

California Department of Education
Nonclassroom-Based Funding Determination - Mitigating Circumstances Request Summary Sheet
Fiscal Year 2016-17

A. Charter School Information (complete lines 1 to 4)

1. Charter School:	TWIN RIDGES HOME STUDY CHARTER SCHOOL	2. Charter No.:	1428
3. Requested Funding % with mitigating circumstances	100%	4. CDS Code:	2.9103E+13

B. Nonclassroom-Based Funding Determination Criteria

Funding Determination Criteria	Certificated Staff Costs to Total Public Revenues Ratio	Instruction and Instruction-Related Services Costs to Total Revenues Ratio	Pupil toTeacher Ratio
100% Funding [5 CCR, Sec. 11963.4(a)(3)]	= or > 40%	= or > 80%	< 25 : 1
85% Funding [5 CCR, Sec. 11963.4(a)(2)]	= or > 40%	= or > 70%	Not Applicable
70% Funding [5 CCR, Sec. 11963.4(a)(1)]	= or > 35%	= or > 60%	Not Applicable

C. Enter the Reported Charter School's Expenditure Ratios and Pupil to Teacher Ratio from Form FDF

	Certificated Staff Costs to Total Public Revenues Ratio	Instruction and Instruction-Related Services Costs to Total Revenues Ratio	Pupil toTeacher Ratio
Enter the charter school's calculated ratios from the FDF in Section VI. Line 1. and VI. Line 2 ----->.	34.79 %	63.08 %	25 : 1

If the reported expenditure ratios and/or Pupil to Teacher ratio do not meet the funding determination criteria for the funding level requested, review the regulations in Section D and complete Sections E and F. Sign and attach any documentation that provides further support or clarification.

D. Regulations

California *Code of Regulations*, Title 5 (5 CCR), Sec. 11963.4(e): A reasonable basis for the ACCS to make a recommendation other than one that results from the criteria specified in subdivision (a) may include, but not be limited to, the following: the information provided by the charter school pursuant to paragraphs (2) through (8), inclusive, of subdivision (b) of section 11963.3, documented data regarding individual circumstances of the charter school (e.g., one-time or unique or exceptional expenses for facilities, acquisition of a school bus, acquisition and installation of computer hardware not related to the instructional program, special education charges levied on the charter school by a local educational agency, restricted state, federal, or private grants of funds awarded to the charter school that cannot be expended for teacher salaries, or contracted instructional services other than those for special education), the size of the charter school, and how many years the charter school has been in operation.

E. Mitigating Circumstances (complete lines 1, 2, and 3 and attach any supporting documentation)

1. Explain why the charter school did not meet the criteria for the funding determination requested. Include specific measures or actions taken by the charter school to comply.

Twin Ridges Home Study Charter School is a small nonclassroom-based K-8 charter school based in Nevada City. The school encompasses a large and diverse geographic area, from the Tahoe area to the Sacramento Valley. The school focuses on educating each student with a personalized education plan and individualized goals. Each student benefits from a teamwork effort: the credentialed teacher, the student, the parent and other professional staff. The school also has a culture of thrift and sustainability due to severe budget cut backs during the Great Recession and subsequent deferrals. The school population is as diverse as its geographic region. We missed the expenditure targets primarily due to building our modest financial reserves, our small size (+/-125 students) and various other one-time and other factors specific to our school. These include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

1) During economic hard times, the school enrollment tends to fluctuate as families move or change to classroom-based schools to accommodate family financial changes. Part of the school's population encompasses students whose parents are employed by or are active Air Force members attached to Beale Air Force Base. A move or deployment often means a loss in not just one student but also in the loss of several students depending on the size of the family.

2) Additionally, the school has faced increased enrollment competition in the Truckee/Tahoe area in recent years as new charter schools open. These factors resulted in a very low, unstable student enrollment for several years. Enrollment volatility meant lower percentages of credentialed staff. Since economic recovery began, the school has seen a steady increase of enrollment. The school slowly has been increasing the full-time status of existing credentialed staff as enrollment has stabilized.

3) The school also has undergone a complete change in administration over the past several years. This new administrative staff has prioritized increasing student enrollment, offering further academic opportunities for students, have plans in place to increase student supplies and curriculum, have replaced recently retired credentialed staff and have worked to take the school from an uncertain financial status to a renewed and growing program. The school's fiscal policy has been very conservative because of these factors and has resulted in "too much" in the reserves. The current administration was trying to protect the program from incoming economic slowdown and possible upcoming deferrals. The school has been making efforts under the direction of its Director and its Board of Directors to make changes that will encourage student retention, add additional credentialed staff, add to student supplies/curriculum/technology and offer increased academic and extracurricular support for the students.

4) Though our executive director is highly educated (PhD from UCLA) and has participated in extensive charter school leadership training activities, she is not certificated. Given our school's small size, not being able to count her compensation toward the "certificated" instructional lines make it extra challenging to meet the 40 percent certificated salaries target.

5) Additionally, the school is part of a SELPA joint powers authority (JPA) so that students with special education plans work with specialists on-site on a weekly basis. All credentialed teacher costs associated with special education are reflected in the instructional contract section, vs. the certificated salary and benefit line in which they would be if the school did not participate in the SELPA JPA.

6) The additional funds in the reserves are from the one-time Educator Effectiveness Grant, other one-time funding and we are adding additional certificated staff to accommodate our enrollment and further foster student achievement.

7) As we continue to grow the program, we have been charged by our Board of Directors to continue to add space and/or research a larger facility in the next few years.

While it is very difficult for schools of our size that occupy significant facilities to meet the expenditure targets, we have taken several actions to come closer to the targets. Space is always open at the main site and the other two sites for student use and resources. Under the direction of the school Director and the Board of Directors, the school continues to maintain a stable enrollment and will be able to increase the FTE of current staff and hire additional credentialed staff in the following fiscal year. Funding is being earmarked for local assessments and technology to further support student achievement and bolster test scores.

2. List and explain the mitigating circumstance(s) to be considered by the California Department of Education (CDE) and Advisory Commission on Charter Schools (ACCS).

Twin Ridges Home Study Charter School asks for full funding. We are prepared to prove that our plan is successful and actionable going forward. The administration is actively supporting the efforts of our current credentialed staff and will add more credentialed staff in response to enrollment stabilization. Our goal has been to grow a fiscally responsible school while offering an individualized education to each child. While we continue to experience growth, we are conservative about taking on new on-going expenses. As explained above, the key factors include the following:

1) Our unique population (e.g., children of military families), small size, and highly competitive environment beg a substantial reserve for economic uncertainties.

2) Our unusual staffing patterns, including a non-credentialed but highly-educated/trained executive director make it very difficult for us to meet the 40 percent certificated compensation spending target.

3) Our school is unusually small.

4) We have opted to spread the expenditure of "one-time" certificated staff development and other funds over a multi-year period to ensure that our growing staff fully shares in the benefit and that we deliberately plan and execute our staff development activities rather than rush to spend funds

5) Our participation of a special education joint powers authority (JPA) makes it difficult to meet the certificated staff expenditure target. If special education were on our staff and not part of our SELPA agreement, our numbers would change.

Administrative and classified staff including the Director, Business Officer, Resource Specialist, instructional aides and others are involved directly with the education of our students. Of note, we have spread one time grant money, Prop. 39 money and the Educator Effectiveness Grant over several fiscal years to maximize the benefit and opportunities for students and staff. The program provides many opportunities for academic enrichment at all sites on a weekly basis for all students. In recent years, we have had a change in administration that aims to protect the program for students through upcoming economic downturns and possible deferrals. We service students from a variety of backgrounds: military families, rural families, families who may otherwise be outside the public school system. Part of our ongoing enrollment stabilization plan is to provide modern technology to support student achievement and updated standards-aligned materials while also providing enrichment and other academic opportunities for students.

- Long-standing program that works in close partnership and with support of the Nevada County Office and Superintendent of Education in addition to our sponsoring district
- While our reserves represent a relatively high proportion of our expenditures, they are not large in absolute terms and we believe they represent a minimally prudent amount for a school in our particular circumstances (e.g., small, competitive environment, variable enrollment, etc.).

3. Provide any other pertinent information that may assist the CDE and ACCS in conducting a detailed review or develop a reasonable basis for a recommendation.

Twin Ridges Home Study Charter School maintains its main site location in Nevada City. The school maintains space in two other locations, Truckee and Wheatland (near the Beale Air Force Base). All locations/facilities are utilized for student educational use. Educational uses include parent/student/teacher meetings as required by law and by the school's Independent Study Master Agreement (see attached); enrichment opportunities available to all students up to three times a week at each of the three locations (see examples attached); tutoring; local and state assessment testing; parent-organized and staff-organized extracurricular activities (see attached example); and a lending library of curriculum, student supplies and technology, and manipulatives. Due to the individualized nature of the program, all classified staff assist the credentialed staff in the direct education of the students. Among classified staff are the Director, the Business Officer (formerly Business Tech), the Resource Coordinator and instructional aides as well as skilled individuals and businesses contracted from the community to provide students with academic activities. The classified staff under the direction of the credentialed staff are involved with educational activities to engage the students; examples include teaching and mentoring students and assisting parents with procuring supplies, curriculum and materials.

F. Certification

I hereby certify to the best of my knowledge and belief, that the information is true and correct.

Signature of Charter School's Director, Principal, or Governing Board Chairperson

Jaynie Aydin, Ph.D.

Print Name of Charter School's Director, Principal, or Governing Board Chairperson

Director

Title of Authorized Individual

Date