



**The Yuba Environmental Science
Charter Academy
(YES Charter Academy)**

"YES! To Excellence in Education"

**CHARTER PETITION
Appendix 5**

Prepared in compliance with the terms, conditions, and requirements of
The Charter Schools Act, Education Code Section 47600, *et seq.*, and related
statutes



V. Submittal Cover Letter to MJUSD

Yuba Environmental Science Charter Academy
9841 Texas Hill Rd
Oregon House, CA 95962
January 8, 2013

The Board of Trustees
Marysville Joint Unified School District
1919 B St
Marysville, CA 95901

Dear Dr. Gay Todd and MJUSD Board of Trustees:

This letter is to request the 5 year renewal of the charter petition of Yuba Environmental Science Charter Academy for the 2013-2018 school years. This correspondence outlines our successes and identifies growth areas for future goals.

YES Charter Academy Council of Directors, Staff and Faculty, Parents, and Students would like to first thank the Marysville Joint Unified School District Board of Trustees for granting us a two year extension on our original charter petition to bring us to the end of our first full term. YES Charter Academy has worked hard since our last two year extension to address the concerns of the District and make ourselves a successful school dedicated to increasing our student academic achievement and science based thinking skills. As we continue to develop as a unique school in the District we are pleased to offer the students and educational community an option in schooling that emphasizes science based thinking with a clear link to the environment and agricultural sciences.

NEWS and SUCCESSES

Our State Testing Scores: This year our state testing goal was to increase 5 points in our API scores. We scored 717 in 2010-2011, our third year of dropping scores. This last year all of our efforts with data, tracking student progress, and implementing research based strategies from Roots of Reading, Seeds of Science paid off big with an API jump of 11 points! More than double what the state set for us, YES Charter Academy staff, teachers, parents, and students pulled together to earn an API score of **728**. This is a proud moment in the history of our school as it marks the first time since we opened that we have improved from the previous year. The stability of new leadership at the school and a full two years of operation from District were a great motivator and stabilizing element that allowed our school to show the learning that occurred and allowed us to meet and exceed our API score goals.

Fiscal Solvency: YES Charter Academy made necessary adjustments to our financial projections and appropriate cuts to staffing and other areas in order to make our school financially solvent with less than 90 students at our last Renewal/Extension meetings. Over the past two years we grew in student enrollment and were able to hire another teacher to address student needs. We lost Class Size Reduction and had to pay back money we had already received for Class Size Reduction and still will be ending our



school year with almost \$20,000 over our annual expenses. We have shown flexibility, been able to adapt to various circumstances and have remained solvent not only for the last two years of our granted extension but into our projections for the next five years.

Bus and Transportation: YES Charter Academy has negotiated the trade of our first school bus for a new bus equipped with seat belts, tire chains, a video and sound monitoring system, and much more from Yuba City Unified School District. We also negotiated a contract for a dedicated driver, trained and maintained through the Yuba City Unified School District Transportation Department including the provision of substitute drivers, full maintenance, repair, and fueling of our bus, and the support services of the Transportation Department. While we still cannot pick up as comprehensively as the bus routes of MJUSD, we are the only charter school in Northern California to offer independent bus services and these services have attracted students from Yuba City through Marysville and the Foothills.

Back Office Services, Power School, and Online Assessment Reporting System: YES Charter Academy now contracts with Charter School Management Corporation to provide back office accounting services, attendance reporting, and our online student information systems and benchmark assessments. Power School allows our teachers to track student achievement through an online grade book, online student attendance and lunch counts, and links the daily grade book to our standards based report cards. The Online Assessment Reporting System (OARS) allows teachers to administer mock CST assessments twice during the school year as well as teacher made tests, standards based quizzes, end of unit tests, and assessments from Saxon Math and Open Court Reading. OARS tracks cohorts, individuals, intervention groups, and much more so that our students, parents, and teachers know exactly where student achievement is and can use this data to design effective lessons and interventions to help students progress. This data is also used to implement our Individual Learning Plan goals and identify student strengths and areas of need, all leading to increased student academic performance.

PROGRESS on PREVIOUS GOALS for IMPROVEMENT:

1. Professional Development: At the completion of our grant for professional development our teachers were trained in the methods and curriculum of Roots of Reading, Seeds of Science from the UC Berkley and Lawrence Hall of Science. Teachers continued to develop on campus through weekly minimum day schedules allowing time to collaborate and reflect on their progress. This year, with feedback from families on scheduling difficulties, the teachers have scheduled one Friday of each month that does not have a significant number of holidays to dedicate to professional development and collaboration. YES has hired a retired teacher and master gardener to assist mentoring teachers in developing a greater alignment of the state adopted curriculum with our matriculation and school vision of teaching through environmental science.
2. Consistency in School Leadership: YES Charter Academy has maintained a consistent Director/Principal for more than two years now, which has provided an opportunity to better establish site goals, school policies, and a consistent vision for the school. Additionally, a strong and consistent Council of Directors has been elected. This Council of Directors and Administration have taken on the task of transitioning the school from a time of turmoil to a time of growth and stability. Through a frank and honest look at policies and practices, the institution of standards based assessment tools and student progress tracking, and a commitment to improvement, our Council of Directors and Principal have lead the school to a new level of academic and behavioral expectations and achievement.



3. **Community and District Resource:** YES Charter Academy has consistently reached out to our community in the Yuba Foothills to build positive relationships and mutual support. Through joint community and school efforts more than \$700 was raised at a benefit family music performance supporting YES Charter Academy and the Dobbins Oregon House Improvement Foundation. The Lions Club joined YES in fund raising to send our 5/6 class to Shady Creek for the first time and again to raise money for a family whose home burned down. We have been featured as a community resource and quality public school in the Yuba-Sutter Macaroni Kids e-magazine, where we continue to promote our school's and our community's events. YES Charter Academy has participated in local Farmer's Markets and held events welcoming the community to family centered events such as our Spring Festival and Harvest Festival. Additionally we have participated in Charter Round Table meetings with Yuba County Office of Education and other Yuba County charter schools.
4. **Building Enrollment:** YES Charter Academy has attracted more students through our efforts in advertising and reaching out to the community. In 2010, the school's enrollment dropped to only 64 students. In 2011 we began with 88 students. This school year we opened with over 100 students enrolled. Our web site has been updated and maintained by a parent volunteer and we have hosted several community events such as book fairs, festivals, assemblies, and more. We are pleased to have hired a fifth teacher and pioneered our first Transitional Kindergarten classroom. Our bus travels through Yuba City, Marysville, and the Foothills up to Brownsville. We have attracted students from each of these areas and Bangor so that we are now pulling enrollment from three counties.

GOALS for IMPROVEMENT/FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

1. YES Charter Academy will continue to develop and refine our own unique method of applying research based strategies to a curriculum based on the scientific inquiry and rooted in environmental and agricultural sciences.
 2. YES Charter Academy will further develop our teaching staff to become experts in thematic based teaching using common core standards through collaboration, mentoring, and professional training.
 3. YES Charter Academy will strengthen relationships between the charter school, district, community, and county through collaboration, a commitment to positive interactions, and a problem solving approach open to serving the needs of the community.
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CLOSING

We appreciate the opportunity to submit a request for renewal of Yuba Environmental Science Charter Academy through the Board of Trustees of Marysville Joint Unified School District. It has been an amazing journey from our beginnings to the current year. We hope to continue our journey and deepen our understanding of and contribution to the professional educational community of MJUSD and Yuba County. As the only Science Based School in the District, YES Charter Academy is proud to offer the



**YUBA ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
CHARTER ACADEMY**

Trustees, students, and families of Marysville Joint Unified and the Yuba-Sutter area a positive public school option that taps into the needs of students who can be successful in this alternative setting.

Sincerely,

Katheryn Smith, M.A., Ed.
Director/Principal/Education Specialist
Yuba Environmental Science Charter Academy