



MITCH Charter School

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2020**

**June, 2015
Board of Directors**

Board of Directors, 2014-15

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Dear Students, Parents, Staff and Members of our Community,

On behalf of MITCH Charter School, we are proud to introduce the MITCH Charter School 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan. This plan represents the collaborative efforts of our school administrators, teachers and staff, parents, community members, and the board of directors. It exists to set a clear path for future growth, honoring our history and core values while seeking to stretch our reach, embrace global and technological advances, and ensure that our students are prepared to engage as thoughtful and intelligent contributors in our community, nation, and world.

Our school is a dynamic learning environment, comprised of people who bring unique perspectives, a diverse range of experiences, and individual goals for learning and achievement. As a school, we are truly rooted in excellence, and it is our goal to embody this excellence in all that we do. As individuals, we will not always agree on methods or decisions, but as a school community, we can embrace a shared vision – a vision of excellence – which will allow our students to grow through knowledge, to become critical thinkers, and to demonstrate social awareness and understanding. Succinctly, we want our students to excel and thrive!

This objective is at the core of the following four goals which will guide our actions under this plan over the next five years. Specifically, we seek to continuously improve student learning and achievement; optimize strategic operational and financial sustainability; enhance staff development and retention; and increase our community connection and commitment.

We are confident that these goals are important, unifying, and attainable. But they require commitment on the part of all who have a vested interest in education at MITCH. Fortunately, commitment is one of our greatest strengths. It is the underlying commitment from our families, staff, and community partners that has allowed us to succeed over the past twelve years; and it is this continued commitment that paves the way for a rich and promising future.

This strategic plan serves as the roadmap for our continued journey. We invite you to join us on this exciting path of teaching and learning, growing and thriving.

Sincerely,

MITCH Board of Directors

Acknowledgements

This strategic plan has been created by the MITCH Charter School Board of Directors, the Executive Director and Leadership Team, school staff and parents.

In particular, we would like to thank the following individuals for their time, thoughtful reflections and advice, and for participating in the *MITCH Future Plan Conversations*:

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Monica Brisan

Donna Capodacqua

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Christa & Robert Griffiths

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Chien Wern

Becky & Brad Young

Finally, we appreciate the support of the Tigard Tualatin School District, our sponsoring district, and the ongoing communication provided by Rachel Stuckey, Director of Curriculum & Instruction.

MITCH Charter School Mission

M.I.T.CH. Charter School, where every child excels academically, pursues a Core Knowledge Foundation School of Distinction designation, with agriculture fully integrated throughout our curriculum.

Our mission is to teach a coherent, cumulative, and content-specific curriculum in language arts, history, geography, mathematics, science, the arts, and agriculture so that our students become literate, knowledgeable, and confident leaders serving our community, nation, and world.

Philosophy

We believe students learn best when excellent teachers teach a coherent curriculum fully supported by a strong parent community.

We believe the integrated use of visual, auditory, verbal, and motor-cognitive skills during skill & content instruction is essential to student learning.

We believe students learn by building knowledge upon knowledge when instructed in a purposefully sequential program.

We believe integrating authentic, agriculture-based content as the context in which we teach our core curriculum improves student achievement.

The MITCH Goal

It is our goal for 100% of our students to meet or exceed the Common Core State Standards grade benchmarks as measured through the standardized assessments established by the Oregon Department of Education without teaching to the tests.

Rooted in Excellence

We believe that students will learn and achieve a higher level when we raise the bar, emphasize excellence, and provide an educational framework in which critical thinking, individual perspectives, and social understandings are highly valued.

Growing Through Knowledge

We teach a sequentially rigorous curriculum that builds knowledge upon knowledge. Our students participate in the educational experience with purposeful instruction in language arts, history, geography, mathematics, science, technology, and the arts, demonstrating mastery of comprehensive learning applied in an agricultural context.

Thriving as a Community

We are educating our children to engage as thoughtful and intelligent contributors in our community, nation, and world.

Executive Summary

Context is vital in planning for the future. Reviewing our current environment and assessing projections for the future of our District and the City of Tualatin, the Board of Directors identified specific long-term goals in four areas for the next 5-year period:

The scope of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan focuses on four goals:

- **Improve Student Learning & Achievement**
 - The MITCH Board of Directors' priorities for Improving Student Learning, 2015-2020
 1. Earn the Core Knowledge Foundation's School of Distinction designation.
 2. Improve individual student achievement on standardized assessments through an articulated & intentional alignment between our curriculum instruction and the Common Core Standards.
 3. Develop exceptional character qualities in students.

- **Optimize Strategic Operational & Financial Sustainability**
 - The MITCH Board of Directors' priorities for Optimizing Strategic Operational & Financial Sustainability, 2015-2020
 1. Establish Board leadership development, succession, and evaluation plans, as well as assume primary responsibility for fundraising.
 2. Organize an optimal school structure to more effectively use our resources to support improved student learning.
 3. Evaluate and refine Board policies.
 4. Renew charter with the Tigard Tualatin School District

- **Enhance Staff Development & Retention**
 - The MITCH Board of Directors' Professional Capacity Priorities for 2015-2020
 1. Provide teacher and staff compensation packages comparable to those offered by the Tigard Tualatin School District
 2. Provide a comprehensive professional development program for Core Knowledge Sequence and Core Knowledge Language Arts, Saxon Math, Riggs, Excellence in Writing, and for RTI data use.
 3. Establish a comprehensive teacher evaluation process.

- **Increase Community Connection & Commitment**
 - The MITCH Board of Directors' Community Relations Priorities for 2015-2020
 1. Develop a MITCH brand.
 2. Explore and establish a formal parent support organization such as a PTA or PSO.
 3. Identify specific legislative, civic, and TTSD Board contacts to cultivate and strengthen on behalf of MITCH.
 4. Develop relationships with diverse potential stakeholders to improve awareness of educational opportunities at MITCH Charter School.

Our primary focus is on student learning and achievement, but the integration of all four goals is essential – we are not likely to accomplish one without accomplishing the others. These goals, and the attendant objectives and measurement points, define our road map for the next five years; staying true to the course will help us to achieve a renewal of our charter and continue to provide an avenue for our students to learn successfully.

Introduction

The Oregon Charter School Law, ORS 338, was enacted in 1999 with the intention to foster school choice options for parents, as well as create incubators for practical educational research. While neither ORS 338 nor the supporting administrative rules have provided a robust funding environment for the development of charter schools, today 5% of Oregon's public school students are enrolled in 125 charters. The national percentage of public school students attending a charter school is 4.2%.

Multi-sensory Instruction Teaching Children Hands-on (MITCH) Charter School was one of the first dozen charter schools to open following the passage of the law; in 2002 the school offered the Core Knowledge Sequence (CKS) at the old Tualatin Elementary School to 59 Kindergarten through third grade students. Today, MITCH leases a 22,000 square foot facility with a District - established enrollment cap of 250 students. The Core Knowledge Sequence, a research-based curriculum, engages students in diverse, but sequential content in history, science, and culture. We are pursuing the Core Knowledge Foundation's designation as a School of Distinction which honors those schools teaching CKS faithfully and excellently. Additional central elements of our curriculum design include a phonics-based approach to reading and spelling, The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading and Thinking (aka Riggs), Saxon Mathematics, Core Knowledge Language Arts, Excellence in Writing, and sustainable agriculture instruction integrated throughout the curricula. In sum, we offer a developmentally appropriate liberal arts-based curriculum with practical experience in the garden.

Environmental Assessment: Where do we fit in the world?

The charter school movement was founded upon a simple, but revolutionary, premise: offer parents a choice in publicly funded, but independently managed schools, where innovative approaches are employed to educate students and hold the charter school accountable for student achievement through market forces and sponsor oversight. In Oregon, charter schools function within a unique context: all charters must be sponsored by either a school district, a public college or university, or by the Oregon Department of Education and must be incorporated as a 501C(3), not-for-profit organization. Therefore, we are a not-for-profit, market driven, public organization – the hybrid nature of our organizational structure requires a clear understanding of the renewal requirements and process, as well as a clear assessment of the environments in which we function so that we may establish a reasoned course for the school's charter renewal and ongoing development.

Our Charter

The Tigard Tualatin School District sponsors our Charter which expires June 30, 2018; our intention to apply for a renewal must be submitted to the District School Board and the

Superintendent by January 2, 2018. The District has 45 days in which to hold a hearing and 30 days from the hearing to decide on renewal or non-renewal of our charter. In the best-case-scenario whereby our charter is renewed without any delays, we then have 90 days in which to negotiate the terms of our agreement with the District.¹ (Appendix A – Renewal Path Diagram)

What are the requirements for renewal? The District School Board will decide renewal based upon a good faith evaluation of whether we are

- In compliance with state and federal laws
- In compliance with the terms of our charter
- Meeting student achievement goals
- Fiscally stable with evidence of sound financial management.

How would we measure up if the District were to evaluate MITCH today?

Compliance with state and federal laws:

- State: We are in compliance.
- Federal: We are in compliance.
- Assessment: Meeting the highly qualified teacher criteria mandated in the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation has been a challenge when hiring middle school teachers who must meet the requirements in multiple subjects.
- Objective: Monitor legislative changes to maintain compliance with all state and federal laws.

Compliance with the terms of our Charter:

- Purpose: The stated “mission is to fully integrate the environment, the curriculum, and the instructional strategies in a Core Knowledge School.” (Charter Exhibit A, 2008)
 - Reading: The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking (aka Riggs)
 - Math: Investigations in Data & Space (IDS), and Saxon Math
 - Science: Simply Science
 - Music: The Core Knowledge Sequence – Music scope & sequence
 - Art: The Core Knowledge Sequence – Art scope & sequence
 - Social Studies: The Core Knowledge Sequence
 - Character development: The Core Knowledge Sequence
- Assessment: The charter details agreed upon in 2001 were not altered when renewed in 2008; since that time we have remained on course with the essential focus on the Core Knowledge Sequence. The Core Knowledge Foundation no longer offers the Core Knowledge School designation, but uses School of Distinction to identify schools

¹ Oregon Administrative Rules Division 26,
http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_500/oar_581/581_026.html

teaching the CKS exceptionally well. We are in progress to earn this designation. We no longer teach IDS, and we have moved beyond the implicit lessons in the CKS about character to the use of a Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) program to teach character development. We have recently implemented the CKLA, in tandem with our original reading curriculum.

- Objective: Continue on our current course, but inform the District of the changes before we submit our intention to request renewal of our charter.

Student achievement goals:

Our current charter states individual students attending MITCH will show progressive improvement on state benchmarks, and the school as whole will score at least equal to or better than the average of comparable schools in the District.

- Individual Student Improvement – Chart 1
- Assessment: While we will not share individual student scores, a grade-by-grade examination of scores shows fewer students meet the benchmarks in 2014 than in 2010. Thus, we cannot say that all of our students exhibit progressive improvement.
- Objective: Concise, clear student achievement goals are found in the 2014 Annual TTSD Report (Exhibit B)
- Comparison to District schools – Chart 2
- Assessment: In 2013-14 we rank in the top four District elementary schools for student achievement in reading and math, but only in the middle of the schools for achievement in science. For the same school year, we are either first or second in all three subjects at the middle school level.
- Objective: We will continue to improve the school ranking in comparison to other District schools as we focus on consistently meeting our student achievement goals.

Chart 1 Historical Data Grade-by-Grade: OAKS scores 2009-14

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
# of Students	128	229	236	242	243
Reading					
3rd	96	92.3	76	80/88	84
4th	100	100	92.3	88.5	100/84
5th	89.5	88.5	88.5	76.9	69.2
6th	--	95	80.8	73.1	75
7th	--	91.7	82.6	84.6	80
8th	--	78.9	75	88.9	69.6
Math					
3rd	96	88.5	72	68/76	72
4th	96	96	96	80.8	84/88
5th	89.5	80.8	84.6	80.8	76.9
6th	--	82.6	88.5	69.2	79.2
7th	--	70.8	81.8	84.6	56
8th	--	68.4	60	88.9	78.3
Science					
5th	89.5	82.3	76.9	80.8	84.6
8th	--	78.9	60	88.9	78.3

Chart 2 Comparison to District Schools 2010-2014

3rd-5th Grade Reading - OAKS District Ranking by Percentage Meet/Exceed			
2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Mary Woodward	Durham Elementary	Edward Byrom	Mary Woodward
C.F. Tigard	Metzger Elementary	Alberta Rider	Edward Byrom
James Templeton	Alberta Rider	Mary Woodward	Alberta Rider
MITCH Charter School	MITCH Charter School	Metzger Elementary	MITCH Charter School
Alberta Rider	James Templeton	Deer Creek	James Templeton
Metzger Elementary	Edward Byrom	Durham Elementary	Tualatin Elementary
Durham Elementary	Mary Woodward	MITCH Charter School	Deer Creek
Tualatin Elementary	Deer Creek	Tualatin Elementary	Durham Elementary
Edward Byrom	Tualatin Elementary	James Templeton	Metzger Elementary
Deer Creek	C.F. Tigard	C.F. Tigard	C.F. Tigard
Bridgeport	Bridgeport	Bridgeport	Bridgeport

3rd-5th Grade Math - OAKS District Ranking by Percentage Meet/Exceed			
2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
MITCH Charter School	Durham Elementary	Mary Woodward	Mary Woodward
C.F. Tigard	MITCH Charter School	Alberta Rider	Alberta Rider
Alberta Rider	Alberta Rider	Edward Byrom	MITCH Charter School
Mary Woodward	Mary Woodward	MITCH Charter School	Edward Byrom
Tualatin Elementary	Deer Creek	Deer Creek	C.F. Tigard
Edward Byrom	Edward Byrom	Tualatin Elementary	Durham Elementary
Metzger Elementary	Tualatin Elementary	Durham Elementary	Tualatin Elementary
Bridgeport	Metzger Elementary	C.F. Tigard	Deer Creek
Deer Creek	C.F. Tigard	Metzger Elementary	James Templeton
Durham Elementary	Bridgeport	Bridgeport	Bridgeport
James Templeton	James Templeton	James Templeton	Metzger Elementary

5th Grade Science - OAKS District Ranking by Percentage Meet/Exceed			
2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Mary Woodward	Mary Woodward	Edward Byrom	Tualatin Elementary
Tualatin Elementary	Alberta Rider	Mary Woodward	Deer Creek
Edward Byrom	Edward Byrom	Tualatin Elementary	Mary Woodward
MITCH Charter School	MITCH Charter School	Alberta Rider	Alberta Rider
Alberta Rider	C.F. Tigard	Durham Elementary	Durham Elementary
C.F. Tigard	Metzger Elementary	Deer Creek	MITCH Charter School
Metzger Elementary	Durham Elementary	MITCH Charter School	Edward Byrom
Deer Creek	Tualatin Elementary	C.F. Tigard	C.F. Tigard
James Templeton	Deer Creek	James Templeton	Metzger Elementary
Durham Elementary	James Templeton	Metzger Elementary	James Templeton
Bridgeport	Bridgeport	Bridgeport	Bridgeport

6th-8th Grade Reading - OAKS District Ranking by Percentage Meet/Exceed			
2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Twality Middle	MITCH Charter School	MITCH Charter School	Twality Middle
MITCH Charter School	Twality Middle	Twality Middle	MITCH Charter School
Hazelbrook Middle	Hazelbrook Middle	Hazelbrook Middle	Hazelbrook Middle
Fowler Middle	Fowler Middle	Fowler Middle	Fowler Middle

6th-8th Grade Math - OAKS District Ranking by Percentage Meet/Exceed			
2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
MITCH Charter School	MITCH Charter School	MITCH Charter School	MITCH Charter School
Fowler Middle	Fowler Middle	Hazelbrook Middle	Hazelbrook Middle
Hazelbrook Middle	Twality Middle	Fowler Middle	Fowler Middle
Twality Middle	Hazelbrook Middle	Twality Middle	Twality Middle

8th Grade Science - OAKS District Ranking by Percentage Meet/Exceed			
2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Twality Middle	Fowler Middle	MITCH Charter School	MITCH Charter School
MITCH Charter School	Twality Middle	Twality Middle	Hazelbrook Middle
Hazelbrook Middle	Hazelbrook Middle	Fowler Middle	Twality Middle
Fowler Middle	MITCH Charter School	Hazelbrook Middle	Fowler Middle

Fiscally stable evidenced by sound financial management:

- Audits conducted by Pauley, Rogers and Company are provided to the District annually. The audit opinion letter has been issued without reservations. Annual budgets projections and monthly expense reports are also submitted to the District
- Assessment: MITCH is fiscally stable with ample evidence of sound financial management.
- Objective: Continue financial practices.

If the District were to evaluate MITCH today, a good faith assessment would indicate that while we are in compliance with state & federal laws, in compliance with the material terms of our charter, and provide evidence of sound fiscal management, we have not consistently fulfilled our student achievement goals.

Tigard Tualatin School District

More than 90% of our students reside within the Tigard Tualatin School District boundaries; 200 of our students reside in-district with our out-of-district students from Aurora, Beaverton, Newberg, Portland, Sherwood, and Wilsonville.

Clearly *all* of our students are counted as Tigard Tualatin School District students by ODE in the State School Fund Grant calculations: 1.7% of the District's average daily membership (ADM) are MITCH students.² Unfortunately, the perception that enrollment at a charter school negatively impacts a district's student population growth³ underscores the need to continue to build bridges and strengthen partnerships with our sponsoring district. This is particularly important in light of

- a projected slow-down in the 10-year growth rate of the TTSD school-age population (5-17) from an annual 1.2% to 0.8%⁴ from 2013 to 2023, and
- the potential passage of a new charter school funding law during the 2015 Legislative session that would increase the percentage of SSF received by charter schools from 80% to 95% resulting in a 15% decrease in MITCH generated revenue for TTSD.

Particular attention should be given to the projections concerning the District's enrollment capacity for the ten elementary and three middle school buildings:

- two elementary schools exceed capacity now and are projected to remain over-enrolled

² Oregon Department of Education, *2014-15 Student Enrollment Report*. Salem, 4 February 2015. e-mail.

³PSU Population Research Center. *Tigard-Tualatin School District Enrollment Forecast Update, 2011-12 to 2020-21*. Paper. Portland: School District Enrollment Forecast Reports, 2010. February 2015. <pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/enrollmentforecasts/33>.

⁴ PSU Population Research Center. *Tigard-Tualatin School District Enrollment Forecast Update, 2013-14 to 2022-23*. Paper. Portland: School District Enrollment Forecast Reports, 2012. February 2015. <pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/enrollmentforecasts/33>.

- six others will reach or exceed enrollment capacity by 2022-23
- two elementary schools are projected to remain underutilized in the next 10 years
- one middle school is projected to exceed enrollment capacity by 2017-18
- two middle schools are projected to remain underutilized throughout the next decade.⁵

The District recently convened three task forces to study school facility needs and report to the Long Range Facility Committee findings for Instructional Programming, Safety/Security, and Athletics. The Committee will hold meetings beginning in Fall, 2015 with an expected long-range plan completed in the Spring, 2016.⁶

In the changing context of projected slower enrollment growth, potential changes to funding, and the District’s uneven building utilization, it is important MITCH reconsider the nature of our inter-dependence with our sponsor. While we do offer to our community a distinct educational opportunity different from the traditional elementary experience, we can no longer work with the District from either an adversarial stance or as an outlier. We must partner with TTSD to fulfill the original legislative intention to offer school choice and serve as a field-research station while balancing autonomy and accountability.

In developing a five-year strategic plan for MITCH, we must account for how we fit within TTSD’s 2012-16 Strategic Plan, *Look to the Future, Perform Today*. (Appendix C) The District School Board’s academic priorities and objectives are grounded in five goals:

1. Individual student growth and success
2. Exemplary staff, exemplary employer
3. Effectively manage resources and maintain the public trust
4. Leverage technology to enhance learning and effectiveness
5. Safe and healthy environment.

TTSD is currently drafting an update to their strategic plan.

City of Tualatin

Excellent public education choices impact the livability of a city and influence the quality of municipal development. MITCH Charter School, incorporated as a not-for-profit charitable organization, relies upon the development of community partnerships, civic friendships, and private contributions to continue to offer an excellent educational choice to area residents.

One of the fastest growing cities in Oregon, Tualatin’s population increased 15% in the decade leading to the 2010 census; Tualatin also experienced the highest rise in poverty in the Metro

⁵ -- *Tigard-Tualatin School District Enrollment Forecast Update, 2013-14 to 2022-23*. Paper. Portland: School District Enrollment Forecast Reports, 2012. February 2015. <pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/enrollmentforecasts/33>.

⁶ “From Superintendent Brown,” http://www.ttsdschools.org/pages/ttsd/About_Us/From_Superintendent_Ernie_Brown

area during the same time period.⁷ In 2010, 63% of Tualatin households had an annual income greater than \$50,000, but Oregon DHS reports the fourth highest poverty hotspot in the state with a poverty rate of over 20% for two consecutive periods of measurement is located in Tualatin.⁸ Tualatin is a city poised to reflect two income extremes: substantial affluence and increasing poverty.

The overall tax base for the city is evenly split between residential and industrial/commercial land assessments. The tax base will skew towards industrial land assessment in the next decade with over 600 acres ready for development; neither commercial nor residential land availability currently exceeds 50 acres.⁹ In order to continue to build strong civic support, MITCH must remain on the forefront of information regarding new industry and manufacturing brought to the City – future community partners, as well as new families attracted to school choice opportunities, will be drawn from the arrival and growth of these businesses.

City of Tigard

Located approximately five miles north of Tualatin, Tigard spans an area just under twelve square miles with over 452 acres of parks, greenways, and natural areas. As stated in the city’s 2014 strategic plan, Tigard seeks to be “the most walkable community in the Pacific Northwest where people of all ages and abilities enjoy healthy and interconnected lives.”¹⁰

With an estimated 2013 population of 50,444, Tigard has experienced population growth of 4.9% from April, 2010 to July, 2013, nearly double the growth rate for the state as a whole over this same time period. Median household income in Tigard is reported as \$61,758 with 10.8% of the population below the poverty rate.¹¹

Tigard is home to the Tigard Tualatin School District administrative office, Medical Teams International, Gerber Legendary Blades, and Stash Tea among the 3,300 businesses employing 42,400 people. With 93% of Tigard’s adult population having a high school diploma, and 40% having at least a bachelor’s degree, Tigard boasts an educated and skilled workforce with a city focus on economic development and sustainability.¹²

Community Partnerships

Frontier Communications, our first community partnership, has made it possible to better fulfill our charter’s obligation to provide agricultural instruction, as well as offer an open green space

⁷ Friedman, N., Tualatin, *Oregon City, and Beaverton see fastest-growing metro-area poverty rates since 2000*. Oregonlive.com, http://www.oregonlive.com/tualatin/index.ssf/2013/05/tualatin_oregon_city_and_beave.html

⁸ Oregon DHS Office of Forecasting, Research, & Analysis, *High Poverty Hotspots – Tualatin, Washington County*. June, 2014.

⁹ 2015 City Profile, <http://www.tualatinoregon.gov/economicdevelopment/city-profile-numbers>

¹⁰ City of Tigard Strategic Plan, http://www.tigard-or.gov/strategic_plan.php

¹¹ United States Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/41/4173650.html>

¹² City of Tigard Economic Development, http://www.tigard-or.gov/business/economic_development.php

to students for larger physical activities. The agreement between Frontier Communications and the school is a model for the development of additional partnerships.

Civic friendships with the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Grange have been in development for the past 18 months. Our recent Groundbreaking Ceremony celebration, and the good press surrounding the event, reflect the positive light in which our civic friends view the school.

In addition to the private contributions made by MITCH families, local businesses support the school through in-kind gifts, discounts, and fundraising opportunities. Plasti-Fab recently remodeled our second floor classrooms through in-kind donations of materials and services, and SNH Corporation has given us permission to use the strip of land adjacent to Willamette Graystone for our experimental garden. Whole Foods Market has offered to the school numerous fundraising opportunities in recent years. The Nyberg Rivers New Seasons Market has hosted two student Art Shows since they opened their doors in the fall, both of which featured MITCH students. In addition to these two businesses who also offered a discount on lunches, our school lunch program is supported with discounts from Jersey Mike's, Dickie Joe's, and Chipotle. The list of our community supporters has continued to grow throughout this school year.

Legislative relationships

MITCH Charter School is located in Senate District 19, represented by Senator Richard Devlin, and in House District 37, represented by Representative Julie Parrish. Senator Devlin visited MITCH in April, 2014 to observe teachers and students in the classroom; he also met with teachers to discuss charter schools. Senator Devlin is the Senate Co-Chair of the Joint Ways & Means Committee for the 2015 session. Representative Parrish's son graduated from MITCH in June, 2014. Representative Parrish has sponsored, or co-sponsored, six education bills for the 2015 Legislative Session -- all of which would benefit the State's charter schools if passed.

Charter Schools & the Education Community

A charter school holds a unique place within the education community: as a not-for-profit, public school operating outside the traditional structural norm for schools, it is important to seek out and develop contacts throughout the education community. With varying levels of interaction, MITCH regularly works with the

- Oregon Department of Education - ODE
- Oregon School Board Association – OSBA
- League of Oregon Charter Schools - LOCS
- Confederation of Oregon School Administrators – COSA
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

An opportunity to strengthen our networking with other charter schools recently occurred: directors, board members and parents representing Alliance Charter Academy, Arthur Academies, Emerson School, KairosPDX, Southwest Charter, Three Rivers Charter, Trillium, as well as MITCH, met to discuss advocacy opportunities for the 2015 Legislative Session. It has taken close to twenty years of advocacy by members of this loosely knit group to reach the point where a charter school funding bill is currently being written and sponsored by a long-time member of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education, We will continue to meet throughout this legislative session to coordinate advocacy efforts for the approval of this measure.

School Assessment: Who are we?

We are a diverse community committed to one purpose: educating our children to the very best of our abilities.

Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors is focused on the success of MITCH via strategic planning, policy development and fulfilling opportunities that enhance the future of our school. The main function and responsibility of the Board is to:

- Protect the fiduciary and legal interests of the Charter School – this responsibility is ultimately to the Oregon taxpayers for how we manage our educational organization. Our other stakeholders – parents, students, staff, our sponsoring District – hold additional influence in the Board’s decision-making process.
- Ensure the Vision/Mission and set policy to ensure that our approved strategy is adhered to and carried out.
- Exercise sound, legal, and ethical practices and policies throughout the school administration and operation.
- Augment strong ties to the community, school district personnel, parents, and students.
- Hire and evaluate the Executive Director.
- Ensure adequate resources to enable the organization to function optimally.

Leadership Team

Essential to charter school development are teacher/leaders – in fact, in 1988 Al Shanker, then President of the American Federation of Teachers, initially proposed the idea of charter schools as a way for *teachers* to offer innovative, measurable ways to successfully teach children. MITCH has established a number of ways for teachers to lead throughout the school. Teachers also serve as the Assistant Principal, the Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator, the Agriculture Instruction Coordinator, and the Wellness Coordinator.

We have run the school with a thin administrative office staff for a number of years, and while the FTE has not increased to match the growth of the school, the duties and responsibilities have continued to proliferate. In order to optimize office functions, two well-defined positions descriptions, Registrar and Office Manager/Bookkeeper, have been created capitalizing upon staff expertise. Their years of experience at MITCH, as well as their passion for supporting our students, make our staff essential to running the school well.

MITCH’s Leadership Team 2014-15 School Improvement Projects

- Designing & implementing behavior systems to promote student success
- Coordinating our curriculum scope and sequence to enhance pursuit of the School of Distinction designation

- Mentoring teachers in classroom management, teaching strategies, and the curriculum methodologies
- Using assessment data to inform teaching decisions
- Creating sustainable agriculture instruction across the scope and sequence & grade levels
- Instituting office procedures so that all bookkeeping is conducted in-house.
- Developing a 4-year model to project revenues.

Professional Capacity

The success of students and the school as a whole is dependent upon the crucial factors of hiring, retaining, and building a team of exceptional teachers and staff.

Our teaching staff is highly educated holding 16 bachelor degrees and 9 Masters degrees; all are licensed through Oregon’s Teacher Standards and Practices Commission with 90% meeting the federally mandated Highly Qualified requirements (one is on-track to meet the qualifications by June, 2015.) While collectively, the teaching staff has more than 115 years of teaching experience, only 1/3 of those years have been taught at MITCH – our teaching team is seasoned, but new to the school and curriculum.

Parents

Our parents are committed to their children’s education and volunteer approximately 1,200 hours a year, and support the operating budget through family contributions and various fundraisers. Parents also give additional resources for the school to provide essential & enrichment resources such as computers and playground equipment. Whether serving on the Board, helping the classroom teacher, serving through the Parent Group, or by giving financially, MITCH parents and families are critical to the school’s long-term well-being.

Organization Structure & Student Achievement

We teach Kindergarten through 8th grade students using the Core Knowledge Sequence, a research-based curriculum that engages students in diverse, but sequential content in history, science, and culture. Additional central elements of our curriculum design include a phonics-based approach to reading and spelling, The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading and Thinking (aka Riggs), Saxon Mathematics, Core Knowledge Language Arts, Excellence in Writing, and sustainable agriculture instruction integrated throughout the curricula. In sum, we offer a developmentally appropriate liberal arts-based curriculum with practical experience in the garden.

We teach our students during a 4-day school week, Monday through Thursday. Most Fridays are not instructional days, except for a monthly field trip or Core Knowledge Event for the K-5th grades, and two half-Fridays a month scheduled for middle school AG-Fridays. For the 2014-2015 school year, 1st through 5th grades are in school 897 hours with 837 hours of seat-time.

Middle school students attend school 969 hours with 909 hours of seat-time. The Oregon Department of Education recently set the minimum number of instructional hours for all K-8 grade students at 900 hours beginning in the 2015-16 school year;¹³ recess, teacher professional development, and parent-teacher conferences are counted as instructional hours even though they are not actual student seat-time. Not coincidentally, in December, 2014 the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) reported to the Oregon House Interim Committee on Education a correlation between the cumulative number of instructional hours and student achievement ranking at the national level. Oregon provides the equivalent of one-full year less than the national average of instructional hours 1st to 12th grade, and our students rank 40th in achievement.¹⁴ Increasing the number of instructional hours to 900 for all students moves Oregon closer to the national average of 913 hours.

Our elementary students are taught in a single, self-contained classroom at each level, except for the current 5th grade which has been the school's double-class moving through primary and upper elementary grades since 2010. It is anticipated this double-class will not move to the sixth grade intact, but that a number of families are self-selecting to transition their children to one of the traditional middle schools in the District. Students also receive instruction in Art, Music, Physical Education, and Library Media Technology.

The organizational structure of the middle school has undergone a number of changes in the past three years, from individual self-contained classrooms to a full-day rotating schedule with multiple electives to a modified-block schedule with minimal electives. The intent to offer a wider range of electives such as a foreign language, music, and other developmentally appropriate learning opportunities to our middle school students has been difficult to achieve due to resource limitations & a lack of economies of scale.

Historically, when our school enrollment increased abruptly the percentage of students who met or exceeded state benchmarks in reading and math dropped precipitously. As presented to the TTSD School Board at our 2014 Annual Presentation, the five-year trend from 2009-10 to 2013-14 reflects a persistent decline in students meeting state standards benchmarks. This is the same time period MITCH moved into our current location and opened middle school classes. (Exhibit B)

Finally, the Center for Education Reform reports the primary reason for a charter school closure is insufficient enrollment, and national data points to a minimum enrollment of 300 students as the financial break-even point for a charter to remain viable in the long-term.¹⁵ Our current charter caps our enrollment at 250; thus our revenue is spread too thin to immediately achieve

¹³ OAR 581-022-1620 Required Instructional Time

¹⁴ COSA, Oregon's Fundamentals Gap, December 14, 2014, <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201311/Committees/HED/2014-12-08-14-00/Agenda>

¹⁵ Center for Education Reform, Annual Survey of Charter Schools, 2008.

our academic performance priority of improved individual student learning, and, while we are solidifying our instructional excellence at the elementary level, we are limited providing a broader and more developmentally-appropriate educational experience for our middle school students.

SWOT Analysis for MITCH Charter School

Prior to determining objectives and goals, a business will take a look at where it stands in four key areas: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). In preparing for our charter renewal it is important we recognize our core advantages as a school, areas in need of improvement, ways in which we can grow as a school, as well as changes in our environment that could adversely impact the school’s sustainability.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Charter: a public school of choice with autonomy in decision making2. Quality of instruction3. Curriculum4. Class size5. Parent & Teacher commitment	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Salary & compensation structure2. Teacher turn-over3. Location4. Financial dependence upon District5. Fragile public perception

Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Develop a compensation structure to support excellence2. Strategic alliances & partnerships3. Community involvement & support4. Further differentiation through emphasis on charter5. Change public perception of school culture and identity	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Facility space limitations2. Facility lease costs3. All players are on the field; no back-up team members on the bench threatens continuity of CKS instruction4. Funding structure5. Increased state regulations

The Board of Directors identify the greatest threats and weaknesses to MITCH’s sustainability as our funding stream and the compensation package for teachers and staff. Addressing these issues reinforces the quality of instruction and creates opportunities for building strategic alliances for long-term school sustainability.

Strategic Goals & Plan, 2015-2020

The Board of Directors met twice in day-long work-sessions in July, 2014 and January, 2015 to plan for our charter renewal in 2018. Using our identified strengths and opportunities to address weaknesses and threats, the Board's strategic goals and plan take into consideration the following:

- The funding and population projection variables that will influence decisions by the Tigard Tualatin School District.
- Our improved relationship with the City of Tualatin whose tax base growth is dependent upon increased industry and manufacturing opportunities.
- A need to develop stronger relationships with our legislative representatives.
- Our participation in a regional advocacy network of charter schools.
- Research identifying what effective schools do to improve individual student achievement.

The scope of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan focuses on four goals:

- **Improve Student Learning & Achievement**
 - The MITCH Board of Directors' priorities for Improving Student Learning and Achievement, 2015-2020, are grounded in the strengths of the quality of our instruction, our chosen curriculum, our class size, and our parent and teacher commitment to student learning.
 1. Earn the Core Knowledge Foundation's School of Distinction designation.
 2. Improve individual student achievement on standardized assessments through an articulated & intentional alignment between our curriculum instruction and the Common Core Standards.
 3. Develop exceptional character qualities in students.
- **Optimize Strategic Operational & Financial Sustainability**
 - The MITCH Board of Directors' priorities for Optimizing Strategic Operational & Financial Sustainability, 2015-2020, are grounded in the strength of our autonomy to

address the threat posed by the state funding structure for charter schools, as well as address the threats posed by our facility's space limitations and costs.

1. Establish Board leadership development, succession, and evaluation plans, as well as assume primary responsibility for fundraising.
2. Organize an optimal school structure to more effectively use our resources to support improved student learning.
3. Evaluate and refine Board policies.
4. Renew charter with the Tigard Tualatin School District

■ Enhance Staff Development & Retention

- The MITCH Board of Directors' Professional Capacity Priorities, 2015-2020, tackle the identified weaknesses in teacher turn-over and salary & compensation structure which results in the threat of a lack of staff bench strength. These priorities build on the opportunity to develop a compensation structure to support excellence in the classroom.
 1. Provide teacher and staff compensation packages comparable to those offered by the Tigard Tualatin School District
 2. Provide a comprehensive professional development program for Core Knowledge Sequence and Core Knowledge Language Arts, Saxon Math, Riggs, Excellence in Writing, and for RTI data use.
 3. Establish a comprehensive teacher evaluation process.

■ Increase Community Connection & Commitment

- The MITCH Board of Directors' Community Relations Priorities for 2015-2020 focus on the opportunities created through the weaknesses identified in our physical location and the fragility of public perception in an era of instantaneous social media connections. These opportunities include building strategic alliances and partnerships, cultivating community involvement and support, and further differentiating our charter in order to positively reinforce the public's perception of the school's culture and identity.
 1. Develop a MITCH brand.
 2. Explore and establish a formal parent support organization such as a PTA or PSO.
 3. Identify specific legislative, civic, and TTSD Board contacts to cultivate and strengthen on behalf of MITCH

4. Develop relationships with diverse potential stakeholders to improve awareness of educational opportunities at MITCH Charter School.

Our primary focus is on student learning and achievement, but the integration of all four goals is essential – we are not likely to accomplish one without accomplishing the others. These goals, and the attendant objectives and measurement points, define our road map for the next five years; staying true to the course will help us to achieve a renewal of our charter and continue to provide an avenue of choice for parents seeking innovative approaches to teaching and student learning.

Next Steps

A strategic plan is effective only when a high level of accountability for follow-through and completion is clearly established.

While our charter renewal is only a few short years away, we will not reach our goal approaching the strategic plan as a Formula One or NASCAR race going around and around a pre-determined track at high speed. This plan is our road-map for a specific destination, but we must actually turn the key in the ignition to reach specific check-points along the course.

Timeline:

July, 2014

- Initial Board work session identifying long-term goals for the school

January, 2015

- Board work session examining long-term goals and financial/operational structure to support goals.

February 19, 2015

- First draft of 5-year strategic plan discussed at work session and Board meeting

February – April, 2015

- Communicate with parents the development of a 5-year strategic plan
- Invite parents to focus groups for feedback
- Revise plan
- Identify specific milestones
- Board work sessions
 - On-going review
 - Implementation plans

March 19, 2015

- Work session: who does what?

April 16 – May 15, 2015

- Focus Groups

May 16, 2015

- Work session – final revisions & refinements

May 21, 2015

- Annual Meeting: 1st Reading

June, 2015

- Board Approval of Strategic Plan

Exhibits

- Exhibit A: Renewal Path Diagram
- Exhibit B: Annual TTSD Report
- Exhibit C: TTSD 2012-16 Strategic Plan, *Look to the Future, Perform Today*

