

FernWaters Public Charter School

New Charter School

Communities of Excellence Application Narrative

Executive Summary

FernWaters Public Charter School (FWPCS) which opened in July 2019 serves students in one of Idaho's most isolated rural communities. FWPCS offers students a high expectations, high supports educational program in a mixed grade setting that maintains a low student teacher ratio. FWPCS carries on many aspects of a program initially designed by FernWaters founders for Upper Carmen Charter School (est. 2005) which is ranked as one of the top performing public charter schools in Idaho. FWPCS exists to foster creative, confident, and independent thinkers, problem-solvers, global citizens, and leaders who give back to their communities. By providing up to 60 rural students in grades 4-8 a rigorous and diverse educational program combined with individualized learning and behavioral supports in a school setting that averages 12 students per grade, FWPCS gives students the discipline to achieve, a vision for the possible, and the courage to try. FernWaters is incredibly grateful to submit this proposal for Communities of Excellence funding to supplement the state and federal funds received in order to facilitate dynamic academic opportunities for our rural students.

A.) Grant Project Goals

GOAL 1: To provide a high quality charter school program adding 60 seats in a remote and rural community where overcrowding of public schools is prominent. With this grant we will be able to update our donated furniture, technology and curriculum that is outdated, as well as have additional funding to help provide unique extended learning programs. FernWaters enrolled 57 students in its first year with waiting lists in the 4th and 6th grades. During the 24 month grant period, FWPCS will serve its maximum number of students by year 2.

GOAL 2: Students in grades 4-8 will meet and/or exceed the state proficiency and growth averages in English Language Arts and math on state standardized assessments.

FWPCS strives to prepare students to succeed in coursework at the high school level. Test data is a useful indicator of future success. Assessments are also a reflection of the high quality teaching, learning, and program design at FWPCS. FWPCS uses a variety of data-based measures to assess student progress and to design appropriate interventions. The ISAT (Idaho Standards Achievement Test) provides FWPCS staff both growth and achievement data, which is recorded and analyzed in our learning management system.

GOAL 3: FWPCS will inclusively serve a student population within 5% of the Salmon School District's demographic.

FWPCS is a public school open to all students in the attendance area regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or special needs. FWPCS believes that a high quality education is a foundational right of our democracy and that access to a high quality education has an equalizing effect. The students who will most benefit from the personalized Fernwaters program are often those from underserved populations. FWPCS collects demographic data in its student information system during enrollment procedures and compares data to the local district.

GOAL 4: To offer all students exceptional extended learning opportunities, including middle level career technical education/exploration, fine arts, and music education.

MUSIC AND ART

Fernwaters believes that access to the arts is imperative in the development of critical thinking for adolescent learners. FWPCS also believes that the arts can offer rural students a healthy avenue for socialization and personal expression, while also offering a meaningful source of income. Although we operate on a four-day week, we would like to offer students the option for Friday piano, guitar (or other instrument) lessons for students who can't afford them privately. The initial purchase of instruments would launch a program which we could sustain with state

funds and through revenue-generating student performances. Our goal is to supplement the 6-8 visual arts program with a textbook component that links art to social studies and to offer students hands on learning projects guided by community artists. Our goal is that FernWaters students will be publicly recognized as artists and musicians in their rural community.

CAREER EXPLORATION/CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

FWPCS has partnered with Salmon's Youth Employment Program (YEP) to offer youth one-of-a-kind career exploration learning opportunities. Current projects include Graphic Design and Welding. Our goal is to expand these programs (and later add other programs) through the purchase of technology, instructor stipends, and software. Our goal is to create a pipeline of students with career skills and interests which could be further developed through participation in YEP and youth apprenticeships. We will track the numbers of students participating in both our arts and career technical extended learning programs and follow their progress over a two year period.

B.) Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum

FWPCS offers students in grades 4-8 a personalized learning experience that focuses on developmentally appropriate curriculum. The school is founded on the belief that a high-quality education, coupled with hands on learning in a community setting, can be transformative. FWPCS is wholly dedicated to creating problem solvers who are encouraged to look "outside of the box" for viable solutions. FWPCS students connect with their communities and the larger world through academic pursuits, creative expression, and opportunities for civic engagement. FWPCS follows a high expectations, high supports learning model in a mixed grade setting that maintains an average student teacher ratio of 12:1.

FernWaters believes that:

1. Access to the arts are crucial to critical thinking;
2. Developmentally appropriate curriculum encourages learning;
3. Extended learning opportunities help students feel that they are a part of a larger community;
4. High expectation and high support environments create self-fulfilling prophecies;
5. One:one device to student technology model increases academic performance.
6. A diverse curriculum aligned to Core Standards in ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, complemented by fine arts studies should be accessible to all students;
7. Trusting, supportive, and nurturing teacher-student rapport forms the foundation for all learning;
8. Students flourish with differentiated and personalized learning experiences;
9. Lessons and activities that require problem solving and critical thinking are instrumental in building confidence and success;
10. Career technical opportunities are important at the middle grade level to help students understand different pathways to postsecondary success.

By helping students understand, appreciate, and believe in themselves, FWPCS increases the rigor and discipline needed for learning to occur. FWPCS aims to imbue each middle grade student with a healthy sense of self, a high level of academic and personal discipline, strong foundational skills in reading, writing, and math, creativity, a concern for others, and a strong sense of community so that our students can go on to succeed in high school and beyond.

FWPCS creates a culture of excellence by maintaining safe, clean, organized, comfortable, and stimulating learning and play spaces, by exemplifying and demanding respectful manners, and by insisting on high quality, on-time work performance that reflects higher level

thinking. FWPCS students often hear from the teachers that they are being prepared for future academic successes, that college is within their reach, that hard work, determination, and fortitude are greater predictors of success than native brilliance or material wealth. FWPCS teaches students how to stay organized, how to study, and how to advocate for themselves. FWPCS delivers a rich and diverse curriculum aligned to Core Standards in ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, complemented by fine arts studies. During young adolescence, the brain and body undergo tremendous growth and change. Research indicates distinctive characteristics of young adolescents in regard to their physical, cognitive, moral, psychological, and social-emotional development (Scales, 2010). FWPCS recognizes these distinctive characteristics and designs its programs to meet the needs of young adolescent children who are developing skills in deductive reasoning, problem-solving, and generalizing, and our Core Curriculum-aligned, Idaho Core Standards-based educational programs are consistent with the following research-based best practices for middle grade students (Lorain, 2017).

1. **Present limited amounts of new information to accommodate the short-term memory.** Our academic programs focus on quality and depth, preferring mastery of a few knowledge and skill sets over exposure to numerous skills. This targeted, mastery-based approach prepares students with strong foundational skills in reading, writing, and math. Similarly, psychologists have discovered that students learn best when studying is *distributed* instead of *massed*. Students retain the most information when they are given repeated opportunities to retrieve previously learned material (Smith and Hernandez, 2017). All of our academic lessons are complemented with learning activities and assessments that require students to review and apply previously learned material. Particularly, our science program provides a standards-based

laboratory component with every concept taught. Language arts curricula is designed to provide regimented practice, but with such a diverse range of activities and resources that students remain engaged. Fireworks Press grammar lessons develop sentence diagramming skills via multi-modal learning that incorporates kinesthetic, auditory, and visual components. Write Source and Spectrum curricula provide structured mini-lessons that develop narrative, persuasive, and expository writing skills and reading comprehension activities.

2. **Provide opportunities for students to process and reinforce the new information and to connect the new information with previous learning.** We prefer curricula with recursive content review, allowing students repeated exposure to foundational skills. Saxon math reliably provides ample practice opportunities as students develop the basic math skills that will allow them to succeed in Algebra and higher levels of math. We have identified some gaps in the Saxon curriculum, and we supplement our direct instruction additional sources and with digital content aligned to the Idaho Core Standards, such as Math-Aide.com, Prodigy Math, Imagine Math, quill.org, and Khan Academy. Science and social studies lessons include lectures, text assignments, projects, labs, oral presentations, experiential learning activities, quizzes, and tests.

FWPCS academic programs are all rooted in the Idaho Standards and provide ample opportunities to read and write in various genres. Study of literary works and text structures is limited to those that can be fully explored. Students at each grade level read and study at least one novel, one play, short stories, and poetry. Prose writing assignments focus on teaching students how to write in three Standards-based genres: Narrative, Expository, and Persuasive.

FWPCS embeds mechanics and usage instruction within the context of student writing assignments requiring recursive revisions and editing so that these concepts can be revisited until they are mastered.

FWPCS supplements direct instruction of language arts concepts with self-guided curricula requiring frequent short reading comprehension and varied writing practice. Students complete impersonal journal prompts, read and summarize/respond to informational texts, and complete short activities that reinforce correct spelling, punctuation, and usage.

3. **Provide lessons that are varied, with lots of involvement and experiential activities.** Instruction periods do not exceed 45 minutes, and lesson activities within instruction periods are planned to accommodate short attention spans. Activities are varied, multimodal, and often hands on or cooperative. The science program is lab-based, affording frequent experiential learning activities that reinforce and apply text and lecture-based learning. The 4th-5th grade science curriculum is developed around the Idaho Standards, and is 90% lab-based. This middle school science program focuses on physical science in the 6th grade, life science in the 7th grade, and earth science in the 8th grade. Each of these courses contains at least 25 experiential labs per year. Some labs take days to complete. Students not only learn the science concepts, but they also learn how to be scientists. They learn observation and deduction skills, and they learn how to follow directions, how to use and care for science equipment, and how to proceed methodically with complicated tasks. Fourth and fifth grade students use SpellWell, which incorporates various word study activities with spelling instruction. Sequential Spelling is used in grades 6-8. This individualized, peer-partner spelling program provides daily practice of spelling

patterns on small white boards. Students receive immediate feedback and opportunities to correct misspellings without the frustrations or anxiety of weekly quizzes. Many cooperative learning activities are offered as well as engaging class discussion periods as part of our learning programs.

4. **Provide lessons and activities that require problem solving and critical thinking.**

All academic programs require students to write about and discuss topics requiring higher order thinking skills, such as synthesis and application. Students are asked to *reflect, assess, evaluate, predict, hypothesize, and infer*. Literature studies, in particular, require in-depth analysis. In all content areas, lessons are structured to give students the information and procedures they need to approach critical thinking tasks. Multiple approaches to problem solving are both taught and encouraged, and students are nurtured to think creatively and independently.

Physiologically, the bodies of children between the ages of 10^{1/2} and 13 undergo significant hormonal changes that affect the developing brain. Essentially, these changes result in an overactive limbic (emotional) system and an underdeveloped prefrontal cortex (impulse control). The FernWaters Public Charter School program reflects research-based practices regarding how best to meet the cognitive and developmental needs of middle grade students, which are succinctly summarized from *The Best Schools* (Armstrong, 2006). They are the following: 1.) Safe school climate; 2.) Small learning communities; 3.) Personal adult relationships; 4.) Engaged learning; 5.) Positive role models; 6.) Metacognitive strategies integrated into all courses; 7.) Expressive arts activities for all students; 8.) Health and wellness focus; 9.) Emotionally meaningful curriculum; 10.) Student roles in decision-

making; 11.) Honoring and respecting student voices; and 12.) Facilitating social and emotional growth. The school program and structure at FernWaters Public School meets these needs.

FernWaters is structured for 4-8 grade education with multi-grade classrooms. Fourth and fifth grades are combined. Science and social studies curricula are delivered in a two-year cycle.

Math and Language arts curricula are grade specific. The sixth through eighth grade students rotate between two classrooms. While two of the grade levels are being directly instructed in grade-specific Science, Social Studies, Math, and English courses, the third group either works autonomously on highly structured independent curricula that reinforces reading, writing, critical thinking, and math skills, or receives elective instruction. Students requiring extra help in any subject area are provided either one-on-one or small group tutoring and/or remediation during this independent work time.

Technology provides a critical learning avenue for FWPCS students seeking reinforcement, enrichment, and engagement. A one-to-one student to device model helps FWPCS accomplish its learning goal of providing individualized and differentiated curriculum. In our mixed grade model, students who are not being directly instructed work independently. Web-based learning applications, such as Duolingo, Prodigy Math, Quill Grammar, Smithsonian Tween Tribune, and Code.org keep students learning and engaged at their individual levels. Students participating in Idaho's Advanced Opportunities track benefit from IDLA courses. FWPCS uses G-Suite for Education as an online learning and communication platform for students, teachers, and parents that can be accessed from school and home. FWPCS students use technology to complete research, writing, and presentation projects, and it is essential to the computer coding curriculum. FWPCS aims to teach students responsible digital citizenship and empowers them

with the tools needed to learn and work in a digital environment. FWPCS also uses technology for screening, growth, and summative assessment.

The FernWaters program recognizes that expressive arts in the middle grades is essential to help students channel their impulsive energies and foster social and emotional health. One component of the expressive arts program is a 2-year sequence of hands-on art projects in the 4th and 5th grades. Students have the opportunity to work with a variety of materials and mediums to produce individual works of art. Additionally, 4th and 5th grade students participate in choral singing, rhythmic movement. All students in grades 6-8 have receive art instruction at least once per week. Students in grades 4-8 also receive daily choral instruction, which elevates their performance to three-part harmony. FWPCS hopes to expand the vocal program to include an instrumental program which provides instruments and instructors for all students who choose to participate in a Friday learning supplement. Many studies have shown that arts education can benefit cognitive abilities, particularly spatial abilities, higher reasoning and motor skills, and higher achievements in language and math. Music and art allow students to become more aesthetically sensitive. Through art, students can experience, express, expand, and apply knowledge in the three domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor. The primary value of arts education is to improve the quality of life through enriching students' experiences of human feeling. The secondary value is in helping middle grade students channel impulsive energies, sort out emotional conflicts, and build a deeper sense of positive identity.

A partnership with the Youth Employment Program, a long standing local non profit is providing Fernwaters students with extended learning opportunities in career exploration and career technical education. We are piloting two programs. In the graphic design program, YEP staff teach students to use Adobe Suite applications, and students engage in hands on graphic design

projects at the Art of Design studio, using equipment such as a large format printer and a graphics heat press. Welding students work with a community instructor over a two-month term on Fridays to develop basic safety protocols and rudimentary welding skills. Our vision is that these programs will expand to the level that students can begin and/or finish industry certificates. The FernWaters program values physical activity and time outdoors in every season as contributing to overall mental and physical well-being. Students participate daily in all-inclusive physical outdoor activities where every child is welcomed into any group game.

The FernWaters educational team partners with community organizations to connect students to their communities and expand their learning experiences. The Salmon Public Library's well-developed STEAM lab serves as an extended classroom for engineering and design-build projects. FernWaters also partners with the The Lemhi County Historical Society to engage students in a local history research/writing/presentation project.

FernWaters Public Charter School recognizes that computer coding is both a practical skill and a high-interest method for teaching problem-solving. FWPCS offers a 4-8 sequence of computer coding classes based on code.org's curriculum. Students gain the fundamentals necessary to pursue the subject in greater depth either as a hobby or as a career pathway.

Although much of our instruction is grade-specific, our learning environment is multi-grade. Research supporting multi-grade classrooms, those that teach a variety of ages in the same classroom, indicates that students learn more efficiently and are also more community-oriented (Riggio, 2017). Multi-grade classrooms have shown that they enhance the following:

- 1) Learning Environment—Students can teach and learn from one another in a natural, family-like setting. Students in this environment tend to be less competitive and more cooperative.

2) Leadership Skills—Older students develop leadership skills because the teacher encourages them to serve as role models and gives them opportunities to help younger students.

3) Individualized Learning Levels—Multi-grade classrooms allow students to work with a peer group of their own ability level while exposing them to curriculum before expected mastery.

Advanced students can more easily be challenged with higher-level material.

4) Socialization—Younger students gain self-confidence and maturity by being exposed to older students, and older students in the classroom become role models of expected behaviors for the younger students.

5) Looping—Research shows that some students benefit from having the same teacher who knows their abilities for two or more sequential years. Responsibility for work and respect for others is encouraged and taught, emphasizing necessary skills for the workforce. The safe environment, personal relationships with positive adult role models, and non-judgemental learning environment in this school structure give middle grade students the opportunity to learn, grow, and flourish.

C.) Teaching and Learning

FWPCS deploys a wide variety of teaching strategies adjusted to meet the needs of students and appropriate to the concepts taught. Teachers establish clear learning objectives and set high expectations. Direct instruction and scaffolded instruction are used to present new information or teach new skills. Students learn how to take notes and how to summarize texts. Guided practice and reinforcement activities occur both within the classroom under the supervision and guidance of a teacher and independently at school or at home. Teachers use rubrics and clearly define measures of success. FWPCS teachers provide clear, effective, and timely feedback on assignments. Assessments are designed to evaluate what students have learned in individual

units and lessons, and they are used to help students gain greater metacognitive awareness of their learning, to improve teaching, and to encourage better organizational skills and study habits. Students are given opportunities and encouraged to redo poor quality work, and they are praised and rewarded for efforts that meet or exceed expectations. Classroom discussions tackle interesting topics centered around higher level questions and age appropriate wait times. Science students practice generating and testing hypotheses. Literature circles, reading groups, and team projects comprise aspects of the language arts program. FWPCS teachers design lessons and activities to reach students with various learning styles, including kinesthetic, auditory, and visual.

Teachers meet weekly with students to discuss academic performance measures and make plans to improve lagging performance. Struggling students receive targeted interventions, which include small group or one-on-one sessions where concepts are re-taught, explained more slowly, or in greater depth. Component reading strategy skills are taught to students who struggle to read. Students who continue to struggle receive tier 3 interventions with a teacher or teacher aide, who models how to think through and solve a problem. Explicit and systematic instructions are provided, and students are taught to verbalize questions and answers relating to what they are learning.

FWPCS leverages local community resources and opportunities for experiential learning through community involvement, educational opportunities, service projects, performances and partnerships.

D.) Student Academic Achievement Standards

FernWaters Public Charter School will effectively and consistently provide a balanced picture of our students' strengths and weaknesses through both summative and formative

assessments. FWPCS staff understand the importance of using data to support student learning and teacher excellence. Data is a tool which drives change in instruction and curriculum with the goal of moving education forward at a pace that matches technology. Students participate in both summative and formative ISAT assessments. Teachers also utilize culminating events including end-of-unit tests, presentations, and projects to serve as summative accountability measures. Written and oral quizzes, questioning, observations, self-assessments, peer assessments, and formal and informal check-ins comprise informal formative assessments. Benchmark screening and progress monitoring are accomplished with NWEA's MAP test and DIBELS. Identified students received targeted interventions and/or referral to special education. Assessment is an ongoing process. The low student to teacher ratio at FWPCS allows for accurate and compelling evaluation of student learning and teacher effectiveness.

E.) Student Demand and Community/Local Support

FWPCS is located in Salmon, Idaho, the county seat and population center of Lemhi County, one of the most isolated, rural counties in Idaho. Lemhi County on average falls well below the state percentage of students going on to post-secondary education. Most students in Salmon attend the Salmon School District #291, whose testing data provides compelling evidence of the need for an effective school of choice. The Salmon School District reported a k-12 enrollment of 789 students, over 50% of those qualifying for free and reduced lunch, and nearly 15% on Individual Learning Plans. The average performance in Salmon was over 20% lower than statewide averages in standardized testing. Students in special populations are more likely to show academic growth when they are taught in a learning environment that allows for individualized education. Unfortunately Salmon's schools are overcrowded. The district report that their

elementary school is 122% over capacity and that their middle school is 181% over capacity. In recent years, 10 bond attempts to fund a new k-8 elementary school in Salmon have failed.

FWPCS offers up to 60 fourth through eighth grade students in and around Salmon, Idaho in Lemhi County a high-quality public school of choice. The school exceeded its target number of applications and has a waiting list. The population of students served closely mirrors the demographic served in the Salmon schools. FWPCS implements a door-to-door marketing strategy that educates families in identified low-income neighborhoods (two trailer courts and one subsidized apartment building) about the FernWaters program and services, offers applications, assistance completing paperwork, and follow up visits to interested individuals. Parents are considered partners in our mission to make sure every student succeeds.

To date parents have provided direction on school layout/design, school safety, student enrollment policy, fundraising, and student activities. FernWaters actively engages parents in personalized communications via email, Facebook, flyers, and texts about school activities and news. Parents participate in an open house before the first day of school. FWPCS is developing a PTA, offering parents choice in how they would like to participate in the learning community. The PTA conducts an annual parent survey and a school climate survey. Teams of parents are formed to address actionable items. The FWPCS volunteer support to date has been impressive. A strong community of parents, volunteers, and advocates are standing by for more opportunities to support the FWPCS programs and initiatives.

G-Suite for Education extends access to school assignments and helps foster a school community of teachers, learners, and collaborators. FWPCS uses communication tools to connect parents to community supports.

F.) Effectively Serving All Students

We focus on providing the most applicable and individualized supports to every student. Targeted tutoring has been identified as an effective method for closing the achievement gap among economically disadvantaged populations. FWPCS teaching staff is available for tutoring from 7:15 until school starts at 8:00, as well as after school, from 3:00-4:30. FWPCS also provides one-on one help from instructional staff throughout most of the school day. FWPCS has contracted with a local Idaho certified SPED teacher to develop and implement a comprehensive SPED program in compliance with federal and state requirements relating to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students requiring extra assistance are identified through screening assessments and other performance measures, and a system of multi-tiered interventions are provided proactively. Class sizes and access to technology allow for a high level of individualized support and differentiated curriculum for children identified for exceptional child services. FWPCS also works to eliminate barriers to enrollment and attendance for special populations. Due to the large geographic service area, FWPCS cannot sustain a conventional bussing program, but a comprehensive in-lieu of compensation plan guarantees access to enrollment and attendance. Parents living more than 1.5 miles from the facility are notified of the transportation plan and the reimbursement rate established by the state. Funds are budgeted to provide Lemhi Ride bussing services above and beyond the FWPCS in-lieu of transportation plan for those whom access to transportation is a barrier. FWPCS students participate in the Salmon School District's extra-curricular activities. FWPCS contracts through competitive bidding field trip transportation. Though an insignificant homeless population is anticipated, a Homeless Liaison identifies and ensures service to homeless students in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act. FWPCS has identified a Spanish language translator in the event that Salmon's small EL population

increases. FWPCS connects families to community service organizations, like Lemhi Social Services, The Mahoney House, food banks, and churches to complement its service to special populations. School programs and structures must allow students to develop in a healthy environment, and they must interrupt and correct any potentially damaging peer interactions (Caskey & Infara, 2014). FernWaters Public Charter School teaches students positive behaviors. FWPCS applies The United States Department of Education's recommendation for the use of positive behavioral interventions/supports as a model for instruction that proactively identifies the behavioral competencies of all students and addresses these competencies through a multi-tiered approach (Posny, 2010). These interventions paired with individualized, escalating consequences focusing on choices and fairness address any maladaptive behavior, ensuring a safe and constructive environment conducive to learning. Interventions and consequences may be systematically applied to the whole school, a small group such as a class, or an individual as determined by the educational team, including, when appropriate, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student. As a whole, this process works to clearly communicate expectations to students, teach and reward a student's demonstration of skills that are necessary to learn and thrive in a learning environment while decreasing behaviors that may be incompatible with learning.

G.) Staffing and Professional Development Plan

Research has confirmed that teachers matter more to student achievement than any other aspect of schooling. To recruit top talent and to retain high-performing teachers, FWPCS offers competitive compensation and benefits packages, fosters a positive work culture, encourages innovation and time for collaboration, and offers professional growth and leadership opportunities to teachers at any stage of their careers.

FernWaters Public Charter School serves 60 students on a campus that is about 4000 square feet. Our staffing requirements are unique. Initially we will employ 3.5 teacher FTE's, 0.5 administrative FTE's, 1.0 classified FTE, and 0.2 pupil services FTE in SPED/counseling. The administrator, who serves as superintendent, principal, and special education director, may also assume some instructional duties, depending on his or her experience and abilities. One teacher oversees the 4th/5th classroom with part-time assistance from a paraprofessional. The core subjects in grades 6-8 are taught by 2 teachers, with a 3rd and a part-time aide available to work one-on-one and offer elective enrichment coursework. Teacher leaders help fulfill administrative roles in technology, data collection/analysis, and student supervision. All teachers at FernWaters help out with light custodial work, and we employ a part-time custodian/groundskeeper. We seek teachers with elementary endorsements or multiple secondary endorsements. The FernWaters staff recognizes the value of meaningful staff evaluations for continuous improvement. Evaluation is used as a vehicle for providing ongoing discourse about curricula, methods, and classroom management practices that optimize learning outcomes. Evaluation observations, school assessment and performance data, patron feedback, and teacher input inform staff Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs). Professional development opportunities include appropriate individual and staff training for certified and classified staff and board members.

H.) Financial Management and Monitoring Plan

The 4,006 square foot FWPCS main facility located at 103 Van Dreff Street in Salmon, Idaho is newly remodeled and currently functional. FWPCS has agreed to lease it for \$1000/month. The main facility has four large classrooms, three rooms for pull-out instruction, 3 bathrooms, (one fully functional with shower), offices for administrative staff, and large privacy-fenced play area. FWPCS also leases from the Lemhi County Historical Society (located across the street) a

music room for \$1,800/year. Combined direct facility costs including lease and utilities for both are estimated at less than \$19,000/year, under 5% of the total budget. Minimal facility costs help ensure financial stability. FWPCS's small size, mixed grade setting, and blended staff positions (teacher/admin), (teacher/aide) also help mitigate revenue shortfalls.

I.) Board Capacity and Governance Structure

FWPCS's Board of Directors represent a diverse and capable sector of our community. Two own and operate successful private businesses. Three have served on other non-profit boards. One is employed by a partner organization, The Lemhi County Historical Society; one is a Veteran's Clinic nurse; and one is bilingual in Spanish and English, has a degree in business management, and work experience in accounting. New board members will be actively and continuously recruited from within and without the charter school community based on the skill sets and diversity required throughout all phases of the charter school's development, as identified by the existing school board members and parents.

FWPCS is organized and managed under the Idaho Nonprofit Corporation Act and is managed locally by its Board of Directors and its employed Administrator. According to the corporate bylaws, the Board of FWPCS consists of no less than five (5) and no more than seven (7) members. All Board work is subject to open meeting laws and it is the responsibility of the chair and secretary to make sure that the laws are followed, and appropriate documentation of meetings is maintained.

The Board of Directors is legally accountable for the operation of the Charter School. The Board is responsible for financial and legal requirements of the corporation including the annual budget, expenditures and legal compliance with local, state and federal regulations. The Board is also responsible for hearing and approving or disapproving the recommendations of the school

Administrator with respect to changes in staffing levels, program, discipline or curriculum. The Board, when necessary, adjudicates disagreements between parents and the administration.

The Board Handbook clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of the board that are in place to govern the school. The board chair has the responsibility of ensuring all board members understand and perform their duties. Board members annually review and update essential documents, revise, amend, and/or approve bylaws and policies, update Conflict of Interest forms, and complete self-assessments to reflect on areas for continuous improvement. FWPCS belongs to the Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA) and encourages and actively funds professional development for board members, including costs of trainings and travel.

J.) School Leadership and Management

FernWaters Public Charter School recognizes that leading a charter school requires both educational and operational leadership. FWPCS employs a 0.5 FTE administrator who works closely with teacher leaders, governing board members, and a 0.14 business manager to govern and manage the school. A full-time classroom aide and the close proximity of the classrooms in the FWPCS facility allow for flexibility in case the administrator/teacher needs to attend to matters outside of the classroom. Kristin Foss is the administrator. Kristin earned an Ed.S. degree in Educational Leadership and has diverse experience in education, including 10 years spent creating and refining the Upper Carmen Charter middle school program. Kristin also teaches English and math. Our business manager is mentoring with a veteran business manager from Upper Carmen Public Charter School to ensure successful financial management. The governing board monitors and evaluates administrator performance. The educational leader, the business manager, and governing board work together to provide key aspects of school leadership, business and financial management, and organizational governance.

Teacher leaders help assume some leadership duties, including ISEE/Data Management, Technology, and Assessment. FWPCS leadership and staff are team-oriented, united in mission, and committed to success.