



GRASP

**THIS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY
TO IMPROVE AND SUSTAIN
YOUR
CHARTER SCHOOL**

***Charter School Governance, Renewal, Assessment, and Strategic Planning
Best Practices Dissemination Project***

848 Gold Flat Road
Nevada City, CA 95959
Phone # (530) 478-9458
FAX # (530) 478-9629
www.coretca.org



Feel Like You're Grasping at Straws?

Does managing your charter school sometimes make you feel like you're grasping at straws? It's tough enough running a charter school on a day-to-day basis. Throw on top of that a myriad of changing rules and regulations, the growing pressure on state and federal testing results, the looming state budget crisis, the ongoing aggressive assault by the education status quo, and other future uncertainties and it can make you feel like you're just grasping at straws to find the right answers and right directions to stay afloat. Never mind the need to fulfill your educational mission and goals and sustain your school. If you could just get on top of it rather than feel like it is weighing down on top of you!

So Here's Your Chance to GRASP a Unique Opportunity

Getting on top of your school to effectively evaluate your strengths and areas of improvement, set out a clear course for the foreseeable future, and implement the wealth of great ideas and solutions that you and your staff have to offer takes a lot of time and effort that many charter school administrators just can't seem to find amidst the onslaught of daily challenges being faced. Perhaps you feel like if you could only afford to bring in outside expertise to guide you through the process efficiently and effectively, then it could work. Well, here is your chance to grasp that very unique opportunity!

CORE @ The Camptonville Academy (TCA), a California charter school, has been awarded a Federal Public Charter School Grant Program (PCSGP) Dissemination Grant based upon its demonstrated best practices in Governance, Renewal, Assessment and Strategic Planning. In partnership with Dr. David Guthrie of Education Synergy Consulting; Middleton, Young & Minney LLC Law Firm; and APLUS+, the Association of Personalized Learning Schools & Services, CORE @ TCA will share its best practices in Charter School Governance, Charter Renewal, Assessment, and Strategic Planning with twenty Beneficiary Charter Schools (with four alternates) throughout California, and assist each of them in developing a tailored, personalized strategic plan that will position each school for educational and operational success and sustainability.

The Benefits You Will Receive

The key goals for the G.R.A.S.P. Dissemination project are to benefit participating schools in the following ways:

- **Governance**: *Receive an understanding of state and Federal law and the ability to maintain a high level of compliance and performance in school operations.*
- **Renewal**: *Receive guidance to position the school for success in renewing and sustaining its charter.*
- **Assessment**: *Receive successful tools and practices in assessing both educational and organizational effectiveness.*
- **Strategic Planning**: *Receive an understanding of strategic planning and the ability to integrate best practices into action planning for school operation process improvements designed to elevate student achievement and learning*

Participation is Better than FREE!

Not only is participation in the CORE @ TCA GRASP project free of charge to all qualifying selected beneficiary schools, but each beneficiary school will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 to cover internal costs associated with participation in the project, including costs such as travel and supplies, etc. Beneficiary schools will also receive a one year free license to Ed Plan online: academic software that guides a school through their SARC and School Improvement Plan (a \$1500 value!).

How to Apply

To be considered for participation as a beneficiary school in the G.R.A.S.P. Dissemination Project, please read and complete the Beneficiary School application on the following two pages, and return it as soon as possible as directed. Beneficiary school qualifying requirements are listed in the application description. The deadline to apply is March 15, 2009 and qualifying beneficiary schools will be notified by the CORE @ TCA Dissemination Grant team thereafter. Don't let this opportunity pass you by. Complete the G.R.A.S.P. Beneficiary School application today!



Beneficiary Application

GRASP Project Summary

The GRASP project shall provide targeted assistance to improve school governance, leadership and operations through best practices for charter school in preparation for renewal. The key goals of the GRASP Project for participating schools are:

- Governance:** an understanding of state and Federal law and the ability to maintain a high level of compliance and performance in school operations.
- Renewal:** success in renewing and sustaining charters.
- Assessment:** success in assessing both educational and organizational effectiveness.
- Strategic Planning:** an understanding of strategic planning and the ability to integrate best practices into action planning for school operation process improvements designed to elevate student achievement and learning.

To these ends, the purpose of this project is to share the best practices developed by Community Options for Resources in Education at The Camptonville Academy (TCA) to strengthen leadership, governance and overall school operations. TCA has assembled an expert Educational Leadership Team from Education (TCA Project Staff), Law (Middleton, Young & Minney), Business (Jeff Rice of APLUS+ Personalized Learning network), and Public Administration (Dr. David E. Guthrie, Education Synergy Consulting) to guide and coach participants in establishing best practices that fit their circumstances. Participating schools will undergo an in-depth evaluation for the purpose of identifying strengths and weaknesses in school operations. Participants will then take part in six workshops conducted by project team members. Middleton, Young & Minney will focus on governance and legal issues which will be followed with a review and development of school policies and procedures related to the areas of governance and personnel. The Education Synergy Consulting representative will focus on the Best Practices Assessment and Strategic and Action Planning.

The project's design is intended to improve the charter school's operating profile, assess and evaluate the charter school's capacity, strengthen the governance leadership, and develop and nurture charter school excellence as "exemplars" for others to emulate. The workshops will be spread out over the Project's duration from March 2009 through June 2010, giving each participating school the opportunity to implement best practices during the gaps between the workshops. The Project will monitor progress made at each subsequent workshop.

Participation in the project is free for selected beneficiaries. The GRASP project is funded through the Federal Dissemination Grant Program administered through the California Department of Education. Beneficiary schools shall also be reimbursed up to \$1000 of any costs associated with its participation in the GRASP project upon full completion of the Project.

Applicant Information

School Name:		Grade Levels (Schools serving any of the grades 7-12 may be given a preference):	
Charter School Number/CDS Code:		Date of Expiration of Current Charter Term	
Address:	Street Address:		
City:		State:	ZIP Code:
Name:		Phone Contact:	()
Title		E-mail Address:	

Beneficiary Requirements

Beneficiaries must meet all of the following requirements:

- 1) The School must be up for renewal during one of the 2009-2010; 2010-2011; or 2011-2012 school years.
- 2) The School's Board must adopt a resolution to commit to the GRASP project including but not limited to a) subjecting the School to evaluation of performance; b) implementing the recommendations of the GRASP Team; c) committing to implement best practices through Strategic and Action planning; d) assigning a School Team representing the Board, the Administration and Staff; and d) agreeing that all evaluations, reports, policies, procedures, or other documentation arising out of the grant shall be public information.
- 3) The School must have received an API growth score for the 2007-2008 school year.



Beneficiary School Requirement Checklist

Is your School up for renewal in 2009-2010; 2010-2011; or 2011-2012?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Is your School willing to submit to evaluation of performance and implement recommendations; committed to implementing best practices through Strategic and Action planning; and in agreement that all documents arising out of the grant shall be public information?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
Has the School's Board adopted a resolution to Commit to the GRASP Project? (please attach Resolution or the Board Agenda when the item will be addressed (approved resolution will be required as a condition to acceptance))	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">If yes, when?</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> </table>	If yes, when?			
If yes, when?							
Has the School assigned a team representing the Board, the Administration and staff?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, please list names below:				
Did your School receive a valid API growth score for the 2007-2008 school year?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>					

If yes, please attach the School's 2008 Academic Performance Index Growth Report, including applicable subgroup information.

Preferences

Beneficiaries that are located in the attendance area of a School that is in Program Improvement Years 3, 4, or 5 may be given preference for selection. For purposes of this application, you may use an elementary school attendance area if your School serves grades K-5; an elementary or a middle school if your School serves grades K-8; and an elementary, middle, or high school if your School is serving grades K-12. If you feel your School qualifies for this preference, please provide the name of the attendance area School or Schools and the Year of Program Improvement.

School:	District:	PI 3,4, or 5:
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School:	District:	PI 3,4, or 5:
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School:	District:	PI 3,4, or 5:
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Application Deadline and Beneficiary Information

Applications shall be sent via mail to 848 Gold Flat Road, Nevada City, CA 95959 to the attention of Jan Jablecki or may be sent via email (with all attachments) to jjablecki@coretca.org. **All applications must be postmarked or received via email by 5:00 p.m. on March 15, 2009. Only complete applications will be considered.**

Twenty (20) Schools will be chosen as grant beneficiaries, with an additional four (4) chosen as alternates.

Beneficiaries will be notified by telephone and email at the contact information provided in this Application. Prior to grant services being rendered, approved Beneficiary Schools may be required to sign an agreement with one or more of the GRASP team members to formalize the provision of the services outlined in the GRASP project grant.

Disclaimer and Signature

By my signature below, I certify that I am an authorized representative of my school and certify my complete understanding of all the conditions stated herein and my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

If this application leads to approval, I understand that false or misleading information in this application may result in the release of the Beneficiary from the GRASP project. I further understand that continued participation in the GRASP project is subject to the continued commitment and follow-through by the Assigned School Team and beneficiary schools which are not meeting the requirements of the GRASP project may be removed from the GRASP project in favor of an approved alternate.

Signature:		Date:	
Print Name:		Title:	