



Two Rivers Community School  
Application for Authorization from Roaring Fork Schools  
September 30, 2019

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### **1. Intent to apply form (exhibit LBD\*-E)**

Attachment: [Intent to Apply](#)

### **2. Executive Summary**

Two Rivers Community School (TRCS) is a public charter school that was established in 2014 in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Since opening, we have been authorized by the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI), a branch of the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The school was born from the collective efforts of many parents, teachers, and community members who wanted to see a greater choice in the public education sector in our valley.

Place-based learning was chosen as the primary model for the school's educational delivery. TRCS was founded with the intention of providing students relevant learning experiences that connect them to the community. This educational model provides a highly experiential learning process that takes students out of the classroom and into the field by connecting content standards to local issues. We use the expertise of local professionals in a range of fields to make the learning relevant. We aim to provide unforgettable learning experiences to all of our students.

Another critical intent of the school was to establish a true sense of community. We strive to develop supportive relationships with all of our stakeholders. We work in a small school setting with a close-knit community. We partner with families as frequently as possible to ensure that we create a welcoming feeling and a sense of belonging for everyone that comes to our school.

Developing a school with a strong second language program and an emphasis on multicultural studies was another important goal of the founders. Though we are not a dual language school, we do provide quality Spanish language classes that all of our students take on a daily basis. The school is passionate about developing respect for cultural diversity from around the world and here in the Roaring Fork Valley.

### **Rationale for District Authorization**

We are in our 6th year of working with the Charter School Institute as our authorizer, and we maintain a positive working relationship with them to this day. However, we see several major benefits to partnering with Roaring Fork Schools as we move forward.

Our mission and strategic goals and those of Roaring Fork Schools are closely aligned. Looking at the strategies to achieve the goals of both TRCS and Roaring Fork Schools, there are really only differences in language, not intended outcomes. From having high expectations for every student, ensuring quality Tier 1 instruction, working to partner with families and the community, providing authentic learning experiences, and more, we share similar values and approaches to education. We could learn from one another's successes and failures.

As a state-authorized school, we are members of a community of schools that spans the entire state and includes a wide range of educational models that are very different than our own. While we enjoy the opportunities we have to work with these schools, the occurrences are infrequent and often lack relevance. We believe our work would compliment that of the district and create meaningful opportunities for collaboration to better serve the Roaring Fork Valley.

At the end of the day, we feel there is far more common ground between Two Rivers and Roaring Fork Schools than there are differences, though we recognize not everyone, including some of our own stakeholders, may agree. We live and work in the same community and we all want the best for our students. It makes sense that we work together to achieve our goals.

### 3. Vision and mission

The mission and vision of TRCS were originally written by a group of parents, community members, and the founding administrators prior to the opening of the school in 2014. The statements were modified minimally in 2015 with input from a group of parents, teachers, and board members. The current Board of Directors has agreed to review and update both the mission and vision statement in the 2019-2020 school year. Teachers, students, and parents have been provided opportunities to provide input into the process and will continue to be involved as the board moves forward with the update.

#### **Vision**

The Vision of Two Rivers Community School is to be an exemplary K-8 school founded upon the belief in Academic Rigor, Authentic Relationships, and Curricular Relevancy.

#### **Mission**

The Mission of Two Rivers Community School is to cultivate in every student:

-Passion for learning and high achievement through creating rigorous, interdisciplinary learning experiences on topics relevant to the students that culminate in original work aimed at engaging and positively impacting the community and the world.

-Deep, supportive relationships among staff, students, families, and the community through the small school setting, multi-age classes, a two-year teacher commitment and high parental involvement.

-Respect for and interest in human diversity through second language acquisition and cross-cultural studies that build a broader world perspective and essential collaboration skills to become leaders in our changing world.

#### 4. Goals, objectives and student performance standards

##### **Student Performance Goals**

The School agrees to make reasonable progress towards meeting academic standards as defined by the Colorado School Performance Framework. Reasonable progress will be established and measured through the implementation of agreed-upon academic targets, developed through use of the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) process and the school's strategic plan. The School agrees that the terms "reasonable progress" or "adequate progress" should be defined through this process and that the School will be held accountable pursuant to these definitions.

##### Primary Goal for 2019-2020:

TRCS will develop a unified vision for high-quality Tier 1 instruction with clear expectations for all teaching staff. All students, regardless of socio-economic status, academic ability, learning challenges, or other demographic data, will receive quality instruction in their core classrooms from teachers using common language, systems, and high expectations. Teachers will receive quality training and regular observations with actionable feedback to help them reach the expectations of the school.

The aforementioned strategy was developed (in a different format) after a sharp decline in academic performance in 2018. After seeing significant improvements in 2018-2019 and recognizing that there was still work to be done, we chose to modify and continue this approach to school improvement. It is the sole improvement strategy included in our school's Unified Improvement Plan. Though the focus of this goal is narrow, the potential impacts are far reaching and will improve outcomes for the entire student population, especially at-risk students. The table below describes the implementation benchmarks and timelines to achieve this goal. Though this does not specifically align with the district's request for four-year goals, this is where we are and what I feel comfortable putting forward.

## Implementation Benchmarks Associated with Major Improvement Strategy

Benchmark Name	Description	Start/End/Repeats
 Consensus	All teachers can articulate the shared agreements and minimum expectations for quality Tier 1 instruction.	08/23/2019 09/11/2019
 Goal Setting	All develop and progress monitor their goals for the 2019-2020 school year. Specific focuses for this school year include: Supporting All Students, Ongoing Assessment, and Structuring Revision and Critique. As goals are met by teachers, new goals are defined.	09/30/2019 06/05/2020 Monthly
 Reflection	Leadership team members facilitate monthly meetings with small groups of teachers to reflect on and refine Tier 1 instructional goals for 2019-2020 school year	10/01/2019 06/05/2020 Monthly
 Execution	All teachers are actively working towards expectations for Tier 1 instruction and can self evaluate where they are in comparison to their personal goals and the school's goals.	11/01/2019 06/05/2020 Weekly
 Delivery	Teachers are demonstrating proficiency towards their personal goals for Tier 1 instruction. Those who are struggling receive additional support to ensure progress is adequate.	03/01/2020 06/05/2021
 Review of Goals / Set New Goals	Teachers review their school year and reflect on their goals for 2019-2020. They set new goals for 2020-2021.	06/05/2020 06/04/2021

### Student Attendance

The School agrees that it shall comply with all state and federal laws and regulations and District policy concerning student attendance. Attendance of students at the School shall be in compliance with Colorado's compulsory attendance laws, including, without limitation, hour requirements and the distinction made between excused and unexcused absences. In general, the School has aligned its calendar to that of the District and intends to continue doing so moving forward.

### **Conduct and Discipline**

The School shall implement student disciplinary policies and procedures, including policies and procedures for the suspension and expulsion of students and the discipline and placement of students with disabilities, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations, District policies, and the School's Student Discipline Policy. The authority to hold expulsion hearings, wherein a student may be expelled from the School, shall remain with the School Board.

Ultimately, Two Rivers Community School believes that it is our responsibility to educate children, not discipline them. Though we sometimes must issue punitive consequences for unacceptable behaviors, the school has been working to implement a restorative justice program under the direction of our Social-Emotional Coordinator. The intent of this program is for students to come together after a conflict arises to acknowledge the harm done to individuals and the school community, solve underlying problems, and restore relationships. This work is still in its developing stages, though over the last three years we have made significant strides in transitioning from a punitive behavior system to a preventative and supportive system aimed at building a healthy school culture.

The Falcon Five, a preventative social emotional learning (SEL) and program we developed based on CASEL's Five Core Competencies, was designed to promote a healthy school culture that improves student conduct and minimizes the need for reactive disciplinary action. The Falcon Five are taught to all students explicitly on a daily basis in their *unidad* class, an SEL focused course that is similar in nature to Crew. The Falcon Five are also brought frequently connected to learning in the regular classroom by teachers of all subjects.

Attachment: [Discipline Policy](#)

### **Student Welfare and Safety**

The School shall comply with all District approved policies and regulations, and comply with all applicable federal and state laws concerning student welfare, safety and health, including, without limitation, District policies and all laws addressing the reporting of child abuse, accident prevention and disaster response, and any state regulations governing the operation of school facilities.

### **School Calendar; Hours of Operation**

The days and hours of operation of the School shall not be materially less than those set forth by the District unless previously approved in writing by the District, but in no case shall fall below the minimum number of days and hours set forth in law.

### **Curriculum, instructional program, and pupil performance standards**

The School will have the authority and responsibility for designing and implementing its educational program, subject to the conditions of any contract and in alignment with this application. The educational program, pupil performance standards and curriculum designed and implemented by the School will meet or exceed any content standards adopted by the state, will be designed to enable each pupil to achieve such standards, and will be consistent with the School's vision and mission.

**A. Curriculum.** The School shall have the authority and responsibility for refining the design and implementation of its educational program, subject to the conditions of any contract with the District, in a manner that is consistent with state law, including but not limited to requirements regarding content standards.

**B. Content Standards.** The educational program, pupil performance standards and curriculum designed and adopted by the School shall be consistent with the content standards required by the state pursuant to CRS 22-7-1013 and referenced in CRS 22- 30.5-505(8) and shall be designed to enable each pupil to achieve such standards.

**C. Instructional Requirements.** The School agrees to comply with all state statutory requirements concerning subjects of instruction, unless specifically waived by the State Board of Education, including but not limited to instruction in the areas of state and federal history and civil government, CRS § 22-1-104; honor and use of the United States Flag, CRS § 22-1-106; the federal constitution, CRS §§ 22-1-108 & -109; and the effect of use of alcohol and controlled substances, CRS 22-1-110.

### **Exceptional Students**

The School shall identify academically low-achieving, at-risk students, and "exceptional children" as defined in federal and state law and regulations adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education, and shall provide its educational program to these students in a manner that appropriately serves their needs in accordance with governing law, as set forth in the Application.

**Gifted and Talented Students.** The School shall identify and provide resources and support to gifted and talented students to enable them to meet their particular academic and emotional. The School shall follow the District's

requirements for identifying, assessing and serving gifted and talented students based on the following guidelines outlined in the Roaring Fork School's PEAK program:

- All students graduate with the knowledge and skills to enroll in postsecondary education.
- Students complete high quality projects that challenge them to pursue a passion, demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving, put forth effort, and engage in authentic learning.
- Students exceed grade-level benchmarks in their area(s) of giftedness.
- All students graduate with the character and life skills to succeed in college, careers, family and community.
- Students complete high quality projects that challenge them to develop resilience, be self-motivated, passionate and responsible for their own learning, engage in the community, and show effort, learning, and achievement.

**English language learners.** The School shall identify and provide resources and support to English language learners to enable them to acquire sufficient English language proficiency to effectively participate in the mainstream English language instructional program in accordance with state and federal law. The School shall follow the District's requirements for determining program eligibility, redesignating, monitoring, and exiting English language learners. The School shall implement an EL plan for meeting the needs of English language learners consistent with the goals and objectives of the District.

As we have grown in the last few years, so has our population of students who are learning English as a second language. This has required us to reflect on iReady, CMAS, and ACCESS data and to make programming changes to keep up with our changing student population. As of this year, we have begun to develop individualized EL plans for students who qualify for EL services. Each plan is developed by our EL Coordinator in conjunction with classroom teachers and sets forward specific strategies and goals that the teacher and EL Coordinator work together to achieve.

Plans and goals are formulated using a variety of data including ACCESS 2.0, iReady interim results, and CMAS results. Our current model includes a 45 minute daily pullout for all NEP students while clustered LEP students receive

push-in support from the EL Coordinator during PBL and ELA classes. NEP students work with the EL Coordinator using elements of the Wonders ELD curriculum from McGraw Hill and additional supplemental materials as selected by our EL Coordinator. Classroom teachers use guidance that is built into the Core Open Up Resources curriculum in addition to supplemental materials provided by the EL Coordinator. All teachers meet with the EL Coordinator regularly in grade-level meetings to develop strategies, evaluate progress, and share ideas to best serve these students.

Attachment: [EL Program Overview](#)

**Education of Students with Disabilities.** The School shall provide services and accommodations to students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1401 et seq.), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794), the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.), and the Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (CRS 22-20- 20 101, et seq.)(“ECEA”), and any other state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to the education of students with disabilities.

**Admission of Students with Disabilities**

i. Admission of applicants with an IEP or Section 504 Plan shall be in compliance with federal and state laws and District policies, procedures, and requirements, as may be amended from time to time. Every student who is admitted with an IEP or Section 504 Plan from his or her previous school shall be placed directly in a program that meets the requirements of such IEP or Section 504 Plan, unless and until a review staffing by the IEP team or Plan review meeting is held and the IEP or Section 504 Plan is changed.

**Education of students with disabilities.**

i. The School shall implement a plan for meeting the needs of students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations, District policy and procedures, and as approved by the District.

ii. The School shall provide all special education support services to students at the School in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and District policy, and in accordance with the plan for

meeting the needs of students with disabilities as approved by the District. Any material changes to the plan for serving students with disabilities may be made only with the advance approval of the District and the School Board. The School shall assign special education support staff as necessary to meet student needs, which staff shall be licensed in accordance with Colorado law.

iii. Pursuant to CRS 22-30.5-503(3) and 22-20-106, the District serves as the Local Educational Agency (“LEA”) with administrative authority for delivering special education services to the School. The School will take direction from and work collaboratively with the District with regard to the provision of special education services, evaluations and concerns, and shall provide for the attendance of any School employees who should be present at any meetings at which IEPs are developed or modified. If the School and the District disagree as to the correct interpretation or application of a statute or regulation concerning the education of students with disabilities, the District’s position shall control.

iv. The School’s special education teachers and all related service providers are required to participate in compliance-oriented training and meetings sponsored by the District, and newly hired special education teachers shall participate in a state-approved induction program.

**\*\*Note:** TRCS currently has two full-time certified special education teachers, one FTE SPED paraprofessional, and two HTE paraprofessionals. We also have a speech language therapist, occupational therapist, school psychologist, and school nurse on contract. For mild-moderate need students, we have generally followed CSI’s guidance for model ratios to be 1:15 in elementary grades and 1:20 in secondary grades. At this time, we do not anticipate purchasing special education services from Roaring Fork Schools.

v. The School must report to the District its anticipated budgetary allocation and hiring plan for all special education teachers and related service providers who will be employed for the following year. No later than the first day of the opening of school, all special education teachers and related providers must be hired, appropriately qualified, and available to serve the identified needs of the students.

vi. Special education programs and services shall be available to each student as part of the regular school day in accordance with the least restrictive environment mandate of federal and state law.

**\*\*Note:** We serve every student enrolled in our school. We have never turned away a student due to a disability and we have always provided appropriate services to all of our students. Our performance figures on annual assessments reflect this. That being said, our special education population continues to grow faster than other student populations. We maintain a \$35,000 reserve in our annual budget for special education services to help with any unforeseen needs.

**\*\*\***Much of the above language for students with disabilities was derived from our current contract with CSI or language used in the District's contract with Carbondale Community School. The School would be open to modification of the language so long as we are not hindered in our ability to serve our exceptional student populations. See the current [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with CSI as a reference point for our current agreement.

Attachment: [Memorandum of Understanding](#)

### **Assessment of Pupil Performance and Procedures for Corrective Action**

The School agrees to implement any requirements necessary to meet the School's and the District's respective obligations under applicable provisions of federal and state law, including, but not limited to, those of the state Education Accountability Act of 2009, and the Every Student Succeeds Act or their equivalent. Schools will administer interim assessments as set forth in this application and in adherence to the District's assessment policy. Any material revision to interim assessments may be made only with the prior approval of the District.

### **5. Purpose and evidence of support**

Since Two Rivers Community School first opened its doors in 2014, interest from the community and enrollment have continually increased. The school was founded with great efforts from community members who were determined to create greater choice in schooling options within the local community. The school went through a significant expansion before the 2016-2017 school year in order to meet the demand from the community and has grown from a student population of 172 in 2014 to 351 in 2019. As a

school, we are committed to providing quality education to students from all backgrounds and our demographic numbers are a clear testament to this commitment. With few exceptions, our subgroup populations have grown every year and we hope they will continue to do so until we have a student population that reflects that of the community. Currently the school does not have an official description of the geographic area of intended service because under CSI policy the school must be open to students who reside anywhere within the state of Colorado. That being said, we serve students from Rifle to Carbondale in the Roaring Fork Valley.

Annual enrollment figures have grown steadily since we first opened the school. This year was the first year that our actual enrollment did not exceed our projected enrollment. This was largely due to a reduction in kindergarten enrollment. Our maximum capacity for the new building was initially designed to be 390 students, but after enrolling 350 students in 2017-2018, it became clear this figure needed to be revised down to 357 students.

Current Enrollment by Grade Level:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Enrolled Students</b>
Kindergarten	31
First	38
Second	42
Third	36
Fourth	37
Fifth	39
Sixth	40
Seventh	44
Eighth	43
<b>Total Enrollment as of October 2019</b>	<b>351</b>

## 6. Student achievement and curriculum

### **Place-Based Learning**

Place-based learning (PBL) is at the heart of the educational model of Two Rivers Community School and serves as the primary vehicle we use to educate students in social studies and science, though these classes are interdisciplinary by design. Through in-depth projects that emphasize local people, places, and issues in the Roaring Fork Valley, students are able to see relevance in their learning. Connecting students to the place they live by connecting content standards to local topics has helped us increase student engagement in every classroom and in every grade level. We are committed to providing unforgettable learning experiences to our students, regardless of their academic abilities, who their parents are, where they live, or what struggles they may face while at home or in the classroom.

Place-based learning takes good ideas from a variety of education models including environmental education, project-based learning, experiential learning, community-based learning, and providing students a chance to use their voice in their education. We take our students out of the building frequently and we use experts in their fields to support and teach our students. Each PBL unit of study concludes with presentations to authentic audiences, whether in person to a panel of experts or to a classroom of peers. Teachers develop this curriculum with their teaching teams and are provided feedback from a development rubric in addition to feedback from their colleagues. We do not have a specific curriculum that we use to develop these learning platforms as each one is developed by our teachers in house.

### **Math and Literacy**

Teachers use multiple resources to address academic standards in math and literacy, though our primary resources for literacy and math curriculum were all developed by EL Education, specifically Open Up Resources and EngageNY. In kindergarten and first grade math, our teachers use the Saxon Spanish program as the primary curriculum and supplement lessons on topics as needed from EngageNY. In kindergarten and first-grade ELA, we have built our own curriculum over the years but will be making the transition to Open Up Resources in the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Literacy**

All grade levels receive a minimum of 90 minutes of integrated language arts instruction in English each day. School-wide writing assessments are examined three times each year in order to build a K-8 writing continuum. Core literacy instruction is supplemented in all grade levels during PBL where students read and write to demonstrate learning in topics relating to science and social studies. All staff who are not ELA teachers have been trained in Step Up to Writing to support writing development in all classes. iReady diagnostics are administered three times annually (only BOY and EOY in grades K-3) to evaluate reading development in addition to a monthly progress monitoring assessments. As of 2019, grades K-3 are also participating in the CDE's ELAT grant program using DIBELS

Next as a tool for diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring of student reading development. We felt the progress monitoring process for iReady was too time consuming to be completed with the frequency we wanted to see PM assessments happening.

### **Math**

Math is taught during a dedicated math time for a minimum of 60 minutes each day in grades K-8 using the aforementioned curricula as the primary tool for instruction. Additionally, for the past three years we have been able to offer Integrated Learning Math Modules for students who are ready for 9th-grade math. This is the same curriculum Glenwood Springs High School uses for incoming freshmen. All students take three iReady diagnostic tests per year and one monthly progress monitoring assessment to track progress.

### **Spanish**

An important part of our mission involves helping students develop “Respect for and interest in human diversity through second language acquisition and cross-cultural studies...” One of the primary ways we achieve this is by celebrating bilingualism and the cultural diversity that exists in our students, staff, and families. We are not a dual language school though we do incorporate some bilingual components into our educational program and nearly all students at Two Rivers take Spanish on a daily basis. Students who are fluent Spanish speakers focus on biliteracy skills during their Spanish periods using *Realidades para hispanohablantes* and supplemental learning materials focusing cultural and historical studies, while non-native speakers use the core *Realidades* curriculum in grades 2-8. Students in kindergarten and first-grade currently take math courses exclusively in Spanish using Saxon Math as the foundational curriculum while also pulling a variety of resources from EngageNY. Kindergarten and first grade students do not take separate Spanish classes outside of math. We frequently host events where Spanish is highlighted in order to develop a culture that models the respect for and interest in language development we hope our students acquire. These events include our annual Hispanic Heritage Night, Día de los Muertos celebration, Demonstrations of Learning, monthly Cafecito Latino meetings (informal conversations with the principal), an annual tamale sale, among others.

### **Makerspace**

All students participate in a makerspace class at least once per week. The intention of the makerspace class is to bring fine arts into the learning that is happening in their PBL classes. The makerspace teacher works closely with the PBL instructors to develop projects that are directly connected to the learning happening in PBL.

### **Music**

2019 is our first year offering a music class. Students in grades K-5 participate in a general music instruction class while students in grades 6-8 participate in a program designed around the Little Kids Rock program.

### **Academic Accountability and Performance**

Two Rivers Community School is held accountable to the same statewide measures for academic performance as any other public school in the state of Colorado. Student performance from the annual Colorado Measures for Academic Success (CMAS) are used to provide a School Performance Framework (SPF) rating. Additionally, we have been held to further performance standards in our contract with our current state authorizer, Charter School Institute (CSI). CSI provides an additional Colorado Annual Review of Schools (CARS) report that looks deep into the school's performance and provides comparison data for local districts. When looking at the statewide SPF, the School has been ranked as a Performance school in four out of five academic years. In our most recent rating from the 2018-2019 school year, TRCS earned a possible 64.7 out of 100 points for academic achievement.

Far more important than academic achievement is academic growth, especially to subgroups that tend to be at greater risk for poor academic performance. Though our total demographic numbers do not yet fully reflect those of our local community, we are proud of the academic growth that all of our subgroups demonstrated in 2018-2019. For ELA and math, every subgroup showed significant improvement on both achievement and growth scores when compared to 2017-2018. In ELA, every subgroup with the exception of students on IEPs, demonstrated a median growth percentile (MGP) score of greater than 50. Students with IEPs demonstrated an MGP of 45.5, a score we are proud of, yet still hope to improve. When looking over historical performance at TRCS, the data tells the story of a school that cares deeply about serving every student. Though we had a particularly challenging year in 2017-2018, we have proven our abilities to examine the work we do and make changes to meet the needs of our student population.

### **Current Performance**

**\*\* NOTE:** The following narrative comes from our 2019-2020 UIP.

In 2018, Two Rivers Community School received an Improvement School rating on the SPF and CARS report. For 2019 our School Performance Framework (SPF) shows a Performance rating with 64.7/100 possible points. This score is up significantly from 2018's Improvement rating with a score of just 46.6/100. In 2019, TRCS scored 67.9% for Academic Achievement and 62.5% for Academic Growth compared to 58.3% and 38.8% in 2018, respectively.

When looking at enrollment over time, there are some important trends worthy of noting while considering the school's current performance. When the school opened in 2014, we

had just 172 students enrolled with limited academic and demographic diversity. Since then, we have expanded our student population over time to 350 students while undergoing a complete remodel and expansion of our facility. While the growth has come with some challenges, our student population continues to look more and more like the demographics of our local community. In 2014, our Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) population was just 11.6% while in 2018 it was up to 28.3%. The number of students we serve with IEPs has increased from 1.7% in 2014 to 9.7% in 2018. English Learners (EL) made up just 11.6% of students in 2014 and are now up to 17.6%. The increasing trends in each of these sub-populations reflect our commitment to serving a population representative of our community. This is notable as these sub-populations are often comprised of students who have a greater chance of being "at-risk" academically.

Median Scale Scores (MSS) for grades 3, 4, and 5 in ELA were 742, 747, and 737 respectively, equating to an elementary ELA MSS of 742. This MSS is down slightly from 744 in 2018. Though these numbers show strength in achievement scores when compared to state and district performance figures, they continue a downward trend in performance at the elementary level that must be addressed. While the Median Scale Scores went down slightly, the elementary Median Growth Percentiles increased significantly. The ELA MGP in 4th-grade increased from 25 to 36 and 5th-grade increased from 21 to 45 when comparing 2018 to 2019. Neither 4th-grade or 5th-grade ELA MGP scores met our expectations, but they are a significant improvement nonetheless.

MSS for grades 6, 7, and 8 in ELA were 753, 746, and 752 respectively, equating to a middle school ELA MSS of 751. This MSS is up significantly from 743 in 2018. This change is significant as it breaks a downward trend in middle school performance for ELA and indicates that improvement strategies are on the right track. When looking at growth, the results are also favorable. In grades 6,7, and 8, the MGP scores for ELA were 53.5, 52, and 76, respectively.

MSS for grades 3, 4, and 5 in math were 744, 731, and 736 respectively, equating to an elementary math MSS of 737. This MSS is up slightly from 734 in 2018. This change indicates that improvement strategies put in place for the 2018-2019 school year are having a positive impact on student achievement. Growth scores were mixed. In 5th-grade, the MGP for math increased from 22 in 2018 to 69 in 2019, while in 4th-grade, the MGP for math decreased from 36 to 34.5. While the 5th-grade improvements are excellent, we must continue our work to ensure all students are growing at appropriate levels.

MSS for grades 6, 7, and 8 in math were 738, 732, and 741 respectively, equating to a middle school math MSS of 737. This MSS is up from 731 in 2018. This change indicates that improvement strategies put in place for the 2018-2019 school year are having a positive impact on student achievement. Growth scores for middle school students were impressive, with each grade level demonstrating improved MGP scores when compared to 2018. Growth scores were 46, 60, and 55 for grades 6,7, and 8, respectively.

When looking at current performance for sub-populations, there was a notable improvement in every category for both ELA and math when comparing achievement scores from 2018 and 2019 CMAS data. Students eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch increased ELA achievement scores from 722 to 735 and math achievement scores from 723 to 726. Minority student scores improved from 732 to 741 in ELA and from 725 to 731 in math. Students with IEPs also saw improvement in both math and ELA, increasing from 705 to 714 in ELA and from 707 to 716 in math. English Learner scores increased from 749 to 751 in ELA and from 717 to 721 in math. Gifted students scores increased from 741 to 745 in ELA. There was not a high enough population tested to show a score in math. These results indicate that major improvement strategies from the 2018 school year have had a very favorable impact on our subgroup students' achievement scores for ELA and math.

### **Academic Performance Data**

Attachment: [1-Year SPF](#)

Attachment: [Multi-Year SPF](#)

Attachment: [Three-Year Growth Data](#)

### **Corrective Actions**

Rather than walking through hypothetical steps of what Two Rivers would do in the event that student performance falls below specified targets, I will describe an actual occurrence of this happening and what we did to correct it. In the course of three years, our school went from having a population of just 172 students with limited academic and demographic diversity to a school of 350 students with significant academic and demographic diversity. Unfortunately, we failed to recognize the need to modify our instructional practices with the rapid growth and our academic performance suffered. When the state results for 2017-2018 came in, it was immediately clear that we had failed many of our students. Because our interim data and classroom data looked strong, we were taken by complete surprise with the poor performance on CMAS. In nearly every grade level, every subject, and every subgroup, we saw a significant decline in performance. Our SPF rating dropped from 73.2 points out of 100 to just 46.6. We immediately began a root-cause analysis and identified that our Tier 1 instruction was inadequate in many areas. Through the use of the state's Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) tool, we were able to set specific goals to ensure we were effectively teaching all students, develop action steps and implementation benchmarks, and begin the process of redefining what it means to be a good teacher at two Rivers. We did away with academic performance tracking and promoted the idea of teaching academically diverse classes in all subjects. We dramatically simplified the teacher evaluation tool to focus on Tier 1 fundamental skills in order to ensure that every student was being served in every class. We extended the amount of time in the schedule for both ELA and math and we worked to provide Tier 2 and 3 interventions for students who were previously not receiving the

support they needed to be successful. We also worked to provide teacher training to improve differentiated instruction and formative assessment. Though there is still much work to be done towards these improvements, we have already seen significant growth from this response to not meeting our performance targets. For 2018-2019, we earned 64.7 points out of 100 on our SPF.

The Major Improvement Strategy for 2019-2020 has been further simplified to ensure our implementation strategies are focused and effective. Rather than developing several goals aimed at various subgroups, we have developed a singular goal focused on improving Tier 1 instruction across the school in order for the improvement strategy to have the greatest impact to the greatest number of students possible. The goal is stated, “TRCS will develop a unified vision for high-quality Tier 1 instruction with clear expectations for all teaching staff. All students, regardless of socio-economic status, academic ability, learning challenges, or other demographic data, will receive quality instruction in their core classrooms from teachers using common language, systems, and high expectations. Teachers will receive quality training and regular observations to receive actionable feedback to help them reach the expectations of the school.” The goal was developed with input from the teaching staff as was the document used to provide guidance in planning and reflecting on quality Tier 1 instruction. Specific action steps and implementation benchmarks have been developed to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

#### **Academic Performance Data**

Attachment: [1-Year SPF](#)

Attachment: [Multi-Year SPF](#)

Attachment: [Three-Year Growth Data](#)

#### **7. Criteria for enrollment decisions**

Two Rivers Community School is fully committed to developing enrollment policies aimed at ensuring our demographics reflect that of our community. We have modified our enrollment policy several times over the years to try and achieve greater diversity in our school. Our subgroup populations for FRL, IEP, and EL have all grown significantly since first opening in 2014. We will continue to target our marketing and enrollment policies to make sure we are working to serve a student population that reflects the demographics of our community. As part of our work with the Charter Compact, we have agreed to a shared enrollment plan with the district. We hope this will further our efforts to have similar demographic data to our neighboring schools.

Attachment: [Enrollment Policy](#)

## **8. Governance and decision-making**

### **Governance**

The School shall be governed by a Board of Directors of the School (“School Board”), which shall remain incorporated as a Colorado Nonprofit Corporation. The School Board members are fiduciaries of the School and shall operate in accordance with the School Corporation’s Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, which articles and bylaws shall not conflict with the School’s obligation to operate in a manner consistent with this application and applicable state and federal laws. The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws or the corporation will provide for governance of the operation of the School in a manner consistent with this application and state and federal law. The School Board shall follow the requirements of the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporations Act in amending its articles of incorporation and bylaws and shall provide the District with notice of any such changes within 10 days of any such ratification or adoption by the School Board.

**\*\*Note:** The TRCS BOD meets monthly except for July and December. As outlined in the bylaws, the Board consists of 7 members. The current composition of the board includes five parent members and three community members. The primary roles of the BOD are to manage the Head of School, provide financial oversight of the school, and to guide the school towards its strategic goals.

### **Corporate Purpose**

The purpose of the School will be limited to such purposes as are set forth in its articles of incorporation as a nonprofit Colorado corporation and as may be accepted and approved by the IRS with regard to its status as an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

### **Transparency**

The School Board and the School acknowledge and agree that the School is subject to the Colorado Sunshine Act (CRS 24-6-401 et seq.) and the Colorado Open Records Act (CRS 24-72-100.1 et seq.) and any subsequent amendments thereto. The School shall make the School Board-adopted policies, meeting agendas and minutes and related documents readily available for public inspection, including the online publication of School Board meeting minutes, agendas, and meeting notices. Public notice of all regular and special meetings shall be given and posted in accordance with law. The District may reserve the right to require submission or perform an audit of Board materials, including but not limited to, notices, agendas, and meeting minutes. Additionally, to promote transparency,

the School shall ensure that the following information, at a minimum, is easily accessible on the School's website: i. School Board membership and contact information for the School Board Chair; and ii. Governing Board meeting calendar.

### **Conflict of Interest Policy**

The School shall adopt and strictly enforce a conflict of interest policy which preserves the mission and vision of the School and shall address nepotism, excessive compensation, and any other potential conflicts of interest. See Conflict of Interest Policy in the attached Bylaws.

### **Grievance Policy**

The School shall adopt a grievance policy for resolution of public complaints consistent with District policy. The policy must provide an opportunity for comment by the grievant in public hearing on the matter and an appeal process. The final administrative appeal will be heard by the School Board, not the District Board, subject to review by the District in appropriate circumstances and in line with the District's conflict resolution policy. The District may require the School to modify the proposed grievance policy prior to approval, but such approval will not be unreasonably withheld. Any material changes to the School's grievance policy may be made only with the approval of the District and the School Board.

### **Community Involvement**

Community involvement is critical to the work we do at TRCS. We have always worked hard to include parents and community members in much of what we do. We frequently hold parent meetings in English and Spanish to encourage a diverse population participates in the school's activities. We hold monthly Tea on Thursday meetings to discuss the development and implementation of our social emotional learning program, the Falcon Five. We also hold a monthly coffee session with the Head of School, one in English and one in Spanish to provide a space for parents to connect to the school's leader and to discuss any major happenings, concerns, academic progress, etc. We also have four School Accountability Committee meetings per year to discuss academics, safety, and school finances.

Attachment: [Two River Community School Bylaws](#)

## 9. Employment plan and practices

### **Employee Matters**

Matters concerning employment including employee relationships and terms and conditions of employment shall be managed by Two Rivers Community School and its

Board of Directors and shall supersede the requirements of any District policies or requirements, subject to the requirements of law.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

TRCS uses a variety of marketing techniques to recruit employees, though most frequently word of mouth had prevailed as our most successful method. We participate in job fairs from Grand Junction to Denver. We use social media, print ads in local papers, and the Colorado League of Charter Schools page to promote open positions. We try to incorporate at least one member of the leadership team and one staff member from the subject area team into every interview. We aim to hire only certified teachers, but have in the past had to rely on waivers from the state to fill positions when there are no other candidates available.

### **Employee Status**

The School shall employ such personnel as are required for the efficient and effective operation of the School. All employees hired by the School shall be employees of the School and shall under no circumstances be considered an employee of the District.

### **Employee Policies**

The School shall adopt and implement personnel policies in accordance with state and federal law to address, among other topics, hiring and termination of personnel, terms of employment and compensation. All employee discipline decisions will be made by the School. Terms of the employment relationship are described in the Employee Handbook. The Handbook may be amended or revised at the discretion of the School, with a copy of the amended or revised Handbook provided to the District.

\*\*Our most current Employee Handbook is being reviewed by the Employers Council and will be modified as needed upon their review.

### **Employee Qualifications**

The School shall employ or otherwise utilize in instructional positions only those individuals who are qualified in accordance with applicable federal and state law, rules and regulations (unless waived), including the federal Every Student Succeeds Act or its equivalent. Paraprofessionals employed by the School shall meet all credentialing requirements imposed by applicable federal and state law, rules and regulations (unless waived).

### **Employee Salary Schedules**

The School has never had a formal salary schedule like that of the District. This is out of necessity more than any philosophical position. When the school first opened, we were significantly understaffed and underfunded due to a low starting enrollment. Teachers that had years of experience came to the school and took significant cuts in their pay. As we have grown in enrollment and our funding has improved, the school has been able to match Roaring Fork's salary schedule for employees with up to five years of experience. However, the school has been unable to adopt a schedule of its own due to the highly variable nature of our funding and the highly variable nature of surrounding districts' salary schedules.

### **Background Checks; Fingerprinting**

The School shall establish and implement procedures for conducting background checks (including a check for a criminal record) of all employees to the extent required by applicable law, rules and regulations, including but not limited to CRS 22-30.5-110.5 and CRS 22-30.5-110.7. No teacher or administrator with a criminal record that would ordinarily preclude them from obtaining a teacher license or from public school employment pursuant to CRS 22-32-109.8(6.5) will be employed at the School, regardless of waivers that may have been granted to the School.

### **Staff Grievance Policy**

**\*\*Note:** This policy would need to be updated by our BOD to reflect a change in authorization.

TRCS encourages employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of the administration. We encourage staff to attempt to communicate and negotiate with the other employee first. TRCS is eager to assist in the resolution of employee disputes, and will not discipline employees for raising such concerns.

Any staff member that is unhappy with a disciplinary action taken against him or her has the right to ask that the decision be reconsidered by the Head of School and, if not satisfactorily resolved, by the Board of Directors. This request shall be made in writing, and shall concisely explain the nature of the concern. This written statement shall be placed in the staff member's personnel file. Based on consideration of the written statement presented, the Head of School and /or the Board may elect, in its sole discretion, to reconsider the decision, or to affirm the decision. Additionally, whether or not the above request for review is undertaken, any staff member may address concerns he/she has with disciplinary action taken against him or her by preparing a written statement of the concerns(s) for placement in his/her personnel file.

In the event of an unresolved conflict between staff members, the aggrieved staff members shall first seek to resolve the conflict themselves. If this is unsuccessful, the aggrieved staff member(s) shall prepare a written statement (including all pertinent information) of grievance and present it to the Head of School. This written grievance will be kept in the staff member's file. The Head of School, or his/her designee, shall meet with the employee(s) in an effort to resolve the dispute. In the absence of a satisfactory resolution, the grievance may be presented to the Board by the aggrieved staff member (s) or the Head of School, by written statement submitted to the Board (including all pertinent information). The Board may elect to involve itself in the grievance, or may direct the aggrieved staff member (s) and the Head of School to resolve the issue.

If a grievant has followed the Two Rivers Community School's Grievance Policy and procedures, and wishes to pursue a concern because it has not been resolved to his or her satisfaction, the Charter School Institute will guide the grievant to follow the Institute Grievance procedures, which will at a minimum include the following: 1. The grievant must submit the concern in a written format to the Charter School Institute Executive Director within five business days after receiving the written decision of the Two Rivers Community School's Board. 2. The Institute's Executive Director or designee will make the school aware of the concern and determine if any violation of law, rule, policy, or the charter contract has been committed. 3. After review, and to the extent practicable, the Charter School Institute's Executive Director will publish his/her conclusions in writing within 15 calendar days of receipt of the written concern. 4. Decisions will not be overturned by the Charter School Institute Executive Director unless there are compelling grounds that Two Rivers Community School discriminated against a protected class, violated its contract with the Institute, failed to follow its own policies, Institute policies or requirements, or violated any other state or federal law, rule, or policy. 5. If, after review, the Charter School Institute Executive Director concludes that a violation has occurred, the Charter School Institute's Executive Director will inform the Two Rivers Community School administration in writing of the violation and direct that the Two Rivers Community School resolve the situation with the grievant. The Charter School Institute may implement procedures in line with the Institute's School Compliance Policy and take any actions provided for in law, policy or contract to resolve the issue. 6. The decision of the Charter School Institute Executive Director is final.

#### 10. Financial data, facilities and transportation

### **Fiscal Accountability**

Fiscal accountability is one of the primary responsibilities of the Board of Directors. The TRCS Board reviews financial data on a monthly basis that includes a review of cash flow, profit and loss statements, and a comparison of the annual budget to actual expenses. Additionally, TRCS is required to complete an annual independent financial audit. Additional financial accountability measures include publicly posting all financial data as required by the Public School Financial Transparency Act, involvement from the School Accountability Committee in the development of a budget, and any future agreements that will be made with the District and their responsibility for financial oversight as our authorizer. Historically, the Charter School Institute has played an important oversight role to ensure the school is operating within the law and appropriately using public funds to educate our students.

Attachment: [2019 Independent Financial Audit](#)

Attachment: [2018 Independent Financial Audit](#)

Attachment: [Alpine Bank Statement CDE Account - August 2019](#)

Attachment: [Alpine Bank Statement Operating Account - August 2019](#)

Attachment: [Two Rivers 2019-2020 Annual Budget](#)

Attachment: [Two Rivers 3 Year Budget Forecast](#)

Attachment: [Two Rivers Community School Financial Policies](#)

### **Fundraising Revenue**

In order to help the school achieve its financial goals, we have held various fundraisers on occasion since our founding in 2014. In a given year, there is a general fundraising goal of approximately \$30 thousand dollars for the general fund as well as a separate fundraising goal for the 8th-grade annual trip to Mexico of approximately \$15 thousand dollars. Fundraising activities have included a silent auction, business donations, in-kind donations, personal donations, and other student-led events such as school dances. Should for some reason the school fall short of its fundraising goals, there has always been enough of a surplus in the budget to cover the loss of revenue. That has never been necessary thus far.

### **Purchased Services from the District**

At the current time, there are no concrete plans to purchase specific services from the District, though we would be interested in discussing terms for the possible purchase of Infinite Campus, Alpine Achievement, iReady, DIBELS, and other products to help us serve students and their families. For services already purchased by the District that could be distributed to Two Rivers at a rate that saves the school money compared to our current vendor contracts, we would be interested in discussing possible arrangements for services to be purchased directly from the District.

Another area of interest for purchased services would be related to the maintenance of our bus fleet. We currently have one brand new gas powered Blue Bird Vision 71 passenger vehicle and another 77 passenger bus under construction that will be delivered in December. We also own a diesel powered Blue Bird 71 passenger bus that was purchased new in 2018. All three buses are or will be in excellent condition and should only require routine preventative maintenance for the next several years. While we fully recognize this may not be possible for the District's bus maintenance team, we would appreciate having the conversation.

### **Insurance Coverages**

Attachment: [Two Rivers Auto Insurance Coverages](#)

Attachment: [Two Rivers Liability Insurance Coverages](#)

Attachment: [Two Rivers Workers' Compensation Coverages](#)

Attachment: [Two Rivers Pinnacle Assurances Policy Information](#)

Attachment: [Two Rivers Facility Coverages](#)

### **Facility**

The School is located at 195 Center Dr. Glenwood Springs, Colorado 81601. The building was purchased and overwrote a major renovation and facility addition in 2016. The building and construction were financed through \$10,020,000 in bonds from the Public Finance Authority with UMB Bank serving as the bondholder and Two Rivers Building Corporation as the lessee. The School intends to refinance the facility debt within the next three years with the hopes of finding a better interest rate than the current 5.2%. Though the facility debt certainly places a burden on the school's operating budget, the school has been able to maintain and operate within its projected budgets each year since the expansion.

TRCS employes a Building and Transportation Manager, whose role involves maintenance of the facility and hiring subcontractors as necessary for any issues that require work beyond her capabilities. We have a competitive bidding process for projects over a certain dollar amount as specified in our financial policy. We also maintain a Repair and Replacement fund as per our bond agreement for any unforeseen building expenses.

Attachment: [Two Rivers Lease Agreement](#)

### **Student Transportation**

The School offers transportation to and from its campus to students residing in a wide geographic area that ranges from the south side of Glenwood Springs to Rifle. The School runs three bus routes: Route 1 runs throughout Glenwood Springs. Route 2 runs to and from New Castle with a stop at the Canyon Creek exit in Glenwood Springs. Route 3 runs to and from Rifle. Additionally, the place-based learning model of the school involves significant use of the school's buses for the purposes of transporting students to a range of field studies throughout the school day. Any transportation of students to the School will be the sole responsibility of the School. The School shall be responsible for- and comply with all regulatory, safety, insurance, and licensing requirements. Coordinating and paying for the inspection, maintenance, repair and replacement of these school buses will be the sole responsibility of the School and will be in compliance with all Federal, State and local regulations. Screening, hiring, testing and training school bus drivers in compliance with all Federal, State and local regulations will also be the sole responsibility of the school.

### **Food Services**

Note: TRCS does not intend to participate in the District's food service program.

The School currently operates a full kitchen facility to provide students with affordable and healthy options for lunch service. We do not currently participate in federal programs nor do we wish to. Students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch under federal guidelines are provided significantly discounted or fully discounted lunches that are subsidized by full-priced lunch sales. Our food service model is not completely self sustaining but does not have a significant impact on our overall budget. Students in grades 4-8 who do not qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch pay \$5.00 per meal. Students who do qualify typically pay \$2.00 per meal, however we fully subsidize lunch for some students who are unable to pay anything. Students in grades K-3 who do not qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch pay \$4.00 per meal. Students who do qualify typically pay \$2.00 per meals, but again, we fully subsidized for families who are unable to pay anything.

## **School Fees**

TRCS charges school fees to help cover the significant costs of school transportation, a 1:1 Chromebook program, and consumable school supplies. The annual charge per student is \$500, though we often make exceptions to these fees for low income families. Our budget includes an expectation of collecting approximately 70% of student fees annually. We have frequently discussed and brainstormed ways to reduce the fees if not cut them entirely, but with our current funding model this is not possible.

### 11. Dispute resolution

Describe the process consistent with state law that will be used to resolve disputes that may arise between the district and the district charter school.

i. **Informal Negotiation.** If both parties agree to dispute resolution, authorized representatives of the District and the School will meet to discuss a possible resolution to the dispute.

ii. **Formal Notification of Dispute.** If the dispute is not resolved through informal negotiation, either party may submit to the other a written notice identifying the specific action with which it disagrees, any Contract provision which it alleges has been breached, and the specific corrective action it wishes the other party to take. Such notice must be given within twenty (20) days of the time the party knew or should have known of the action at issue and that informal resolution under (i) was unsuccessful.

iii. **Mediation.** If the parties are unable to negotiate a resolution to the dispute within ten (10) business days of receipt of such formal notice, either party may request mediation. The party making the request will notify the other party of the request in writing. Within one calendar week of receipt of notice by the other party, the authorized representatives of the parties will attempt to agree on a mediator. If the parties through their representatives fail to reach an agreement within one calendar week after the first attempt to agree, they will request appointment of a mediator by the American Arbitration Association or such other organization as may be mutually agreed upon.

iv. **Procedure.** Within thirty (30) days of appointment, the mediator will conduct a hearing limited to the issues raised in the notice required by Sections (ii). The mediator will have authority to make procedural rules and will issue a report to the parties within thirty (30) days after the close of the hearing. Such report will contain findings and a recommendation regarding the issue(s) in dispute. The mediator's recommendation will be forwarded to the District and to the School. This shall not be deemed the "release" of the mediator's recommendation.

v. **District Board Action.** If the parties are unable to negotiate a resolution, the District Board will make a decision on the matter and release the mediator's recommendation. The District's Board's action on the recommendation will be final and binding, subject only to such appeal as may be authorized by law.

vi. **District's Authority.** The dispute resolution process set forth in a contract will not be required prior to the exercise of any contractual right or statutory authority by the District Board, such as proceedings to revoke or not renew the Contract.

vii. **Failure to Advance the Process.** Failure to advance the process within the time specified in Section (iv) will be deemed a waiver of any right to contest an action covered by this procedure with respect to the specific action at issue and will forever bar any claim or proceeding related to such action. In other words, if a party fails to advance the process within the time specified, that party has no right to complain that the process has moved ahead. However, notwithstanding this provision, the parties may agree in writing to extend any of the time limits for a specified period.

viii. **Costs shared.** The parties will share equally the costs of mediation, including any per diem expenses, plus any actual and necessary travel and subsistence expenses. A party who unilaterally cancels or withdraws from a scheduled mediation will pay the full cost of any fees assessed by the mediator.

12. Requested "automatic waivers" under state law

Attachment: [Automatic Waivers](#)

13. Requested waivers that are not "automatic waivers" under state law

Attachment: [Requested Waivers](#)

14. Education management provider, if applicable

NOT APPLICABLE