COUNTY of MARIPOSA
P.O. Box 784, Mariposa, CA 95338 (209) 966-3222

JIM ALLEN, CHAIR
JANET BIBBY, VICE-CHAIR
LEE STETSON
LYLE TURPIN
KEVIN CANN

DISTRICT V
DISTRICT III
DISTRICT I
DISTRICT II
DISTRICT IV

MARIPOSA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTE ORDER

TO: FILE
FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board

SUBJECT: Presentation and Request for a Letter of Support to Pursue Charter School in Catheys Valley

RES. 11-463

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

ADOPTED THIS Order on September 20, 2011

ACTION AND VOTE:

3 Jill Harry, President/Chair, Sierra Foothill Charter School
Presentation and Request for a Letter of Support to Pursue Charter School in Catheys Valley

BOARD ACTION: Jill Harry presented information on their efforts to form a charter school in Catheys Valley, and she requested a letter of support from the Board. Discussion was held, including the statistics on the stability of charter schools, benefits, number of students proposed to be served, and use of the School facilities. Chair Allen advised of the receipt of an email from the Mariposa County Unified School District Superintendent this morning – the Superintendent is neutral on this request pending review by the School Board. Jill Harry provided input on the process and advised that they are putting together a document to submit to the School District.

Input from the public was provided by the following:

Eleanor Keuning stated she is very supportive of this effort and agrees with all of the comments made by Supervisor Bibby.

Brett Baumann asked the Board to support the request with a letter. He commented on his community involvement and this process, noted the importance of the school to the community, and presented a letter.

Heather Bernikoff, resident of Catheys Valley/Hornitos area, stated she does not have children in school, but feels the local school is important and she volunteers in the schools. She requested that the Board approve a letter of support, and noted the funding opportunities that are available to charter schools.

(M)Bibby, (S)Stetson, Res. 11-463 was adopted approving the letter of support of the charter school for Catheys Valley/Ayes: Stetson, Bibby, Cann, Allen; Excused: Turpin.

Cc: Board of Supervisors
Mariposa County Unified School District
P.O. Box 8
Mariposa, CA 95338

Dear Superintendent Rosander:

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors supports the efforts to form a charter school in Catheys Valley. A local school is the focal point which unifies the community and a charter school at the former elementary school location will allow the community to continue to utilize this valuable physical asset. As illustrated by the proponents of the charter school, the closing of Catheys Valley Elementary School is an opportunity to provide for an even better educational experience for local students.

We understand that The Sierra Foothill Charter School Organizing Committee will be required to provide an organizational plan to provide for the best possible utilization of existing resources. It is our understanding that they have developed an educational model which will meet the needs of the local community. Among the many requirements needed to be met before the school can open is that the committee provide a viable financial plan for the school. Assuming that the committee is able to satisfy those requirements, the charter school will undoubtedly become an asset for all of Mariposa County.

The Board of Supervisors recognizes that your primary mission is to provide a high quality educational experience for every young person in Mariposa County. We are also acutely aware of the many challenges faced by public entities. As such, we applaud the efforts of those who seek to enhance and improve the educational opportunities within Mariposa County.

Sincerely,

Jim Allen
Chairman
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

RJB/mlj
September 20, 2011

Mariposa County Unified School District
P.O. Box 8
Mariposa, CA 95338

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Sincerely,

Jim Allen
Chairman
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

RJB/mlj
September 8, 2011

Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
PO Box 784
Mariposa, CA 95338

Dear Mariposa County Board of Supervisors,

As a result of the closing of Catheys Valley Elementary (CVE), I am working with a group of Mariposa County residents to form Sierra Foothill Charter School (SFCS) in Catheys Valley, initially serving grades kindergarten through eighth with a five year plan to expand through grade 12.

A charter school is part of the public school system. If approved, Mariposa County Unified School District will be SFCS’s local authorizer. We have met with Superintendent Aaron Rosander, Assistant Superintendent Celeste Azevedo, and Chief Business Officer Linda Levesque. Superintendent Rosander has indicated that he is open to the idea of the charter school, and he believes the school board will be as well. Our goal is to maintain a positive working relationship with MCUSD.

SFCS believes having a school in Catheys Valley is in the best interest of our community, the school district, and Mariposa County. On behalf of SFCS, I am asking you for a letter of support. Please consider:

- Especially in rural communities, the school provides a place to come together not just for the students, but for all of the area’s residents. It is the community center. Before CVE was closed in June, it had been the heart of our community since 1879. Without the school, our community has lost an important central focus.

- On September 1, the Gazette reported that the school district had lost 20-23% of the former CVE population due to the school’s closure. This statistic is alarming, especially given that enrollment at CVE had been basically steady the last 15 years, even while overall district enrollment declined. It is disheartening to everyone in Catheys Valley and Hornitos to have so many of our community’s children leaving not just our community, but Mariposa County for schooling.

- A small community school provides a safer environment for students. Older students take on the responsibility of younger students. It provides a very family friendly place outside the home.

MES has wonderful teachers and staff, but with the great number of students now at MES, there are naturally more chances of incidences
escalating on the school yard. There are also more chances of accidents after school given the greatly increased flow of traffic as parents drive to pick up their children, struggle to find one of the limited parking places open, and walk in the narrow parking lot and on the street to get to their cars with their children.

- There are less health issues in a small community school. Consolidating the majority of children in one location is not a best practice. Illnesses can spread rapidly, infect more and potentially overwhelm our local public health and medical resources. Without a community school, there is no central location for health officers to control an epidemic.

- A community school draws more families into our community and keeps our community vital. If Catheys Valley had a school, it is safe to say that most if not all the 20-23% of former CVE students who left the district would come back. In addition, given Catheys Valley’s close proximity to UC Merced and the growth expected for that campus (to an eventual student population of 25,000), we would see more faculty and staff looking for homes in our community. Without a school, we will see no growth, homes will become even more difficult to sell, property values will decrease, and therefore, so will the property tax revenues that Mariposa County receives.

The Gazette reported that families of most former CVE students (77-80%) chose to stay in the district and attend MES. For many, this is because they found it to be the best of a number of less than desirable choices.

Having their children attend MES is not an easy option for most families. Please consider:

- In these economic times, many parents cannot afford to drive their children to schools outside their community and carpooling is not always an option given car seating constraints. Driving is costly and a tremendous hardship. This is especially true for the 39% of the Catheys Valley Elementary student population considered socioeconomically disadvantaged. (Data from the 2009-10 CVE School Accountability Report Card (SARC).)

- Car rides and bus rides to other schools are too long, especially for the youngest students. Excessive time on the road is not productive time.

Former CVE students living in Hornitos would have had to spend 1 hour 18 minutes on the bus on the way to school and 1 hour 38 minutes on the bus on the way home according to the 2011-12 bus schedule posted on the district website. As a result, some of these families decided to send their children out of district to Snelling.
• **Parents do not like having their children, especially young children, so far from home.** Especially if children become sick during the day, it becomes a hardship to get to them quickly. It also makes it difficult for arranging and transporting children to doctor visits.

• **A community without a school has no future.** The Catheys Valley community deserves a future.

  **It is in the best interest of Mariposa County to see that Catheys Valley remains vital with an infusion of families with school-aged children. Without a school, Catheys Valley will experience negative consequences, as will the County as a whole.**

SFCS has a group of founding members with a track record of success. We plan to implement an excellent curriculum in a small school setting. As a public school, SFCS will be free and open to anyone.

The charter is inspired by the work of the Land and Legacy Project, which recognizes the unique value of the natural and cultural heritage of Catheys Valley. The Land and Legacy Project was created by Mariposa County residents and based at CVE. It was endorsed by MCUSD and the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors in 2007.

In order to give you a better sense of our project, I am including a recent press release, my letter to the school district, and our founding group biographies. I would be happy to attend the board meeting where a letter of support is discussed and answer any questions.

While the school district has expressed openness to the idea of a charter school, I am asking you for a letter of support because I think it is important that MCUSD, the Catheys Valley community, and all of Mariposa County know that the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors recognizes the value of a school in the Catheys Valley community. If you agree to write a letter of support, I respectfully request your letter by September 30.

I am repeating myself, but it bears repeating: a community without a school has no future. Please help give Catheys Valley a future.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jill Harry
President/Chair
Sierra Foothill Charter School

Enclosures
Press Release: Sierra Foothill Charter School in the Works

Date: for immediate release

Contact: Jill Harry - 209/374-3392 or Debra Salonen - 209/742-6793.

On May 12th, the residents of Catheys Valley were told by the Mariposa County Unified School District Board of Trustees that Catheys Valley Elementary would close. Since that announcement, a number of community members have joined together to investigate feasible alternatives for their children’s education, including the creation of a charter school, which they decided was the best option. They have begun the groundwork for creating Sierra Foothill Charter School.

“The closing of CVE has created an opportunity to open an excellent charter school that will benefit Catheys Valley, MCUSD, and the greater foothill area,” said Jill Harry, who heads the group. “We have an enthusiastic, dedicated and highly professional core group that is doing everything possible to make sure SFCS will be ready to open its doors in Fall 2012.”

Charter schools are public schools that are tuition-free and open to any student who wishes to attend. They differ from regular public schools in that each charter must spell out specific goals that set it apart from any school previously serving the area. Since SFCS will be a public school, the group is required to present a charter petition to the MCUSD Board of Trustees. They plan to do so this fall. MCUSD then has 30 days to hold a public hearing.

SFCS Chief Financial Officer, John Elliott said, “Our goal is to give students attending Sierra Foothill Charter a well-rounded education with an emphasis on science. We are drawing on the existing Land And Legacy Project, which recognizes the unique value of the local natural and cultural heritage of Catheys Valley.” The project, which was in its early stages of integration in Catheys Valley Elementary, was recognized by MCUSD and the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors in Spring 2007. “The Land and Legacy Project is visionary and we are thrilled to build on that foundation,” Elliott said.

“We need a school,” said Caroline Korn, a long time Catheys Valley resident and SFCS Founding Member. “A local school provides a place to come together not just for the students, but for all of the area’s residents; it is a community center.”
Brett Baumann, President of Catheys Valley Real Estate, Inc. and SFCS Board Member, points to data that shows a community without a school has lower property values. "One of the first questions someone looking to relocate to an area asks is, 'How are the schools?' Not having a school in a community affects local property owners' ability to sell their homes, but it's also bad for the school district because that means reduced property tax income."

Sierra Foothill Charter School has the potential of benefiting the fiscal health of MCUSD, which despite closing two schools is still facing budget issues. In addition to state budget cuts to education, MCUSD is dealing with the negative effects of declining enrollment. "We have spoken to the Superintendent about potential ways we could attract students and families back into the district to stop declining enrollment if we are approved as a charter," Harry said, "as well as ways we could contribute back to the district's bottom line—through a lease arrangement for the Catheys Valley Elementary facility, for instance. We look forward to a positive working relationship with MCUSD."

Start-up costs to open a charter school include legal and other professional fees. Sierra Foothill Charter intends to begin fund-raising and grant writing in the immediate future. "We have a lot to accomplish in a short time," Harry said. "And we're asking community members for their support and involvement."

Anyone interested in donating to this cause is asked to make checks out to Acorn Cooperative Preschool, which is acting as the group's temporary fiscal agent until SFCS non-profit status is approved by the IRS. Please write SFCS on the memo line, and mail to SFCS, PO Box 36, Catheys Valley, CA 95306. All meetings are open to the public. Dates and time will be posted on the bulletin board at the Catheys Valley Post Office, at the Mariposa County Library, and online at the group's website: www.sierrafoothillcharterschool.org.
August 18, 2011

Jill Harry
President/Chair
Sierra Foothill Charter School
PO Box 36
Catheys Valley, CA 95306

Superintendent Aaron Rosander
Board of Trustees
Mariposa County Unified School District
PO Box 8
Mariposa, CA 95338

Dear Superintendent Rosander and Trustees,

As a result of the closing of Catheys Valley Elementary (CVE), I am working with a group of Mariposa County residents to form Sierra Foothill Charter School (SFCS) in Catheys Valley, initially serving grades K-8 with a five year plan to expand to TK - 12. We would like to form a cooperative, positive relationship with MCUSD.

We understand that closing CVE was a difficult decision and something the district felt it had to do to preserve the fiscal solvency of the district as a whole. Please know that likewise, we are working to open a charter school because we feel we must. It is imperative to the Catheys Valley community to have a school for these reasons:

- In these economic times, many of our local parents cannot afford to drive their children to schools outside their community and carpooling is not always an option given car seating limitations. Driving is costly and too much of a hardship. This is especially true for the 39% of the CVE student population considered socioeconomically disadvantaged. (Data from the 2009-10 CVE School Accountability Report Card (SARC).)

- Car rides and bus rides to other schools are too long, especially for the youngest students. For instance, the longest bus ride for a former student of Catheys Valley Elementary to and from MES will be one hour and fifteen minutes in the morning and one hour and thirty-eight minutes in the afternoon according to the MCUSD 2011-12 published bus schedule. Excessive time on the road is not productive time.

- A local school provides a place to come together not just for the students, but for all of the area’s residents; it is a community center.

- A community without a school has lower property values for all property owners. Properties become more difficult to sell as fewer buyers are interested in moving into a community without a school. Not only is this bad for local property
owners, but it is bad for the school district, as it means reduced property tax income.

Looking on the positive side, we believe the closing of CVE has created an opportunity to open an excellent charter school focused on college preparation that will benefit Catheys Valley, MCUSD, and the greater foothill area. Some of the benefits to MCUSD include:

- While a community with a school has higher property values, a community with an excellent college prep charter school will attract more families to move into the community, further increasing property tax revenues for the MCUSD. This is especially true for Catheys Valley given its proximity to UC Merced, a campus that is providing educational opportunity to the San Joaquin valley and attracting new members to the community. UC Merced has grown to over 5,000 students since 2005 and plans to grow annually to an eventual student population of 25,000. (Looking at the alternative, we know UC Merced has already lost some staff, and Catheys Valley some residents, due to not having the type of college prep schools UC Merced faculty require for their children.)

- SFCS will provide a college preparatory education to socioeconomically disadvantaged student populations. District-wide, this will increase the percentage of high school graduates ready for a 4-year university. (According to its 2009-10 SARC, only 36% of students graduating from Mariposa High School completed all courses required for University of California or California State University Admission. SFCS’s goal is 100% qualified and ready.)

- SFCS will provide a science and sustainability focus, along with math, language, music and other arts, and physical education to create a well-rounded education. We are establishing partnerships with UC Merced in the areas of natural science education, college preparedness, and continuing education for our teachers. This will benefit MCUSD by attracting new families to the area who value and support education and by establishing programs that other teachers and schools in the district can choose to participate in.

- There are many families in the district who choose for their children to go to schools outside of the district not for economic reasons, but because they feel that the district is unable to fulfill their academic expectations. SFCS’s college prep focus will attract those families back into the district, increasing enrollment in a district suffering from declining enrollment.

- Though ADA funds will follow enrolled SFCS students to SFCS, the district will have opportunities to recapture a portion of those ADA funds. Two ways would be through SFCS paying lease to MCUSD for the use of the CVE campus and encroachment fees for special education services to students. The district would be able to recapture additional revenue if SFCS chose to contract with the
district for services such as payroll, kitchen, and back office support.

- There is evidence suggesting that charter schools have a positive ripple effect on conventional public schools in the district (higher annual test, math, and reading scores). See the attached document.

- Charter schools tend to be more fiscally efficient. Our small size will force us to explore creative solutions to save money, practices which we would share with the district.

Our charter is inspired by work and the Land and Legacy Project, which recognizes the unique value of the local natural and cultural heritage of Catheys Valley. The Land and Legacy Project was created by Mariposa County residents and based at Catheys Valley Elementary. It was endorsed by the Mariposa County Unified School District and Mariposa County Board of Supervisors in 2007.

SFCS has a group of founding members with a track record of success as you will see from the enclosed biography document. We are dedicated to creating SFCS. Please have no doubt that we will succeed. We plan to present our charter petition to the board at its regular October meeting. Please let me know the deadline for submitting the petition in order to have it on the agenda.

We look forward to having a positive relationship with the district as we work to form SFCS.

Sincerely,

Jill Harry

Enclosures
Founding Group
The Sierra Foothill Charter School is founded by a diverse group of Mariposa County residents, local business owners, families with children in Catheys Valley and the greater Mariposa County area, as well as faculty and staff of the nearby University of California, Merced. We have a track record of success in our professional lives, as well as in serving children, families and our community. Our history of achievement and our ability to partner with outside experts demonstrates our capacity to open and smoothly operate a charter school.

Founders involved in these efforts include:

Jill Harry, Board Chair, President
BA English, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Served in various editorial positions in publishing companies, e.g. Executive Editor at Addison-Wesley/Prentice Hall PTR, Pearson Technology Group; Mariposa County Unified School District Substitute Teacher; Freelance Consultant for the Mariposa County Local Child Care Planning Council; Volunteer work includes Mariposa Elementary Student Council Leader, Mariposa Elementary Parent Club PR Chair, American Youth Soccer Organization, Under 10 and Under 8 coach, Secretary, Catheys Valley Parent Teacher Improvement Club, Mariposa County First 5 Commissioner, Parent Representative, Mariposa County Health Department Tobacco Education Coalition Member, Mariposa County Unified School District Strategic Plan Committee Member, Co-founder, Board President, Secretary, and Preschool Administrator for the Catheys Valley Preschool; Successful grant writer since 2006, winning 8 grants for school initiatives, for a total of $96,800; Attended management training seminars in effective communication, presentation skills, conflict management, team building, and interviewing techniques.

Carolin Frank, Board Vice-Chair
Assistant Professor of Microbiology and Genomics at UC Merced; BS/MS in Biotechnology Engineering at Uppsala University, Sweden and École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, France; PhD in Biology/Bioinformatics at Uppsala University; Swedish Research Council Fellow at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland; Mentors students in genome analysis though a collaboration with the Department of Energy; Has served on numerous university committees, including the UC Merced Graduate Research Council; Successful grant writer.

John Elliott, Board Member, Chief Financial Officer
Director, Energy and Sustainability at UC Merced; BS in Civil and Environmental
Engineering from Stanford; MA in Energy and Resources, UC Berkeley; Responsible for shaping and implementing UC Merced’s sustainability strategy, which includes a "Triple-Zero" commitment to zero net energy, zero landfill waste, and climate neutrality by 2020; Successful grant writer, ($1.7 million in grant funding to support campus initiatives); Previous positions in environmental and energy efficiency consulting, including Vice President of Professional Services at an energy software company; Serves on the board of a local youth organization in Mariposa.

**Naoko Kada, Board Member**
Fulbright scholar; PhD in International Affairs, UC San Diego; MA in International Relations, and BA in Latin American Studies, University of Tokyo; Served in various positions, including Managing Editor and Executive Editor for the *Journal of Environment and Development*; Research Fellow at International Community Foundation; Research and publications in English, Japanese and Spanish; Lecturer at San Diego State University and UC Merced; Kiwanis Preschool Board Vice President; Mariposa Elementary School Parent Club Enrichment Programs Co-Chair; Organizes challenging hikes in the Sierras with community members.

**Brett Baumann, Board Member**
President, Catheys Valley Real Estate, Inc; Owner/Broker of 2 real estate offices in Mariposa County—Catheys Valley Real Estate and Mariposa Homes & Land Co, the top performing real estate sales company in Mariposa County from 2006 to present; Previous Director of Mariposa County Board of Realtor’s; Served in various managerial positions including an airport car rental operation of up to 85 employees; Previous head coach of the Catheys Valley T-Ball and Coach Pitch teams, currently Mariposa Little League Coach.

**Kori Smith, Vice-President**
Realtor, 1997-2011; Real estate sales associate at Catheys Valley Real Estate; President, Mariposa County Board of Realtors in 2010; Director, Mariposa County Board of Realtors; International Rotarian service club member from 2006-2010; Active participant in child’s school activities, fundraisers, and sporting events.

**Lara Kueppers, Secretary**
Assistant Professor of Climate and Ecosystem Science, UC Merced School of Natural Sciences and Sierra Nevada Research Institute, since 2006; PhD UC Berkeley, BS and MS Stanford University; Faculty lead for the Earth Systems Science major; Department of Energy funded research program ($680k per year 2008-present); Additional experience includes concert production, meeting facilitation, and student mentoring.

**Ruth A. Smiley, Assistant Treasurer**
Secretary and Treasurer of Blue Oak Ayurveda, holistic healthcare business; Eight years experience as a bookkeeper and office manager as Treasurer of Salonen Enterprises, Incorporated; Five years experience mentoring intern students at the California College of Ayurveda; 16 years as an active practitioner of the healing arts, specializing in diet and balanced living; Teaches African dance in Mariposa.
David Ardell
Assistant Professor of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology at UC Merced; BS Harvard University; PhD Stanford University; Chair of Educational Policy for UC Merced's newly WASC-accredited Quantitative and Systems Biology graduate program; Previous experience includes Director of Marketing for the non-profit consultancy firm Pallotta and Associates, and Assistant Professor at Uppsala University, Sweden; Harvard college interviewer for high school seniors from the Sierra Foothills and Central Valley; Teaches African drumming in Mariposa.

Denisha Dawson
Professor of Chemistry at Merced College; Ph.D. in Chemistry at U.C. Berkeley; BA in Chemistry at U.C. Santa Cruz; 15 years experience as a community college instructor, as well as one year as a K-12 substitute teacher.

Caroline Wenger Korn
Grew up on a ranch in Catheys Valley; BA in Biology, California State University, Fresno; MA in Education, University of San Francisco; Previous experience includes teaching middle school life science, journalism and teaching in an exemplary elementary Bilingual Education program; Led saving and restoration of the Catheys Valley 1879 schoolhouse; Past President, current Historian and Board Member of Catheys Valley Historical Society; Volunteer teacher, Land and Legacy Learning Garden project, Catheys Valley Elementary.

Debra Salonen
Published author of 30 books, translated to seven languages; BA and MS in Geography and History, South Dakota State University; Co-founded Salonen Construction, a successful contracting company that built a number of homes in the Catheys Valley area; Secretary of Salonen Enterprises, Inc; Previous experience includes Public Relations Liaison for the Merced College Preschool, feature writer and assistant Lifestyle editor of the Merced Sun-Star, Catheys Valley Preschool Board member.

Additional Volunteers:

Benoit Dayrat
Assistant Professor of biology at UC Merced; Ph.D. in Evolutionary Biology, University of Paris, France; BS in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, France; teaches Introductory Biology, Human Anatomy, and Flora of California (the latter course includes many field trips in the foothills from the Catheys Valley area); Has a research lab focusing on biodiversity exploration from the Sierra Nevada as well as South East Asia; Has served on numerous university committees (including school-wide curriculum committees and the campus-wide Undergraduate Council); Successful grant writer ($860K from the National Science Foundation since 2008).
Stephanie Evans
Educator; California Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, with CLAD and
Supplemental 9th grade Literature Certification, CSU Monterey Bay, 1998; BA in
Comparative Literature, 1992; long and short term teaching contracts in Mariposa and
Madera counties, 2004-2006; Acorn Preschool Board of Directors Secretary, 2005; Peace
Corps Education Volunteer and Trainer 1999-2001; Teacher at International School in
Mongolia 2002-2003; Stage Manager for Mariposa Playhouse’s production of “A
Midsummer Night’s Dream” 2011; Home School mom of three boys residing in Catheys
Valley.

Donna Fredrickson
BS Ag and Managerial Economics, UC Davis. Principal Investment Advisor, Vulcan
Securities, specializing in Kaiser Permanente individual retirees. Current and past
volunteer work includes: Treasurer, St. Paul’s Elementary PTF; classroom parent, both
St. Paul’s and Catheys Valley Elementary; co-founder, Board Vice President, and
Treasurer, Catheys Valley Preschool; baseball and softball snack and ride coordinator;
American Youth Soccer Organization Under 6 coach; instrumental in securing grant
funding for Catheys Valley Park playground equipment; co-founder Catheys Valley
Women’s Book Club.

Jeffrey W. Gilger
Professor, UC Merced. PhD Developmental Psychology & Behavioral Genetics; MS in
Clinical Child-School Psychology. Specializes in the etiology of atypical neuro-biological
development, such as learning disorders and twice exceptionailities, and LD definitions.
Former director of Human Biology Program (KU), department chair in Child
Development (Cal State LA), and Associate Dean for Research (College of Education,
Purdue). Participant in a number of national and international research, learning and
engagement projects. He has been a reviewer for over 40 journals and publishers in the
areas of education, psychology and medicine, and has served on the Advisory, Editorial
and/or Review Boards for national and international grant agencies, publications and
professional organizations.

Mónica Medina
Associate professor of biology and founding faculty at UC Merced; Ph.D. in Marine
Biology and Fisheries, University of Miami; BS in Biology Universidad de Los Andes,
Bogotá, Colombia; Teaches Cell Biology, Evolution and Development, Astrobiology;
Has a research lab focusing on coral reef science that includes several graduate students
and postdocs; Recipient of prestigious awards such as the US Presidential Early Career
Award for Science and Engineering and the Guggenheim fellowship; Involved in science
outreach to the general public.

Jim Newberry
MA in Psychology from Western Institute for Social Research, and a MA in Special
Education from Chapman University. BA in Sociology from California State University,
Fullerton. Currently employed as a Marriage and Family Therapist Intern at the Native
American Healing Center (Miwu-Mati) in Mariposa. Recently retired from a 24-year
career in Special Education with the Merced County Office of Education, Special Education Department. Has lived in Catheys Valley 26 years, two children who attended Catheys Valley Elementary School and other MCUSD schools, K through 12.

**Tiffany Newberry**  
Marie Jacobsen

From: Kevin Cann
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2011 9:43 AM
To: Karen Smith; Marie Jacobsen; Tracy Gauthier
Subject: Fwd: Charter School

Please make copies of this for the board ASAP & bring them in.

Thanks

Kevin Cann

Mariposa County Supervisor
5100 Bullion St.
Mariposa, CA 95338
209-966-3222 office
209-617-1402 mobile
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Aaron Rosander" <ARosander@mariposa.k12.ca.us>
Date: September 20, 2011 9:33:28 AM PDT
To: "Jim Allen" <jallen@mariposasounty.org>, "Kevin Cann"
<kcan@mariposasounty.org>
Subject: Charter School

Good Morning,

I planned to attend your meeting, but an issue has surfaced in MCUSD which requires my immediate attention. I apologize. I also apologize for sending this email solely to Kevin and Jim, as I did not have ready email access with such limited personal time to connect with all other supervisors.

Please note that as Superintendent of MCUSD/MCOE I am currently neutral on the charter school proposal emanating from Catheys Valley. As you know, this past spring MCUSD closed Catheys Valley School out of sheer fiscal necessity. This closure was initiated to mitigate against state imposed budget cuts and continued declining enrollment. And, while everyone associated with MCUSD was saddened to have been forced to close Catheys Valley school, it’s important to note that we did so out of necessity, and with no ill will or malice to the community of Catheys Valley.

I am aware that the community of Catheys Valley would very much like to have a
school in the heart of their own small community. And, while I could argue that MCUSD’s outstanding school, Mariposa Elementary is Catheys Valley’s school, I understand Catheys Valley’s desire, along with that of a very able charter school committee, to reinstate a school in their immediate area. While sensitive to this desire, I also remain cognizant that MCUSD/COE must guard against overstretching our resources in any manner, including providing oversight of a charter school, as required by Education Code. To this end, until my office and the Board of Trustees has received and analyzed this charter, it is difficult to make specific comments or to take a definitive position.

The State of California has seen to it that charter schools be given opportunity to flourish. And, while I am obligated to follow the lead of CDE and to work in compliance with the law (Education Code) I must be vigilant in my efforts to ensure that the emergence of a charter school in our county does not serve to further strain already limited and dwindling resources. As you may know, the County Office of Education is required to provide a certain level of oversight for charter schools, including Special Education services, for those charters that reside in a given county. With all of this in mind, it is my very obligation to give the best possible educational services for students enrolled in Mariposa County Unified School District. Exactly how the charter fits into these MCUSD obligations and the affect that the charter will have on MCUSD enrollment and revenue is currently unknown. It is for this reason that I await to receive the charter proposal before making any further comment.

Sincerely,

Aaron N. Rosander, Superintendent of Schools
Mariposa County Office of Education
Mariposa County Unified School District
5082 Old Highway North ~ P.O. Box 8
Mariposa, CA 95338
(209) 742-0250

9/20/2011
Board of Supervisors Meeting - 9/20/2011

My name is Brett Baumann and I am here to today to ask the Board to support our CV community by writing a letter of support for our Sierra Foothill Charter School.

Our CV community has been through a lot over the past couple of years and has been somewhat torn apart. Now our school has been closed!

I am seeing our community come together for a common cause ... our kids and our hope of a new School.

I have been selling real estate in CV for over 20 years and I love our community. When we show new clients property in CV, the first question that families ask is, “where is the school? How is your school?” Now we have to tell them our CV School has been closed and that their kids have to be bused to Mariposa.

We are losing good families from our community because of this situation. Many parents are taking their kids out of the Mariposa School District and driving their kids to Merced!

I was at the School closure meeting and I will never forget that day! I vowed to do whatever I could to help bring a school back to CV! So I am here today to ask you for your support for our CV community and our Sierra Foothill Charter School! Thank you!

Sincerely,

Brett Baumann
Local Business Owner
Father/Coach
To: Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

        Jim Allen, Chair
        Janet Bibby, Co-Chair
        Lee Stetson
        Lyle Turpin
        Kevin Cann

RE: Sierra Foothill Charter School

Dear Board of Supervisors,

        I am writing to you today to request that you support our community’s efforts to open a charter school in Catheys Valley. There are so many things that are not considered and consequences that are not obvious when decisions are made to send our children to another school district.

        Speaking from my own experience as a child who lived in a rural area but was required to commute on a bus to a school in a city half an hour away, I can say that it is a waste of time and energy for our children. The commute is never as quick or convenient as predicted and the time spent on the bus drains our children physically and emotionally before they even get to school. All the extracurricular activities required a commute that was too far for my family to afford for me to participate and too far for my family to attend. It was disappointing to me that even if the bus would take me to the activity – my family and friends were not able to go. On days that I became ill, I did not have a family member or neighbor who could pick me up from school. I was left in the nurse’s office until the bus took me home in the afternoon.

        I know there are many communities that must endure sending their kids to another school district, but I believe that any proud community such as ours can make a difference by standing up to the challenge and starting a charter school that is better for the children, their family and their community. Please write a strong and convincing letter of support to the School Superintendent and the Mariposa County Unified School District Board and let our community continue to be involved and supportive of our children’s future.

Sincerely,

Charli McCord - Cateys Valley Resident and Business Owner
To: Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
   Jim Allen, Chair
   Janet Bibby, Co-Chair
   Lee Stetson
   Lyle Turpin
   Kevin Cann

RE: Sierra Foothill Charter School

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to you today to request that you support our efforts to open a charter school in Caheys Valley.

One of the most impressive and important things about our community is the participation of all of those in our community – parents, families, friends, neighbors and local businesses. The schools are the corner stone of this involvement and allow us all to participate, encourage and support our children in their endeavors.

If we do not have our own school we will undermine and un-intentionally discourage this participation and support. The change of school district will have a major affect on our ability to provide local support, business involvement and community interaction with our kids and their activities.

It would be different if we had no choice, but we do have a choice! We are a small but proud community and we want to continue putting our time and effort into our kids and their future. Please join our efforts for Sierra Foothill Charter School and send a letter of support to the School Superintendent and the Mariposa Unified School District.

Sincerely,

Scott Bening
Catheys Valley Resident
Hi Marjorie,

We cannot attend today's Board of Supervisor's meeting. If there is still time, can you please include our letters to the supervisors in the public record and distribute them as necessary.

Thank you,
Jeanie and David Hinds

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: David and Jeanie Hinds <dnjhinds@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Sep 20, 2011 at 7:42 AM
Subject: Support for Charter School
To: "lturpin@mariposacounty.org" <lturpin@mariposacounty.org>

Dear Supervisor Turpin,

We are writing to express our support for the Sierra Foothill Charter School. We live in Hornitos and have two young children who will be entering elementary school in the next few years. We believe it is important for our local community to have a school, which often serves as a community center—this is especially important in a rural community like ours to have a place for children and residents to build community bonds. We are also concerned that travel to Mariposa Elementary School places an undue burden on children in our community.

Hours spent on a school bus mean less time is available for homework, rest, and play (through which children also learn). We believe that this additional time spent being "cooped up" on a bus can have a cumulative negative effect in the classroom—such as more frequent disruptions and a reduced ability to focus and learn.

We support having a local option for education in our community and Mariposa County as a whole. We urge you express your support for the Sierra Foothill Charter School as well.

Sincerely,
Jeanie and David Hinds
Margie Williams

From: Josh and Steph Evans [stephandjosh@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2011 9:47 PM
To: Margie Williams
Subject: A School in Catheys Valley

Please include the following in the public record and have them distributed to all Board of Supervisors for the Charter School Agenda for the meeting on 9/20/2011.

I would like the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors to sign a letter of support for Sierra Foothill Charter School because Cathey Valley has lost its center. I want a small, community based school that is not so far away. The bus ride is too long and the community is disjointed.

I thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration.

Stephanie Evans
Catheys Valley
Mother of 3

9/20/2011
Margie Williams

From: Angelina Brouillette [angelinabr2003@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2011 7:43 PM
To: Margie Williams
Subject: Sierra Foothill Charter

Hello, Marjorie.

My name is Angelina Brouillette. I have a 5 year old child, Wyatt, who currently attends Woodland Elementary School. I would ask that my email comments be included in the public record and be distributed to all Board of Supervisors for the Charter School agenda item on Tuesday, September 20th. While I am currently a resident of Mariposa proper, I would like to submit my support for Sierra Foothill Charter school in Cathey's Valley. As a parent of an elementary school aged child, I completely empathize with the situation the residents of Catheys Valley find themselves in with the recent closure of their school. While I understand reasons of not wanting young children to have to ride the bus from Catheys Valley to Mariposa and having a vacant school site being a draw for vandalism, I think more important is that our county needs more options for good quality education. I personally know of two families which reside in Catheys Valley who now elect to send their children to school in Merced because of their limited options.

I hope that you seriously consider supporting the initiative to launch a charter school in Catheys Valley. The program that is being considered for development appears to be a very solid and positive addition to our community in a time when we absolutely need to provide options for quality education in our state. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Angelina Brouillette
Margie Williams

From: Debra Salonen [salcon@sti.net]
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2011 4:06 PM
To: Margie Williams
Subject: in support of Sierra Foothill Charter School

Marjorie,
I'm not certain I will be able to attend the meeting tomorrow, Sept. 15, but I'd like my comments to be included in the public record and be distributed to all of the Board of Supervisors prior to our agenda item, if possible. Thank you.

Esteemed Supervisors,

I am writing to request your support for Sierra Foothill Charter School.

My husband and I moved to Catheys Valley twenty-two years ago. We bought a five-acre parcel, built a house and enrolled our two children at Catheys Valley Elementary. We didn't truly understand at the time how important the school was to our community. But as we became involved in the P.T.I.C. and after-school activities like 4-H, Girl Scouts, and sports, we learned that the school was the heart and soul--the hub--of our community. Fundraisers like the Sweetheart Dinner brought together not only parents of the children enrolled there, but grandparents, uncles, aunts, and residents who supported the school because they recognized how important it was to the community.

We were extremely saddened and distressed to learn the Mariposa County Unified School District was closing Catheys Valley Elementary. Two of my grandchildren would have been enrolled in CVE this fall, and my youngest granddaughter attends Catheys Valley Preschool, which was opened on the school site two years ago. The children of Catheys Valley should be able to wake up in the morning and go to school--not be forced to board a bus for a long, noisy and--at certain times of the year--hazardous drive to Mariposa. Or, if parents don't want their five-year old mingling with high school-age children on the bus, they have to drive to and from Mariposa twice a day. The parent of an elementary-age child in Catheys Valley today has very little incentive to stay in Mariposa County--and that reality effects you as County Supervisors and every citizen, county-wide.

Luckily, we have a chance to turn this negative into something very, very positive. Thanks to a dedicated group of individuals who have donated countless hours--and generous monetary gifts--we have a real shot at making Sierra Foothill Charter School a reality. Opening a charter school is no easy task. It takes a great deal of time, effort, donations and community support. As a member of the Founders Group and as a citizen of Mariposa County, I ask for your support. I truly believe that a community without a school has no future. Please help us secure the future of Catheys Valley by adding your support to this effort.

Debra Salonen
4989 Knoll Lane, Catheys Valley, CA
209.742.6793

9/19/2011
Margie Williams

From: Gregg Baumann [thelakedoctors@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, September 18, 2011 6:56 PM
To: Margie Williams

Subject: Catheys Valley Charter School

Dear Mariposa County Board of Supervisors,

I am sorry that I cannot be in attendance at the Tuesday meeting while this issue regarding the Catheys Valley Charter School is being discussed. In fact, I have not gone to any of their other local meetings concerning this issue, but I feel it is high time that everyone in this little family community stand up to the school board and say "that is enough!"

Taking our little school away ... is a terrible thing to do to this community! My wife & I sent all 4 of our kids through our little school here in CV. We also enjoyed supporting our children through all of the Mariposa County schools. We had great experiences while attending the Middle School and also the High School. So when we heard that the District was cutting our school out of their budget, we could not believe it!

By losing our school, we are losing our educational roots here in CV!

By losing our school, they have created real hardships on our parents!

By losing our school, we all lose a sense of community ... of family!

Please consider this message and make it a matter of public record! We are extremely disappointed in our school district! We will do everything in our power to see to it that there is some sort of elementary school for our grandchildren and future residents of Catheys Valley!

Sincerely,

Gregg Baumann

The LAKE DOCTORS of California
Dear Ms. Marjorie Williams,

Please include the following comments in the public record and distribute them to all Board of Supervisors under the Charter School agenda item on 9/20.

When my family moved to Mariposa County in 2007, the last thing on my mind was public education. That attitude changed in 2009 when our first son was born and it continues to change: we're expecting again this winter.

There are many things I love about living in Mariposa, including the small-town ambiance and rural setting. There are also many things I'd opt to improve upon if given the opportunity. One of those improvements would be to add variety to the educational opportunities for the children of this county. This is not to say that Mariposa County Unified School District is lacking in any specific way, only that as the population expands, so too should the choices for the members of that population.

As the Board of Supervisors, your official job is to enact ordinances/ resolutions, determine county policy, adopt an annual budget, and fix salaries. It is your unofficial job to represent the needs of the people, and by writing a letter of support for the Sierra Foothill Charter School, you are demonstrating your interest in doing just that. By working together, this community can become even more promising than it already is; by offering educational options to the next generation of Mariposans, we will be giving our residents the best possible gift... the gift of the future.

Thank you. Sarah Steele
Dear Marjorie Williams, and the entire Mariposa County Board of Directors,

I have attached here a letter for your perusal. Please see the attached pdf file, (also attached Word doc) I would like to share my ideas as to why I believe the Sierra Foothill Charter School would be a definite benefit to Mariposa County.

PLEASE INCLUDE THE LETTER IN YOUR TUESDAY, 9/20 BOARD MEETING PUBLIC RECORD INFORMATION.

Thanks in advance for your thoughtful consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Wendy Davis
Sunday, September 18, 2011

Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
5100 Bullion Street
Mariposa, CA 95338

Dear Mariposa County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in regards to the Sierra Foothill Charter School’s request for a letter of recommendation to the Mariposa County School Board. I heartily endorse that the county should be behind the proposed charter school. My reasons are many:

My first reason is that our county’s economic health is based on the financial health of its population and its incoming tax dollars. I do agree that Catheys Valley needs a school to maintain it community. But MY reasoning is we need to entice faculty/staff of the University of Merced to want to come live in Catheys Valley!! The growth of the college is poised to take off, and Mariposa County really needs to be able to offer quality living in a nearby community for these growing families. This will raise our tax base and GROW OUR COMMUNITY!!! It will increase total head count in Mariposa County Schools. (And give a few more teachers jobs and maybe lower class sizes in our local Mariposa schools to boot.)

As a parent with two kids in Woodland Elementary School, most likely, we would not be driving to Catheys Valley to attend school—for the very reason they do not want to drive here to go to school. It is just too far. But the idea does intrigue me. We may be on that list of potential students in the future if the staff and curriculum are inspired, the class sizes are more reasonable, and the program falls in to place.

So, please consider this a real benefit to our county. It brings back students who have left and also beckons NEW families to move to Cathay’s Valley and in turn helps our county’s coffers grow. It really is a win-win situation.

Sincerely,

Wendy Davis
5797 Darrah Road
Mariposa, CA 95338
Dear Margorie William,
Please include this email and following comments in the public record and distribute it to all the Board of Supervisors for the Sierra Foothill Charter School agenda item on Sept. 20, 2011.

thank you,
Marci Jones Messick

To The Mariposa Board of Supervisors:

I am a Midpines resident and currently homeschool my two children through the Mountain Homeschool Charter in Madera County. I strongly urge you to recommend School Superintendent Rosander and the Mariposa County Unified School District Board to adopt the Sierra Foothill Charter School.

You have no doubt received many letters from Catheys Valley residents about why a school in their community will be beneficial, but I would like to add another perspective of the potential this school has. As I stated above, I currently homeschool my children outside Mariposa County, because it does not fit the educational needs of my children. SFCS has me excited about the possibility of returning to the MCUSD system. The SFCS mission statement is one that mirrors the goals and aspirations we currently have for our children and is why we are homeschooling. If SFCS succeeds in becoming a school, we would be very interested in becoming involved and enrolled. The current schools in this county do not offer a science and global community based curriculum whereas, SFCS will. SFCS will not only provide a school to a community that has lost one, but will also provide a service that currently is not being offered. A school of this caliber has the potential of not only retaining residents, but attracting them as well. Parents are looking for innovative schools and SFCS is striving to be just that. Once again, I urge you to recommend the adoption of the SFCS.

thank you,
Marci Jones Messick

9/19/2011