

Río Gallinas School  
Application for Renewal of Charter

Respectfully submitted this

9<sup>th</sup> Day of August, 2006

Las Vegas, New Mexico

by the

Governing Council, Staff, Students, and Families  
of Río Gallinas School.

Thank you!

# Río Gallinas School

## Application for Renewal of Charter

*Contents of the charter application set forth in Section 8 [22-8B-8 NMSA 1978] of the 1999 Charter Schools Act:*

The charter school application, whether for a start-up school or a conversion school, shall be a proposed agreement between the local school board and the charter school and shall include:

- A. the mission statement of the charter school;
- B. the goals, objectives and student performance standards to be achieved by the charter school;
- C. a description of the charter school's educational program, student performance standards and curriculum that must meet or exceed the state board of education's educational standards and must be designed to enable each student to achieve those standards;
- D. a description of the way a charter school's educational program will meet the individual needs of the students, including those students determined to be at risk;
- E. a description of the charter school's plan for evaluating student performance, the types of assessments that will be used to measure student progress toward achievement of the state's standards and the procedures for taking corrective action in the event that student performance falls below the standards.
- F. evidence that the plan for the charter school is economically sound, including a proposed budget for the term of the charter and a description of the manner in which the annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the charter school is to be conducted;
- G. evidence that the fiscal management of the charter school complies with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations relative to fiscal procedures;
- H. evidence of a plan for the displacement of students, teachers and other employees who will not attend or be employed in the conversion school; [does not apply to Río Gallinas School]
- I. a description of the governing body and operation of the charter school, including how the governing body will be selected, the nature and extent of parental, professional educator and community involvement in the governance and operation of the school and the relationship between the governing body and the local school board;
- J. an explanation of the relationship that will exist between the proposed charter school and its employees, including evidence that the terms and conditions of employment will be addressed with affected employees and their recognized representatives, if any;
- K. the employment and student discipline policies of the proposed charter school; their respective legal liability and applicable insurance coverage.
- L. an agreement between the charter school and the local school board regarding their respective legal liability and applicable insurance coverage;
- M. a description of how the charter school plans to meet the transportation and food service needs of its students;
- N. a description of the waivers that the charter school is requesting from the local school board and the state board and the charter school's plan for addressing these waiver requests;
- O. a description of the facilities the charter school plans to use; and
- P. any other information reasonably required by the local school board.

## SECTION A MISSION STATEMENT

**Río Gallinas School is committed to growing a culture of academic excellence, service, and caring through self-discovery and responsible participation in the local and global community.**

The Río Gallinas School approach to learning recognizes that students come to our school not as “blank slates,” but as individuals who already have years of meaningful, diverse learning experiences in place, ready to be built upon. Students at Río Gallinas School learn to think critically, recognize relationships, analyze content, and apply knowledge, to use technology appropriately, to make meaning from their learning, and to express understanding through their own artistic visions.

**Vision:** The vision of Río Gallinas School is that children of all abilities and learning styles can learn and achieve at high levels, through participation in an literacy-focused, arts- and science-rich, family-centered environment that continually encourages work of the highest quality. Students compete, not with each other, but with their own best work, always striving to do better than they have ever done. They create multiple drafts of important, carefully crafted work that then becomes part of their portfolio of achievement.

**Curriculum Statement:** Curriculum revolves around a carefully structured series of Learning Expeditions, interspersed with periods of concentrated skill-building and exploratory experiences. This is a relevant, real-world-focused type of investigative learning that is rooted in the arts (including dance, visual arts, music and drama), and integrated with the sciences and other content areas (including investigation of ecological systems and cultural resources with emphasis on of Las Vegas and surrounding area). Every part of the curriculum has been aligned to the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for each grade level.

Río Gallinas School offers the following **Teaching Environment:**

- Place-based education, using the Expeditionary Learning structure and protocols, that employs the rich local environment to engage learners in an investigation of the ecology, history, and culture of Las Vegas and surrounding areas and to extend learning to the world at large in a family-centered setting.
- Integrated curriculum that encourages and empowers teachers and students to make connections between areas of study and uses technology in powerful ways to enhance learning and add to the means of expression of the fine and traditional arts.
- Artistic creation and creative invention, with a solid foundation in artistic standards and skills and in the imagination needed to fully participate in scientific investigations, while providing appropriate and fully-realized tools and spaces for that learning.
- Training and practice in conflict resolution, self-awareness and self-mastery, and reflective, team-building experiences.
- Using the many human, technical and natural resources available in the school and community at large, including leaders in the arts and sciences, to build understanding.
- Learning exchanges with other schools in the area, including schools in the West Las Vegas and Las Vegas City School districts, Luna Community College, the United World College, and New Mexico Highlands University.

## SECTION B

### GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

#### Goal

Students demonstrate high levels of academic achievement, appropriate for their grade level.

#### Objectives

- Students achieve excellence in literacy by reading and writing across the curriculum.
- Students develop proficient understanding in mathematics by confronting problems as individuals, in small groups, by presenting and defending ideas and solutions to large groups, and by working independently on problems at or slightly above their skill level.
- Students grow and progress in the arts by creating high-quality, standards-based artistic products to demonstrate their understanding in other curriculum areas.
- Students develop proficient understanding in science and sustainable systems by participating in hands-on, authentic research projects and fieldwork, documenting their learning in appropriate scientific reporting formats.
- Students demonstrate proficient understanding in social studies by exploring local, regional, state, national, and world history and culture in the course of their Expeditionary Learning units and other integrated studies.
- Students demonstrate basic understanding in the Spanish language, as described by the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for Modern, Classical, and Native Languages. We measure this understanding through the following benchmarks:
  - Converse, write briefly, and ask/ answer simple questions about themselves and their immediate environment.
  - Participate in various forms of cultural expression including: music and dance, art, storytelling, writing, traditional celebrations, and making artifacts of a culture (foods, costumes, games, toys, books, etc.).
  - Observe/listen to and explain/retell simple narratives presented in a variety of formats such as newspapers, letters, literature, newscasts, videos, musical recordings and conversations.
  - Perform a song or tell a folktale in the language studied.
  - Prepare a typical meal of the region or country and prepare a menu in the language studied.
  - Use appropriate courtesy expressions for simple everyday tasks, such as greetings, introductions, gestures, behavior during meals, etc.

### **Goal**

Students demonstrate an understanding of local ecology, culture, and history, and are able to make connections to regional, state, national, and global issues.

### **Objectives**

All students participate in multiple local or regional fieldwork experiences during each school year. Resulting from their participation, they create one or more high-quality, standards-based products that become part of their achievement portfolio.

- Products can include works of art, oral presentations, written narratives, performances, events, booklets, architectural renderings, scientific reports, and numerous other natural outcomes of the fieldwork.

### **Goal**

The school is a safe environment in which students demonstrate growth and self-knowledge, intellectually, emotionally, and physically.

### **Objectives**

Students regularly create written journal entries and other reflection instruments to demonstrate personal goal setting and the ability to assess their own progress fairly and insightfully.

Staff members monitor socialization skills and academic performance through behavior reports, staff and student reflections and self-assessments and other appropriate instruments. We use these results as formative assessments to adjust the school environment through a team process.

By participating in regular outdoor fieldwork and other physical activities, students develop physical skills and abilities, as measured on a standardized batter of pre- and post-tests developed by the Public Education Department and administered by PE-certified staff.

Students demonstrate increased self-awareness and emotional growth through their responses on pre- and post-surveys.

At least three times a year students lead conferences, along with school staff and the student's parents or guardians, focused on evaluation of the student's progress. The purpose of the conferences is to adjust teaching and learning to meet student needs. Students participate in thorough and ongoing training to lead these conferences according to a carefully-planned process.

## **Goal**

Students develop skills of collaboration, community participation, and service.

### **Objectives**

Students regularly engage with parents, siblings, peers and staff in family-centered experiences at Río Gallinas School, its satellite learning centers, and other locations, in order to include family members in the community of learners the school represents.

Students regularly participate in peer-teaching experiences.

Students are exposed to and trained in a variety of strategies for conflict resolution, mediation, and group facilitation. They will demonstrate their improving skills in weekly community and classroom gatherings held for a variety of purposes.

Students regularly take part in collaborative and service-learning opportunities both within the school environment as well as in teams with community members and other learning institutions. Students will document their own learning in these opportunities as well as collect surveys and evaluations from the population served and qualified observers.

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### **MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD OBJECTIVES**

Río Gallinas encourages, shapes, and measures student achievement using multiple forms of assessment. The following assessments apply to all the goals and objectives listed:

- New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment (annual testing)
- Cumulative or exit portfolio (reviewed at the end of each year)
- Northwestern Educational Association Measures of Academic Progress (MAPS) online instrument for reading and mathematics
- Assessment instruments created by Río Gallinas teaching staff:
  - Selected response instruments (quizzes and tests)
  - Extended response instruments (written from detailed prompts and supported by models and exemplars)
  - Performance assessments, measured by consistent rubrics
  - Personal communication, documented in teaching journals and written student reflections

See Section E of the charter for a detailed list of assessments applied to student learning.

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## SECTION “C”

### **Description of the Río Gallinas School educational program, student performance standards, and curriculum that meets or exceeds the state’s educational standards and enables each student to achieve those standards.**

Río Gallinas is an Expeditionary Learning school, and after just one year of involvement in this comprehensive, nation-wide professional development program, is already receiving national attention for its unique and thorough application of Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound design principles. Students engaged in rigorous academic work and helping one another, teachers with a passion for teaching, schools with a culture of service and community: these are the hallmarks of an Expeditionary Learning school, and they are the hallmarks of Río Gallinas School.

The educational model at Río Gallinas focuses on academic content instruction based upon best practices and research. It is our belief that students' ability to read, and to comprehend what they read is critical. Our staff focuses upon developing reading and math literacy skills with every student through methods and strategies drawn from Expeditionary Learning principles and other well-established best practices. Students at Río Gallinas read and write across the curriculum as they learn to outline, revise, execute, and defend their projects, both singly and in their learning teams.

We recognize that students who enter our school may be one or more grade levels behind their age-peers nationwide, and often come from low-income, single-parent, or other challenging environments. We assess student skills and knowledge upon entry into the school, and through ongoing formative (short-cycle) assessments throughout the year, we continuously adjust teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of all students.

We participate in the New Mexico Fine Arts Elementary program as part of our strong commitment to integrating the arts across the curriculum. As demonstrated in current research, integrating the creative arts stimulates and develops the following kinds of cross-discipline thinking and learning skills that our integrated and Expeditionary Learning curriculum develops and strengthens in all students:

<b>observing</b>	<b>synthesizing</b>	<b>imaging</b>	<b>evaluating</b>
<b>modeling</b>	<b>recognizing patterns</b>	<b>transforming</b>	<b>forming patterns</b>
<b>abstracting</b>	<b>multiple perspectives</b>	<b>analogizing</b>	<b>resolving conflicts</b>
<b>complex thinking</b>	<b>predicting</b>	<b>self-regulation</b>	<b>interpretation</b>

**Sciences / Local Ecology:** Another area of curriculum emphasis is ecology and the environment. The sciences, especially the environmental sciences, bring learning to life for students. The study of local ecology and sustainable systems encourages students to discover universal concepts and issues within the context of their immediate surroundings. It gives meaning to abstract issues and allows students to grow beyond their initial limits into understanding about the world around them. The environmental intelligence (Howard Gardner, “Frames of Mind” and subsequent work) serves as an entry point into learning for students who encounter challenges in the traditional verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligences.

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## The Ecology of Place

**Ecology:** the study of the relations between organisms and their natural environment.

A cornerstone of this school is the active exploration and critical understanding of the complex web of life within which we find ourselves. We discover knowledge of place within the stories, the multi-generational experiences, the biological and investigative sciences, the histories and cultural artifacts, the land and the people.

As examples of methodology for the linking of ecological studies with literacy and art, students at Río Gallinas participate in multiple scientific study opportunities:

- Directly explore, observe, and document the diversity and biological interplay of the area, and create standards-based artistic responses integrating this learning.
- Identify, interview and document traditional knowledge, histories, and stories of community members as they relate to themes that reflect agricultural practices, natural resource development, weather patterns, water availability, species studies, etc.
- Participate and document regular visits and research at an environmental education satellite site and at one or more arts-focused satellite sites (theater, art studio, etc.).
- Be introduced to the professionals in the fields of ecological studies and the arts through direct contact and exposure to their work.
- Directly observe and research the region's ecology by means of species studies, water quality testing, photography, mapping, plant identification, etc.
- Develop skills and knowledge of traditional folk arts based on indigenous local materials.
- Be introduced to local medicinal plants and their traditional uses by interviewing, and / or video and audio recording of practicing *curanderas* (traditional healers).
- Develop tools to provoke attention, interest, and engagement with participants, families, and the community that will include oral histories, video documentaries, and 'museums' to highlight the school's place-based investigations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural relevance and the ecological significance of acequias and farming to the region.
- Become familiar with restoration ecology through both theory and site based demonstrations and observations.
- Develop systems analysis through the exploration of food source and distribution in northern New Mexico.
- Examine, research, and experiment with alternative sources of energy.
- Develop critical knowledge of and seek solutions to the water issues facing this community.



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## The Arts

An arts education engages students and invigorates the process of learning. It restores to our children their birthright of artistic expression and the perception and discussion of beauty.

Educational researchers have shown that people use many routes to learning, including kinesthetic, visual, auditory, analytic (taking ideas apart), and synthetic (putting ideas together). An educational approach that integrates arts increases learning potential for all students. At the Guggenheim Elementary School in inner city Chicago, after the curriculum integrated the arts with other subjects, daily attendance increased to 94%. At the same time, 83% of students achieved at or above norms in reading and math. An art education builds values that connect children to themselves and to their culture.

Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders enrolled in a program of improvisational drama showed significant improvements in reading achievement (Gourgey). The researcher found students' attitudes, self-esteem, and expression improved, and they exhibited a greater sense of trust and acceptance of others.

The creative arts ("Critical Links," review of research, 2002) prepare and stimulate the brain for learning and communication like no other area of study. Research has shown that participating in music lays down fundamental thinking skills students will need for higher mathematics, and that creative movement prepares the brain like nothing else does for higher level thinking skills that cross domains and subject areas. The arts also engage multiple intelligences unlike "academic" teaching, which tends to focus on those children who already do well in school.

Literacy skills like pattern and shape recognition, sequence, order, shape, and rhythm are at the heart of the study of the arts and sciences. Eric Jensen's work ("teaching with the Brain in Mind" and "Arts with the Brain in Mind," ASCD Publications) shows that movement is essential for learning and that creative movement helps organize the brain's ability to learn and to communicate that learning.

Students at Río Gallinas become familiar with all the arts in the course of creating high-quality products which express and embody their learning in creative, meaningful ways.

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## Other Areas of Emphasis

### TECHNOLOGY LITERACY

Integrated with classroom instruction will be a continual development of technological literacy. All activities will center on encouraging students to appropriately develop an understanding of the importance and applicability of critical thinking in current and future learning using technological and non-technological source of information. Río Gallinas School students will be prepared to discern and to evaluate appropriate sources of information and choose which is most applicable to solve problems or address issues/questions. When students use technology as a tool, they are in an active role of recipient of information. Students actively make choices about how to generate, obtain, manipulate, and /or display information.

Technology also plays an increasingly important role in the creative process and all the fine arts.

## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Fundamental to Expeditionary Learning methods is the process of working and learning in teams. In Río Gallinas School collaborative classrooms there is on-going communication and collaboration among students, teachers, and community members with recognition that learning requires diverse perspectives. Everyone is a learner, and all students will enjoy the opportunity to contribute and to appreciate the contributions of others. The school does not segregate students according to ability, achievement tests, interests, or any other characteristic. In Río Gallinas School, knowledge flows between and among all the members of the learning community.

Students learn to share their knowledge, to treat each other with respect, and focus on higher levels of understanding. Our students learn to listen to diverse opinions, support knowledge claims with evidence, engage in critical and creative thinking, and participate in dialogue. Students learn, with the guidance of teachers, parents, and guardians, to set goals, design their own learning tasks, and to reflect on and assess what they are learning.

## TEACHER AS FACILITATOR

Teachers at Río Gallinas School act as facilitators, creating rich environments and activities for linking new information to prior knowledge. Teachers provide opportunities for collaborative work and problem solving, and offer students a multiplicity of authentic learning tasks. Teachers provide a diversity of genres and perspectives, using and building upon stories and artifacts from the students' homes and communities.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Río Gallinas School is committed to demonstrating a connection between the mission of the school and community. Both have at their heart a desire to establish new patterns of educational and employability living, that enables people to meet their educational and economic needs, yet develops, nurtures, and sustains a strong community values and harmony. Every Learning Expedition has a strong component of service. Natural outcomes of each expedition include links between the school and the local and global community through service.

Río Gallinas School is committed to communicate with and involve the community in the school. We are committed to partnerships with local schools, local businesses, and community members, Federal and State agencies, foundations, and other national organizations. Community members come to the school to share their personal expertise with the children, and they often leave having learned something new from the classrooms they visit.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents and guardians are considered equal partners in the education of their children. Río Gallinas School sees families as valuable resources, competent, and essential to their children's educational experiences. Parents and guardians are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the classroom activities. The school design includes family-focused assistance and workshops in how to work with students at home to strengthen skills and forge active links with the school.

Each month, there are parent meetings at the school. Most meetings begin with a snack or meal and activity, and the school provides childcare at no cost to parents. On-going assessments and evaluations ensure that the parent meetings are working for families in attendance.

Parents and guardians are expected to visit their child’s classroom during the year, attend at least two parent meetings, attend all student-led conferences, and support their children in getting to school on time and regularly.

Parents are also involved in major school decisions such as, but not limited to hiring of teachers, improving the facility, providing meals, designing curriculum, and creating and maintaining the school environment.

#### CURRICULUM OVERVIEW *(see end of this section for more about Expeditionary Learning)*

Río Gallinas School curriculum encompasses integrated content areas through periodic, standards-based Learning Expeditions that challenge students to achieve at high levels, as well as continuous and rigorous skill development in literacy and mathematical thinking outside the Expeditionary Learning format.

Each class and each Expedition revolve around clearly-stated, standards-based Learning Targets. Students see, discuss, and question these targets before each unit, and the targets are posted in the classroom so that everyone knows where they are heading. Daily assessments are built into the teachers’ lesson plans so that students always know where they are in relation to those targets and what they still need to do in order to reach them. This clarity of expectations creates an atmosphere of high expectations without the anxiety typically found in classrooms where students do not know exactly what those expectations are or require of them.

The school year begins with a “mini-expedition” that immerses students and families in the school culture exemplified by the motto, “We are all crew, not passengers.” This immersion creates excitement and curiosity, the “need to know” that drives inquiry and engagement in learning. A Fall Expedition ends in a culminating activity that summarizes and celebrates learning from the expedition while providing focus to the service component(s) of the learning. Fieldwork takes students outside of the school building to learn about the community around them, but Expeditions take place as much in the school as outside of it. While students participate in the integrated Expeditionary Learning approach, they also take part in daily skill-building activities and classes focusing on literacy and mathematical thinking.

A Winterim term bridges between Fall and Spring Expeditions with additional skill-building courses, plus elective classes called Choices that allow students to go into depth exploring fine arts, research projects, physical education opportunities, and other areas of interest that students identify on staff-generated surveys during the Fall. Mini-Expeditions called “Slices” take place during this period and throughout the rest of the school year as appropriate.

The Spring Expedition typically involves more extended periods of travel outside the school building, and ends with a culminating activity that summarizes and celebrates not only the learning from the particular expedition but also the entire school year. The year ends with a two-week period of reflection, portfolio gathering and review, and a student-led conference with parents and guardians before students are released for the summer. An awards assembly celebrates achievement by all students (each student receives an award / appreciation for growth shown during the year), and an eighth-grade graduation ceremony serves as a community farewell to our graduating students as they prepare to enter high school the next Fall.

Before teaching staff leaves for summer study and travel, they participate in a year’s-end retreat to reflect on and evaluate the past year, and to plan the following year’s Expeditions, Slices, Choices, and other course offerings.

## SCHOOL DAY:

The school day begins at 7:55 A.M. and ends at 3:15 P.M. Each school day includes some form of arts experience such as a creative movement class or a guided drama activity, some real-world study of ecological principles and problems, and time for students to work in teams and individually as they read, research, reflect on, and assess their ongoing Expeditionary Learning projects. By embedding the reading, writing and computational skills inside the larger relevant projects, we develop student literacy skills at the same time as we assist their learning about the arts and science foundations beneath local history, culture, ecology, and artistic expression.

Students read each day individually or in small groups. Students write each day (projects, journals, creative writing, documentation, etc.). Students work on math programs daily. Students communicate through and about the arts daily. Students edit their work in small groups. Students develop and strengthen reading and math literacy in classroom work every day.

## SCHOOL YEAR:

The school year varies in length according to the calendar developed annually by parents, students, and staff. However, each year the actual number of hours of instruction exceed the state minimums. There are six hours and 50 minutes instructional time per day, plus additional hours spent on fieldwork, including overnight or multiple-day Expeditionary Learning trips. The state minimum hours of instruction requirement for grades 4-6 is 990 hours per year, and for grade 7 and 8 the requirement is 1,080 hours per year. A typical year at Río Gallinas includes over 1,150 hours of instruction, not including overnights.

## GRADES, CLASS SIZE AND TOTAL ENROLLMENT

Current total enrollment in grades 4-8 is 56 students. We would like to increase this to 58 to allow for variations in application rates and grade levels, and then hold this maximum enrollment as long as we remain in our current facility. The distribution across grade levels looks like this:

Lower Elementary (4,5,6)	28 students
Upper Elementary (7,8)	30 students
<b>Total School Enrollment:</b>	<b>58 students</b>

## PROPOSED EXPANSION PLAN

(see following pages)

## EXPANSION PLAN

Parents, guardians, and staff have agreed that, when an appropriate facility becomes available, the school should expand to include grades K-3, becoming a K-8 elementary school. A detailed rationale for this expansion is included below. The phase-in plan for these grades is as follows:

Year 1 of Expansion:	Kindergarten	12 students
	First Grade	12 students
	Grades 4-6	30 students
	Grades 7-8	30 students
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>84 students K-1 and 4-8</b>
Year 2 of Expansion:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	12 students (other enrollment remains the same)
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>96 students K-2 and 4-8</b>
Year 3 of Expansion:	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	12 students (other enrollment remains the same)
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>108 students K-8</b>

## RATIONALE FOR EXPANSION

The suggestion to expand to include grades K-3 came from our Family Advisory Council, which includes all families in our learning community. In a recent survey of families that reached 81% of parents and guardians with children at Río Gallinas, 100% support renewal of the charter and 98% support this proposed expansion plan.

At present, students enter Río Gallinas (most from outside the school district, and many from outside the state or from home-schooling backgrounds) at 4<sup>th</sup> grade or older. They often bring with them significant learning deficits and a negative attitude toward schools and learning. By drawing out their natural curiosity and love of learning from early childhood, we feel we can better assist children to become lifelong learners.

Those children who move on to other schools in West Las Vegas, either by matriculating from eighth grade into high school, or by transferring at an earlier grade, will bring with them the ethic of excellence and the culture of quality they have learned at Río Gallinas.

Many of the outstanding characteristics of young learners are exactly those they will need to excel in the Expeditionary Learning / integrated studies environment at Río Gallinas. We would like the opportunity to build on those innate abilities from Kindergarten forward.

### **Kindergarten:**

Children are the principal agents of their own learning, and learning best occurs through active exploration in a rich environment. In kindergarten students explore the world around them. Students learn through hands-on learning expeditions. They learn to pursue their interests, evaluate themselves, and move toward responsibility for their learning. Students develop self-esteem, independence, communication, and conflict resolution skills by working alone and in small groups. They learn to make connections, developing positive attitudes toward learning, and towards learning in a community of learners.

Our kindergarten will be used to develop reading readiness skills. We will focus on reading strategies that proficient readers use to understand what they read. [Pearson, 1992] They will learn to:

- Search for connections between what they know and new information;
- Ask questions of themselves, the authors, and the texts they read or hear;
- Draw inferences during and after reading;
- Distinguish between important and less important ideas in the text;
- Become adept at synthesizing information;
- Visualize and create images using their different senses; and
- Read and write across the curriculum

*Examples of kindergarten learning experiences we will offer at Río Gallinas School:*

- Book-making
- Books read aloud every day
- Storytelling
- Storylab where students use story figures to tell their own stories and fables.
- Creative movement
- Building vocabulary through investigations, out of classroom exploration, discussing, sharing, pictures, stories, etc.
- Strengthening visualization skills essential to imaging
- Building comprehension of concepts
- Exploration of the wilderness
- Exploration of different art mediums
- Community service
- Care of animals
- Fieldwork
- Learning about local history
- Photography
- Science Investigations
- Cooking
- Daily Movement
- Daily music, dance, singing, rhythm exercises
- Numbers exploration
- Solving real world problems
- Play

**Documentation:**

Teachers will daily observe and document the children's comments, learning styles, comments, problem-solving abilities, and social behavior. Kindergarten will be used to extensively assess how the individual students learn best and what their weaknesses and strengths are. This information will be used to strengthen the students' learning.

**First Grade:**

The core curriculum for language arts will be *Sounds and Syllables, Multisensory Structured Language Program* based on the Orton Gillingham / Alphabetic Phonics based program, Books I and II for 1<sup>st</sup> graders.

This structured, multisensory, process-oriented, phonetic approach to teaching reading emphasizes:

- Phonemic awareness
- Word attack skill
- Accuracy and fluency
- Linguistic and morphologic patterns
- Listening and reading comprehension skills

Similarly, this structured, multisensory, process-oriented, phonetic approach to teaching spelling emphasizes:

- Phonological/phonemic awareness
- Basic sound/symbol relationships
- Linguistic and morphologic patterns
- Spelling rules and generalizations for base words and derivatives

This program can also be used for remediation one-on-one with students who need extra help.

**Second Grade:**

Students work through Books III, IV, and V

**Third Grade:**

Full integration into Learning Expedition Anchor Texts and reading / writing for literacy across the curriculum.

*Our Ethic: Everyone in our community — children, parents, guardians, teachers, staff, and visitors — is a learner for life.*

# Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound

## What is Expeditionary Learning?

Expeditionary Learning is a model for comprehensive school reform for elementary, middle, and high schools that emphasizes high achievement through active learning, character growth, and teamwork.

As Outward Bound aims at personal transformation, Expeditionary Learning aims at the transformation of whole schools. Both work at challenging and helping people do more than they would have thought possible. Both view learning as an act of discovery, and experience as the most potent teacher. They are based on certain ideas about what is important for a person to learn and practice as a foundation for academic success and success in life, such things as enterprise, resilience, curiosity, tenacity, self-discipline, teamwork and compassion.

Expeditionary Learning emphasizes five **Core Practices** within its schools:

- *Learning Expeditions*: These challenging, interdisciplinary, real-world projects and in-depth studies act as the primary curriculum units in Expeditionary Learning schools. Learning Expeditions support critical literacy and address central academic standards of content, while promoting character development and fostering a service ethic.
- *Active Pedagogy*: In Expeditionary Learning schools, teachers use active pedagogy to help students become active and collaborative learners: to make connections, to find patterns, to see events from different perspectives, to experiment, to go beyond the information given, and to develop empathy and compassion for events, people, and subjects.
- *School Culture and Character*: Expeditionary Learning builds shared beliefs, traditions, and rituals in order to create a school culture, which is characterized by a climate of physical and emotional safety, a sense of adventure, an ethic of service and responsibility, and a commitment to high quality work.
- *Leadership and School Improvement*: Leaders in Expeditionary Learning schools create a professional community that focuses on curriculum and instruction as the primary vehicles for improving student achievement and school culture.
- *School Structures*: Expeditionary Learning schools use longer and more flexible schedule blocks, common planning time, heterogeneous groupings, and/or looping to ensure student success. Expeditionary Learning achieves success in these Core Practice areas by providing schools with an extensive professional development program. Over a multi-year period, school faculties and administrators are offered a coherent, demanding, and highly regarded program of professional development to implement the model and to realize significant improvement in student learning and character development.

## How many schools are using Expeditionary Learning?

Begun in 1993, Expeditionary Learning is now being implemented in 136 urban, rural, and suburban schools in 27 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. It has been demonstrated to be effective at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Expeditionary Learning recently received a \$12.5 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to open 20 new small high schools around the country over the next five years.



## What are the Results?

*ANSER Elementary Public Charter School in Boise, Idaho:* On the most recent statewide tests, 100 percent of 4th-grade students were rated “proficient” or higher in reading and language arts, and 95 percent “proficient” in math, exceeding comparable state and district scores by 15-20 percent.

*Buncombe Community School in Swannanoa, North Carolina:* Working with some of the county’s hardest-to-reach students, in 1995, Buncombe did not send any students to higher education. After implementing Expeditionary Learning, 62 percent of the Class of 2002 were college bound.

*Codman Academy, Boston, MA:* With a student body consisting of 97 percent students of color, 82 percent on free and reduced lunch, and 18 percent special education, in 2003, all of Codman’s sophomores passed the state English Language Arts assessment on their first attempt, compared with 89% of all sophomores statewide.

## What do Educators say about Expeditionary Learning?

*“In the years that I’ve been teaching, this is, to me, the single best model of learning for kids and the most satisfying model for teachers, because the kids are working on real projects, their work is held of great value, and you are stretching them academically.”*

-Jennifer Wood, Elementary School Teacher

*“There is a sense of moral purpose to the design that is beyond academic success. There is a sense of citizenship, something closer to a world view, a shared sense of our place in the world and the responsibilities that come with that. That is really powerful, and it’s something that is largely absent today.”*

-Tom Vander Ark, Executive Director, Education, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

## What is the Research Evidence?

Expeditionary Learning is a New American Schools-approved model for comprehensive school reform that achieves results: improved teacher practice, higher student achievement and engagement, and a positive and productive school culture. The following third-party, scientifically-based research studies highlight Expeditionary Learning’s success.

### **Center for Research on the Education of Students at Risk (CRESPAR), 2002**

In “Comprehensive School Reform and Student Achievement: a Meta-Analysis,” researchers looked at 29 comprehensive school reform models including EL. The report characterized Expeditionary Learning’s research base as showing “highly promising evidence of effectiveness.” This was the highest rating given to any model that was created in the last ten years. Only three of the 29 other models assessed received higher ratings, and they had all been in the field for a decade longer than EL to build a larger research base.

### **Center for Research in Educational Policy, 2002**

In comparison to a group of schools with similar demographics, teachers at the Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) in Denver used significantly more coaching and project-based learning and significantly less direct instruction and independent seatwork. The study found that RMSEL students consistently outscored the weighted average of students from its four feeder districts across all grade levels for each year of the five-year study period on the Colorado State Assessment Program. RMSEL students scored on average 11.9 percentage points higher in reading than those of the comparison group.

### **National Staff Development Council (NSDC), 2002 and 1999**

A series of NSDC reports entitled “What Works: Results-Based Staff Development” have featured Expeditionary Learning as a leading professional development organization. The 2002 NSDC report on elementary school professional development notes that “using both independent third-party evaluations and internal assessment, consistent improvement in student achievement has been demonstrated throughout the [design’s] history.” The 1999 middle school report concluded that EL was the only program of 26 studied to meet all 27 standards for high quality professional development. The 2002 report on high school professional development mentions EL’s “heavy emphasis on teacher content development and the rigorous expectation of adult learning and collaboration for all teachers.”

### **American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), 2001**

Finding common ground between service learning and comprehensive school reform was the theme of the AYPF survey of 28 leading school reform models. The report gave Expeditionary Learning a five-star rating for being “highly compatible” in linking community service to academics and building “an ethos ...of service to others.”

### **Polly Utichney, Ed. D., Brown University, 2000**

This study analyzed data from two New England Expeditionary Learning schools. Before adopting Expeditionary Learning, King Middle School in Portland, Maine scored lower than its district and state on the Maine Educational Assessment. In 1998-1999, however, King students outscored the state average in 6 of 7 disciplines. At the Rafael Hernandez School, a K-8 two-way bilingual school in Boston, students performed better on the MCAS tests than a district school with a demographically similar population. Ulichney concludes, “Expeditionary Learning implementation appears to be providing a strong academic curriculum that allows students from typically disadvantaged backgrounds to thrive.”

### **American institutes for Research, 1999**

This study of comprehensive school reform determined that Expeditionary Learning was one of only eight school-wide reforms with a research base showing positive effects on student achievement, and noted that the positive effects were seen across subjects.

### **Academy for Educational Development, 1995**

A study and evaluation of Expeditionary Learning’s first three years concluded that nine of ten original demonstration site EL schools showed significant improvement in the standardized tests mandated by their districts. Teachers reported that classroom practices changed markedly, including more collaboration with other teachers, a more systematic connection between content and skill learning, and the development of clear criteria for assessing student work. The study found that students produced high quality work and demonstrated high levels of engagement.

## SECTION D

### **Description of the way Río Gallinas School's educational program will meet the individual needs of the students, including those students determined to be at risk.**

We have designed the Río Gallinas School curriculum to meet the individual learning styles and academic, social, and physical needs of all students. Most children who enroll in non-traditional public school programs are at risk. These students may be bilingual with limited English proficiency, identified as special education, performing below or above grade level, and/or exhibiting social and behavioral needs. Through ongoing assessment procedures, teachers and students identify academic areas on which they need to focus for maximum achievement. For students in need of remediation, parents, students, and teaching staff work together to devise an individualized plan of instruction.

Río Gallinas School uses an approach that recognizes education as a process that takes place both inside and outside the school and is, therefore, affected by:

- (a) social and academic organization of the school;
- (b) the personal and background characteristics/circumstances of students and their families;
- (c) the community contexts within which families, students, and schools exist; and
- (d) the relationship of each of these factors to the others (Natriello, 1990; Richardson & Colfer, 1990)

All students at the school are valued through:

- (a) ensuring that the images and symbols in the school reflect the membership, participation, and contribution of all "categories" of students;
- (b) sensitizing all staff, visitors, and students to the importance of language used to describe the staff, students, parents, who are part of the school family and community;
- (c) planning and teaching with the assumption and expectation that all students can learn whatever the school deems important, (d) ceremonies, festivals, and traditions reflecting the values and diversity of all students; and
- (e) involving all students, parents, and community members in supporting and participating in the instructional program. (Hixson and M.B. Tinzmann, 1990).

Río Gallinas School employs staff and has volunteers in place to address individual students' academic and social needs. By early detection and addressing learning difficulties immediately, we enable every student to feel competent as learners and move toward proficiency in all subject areas.

Staff members work with students that are performing below grade level in reading and writing, individually and in small groups. We follow the Multisensory Integration program and our students have shown significant benefits from this type of intervention. Students involved in this program participate in 60 minutes of daily individual instruction by a reading specialist, as needed, with periodic team re-evaluation.

Students sometimes also work with a mentor; either an older student and/or adult volunteer who can assist them in numerous ways, including tutoring, and per teaching, as appropriate. Parents and guardians participate in workshops on how to support their children's reading progress at home. After-school tutoring is also available for students and their parents / guardians.

**Rio Gallinas School Learning Team** includes: Director, Regular and Special Education teachers, contracted licensed counselor, arts specialists, students, parents / guardians or other family members, members from other schools in the area, and community and student mentors

**Rio Gallinas School Learning Tools** include: constructivist teaching methods, student-directed learning, team-teaching, collaborative and cooperative learning, peer, parent, and community tutoring, role models, community service programs, Spanish language support, home visits, family involvement, specialized software programs, on-going authentic assessment, remediation in basic skills, and adult education classes and workshops.

*Special Education Policies follow as an extended appendix to this section.*

## SECTION E

**Description of the Río Gallinas School plan for evaluating student performance, the types of assessments that will be used to measure student progress toward achievement of the state's standards and Río Gallinas School's student performance standards, the timeline for achievement of our standards, and the procedures for taking corrective action in the event that student performance falls below school standards.**

### **State-mandated tests:**

We administer all state-mandated tests. The school administers the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment (NMSBA).

### **Assessment:**

Río Gallinas School has crafted a school-wide assessment plan that is comprised of several components. The plan includes a variety of relevant, authentic, performance, and standards-based assessments that most effectively measure the school's actual classroom instructional effectiveness towards fulfilling our goals and objectives. The emphasis is on assessment **for** learning through formative, short-cycle assessment instruments, though regular assessment **of** learning takes place using familiar summative assessment tools (such as quizzes and tests).

Students are required to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and strategies through performance assessments that correspond to the New Mexico content standards and benchmarks. The assessments used help teachers gain insight into students' different strategies for learning and to quantify student progress and achievement.

Students are a crucial part of the assessment team. When students are collaborators in assessment, they develop the habit of self-reflection. They learn what good work looks like, how to evaluate their work against models, how to step back from their work and objectively assess their own accomplishments, and how to set personal goals. (Reif, 1990; Wolf, 1989) Río Gallinas staff members regularly participate in professional development opportunities to increase their competence and confidence at designing and applying assessment tools.

We expect all students to learn, because all students can learn. Students compete, not against other students, but against their own personal best. We identify clear learning targets for every unit, learning expedition, and lesson, and then use the assessments described above to help students identify where they are in relation to those targets and what they need to do to reach them.

### **Initial Assessment upon enrollment: Staff review**

- Previous NMSBA or other standardized test scores
- Portfolio (if any) from previous school (s)
- Parent statement of strengths, weaknesses, and goals
- Student statement of strengths, weaknesses, and goals
- IEP records from previous schools, if any

### **Assessments at beginning of school year:**

- Pre-test series assessing level of achievement in home language survey, English language, mathematics, social studies, science, physical education, health education, and career readiness.
- Northwestern Educational Association Measures of Academic Progress (MAPS) online instrument for assessing reading and mathematics skills.
- Brigance comprehensive assessment instrument.
- Meeting with parents and students to confirm or revise initial assessment of strengths, weaknesses, and goals.

### **Ongoing assessment methods:**

- Teacher observation and documentation: Teachers record observations of students' academic and social progress in terms of student interactions, their work with ideas, and their use of diverse materials, and their methods of solving problems.
- Growth Portfolio: This portfolio includes works collected by the students that demonstrate their own development and growth over time. It includes evidence of academic and thinking skills, comprehension strategies, content knowledge, self-knowledge, and cooperative learning. Students add to this portfolio as they complete important projects. A Portfolio Review Committee which includes staff, students, and parents/guardians meets at the end of each year to assess each portfolio, and students explain and defend their choices in a formal review meeting.
- Reading Logs: Students read at least twenty books per year at a level equal to or slightly above their assessed reading level, and document these in a written reading log.
- Rubrics: Students and teachers use clearly stated rubrics for many projects, so students can assess their own work. Students examine models of high-quality work so they can make an educated self-evaluation. Students must explain and defend their scoring.
- Presentations to peers and/or community members: Students make meaning of their learning and communicate that meaning using diverse media (e.g., dances, visual art, computer presentations, poetry, stories, songs, dramas, videos/movies, photos).
- Learning Expedition Journals and Documentation: Students keep several journals, including personal reflection, art experiences, documentation of fieldwork and projects. Students bring self-selected journal entries to peer learning groups for reflection and evaluation as a regular part of their daily learning experiences.
- Interviews with parents, teachers, peers, self, community members, and specialists
- Quizzes and Tests (selected response and extended written response)
- Checklists of skills and project steps toward completion
- Report Cards: The purpose of our report cards is to enable parents, students, and educators to better understand the student's performance and to know what is required for future progress and mastery of state content standards and benchmarks. Staff does not assign letter grades. The school issues extensive report cards three times a year
- Student-led conferences with parents / guardians and staff: three times per year
- Parent/Guardian Conference separate from the student-led conference (upon request)

**End of School Year Assessments:**

- Post-test series mirroring assessments given at beginning of the year (as listed above).
- Student-led conference with parents/guardians to review portfolio and assessments from the year and to revise assessment of strengths, weaknesses, and goals for coming year and/or transition to high school. Staff may make recommendations for the student to participate in summer school or tutoring.

**Timeline (AYP)**

Río Gallinas School follows the federal and state accountability guidelines for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), under which students are moving toward full proficiency at grade level by the year 2014.

**Interventions**

Through our comprehensive assessment strategies, teachers and students identify academic areas on which they need to focus. For students in need of remediation, parents/guardians, students, and teachers design individualized plans.

Staff members work with students who are performing below grade level in reading and writing, both individually and in small groups. Students who need enrichment are noted, and teachers work with students to design appropriate challenges through an expansion of project work or opportunities for mentoring.

Please refer to the plan to meet individual needs section (Section D) for additional information about specific interventions.

## SECTION F

**Evidence that the plan for Río Gallinas School is economically sound, including a proposed budget for the term of the charter and a description of the manner by which the annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of Río Gallinas Schools is to be conducted.**

### **Budget Overview**

Río Gallinas School adheres to all federal and State of New Mexico rules and regulations regarding the handling, reporting, purchasing, and auditing of funds and all other matters relating to the financial dealings of the School. The West Las Vegas Schools (WLVS) district business manager, overseen by the School Director and the Governing Council, handles all budget data entry and reporting, per contract with WLVS.

The Río Gallinas School receives 98% of the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Revenue based on student enrollment and applicable size adjustment units, as well as factors for special education. This amount does not include private grants, matching funds, or federal grants, all of which we regularly and actively seek. The remaining 2% of the SEG goes to WLVS to help defray the costs of hosting the charter school in their district.

Río Gallinas School's Governing Collaborative Council uses the results of annual audit of the WLVS District to evaluate the handling of the school's financial affairs. The audit verifies the accuracy of the school's financial statement, revenue-related data collection, and reporting practices, and reviews the school's internal controls. The audit is conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to a school. The Governing Council reviews any audit exceptions or deficiencies (to date there have been none) and must report to the WLVS District and the PED as to how any exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved.

### **Proposed Five-Year Budget**

Río Gallinas School parents, staff, and community members each year create a proposed budget which is then approved by the Governing Council, the WLVS Board of Education, and the PED budget analysis office. In the past year of operation, we have stayed within our budget, and our projections have come very close to actual final amounts received and expended.

Please see the proposed detailed budget in the Appendix to this Section. Assumptions in building this budget include remaining in our current facility for four more years before moving to a larger facility, increased enrollment when we do move, and relatively constant SEG figures over the five-year period of the projection.



## **SECTION G**

**Evidence that the fiscal management of the charter school complies with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations relative to fiscal procedures.**

### **MANAGEMENT AND PROCEDURES**

Pursuant to New Mexico Statute 22-8B-4 Rio Gallinas School exercises its rights and accepts its responsibilities for the operation of a public chartered school.

The school, to maintain internal control over all assets, has established and consistently follows the procedures below. The purpose of establishing internal controls is to provide a reasonable assurance that the district will accomplish its objectives of safeguarding assets, providing reliable financial information, promoting operational efficiency and ensuring compliance with laws, regulations, and established district policies and procedures.

#### **Personnel**

The Governing Collaborative Council convenes a Hiring Committee consisting of administrator, parents/guardians, teachers, students, and Council members to recruit and recommend staff. The WLVS district business manager trains staff regarding mutually agreed-upon financial policies and procedures.

The council has contracted with the West Las Vegas Schools to provide financial management, including bookkeeping, accounting, budget assistance, and state reporting. WLVS are paid 3% of the operating budget for this service. The WLVS business manager has demonstrated that she possesses and indeed exceeds the necessary qualifications and experience with federal and state laws and regulations to ensure that all practices comply fully with these laws and regulations.

#### **Segregation of Duties:**

Rio Gallinas School assigns duties to staff members who have access to the financial management system with the intent of limiting their ability to cause and conceal errors or irregularities. Added administrative review and oversight procedures increase security in the control system.

#### **Transaction Authorization**

All transactions are recorded at the time of authorization. The business manager is responsible for verifying amounts, classifications, and authorizations before posting them in the financial management system. All source documents used to record transactions are school forms that are pre-numbered for accountability. Void documents are marked void and kept on file.

#### **SAFE-KEEPING ASSETS**

The school keeps an inventory of all assets valued at over \$100. The director has access to the building, cash, and other assets.

#### **RECORD RECONCILIATION**

The WLVS district business manager compares actual assets on hand with the amounts recorded in the financial system. Monthly/periodic reconciliation of bank statements and other financial records are prepared and verified during the monthly closing process. Immediately upon detecting any discrepancies found during the reconciliation process, Rio Gallinas School director researches and corrects them.

## **AUDIT**

An audit to determine whether the Rio Gallinas School has successfully designed and implemented its financial controls and administrative operations is performed annually as part of the WLVS audit.

## **BUDGET** (see also Section F)

The Rio Gallinas School prepares and adopts an annual budget in accordance with statutory requirements. The Rio Gallinas School director and the Rio Gallinas School budget committee prepare the Operating Budget. The Rio Gallinas School ensures that the budget committee has representation from the staff, students, parents, and community members.

WLVS reviews and approves the Operating Budget and includes it separately in the budget submission to the State Public Education Department, pursuant to the Public School Finance Act.

Revenue generated independent of the public school funding formulas for items such as, but not limited to, State funding for instructional materials and technology, federal funding for special and compensatory education, and local revenues is estimated by the State Public Education Department (PED) and/or West Las Vegas Schools with the input of the Rio Gallinas School Director and Governing Council.

Upon completion of each fiscal year, Rio Gallinas School determines the actual cash balances for all funds and reports them WLVS and the PED by the designated deadline.

Increases, decreases, and adjustments to the finalized budget are presented to the PED for approval in the form of a Budget Adjustment Request (BAR). Once all approvals are in place, the change is recorded in the financial management system and the adjustment is made to the original budget.

Budget adjustments that do not alter the total amount of the budget are processed as follows:

- Transfers between expenditure codes within the same function are presented to the Governing Collaborative Council for approval. Once all approvals are in place, the change is recorded in the financial management system as an adjustment to the original budget.
- Transfers between expenditure codes outside of the same function are presented to the PED for approval. Once all approvals are in place, the change is recorded to the financial management system as an adjustment to the original budget.

## **PAYROLL**

The Rio Gallinas School Director is responsible for monitoring the hiring of employees, authorizing salaries, initiating employment contracts, and maintaining the staffing levels approved in the annual budget. Rio Gallinas follows West Las Vegas Schools' salary schedule for administration and teacher salaries.

The Rio Gallinas School is responsible for reporting staff absences and the use of substitute employees. The school submits absentee reports on Friday of each pay period. The WLVS district business manager uses these reports to update employee leave balances. The WLVS district business manager docks leave taken without sufficient leave balances from the employee's pay.

The WLVS district business manager collects all insurance and other deductions on the proper

forms. Records of these deductions are kept at the school site.

## **PURCHASING**

The School Director is responsible for assuring that all purchases against assigned budgets are appropriate and necessary. Submitting the required pre-numbered purchasing documents to the director for review and approval is the first step in the purchasing process.

Whenever it is cost-effective for the charter school, purchases are made from the WLVS warehouse. In these instances, the school follows the bookkeeping requirements and purchasing process of the district. The school pays the same costs and is required to use similar procedures as the other schools in the district.

School policies and procedures meet all of the requirements of the procurement code as dictated by New Mexico State Statutes, including the Public School Code.

## **ENCUMBRANCES**

The WLVS district business manager forwards documents to the Rio Gallinas School director. The School Director verifies that sufficient budget exists for the purchase and that the expenditure is correctly classified and coded to the appropriate account.

Upon completion of the required verifications, the purchase document is recorded as an encumbrance on the financial management system. The WLVS district business manager keeps a copy of all purchase requisitions and holds same until the order is complete and ready for payment.

## **RECEIVING**

The Rio Gallinas School office staff signs a copy of the purchase order to document the receipt of goods and to authorize the release of payment to the vendor. The WLVS district business manager for processing then retains a copy of the purchase order.

## **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

The WLVS district business manager retains all vendor invoices. The vendor is matched to the encumbrance copy of the purchase order and the receiving copy to the purchase requisition. Once the documents are matched, the items invoiced are matched to the items listed on the approved copies of the purchase order. The account distribution is verified and any necessary changes are noted on the invoice.

The financial management system generates a check register, a schedule of checks to be written, and a remittance advice report. A check register by find is generated.

The WLVS district business manager assembles the check back-up documents and presents them to the authorized signer. The check is then initialized and authorized for release of payment. The WLVS district business manager reviews and initials the check back-up for bank reconciliation purposes.

All bank accounts are reconciled on a monthly basis. The WLVS district business manager verifies and approves the bank reconciliation and makes any adjustments necessary to the general ledger.

## **TRAVEL**

Employees and council members of the school are entitled to reimbursement of registration fees, mileage, per diem, and other costs associated with authorized trips for official school business.

All in-state and out-of-state trips must have administrative approval before traveling.

All reimbursements are processed in accordance with the per diem and mileage Act. All receipts for out-of-pocket expenditures for transportation, registration, and miscellaneous expenses are required for reimbursement.

All school employees are eligible for reimbursement of travel-related expenses upon return from their trip. Prepayment of airline tickets is allowable. A purchase requisition is required and must be properly approved before departure on the trip.

## **CASH RECEIPTS**

All funds received go directly to WLVS for deposit and credit toward the Río Gallinas School account. There are no cash receipts accepted by the school, since there are no fees or other charges to attend, and the school does not provide services for payment. When students organize fund-raising events as part of their Learning Expeditions, those funds go into a separate escrow account managed by the Amigos de Río Gallinas not-for-profit support group, and they are disbursed directly to the appropriate charity.

The original receipt is given to the payer, a designated copy is forwarded to the WLVS district business manager, and another copy is retained by the person initiating the receipt.

## **ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE**

The WLVS district business manager is responsible for billing and monitoring the collection of all amounts due from outside agencies. The WLVS district business manager is responsible for tracking and verifying the cash balances for all federal, state, and other grants and contracts awarded to the school. The business manager prepares the required cash receipt, reimbursement reports and invoices necessary for collection of amounts due for various programs.

## **PETTY CASH**

The School Director authorizes issuance of petty cash funds. The petty cash fund is intended for small purchases of \$30.00 or less. A petty cash voucher is required for all payments made from the fund. Persons making purchases on behalf of the school submit the petty cash vouchers and receipts documenting all purchases to the business manager with a purchase order to replenish the petty cash fund. The director returns the petty cash fund to the business manager in cash or invoices before the end of each fiscal year and may request a new petty cash fund for the next fiscal year.

## **INVESTMENTS**

Río Gallinas School will account for all monies placed in interest-bearing accounts by fund. Excess cash balances in the interest-bearing bank account generate interest, which is credited by the financial institute on a monthly basis. The amount of interest earned is receipted and recorded to the financial management system when the credit is received. As of the date of this charter renewal application, the school does not maintain any such fund.

Río Gallinas teachers, who are responsible for facility management, maintain fixed asset inventory records. The database includes asset number, a description of the item, the serial number, and purchase number, and acquisition date, the fund code, and the location number.

The staff takes an annual physical inventory and the director signs the inventory sheets.

The director must approve all requests for removal of surplus property, deletions, and discards.

## **INSURANCE**

Personal insurance for school employees is provided to the school through the New Mexico Public School Insurance Authority (NMPSIA). Property and Liability insurance is also covered through NMPSIA. Memoranda of coverage are provided to NMPSIA each year.

## **CONTRACTS**

New Mexico law and PED regulations govern the issuance of contracts. The issuance of contracts will comply with State and Federal laws regarding non-discrimination.

## **REAL PROPERTY DISPOSITION**

New Mexico law and PED regulations govern the leasing, selling, or otherwise disposing of real property belonging to the school.

## **SUBSTITUTE SERVICES**

The Rio Gallinas School will maintain a substitute services program under the School director.

## **FUNDING**

Río Gallinas School receives funding pursuant to the New Mexico Charter School Act of 1999 and its successors, and may opt to receive its funding directly from the state or through any other available mechanisms.

## **LEGAL SERVICES**

Río Gallinas School will retain a law firm as legal counsel from time to time if the Governing Council deems it appropriate to do so.

## **SECTION H**

**Evidence of a plan for the displacement of students, teachers and other employees who will not attend or be employed in the conversion school.**

*Not applicable, as Rio Gallinas School is not a Conversion School as defined by legislation.*

D. **Evidence of compliance (as needed)** with conditions, standards, **and/or** procedures set forth in the charter.

E. Evidence of progress toward achievement of the state minimum education standards and/or student performance standards identified in the charter application.

F. Financial audit summary and other evidence of responsible fiscal management.

G. Notice of violation of any provision of the Public School Code from which the School was not specifically exempted and steps taken to correct such violation.

**FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Family Advisory Council consists of parents, guardians, **the** Director, staff **and personnel of the School**, and community members as specified in HB 212 and enacted into law July 1, 2003. **Using** a traditional governance model **which** follows the Democratic Rules of Order, **the Council meets on a regular monthly basis and provides input, advice, and support to the School Community** on issues **including, but not limited to;** curriculum, facility and school climate, student achievement, community involvement, **publicity and** marketing, fundraising, **general and specific** student activities, **and** school events.

**Information, ideas, and concerns generated through the Family Advisory Council are presented to the Governing Council by the Director of the School for review and consideration. The Governing Council takes action on such matters as appropriate and/or necessary.**

**PERSONNEL**

**NOTE: IF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL IS NOT INVOLVED WITH RECRUITING AND RECOMMENDING STAFF AND THERE IS NO “HIRING COMMITTEE” IN EXISTENCE, THE “PERSONNEL” PORTION OF THE SCHOOL CHARTER SHOULD BE DELETED.**

**OPEN MEETINGS**

Rio Gallinas School **Governing Council** operates in compliance with the “Open Meetings Act”: NMSA 1978; Sections 10-15-1 to 10-15-4. This stance is consistent with the School’s mission to foster a democratic society. This legislation embodied the belief of the democratic ideal is best served by a well-informed public. The laws require; public business **is** conducted in full public view, actions of public bodies be taken openly, and deliberations of public bodies **are** open to the public. The School specifically follows the New Mexico Open Meetings Act concerning the following:

1. Meetings shall be public.
2. All meetings with a quorum shall be public.
3. Telephone access provided if necessary.
4. Reasonable public notice.
5. Reconvened meetings.
6. Agendas made available prior to the meeting.
7. Written minutes.
8. Closed meetings.
9. Completion of closed meetings.

**INSPECTION OF PUBLIC RECORDS**

Rio Gallinas School **Governing Council** complies with the “Inspection of Public Records Act” – NMSA 1978: Chapter 14; Article 2, including:

- Definitions.
- Designation of records custodian and duties.
- Procedure for requesting records.
- Procedure for inspection.
- Procedure for excessively burdensome or broad requests.
- Procedure for denied requests.
- Exceptions.

The Governing Council uses standard forms for inspection of public records.



## **SECTION J**

**An explanation of the relationship that will exist between the proposed charter school and its employees, including evidence that the terms and conditions of employment will be addressed with affected employees and their recognized representatives, if any.**

Rio Gallinas School complies with Chapter 22, Article 10 of the NMSA 1978 "School Personnel Act." Rio Gallinas School has created a comprehensive governing policy and procedures manual to align specifically with the New Mexico state law and the School Personnel Act. The Governing Council adheres to all personnel policies and procedures contained in the manual. All employees may negotiate the conditions of employment directly with the council and administration individually or through their recognized representatives, if the employee chooses.

### **LICENSURE**

Rio Gallinas School will insure that any person teaching, supervising an instructional program, counseling or providing special instructional services shall hold a valid certificate authorizing the person to perform that function. Rio Gallinas School will ensure that all such individuals in the school have current and appropriate licenses or waivers.

### **PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT**

Rio Gallinas School does not discriminate against any employee because of race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, or disability in its recruitment, selection, training, utilization, or other employment-related activities.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT**

Pursuant to New Mexico law, all personnel employed by Rio Gallinas School shall be subject to:

- Criminal background check (22-10-3.3), including two fingerprint cards provided to the SDE to obtain the applicant's FBI record.
- Background check for known conviction or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude (22:10-3.4)
- Child abuse registry check

All persons seeking employment with Rio Gallinas School must submit:

- Application for employment (the Rio Gallinas School will use the West Las Vegas Schools application [See Appendix] with slight modifications)
- Copy of the teaching certificate or waiver
- Tuberculosis test
- New Employee Training
- Official Transfer

## **DISMISSAL, DISCIPLINE, AND TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

Río Gallinas School complies with the School Personnel Act for terminating, discharging, and not rehiring its licensed employees.

No employee may be disciplined, reprimanded, reduced in rank or compensation, or deprived of any professional advantage without procedural due process, including the employee's right to know allegations or charges and progressive discipline appropriate to the specific action or incident.

The school shall investigate any complaint regarding an employee made by any parent, student, or identified representative at the lowest administrative level before any action being taken against the employee.

## **CONTRACT**

Río Gallinas School will use the template contract called "Certified (Licensed) School Instructor Contract" with paragraphs A-I recorded as Title 6 Primary and Secondary Education, Chapter 66 School Personnel-Contracts, Part 2 Certified (Licensed) School Instructor Contract.

## **PAYROLL**

All staff and faculty members employed by Río Gallinas School participate in the retirement system of the State of New Mexico Education Retirement Board.

Employees are paid through the payroll department of West Las Vegas Schools, using the district's procedures for recording employee work hours, overtime, absences, leaves, vacation, and other adjustments, as contained in applicable policies and regulations.

## **HOURS AND WORKLOAD, EMPLOYEE LEAVE**

The school publishes the hours and workload of each position in the Staff Handbook at the beginning of each school year, along with policies regarding employee leave.

## **PUNCTUALITY AND ATTENDANCE**

Any employee who is routinely tardy or absent, or routinely violates the rules or policies of Río Gallinas School shall be subject to disciplinary review.

## **SALARIES**

The application will set forth a salary schedule that indicates salary steps for all personnel based on training, education, and experience.

Teachers coming from the district to Río Gallinas School must make their own arrangements with the district concerning years of employment and whether their district leave of absence to teach at Río Gallinas School will accrue years of in-state district employment or not.

The Río Gallinas School teacher salary schedule conforms to the West Las Vegas Schools salary schedule. (See appendix.) The director (administrator) will receive 10% above the salary schedule to cover longer hours and extended school year. Teachers will receive 5 % above to cover additional hours in camping trips and Saturdays. Río Gallinas School will follow any annual increases WLVS provides for teachers. Modifications to the WLVS schedule include:

- The calendar does not use the standard 185 days for the district but instead uses the Río Gallinas School calendar, e.g., 164 instructional days (1,107 hours) plus 10 days of in-

service. Total teacher hours not including camping trips or overnight retreat (1,174.50)

- Not only in-state experience, but also all out-of-state teaching experience (in schools, colleges, and universities) carries weight for placement on the salary scale.
- There is no cap on out-of-state experience allowed.

## **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

The Staff Handbook will set forth job descriptions for every position. The Governing Collaborative Council may revise the following job descriptions.

### **School Director:**

The School Director is the instructional leader and is directly and indirectly responsible for school-based operations and the decision-making process of their school. The School Director serves as the site administrator of the school and is responsible for the academic operation and success of the school. The Director is responsible for implementing the school budget, supervising all relevant staff members regarding the school site operations. The Director is directly responsible and accountable to The Governing Collaborative Council.

The School Director, in cooperation with the Hiring Committee, will interview candidates for all other staff positions as well as providing notification of all hires to the Governing Collaborative Council. The same process of operation is in effect for the termination of an employee. The Director will notify the Collaborative Governing Council of any termination of staff. All school employees are directly responsible to the Director and thus should bring issues of concern to the Director's attention.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF SCHOOL DIRECTOR**

Administrative Licensure, M.A./M.S. or higher

Demonstrated ability to plan, schedule and coordinate the efforts of numerous people and numerous projects simultaneously.

Demonstrated ability to employ, supervise, evaluate, apply due process, dismiss, and compensate personnel.

Demonstrated ability to facilitate groups of people from diverse backgrounds and interests.

Demonstrated educational leadership including curriculum, instruction, student conduct, and professional growth

Demonstrated knowledge of and commitment to the mission statement, guiding principles, goals, and delivery of instruction.

Demonstrated ability to provide effective leadership by including the educational community in decision-making and implementation of the program.

Demonstrated ability to empower others and delegate both responsibility and authority to others.

Demonstrated characteristics of honesty, integrity, and a sense of humor.

Demonstrated ability to communicate with staff, parents, students, and the community.

Demonstrated ability to work well with children.

Evidence of on-going professional growth.

**In addition**, per NMAC 6.69.3.9, School Director the school of Rio Gallinas School shall be subject to the following New Mexico State statutes and rules concerning personnel processes:

- A) Each school district shall include the following competencies and indicators as part of the evaluation criteria.
- (1) The School Director /administrator:
    - (a) Demonstrates foresight, examines issues, and takes initiatives to improve the quality of education in the community.
    - (b) Enables staff, students, parents, and community to build a common vision.
    - (c) Articulates a vision and is able to make that vision concrete to others.
    - (d) Provides a learning environment and climate where all stakeholders share creativity, risk taking, and experimentation.
    - (e) Understands, facilitates, and manages change in self, others, and the organization.
  - (2) The School Director /administrator embraces and encourages the acceptance of diversity.
    - (a) Models respect, understanding, and appreciation for all people.
    - (b) Addresses the special needs of groups and individuals.
    - (c) Addresses the needs of multicultural, multilingual, multiracial, and economically diverse populations.
    - (d) Promotes and supports recruitment and assignment of diverse staff.
    - (e) Demonstrates sensitivity to alternative educational philosophies and methodologies.
  - (3) The School Director /administrator uses effective people skills to communicate
    - (a) Addresses the needs of staff, students, parents, and community
    - (b) Facilitates communication and the use of problem solving processes to promote teamwork, consensus, and inquiry.
    - (c) Assists with the resolution of conflicts and stress.
    - (d) Implements the staff evaluation process effectively.
    - (e) Writes and speaks appropriately.
    - (f) Keeps staff and community informed of pertinent information in a timely manner.
    - (g) Utilizes appropriate listening skills.
  - (4) The School Director /administrator provides and maintains an environment where optimal student growth can take place.
    - (a) Understands and supports the goals and purposes of the organization
    - (b) Promotes learning as the primary purpose of the organization.
    - (c) Collaborates and networks with community service agencies, other educational organizations and businesses, as appropriate.
    - (d) Provides and maintains a safe and healthy environment that promotes positive student behavior.
    - (e) Understands and encourages the application of human growth and development principles.
    - (f) Assesses and evaluates program and staff effectively.
  - (5) The School Director /administrator demonstrates instructional leadership.
    - (a) Seeks out and provides staff with information on methodology, research, and current educational trends.
    - (b) ) Identifies, accesses, and uses appropriate resources.
    - (c) Makes reasonable decisions and accepts responsibility for those decisions.
    - (d) Promotes collaboration and mutual sharing among teachers and staff.

- (e) Encourages and allows others to lead as appropriate.
  - (f) Comprehends effective learning and teaching processes.
  - (6) The School Director /administrator demonstrates an understanding of the dynamics of the educational organization.
    - (a) Develops positive school/community relations.
    - (b) Demonstrates an understanding of the politics of school governance and operations.
    - (c) Informs staff, parents, and community of relevant facts to aid in reaching informed decisions.
    - (d) Exhibits skills in comprehending, interpreting, and supporting positions of the organization.
    - (e) Exhibits skills in lobbying, negotiating, collective bargaining, policy development, and policy maintenance.
    - (f) Exhibits effective public relations skills.
  - (7) The School Director /administrator effectively manages the resources for which he/she is responsible including personnel, finances, facilities, programs, and time.
    - (a) Implements district policies, state standards, and federal regulations and laws.
    - (b) Organizes, coordinates, and supervises staff assignments and needs.
    - (c) Carries out appropriate fiscal procedures.
    - (d) Utilizes and maintains facilities.
    - (e) Demonstrates efficient time management by establishing schedules and reasonable timelines for completing tasks.
    - (f) Utilizes available technology to meet administrative objectives.
    - (g) Utilizes participatory management techniques.
  - (8) The School Director /administrator uses supervision, staff development, and performance evaluation to improve the educational program.
    - (a) Implements a collaborative process in staff development.
    - (b) Identifies and acknowledges effective performance in objective terms.
    - (c) Assists individual professional development planning.
    - (d) Develops, implements and evaluates the staff development program, collaboratively utilizing a variety of resources.
    - (e) Follows procedures and participates in training consistent with the state and local Teacher Performance Evaluation Plan.
    - (f) Provides regular feedback on performance.
  - (9) The School Director /administrator maintains a familiarity with current educational issues through a process of ongoing personal development.
    - (a) Meets statutory contact hour requirements.
    - (b) Participates in local, state, and other training opportunities.
    - (c) Reviews current professional literature.
    - (d) Continues to expand knowledge and awareness of programs within the school district.
- B. Each school district shall select and/or develop additional competencies and indicators determined appropriate by the school district to complete the total system of principal/administrator evaluation.
- C. Each school district shall provide training in conference skills and growth planning to all principal/administrators and supervisors of principal/administrators.
- D. The principal/administrator performance evaluation system shall include at least the

following components.

- (1) Collect data on the principal/administrator's performance to determine the presence and extent of competencies demonstrated.
- (2) Confer with the principal/administrator before each observation and as soon as possible after each data collection instance to ensure the adequacy, accuracy, and completeness of the information obtained.
- (3) Identify strengths and areas of the principal/administrator's performance where growth can occur.
- (4) Collaborate with the principal/administrator on the development of a written plan for improvement or growth. The plan should include follow-up data collection and conferences with the principal/administrator to determine progress toward completion of the plan.
- (5) Assist the principal/administrator through individual guidance, workshops, classes, or other such means for completing the growth plan.

[01-15-99; [6.69.3.9 NMAC](#) - Rn, 6 NMAC 4.5.2.9, 06-14-01]

### **Teachers**

Teachers are an integral part of the school and shall be primarily responsible for the education of students in the classroom. The teachers shall have a firm belief in the instructional methods and curriculum set forth in this proposal. They shall understand and be committed to the philosophy of Rio Gallinas School. They shall have a strong desire to help all students learn to their individual potential and accordingly shall set high expectations for their students. Teachers must ensure that all students meet the curriculum goals and provide a challenging yet supportive learning environment in the classroom.

The Teacher will report directly to the School Director. The Teacher provides the leadership and knowledge needed to plan for each student's learning and the development and implementation of the curriculum.

### **EXPECTATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF TEACHER**

B.A./B.S. or higher, and possess teacher certification

Demonstrated competency to deliver an educational program

Demonstrated history of providing effective, innovative instruction

Demonstrated knowledge of and commitment to the mission statement, guiding principles, goals, and delivery of instruction

Demonstrated ability to work in a shared-responsibility decision-making, model by participating in site-based council and PTO meetings

A proven record of collaboration with colleagues, parents, and community

Members as a volunteer in the community

Demonstrated characteristics of honesty, integrity, and a sense of humor

Demonstrated ability to work well with children

Evidence of on-going professional growth

Open to intermittent evaluations and evidence improvement based on evaluations  
Evidence of on-going professional growth  
Evidence of successful background checks

**In addition**, per NMAC 6.69.3.8, all teachers of, and the school of Rio Gallinas School shall be subject to the following New Mexico State statutes and rules concerning personnel processes:

A. N/A

B. N/A

C. Each evaluation/supervision system shall include the following competencies and indicators as part of the evaluation criteria.

(1) The teacher accurately demonstrates knowledge of the content area and approved curriculum.

(a) Utilizes and enhances approved curriculum.

(b) Gives clear explanations relating to lesson content and procedure.

(c) Communicates accurately in the content area.

(d) Shows interrelatedness of one content area to another.

(2) The teacher appropriately utilizes a variety of teaching methods and resources for each area taught.

(a) Provides opportunities for students to work independently, in small groups, and in large groups, as appropriate.

(b) Uses a variety of methods such as demonstrations, lecture, student-initiated work, group work, questioning, independent practice, etc., as appropriate.

(c) Uses a variety of resources such as field trips, supplemental printed materials, manipulatives, etc., as appropriate.

(d) Provides opportunities for students to apply, practice, and demonstrate knowledge and skills learned through various modalities.

(3) The teacher communicates with and obtains feedback from students in a manner that enhances student learning and understanding.

(a) Explains and/or demonstrates the relevance of topics and activities.

(b) Communicates to students the instructional intent, directions or plan at the appropriate time.

(c) Establishes and states expectations for student performance.

(d) Clarifies actions, directions, and explanations when students do not understand.

(e) Actively solicits communication from students about their learning.

(f) Communicates regularly with students about their progress.

(4) The teacher comprehends the principles of student growth, development, and learning, and applies them appropriately.

(a) Uses and instructs students in the use of cognitive thinking skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, divergent thinking, inquiry, decision-making, etc.

(b) Uses teaching techniques that address student learning levels, rates, and styles.

(c) Uses materials and media that address student learning levels, rates, and styles.

(d) Uses resources such as community service agencies, school personnel, parents, etc., to meet students' learning levels, rates, and styles.

(5) The teacher effectively utilizes student assessment techniques and procedures.

(a) Uses a variety of assessment tools and strategies, as appropriate.

(b) Uses information gained from ongoing assessment for remediation and instructional

planning.

(c) Maintains documentation of student progress. Communicates student progress with students and families in a timely manner.

(6) The teacher manages the educational setting in a manner that promotes positive student behavior, and a safe and healthy environment.

(a) Serves as a model for constructive behavior patterns.

(b) Executes routine tasks effectively and efficiently.

(c) Establishes and states expectations for student behavior.

(d) Handles transitions effectively.

(e) Have materials and media ready for student use.

(f) Minimizes distractions and interruptions.

(g) Manages student behavior effectively and appropriately.

(h) Identifies hazards, assesses risks, and takes appropriate action.

(7) The teacher recognizes student diversity and creates an atmosphere conducive to the promotion of positive student involvement and self-concept.

(a) Demonstrates sensitivity and responsiveness to the personal ideas, needs, interests, and feelings of students.

(b) Acknowledges student performance and achievement.

(c) Acknowledges that every student can learn.

(d) Provides opportunities for each student to succeed.

(e) Provides students with opportunities for active involvement and creativity.

(f) Provides opportunities for students to be responsible for their own behavior and learning.

(g) Promotes positive student/teacher relationships.

(h) Encourages high student expectations.

(i) Demonstrates an awareness and respect for each student's background, experience, and culture.

(8) The teacher demonstrates a willingness to examine and implement change, as appropriate.

(a) Seeks out information on methodology, research, and current trends in education to enhance and improve the quality of learning.

(b) Implements a variety of strategies to enhance learning.

(c) Recognizes that change entails risk and that modifications may be needed.

(9) The teacher works productively with colleagues, parents, and community members.

(a) Collaborates with colleagues.

(b) Communicates with parents on a regular basis.

(c) Uses conflict resolving strategies when necessary.

(d) Involves parents and community in their learning environment.

(e) Communicates in a professional manner with colleagues, parents, and community members regarding educational matters.

(D) Each school district shall select and/or develop additional competencies and indicators determined appropriate by the local school district to complete the local teacher performance evaluation system.

(E) Each school district shall provide training in classroom observation techniques, conference skills, and growth planning to all teachers and personnel assigned performance evaluation duties.

(F) The teacher performance evaluation system shall include at least the following



components:

- (1) Conduct and document multiple observations of the teacher's performance to determine the presence and extent of competencies demonstrated.
- (2) Confer with the teacher before each observation and as soon as possible after each observation to ensure the adequacy, accuracy, and completeness of the information obtained.
  - (3) Identify strengths and areas of the teacher's performance where growth can occur.
  - (4) Collaborate with the teacher on development of a written plan for improvement or growth. The plan should include observations and conferences with the teacher to determine progress toward completion of the plan.
- (5) Assist the teacher through individual guidance, workshops, classes, or other such means for completing the growth plan.

### **Secretary**

The Secretary serves as the core for all communication in the school. He/she will report directly to the School Director.

### **EXPECTATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF SECRETARY**

- Demonstrated knowledge of and commitment to the mission, guiding principles, goals, and delivery of instruction
- Demonstrated competency in executive clerical and communication skills
- Demonstrated knowledge and skills in the use of computer applications and programs
- Demonstrated ability to supervise several people and projects simultaneously as the office manager
- Demonstrated ability to relate well with student, staff, parents, and the community
- Demonstrated characteristics of honesty, integrity, and a sense of humor
- Demonstrated ability to work in a shared responsibility decision-making model
- Demonstrated ability to work well with children
- Evidence growth from intermittent evaluation
- Evidence of on-going professional growth

## **SECTION K**

### **The employment and student discipline policies of the proposed charter school.**

#### **General Condition of Employment**

The School Personnel Act, codified at NMSA 2000 22-10-1 through 22-10-27, controls personnel policy at the Rio Gallinas School. The Governing Collaborative Council through the School Director will have complete authority over all employment matters, including employment, discipline, re-employment, and termination in compliance with the School Personnel Act. NMSA 22-10-14 (A) Employees who have been employed for three or more consecutive years shall only be terminated for just cause NMSA 22-14-10 (D). "Just cause" means a reason that is rationally related to an employee's competence or turpitude or proper performance of his/her duties and that is not in violation of the employee's constitutional civil rights. NMSA 22-10-2 (F).

Employees are entitled to due process before termination, if such employee has a vested property or livery interest in his or her employment. In the event of termination, the administration shall provide the employee with written notice concerning reasons for the termination. The administrator shall provide the employee the opportunity to present her or his case. The procedures are set forth in NMSA 2000 22-10-14, 22-10-17, and in the school Personnel Act in general. Any employee aggrieved by a decision of the school may appeal, as set forth in NMSA 22-10-14, and 22-10-17, if the school Personnel Act is changed, modified, or amended, then the schools procedure will also be changed, modified, or amended to conform to the Act.

#### **SIZE OF STAFF/PTR**

The Pupil-Teacher Ratio is (1:12). There are four full-time teachers, three half-time teachers, and a half-time administrator and half-time special education teacher. In addition to classroom teachers, the school employs part-time reading specialists. Included in the teachers' job descriptions are significant planning, programming, and operational duties. Teachers may be paid more than the WLVS scale depending on duties and increased complexity of the job description, but certified staff shall never be paid less than district scale for their teaching level.

#### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

A grievance procedure is included as a part of the Staff Handbook and follows the WLVS Board of Education Policies, with the modification that due process applies from the time of first employment.

#### **HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE BENEFITS**

Rio Gallinas School complies with all applicable federal and state laws concerning employee welfare, safety, and health issues, including the requirement of federal law for a drug-free workplace.

Employees are entitled to receive the benefits described in the budget including the New Mexico State Employee's Retirement System, for which Rio Gallinas School shall be responsible for the cost of the employer's respective share of any required contributions.

Rio Gallinas School agrees to provide to eligible employees group medical, dental, and vision insurance through and as determined by the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority (NMPSIA). For those employees who elect to participate in approved insurance plan(s), the Rio

Gallinas School agrees to continue to contribute that percentage of the premium required by state law.

Rio Gallinas School agrees to provide employees access to long-term disability and life insurance benefits available through NMPSIA. Río Gallinas agrees to include its staff and other employees and volunteers under its blanket liability insurance coverage as long as they are acting in an official school capacity at the time of the alleged liability.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Teachers are encouraged to attend conferences and classes that will help them develop professionally. Professional leave will be granted according to policies found in the Staff Handbook. If the budget allows, Rio Gallinas will pay expenses for professional development.

### **EVALUATION**

All performance of personnel are evaluated annually in conformance with State Department of Education Professional Development Plan requirements. Official observations of teachers provide some information about practice and skill. More importantly, teachers meet individually with the Director, and also as a peer group set up to evaluate each other in a spirit of collegiality and assess their performance. The Director documents areas of competence or mastery, and areas needing improvement, following the model of a standard performance review. This procedure is included in the Staff Handbook.

### **RIF**

The Staff Handbook sets forth provisions to address a reduction in workforce, as prescribed in the New Mexico Public School Code.

### **JURISDICTION OVER STUDENTS**

All officials, employees, and authorized agents of the Rio Gallinas School whose responsibilities include supervision of students stand *in loco parentis* with regard to any student whom they are required to supervise at any time that the responsibility of supervision exists. This authority applies whenever students are lawfully subject to the Rio Gallinas School' control, regardless of place. During such periods, public school authorities have the right to supervise and control the conduct of students, and students have the duty to submit to the Rio Gallinas School' authority.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

Rio Gallinas School is committed to providing a safe, challenging, and creative learning environment for the students, teachers, and parents. We want students to enjoy school and feel safe. The school has set forth policies and rules to ensure a positive learning environment for all involved in the school. Students are encouraged to make responsible decisions and to be active in solving conflicts in a positive way. The Rio Gallinas School policies reflect the school mission by shifting many responsibilities to students.

Using the model of Positive Discipline in the Classroom, within a community circle, students monitor and determine appropriate behavior and resolve conflicts. Students and teachers develop skills and strategies that create a learning environment in which students manage and monitor their own behavior.

Rio Gallinas School is committed to taking the time and using the necessary resources to find solutions for behavioral issues in the school community. At times when the school must take disciplinary action, staff makes sincere and professional attempts to locate the underlying cause of behavioral difficulties, and to make reasonable adjustments in the daily environment of the student to address his/her needs.

The main components of our disciplinary process are student meetings, class meetings, removal from class, and conferences. Under extreme circumstances, consequences can be suspension, police contact, and/or expulsion. Before expulsion, students have the right of due process, except when the student's conduct presents an immediate threat to the health and safety of others. Rio Gallinas School will notify the District of expulsions immediately and includes suspension and expulsion data in its annual report.

**Student Meetings:** When a conflict arises, the students involved meet and share their perspectives and feelings, and then find solutions with the teacher(s) and student(s). After discussing solutions, each student fills out a behavioral form stating their her/his part in the conflict and a possible solution.

**Class Meetings:** When a conflict involves the majority of the class, or with one repeat offender of the rules, a qualified staff member oversees a class meeting. A student acts as the designated facilitator, with coaching from the staff member as appropriate. The students share their perspectives, feelings, and find solutions. After discussing solutions, students who agree to the proposed plan sign the behavioral agreement form. Staff may call follow-up meetings, until the situation is resolved.

**Conferences:** Conferences result in a wide variety of outcomes and follow up. Parent(s)/guardian, teachers, director, and the student are all involved in the communication, in goal-setting, and in the evaluation of the student's progress.

### **CATEGORY I Offenses**

- Violation of Class and School Rules
- Disruption of Educational Process
- Disrespect/Defiance
- Unacceptable Dress

Tardiness  
 Dishonesty  
 Profanity/Obscenity  
 Inappropriate displays of affection  
 Possession of music players, pagers, phones, or noise-making devices  
 Truancy (See truancy policy)

Range of Consequences: 1st offense: meeting with the student(s) 2nd offense: Class meeting  
 3rd offense: conference with parents/guardians **Behavioral agreement will always be created when there is a meeting with a teacher.**

**CATEGORY II Offenses**

Verbal abuse to another student	<b>Meeting with students involved</b>
Intimidation/threats to another student	<b>Meeting with students involved</b>
Petty theft	<b>Meeting with parent/guardian</b>

Consequences: **1-2 will occur for every offense in category II.** 1<sup>st</sup> removal from class, 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting with the student(s), 3<sup>rd</sup> conference with parents/guardians if conflict is not resolved in the meeting with students involved. **Behavioral agreement will always be created.**

**CATEGORY III Offenses**

Physical assault  
 Fighting  
 Endangering the health or safety of others  
 Verbal abuse to a teacher  
 Intimidation/threats to a teacher

Consequences: **1-4 will occur for every offense in category III.** 1<sup>st</sup> removal from class, 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting with the student(s), 3<sup>rd</sup> conference with parents/guardians 4<sup>th</sup> 1-3 day suspension depending on severity of offense. **Behavioral agreement will always be created when there is a meeting with a teacher.**

**CATEGORY IV Offenses**

Extortion	<b>Police contact</b>
Grand theft	<b>Police Contact</b>
Possession of tobacco/ alcohol	<b>Parent/guardian Contact</b>
Possession of drugs	<b>Police contact</b>
Possession of Firecrackers	<b>Parent/guardian Contact</b>
Possession of Dangerous Weapons	<b>Police contact</b>
Arson	<b>Police contact</b>

Consequences: **Police will be contacted depending on offense , 1-4 will occur for every offense in category IV.** 1<sup>st</sup> Removal from class, 2<sup>nd</sup> conference with parent/guardian, 3<sup>rd</sup> behavioral agreement, 4th suspension or expulsion,

## **DRESS CODE POLICY**

Students are free to express themselves through attire appropriate to school learning. We want to create an environment in which each student can develop their innate qualities, focus on learning, develop an awareness of others, develop character and good citizenship skills, instill respect, and self-discipline.

### **Clothing may not:**

- Promote or suggest racism, bigotry, or sexism
- Promote or advocate addiction (drugs, cigarettes, etc.)
- Promote or advocate violence
- Suggest sexual labels and stereotypes

### **Guidelines for Clothing:**

- No undergarments showing
- No stomachs or chests showing
- No oversized garments
- No hairnets

Consequence: Student will be given a T-shirt to cover their inappropriate shirt. If this does not work parent/guardian(s) will be called to bring other clothing.

## **Behavior Agreements *To be posted in the school***

### **ABOVE ALL BE KIND**

#### **RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPECT**

Kindness to others, plants, animals and ourselves. Responsibility for ourselves. Respect for others and for things.

#### ***Respect for things***

Care of materials

Teachers agree to:

Provide specific places for things

Provide enough time for clean-up

Provide places for trash

Provide clear boundaries for what is and is not available for student use

Provide a space, if needed, to store items from home which are not allowed during school

Students agree to:

Always return things to their proper place

Always tidy up and throw away trash at the end of a project

Respect and care for material things belonging to the school (no eating or drinking at the computers)

Respect for boundaries

Not bring the following from home: CD players, headphones and CD's, gameboys, phones, pagers or other miscellaneous that distract from

classroom work. Bicycles and skateboards can't be used during school hours unless they are being used for school event.

***Respect for others. Responsibility for ourselves***

**Inside Behavior:**

Teachers agree to:

- Provide an organized and engaging learning environments for students
- Be clear about when it is group time, individual time, and time to listen to the teacher
- Always call students on cussing and inappropriate language
- Be clear and consistent about boundaries.

Students agree to:

- Not talk when the teacher is talking
- Calm, quiet voices and bodies
- No interruptions - must wait or join in
- Not leave the classroom without permission
- Not leave the building without an adult
- Not cuss or use inappropriate language

**Outside Behavior**

Teachers agree to:

- Monitor outside behavior to keep all students safe
- Accompany students to and from the park at all times
- Be available for any student who needs to talk to an adult

Students agree to:

- Not disturb other students who are in class
- Not disturb neighbors when traveling to and from park
- Stay with the group when traveling to and from the park

**Food Agreements**

Staff agrees to:

- Provide nutritious breakfasts and lunches
- Provide water
- Provide specific times and places for snacks and meals

Students agree to:

- Not eat candy or chew gum during school hours
- Not bring any drinks except water
- Not eat unless it is a designated time and place

**Dress Code**

**Staff agrees to:**

- Dress in an appropriate manner for school
- Always call students on inappropriate dress
- Provide alternative clothing for students who come dressed inappropriately

Students agree to:

- Follow the dress code

## **Student Handbook Contents**

The Student Handbook, as revised from time to time, will include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Rio Gallinas School' vision, mission, and goals
2. Student Activities
3. Enrollment, withdrawal, and transfer
4. Policies regarding attendance, truancy, tardiness, dress code, food, and student discipline
5. Grading
6. Code of Conduct
7. Visitation
8. Fire and emergency drills

The Student Handbook will include **Student Rights and Responsibilities** in detail, including:

1. Jurisdiction over students: All officials, employees and authorized agents of the Rio Gallinas School whose responsibilities include supervision of students shall have comprehensive authority within constitutional bounds to maintain order and discipline in school.
2. School authority over non-students.
3. Statement of policy, including:
  - a. the school as a community with laws;
  - b. the right to attend public school as a condition of each student's acceptance of the obligation to abide by the lawful rules of the school community until and unless the rules are changed through lawful processes;
  - c. teachers and other school employees are required by law to maintain a suitable environment for learning.
4. The Governing Collaborative Council has both the authority and responsibility to ensure that it establishes suitable rules of student conduct and appropriate disciplinary processes for the School.

The Student Handbook will include rules of conduct, including the following:

Regulated activities, including school attendance, use of and access to the school, students' dress and personal appearance, use of controlled substances, speech and assembly within the School, publications distributed in the School, the existence, scope, and conditions of availability of student privileges, school expulsion provisions, and discipline of students for out-of-school conduct having a direct and immediate effect on school discipline or the general safety and welfare of the school.

The Student Handbook will include rules of conduct and enforcement, including the following:

1. Enforcing attendance requirements.
2. Search and seizure, including notice of search policy, who may perform searches,



- when searches are permissible, conduct of searches, seizure of items, and notification of law enforcement authorities.
3. Basis for disciplinary action, including endangering acts, violation of rules, acts prohibited by this regulation, when the student knew or should have known that the conduct was prohibited.
  4. Selection of disciplinary sanctions, including school discipline and criminal charges and nondiscriminatory enforcement.
  5. Detention, suspension, and expulsion.
  6. Discipline of students with disabilities, including long-term suspensions or expulsions of students with disabilities, temporary suspension, program prescriptions, and immediate removal (in accordance with Subsection C of Section 6.11.2.12 NMAC).

The current Student Handbook is attached to this application in the Appendix of Supplemental Documents.

### ***ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY POLICY***

In accord with the state compulsory attendance law, parents or guardians are responsible for insuring that their child is in school. Attendance will be taken in every class and each day. Appropriate legal procedures will be followed for ten or more unexcused absences during the school year, considered habitual truancy, as specified and required by the Public School Code. A student who has accumulated five unexcused absences within a twenty day period is considered truant. However, it is expected that school staff are aware of repeated unexcused absences before the point of truancy and will intervene both informally by conferring with the student and more formally through parent contact and conferences to determine the cause of the student's

absenteeism. **In no case will students be punished for truancy by suspension and/or expulsion.**

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Persistent absenteeism creates a genuine hardship for a student academically and socially and is regarded as a very serious problem.

**Excused Absences:** In order for an absence to be valid the student must bring a written excuse signed by the parent the day he/she returns to school. A valid excuse is considered illness, death in family, prearranged family event, or religious holiday.

### **Consequences for absences**

#### **STEP I: Initial Meeting**

After three incidents of absences (excused or unexcused), the student is contacted and counseled by the director. In the meeting the student and director decide what kind of support is needed for the student. Parent/Guardian(s) is notified by a phone call and/or letter and a conference is held discussing what was decided in initial meeting between student and director. After school tutoring is required as support for student to make-up missed assignments.

#### **Step 2: Parent/Guardian Conference**

If student has a five (excused or unexcused), absences in a quarter, he/she will again be counseled by the director. Parent/ Guardian(s) will be notified of continued truancy by a phone call and/or a letter. A conference will be held between parent/guardian, student, director, and teachers. A truancy prevention plan and contract will be developed and signed in order to support the student. After school tutoring is required as support for student to make-up missed assignments.

#### **Step 3: Meeting with juvenile probation and parole services in San Miguel County**

If the student has **ten unexcused** absences in a school year, the student's parent/guardian will be notified by certified mail and a phone call. The student, parent/guardian(s), director will meet with juvenile probation and parole services in San Miguel County. A truancy action plan and contract will be developed. After school tutoring is required as support for student to make-up missed assignments

**Step 4: If** there is another unexcused absence, within seven days San Miguel probation offices will be contacted. Director will be in communication with probation officers to see if student was referred to children's court. After school tutoring is required as support for student to make-up missed assignments.

## **SECTION L**

### **Agreement between Río Gallinas School and the West Las Vegas Public Schools Board of Education regarding their respective legal liability and applicable insurance coverage.**

#### **LIABILITY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE AGREEMENT**

In accordance with the New Mexico Charter School Act of 1999 and its subsequent modifications, the local school board (WLVS) and Rio Gallinas School hereby agree that the WLVS will assume no liability for the Rio Gallinas School and that Rio Gallinas School can sue or be sued.

Regarding liability, the Rio Gallinas School Governing Collaborative Council, and all employees of Rio Gallinas School Charter School, are and will be adequately insured through the New Mexico State Public School Insurance Authority (NMPSIA).

#### **AGREEMENT**

Rio Gallinas School is subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination based on disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry or need for special education services.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 22.1.4 NMSA 1978, the Rio Gallinas School shall enroll all students who apply without regard to socioeconomic background, ethnicity, or academic ability.

Rio Gallinas School is administered and governed by a governing body in the manner set forth in the charter and not by the Board of Education of the West Las Vegas Schools.

Rio Gallinas School is responsible for its own operation, including preparation of a budget, contracting for services, and personnel matters, and follows mutually accepted policies with the Board of Education of West Las Vegas Schools concerning these matters.

Rio Gallinas School reserves the right to negotiate or contract with the West Las Vegas Schools, a university or college, or any third party for the use of a facility, its operation and maintenance, and the provision of any service or activity that the charter school is required to perform in order to carry out the educational program described in its charter.

Rio Gallinas School may negotiate with the West Las Vegas Schools District to provide transportation to students eligible for transportation under the provisions of the Public School Code. Rio Gallinas School reserves the right to negotiate on an as-needed basis for the use of transportation provided by the West Las Vegas Schools District

Rio Gallinas School may negotiate with the West Las Vegas Schools District for capital expenditures.

Rio Gallinas School is a non-sectarian, non-religious, and non-home-based public school that operates within and as part of the West Las Vegas Schools District, subject to this charter.

Except as otherwise provided in the Public School Code, Rio Gallinas School does not charge tuition or have admission requirements.

Rio Gallinas School is subject to the provisions of Sections 22.1.6 and 22.2.8 NMSA 1978.

Rio Gallinas School may acquire, pledge, and dispose of property if upon termination of the

charter, all assets of the Rio Gallinas School shall revert to the West Las Vegas Schools.

Rio Gallinas School may accept or reject any charitable gift, grant, devise, or bequest, provided that the school may accept no such gift, grant, devise, or bequest if subject to any condition contrary to law or to the terms of the charter. The particular gift, grant, devise, or bequest will become an asset of Rio Gallinas School.

Rio Gallinas School may contract, sue or be sued. The West Las Vegas School Board shall not be liable for any acts or omissions of the Rio Gallinas School.

Rio Gallinas School shall comply with all state and federal health and safety requirements applicable to public schools.

Rio Gallinas School's entitlement to receive funds pursuant to this agreement shall be continuous throughout the term hereof. In the event of any disputes between the parties, the WLVS District shall not be permitted to withhold, as a remedy or otherwise, any funds due to the Rio Gallinas School, subject to approval from and control by the Public Education Department (NMPED).

Rio Gallinas School obtains, at its expense, liability coverage for its staff.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

Pursuant to New Mexico Statute 22.8B-5:

- A. The New Mexico State Board of Education shall waive requirements relating to individual class load and teaching load, length of the school day, staffing patterns, subject areas, and the purchase of instructional material. The state board may, upon request, waive state board requirements or rules and provisions of the Public School Code pertaining to graduation requirements, evaluation standards for school personnel, and school principal duties. Any waivers granted pursuant to this section shall be for the term of the charter granted.
- B. The West Las Vegas School Board may waive only locally imposed school district requirements.
- C. Rio Gallinas School shall be a public school, accredited by the state board, and shall be accountable to the school district's local school board for purposes of ensuring compliance with applicable laws, rules, and charter provisions.
- D. West Las Vegas Schools shall not require Rio Gallinas School to employ any current or former employee of the school district.
- E. The West Las Vegas Schools District shall not require any student residing within the geographic boundary of its district to enroll in the Rio Gallinas School.
- F. A student who is suspended or expelled from the Rio Gallinas School shall be deemed to be suspended or expelled from the school district in which the student resides.
- G. Rio Gallinas School will grant each employee sick leave according to its Staff Handbook.

## **DISPUTES OVER CHARTER**

Rio Gallinas School has adopted its own policies and processes for airing and resolving internal and external disputes.

The Governing Council of the Rio Gallinas School agrees to handle all complaints regarding the school's operations.

The Rio Gallinas School provides parents, guardians, students, board members, volunteers, and staff with a copy of the Rio Gallinas School' policies and dispute resolution process and requests that they sign an agreement to work within it.

## **AMENDMENTS TO CHARTER**

The Río Gallinas Governing Council may amend this charter by a vote of its members, according to its by-laws. The Council will then present the amended charter section(s) to the West Las Vegas School Board for its approval. Approved amendments will be filed with the New Mexico Public Education Department Charter Schools Bureau.

## **SECTION M**

**A description of how the charter school plans to meet the transportation and food service needs of its students.**

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

As required by law, Rio Gallinas School will negotiate with the WLVS district for transportation services as needed. The Rio Gallinas School will arrange for special education student if transportation is in the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

Parents / guardians have responsibility for arranging transportation of their students to Río Gallinas School.

Rio Gallinas School annually budgets funds for fieldwork and extracurricular activities.

Rio Gallinas School staff member may transport students in their own car following West Las Vegas Rules and insurance policies.

### **FOOD SERVICES POLICY**

Rio Gallinas School is dedicated to teaching students healthy nutritional practices. There is an existing kitchen in the school building, which we use to create and supplement meals. Students are also free to bring food to consume at breakfast, lunch, and snacks, subject to approval of specific items by the School Director.

As required by law, Rio Gallinas School negotiates with the WLVS district to provide free and reduced-price lunches. All food services, internal and externally-contracted, meet or exceed state and national standards for health, nutrition, safety, and food service.

## SECTION N

### **Description of the waivers that Río Gallinas School is requesting from WLVS and the state Public Education Department and the school's plan for addressing the waiver requests.**

Río Gallinas requests approval of these waivers from both the WLVS Board of Education and the NM State Department of Education, as applicable. Río Gallinas reserves the right to request additional waivers or to adopt waived policies, as identified and directed by its Governing Council.

### **WAIVERS TO BE REQUESTED FROM NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

Río Gallinas School will request the WLVS School Board to request waivers from the State Public Education Department (PED) to cover the following, for the following reasons:

Length of school day	Río Gallinas School's schedule provides for a school day slightly longer than most schools
Staff patterns	Río Gallinas School is a small school requiring flexible staff patterns determined by need
Subject areas	Río Gallinas School will meet or exceed state requirements for core courses and graduation requirements
Purchase of instructional materials	Río Gallinas School has a non-conventional curriculum which de-emphasizes textbooks and therefore needs to purchase material wherever available
Evaluation standards	Río Gallinas School will adopt its own rigorous evaluation standard for staff which emphasizes team teaching observations
School principal duties	Río Gallinas School has a director but no principal

## WAIVERS REQUESTED FROM THE WEST LAS VEGAS SCHOOL BOARD

### Section I and II – General Policies

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Reason</b>
1.1 Philosophy	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own philosophy found in its mission, vision, and objectives statements
1.2 Objectives	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own objectives found in its statements
2.1 Code of ethics	Adopt with modifications	Modifications of language (e.g., Governing Council for Board)
2.2 General Statement of Purpose	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own policies stated in the Governing Council Handbook to be developed by the Advisory Council
2.3 Legal Status	Adopt with modifications	Modifications for language
2.4 Election of Board Members A. Number of members	Waiver requested	Governing Council will have more than 7 members
B. Eligibility	Adopt	
C. Nepotism	Adopt	
D. Term	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School will adopt a different term of service
E. Elections	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School will devise its own election procedure
F. Resignation	Waiver requested	The Governing Council will not vote for a successor but will proceed using a consensus model of decision-making
2.5 Election A. Officers	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School will have its own council roles
B. Timing	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School will have its own timing
C. LVTI	N/A	
D. Vacancy	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School will devise its own policy on vacancies
2.6 Powers and duties A. President	Waiver requested	The Council does not have a President; duties of the Chair are specified in the Council By-Laws
B. Presiding Officer	Waiver requested	The Council does not have a Presiding Officer
C. Duty vote	Waiver requested	The Council does not use voting as a decision-making model (consensus)
D. Access to records	Adopt	
E. Salary of superintendent	N/A	



<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Reason</b>
2.7 Professional Membership A. Associations	Waiver requested	The Council will decide on which associations to join as an organization.
B. Membership	Waiver requested	The Council will decide on membership in associations.
C. Reimbursement	Adopt	
2.8 Meetings A. Date	Waiver requested	The Council will set its own dates.
B. Special Meetings	Adopt with modifications	Modify “superintendent” etc.
C. Executive Sessions	Adopt	
D.	Adopt	
E. Place	Adopt with modifications	Modify specific language
F. Time	Waiver requested	Will set own times
G. Agenda	Adopt	
H. Public address	Adopt	
I. Hear People not on agenda	Adopt with modifications	Modify “with consensus of Council”
2.9 Minutes of meetings	Adopt	
2.12 Quorum	Adopt	
2.13 Committees	Adopt with modifications	Modify “President” etc.
2.15 Public records A. Access	Adopt	
B. Personal records	Adopt	
C. Request in writing	Adopt	
D. Protector of records	Adopt with modifications	As appropriate for staff positions at RGS.
E. Cost of copies	Adopt	
F. Examining records	Adopt	
G. Time frame for access	Adopt	
2.17 Revision and adoption of policies A. Policies revised	Adopt with modifications	With modification “by consensus,” not vote.
B. Temporarily suspended	Adopt with modifications	With modification above
C. Notify employees	Adopt with modifications	Modification by “director” not “superintendent.”
Open Meetings Resolution	Adopt	

### **Section III –Role of superintendent (N/A)**

## Section IV – Personnel Policies

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Personnel Policy Statement	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own policy statement in line with its philosophy.
Statement of Ethics A. Administration	Adopt with modifications	Rio Gallinas has its own statement of ethics similar to that of WLVS.
B. Teachers	Adopt with modifications	Rio Gallinas has its own statement of ethics similar to that of WLVS.
Nondiscrimination and sexual harassment	Adopt	
New employee policy general philosophy	Adopt	
A. Advertising vacancies		
B. Announcements posted	Adopt	
C. Out of state if shortage	Adopt	
Application Materials	Waiver requested	Río Gallinas has its own policy for application materials (more extensive than WLVS).
Application review	Adopt with modifications	See Personnel Policy section for variances with WLVS policy.
Qualifications for licensed employees	Adopt	
Background check	Adopt	
Employment and re-employment	Adopt	
Re-employing	Adopt	
Termination	Adopt with modifications	Modification: Due process from first year of employment
Discharge	Adopt	
Termination of other employees	Adopt with modifications	Modification: Due process from first year of employment
Reassignment of Employee	Adopt	
Health regulations	Adopt	
Permanent files	Adopt	
Grievance procedures	Adopt	
Staff Development	Adopt	
Assignments, reassignments, and transfers	Adopt	
Contract Year/School Calendar	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own school calendar
Standard Working Day	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own daily schedule
Alternatives for filling extracurricular vacancies	Adopt	
Administrative council	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own governing structure

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Reason</b>
School Site Advisory Council	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own governing structure.
Supervision of Personnel	Adopt	
Class Size and PTR	Adopt	
Substitute Teacher	Adopt	With modifications (e.g., “superintendent.”)
Tutoring of Students	Adopt	
Employee Dress Code	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own policy based on its particular needs and philosophy.
Use of Tobacco Products	Adopt	
Drug Free Schools	Adopt	
Confidentiality	Adopt	
Policy Review	Adopt	
Disciplinary Authority over students	Adopt	
Student Substance Abuse	Adopt	
Reporting Child Abuse	Adopt	
Political Activities by Employees	Adopt	
Soliciting and selling	Adopt	
Conflict of Interest	Adopt	
Extra employment outside of school hours	Adopt	
Leave from work A., B., C., D.	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School will not set up banks but will monitor through the Business Manager in Payroll records.
E. Military leave	Adopt	
F. Civic leave	Adopt	
G. Professional leave	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School made this subject to director’s discretion.
H. Delegates	Adopt	
I. Other absences	Adopt	
J. Vacation	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own vacation policies.
4.18 Group insurance	Adopt	
4.19 Worker’s comp	Adopt	
Employee Assault	Adopt	
RIF	Adopt	
Travel, Per Diem, Mileage	Adopt	
Personnel Records	Adopt	
Release of personal information	Adopt	

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Disclosure of employee names	Adopt	
Alcohol, drug abuse, tobacco policy	Adopt	
Vehicles use	Adopt	
Sick leave bank	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School will not set up banks but will monitor through the Business Manager in Payroll records

### **Section V – Student Policies**

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Attendance	Adopt	Modification: Calendar
Students with Communicable diseases	Adopt	
Philosophy supporting disciplinary policies	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has a discipline philosophy based on its mission and vision for education.
Disciplinary Policy	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has its own discipline policy.
Sexual Harassment of Students	Adopt	
Alcohol and Drug Abuse	Adopt	
Athletic Code	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School has no formal athletics program. Students are free to participate in other district athletics programs, subject to scheduling. In that case, students will follow the WLVS athletic code.
Graduation Requirements	Adopt	
Standard of dress	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School provides its own student dress code.
Corporal Punishment	Waived	Rio Gallinas School will not approve corporal punishment exception: restraining student who may harm others or be of harm to self.
Internet policy	Waiver requested	Río Gallinas' Internet policy is part of its approved Technology Plan.
Zero Tolerance Policy	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School addresses discipline problems in the manner indicated in the Student Handbook.
Policy on open enrollment	Adopt with modifications	As per charter school law regarding lottery for admissions.
Policy on grades for students expelled or suspended	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School addresses expulsion and suspension issues in its Student Handbook.
Policy on threats of violence	Adopt	
Policy on students charged with capital crimes	Adopt	
Policy Prohibiting violence...	Adopt	

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Search and seizures policy	Adopt	
Long-term suspension policy	Adopt	
Expulsion – SDE 81-3	Adopt	
Policy on gang activity	Adopt	
Fund drives	Waiver requested	Rio Gallinas School is a small school and will make its own appropriate fund raising policies.
Distribution of printed materials	Adopt	
Policy for home schooling	N/A	

## SECTION O

### A description of the facilities the charter school plans to use.

Rio Gallinas School assures that all buildings, facilities and play grounds that the school shall occupy and utilize will meet all health, safety and fire codes regulations prior to opening the schools. The building has handicapped parking, loading zone, ramp, and men's and women's restrooms. The existing facility is located at 301 Socorro Street, Las Vegas, NM 87701. Building layout and specifications appear below.

Pursuant to new Public School Code provisions about charter schools being in public facilities by early in the next decade, Río Gallinas is actively negotiating with WLVS to find housing in a public-owned facility as soon as practicable.

Square footage (total): 6,088

Square footage (teaching & administrative): 3,099

