**Introduction:**

Waldorf education can be found in countries across the globe and is the fastest growing independent school movement in the world. Syringa Mountain School, the first Waldorf inspired charter school in Idaho, and the first school of choice in the Wood River Valley, is the newest school to join the more than 50 Waldorf inspired charter schools across the US. The Waldorf method of education offers an academically rigorous curriculum presented in a developmentally appropriate and arts-integrated context. This holistic, balanced approach has been shown to produce better academic results. In fact, Waldorf educated students have been found to equal or surpass their peers on studied parameters such as math, science and reading achievement. Equally imperative are the observed but less easily documented cognitive capacities such as emotional intelligence, social interaction, flexibility and tenacity that these students exhibit.

**Mission: Cultivating the Head, Heart and Hand.**

Syringa Mountain School offers Waldorf-inspired, liberal arts and arts-integrated education, incorporating sustainable living practices and experiential learning in a K-8 public school setting. Each child will impart meaning and direction to their lives, through cultivating their intellectual, physical, emotional, social and creative capacities in natural learning environments. Through a supportive community of peers, parents and teachers, each child will become a confident, self-directed and engaged learner, invested in his/her own education.

**Vision**

Syringa Mountain School provides a rigorous integrated educational program through a whole-child approach to learning. By integrating traditional Waldorf methods and curriculum with Idaho State Standards, children will emerge from Syringa Mountain School with a life-long passion for learning, well prepared for the transition into other academic programs, as creative thinkers, engaged citizens with a strong work ethic, and prepared to become stewards of the earth and its many diverse communities.

Syringa Mountain School will embrace the key aspects of the local sustainability movement, providing students and their families with an increased connection to their local environment. By utilizing the rich community resources of Blaine County and through ongoing cultivation and development of the school’s garden and farm, all children will be enabled to deepen their connection with the earth, self and community.

As a result of attending Syringa Mountain School, students will demonstrate

* Reverence and stewardship for self, others and the earth.
* Creative and imaginative thinking.
* Critical thinking and good judgment.
* Literacy.
* Responsibility and self reliance.
* Lifelong learning.

**How we define student and school success.**

Syringa Mountain School will provide an exceptional, time-tested and research-based, educational experience for students. By supporting the local need for Waldorf methods and sustainability in a public school setting, the school will inspire and educate families in our area. Our SMS Strategic Plan 2014-17, is based on how we define success.

* **GOAL 1: Achieve a three star rating or higher through the Idaho State Department of Education Statewide Accountability Rating System.**
* **GOAL 2: Educate students able to compete academically with their public education counterparts**. By the end of 8th grade, SMS students attending SMS for three years or more will equal or surpass their counterparts as measured by State assessments.
* **GOAL 3: Institute a Thriving and Complete Waldorf-Inspired Program (pre-K - 8):** Ensure that all Waldorf-inspired programs are in place and thriving, and that all teachers are Waldorf-trained.
* **GOAL 4: Model Financial Stability**: Create the conditions for a productive and stable revenue flow to the school, ensure that teachers and staff are fairly compensated, all programs are properly funded, and a school campus is affordably financed.
* **GOAL 5:** **Foster Effective Communication within our School Community**: Develop systems and mechanisms to enhance communication within the school community.
* **GOAL 6: Nurture an Engaged, Waldorf-Inspired Community Committed to Sustainable Volunteerism**: Organize and promote the active participation and collaboration of parents and others in a way that taps but does not exhaust all parents in the community.
* **GOAL 7: Design and Build a Beautiful, Eco-Friendly Campus**: Ensure that the new campus is built to enhance and teach about sustainability, and that it contains all the spaces needed to advance a vibrant, Waldorf-inspired curriculum.
* **GOAL 8: Involve SMS within the Blaine County Community**: Reach out to the broader community to 1) enhance the school's image, 2) broaden its funding base, and 3) increase mutually beneficial collaborations and partnerships, 4) expand the uses of the school campus making it available to community groups and schools and 5) educate county residents about the merits of Waldorf-inspired education, 6) expand Waldorf inspired after school and summer programs to all students, not just those attending SMS.
* **GOAL 9: Create a Biodynamic Farm and Wilderness Education Program**: Develop a farm-based curriculum that teaches the principles of biodynamic farming, and that uses the school campus and surrounding areas for hands-on farming and wilderness skills experiences for all students.
* **GOAL 10: Inspire** children to live engaged and successful lives, prepared to meet the demands of their world as educated and responsible human beings.

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* **GOAL 1: Achieve a three star rating or higher through the Idaho State Department of Education Statewide Accountability Rating System.**

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* **GOAL 2: Educate students able to compete academically with their public education counterparts**.

**Strategy 2.1:** By the end of 8th grade, SMS students who have attending SMS three years or more will equal or surpass their counterparts as measured by State assessments.

**Action 2.1.1:** Staff will track student performance data as it relates to the SMS curriculum and

the appropriate grade counterparts annually.

**Action 2.1.2:** Staff will analyze and adjust curriculum and instruction annually based on a variety of student performance data.

**Strategy2.2:** SMS students will utilize technology enhanced assessment tools as used on the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

**Action 2.2.1:** Purchase and equip one classroom of wireless enabled Chromebooks year one, purchasing additional appropriate devices each year as subsequent grades are added.

**Action 2.2.2:** Provide professional development for staff on Chromebooks, the platform the students will use for the state assessments.

**Action 2.2.3:** Integrate technology tools and keyboarding into the school curriculum to assure students are competent to take the state assessments.

**Action** **2.2.4**: Integrate SBA assessment tasks into the 3, 4, and 5 grade curriculum so students have practice prior to taking the state assessments.

**Action 2.2.5:** Prepare students for the SBA by teaching the expected navigation tools:

moving between two or more screens, operating spreadsheets and calculators, manipulating virtual objects such as geometric constructions, and editing electronic text

**Action 2.2.6:** Utilize the reference [Recommended Digital Literacy and Technology Skills (pdf)](http://commoncore.fcoe.org/sites/commoncore.fcoe.org/files/resources/FCOE_TechSkills_Flowchart_2012.pdf) matrix published by the Fresno County Office of Education, that provides a baseline of technology tasks for our SMS students to learn.

**Action 2.2.7:** Experiment with using Chromebooks in the 3, 4, and 5 grade classroom as instructional tools in the delivery of Waldorf inspired curriculum.

**Action 2.2.8:** Monitor performance on state assessments: IRI, SBA and Science.

**Action 2.2.9:** Modify instruction and test preparation based on observations and data from SBA results.

**Narrative:** Traditional Waldorf schools do not use technology until third grade or even by middle school in an attempt to foster imagination, active learning, inquisitiveness, rich language exposure and to minimize the negative effects of media. Similarly, Waldorf schools have traditionally been independent schools, and as such, not required to participate in state standardized testing. SMS’s enrollment will include students from both the public and private school arenas. We anticipate that about a third of our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students will have never participated on computerized state assessments. It is critical to create learning experiences that will prepare our students to utilize the technology enhanced assessment tools on the state assessments as well as explore how and when technology can be used appropriately in a Waldorf inspired charter school.

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**GOAL 3: Institute a Thriving and Complete Waldorf-Inspired Program (pre-K - 8):**

**Strategy 3.1:** Ensure that all Waldorf-inspired programs are in place and thriving.

**Action 3.1.1:** Survey students, staff and parents systematically for perceptual data.

**Action 3.1.2:** Develop a Waldorf Inspired After school program initially for SMS Students, but over time for all community-wide students seeking a Waldorf education experience.

**Action 3.1.3:** Develop a Waldorf Inspired Summer Camp program initially for SMS Students, but over time for all community-wide students seeking a Waldorf education experience.

**Action 3.1.4:** Monitor waiting list and implement public relations strategies to maintain a healthy pool. **Action 3.1.5:** Investigate software systems that will document historical student narrative and data such as Mileposts.

**Action 3.1.6:** Provide professional development to specials teachers specific to their curriculum.

**Action 3.1.7:** Continue to pursue a state approved multi-age kindergarten program at SMS.

**Strategy 3.2:** Ensure all teachers are Waldorf certified within four years.

**Action 3.2.1:** Implement four year Waldorf Certification Training through Kentahten Teacher Training.

**Action 3.2.2:** Provide Waldorf certification training on site beginning June 2014 through collaboration with Kentahten Teacher Training to establish an Idaho satellite site.

**Action 3.2.3:** Send grade level teachers to one week intensive Waldorf training annually.

**Action 3.2.4:** Provide on-site Waldorf coaching at least two times during each school year.

**Action 3.2.5:** Utilize private donations initially to help fund professional development until public school funding can be secured and a portion directed toward ongoing professional development needs.

**Action 3.2.6:** Advertise our professional development and incorporate interested teachers from the states without Waldorf training opportunities: Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Washington.

**Strategy 3.3:** Implement the Extra Lesson methodology (special education, remediation).

**Action 3.3.1:** Create a Student Support Advocate position that integrates a more holistic student support system that incorporates special education, social work, and remediation services.

**Action 3.3.2:** Solicit grants and funding to provide in-depth professional development and coaching in the Extra Lesson methodology to the Student Support Advocate and staff, both on and off site.

**Strategy 3.4:** Implement parent education program.

**Action 3.4.1:** Provide regularly scheduled parenting education programs that include instruction in Waldorf curriculum as well as parenting strategies.

**Narrative:** It is customary for prospective Waldorf teachers to travel out of state to pursue their certification. This collaboration between the Kentahten Teacher Training Board and the Syringa Mountain School Board brings this learning methodology so well suited for the 21st century to beautiful Sun Valley. Sessions will include Waldorf pedagogy, alignment with common core standards, language arts and mathematics instruction in grades 1-5, the temperaments, child development, painting, singing, recorder, eurythmy, form drawing, and handwork. *Syringa Mountain School Teachers are required to hold both Idaho Teaching Certification as well as Waldorf Certification.* This four year program will ensure all present Syringa Mountain School staff achieve their Waldorf Certification.

Additionally, Syringa Mountain School Grade Level Teachers annually attend a week long, in-depth intensive training at Rudolf Steiner College, Sacramento, California. Teachers have the option to attend one of two tracks of professional development courses per grade: one track is for teachers with four years or more of Waldorf teaching experience and one track is for teachers new to the Waldorf philosophy (three or fewer years in a Waldorf classroom). This ensures the training is individualized and relevant.

As funding is received, our second priority is to provide specific Waldorf training for our student support coordinator, and our specials teachers-Music, Spanish, Handwork, Farm and Garden.

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**GOAL 4: Model Financial Stability.**

**Strategy 4.1:** Create the conditions for a productive and stable revenue flow to the school.

**Action 4.1.1:** Learn the state and federal funding landscape in year one.

**Action 4.1.2:** Set annual fundraising goal to address the gap between state and federal funding and quality Waldorf school programs.

**Action 4.1.3:** Hire part time development director in year one. Reassess viability and value of the position mid- year. Increase position if data indicates.

**Action 4.1.4:** As the school enrollment and subsequent funding grow, increase Business Manager Position from part time to full time.

**Action 4.1.5:** Actively recruit and maintain student waiting list to maximize state per pupil funding.

**Action 4.1.6:** Actively pursue all pertinent grants.

**Action 4.1.7:** Investigate, collaborate, advocate for and support changes in the Idaho funding formula and in Idaho Code that currently prohibit charter schools from accessing local funding.

**Strategy 4.2:** Ensure that teachers and staff are fairly compensated.

**Action 4.2.1:** Provide competitive salary schedule to attract the highest quality staff.

**Action 4.2.2:** SMS Board adopts a competitive, “one year only” teacher salary schedule and reassesses annually based on the school’s fiscal health.

**Strategy 4.3:** Ensure all programs are properly funded.

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**Strategy 4.4:** Ensure the school campus is affordably financed.

**Action 4.4.1:** Lease the facility with the option to buy.

**Action 4.4.2:** Leverage start-up funds, and pursue charter school specific financing opportunities.

**Action 4.4.3:** Establish capital campaign for purchase of school.

**Action 4.4.4:** Collaborate with the city to lease adjoin property for demonstration garden and natural play space.

**Strategy 4.5:** Provide the full staffing needed to deliver the promised Waldorf curriculum.

**Action 4.5.1:** SMS Board hires full time staff for grades positions, the school director, and the office administrator. All other school positions are hired on a part time basis and positions re-evaluated annually to determine if the school’s student growth coupled with fundraising activities justifies increased part time positions to meet the students’ needs.

**Strategy 4.6:** Create and implement a comprehensive development strategy to fill the gap between a quality Waldorf program and SDE funding.

**Action 4.6.1:** Implement a capital campaign to raise funds for completing the remodel of the present facility, and raise funds for purchasing the building.

**Action:** Implement annual school community fundraising goal and plan.

**Strategy 4.7:** Implement a strong Parent Council Organization to assist with governance and development.

**Action 4.7.1:** Create one or two signature SMS events that will raise significant funds for the ongoing operations costs of the school: Storytelling Festival, May Fair.

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**GOAL 5:** **Foster Effective Communication within our School Community**:

**Strategy 5.1:** Develop systems and mechanisms to enhance communication within the school community.

**Action 5.1.1:** Publish biweekly school newsletter, including regular updates from all programs: grades, kindergarten, specials, site, director, student support advocate, Parent Council, School Board.

**Action 5.1.2:** Publish and update student directory to facilitate carpooling and relationships.

**Action 5.1.3:** Conduct home visits at the start of each school year.

**Action 5.1.4:** Maintain website, Facebook and other social media sites with up to date information.

**Action 5.1.5:** Schedule staff meetings to ensure all staff meet monthly, grades teachers meet with specials teachers monthly, and Director and Student Support Advocate meet with each level teacher and specials teachers to monitor student success.

**Action 5.1.6:** Implement the Care Team.

**Action 5.1.7:** The Director will hold periodic informal coffees for the parent body to bring questions and concerns.

**Action 5.1.8:** Support the development of a thriving Parent Council.

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**GOAL 6: Nurture an Engaged, Waldorf-Inspired Community Committed to Sustainable Volunteerism**: **Strategy 6.1:** Organize and promote the active participation and collaboration of parents and others in a way that taps but does not exhaust all parents in the community.

**Action 6.1.1:** Solicit and acknowledge parent help.

**Action 6.1.2:** Parent Council establishes how parent volunteer hours will be tracked and oversees function.

**Action 6.1.3:** Support the development of a Parent Council.

**Action 6.1.4:** Hold community wide events to showcase parents and students learning and efforts. Grandparent Day, May Fair.

**Action 6.1.5:** Facilitate parent school visits to enlist their help.

**Strategy 6.2:** Mentor other start up schools aspiring to create a public Waldorf inspired school.

**Action 6.2.1:** Meet regularly with and provide assistance to our Boise sister school, Dry Creek Waldorf School, slated to open fall 2016.

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**GOAL 7: Design and Build a Beautiful, Eco-Friendly Campus**:

**Strategy 7.1:** Ensure that the new campus is built to enhance and teach about sustainability, and that it contains all the spaces needed to advance a vibrant, Waldorf-inspired curriculum.

**Action 7.1.1:** Employ Farm/Garden/Sustainability Teacher

**Action 7.1.2:**  Develop and implement sustainability curriculum K-8.

**Action 7.1.3:** Employ as many staff with biodynamic gardening, animal husbandry and wilderness skills.

**Action 7.1.4:** Hire green architect and builder to oversee the two phases of the school remodel.

**Action 7.1.5:** Investigate leasing, purchasing or being gifted the use of land adjacent to SMS to support the garden, farm and sustainability curriculum.

**Action 7.1.6:** Hold community tours, talks to educate on eco-friendly school campuses.

**Action 7.1.7:** Solicit grants to expand curriculum to include roof top greenhouse, employ full time site manager.

**Action 7.1.8:** Foster collaborative relationships with like-minded organizations: the Sawtooth Botanical Garden, the Environmental Resource Center, the Quigley Foundation, St. Luke’s Hospital Foundation.

**Action 7.1.9:** Pursue environmentally responsible transportation choices for students and parents to and from school.

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**GOAL 8: Involve SMS within the Blaine County Community**:

**Strategy 8.1:** Reach out to the broader community to enhance the school's image, 2) broaden its funding base, and 3) increase mutually beneficial collaborations and partnerships, 4) expand the uses of the school campus making it available to community groups and schools and 5) educate county residents about the merits of Waldorf-inspired education, 6) expand Waldorf inspired after school and summer programs to all students, not just those attending SMS.

**Action 8.1.1:** Hold community tours, talks to educate on eco-friendly school campuses.

**Action 8.1.2:** Foster collaborative relationships with like-minded organizations: the Sawtooth Botanical Garden, the Environmental Resource Center, the Quigley Foundation, St. Luke’s Hospital Foundation, flourish, Mt. Rides, Blaine County School District, Wood River Sustainability Center, the City of Hailey Sustainability Department.

**Action 8.1.3:** Pursue environmentally responsible transportation choices for students and parents to and from school.

**Action 8.1.4:** Cultivate an Advisory Board to the SMS Board to broaden community collaborations.

**Action 8.1.5**: Build financially viable after school and summer camp programs, and expand to include non-school students.

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**GOAL 9: Create a Biodynamic Farm and Wilderness Education Program**:

**Strategy 9.1:** Develop a farm-based curriculum that teaches the principles of biodynamic farming, and that uses the school campus for hands-on farming and wilderness skills experiences for all students.

**Action 9.1.1:** Establish and fund a site manager position that includes building and facilities management as well as development and oversight of the garden and farm.

**Action 9.1.2:** Write, implement and monitor K-8 Sustainability Curriculum.

**Strategy 9.2.1:** Ensure that the new campus is built to enhance and teach about sustainability, and that it contains all the spaces needed to advance a vibrant, Waldorf-inspired curriculum.

**Action 9.2.2:** Employ Farm/Garden/Sustainability Teacher

**Action 9.2.3:** Employ as many staff with biodynamic gardening, animal husbandry and wilderness skills.

**Action 9.2.4:** Hire green architect and builder to oversee the two phases of the school remodel.

**Action 9.2.5:** Investigate leasing, purchasing or being gifted the use of land adjacent to SMS to support the garden, farm and sustainability curriculum.

**Action 9.2.6:** Solicit grants to expand curriculum to include roof top greenhouse, employ full time site manager.

**Action 9.2.7:** Foster collaborative relationships with like-minded organizations: the Sawtooth Botanical Garden, the Environmental Resource Center, the Quigley Foundation, St. Luke’s Hospital Foundation.

**Action 9.2.8:** Pursue environmentally responsible transportation choices for students and parents to and from school.

**Action 9.2.9:** Incorporate Sustainability curriculum into after school and summer camp offerings.

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**GOAL 10: Inspire** children to live engaged and successful lives, prepared to meet the demands of their world as educated and responsible human beings.

**Strategy 10.1:** Deliver a Waldorf inspired curriculum, after school program and summer camp program.

**Action 10.1.1:** Employ fully trained Waldorf teachers and/or grow our own.

**Action 10.1.2:** Provide ongoing teacher coaching and professional development to support teaching excellence.

**Action 10.1.3**: Survey students, staff and the community regularly, analyze results and use data to modify strategic plan.

**Action 10.1.4:** Employ successful and inspiring Waldorf teachers.

**Action 10.1.5:** Track SMS graduates.