

Executive Summary: A failure to thrive is commonplace for some students in a traditional school setting. These students haven't been able to tap into their full learning power and are disengaged because they are either ready to move on ahead of their peers or who need more direct assistance to strengthen specific skills. These students are also some of our brightest and most creative students, who need a different educational model to reach their potential. A model that focuses on mastery and personalization while utilizing an integrative, meaningful curriculum that also puts an emphasis on a student's social and emotional well-being allows students to flourish. Our model also focuses on the individual within their place both in their community and in the mountains, providing enriching and relative context for students to achieve academic success. Teachers work with students to explore topics they are interested in or topics concerning the Valley County communities, for example, the recent concerns around the Stibnite mine and its impact economically and environmentally to our area. A deep dive into the impacts, concerns, needs, and history around the topic can unfold into an interdisciplinary, authentic, and rigorous learning experience that draws students in. As students foster ownership over the curriculum as the project unfolds, teachers work to weave in state standards, coordinate with local experts and officials, and navigate students through steps to create a final project of a presentation, paper, website, art piece, etc. that community members can learn from and engage with as well.

Throughout this, teachers pause to break students out in groups based on their academic level to work on core math and literacy skills that can then be tied back into the community project.

MCS aims to close the gap for students whose needs are not being met and provide choice in public education where one previously did not exist. The model for MCS was chosen to reflect the values of our rural, mountainous area and with the CSP grant's support to provide critical startup funds necessary for opening a rural charter school in Valley County, Idaho.

A. Grant Project Goals The mission of MCS is to inspire curiosity, engagement, and leadership through transformative place-based education.

1. ***Provide family access to a school of choice with a proven school teaching and learning model that reflects the values of our community.*** Currently there are no free local options of choice for Kindergarten - 8th grade education in Valley County aside from the local school district. MCS aims to provide 115 seats of choice offering a unique and rigorous program; student enrollment will reflect within 5% of the local elementary's student demographics which are 11.8% SPED, 1% ELL, 30% Title 1, and 13% non-white.
2. ***Provide rigorous, place-based, personalized learning for local Gr. K-8 students.*** Place-based learning utilizes interdisciplinary, authentic problem-solving through relevant projects that allow students to be engaged, inspired, and to develop curiosity about their place and their roles within their community. 100% of MCS students will complete at least one in-depth place-based project per semester; demonstrating mastery in at least two content areas and at their level of academic growth as assessed by the rubric and their learning profile.
3. ***Provide transformable personalized learning experiences that address students' individual learning goals and needs.*** All students will have a personalized learning plan that maps their path to mastery and is unique to their personal learning goals and interests. This plan will be tracked and recorded by their teachers which will be available to parents and students through an online platform. 100% of MCS students will pick at least one personal learning project per semester based on their learning goals and interests, allowing students to explore and expand their learning based on their interest and pacing. Personal learning projects will demonstrate growth in at least two academic areas and one character and leadership area.

4. *Provide students with educational experiences that nurture both academic and social emotional skills.* MCS will curate curriculum around meaningful, current, local topics with an interdisciplinary approach that targets all core subjects and allows for an emphasis on leadership and character development - key skills required by employers and for a rapidly changing tomorrow. Annually 100% of MCS students will demonstrate academic growth of one grade level in Math, Reading, and English across grade levels as measured by Idaho ISAT, Idaho Reading Indicator, and NWEA MAP testing with 4th and 8th grades as benchmarks years. Social-emotional learning will be assessed twice a year using the [CASEL](#) survey.

B. Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum

B1-3) Students at MCS will address local, regional, and global challenges, using a combination of personalized learning and community impact projects that move the classroom beyond the school walls to the outdoors and into our community. By integrating student's personal interests within a framework of real-world projects, we expect increased levels of problem solving, academic proficiency, community involvement, and leadership skills. At the core of our philosophy is where staff and students work together and build personal relationships in order to achieve personal and professional success. In a rapidly changing world, key skills cited by employers in 2020 (compiled by the World Economic Forum), include complex problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity ([Gray, 2016](#)). The focus on these skills as well as application of problem-solving through inquiry and investigation poises students to be able to address any challenge - personally or academically.

MCS philosophy centers around the student and the place they live, meaning, we cater to individual student needs and interests to build curriculum that includes what is happening in our area right now with an interdisciplinary, project-based approach. All grades levels, K-8, will

Mountain Community School

collaboratively focus and work towards a community project (e.g. exploring impacts of the Stibnite mine) with content standards woven into the goals and tasks within the project during **Community Project** time. Specific content support will occur daily to meet students at their level (below, at, or above grade level) during **Core Skills** time so they can continue to master and move forward in their learning in math and ELA. Students will be engaged in their learning progress while also engaging in the community in problem solving and stewardship, fostering a civic identity, and utilizing learning time to also benefit the greater community. Students will also have a choice in selecting mini-projects, or electives, to study during **Personal Project** time (e.g. learning to play the ukulele or study Latin). Students' goals and evaluation will be on developing their leadership and 21st century skills that employers seek. Weekly meetings between the student and teachers as well as frequent (monthly/quarterly) assessments keep students moving forward towards academic and personal goals. A partnership between student and teacher and between MCS and Valley County are high priorities!

To implement this philosophy and approach of place-based education, we have partnered with the Place Network, a collaboration of schools that share common practices, values, and approaches focused on place-based education led by the Teton Science School. Active engagement in the Place Network leverages professional development, resources, and curriculum to ensure the successful implementation of this model. The Place Network is currently working with schools across the nation with over 50 years experience and expertise in supporting schools in rural communities succeed academically and according to their goals.

Our day-to-day instructional design recognizes that the whole child matters. Forging a strong community of leaders and learners within the schools' students and staff is an essential component of connecting to the community beyond the school walls. This teaching and learning

model is reflected in the Place-based Education Framework which guides instructional practices by the following six design elements that are vetted in pedagogy and research: **1) Local to global context:** Local learning serves as a model for understanding regional and global challenges, opportunities, and connections. An understanding of self is a starting point to understanding our place. Research suggests that building new knowledge on prior experiences increases transfer from short-term to long-term memory (Liu, Grady, and Moskovitch, 2017). By using the local region as a starting point for learning, MCS students will better understand more abstract and/or global concepts. **2) Community as classroom:** Communities serve as learning ecosystems for schools where local and regional experts, experiences, and places are part of the expanded definition of a classroom (Place-based Education Collaborative, 2016). The research base for using the community as a classroom is well-described in the literature on service learning - connecting students to opportunities outside of the classroom or connecting learning to relevant community based challenges has benefits in both engagement and academic outcomes (Cylio, Durlak, Dymnicki, 2011). **3) Inquiry-based:** Learning is grounded in observing, asking relevant questions, making predictions, and collecting data to understand the world through economic, ecological, and cultural lenses. Research on inquiry-based approaches shows an increase in academic outcomes, narrowing of achievement gaps, and benefits for students with diverse learning needs (Center for Inspired Teaching, 2008). **4) Design thinking:** Design thinking provides a systematic approach for students to make meaningful impact in communities through the curriculum. Collaboration, creativity, innovation, and problem-solving are all increased through a design-thinking approach (Luka, 2014). **5) Learner-centered:** Learning is personally relevant to students and enables student agency. The teacher serves as a guide or facilitator to learning. Literature suggests that students in learner-centered experiences achieve more, at higher

levels, and with higher engagement ([Iowa Core, 2017](#)). **6) Interdisciplinary approach:** The curriculum matches the real world where the traditional subject area content, skills, and dispositions are taught through an integrated and frequently project-based approach where all learners are accountable and challenged. Project-based learning is a core component of the teaching and learning model at MCS and when done with high accountability and appropriate structure, leads to higher achievement ([DeVion, 2022](#)). Students who participate in project-based learning out-performed students in traditional classrooms across multiple disciplines ([Kimberly, 2015](#)). The above noted research along with research in the value of place-based education has years of research vetting not only the academic benefits, but also the social-emotional, civic, and leadership skill development benefits ([Demarest, 2015](#); [Wells, 2001](#); [Orr, 1992](#); [Gruenwald, 2003](#)). “When content is more aligned with the truth of students’ lives, they gain tools that help them gain a voice in their community” (Demarest, p. 9, 2015); which harkens to John Dewey’s comment that teachers “should know how to utilize their surroundings” to maximize learning opportunities ([Dewey, p. 40, 1938](#)).

The open and rural area of Valley County provides many rich learning opportunities for students and a smaller community offers many entry points for students to become active participants in meaningful ways. Another unique factor to Valley County is the diverse range of talent and experience from our residents, many of whom are committed to MCS and supporting our curriculum with their skills including music, language, building, farming, culinary arts, science, and more. The interest and value in place-based education in Valley County is evidenced through programs such as the outdoor Roots Forest Pre-School, a collaborative program Payette Children’s Forest, and a camp at the McCall Outdoor Science School.

Daily Content: Every day students have scheduled **Core Skills** time to focus on skill development in Math and Literacy which is taught at their achievement levels based on on-going assessment and with structured curriculum. Core skills are applied in a real-world, meaningful project during daily **Community Project** time. Other elements to the daily schedule include **Personal Project** time that might focus on arts, foreign language, or specific interests, and group and individual reflection time.

Mathematics: MCS commits to strong skill building in mathematics linked to competencies. MCS has selected [Math in Focus](#) as the core mathematics curriculum based on best available research. Math curriculum will be used as a foundation for skill development while greater enrichment of skills and practice will come as students apply mathematical thinking to community based projects (e.g. students will practice skill development and equation understanding during daily Core Skill time and will apply concepts of trigonometry to calculate flow rate and runoff to the mining study during Project Time). This combination of instruction, practice, and enriched application will offer students an opportunity to sink deeper into the curriculum going beyond state standards and allowing students greater mastery.

Literacy: Similarly, language and literacy competencies are taught through both core skills and place-based projects. When relevant and possible, literacy is interwoven within student driven projects with high levels of student voice/choice. Core sequences, especially around reading, are made relevant through book and topic choice as well as a personalized approach to pace the learning experience for students. MCS has selected the [National Geographic Learning](#) curriculum to support reading and writing development starting from pre-readers through 8th grade (Panorama for grades K-6 and [Inside](#) for 7-8). Their approach teaches reading and writing skills through authentic fiction and National Geographic nonfiction using science and social

Mountain Community School

studies texts to increase literacy skills to meet Idaho state standards. Application of literacy skills to projects will offer students opportunities to exceed state standards and develop mastery as well as context (e.g. in the above example literacy skills can be used to research the history of mines, types of mines, products of mines, and more about the people who depend on mining jobs).

Science, Social Studies, Arts, Health, Physical Education: Required learning goals for these subject areas will be taught through integrated place-based projects utilizing Idaho State Standards as the foundation. Application of interdisciplinary projects will offer an enriched learning experience for students to dive deeply into all subject areas simultaneously within a given topic (e.g. in the mining example other subjects can be tied into by looking at watershed impacts, species impacts, economics of mines, and design alternatives to mines).

Music and other specialist areas: Separate classes for these areas will be built into the schedule and follow the same six core principles of place-based education. Students will have a choice in selecting their areas of focus, unique to the MCS personalized learning model. MCS will utilize the many skilled residents of Valley County to diversify the teaching of specific specialists to address all student interests (e.g. if a student was interested in learning to play the Ukulele we would bring in local talent to help teach these lessons). If experts in the area of interest cannot be found in our area, online tutorials may be used as appropriate.

Character and Leadership Skills: Annually students will be evaluated on their progression towards the Profile of a Graduate, a set of skills each MCS student will possess prior to graduating. These skills include: a foundation of grounding in self-awareness, an open mindset, and the grit to persevere, MCS graduates will be critical thinkers, problem solvers, and active citizens that communicate and collaborate respectfully and effectively. From learning at MCS, graduates will have practiced and developed the skills to help them be successful in high school

Mountain Community School

and to reach any personal or professional goals post high school. Progress will be tracked in students' grade reporting, their cumulative portfolios as evidenced by project documentation, goal self-reflection, and teacher and peer feedback. Students will share their capstone project and cumulative portfolio prior to graduating to celebrate their learning.

B4) Technology: MCS aims to be a 1:1 school where each student has access to their own technology to support learning within the school at developmentally appropriate levels.

Technology will be available for regular assessment including state assessment. Technology also includes various data collecting systems such as monitors, probes, etc. Access to technology will enable students to research, develop, explore, calculate, and present for their individual and group projects. Progressive training and education on how to use technology appropriately and safely will be provided to students as their use and exploration with the technology develops.

B5) Consistent with the definition of charter school in ESEA 4310, MCS offers choice where one previously didn't exist and choice in the form of education that mirrors the lifestyle and values of a rural mountain town. A public, free choice in education for all students in the Valley County surrounding area will benefit learners that require a different model that reflects their unique learning needs, situates the learner at the center of local current events with place-based learning, and allows students to advance at their academic learning level through mastery.

C. Teaching and Learning

C1) The MCS learning model puts both the learner and local place at the center of the experience through the six design elements discussed above. Supporting the model of place based learning are the following four teaching principles: (1) **personalized learning** to build strong capacity in literacy and mathematics, in which students are met at their level daily and their interests and needs are incorporated into the curriculum daily, (2) **character and leadership** where

social-emotional and self-awareness competencies play an equal role to other knowledge and skills competencies - the whole child matters, (3) **project-based learning** as the core integrating methodology to support community impact that naturally integrates all subjects matter, and (4) **mastery** as a competency-based assessment system where advancement is based on demonstration of mastery rather than time period. Each of these components support the others. Students learn core skills of math and literacy in **Personalized Learning** and apply them during interdisciplinary **Project-based Learning** experiences. All assessment is **Mastery-based** so that students are given multiple opportunities to submit evidence of proficiency (or mastery) across different learning experiences but on the same continuum of learning goals (standards). Finally, **Character and Leadership skills** build upon the significant evidence that a focus on social and emotional learning and other learning habits support positive academic outcomes.

Upon entering the school, students' state testing data along with student interviews, and informal testing will assist MCS educators in assessing students' academic levels. MAP testing data will be used to group students by academic level as opposed to solely grade/age level to cater education to unique learning needs. As students advance and scores change, groupings will also change; changes may occur at any time in the year but particularly after MAP testing (3X year). Frequent conversations between the student, parents, and teachers will assist in tracking student progress and placement. Schoology LMS will be used to track and communicate to all involved parties. Teachers will meet with students weekly to reflect on goals, progress, and daily plans. These conversations will help to inform instruction and adjustments to best meet the needs of the learner. Staff will work with each student to create a personalized learning plan that incorporates student academic levels, plan for mastery, individual interests, and leadership goals. Weekly meetings between the teacher and student allow for progress checks and regular

Mountain Community School

meetings with families ensure team effort for success. Staff will coordinate with local members in the community to help bring in subject experts to assist in curriculum support for individual student interests and academic needs for both community and personal projects, such as music or language experts and employees of related industries. Utilizing a [flipped classroom model](#) approach, classroom aids and parent volunteers, and teachers can be grouping students working at a similar level with self-directed tasks so they can be working at their level as the teacher moves around the classroom helping as needed. As students demonstrate mastery, or move more quickly through a topic, they will be tasked with a new challenge at the next level. Using Schoology to track progress and lesson progression, students will be able to see what is next and continue to move forwards as they are ready.

MCS will develop an effective Response to Intervention system that targets specific academic and social-emotional needs of each child. Identification, assessment, instructional modification, and evaluation will create a responsive environment to help each child succeed. The RTI team will work with the student and parent to develop accommodations and a plan for success in the least restrictive environment. MAP testing will be conducted 3x a year to monitor progress and collect data to determine progress and level of support needed (Tier 1 of RTI). All students start at Tier 1 with our model. Monthly reassessment will be conducted using rubrics, staff and peer assessments as students and teachers meet to adjust interventions and support. For Tier 2 students needing more support they will work 1:1 with staff or in small groups to strengthen learning practices. MCS will also use evidence based, restorative programming, and curricula when working with students with disabilities who need supplemental or replacement curricula (Tier 3). MCS will use targeted intervention to bolster deficits that will include 1:1 help daily and potentially hire out intervention services as needed. MCS will follow the three-step

process outlined in the Idaho Special Education Manual to determine whether a student requires special education services and will be conducted by the School Leader/SPED Director.

D. Student Academic Achievement Standards

D1&2) Academic Goals: Students matriculating from MCS after 8th grade will have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to achieve college and career success following high school; become agents of change within school, local, regional, and national communities; and have a strong sense of self and leadership capacity to support personal and professional growth. This can be assessed through their development in the Profile of a Graduate (character and leadership skills) rubric that is scaled per grade bands (K-2, 3-5, 6-8) and assessed annually.

School subjects are taught and assessed with an interdisciplinary approach where traditional content areas are overlapped allowing students to be assessed as a whole student. Students demonstrate mastery of standards by submitting artifacts (variable per competency) that score at the proficient level or above on standards per established rubrics. Once a student scores proficient on the rubric for a learning goal or standard, the student may move to the next grade or content area; if a student has not yet demonstrated proficiency they will continue to develop and resubmit/redo as needed with teacher support. At any given point, teachers, students, and parents can view a student's progress towards mastery seeing what areas or subareas a student needs to work on or has mastered via an online platform such as Schoology. Notes, scores, and progression are all tracked. Student work will be collected in a student portfolio that builds from year to year. Students will use portfolios to present annual and interim (formative) learning. Portfolios will include digital and physical items that represent student growth and developing mastery. Advancement towards mastery or lack thereof informs daily instruction and support as

Mountain Community School

staff and students adjust curriculum and goals weekly to meet the needs of students' learning goals.

Achievement Standards: MCS Learning Goals and associated achievement standards are built to exceed Idaho Content Standards by linking content competencies and performance indicators to Idaho State Standards. NWEA MAP testing will be used throughout the year for benchmark assessment in addition to the use of performance rubrics for competency-based assessment. Teachers and Admin will evaluate student progress and test scores following benchmark testing (3x a year) and following completion of major units. Curriculum and goals will be adjusted weekly or monthly as informed by data and meetings with students, staff, and parents informed by formative (self and teacher evaluations) and summative assessments (rubrics, self and teacher evaluations). Teachers will meet weekly during a designated meeting time (scheduled) to discuss collective and individual student growth using formative and summative data to determine best approaches. Annually teachers will review progress along with Place Network in order to plan and adapt for best implementation practices and training for the upcoming school year. The small staff of MCS allows for one united Data PLC to direct and inform practices. Teacher performance is measured through [Danielson's Framework](#) as required by the State of Idaho.

Social Emotional Learning and Character Education Assessment: MCS students will routinely reflect on their Character and Leadership skills. All students will identify and reflect on goals based on these dispositions and will be assessed twice a year using a vetted survey from [CASEL](#). Results from the survey will be reviewed in the fall and spring to track student Charter and Leadership skills. Staff and school leaders will work together to create and plan for school wide and individual goals to help support student growth. Goals and progress will be available daily to families in Schoology as part of academic reporting.

E. Student Demand and Community/Local Support

E1&2) Valley County families are active in their support for a school of choice and a school that represents the values of a mountain town, as evidenced from our enrollment. Place-based education, getting students not only outside, but also involved in their community, has a foothold in Valley County through various local, innovative push-in programs such as the McCall Outdoor Science School, the Payette Children's Forest Coalition, and from the outdoor based Roots Forest Pre-School, which has been at maximum capacity since opening in 2015. Collectively families agree there is a need for a place-based school here in Valley County.

Since there is only one existing public option in the area, several families have chosen to homeschool their children. According to the director of one of the homeschool networks, many families in the network have chosen to homeschool their children since their educational needs were not being met in the district. Those needs range from wanting/needing more outside time, valuing smaller classrooms, to needing more one-on-one support. According to the most recent report on homeschool children (*Homeschooling Report*), the national average is 3.4% of the school-age population. In Valley County, however, the percentage is roughly three times the national average. We are working on actively engaging in this community, which is aligned with our type of schooling. The McCall-Donnelly School District buildings are all currently at or nearing capacity and are seeking building expansion options and the recent surge in our area's population growth along with over a thousand new homes slated for our area will also strain existing space; our school would help to alleviate the crowding occurring at the local district. Furthermore, a private parochial K-12 school recently opened and is at maximum enrollment.

Students requiring special services are anticipated to reflect that of the local school district which reports 11.8% SPED, 1% ELL, 30% Title 1, 13% non-white. Our staffing plan and

Mountain Community School

educational program are consistent with our intended demographic; as our school is focused on the place we live in and the outdoors, the program specifically caters to the students of this area.

Community Partnership and Local Support: Many stakeholders have committed to supporting MCS and excitement about the model and opportunity for students in the area, including but not limited to Little Ski Hill, McCall Airport, Payette Children’s Forest, Gravity Sports, The Club, The Guild, Franklin Building Supply, and Elk Creek Church. Many have shared interest in helping with the school from spreading the word, to helping to build, to offering up specific skills, tools, and labor including use of space for gym space, building materials at cost, and building help. An important partner to MCS is Tamarack Resort and their business partners which have provided services and materials for free or at a reduced rate (see section H for more detail). Marketing has included several community meetings, participation in public events such as the Payette Children’s Forest Take It Outside event, Farmer’s Markets, lessons at a local library’s reading programs, meetings with interested families, advertisements in the paper, cultivation of a Facebook and Instagram following, creation of various marketing materials, and creation of a school website to encourage and continue marketing for the school. Marketing materials and the website are available in Spanish and mailers were sent to all local residents with school age children to inform all families (underserved and diverse) of our opening. Our lottery was held in April with current enrollment still growing as to date.

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Students	10	15 (3 WL)	15	14	7	17	15	4	8	104 (3WL) *waitlisted

Continued marketing and recruitment efforts include local advertising through the local newspaper and social media, small-targeted presentations, and community events.

Strategies for Enrolling Underserved Families: Considerable effort has been made to notify all families within the school district area of their new choice in K-8 education. Notifications have

Mountain Community School

been posted in the local paper, flyers, online postings, and flyers home from local preschools and daycares. MCS plans to coordinate with Shepherd's Home (a local women and children's shelter), the hospital, and other entities that may represent communities often overlooked. MCS plans to go door-to-door to areas with concentrated low income housing, that often also house families that are ELLs, to inform families of their choice in education. In addition, flyers, informational handouts, and the MCS website have been translated into Spanish.

Further family engagement is anticipated to grow Spring and Summer 2022 and beyond opening into Fall 2022. Family engagement and input is a high priority to MCS staff. Several parent committees have been formed to help make decisions impacting the school from the outside play area to school layout. Bi-monthly newsletters intend to inform families of updates. Events at the school site will help to inform, prepare, and cultivate excitement for families. MCS is hosting a registration event over several days at the end of May to meet 1:1 with parents and students to get to know them and address their questions. Posts to social media intend to update and inform families as well as cultivate community and excitement around the school. In addition, MCS aims to start a Parent Teacher Association summer 2022 to further involve families. Open and clear communication with families and the community is a high priority for MCS!

F. Effectively Serving All Students

F1&2) The MCS model focuses on the student and their individual learning needs and interests at the center of the curriculum. The focus on the student empowers MCS staff to quickly and routinely address student needs as students both struggle and excel throughout their educational career. Weekly meetings between the student and the teacher and regular meetings including

Mountain Community School

parents will help everyone to understand how to help the learner progress. Weekly meetings also enhance adjustments to learning objectives and support as needed.

MCS will meet and exceed all applicable state and federal laws in order to serve all students: English Language Learners (ELL), students with intellectual and physical disabilities, and gifted and talented learners that meet the criteria as set forth by IDAPA code, including those with cognitive and physical disabilities. By the nature of a learner-centered philosophy all students will benefit since their individual learning needs will be addressed. Our facility meets the needs of special populations per ADA regulations. Additionally, the program itself warrants various types of learning spaces to facilitate one on one intervention, small-group work, and larger community project work. Through the use of a technology platform, such as Schoology, all students will have a Learner Profile that will contain internal and external assessments, goal-setting, community impact projects, and a student portfolio.

The nature of a mastery-based approach is that every child has equal and high expectations. Individual personal growth is built directly into the program, the technology to support the program, and the systems to guide students to proficiency. Families, as well as students will have a detailed real-time awareness of progress towards these expectations. During frequent parent meetings families will meet with advisors and teachers to discuss progress. The student will play a role in these meetings. All staff will be trained annually on effective and appropriate intervention, such as Multi-Tiered System of Supports and Restorative Practices.

Special Education and At-risk: The school materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of the performance certificate relating to the treatment of students with identified disabilities and those suspected of having a disability, including but not limited to: equitable access and opportunity to enroll; identification and referral, appropriate

Mountain Community School

development and implementation of Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) and Section 504 plans; operational compliance, including provisions of services in the Learning Restricted Environment, and appropriate inclusion in the school's academic program, assessments, and extracurricular activities; discipline, including due process protections, manifestation determinations, and behavioral intervention plans; access to school's facility and programs; and appropriate use of all available applicable funding. The School Leader also has his SPED endorsement and will manage all IEP and 504 cases.

Teachers, staff, and parents will work together to ensure each student is tasked with challenging projects at their appropriate learning level with the development of rigorous IEP goals. MCS is an inclusive environment that aims to meet all students at their level, regardless of any identified challenges, and to help push all students academically, socially, and emotionally in a positive and beneficial manner. Staff will work through proper tiered supports for each students' needs. These tiered supports will help provide more data for staff to seek other services as needed. When students require more services to master content MCS will contract out speech language therapists, occupational therapists, school psychologists, and physical therapists. Staff training for working with special education and at-risk students will occur throughout the year. As our model caters to the individual student's needs, the Place Network and outside resources will focus on addressing all learning gaps and needs. English Language Learners (ELL): The school materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of the performance certificate relating to requirements regarding ELLs, including but not limited to: Equitable access and opportunity to enroll; required policies related to the service of ELL students; compliance with native language communication requirements; proper steps for identification of students in need of ELL services; appropriate and equitable delivery of services

to identified students; appropriate accommodations on assessments; exiting students from ELL services; and ongoing monitoring of exited students. MCS intends to use the WIDA ACCESS Screener to determine if a student qualifies for Limited English Proficiency services based on scores. MCS will outsource ELL services as needed. Section 504: Any student attending MCS is entitled to a Section 504 Accommodation Plan if he or she has been identified and the evaluation shows that the individual has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. This determination is made by a team of knowledgeable individuals, including the student's parents who are familiar with the student and his or her disability. Gifted and Talented: MCS will identify students possessing high-performing capabilities in specific academic, intellectual, leadership, creativity, and visual/performing arts talent areas pursuant to Idaho Code 33-2003.

F3) Meals: MCS will enroll in the National School Lunch Program. MCS is exploring options to offer sack lunches, snacks, and breakfast that will be outsourced with local restaurants until an expansion allows a full kitchen. MCS will work with local restaurants to understand and meet the regulations of the National School Lunch Program. MCS will provide a designated area with refrigeration for milk, sack lunches, and snacks. MCS has begun conversations with several local businesses to secure daily meals including Cafe 634, Banyans, and Stax. MCS is committed to providing a full food service in accordance with federal food regulations for all students, especially disadvantaged and at-risk students. F4) Transportation: MCS aims to provide a free busing service for all students. MCS is working with Harlows, a local busing company, to transport students to and from school. MCS will ensure needs are met of any educationally or economically disadvantaged students by identifying and arranging for as needed.

G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan

Mountain Community School

G1) MCS will work with Red Apple to provide support and later training to help onboard a Business Manager. A total of 5-6 teachers with one School Leader will make up the educational team, including a Director of Academics to assist with project management details, parent/community communications, professional development, and staff support. Applicants have provided teaching samples, answers to impromptu questions related to place-based and mastery education, and will complete face-to-face interviews looking for creative, flexible, and compatible teachers to enhance the MCS team. Focused effort will be given to advertising and hiring staff that are familiar with place-based education and mastery as well as an enthusiasm for learning and teaching in a creative environment! To date, MCS has hired 4 highly qualified educators. Continued recruitment efforts, as needed, will include advertising through social media, local paper, and amongst the Place Network.

G2) General Staff Training: Professional Development is a core component of MCS. MCS also recognizes that the unique learning model at the school warrants special attention in the hiring, orientation, and on-boarding process. Each teacher will receive specific training around place-based and project-based learning, personalized approaches, competency-based assessment, and social-emotional learning. A detailed Teacher Handbook, created with the Place Network, will be shared with teachers this spring to introduce the model with many links to further resources. Teachers will be tasked with several playlist to read in addition and to present on one element when we gather in August for training with the Place Network. Teachers will spend 8 days prior to the school year and several days throughout the year to collaboratively develop the model, their understanding, and to evaluate our progress. Additionally, several mornings a week will be team time for further collaboration, as built in the weekly schedule. The Director of Academics will also work as an Instructional Coach to help guide and support teachers.

Additional classroom aids can help with the learning model and further lower the teacher to student ratio to below 1:20 that it is at currently.

New Teacher Orientation and On-boarding: Consists of the following steps: (1) **Learning:**

Background resources immediately available after hire for literature review and model

descriptions. (2) **Orientation:** Support and preparation before the start of the school year will

provide time for new teachers to develop curriculum. (3) **Mentoring:** Each new teacher will be

assigned a mentor to guide them through the first 2years. Teacher Professional Growth: Consists

of the following elements: (1) **Collaboration:** All teachers and administrators at MCS will have

access to a technology platform made available to all Place Network Schools to share resources,

tools, and curriculum ideas. (2) **Place Network Professional Development Pathways:** All

teachers will participate in on-going experiences linked directly to the Place Network model. (3)

Common Competencies: Place Network has an established set of adult learning competencies

and performance indicators linked to the framework and learning model for PD. (4) **Faculty**

Team Planning Time: Weekly meetings will be held with a specific focus on learner discussions

needs and program design and implementation (5) **Goal-setting:** Administrators and staff will

set personalized learning goals related to the learning model, educational approach, culture, or

community leadership. (7) **School Needs:** Other opportunities based on school goals.

Teacher Evaluation and Feedback: To encourage teacher growth, satisfaction, and retention the

following supports will be utilized: (1) **Evaluation:** All faculty will be observed routinely using

the [Danielson's Framework](#) per State Regulation. Using data from observations, teachers will

reflect and make goals accordingly. (2) **Student satisfaction surveys:** Students will provide

teachers with anonymous surveys that focus on expectations and rapport. Teachers will be

expected to respond to these surveys through the goal-setting process. (3) **Project design,**

engagement, and community impact: Teachers, through faculty collaboration time, will be expected to share and build community impact projects in partnership with students. Teachers will share out and support each other in their growth. (4) **Documented student progress on competency continuum:** With a competency-based system, all teachers in the school will be held accountable to the progress of all students and will be measured by weekly student discussions will ensure that all students make progress against the continuum. (5) **Teachers as learners.** Teachers will conduct action research and/or continuous improvement research to assess the efficacy of their teaching. (6) **Teachers as teammates.** Several times throughout the year staff will gather for seasonal outings to share their personal passions and build internal rapport including afternoon skiing, biking or potlucking with childcare provided.

H. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan

H1&3) Please see our 3-year operating budget and narrative that demonstrates financial stability, viability, autonomy, and alignment with the goals of this proposal and our mission.

H2) MCS has secured a lease at Tamarack Resort for \$1 a year. In our agreement they are also assuming the cost of all land improvements and hookups so the site is move-in ready. MCS has secured a loan from the Charter School Development Corporation to purchase 7 yurts for classroom and office spaces. Tamarack Resort is also donating time, materials, and resources to help with offsetting opening costs including: free internet for the first year, materials needed for the foundation of the yurts, bathroom facilities, expertise from engineering, construction, and architects, and logistical project management support. Yurts have been purchased and will arrive on site in July. Several community and family members will assist with the erecting of the yurts. This facility has open areas that allow for flexible grouping and a play area outdoors as well as access to the ski area, trails, and the lake - all important access elements to our model. The

Mountain Community School

buildings are ADA compatible and all necessary accommodations will be made as needed for students receiving special services. Currently our facilities including our loan, lease, maintenance, utilities, snow removal etc. is \$78,168 the first year, which is 13.6% of our budget. This number would decrease with the CSP grant.

I. Board Capacity and Governance Structure

11): MCS board members were recruited to provide diversity in experience and professional sectors within Valley County to serve a strong foundation to the opening of MCS. MCS board consists of 3 men and 4 women, with experience in small business ownership, legal, real estate, classroom teaching, outdoor learning, early childhood development, bookkeeping, marketing, and grant writing. MCS will seek Board members who have training in accounting/finance and community relations. Conversations are underway with several community members to fill in these areas. MCS board is a member of the Idaho School Boards Association and will utilize them for future training. MCS board has conducted several training meetings over the years provided by Bluum resources or available online. 12&3) MCS is a legally and operationally independent entity established by the non-profit corporation's Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is legally accountable for the operation of the charter school. MCS commits to compliance with all federal and state laws and rules and acknowledges the responsibility for identifying essential laws and regulations and complying with them. The Board of MCS complies with Idaho's Open Meeting and Public Record laws. The Board serves as public agents that serve MCS. There will be no less than five (5) and no more than nine (9) members on the Board. Annual election and selection of the Board of Directors will be held according to the Bylaws of MCS. The Board and the School Leader function as a governance team and collaborate on the conditions necessary for student and organizational success. The Board

Mountain Community School

empowers its' School Leader to accomplish school goals and create conditions for success. Close attention will be given to initial and ongoing board training and training protocols will be developed, implemented, and monitored by the Board Chair. Dedicated board training funds from the state will be used for ISBA board training and annual conference. Training will also be provided at the annual National Charter School Conference. Committees within the board were developed to manage finance, academics, governance, and facilities.

The Board is responsible for policy development and review, to which they have recently adopted school policies and by-laws; educational goals, short-term and long-term; financial well being of the school; operational oversight (not day to day); legal affairs of MCS; adopting, advocating for and overseeing a responsive school budget that meets the school goals and needs of all students; conducting a self-evaluation of its own leadership, governance, and teamwork; communicating and interpreting the school's mission and vision as well as other matters to stakeholders and the general public; managing conflicts of interest; and evaluation of School Leader. An annual assessment of training needs will take place to ensure the progression of the Board based areas of strengths, weakness, and potential growth.

J. School Leadership and Management

J1) MCS is led by the School Leader who is responsible for daily operations of the school and all reporting to the state department of education and the Board of Directors. The School Leader is responsible for overall instructional leadership, special education, testing, professional development, and compliance with professional codes and standards. The School Leader has the responsibility of all personnel matters relating to hiring, discipline, or termination of employees. The School Leader will lead in promoting the mission and vision of MCS. The School Leader advocates in the development of academic engagement, character development, and community

Mountain Community School

connections. The School Leader will work to lead and develop their team, demonstrate a strong passion for place-based and project based learning, and serve as an engaged teacher leader connected to the student experience. This person promotes a positive engagement with all stakeholders, faculty, and students. The School Leader will be evaluated annually by the School Board following the Idaho Principal Evaluation Framework and will receive feedback from staff and board during annual review. The School Leader will work closely with the Director of Academics to implement appropriate professional development, curriculum implementation, school culture, and coordinate community relations. This role helps to serve as a liaison amongst teachers and support by helping teachers coordinate vertically through grade levels so students are able to benefit from the expertise of all staff. The Director of Academics is evaluated by the School Leader using Danielson Framework. All school staff (certified and classified) and school volunteers report directly to the School Leader who then reports to the school Board. Certified staff will be responsible for working with students in multiple grade levels, as well as working with the Director of Academics to implement appropriate lessons.

The Place Network, the ESP for MCS, is a group of small, rural schools who share a commitment to innovative and high-impact learning. The network provides model curriculum, professional learning communities, technology support, research, and consulting services to accelerate the impact of the model. The network makes no requirement for particular curriculum selected by the school and thus allows each school to be locally relevant. Schools within the network share tools and curriculum liberally across other member schools. MCS will evaluate the Place Network Schools partnership on an annual basis through the analysis of network wide data, school specific data, and satisfaction surveys.

Mountain Community School

J2) Patrick Berg is the School Leader and co-founder of MCS. Mr. Berg has over 20 years in education including classroom, special education, alternative school, and school leadership. Mr. Berg is passionate about educating the whole child and working with teachers to help them transition to a mastery, personalized approach so students can be successful in their chosen pathways. Mr. Berg has previously held leadership roles in helping 2 schools transition to personalized and mastery-based programs. Dr. Jenny Schon is the Director of Academics and co-founder of MCS. Dr. Schon has 15 years of experience in education in both a classroom setting and in place-based, outdoor education. Dr. Schon has taught secondary science, graduate education courses, and a range of electives at the middle school and high school levels. She has also served as both a Technology Director and Gifted and Talented Director for a K-12 school and is currently working on her primary endorsement. Both Mr. Berg and Dr. Schon have experience in mastery-based, place-based, and project-based education.

Potential operational challenges include recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers and providing enough time and support for teachers to implement and maintain a new model of education. To implement the model with fidelity and provide a positive impact additional staff are required to provide a powerful personal learning experience. Opening a charter school in a rural area includes risk in growth due to limited population size. Finances are inherently difficult with a small population school, which greatly impacts facility development. Grant funds will greatly help us to tackle these obstacles. Despite these inherent challenges and risks Mr. Berg, Dr. Schon, and the MCS board feel very confident they possess the skills, training, network, and support required to open MCS. Our successful enrollment numbers and qualified teachers have us poised well to overcome many of these challenges. All of these challenges and risks can be minimized over time by providing a quality program and showcase the success of the students.