own work through artistic rendering and composition. Our faculty is all in the process of receiving specialized training in Waldorf methods teacher and all are licensed by the State of California with either an intern credential or a clear multiple subject credential. Each teacher is evaluated each year and we have a mentoring program supported by master teachers who visit classrooms. The overall quality of instruction is high and there is a lot of emphasis placed on excellence in teaching.

Analysis of Current Educational Practice

The following statements characterize educational practice at YRCS.

1. Alignment of curriculum, instruction and materials to performance standards: Standards based reading materials and text are purchased for the library for use in all classrooms. Staff is becoming familiar with Waldorf methods curriculum goals that directly and indirectly meet state standards. Faculty are evaluated with an eye towards their use of standards.
2. Alignment of staff development to standards, assessment and professional needs: YRCS allocates professional development funds each year to support educational methods in the classroom. Faculty receive and review STAR scores and plan individualized instruction to support under-performing students. Teachers hold parent/teacher conferences twice a year to discuss the alignment of the curriculum to meet each child's entire development.
3. Supplies provided by support of Educational Foundation: YRCS has the financial support of an educational foundation which allows us to provide string instruments, library materials, and direct curriculum support to hire teachers. This allows us to implement state curriculum along with a Waldorf methods approach that each child can participate in regardless of economic status or academic ability.
4. Services provided to underperforming students: Parents are invited into the classrooms as part of our cooperative approach to providing instructional support to teachers. Small work groups have been developed for math with the support of additional staff and resource specialists. Our student resource team has the reading naturally programs, work books in phonics and math development skills to support children who are taken out of lessons as well as provide resources for teachers who support children directly in the classroom.
5. Use of state testing and assessment: Each instructor reviews STAR tests and identifies strategies for improving performance. Subsets of areas are analyzed to determine class weaknesses and provide support to the main teacher. Middle School students are given written feedback after each three week curriculum block and there are trimester reports that go home for parent signature. Students prepare portfolios of work which are reviewed by the teacher regularly.
6. School barriers to improving student achievement: YRCS has had low student retention rates in some middle school classes which has reduced the continuity of program as new student enter in 8th grade. Many families are economically disadvantaged and the parents struggle to be involved in their child's education while earning a living. Because students travel from throughout the county, there are reduced opportunities for after school tutoring and study support. Since charter schools do not receive facility funding, a lot of program money have to be spent on paying a very high rent, almost \$200,000, which would otherwise be directed into program expansion and student support.

Conclusions from Student Performance Data

Student data shows that scores generally improve over time with the upper grades outperforming their district counterparts. Many of the low scores are in the language arts in the lower grades. Our participation rates are improving. Parent education has improved student participation and teachers are discussing the importance of the tests in their parent evenings.

Every year the school continues to meet its target for API scores. Last year was an exception so the school is focusing on 4th & 5th grade math scores and 8th grade Algebra. There was significant progress made last year and this year promises to be even better. Instructional minutes are more effective, our programs are more mature, we have more buy-in from parents, and the staff has received excellent training. Our middle school students outperform their peers in the county and in northern California. The classes of 2007 and 2008 were very high.

Conclusions from Parent Input

Parent surveys have been distributed each year and this last year up to 90% of families identified that they were at YRCS for the curriculum and the Waldorf program. Parents support the academic standards of the school and understand that we are developing programs to meet high academic standards and have more accountability for student work. Parents also appreciate the high level of teacher feedback in parent/teacher conferences and in the middle school through our assessment tools and written trimester reports. This year over 2/3rds of parents indicated they had a Bachelor's degree or better.

School Goals for Improving Achievement

Our special education team will be developing a phonics curriculum for the lower grades in connection with experienced Waldorf teachers to create a stronger connection between the curriculum and the development of language in the early years. The primary focus will be on spelling lists.

Clerical controls will be put in place to better audit the student forms and correct mistakes in the reporting before the state makes our scores final.

More attention will be paid to overall grammar and vocabulary development in grades 2-4. In particular, grade 3 needs to spend more time developing paragraph structure and moving to more original composition. Above grade 4 more focus will be put to reading comprehension skills and analysis of text materials students see for the first time.

A Program will be put in place to provide meeting time between the class teacher and our special education staff to discuss support of weaker students. We anticipate this to occur each semester. General education staff will be given more responsibility to identify children for individualized instruction and to work towards approaches that account for more learning differences.

Our school will increase its support of the following programs that support learning: the L (I) Language program, LIPS for phonics, math manipulative, math packets that focus on long division, and Signs for Sounds (SS) program for spelling support.

Faculty evaluations will consider these tools and how they are integrated.

School Site Council Membership

Allison Gjertsen	parent
Matt Reischman	parent
Dan Martinez	faculty
Doris Rainville	faculty
Susan Egan	administration
Caleb Buckley	administration
Torrie Mudd	parent
Leila Barber	faculty

Numbers of members of each category

Faculty	3
Parents	3
Administration	2

Recommendations and Assurances

The YRCS site council recommends this school plan and its related expenditures to the district governing board for approval, and assures the board the following:

1. The school site council is correctly constituted, and was formed in accordance with district governing board policy and state law.
2. The school site council reviewed its responsibility under state law and district governing board policies, including those board policies relating to material changes in the school plan requiring board approval.
3. The school site council sought and considered input from faculty and parent groups in preparing its goals.
4. The school site council reviewed the content requirements for school plans of programs included in this Single Plan for Student Achievement, and believes all such content requirements have been met, including those found in district governing board policies.
5. This plan includes a thorough analysis of student academic performance. The actions proposed herein form a sound, comprehensive, coordinated plan to reach stated school goals to improve student academic performance.
6. This school plan was adopted by the school site council on April 14, 2010.

Attested:

Torrie Mudd, Charter Council Chair, Site Council Chair

Date:

Caleb Buckley, School Director

Date: