

TRCCS Implementation Grant Narrative 2013

Executive Summary

Creating innovative, community-minded, well-rounded individuals!

The Tomorrow River Community Charter School (TRCCS) is opening in the School District of the Tomorrow River in the fall of 2013 for grades Pre-K through 6th, providing a unique learning environment for all children. Students who would thrive in a collaborative and noncompetitive learning environment that integrates the arts and offers hands-on experiences related to the natural environment are a perfect match.

A Sustainable Mission

Students will be prepared to become stewards of the earth, graduating with the skills to create and change the world around them, and not just fit into what already exists.

We achieve our mission through: Waldorf + Environment + Community

- **Waldorf Inspired Education.** Established in 1919, Waldorf is one of the fastest growing educational philosophies in the world today. Its whole-child approach meets the children's needs as they grow and develop. Technology is de-emphasized until fifth grade in order to preserve students' imagination, and build a foundation of learning connected to their natural attraction to the wonders of nature.
- **Environment and Sustainability.** Students form a relationship with the environment as they learn to care for the earth's plants and animals. Academic standards are infused into real-life hands-on projects like growing organic food for school lunches, as well as field experiences related to the local environment and natural resources.
- **Community.** Companies, local colleges, organizations and individual's partner with the school to offer opportunities and experiences that help students develop skills and community values. Students learn to look at the world from a broad, holistic perspective, as innovative, community minded, and well-rounded individuals.

Learning to Love Learning

Students learn to problem-solve, think creatively and analytically, and retain more information when learning is an experience that they connect to physically and emotionally. Three to six week learning blocks allow in-depth study of core subjects through stories, music, hands-on projects, speech and drama, and the arts. Students develop a trusting relationship with their teacher, as they stay together from 1st through 6th grade, ensuring that they receive instruction that matches their learning style and personality. Added music, practical and fine arts, and foreign language lessons complete the program.

Testimonials Speak to the Value of Waldorf Approach

"I believe that Waldorf Education possesses unique educational features that have considerable potential for improving public education in America. The time is well ripe for the public schools to explore the ways in which ideas in Waldorf Education might be explored in their own settings."

Elliot W. Eisner, Ph D., professor of education and art, Stanford University; author Cognition and Curriculum Reconsidered Educating Artistic Vision

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The Charter School Vision for Innovation

- 1. Describe the educational vision and philosophy which will drive your charter school implementation effort including the underlying theories and research which support that vision. Include the following:**

The purpose of Tomorrow River Community Charter School, (TRCCS) is to enhance future environmental, sustainable and social justice practices within our community of Amherst, Wisconsin, and to strengthen and inspire the Tomorrow River Public School District's education by offering a Waldorf-inspired curriculum. Through sound leadership principles, respect for ecology and an investment in the arts, the TRCCS will empower a community of educators, parents and children to create a mindful and innovative educational environment where students will learn the skills to transform the world around them. The educational philosophy will be inspired by Waldorf and other non-traditional academic styles engaging students by exploring the natural world, in learning and creating diverse, sustainable environments, and by practicing social justice behaviors, while being creative in a full spectrum of techniques using arts, music, language arts and foreign language to reinforce their innate spirit, happiness and discovered abilities. Academic courses are experienced physically and emotionally, with storytelling and limited lecture style, giving students a lifelong knowledge and love of learning. This whole child education fosters the skill set necessary to become creative, confident and compassionate individuals. Our success lies within meeting common core standards and meeting standardized testing requirements and scores, following state mandates required in early childhood, and elementary school.

"Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able, of themselves, to impart purpose and direction to their lives."Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)

- a. Summarize research supporting the visions.**

There is much research supporting Waldorf education, to find out more please visit: <http://www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org/>. Two studies are cited here to illustrate some of the vital points. A 2007 study in Sweden comparing Waldorf and state schools reported that Waldorf pupils were more likely to have a positive learning attitude, less likely to have passing tests as the goal of their learning, and had a "more in-depth study style" in higher education. They also showed more tolerant attitudes to minority groups and less tolerance of racist ideologies, were more involved with social and moral questions and were more likely to believe in the social efficacy of love, solidarity, and civil courage as opposed to legislation or police control. In addition, Waldorf students tended to wait longer before attending university. In a U.S. study it was found that Waldorf pupils' SAT scores have usually come above the national average, especially on verbal measures.

- 2. Provide a description of:**

- a. The grade levels of children to be served and the projected enrollment numbers:**

The TRCCS will provide schooling to children in grades Pre-Kindergarten through sixth grade. In year one there will be four classroom spaces available and the younger grades will be filled first. Depending on enrollment there will be combined older grades with the ability to accommodate approximately 80 students. It is projected that there will be between 70 and 80 students in year one, if more than 80 apply there will be a lottery. The school will grow one to two classrooms each year with the final number of 8 classrooms and approximately 175 students.

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b. The primary educational model used to meet the charter school vision and how it will be implemented:

The TRCCS will use an adapted form of the Waldorf method. The Waldorf method is a tried and true method of education with 94% of students attending college or university post-graduation. It was developed by Rudolf Steiner in 1919 for the children of the employees of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Factory in Stuttgart, Germany. Waldorf has been called an education of the hands, heart and head. Rudolf Steiner observed through his practice that children tend to learn through their hands and heart, meaning that if children can manipulate something or use movements like those used in dance and art and if something affected them emotionally through story, music and art, the lesson or concept would get implanted in their minds and have the potential to continue to grow and evolve as new learning is added. He also observed that children have an innate attraction to nature. When in natural settings, children were amazed and yearned for explanations of the animals and insects, the seasons and climate, and the vegetation around them. He used these elements as a foundation of learning, adding in more conceptual elements as the children's minds advanced. This is one of the innovations of Waldorf: its integrated approach to learning.

A second unique characteristic of Waldorf is that teachers follow their students from first grade to as high as eighth. This long-term teacher/student relationship extends that level of trust, fostering a deep understanding of a child's individualism, abilities, and needs. Knowing the students allows teachers to deftly adjust their approach and choose their stories, activities and projects to best meet the needs and interests of his or her particular class.

A third distinctive element of traditional Waldorf education bases what children are capable of learning on the phases of human development. For example, Rudolf Steiner saw that after the first phase of development (birth to approximately age 7) when children generally lose their baby teeth, children were then able to put more energy into forming concepts and memorizing content. Consequently, traditional Waldorf schools do not teach academics prior to first grade. Then, starting in first grade, they teach academics in a way that allows for a gradual unfolding of the intellect. Because charter school students are required to take standardized tests, TRCCS will teach a slightly accelerated form of the Waldorf curriculum. This is why we are referring to this school as a "Waldorf-inspired" school. We will not be accredited by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (www.whywaldorfworks.org) because only private schools can achieve this accreditation. We are members of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education (www.allianceforpublicwaldorf.org). Our teachers will all be DPI certified with additional training in Waldorf and other non-traditional educational methods.

A fourth difference is that students will learn "main lesson" subjects in blocks of 3-6 weeks, going deeply into the particular subject matter in a multi-disciplinary way every morning for that period of time. For example, in first grade the blocks may rotate from language arts, to mathematics, to nature studies, and back through again. Other times during the days and weeks will be spent on these subjects as well, but the main lesson time will be focused on presenting new content in a holistic way, while other time will be spent on practice. In addition to main lessons, the students will have music lessons and fiber arts (such as knitting) every day. Students will begin a foreign language course starting in 1st grade as well.

A final big difference is the de-emphasis on technology, preserving students' innocence and imagination and deepening their wonder of nature, particularly during a child's early years. During later years (5th and 6th grade), TRCCS will begin to introduce technology so that when the children begin attending public school, they will have the same understanding and skill sets

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as their peers. Standardized testing will follow state mandates and take place on computers; students will be prepared ahead of time so they have the skills necessary to complete these tests to their full potential.

c. The measurable goals of the charter school; and

d. The means of measuring the charter school goals each year (*means of measurement follow each goal in italic*):

- To develop and administer Waldorf-inspired curriculum and teaching practices. *This will be supported by professional development and will be measured by records and teacher portfolios as well as student progress and end of year narrative reports.*
- Continued support for teachers, administrators and the parent community in fostering an understanding of the pedagogy and developmental theory that are the foundation of the school. *Fulfilled through professional development, school programs and community outreach; measured by attendance.*
- Employing and retaining highly effective teachers with both formal Waldorf teacher training and certification by Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction. *Maintained with professional development and continued trainings in Waldorf and other non-traditional educational methods as well as touring other schools employing these methods; measured by attendance.*
- All teachers maintain a professional learning plan which is overseen and supported by the school's Lead Teacher. *Learning plans are reviewed semi-annually by the Lead Teacher and periodic consultations between teachers and Lead Teacher: documentation of meeting notes and amendments to learning plans will be recorded, measured by records and teacher and student evaluations.*
- Faculty use the evaluation system adopted by the District and supported by the TRCCS. *Measured by a Principal from the public school utilizing the same evaluation system used for all teachers in the district.*
- Clear and transparent on-going formative assessments of student progress within an articulated framework of Waldorf standards co-aligned to recognize the common core standards at the state and federal level. *Maintain verifiable records of student progress: Student Progress Reports (Whole-Child Rubric), End of Year Narrative Report and Individual Student Portfolio (Main Lesson Book Review). Files reviewed by the Lead Teacher semi-annually.*
- Commitment to developmentally appropriate high academic standards informed by the state student achievement standards. *Measured through student testing: Wisconsin State Test and NWEA MAP (or equivalent.)*
- Ongoing professional development for teachers, Governance Board and administrators in governing practices, curriculum and working toward a constant renewal of Waldorf pedagogy. *Measured by attendance, curriculum documents and minutes during Governance Board Meetings. The school's success in Waldorf pedagogy will be reviewed annually at the board retreat.*
- A rigorous effort to co-align 21st century skills within the framework of the school's Waldorf-inspired curriculum. *Measured by meeting the goals set for Wisconsin State Test and NWEA MAP (or equivalent) test scores and the ease of integrating 7th or 9th grade students into the traditional public school system.*

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- Academic freedom wherein curriculum can be uniquely designed by teachers in his or her on-going effort of meeting the evolving learning needs of the students. *Measured by Student Progress Reports, End of Year Narrative Report, Individual Student Portfolio and teacher reviews and evaluations.*
- An articulated and inclusive approach to school governance that involves teachers, administration and parents as reflected in the school policies and procedures. *Measured by Governance Board make up and attendance of board meetings by parents and teachers. Annual Governance Board member peer and personal reviews and continued adherence to the TRCCS By-laws, policies and procedures.*
- A cooperative, non-competitive environment in and out of the classroom engaging the children intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. *Satisfaction will be measured by student and parent surveys done annually, 2 parent focus groups compiled semi-annually, student interviews and student progress and end of the year narratives.*
- Equal access for all. *Measured by a comparable student to community demographic*
- A partnership between home and school giving parents the opportunity to become deeply involved in their children's education; promoting the creation of a culturally rich and meaningful life which expands to the larger community creating a healthy childhood. *Satisfaction will be measured by surveys done annually, 2 parent focus groups compiled semi-annually, and promotional materials and attendance records of community events.*

e. The measurable student achievement goals for each year:

Measured by Student Progress Reports (Whole-Child Rubric), End of Year Narrative Report and Individual Student Portfolio (Main Lesson Book Review).

- Literacy (also measured by Wisconsin State Tests and NWEA MAP testing (or equivalent))
- Ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing
- Ability to communicate in more than one language
- Understanding of various cultures
- Understanding of scientific process and disciplines
- Knowledge of history
- Ability to think creatively, analytically and logically
- Ability to observe, gather, organize, analyze and synthesize information
- Understanding of the mathematical process including application (also measured by Wisconsin State Tests and NWEA MAP testing (or equivalent))
- Lifelong learner who has developed competence, self-motivation, confidence and responsibility

f. The means of measuring the student achievement goals:

The means of measuring the student achievement goals each of the first five years.

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Assessment Tools	Purpose for Administering	Grades Assessed	Season to be Administered	Goals for the first 5 years
Wisconsin State Tests	Measure student performance against State and National schools.	3rd-6th	Per State guidelines	A 5% increase in proficiency each year up to 97%
NWEA MAP or Equivalent	Assess reading and math skills	K-6th	Fall and Spring	A 5% increase in proficiency up to 97%
First Grade Readiness Assessment	Assess students' developmental readiness for entering first grade	K-1st	Spring of K for continuing students; spring or summer before 1st grade for new students	We believe that students coming from our K will more likely be ready for 1st grade, benchmark achievements
Second Grade Assessment	Evaluate student development in terms of motor skills, ability to cross midline and other developmental abilities that contribute to a student's academic learning	2nd	Middle of 2nd grade	Benchmark achievements
Student Progress Reports (Whole-Child Rubric)	Assess student progress in academic, social and motor skills based on teacher observation	Pre-K through 6th	October and April	Reports will show a continued increase in depth & understanding of the student and his/her needs and accomplishments
End of Year Narrative Report	Provide teachers and parents with an annual, in depth individualized report of student progress in all areas of study, social interactions etc.	Pre-K through 6th	At the end of the school year	Reports will show a continued increase in depth & understanding of the student and his/her needs and accomplishments
Individual Student Portfolio (Main Lesson Book Review)	Provide teachers and parents with annual, individualized report of student progress based on samples of student work	Pre-k through 6 th	2 times per year as part of the Whole-Child Rubric	Reports will show a continued increase in depth & understanding of the student and his/her needs and accomplishments

Other demonstrations of student progress:

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- Oral recitations, presentations, reports, performances, exhibits and demonstrations which will take place periodically during the school year.
- Student projects: Both individual and group projects will be exhibited at school wide and/or public events which will take place periodically during the school year.
- In addition to the assessment tools above, the daily, weekly and monthly teacher monitoring and observation of students provides ongoing formative and summative assessments.

Teachers will use this information to adapt the curriculum to their student's needs. Because teachers have the same students from 1st through 6th grade they can better understand the learning environment that works for their classroom. This long term relationship will be conducive to improving instruction and tracking achievement over time.

3. Address the following:

a. Explain how the charter school provides its students' core academic subjects:

Students in the charter school will learn all the of the core academics that students in the traditional setting learn; it is the approach to that learning that will be fundamentally different. The charter school has a commitment to developing curriculum that applies to the common core standards. The charter school staff plans to work closely with the District staff so that when children transfer school settings, the transition is easy for students and teachers.

During Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, faculty provides hands-on activities and experiences that promote students' physical development, sensory-motor skills, social development and creative play. In 1st through 6th grade, the curriculum emphasizes the development of imaginative thinking (key to problem solving and analytic reasoning), while helping students deeply understand and connect to what they learn. Students engage in artistic activities that are directly integrated into the academic curriculum, thus deepening their social and emotional connection to their subject matter.

As stated previously, Waldorf approaches learning with lengthy focused time in which lessons are taught in two-hour blocks for up to six-week increments. These lessons are called Main Lesson blocks and are developed by the teacher with assistance of the Lead Teacher. Main Lessons are taught through stories that draw children into a world of imagination and learning. For instance, a teacher may teach children about ancient Egypt telling stories of pharaohs and their agricultural discoveries. During these lessons, the children may erect pyramids (learning geometry, building techniques and teamwork), plant grains (learning gardening, weather patterns, geography and work ethics), make masks and head dresses (learning about art and hierarchy), and other practical, life-preparing lessons. Students are not given text books; they create their own as they learn.

Seasonal and daily rhythms help provide consistent structure to the Waldorf educational process. The integration of core subjects with arts, drama, painting, music, movement and handwork create the opportunity for children to better understand those subjects and directly relate them to themselves and the world around them. Our teachers will create a classroom environment that optimizes the learning ability of every student regardless of difficulties a student faces in learning.

b. Justify why the charter school is an elementary or secondary school and not just a program within an existing school or district.

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TRCCS will be a Waldorf-inspired school with an emphasis on nature and the environment, it will be creating a whole-school culture unique to its mission and vision. This will be best achieved as a separate school rather than as a program within the district

4. Describe the charter school's professional development plan by answering the following questions:

a. What specific competencies, skills and knowledge do teachers and administrators need in order to successfully deliver the proposed curriculum and instruction at the charter school?

Waldorf teachers recognize that their role is to inspire, mentor, and facilitate the learning process. They are trained to identify the best response to the changing interests and needs of each unique child and they adjust their strategies and timetable to fit the development of each of their pupils.

Practices of Waldorf teachers as developed by the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education:

Planning, curriculum and assessment

- The annual block rotation is comprehensive and appropriate to accomplish established curriculum core standards.
- Curriculum planning evidences knowledge of both Waldorf methodology and child development.
- Ongoing and periodic student assessments are appropriate, recorded and in evidence. This includes empirical verification of student ability in all core strands of knowledge.
- Lessons are planned with clear objectives, established rhythm and guiding images.
- Lessons are planned to meet all learning modalities and temperaments.
- Lessons are inclusive of practical life experiences and enhance the students' sense of wonder at world phenomena.

Lesson delivery

- Teacher uses inductive and deductive reasoning skills in teaching methodology. In the early years, teaching from the vantage point of synthesis toward analysis, whole to part, (deductive skills) and through the middle school years from part to whole, analysis to synthesis, or (inductive reasoning skills).
- The teacher recognizes cognitive differentiation and personal individuation when delivering instruction.
- Lessons are balanced in the realm of academic skill, artistic expression and kinesthetic engagement.
- Lessons include social/emotional aspects; relate to student interest and experience.
- Lessons stimulate student engagement.
- Differentiated instructional approaches are a part of every teacher's skill set.
- The teacher knows the core subjects skill strands and can assess the placement of a child along a continuum of growth in competency.
- The teacher is able to adjust student learning outcomes such that students are provided scaffolding for stepping into the next zone of proximal development.

Classroom management and Delivery

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- The teacher aspires to being worthy of imitation for the early years student and strives to be an authority of what is essentially human when teaching children passing through the middle and later years of childhood.
- Establishes authority, maintains control and anticipates and responds to problem situations and specific needs as they arise.
- Teacher is fair, consistent, and keeps proper perspective.
- Teacher evidences strength, striving and intent in all artistic disciplines: drawing, painting, form drawing, modeling, storytelling, speech, drama, vocal and instrumental music.

Collaboration

- Main Lesson teachers and single subject (specialty) teachers share content and key generative images given within the Main Lesson block:
- Increasing student practice of and thus reinforcement of academic, artistic and practical skills.
- Providing for different avenues of expressing the unique individual's intelligence, style and modality of learning.
- Core academic content is taught through the use of compelling and empowering imaginations wherein the child experiences implicit learning which moves to explicit in practice.
- Main Lesson teachers collaborate between grades with the School Coordinator, Lead Teacher and Governance Board

Lead Teachers responsibilities for pedagogy as developed by the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education:

- Ensuring review, evaluation, and development of the curriculum on a regular basis.
- Providing an assessment process for all students' progress (written narrative and empirically based) in addition to state and federal mandated testing.
- Inclusion of strategies to meet the needs of a diverse community of learners and learning styles, and recognition of a process of collaboration to develop the resources to serve and enhance capacities of the learners.
- On-going study and support of colleagues to meet the learning styles, cultural backgrounds and developmental needs of the students.
- Support personnel who provide for access to services for special needs learners.
- Identifying and fostering of the principles of Waldorf Education.

The School's Coordinator is responsible for all financial reporting, legal documents and records of the organization. They will be responsible for building, property and maintenance of all goods and services. They will, along with the Governance Board, be responsible for all outreach, fundraising, events coordination and student recruitment. It is their responsibility to make sure the school adheres to all governing policies and that the school is in alignment with the Waldorf philosophy, principles and pedagogy. The School Coordinator attends bi-monthly meetings of the District's School Board.

b. Provide a two- to three- year professional/curriculum development plan on how you intend to develop the required competencies, skills and knowledge of staff (*teachers and administrators*) to achieve the innovations envisioned for the charter school.

Planning year: Summer 2012 through summer 2013:

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- The Planning Grant Coordinator, Pedagogical Advisor, the teachers and the Governance Board are working closely with Dr. Mary Goral the Curriculum Developer, the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute, Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education, Central Wisconsin Environmental Station and other existing Public Waldorf Schools to create the curriculum.
- The Planning Grant Coordinator and members of the Governance Board have and will continue to visit Waldorf and Charter Schools in Wisconsin and other states.
- There will be a 3 day TRCCS Introductory Retreat put on by the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute, Mary Goral, CWES and WCEE. It will be for incoming teachers, TRCCS Governance Board members, CWES staff, District School Board members, WCEE staff, UWSP faculty and department heads, TRCCS parents and other community members who are interested and invested in the school.
- Teachers will attend a 3 week summer intensive courses by the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute.
- The Planning Grant Coordinator, Pedagogical Advisor and 2 Governance Board members attended the WISN Conference in March.
- The Planning Grant Coordinator attended the National Charter School Conference.
- The Planning Grant Coordinator and the Governance Board Chair attended the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education National Conference in January.
- Wisconsin Green School's Network workshops and trainings will be offered and attended by staff, faculty and Governance Board members.

Year One: September 2013 through 2014

- The Lead Teacher and all current and incoming teachers will attend a 3 week summer intensive by the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute. New teachers will receive a scholarship and existing teachers in need will be offered scholarships to continue their Waldorf training/certification.
- Dr. Mary Goral will provide multiple onsite curriculum trainings for teachers throughout the year.
- Continued Professional Development seasonally by the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education.
- Environmental Education and site training will be provided seasonally by the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station.
- Wisconsin Green School's Network workshops and trainings will be offered and attended by staff, faculty and Governance Board members.
- The Governance Board along with administration and faculty will attend a one day retreat with multiple professional development workshops.
- At least 3 tours of Waldorf and/or Charter Schools will be arranged for staff, faculty and Governance Board members.
- There will be options to attend professional development days at the Amherst Public School; sessions will be examined to see if they apply to the Charter School.
- Teachers, School Coordinator and Governance Board members will attend the WISN Annual Conference.
- The School Coordinator, teachers and Governance Board members will attend the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education National Conference.
- If funds permit staff or a Governance Board member may attend the National Charter Schools Conference.

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We will continue with the schedule as stated in year one for all years to come adding or subtracting learning activities as they are annually assessed by the Governance Board, administration and faculty.

c. Describe how the plan will include training for potential transfers or new hires in subsequent years.

Teachers will be trained through the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute, conferences, seminars, and other non-traditional trainings. The Lead Teacher will work with teachers to develop curriculum for the school. As new teachers are hired, they will attend trainings and then will participate in an on-site training from the Lead Teacher. The Lead Teacher will assist in any way necessary for curriculum and professional development.

d. When school districts authorize charter schools and receive federal funding, significant resources are invested in professional development during the initial three years. Please describe efforts that will be undertaken to retain these teachers in the charter school.

Teachers hired will be passionate about the Waldorf methodology of education. Some will already be trained in Waldorf and will know this is the teaching environment for them. Because teachers stay with their class from 1st through 6th grade teachers will understand the commitment prior to accepting the job. There will be annual trainings and professional development to support teacher growth and learning; teachers will help decided the focus of those trainings giving them an increased commitment and interest in the material. Because this is a Charter School, the teachers will have more freedom to create a classroom environment and teaching materials. Teachers' active engagement in creating the environment and materials will likely create an added investment in the school and students. There will be annual raises and a base wage in-line with state averages for our area.

5. Plans for Opening a Charter School in Fall 2013.

a. Provide the details for the following related to your planning and preparation for opening your charter school in the fall. Indicate types of training, coaching, consultants, trainers, and approximate amount of time each teacher in the charter school will be spending in this type of professional development during the summer.

Teachers will participate in a 3 day Introductory Retreat June 14th through the 16th. There will be workshops on Waldorf Education, Environmental Education, site specific trainings and an introduction to charters schools, the curriculum developed for this school and the TRCCS. Teachers will then participate in a 3 week teacher intensive training at the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute in Milwaukee. Teachers will begin 2 weeks early, during this time they will have training by Mary Goral the curriculum developer. There will be trainings from CWES staff on the site, safety procedures and use of CWES grounds and equipment for education. The teachers will also meet with the handwork teachers from the Waupaca Community Arts Center, UWSP Environmental Education students, foreign language teachers and District staff (Principal and specialists). The teachers will have time to get their classrooms in order and work together on curriculum in preparation for the school year. There will be a school picnic where students can come and meet their teachers and see the classrooms before the school year begins.

b. If you have staff who are not engaged in the full training regimen described above, explain how they will receive training.

All incoming teachers will be required to participate in the above trainings unless they are a Waldorf certified teacher. If they are already certified they do not need to attend the Great Lakes

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Waldorf Institute 3 week training in Milwaukee but will still need to participate in the 3 day retreat and the 2 weeks of preparation prior to the school year.

Governance and Autonomy

1. Describe how the charter school will take advantage of the flexibility afforded it under state law.

TRCCS will be exempt from Wis. Stat. 118.045 Commencement of school term. Wis. Stat. 118.16 School attendance enforcement (4) (a); Wis. Stat 119.18 Board; powers (school calendar, school hours, schools closed); Wis. Stat 120.12 School Board duties (15); Wis. Stat 121.02 School District standards: timeframe for instruction may be different from state mandated minutes per discipline.

2. If applicable, submit a request and justification for waivers of any federal statutory or regulatory provisions that the applicant believes are necessary for the successful operation of the charter school.

The Tomorrow River Community Charter School does not feel it will be necessary to ask for any waivers from federal statutory or regulatory provisions.

3. Local school board policies will apply to this charter school unless they are waived by the school board. *The waivers must be described in the charter contract. Please identify school board policies that will be waived for this charter school and how the waiver(s) will support the operation of the charter school. This question does not apply to independent (2r) charter schools.*

TRCCS will be exempt from the following District policies so that they can embody full autonomy: 2131.01: Reading instructional goals, 2210: Curriculum Development, 2260: Nondiscrimination and Access to equal educational opportunity, 2340: Field and Other District-Sponsored Trips, 2510: Adoption of Textbooks, 2521: Selection of Instructional Materials, 2522: Supplementary Materials Selection, 3120: Employment of Professional Staff, 3120.01: Job Descriptions, 3120.09: Volunteers, 3130: Assignment and Transfer, 3131: Reduction in Staff, 3132: Vacancies, 3140: Termination and Resignation, 4120: Employment of Support Staff, 4120.01: Job Descriptions, 4120.09: Volunteers, 4130: Assignment and Transfer, 4131: Reduction in Staff, 4132: Vacancies, 4140: Termination and Resignation, 5200: Attendance, 5410: Promotion and Retention of Students, 5830: Student Fundraising, 6152: Student Fees, Fines and Charges, 6231: Budget Implementation, 6610: Student Activity Fund, 7230: Gifts, Grants, and Bequests, 8210: School Calendar, 8500: Food Services, 9150: School Visitors, 9160: Public Attendance at School Events, 9210: Parent Organizations, 9700: Relations with Special Interest Groups, and 9700.01: Advertising and Commercial Activities.

4. Charter schools must have a separate governance board that is legally able to contract with the authorizer.

a. Provide a description of the charter school governing board including membership names and roles of the board members, election of members and terms of office and how frequently the board meets throughout the year.

The Governance Board of Tomorrow River Community Charter School, Inc., (Governance Board) will abide by the TRCCS Bylaws. The Governance Board will consist of up to 7 voting members with a chair and officers as well as additional non-voting members. Board members are up for renewal every two years, staggered years. Initial board members will serve a 2 or 3 year staggered term. Open seats are open to anyone to apply and approved by the existing Board Members. The Governance Board shall hold a minimum of 5 meetings per year plus the annual meeting. Currently the Governance Board meets twice each month on the 1st and 3rd

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Monday of the month.

The Governance Board may accept nominations for vacancies. Prior to becoming a Board Member, a prospective Board Member shall be subject to a background check.

Board Members of the Corporation shall be elected by an affirmative vote of the majority of the Membership at the Governance Board Annual Meeting. Any vacancy occurring on the Governance Board may be filled until the next succeeding Annual Meeting by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members in attendance. Officers are appointed from within the Governance Board body after all vacancies have been filled.

The Corporation's Principal Officers shall be a Chair, one or more Vice-Chairs, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, each of whom shall be elected by the Governance Board. The Officers shall be elected annually by the Governance Board at their Annual Meeting. Officers are up for renewal annually on a staggered basis. Open seats are available to any Board Member to apply and approved by the existing Board Members. If no Board Members wish to fill the open seat, the Board Development Committee will be called up to find a suitable candidate.

Current Governance Board Members: Chair: Laurie Low, Treasurer: Shannon Korger, Secretary: Tina Giombetti, Members: Kristy Stacy and Tom Quinn, School Board Representative (non-voting): Diana Bohman.

b. Describe the authority this governing board has to make decisions regarding the operation of the charter school including personnel, curriculum, local assessments and policy development. Indicate if the charter board is a non-stock corporation or non-profit organization.

The Governance Board shall manage and direct the affairs of the charter school. The Governance Board will have authority for independent control of the charter school, its vision, goals, and educational program, including curriculum, student progress, policies, procedures and action plans for improvement.

The Governance Board, on recommendation of the hiring/staffing committee, will provide hiring, firing and staffing recommendations to the Board of Education.

The hiring process will be facilitated by a hiring committee made up of Governance Board members, TRCCS staff, the District Administrator and the assigned District Principal for the TRCCS. The hiring committee will make a recommendation to the Governance Board. The Governance Board will make a recommendation to the Board of Education, who has the final say on all personnel matters.

The Governance Board will work in partnership with the District on all decisions pertaining to the facilities, grounds and resources owned or rented by the District.

The Governance Board will seek to make decisions through consensus, carefully considering the views of parents, students, and community members. Input may be requested from administration and District staff, as necessary.

c. Describe how the governance board of the charter school has control over the charter school's budget and expenditures.

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The District will be the fiscal agent for the charter school. The Governance Board will be responsible for approving the charter school's annual budget prior to final approval by the Board of Education. The Governance Board will be responsible for decision making with regard to finances, which will include, but is not limited to: budgeting and expenditure of discretionary funds, charter grant funds, fundraising and/or foundation donation amounts. The Governance Board will have full authority regarding money to be spent from TRCCS, Inc.

d. Include a description of the administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorizer and describe how the charter school will be managed.

Administrative services will be provided in the same manner as other District schools, including but not limited to: accounting, bookkeeping, risk management, auditing, cash management, payroll, benefits, administrations, labor relations, enrollment pupil services, record keeping, reporting and other compliance monitoring, building and grounds maintenance (in a supervisory capacity), and general testing of students. The District will at all times remain the sole employer of all personnel engaged in providing such administrative services. Daily administrative duties shall be performed by the School Coordinator, Lead Teacher, and TRCCS staff.

e. If the charter school shares a principal with a traditional school, indicate how the management of the charter school will be impacted.

If the School Coordinator or Lead Teacher requires assistance, it will be provided by the assigned District principal. The TRCCS staff will be evaluated by the District principal assigned to TRCCS. Staff Evaluations will be congruent with the TRCCS mission, vision and philosophy. The Governance Board will make recommendations to the District regarding individual employment contract renewals, non-renewals, and terminations, as applicable.

f. Describe the training that will be provided to the charter board and when it will be delivered, e.g., governing authority, Roberts Rules, by-laws, finances/budgets, fund raising, parent involvement, policies/procedures, etc.

The Tomorrow River Community Charter School's Governance Board Members will be trained in effective shared leadership governance models, Consensus decision making, the state's Charter School Law, the board's legal responsibilities, and fiscal matters. Governance Board members will receive a Governance Board Handbook and participate in a 2 hour PowerPoint presentation on charter schools, successful charter school governing, Waldorf education and school history. Continued professional and governance/leadership development for the Governance Board will happen at an annual retreat, this will be a daylong retreat and the school will utilize one of the many wonderful charter school consultants. This year the Governance Board had their retreat on March 8th, 2013 and the morning session was facilitated by Deb Lukovich of alinea. Governance Board members will be invited to attend school tours throughout the state as well as charter school and Waldorf conferences, attendees will be reimbursed from the TRCCS's Governance Board Development Fund. These funds will be garnered through donations to the schools 501c3 and annual fundraising events such as seasonal festivals, Valentine's Day Dinner and a Trike-A-Thon.

5. Describe how parents and community members are involved in the implementation of the charter school.

Parental involvement is critical for the success of the TRCCS's students. Parent and community ties to the TRCCS will be strong. Parents of TRCCS students will develop a positive relationship with the school, its teachers and their children due to consistent school-home communication and support, and input on and/or through the school Governance Board. Contact with parents shall be frequent and all parents will be taught the school's culture of giving. Parents will be encouraged to offer 40 volunteer hours per year for the benefit of the

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school. This time may be donated in many ways including time in the classroom, in the school's organic garden and in chaperone time on school trips, etc. Community and family experts will be utilized in delivering instruction in conjunction with the certified staff of the charter school.

There will be many opportunities for parents to attend seasonal festivals, fundraisers and Informational events. Prior to students beginning at the school, all parents will have a one-on-one meeting with the TRCCS's School Coordinator or a Teacher. This meeting will give the parents a full view of the educational environment at the TRCCS so they can determine if it is an appropriate fit for their child and family.

6. Attach three letters of support from parents and community members.

To Whom it may concern,

As a resident of the Amherst, Wisconsin community for the past 40 years I was thrilled to hear of the possibility of a new Waldorf inspired Charter School to open in our area. We are a small town community that offers a wonderful place to raise children and when my own children were young we were involved in a Waldorf school in Amherst. I was sad to see that school close, as we regarded it as a wonderful and enriching alternative to traditional public education. Since we currently have only the public school available in our area, I think it would be beneficial to our community to have another option for those families looking for an alternative type of educational opportunity.

I trust that the TRCCS will bring a choice to the Tomorrow River School District in offering a broader education in a hands-on, nature- inspired schooling environment. Families will be offered the opportunity to educate their children through the Waldorf inspired usage of storytelling, music, movement, arts, foreign language, environmental education and core classes that work to integrate all of the traditional school subjects. It is the goal of the TRCCS to inspire a love of learning in all children through whole child Waldorf-inspired education.

I believe diversity and accessibility to varied educational experiences is essential for the health of all communities and I consider this proposed charter school to have the potential to bring a meaningful and progressive educational experience not currently offered to families in our community and surrounding area, and also to draw new families into our community.

Sincerely,
Maggie Woodside
6770 County Road TT
Amherst, WI 54406

To Whom It May Concern,

As an educator and parent of two young daughters, I am very excited about the opening of the Tomorrow River Community Charter School. My husband and I are hopeful that our oldest daughter, who will be entering pre-Kindergarten next year, will be able to attend this amazing new school.

While considering schooling options for my daughters, I had come to appreciate the Waldorf model, though felt that the cost of such an education would be out of our family's reach. My husband and I were seriously considering homeschooling until we found out about TRCCS. This school is literally a dream come true for our family.

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We are excited about this school for so many reasons. Our daughter is extremely creative and loves music, movement, and art, which are all integral parts of Waldorf schooling. As an educator, I am aware of the value of lessons being taught in several week sessions that allow for deeper, more long-term knowledge of subject matter. We appreciate the non-competitive nature of this school, which fosters collaboration among students and strong bonds with teachers who remain with the same students from first grade through middle-school. In our family, we try to minimize exposure to media and electronics, and we feel that the school's policy to de-emphasize electronics in the early years of childhood will alleviate the peer pressure our daughters might otherwise feel to keep up with what their classmates are watching. We feel that the school's location at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station will provide an amazing opportunity for our daughters to connect with nature and learn environmental stewardship, and we are very enthusiastic about the school's plan to raise chickens and have gardens that the students will help tend. Students will be given the chance to learn the real life skills of food production and good nutrition. With so many studies showing that language acquisition is most easily achieved in the earlier years of life, we are so happy that the school plans to begin Spanish in the first grade.

This school is such a good match for our daughters and our family. I believe that many families in this community will be excited to have this schooling option for their children. The school, itself, will also have a positive impact on the community by educating students to be compassionate stewards of the environment.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to have my daughters attend the Tomorrow River Community Charter School, which promises to provide them with a holistic education that will foster their innate abilities to learn. We are so fortunate to have this school opening in our community.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Ryan
Waupaca, WI

March 29, 2013

Dear Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Charter School Program:

I am writing in Support of the Tomorrow River Community Charter School (TRCC). As a parent of a 6-year-old first grader in the Stevens Point School District, I am very excited to have my daughter attend the Waldorf inspired school this September. The school's mission of educating the whole child and implementing innovative and proven methods of teaching utilizing the arts and nature is what is compelling my husband and I to send our daughter Eliana to the school. We are doing this even though her current school is only three blocks from our home.

Last year I was able to volunteer once a week in Eliana's Kindergarten classroom. Although the teacher did her best, I witness kids being hurried around from one subject to the next without time for completing tasks or fully understanding what they were learning. The TRCC is taking a different approach to learning that is in alignment with our beliefs and values and fills a big gap in our community. The location of the school at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station, adds an unparalleled dimension to the educational experience.

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We have attended several of the events the planning group has presented and have been impressed by the unique offerings and dedication to the school. When I first walked into the spring festival last year, my heart stirred and I knew we had found a new school home for our daughter. Eliana immediately felt welcomed and took part in the numerous creative learning opportunities. The community is very supportive of the school and I am looking forward to being an involved parent to help make the school a great success. With the awarding of the implementation grant, the school will have crucial funding to make the school an enriching experience for the students and a model for the State of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,
Julee Duessing
Stevens Point, WI

Equal Access (Admissions and Lottery)

1. Provide a description of how your school assures equal access for all students regardless of gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age factors.

Enrollment is voluntary and there will be no tuition. The Tomorrow River Community Charter School is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that could fall under the definition of hate crimes. "Hate crime" means a criminal act committed, in whole or in part, because of an actual or perceived characteristics of the victim or association with a person or group with actual or perceived characteristics. Children at the TRCCS are entitled to participate fully in the educational process free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying. We will take affirmative steps to combat racism, sexism and other forms of bias. We will work to prevent and respond to acts of hate, violence and bias-related incidents in an urgent manner. We will teach and inform students about their rights and rights of others in order to increase awareness and understanding to promote tolerance and sensitivity. The TRCCS will adopt and implement a complaint process to receive, investigate and resolve complaints of discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying based on any actual or perceived characteristics of hate crimes.

2. Provide a description of how your school will serve students with disabilities.

Students with special educational needs will be evaluated and an Individualized Educational Plan will be created. The Tomorrow River Community Charter School will work with district personnel such as a school psychologist, speech and language clinician, physical and occupational therapists, and special education teachers to create this plan. We believe that because our teachers stay with their students from 1st through 6th, grade they will have the opportunity to develop long term relationships with students and encourage their strengths. All students with disabilities will undergo the same application process for admission as any other student applying to the school; if there are more applicants than spaces they, will enter the lottery.

3. Provide a description of how students and parents in the community are informed about the charter school and given an equal opportunity to attend.

TRCCS has been seeking and obtaining significant coverage in the local newspaper and on radio. Public events, starting a year ago, have been promoted and parents who have expressed interest are on an email and paper mailing list. There is an email newsletter that is sent to them regularly as well as a website that is updated as needed.

4. Provide the admissions policy for the school.

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TRCCS will not discriminate in admission or retention on the grounds of age, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, handicap, disability, gender, sexual orientation or physical condition. It will work to retain a student demographic aligned with the community and make special efforts to reach families who are typically underrepresented. Enrollment is voluntary and there will be no tuition. The TRCCS is open to all District students in grades Pre-K through 6th grade. Open enrollment students may also attend the school in accordance with state law and District policies. An application for all students is required as part of the admissions process.

5. Provide a description of a random lottery process to be implemented if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated in the charter school.

There will be an enrollment window. If applications do not exceed the established cap, all students will be accepted for admission and no lottery will be held. Additional students will be accepted with the date of application being the establishment of priority. If more than the established cap enroll during the window, all applicants will make up the lottery pool. The totally random selection will ensure fairness and equal access. The Governance Board will perform the lottery, and it will be part of school record. Those not accepted will be placed on a priority waiting list in the order drawn. An automatic enrollment preference shall be extended to siblings of students currently attending the school or alumni, children of founding members and children of teaching staff (teaching staff's children shall not be more than 10% of the student population).

Assurances

Please provide the following:

- 1. As required by section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), describe proposed steps the grantee will take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, the charter school. (*The statute, which allows applicants discretion in developing the required description, highlights six types of barriers (gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age) that can impede equitable access or participation.*)**

The TRCCS is situated in a rural area of central WI. One of the only barriers we foresee is transportation. We are working to provide transportation for all of our students including those coming from outside the Tomorrow River School District. TRCCS will not discriminate in admission or retention on the grounds of age, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, handicap, disability, gender, sexual orientation or physical condition. We do not predict that there will be any circumstances that impede equitable access or participation.

- 2. Provide an assurance that the charter school will not charge tuition.**

There shall be no tuition fee for enrollment in the TRCCS, nor shall there be any application fee.

- 3. Provide an assurance that the charter school will be nonsectarian.**

The TRCCS is a public school that is nonsectarian in its practices, programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations.

Budget

The following questions must be completed:

- 1. Describe how planning and/or other funds were used for:**
 - a. Training.**

Educators will participate in Waldorf training at Great Lakes Waldorf Institute in Milwaukee,

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funding will come from grant funds for the initial trainings and scholarships for continued training encouraging teachers to get their full Waldorf Teacher Training Certification. Funds will cover trainings from the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station on site specific educational opportunities. The Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education will facilitate seasonal trainings on Environmental Education and resources.

b. Consultants.

The TRCCS will continue to contract Mary Goral of Transformational Teaching for curriculum development and teacher training and support. The Waupaca Community Arts Center is being contracted to develop the handwork curriculum for the school and its members are volunteering their time to teach the curriculum throughout the year. The TRCCS will continue to contract Lori Barian of Great Lakes Waldorf Institute for teacher and school support. Chamomile Nusz of Circle Education will become the Implementation Grant Coordinator instead of the Planning Grant Coordinator working as the administrator and school coordinator. Alinea will be contracted to facilitate preparation for a Capitol Campaign to raise funds to build a school on the CWES grounds.

- 2. Provide a list of itemized expenditures and a budget narrative which provides a rationale for why the expenses are necessary. This list should be consistent with the Local Plan for Use of Discretionary Funds, but should offer greater detail including specific items and the cost of items that will be purchased.**

The TRCCS is offering Waldorf-inspired education which has very specific materials and supplies for the classrooms. With the grant funds we will outfit all classrooms with the necessary items to create the educational environment necessary for the schools vision and mission. The school is located at and Environmental Camp and to fully take advantage of all that the location has to offer for nature studies supplies need to be purchased as well as gardening tools. Because there has not previously been a school at this location funds are going into developing a natural outdoor play space for children's free time. For the students in the older grades there will be Chrome Books for each student. All supplies will be utilized for many years into the future. In addition to trainings there is funding for Conferences and Retreats for staff and Governance Board members. See Section VI-A of form PI-9600-I for a complete list of specific items and the cost.

- 3. Describe how other federal program funds available to the charter school; e.g., Title I and IDEA funds, will be used.**

All federal program funds will be applied for by the Tomorrow River School District in the same manner as all other schools within the District.

- 4. Describe the method by which controls over expenditures and records of expenditures will be maintained.**

All funds are tracked by TRCCS in QuickBooks. These financial reports are presented to the District School Board monthly as well as the TRCCS Governance Board monthly. The District writes all checks and a Purchase Order is required for all expenditures. All purchase orders are reviewed and signed by LeAnn Chase the District Administrator and Mike Toelle the District Elementary Principal, who is the acting Principal for the Charter School. The District is responsible for reporting to the DPI for fund reimbursement. The Charter School's budget and records of expenditures will be available to the public with total transparency; the school will be audited annually by the same auditor used by the Tomorrow River School District.

- 5. Please use the budget worksheets you'll find under each grant type on the charter school grant information page (http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_cs_grant_info)**

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to indicate the total projected cost of operating the charter school for each of the first five years. (Note: the budget worksheets should include all expenditures and revenues from state, local, federal and other funds including the anticipated federal charter school grant funds. Attach the expenditures and revenues worksheets to the application and designate the year to which they apply. **ONLY THE EXPENSE AND REVENUE WORKSHEETS MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION SUBMITTED TO DPI.**

See Attached Budget Worksheet.

- 6. Provide a plan on how the school's innovative offerings and professional development will be sustained and continued after the charter school grant expires.**

The TRCCS will create an environment of financial giving; all families will be encouraged to donate not only their time (a suggested 40 hours annually), but their financial philanthropic donations. There will be annual fundraisers such as the Trike-a-Thon and seasonal festivals that will garner funds for professional development, school gardens and building renovations/construction. The Governance Board will play a large role in reaching out to the larger community to develop donors and business partnerships to help support the Charter School. All teachers will be required to be working towards their full Waldorf Teacher Certification. We have a partnership with the Great Lakes Waldorf Teacher Training program in Milwaukee. The Charter School will offer scholarships for all new teachers to begin the training with a 3 week summer intensive; this will be covered by the monies raised for the Development Fund. In addition all teachers will start the school year early and during this time they will have professional and curriculum development. The Charter School will provide their own professional development as well as participating professional development activities offered by the Tomorrow River School District. In addition to fundraising grants will be a continued effort for a vast array of school needs; this work will be done by the Governance Board Public Relations and Funding Committee and the Charter School Coordinator.