

**North Country Charter Academy**

**CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL**

**March 2, 2009**

**Consultant for Charter Renewal**

**Richard W. Ayers, Ed.D.**

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## **SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the North Country Charter Academy (NCCA) is to provide a learning environment for students who would benefit from a nontraditional high school setting. Students who are or may be at risk of dropping out shall be provided an alternative educational setting in which they can succeed in their pursuit of a high school diploma. The Charter Academy Staff works collaboratively with all Students, Parents, NCCA Board of Trustee members, NCCES Executive Board of Directors, North Country High School Principals, Guidance Counselors, other educational team members and School Superintendents of all sending districts. The above named Educational Team will also work together to see to it that the North Country Charter Academy students are given the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, emotionally and physically both today and in the future.

## Executive Summary

The North Country Charter Academy (NCCA) mission is to provide alternative education in a supportive environment for students who are at high risk of dropping out, in need of credit recovery, or who have dropped out to earn a high school diploma. For the past four years NCCA has graduated 116 such students, of whom nearly 30 % matriculate into post-secondary educational programs. NCCA is achieving its mission and will focus going forward on eliminating all enrolled students from dropping out.

Local school district tuition, state aid, grant funding and public donations contribute to the funding stream to support the vision and mission of NCCA. The NCCA Board of Trustees and NCES Executive Board scrutinize the educational plan represented in each year's operating budget in relation to sources of revenue offsets. Each NCCA per pupil expenditures are considerably less than that of traditional North Country high schools.

NCCA will move forward in FY'09, without any continued contractual obligation to Ombudsman Educational Services of Libertyville, Illinois, all monies now to be expended will remain in the local economy.

Through the use of individually-paced learning plan using computer assisted architecture with PLATO software, NCCA teachers promote student attainment of expected knowledge and skills as evidenced by student growth on pre-test and post-test gain scores

in areas of academic assessment as measured by the Basic Assessment of Skills Inventory (BASI) in 2007 - 2008. in reading comprehension (+2.8 GLE ave./Range 0.0 – 7.3), language mechanics (+1.8 GLE ave./Range 0.0 – 7.0.), spelling (+2.9 GLE ave./Range 0.0 – 9.0), vocabulary (+1.9 GLE

ave./Range 0.0 – 6.8), math computation (+2.8 GLE ave./Range 0.0 – 8.5) and math application (+2.1 GLE ave./Range 0.0 – 7.3). Thirteen eleventh graders took NECAP testing in 2007:

<b>Proficiency Level</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Writing</b>
Advanced	0	0	0
Proficient	4	0	0
Basic	5	5	9
Novice	4	8	4

NCCA will strive to assist students to perform even better in future NECAP testing.

NCCA is a highly desirable and sustainable school supported by area superintendents and principals who recognize that not all students may conform to the academic and social norms expected in traditional high schools. The accolades paid to NCCA by area legislators, school administrators and practitioners, NCCA Alumni and NCCA parents give testimony to the efficiency and effectiveness of the school, the quality and stability of its administration, and the relentless dedication of administrators and teaching staff dedicated to the personal, academic, social and vocational achievement to each and every student enrolled in North Country Charter Academy where “Carpe diem” prevails daily.

**1. Is the school making progress toward achieving its mission?**

- Have the school’s programs and operation been consistent with the terms of its Charter? How do the Accountability Plan Objectives and Measures demonstrate faithfulness to Charter? How do the performance criteria demonstrate consistency with Charter?

North Country Charter Academy’s (NCCA) programs and operation has been consistent with the terms of its Charter. NCCA successfully opened its doors as scheduled on September 7, 2004 in two North Country Locations: Lancaster and Littleton, New Hampshire. NCCA has been established as a regionalized program which continues to be supported by ten area school districts receiving referrals from over 15 schools, impacting over 45 communities and serving students located nearly 3000 geographical square mile area in New Hampshire’s largest counties and part of Vermont. North Country Education Services and its Executive Board continue to be NCCA’s core sponsoring organization and manager of all financial affairs. NCCA continues to function as an

alternative public charter school for students who have dropped out of school or who are at risk of school failure. NCCA has enrolled up to 60 students each year in grades 7-12 and students are between 14-21 years of age. For the past four years, NCCA has contracted with Ombudsman Education Services to provide NCCA with a highly successful model which utilized multiple computerized learning systems and focused on individualized learning plans to meet the needs of our students. In addition, each year all students were enrolled in an approved work study placement which included employment, community service and enrollment at one of the area Region 3 Career and Technical Centers. NCCA's Accountability Plan Objectives and Measures over the years have corresponded accurately with NCCA's charter, mission, goals and plans. NCCA has created a strong, effective and supportive governance structure with the establishment of its Board of Trustees and its relationship with North Country Education Service Executive Board. NCCA board members are not only leaders within their profession but have provided NCCA with an enormous amount of their time supporting the charter. Board members have always been open to being called upon to attend events on behalf of the charter school. Board members have also held special meetings such for establishing policies, to address sustainability and future funding. Two parents of current NCCA students have served one year terms on the board for the past four years. One parent board member has been serving on the board for the past three years and another parent board member has requested to continue to serve on the board. NCCA participated in numerous events and community outreach activities to seek support and promote public awareness of the need for the alternative education. Mount Washington Hotel donated its facility in 2006 for its graduation ceremony and in 2007; Mountain View Grand donated their ballroom for the graduation. Littleton Chevrolet donated a van to use for transportation from 2004-2007. GM Photography donated its photography service from 2004-2007. During the first year of operation, NCCA initiated its community service project which continues to be strong today. This project involved adopting infantry units in Iraq and sending the Marines care packages. This project took on a life of its own. Numerous area businesses and local schools partnered with NCCA and frequently provided items to send in the packages. NCCA even received a direct call from a Marine stationed in Iraq to say thank you. Families of these Marines even sent students Christmas cards and thanked them for supporting their family member. Channel 9 WMUR news came to the school to conduct a report on the project. Please see Appendix A (Community Outreach &

Service Project). Furthermore, NCCA has been faithful to its objectives and measures as demonstrated by our student's academic success and significant personal growth. Academic progress has been measured each year by using the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASIS) assessment which was administered by Ombudsman Educational Services. BASIS is a normed reference test administered upon entry and prior to exit for each student during each period of enrollment. The scores are reported as grade level equivalents and measure a student's progress over their period of enrollment during a given year. The following assessment data reported by Ombudsman to NCCA demonstrate that students have experienced significant growth academically.

## Academic Progress

### 2004-2005

#### NCCA Summary of Grade Level Improvements

	Math	Vocabulary	Writing
<b>Semester 1 Average</b>	<b>1.8 Grade Levels</b>	<b>1.0 Grade Levels</b>	<b>1.2 Grade Levels</b>
<b>Semester 2 Average</b>	<b>2.7 Grade Levels</b>	<b>1.2 Grade Levels</b>	<b>1.7 Grade Levels</b>
<b>Average Growth</b>	<b>2.3 Grade Levels</b>	<b>1.7 Grade Levels</b>	<b>1.5 Grade Levels</b>

### 2005-2006

Center Name	Math Comp			Math App			Vocabulary			Spelling			Language			Reading		
	Entry Level	Exit Level	Growth															
Lancaster	7.3	8.9	1.6	8.9	10.1	1.2	8.6	11.7	3.2	9.2	10.8	1.7	8.6	11.1	2.5	8.7	12.5	3.8
Littleton	7.2	8.9	1.8	8.7	11.1	2.4	9.9	11.2	1.3	8.5	10.3	1.7	9.1	11.3	2.2	8.7	12.1	3.4
<b>Average Growth</b>			<b>1.7</b>			<b>1.8</b>			<b>2.2</b>			<b>1.7</b>			<b>2.4</b>			<b>3.6</b>

### 2006-2007

Center Name	Math Comp			Math App			Vocabulary			Spelling			Language			Reading		
	Entry Level	Exit Level	Growth															
Lancaster	6.1	8.5	2.4	7.7	10.8	3.2	6.9	8.0	1.1	6.0	9.1	3.1	7.4	10.6	3.2	7.6	9.6	2.0
Littleton	6.8	9.7	2.9	8.1	10.8	2.8	8.0	9.8	1.8	9.2	10.8	1.6	8.9	10.0	1.1	7.7	11.1	3.4
<b>Average Growth</b>			<b>2.7</b>			<b>3.0</b>			<b>1.5</b>			<b>2.4</b>			<b>2.2</b>			<b>2.7</b>

**2007-2008**

Center Name	Math Comp			Math App			Vocabulary			Spelling			Language			Reading		
	Entry Level	Exit Level	Growth															
Lancaster	7.1	8.0	.8	8.4	10.3	2.0	8.3	9.6	1.3	8.1	10.8	2.7	11.8	13.7	2.0	9.1	10.6	1.5
Littleton	6.7	9.9	3.2	8.5	10.3	1.8	9.1	10.8	1.6	7.9	10.5	2.6	9.1	10.8	1.7	9.3	10.3	.9
Average Growth			2.0			1.9			1.5			2.7			1.9			1.2

In addition, most of the students enrolled at the charter had very poor attendance prior to enrolling. The following attendance data demonstrates the success NCCA has had with student attendance:

**Attendance Rates**

**2004-2005**

	<b><u>Semester I</u></b>	<b><u>Semester II</u></b>	<b>YTD</b>
Littleton Site	85%	89%	87%
Lancaster Site	87%	90%	89%
NCCA Summary	86%	90%	88%

**2005-2006**

	<b><u>Semester I</u></b>	<b><u>Semester II</u></b>	<b>YTD</b>
Littleton Site	91%	91%	91%
Lancaster Site	90%	91%	91%
NCCA Summary	91%	91%	91%

**2006-2007**

	<b><u>Semester I</u></b>	<b><u>Semester II</u></b>	<b>YTD</b>
Littleton Site	89%	90%	90%
Lancaster Site	91%	88%	90%
NCCA Summary	90%	89%	90%

**2007-2008**

	<b><u>Semester I</u></b>	<b><u>Semester II</u></b>	<b>YTD</b>
Littleton Site	88%	90%	89%
Lancaster Site	92%	90%	91%
NCCA Summary	90%	90%	90%

Furthermore, the following retention rate data also demonstrates the success NCCA has experienced:

**Retention Rates**  
**2004-2005**

	<b><u>Semester I</u></b>	<b><u>Semester II</u></b>	<b>YTD</b>
Littleton Site	76%	89%	83%
Lancaster Site	87%	90%	89%
NCCA Summary	82%	90%	86%

**2005-2006**

	<b><u>Semester I</u></b>	<b><u>Semester II</u></b>	<b>YTD</b>
Littleton Site	94%	93%	90%
Lancaster Site	94%	96%	92%
NCCA Summary	94%	94%	91%

**2006-2007**

	<b><u>Semester I</u></b>	<b><u>Semester II</u></b>	<b>YTD</b>
Littleton Site	78%	97%	87%
Lancaster Site	100%	79%	91%
NCCA Summary	89%	88%	88%

**2007-2008**

	<b><u>Semester I</u></b>	<b><u>Semester II</u></b>	<b>YTD</b>
Littleton Site	94%	90%	92%
Lancaster Site	100%	100%	100%
NCCA Summary	96%	95%	96%

In addition to the academic success, many of our students have experienced significant personal growth. When students enroll in our school, most of them are in a survival mode and simply need the bare necessities; safety, food, shelter, and clothing. Many of them also have mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, and other issues. NCCA addresses these issues with the students and assists them in finding help. For example, NCCA has established a relationship with a local homeless shelter and partnered with the New Hampshire Community College to help raise money for the shelter. Many of our students utilize this shelter and NCCA wanted to give back. A dinner was put on and we were able to raise \$500.00. In 2004, NCCA had a specific student who was a parent and homeless four times throughout being enrolled. NCCA gathered donations from local businesses and community members that enabled her to stay in an apartment for two months while she completed her diploma requirements. NCCA has also partnered with local Social Workers who are willing to provide service on site. An area school district donated their Student Assistant Program Coordinator's time to meet with our students at each of our sites. For additional success stories please see (Appendix B).

- What changes have been made or do you plan to make regarding the Charter? Do you wish to refine your Charter?

As of July 1, 2008, North Country Charter Academy will continue operating in the same manner except without the contract with Ombudsman Educational Services. This was a joint decision among the members of the NCES Executive Board and the NCCA Board of Trustees and highly supported by representatives of the New Hampshire Department of Education. NCCA has purchased all the necessary items to move forward independent

from Ombudsman and is on schedule to open school on August, 26, 2008. This independence allows NCCA more control and flexibility in meeting the needs of the students and staff. NCCA hired its own staff and is now able to schedule staff meetings, plan its own professional development, conduct staff evaluations and build a stronger and more cohesive leadership team. NCCA plans to broaden opportunities for the students by scheduling field trips to college fairs, employment offices and other important educational functions. In addition, NCCA will be implementing a weekly unit focused solely on employability skills training and career awareness. The primary goal for 2008-2009 is to continue working collaboratively with all supporting districts as well as to monitor the success of the transition making sure all policies; practices and procedures are in place.

**2. How is the school responsibly using public funds?**

- Please include school’s operating budget and sources of funding, including funds raised in addition to state funds.

North Country Charter Academy's (NCCA) sources of funding are tuition from school districts for participating students, donations from fund raising, NHDOE grant, HB76 State Aid, and financial assistance from North Country Education Services (NCES).

Sources of Funding:

School Year	School Districts	Grant Money	State Aid	NCES
2004 - 2005	162,516	341,381	0	0
2005 - 2006	200,974	308,601	0	0
2006 - 2007	167,985	399,029	144,627	0
2007 - 2008	250,657	145,367	195,597	35,000

Public funds are used for salaries and benefits for the NCCA Principal and Administrative Assistant. Operating costs including rent, telephone, postage, audit, printing, advertising, supplies and equipment also use public funds. Student transportation is paid for with public funds as well. From 2004 through 2008, NCCA had contracted with Ombudsman Educational Services of Libertyville, Illinois for all costs associated with the use of two facilities (Lancaster and Littleton), for the services of four professional

teachers and for all computer equipment, software, and for both instructional and expendable materials for student and teacher use. Annual fundraising conducted by staff and students has consisted of the sale of high quality products during the Christmas season and has realized the following receipts to defray various school expenses to benefit the students.

Fundraising:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>FUNDS RAISED</u>	<u>FUNDS EXPENDED</u>	<u>CARRYOVER</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
2004-2005	\$ 2,480	\$ 1,169	\$ 1,311	GRADUATION EXPENSES
2005-2006	\$ 6,545	\$ 5,157	\$ 1,388	GRADUATION EXPENSES
2006-2007	\$ 5,139	\$ 6,301	\$ (1,162)	GRADUATION EXPENSES
2007-2008	\$ 6,682	\$ 7,572	\$ (890)	GRADUATION EXPENSES
		BALANCE LEFT	\$ 647	

- How are decisions made regarding use of resources and setting priorities for spending?

All operational decisions for NCCA are made by the Principal with approval from the NCES Executive Director as well as the NCCA Board of Trustees and the NCES Executive Board. Priorities are always based on how decisions will affect the well being of the students and further the mission of NCCA.

- Reference yearly audit which is on file at the DOE?

As indicated in the annual audit on file with the NHDOE, any revenue over expenses at the end of the fiscal year is put in the NCCA fund balance as operating cash flow as well as for addressing any upcoming expenses not covered by grants, tuition, etc.

Please see the approved 2008 - 2009 Operating Budget, (Appendix C), for complete line item budget detail.

### **3. Is the school promoting student attainment of expected knowledge and skills?**

- Has the school made reasonable progress in meeting internally established goals in both its accountability plan and as demonstrated in the NH Educational Instructional and Assessment Program (NHEIAP) results?

NCCA has made reasonable progress in meeting internally established goals in its accountability plan.

NCCA established itself four years ago through the collaboration of ten area school districts and the North County Education Service organization. NCCA remains strong today because of this relationship and the enormous support from area schools, businesses and organizations. NCCA is a highly reputable school in which students are proud to be enrolled and affiliated. This reputation is a reflection of the need for alternative education and our student's commitment to completing their high school education. In the past four years, NCCA has graduated 116 students in which 34 (29.3%) were high school dropouts back to 2001. Of the twenty-one graduates in 2005, five are enrolled fulltime in college/universities, two are involved in online coursework, thirteen are employed and we were unable to contact one student. Of the thirty-three graduates in 2006, one is enrolled in college, one in a community technical school, eighteen are employed, three enlisted in the military, three are unemployed and we were unable to contact seven students. Of the twenty-nine graduates in 2007, one is enrolled in college, fifteen are employed fulltime, one employed part time, five are unemployed and we were unable to contact seven students. Several attempts have been made to contact those who are reported as unable to contact with no success. For data relating to the NH Educational Instructional and Assessment Program (NHEIAP) please see (Appendix D).

- Has student performance significantly improved and/or been consistently strong on local and state academic assessments? You may reference NH *Follow The Child* growth data.

NCCA enrolls students who are failing the traditional school system, are not involved in extra curricula activities or sports, do not have a sense of belonging, and generally do not get along with teaching staff

and school administrators. Upon acceptance to NCCA, students have failing grades, very poor attendance and many documented disciplinary infractions. NCCA strives to help the North County region decrease its dropout rate, increases its dropout recovery and to provide a viable alternative pathway to obtaining a quality education leading to a high school diploma and to options in their future. NCCA has been participating in the “Follow the Child” initiative by attending trainings and by administering the “Follow the Child” surveys. The survey information below is an extract from one of our survey’s administered to students. This information revealed some very positive attitudes from our students.

**Belonging**

Feels like school is welcoming/ friendly 87%  
 Feels accepted for who they are at school 73%

**Heroes**

Students respect teachers 76%  
 If I have a problem I have a teacher to talk to 64%

**Sense of Accomplishment**

Tests are an important part of my education 73%  
 Teachers recognize students who are kind/helpful 82%  
 Teachers recognize me when I try my best 68%  
 I put forth my best effort at school 68%  
 Getting good grades is important to me 75%

**Creativity and Curiosity**

I feel comfortable asking question in class 84%  
 I enjoy learning new things 84%  
 What I learn at school will benefit my future 73%

**Spirit of Adventure**

I push myself to do better academically 89%  
 Teachers think I can be successful 70%

**Confidence to take action**

I believe I can be successful 91%  
 Teachers expect me to be successful 92%  
 I work hard to reach my goals 78%

**The Role of Parents**

My parents care about my education 94%  
 My parent’s think going to college is important 79%

#### **4. Is the school sustainable?**

- Does the school show organizational viability?

Yes, NCCA shows organizational viability. NCCA's administrative leadership has been very consistent, committed, and dedicated to its mission. The Principal and Administrative Assistant/Case Manager have been the same since NCCA opened. Fifty percent of Ombudsman's Teachers were hired to continue with the NCCA transition to operate independently and both of those teachers have been with NCCA since it opened. NCCA's is fortunate to have many enthusiastic and supportive parents. Several parents have given speeches at graduations, written letters of support, volunteered to help us raise money and have joined the Principal in attending state events. NCCA has frequently been visited by many local political representatives who also support the charter at state legislative events. These representatives have included Senator John Gallus, Representative Bill Remick, Melissa Ogle, Liaison to Senator John Sununu, Representative Stephanie Eaton, and Executive Councilor Raymond Burton.

- Is the enrollment stable and near capacity?

Yes, NCCA's enrollment has been consistent and stable over the past four years as indicated below. While contracting with Ombudsman, NCCA was only allowed to enroll up to 60 students at one time. NCCA has now prepared itself to enroll up to 70 students. Please see (Appendix E) for the enrollment history.

- Is the governance and management system effective?

NCCA continues to have a very strong Board of Trustees. In 2004, the Board consisted of five members and today Board membership has grown to nine members. Of the nine members, three have been on the Board for the entire four years, two members have been on the Board for three years and two members are Superintendents who supported the school from its inception but have served for two year and one year terms. Each year we invite two parents to serve on the Board for one year terms. At the end of this school year, we added another member. This member was the current parent member who requested to remain on Board. In addition, we are looking for another board member to join this year who can represent the Lin-Wood school district.

- What are the school's measurable objectives for its next charter term?

NCCA's measurable objectives for its next charter terms are as follows:

1. Strive to eliminate all NCCA dropouts.
2. Apply to the NH Department of Education for the GED option to offer NCCA students as an alternative to our diploma.
3. Strive to meet a 95% retention rate.
4. Strive to meet a 95% attendance rate.
5. Expand awareness, opportunities, and programs related to employability skills and career awareness.
6. Increase post-secondary and/or other training placements.
7. 100% of enrolled students will be in an approved work study placement.
8. Two parents of currently enrolled students will serve one year term memberships on NCCA Board of Trustees.
9. Community outreach through participating in regional events, conducting presentations, and inviting the public to come to our school to meet our students and staff and to gather information about the school.

- What is your budget process?

The budget process is a year long process and follows the timeline listed below:

May -September: NCCA Principal prepares proposed budget for following school year. Principal reviews proposed budget with Director of NCES.

September-October: Proposed budget is presented to NCCA Board of Trustees.

November-December: Proposed budgeted is presented to NCES Executive Board which includes all Superintendents for approval.

January: Proposed budget is present to NCCA Board of Trustees for approval.

January-February: Notification of approved proposed budget goes out to all participating school district Superintendents.

February-March: Enrollment contracts from each participating district are secured.

April: Enrollment contracts adjusted if necessary.

