



MITCH
Charter School

STRATEGIC PLAN
2017-2022

October 2017
Board of Directors

Board of Directors, 2017-18

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Who are we?

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

Vision and Mission

MITCH 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.

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

Our administrative leadership team is dedicated to the fulfillment of the MITCH’s mission by operating the school on sound business practices. We are equally committed to excellence in our instructional practices. The team’s combined experience in education and business exceeds 20 years.

Teachers

Our teaching staff is highly educated holding 20 bachelor degrees, 10 Masters degrees, 1 Doctorate. While collectively, the teaching staff has more than 180 years of teaching -- our teaching team is seasoned and adept at teaching our curricula.

Families

Our families are committed to their children's education and volunteer over 1,200 hours a year, and support the operating budget through family contributions and various fundraisers. Families 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 families are critical to the school's long-term well-being.

Our Schools Curriculum and Program

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 (Codebreaker), Saxon Mathematics, Core Knowledge Language Arts, Excellence in Writing, and sustainable agriculture instruction integrated throughout the curricula. Students also receive instruction in Art, Music, Physical Education, and Media Technology. In sum, we offer a developmentally appropriate liberal arts-based curriculum with practical experience in the garden.

We teach our students using a standard 5-day school week and offer regular field trips or Core Knowledge Events as well as agricultural based excursions and experiences. For the 2017-2018 school year, we have 193 days of instruction compared to the district average of 178 days. MITCH has consistently exceeded state instructional hour requirements and believes classroom instruction time is critical to children's learning success.

Our elementary students are taught in a single, self-contained classroom at each grade level. For some grade levels we have two classes of each level while others support just one class for that grade level. Each year we evaluate our space in order to determine how to best structure the number of classes for each grade level given our facility constraints.

The organizational structure of the middle school has undergone changes from individual self-contained classrooms to a full-day rotating schedule with multiple electives to a modified-block schedule with minimal electives to combined seventh and eighth grades. Consistent learning opportunities for our middle school students has been difficult to achieve due to resource limitations & a lack of economies of scale.

Organizational Context

History

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, Codebreaker (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.

Charter and Assessment of Compliance

The Tigard Tualatin School District sponsors our Charter which expires June 30, 2018. We are in process with renewing our charter which must be submitted to the District School Board and the Superintendent by January 2, 2018. The information in this section lists our results related to the major areas evaluated as part of charter renewal.

State and Federal Accountability

Compliance with state and federal laws:

- State: We are in compliance.
- Federal: We are in compliance.

Compliance with state assessment standards:

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

- Did at least 95% of the students take the required assessments?
 - Benchmark Met - 99.2 % participated.
- ELA and Math Assessments
 - Standards Met as described in Table 1 below

Calculation of MITCH's Academic Achievement Indicators for ELA and math are seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Academic Achievement Indicator for ALL Students at MITCH, 2015-16

	2015-16		2016-17		Targets	Did MITCH meet the target?
	# Tests	% Level 3/4	# Tests	% Level 3/4		
ELA	122	75.4%	124	65.3%	57.0%	Yes
Math	122	63.9%	124	62.1%	47.0%	Yes

Notes on table: The Academic Achievement indicator uses the Colorado Growth model to measure student growth in English language arts and mathematics as compared to academic peers. The growth model examines a student's current performance as compared to that of his/her academic peers with a similar test score history, and expresses it as a percentile. (i.e., a ranking from 0 to 99 where 99 is the highest). For example, a growth percentile of 50 in English language arts would indicate that a student had typical or average growth compared to all other students in the state with similar prior test scores. A growth percentile of 80 would indicate that a student's growth was as high or higher than 80 percent of his/her academic peers.

Organizational Performance:

Mission and Key Design Elements

Criteria: To what extent is the school executing its mission and implementing the key design elements outlined in the charter agreement?

Result: Exceeds Standards. All stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements outlined in the charter. The school has fully implemented its mission and key design elements in the approved charter. The school has systems in place to communicate policies and student performance to parents. Families are able to use the school's communication system to access information about their child's academic progress. The school has clear processes in place to garner parent input to help drive school improvement efforts.

Educational Program

Criteria: To what extent is the school providing the educational program and implementing the distinctive instructional practices as described in the current charter agreement?

Result: Exceeds Standards. The school implements the instructional practices that are consistent with the educational program described in its charter. Teachers demonstrate understanding and skill in the stated instructional practices. The instructional strategies are consistently implemented and meet the material terms of the charter agreement. The school has adequate assessments in place to evaluate instructional effectiveness and student learning. The school complies with all laws, rules and regulations regarding instructional days, content standards including common core state standards and the administration of state assessments.

Fiscally stable evidenced by sound financial management:

Result: MITCH is fiscally stable with ample evidence of sound financial management.

- Audits conducted by McDonald Jacobs, P.C are provided to the District annually. The audit opinion letter has been issued without reservations.
- Annual budgets projections and monthly expense reports are submitted to the District

Conclusion:

If the District were to evaluate MITCH today, it is evident that MITCH is fulfilling the provisions of its charter with the Tigard-Tualatin School District and fully complying with federal and state statutory requirements regarding charter school operations and accountability in Oregon. Furthermore, it is evident that MITCH is performing much beyond compliance with statutes and the charter contract. Through the efforts of passionate and dedicated teachers and school staff, school leadership, families, board members and community partners, MITCH provides a high-quality, rich and authentic learning experience for its students.

The Community in which we operate

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 Beaverton, Newberg, Portland, Sherwood, Hillsboro 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.¹ Unfortunately, the perception that enrollment at a charter school negatively impacts a district's student population growth² underscores the need to continue to build bridges and strengthen partnerships with our sponsoring district.

While we do offer to our community a distinct educational opportunity different from the traditional elementary experience, 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 2016-21 Strategic Plan. The District School Board's academic priorities and objectives are grounded in four areas:

1. We prepare students for success in a rapidly changing world.
2. We believe that success is the reflection of high expectations and a belief in all students.
3. We hire, support and retain catalysts for learning.
4. We create and nurture a school community where everyone feels safe, valued and connected.

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.

Throughout the last 10 years, the City of Tualatin has been one of the fastest growing cities in Oregon. Unlike many other sprawling regions, Tualatin continues to maintain a high standard of

¹ Oregon Department of Education, *2014-15 Student Enrollment Report*. Salem, 4 February 2015. e-mail.

²PSU 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>.

living, yet remains an affordable place to locate a family. Tualatin is also part of a large educated and skilled regional workshed.³

Tualatin's population is well-educated, diverse, and involved in community and school activities. There are excellent educational opportunities available to residents through the Tigard-Tualatin School District and numerous colleges and universities within easy commuting distance. In the most recent satisfaction survey, 84 percent of residents rated the overall quality of life in Tualatin as "excellent" or "good." Residents enjoy community amenities such as award-winning parks, unique shopping and dining establishments and a low tax rate.³

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.”⁴

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.⁵

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 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 progress for multiple years. Recent interactions show that our community partners view our civic partnerships in a positive light.

³ 2017 Tualatin City Profile, <https://www.tualatinoregon.gov/community/our-community>

⁴ City of Tigard Strategic Plan, http://www.tigard-or.gov/strategic_plan.php

⁵ City of Tigard Economic Development, http://www.tigard-or.gov/business/economic_development.php

MITCH has partnered with Neighbors Nourishing Communities (NNC), a local non-profit organization dedicated to bringing fresh produce and healthy alternatives to local food banks. Through this partnership, students have grown plant starts for our partner, learned about food sustainability and had opportunities to be of service to others and to the community.

In addition to the private contributions made by MITCH families, local businesses support the school through in-kind gifts, discounts, and fundraising opportunities. SNH Corporation has given us permission to use the strip of land adjacent to Willamette Graystone for our experimental garden. The Nyberg Rivers New Seasons Market has hosted two student Art Shows since they opened their doors, both of which featured MITCH students. Our school lunch program is supported through Fresh and Local. In 2017, Westside: A Jesus Church entered into a partnership to use our facility for their worship services on Saturdays. 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
- Confederation of Oregon School Administrators – COSA
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

We also work with other charter schools including directors, board members and parents representing Alliance Charter Academy, Emerson School, KairosPDX, Multi-Sensory Learning Academy, Southwest Charter, Three Rivers Charter, and Trillium. We are also meeting with a new charter school alliance group that is forming.

SWOT Analysis for MITCH Charter School

The following analysis summarizes MITCH Charter Schools Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). This analysis helps us to 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.

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Charter: a public school of choice with autonomy in decision making 2. Quality of instruction 3. Curriculum 4. Class size 5. Parent & Teacher commitment 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salary & compensation structure 2. Location 3. Financial dependence upon District 4. Fragile public perception
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a compensation structure to support excellence 2. Strategic alliances & partnerships 3. Community involvement & support 4. Further differentiation through emphasis on charter 5. Change public perception of school culture and identity 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facility space limitations 2. Facility lease costs 3. All players are on the field; no back-up team members on the bench threatens continuity of CKS instruction 4. Funding structure 5. 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.

Goals for 2017-2022

- **Improve Student Learning & Achievement**
 1. Improve individual student achievement on standardized assessments through individual enrichment and /or intervention plans.
 2. Develop exceptional character qualities in students.
 3. Integrate agriculture instruction across the curriculum.
 4. Earn the Core Knowledge Foundation’s School of Distinction designation.

- **Optimize Strategic Operational & Financial Sustainability**
 1. Renew charter with Tigard Tualatin School District
 2. Expand enrollment capacity through
 - a. facility development
 - b. multiple revenue sources to increase revenue
 - c. the provision of school transportation
 3. Develop the MITCH Frontier Garden as a full instructional space

- **Enhance Staff Development & Retention**
 1. Maintain competitive teacher and staff compensation packages
 2. Provide a comprehensive professional development program to develop expertise in curriculum, as well as instructional excellence.

- **Increase Community Connection & Commitment**
 1. Serve the community through the development of the MITCH Frontier Garden and/or additional garden spaces

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.