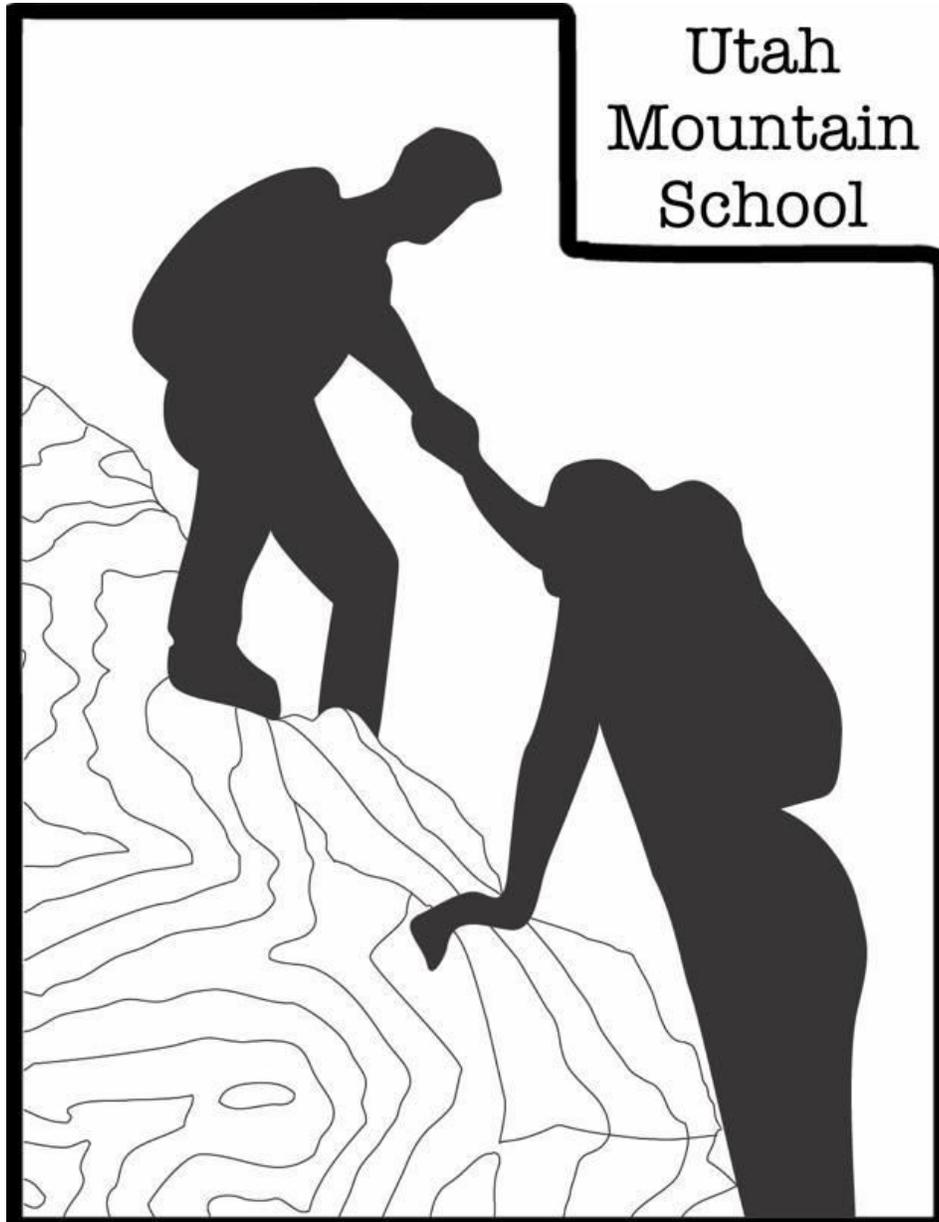




# Utah State Charter School Board New Charter School Proposal

## Utah Mountain School



## Required Information

### *Charter School Information*

1. Name of Proposed Charter School: Utah Mountain School
2. Name of Applicant: Charles Kavanagh
3. Authorized Agent: Charles Kavanagh
4. Mailing Address: 1549 Binford Street Ogden, Utah 84401
5. Phone Number: (385) 743-0900
6. Email Address: utahmountainschool@gmail.com
7. New School Location and Location's School District(s): 870 Wall Avenue, Ogden School District

### *Governance Structure*

Name	Position	Area of Expertise	Any Charter Affiliations
Charles Kavanagh	President	Outdoor Education	AISU - Lead Teacher
Chris Wright	Vice President	Special Education	AISU - SPED Teacher
Michael Jolley	Financial Officer	Finances/Curriculum	None
Timothy Owen	Board Member	Curriculum Specialist	AISU - SPED Teacher

### *Enrollment*

8. Year School will start: 2020-2021

9. Grades Served: 7-8

Does the proposed grade configuration match the resident district grade configuration?

Yes

No: Utah Mountain school seeks to start as a Junior High School that serves 7th and 8th grades in our first two years of operation, and then expand to offer 6th grade in the third year of operation.

10.		10. Grades and Specific Number of Students Served by Grade												Max Enrollment
Year 1	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
SY								100	100					200
Year 2	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

<b>SY</b>								120	120					270
<b>Year 3</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>SY</b>							60	120	120					300

**Waivers**

11. Is this proposal seeking special treatment under UCA §53G-5-301?

Yes: Utah Mountain School (UMS) seeks to serve students coming from low socioeconomic status (SES) households in the Ogden area. Forbes Magazine listed Ogden as one of the 13th fastest growing cities in the United States. Given the anticipated growth and absence of a school dedicated to underserved communities in Ogden, we feel there is an acute need for a place of learning with the UMS mission.

No

12. Is this proposal seeking priority consideration under UCA §53G-5-504?

Yes:

No

13. List any waiver requests here (i.e., Rule numbers and titles). N/A

**Signatures**

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, do hereby certify that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the data in this proposal are true and correct. Therefore, this proposal for charter school status and funding is hereby submitted with the full approval and support of the governing body of the proposed charter school.
Name of Authorized Agent: Charles Kavanagh
Signature of Authorized Agent: 
Name of Charter School Board Chair (if different than Authorized Agent)
Signature of Charter School Board Chair (if different than Authorized Agent)

## 1. Key Elements

1a. State the proposed school's mission.

Utah Mountain School is proposing to become a public charter school aimed at helping students bridge the divide between wilderness and community. Through curriculum focused on project-based outdoor education, students will engage nature and activate their minds to discover the world around them and individual within. While other charter schools in Utah utilize elements of the outdoor classroom, we are not aware of any school currently using research-based principles to inform an outdoor curriculum to the extent we are proposing.

1b. State the legislative purpose(s) outlined in UCA 53G-5-104 which this school specifically satisfies.

**Opportunities for Educators:** Because an outdoor-oriented classroom serving low SES students is a relatively new idea in the United States, every educator and staff member working at the UMS will be considered a collaborator. We will have open lines of communication between all stakeholders and will value all ideas. This will allow for quick resolutions to small problems before they become systemic in the school.

**Increased Choice of Learning Opportunities:** There is no school in Ogden, let alone Utah, that is currently using the Utah Mountain School model. There is one charter school in Ogden, which uses some of the principles we will be using to inform curriculum and instructional choices; however, because UMS will craft curriculum specifically to meet the needs of the low SES population, we feel that there is an educational niche to be filled.

**Opportunities for Greater Parental Involvement:** UMS will cultivate opportunities for parental and community involvement through the extensive use of project-based learning. Outdoor learning projects will encourage volunteerism in the form of helping to teach students career-based skills. The increased community involvement we anticipate will go a long way toward creating a new model of accountability.

**Expanding Public School Choice:** Of the three junior high schools in Ogden School District, the Utah State Board of Education issued two of them D grades (Highland & Mound Fort), with the third more affluent school (Mt. Ogden) receiving a C grade. Two of these junior high schools serve a part of Ogden that is constantly struggling with chronic absenteeism, disruptive behavior, violence, and low academic achievement. The UMS seeks to work with Ogden School District to identify those students for whom the traditional model is not working, and refer them to look at the UMS either as a full-time or part-time enrollment.

1c. Explain how this school will promote the State Charter School Board's mission and vision.

The Utah Mountain School will promote the mission and vision of the SCSB by increasing choice of educational opportunities in Ogden. UMS will give students the opportunity to learn through research-based techniques using innovative methods to achieve educational and social success for all cohort groups, not just low SES students.

1d. List the school’s key elements. The key elements of the Charter School, as set forth in the application, are programs and processes that are defining characteristics and make this school unique.

- **Outdoor Classroom:** While the outdoor classroom is used as a tool around the world, an immersive outdoor experience has not been extensively explored in our community. Outdoor immersion will provide educators with endless opportunities for experiential learning. Teachers will have the opportunity to use a myriad of outdoor-based instructional methods. For example, farming can be used to explore earth sciences, biology, and chemistry. Additionally, the nearby mountain range provides real-life examples in the study of slope angles, physics, and geometry related to snow science. Outdoor environments can be used to inspire poetry to come alive, and the outdoor classroom lends itself perfectly to teaching the real-world applications of persuasive writing.
- **Cooperative Learning:** UMS teachers will use cooperative learning extensively, even in academic areas that have tended to see more traditional instructional methods. In order to adapt curriculum to changing conditions and environments, teachers will be required to employ a wide variety of instructional techniques. For example, facilitating close reading lessons at a local park could allow for kinesthetic instructional activities. The same lesson conducted in a more contained and less dynamic outdoor classroom may require methods such as “jigsaw” or “pattern maker” to inspire interest among students. Teachers will be given the freedom to choose the most developmentally appropriate instructional methods within a framework of cooperative learning.
- **Project-Based Learning:** We will use project-based learning not only as a method for students to acquire new knowledge, but also to assess proficiency through capstone projects. For example, roller-coaster projects are used frequently to explore the concepts of potential and kinetic energy. Typically, these projects involve groups using wood, vinyl tubing, and ball bearings to construct a “roller coaster” that leads to the greatest possible velocity for the ball bearing. This project can be, and frequently is, used to explore core subjects in the 8th grade STEM curriculum. Within the UMS curriculum and instructional practices, a capstone roller-coaster project with carefully crafted rubrics and appropriate chunking could serve as an effective assessment. Using projects not only to explore but also to demonstrate mastery of a standard will provide an exciting opportunity for both students and teachers.

1e. Describe the academic goals of this school.

**Outdoor-Based “Applied” Learning and Project Based Learning:** A common refrain among students in traditional classrooms is “why are we doing this?” With the Utah Mountain School curriculum, students and staff will be in lock step with the purpose and objective of every standard being covered. Access to the outdoors will allow lessons and projects to be focused on real world problems.

**Choice of Methods to Demonstrate Mastery:** Instead of separate elective classes, students will be allowed to show mastery through projects of their choice. Elective teachers will support capstone projects, and students will be able to choose from a variety of options that integrate industrial, performing, or visual arts.

**Acute Aerobic Exercise:** Acute aerobic exercise is one of the most effective interventions we have

to combat the SES achievement gap. Research has shown that 10 minutes of acute aerobic exercise per every 50 minutes of instruction was the ideal ratio (Tine, 2014). UMS has built a daily schedule for students that allows for this exercise for 15 minutes before every academic block. Staff will be trained and encouraged to include physical activity in lesson plans that occurs outside of these “movement breaks.” Access to spaces conducive to aerobic exercise is a cornerstone of the educational philosophy of our school.

**Personal Growth & Leadership Training:** Because low SES students often struggle with executive functioning and impulse control, the Utah Mountain School will be dedicated to educating the whole student. Frequent opportunities for reflection will allow students to connect the curriculum to their lives and communities. Personal growth will be built into every lesson through personal choice, goal setting/monitoring, and self-evaluation. The school has built in advisory blocks in the beginning and end of the day that allow for this growth to occur under the mentorship of an assigned mentor or “Success Coach.”

**Measuring Success (Academic Goals):** Starting as a junior high school serving grades 7-8, with approximately 100 students per grade, we seek to serve students who do not feel successful in the traditional classroom setting. Although our methods will be innovative, our goals will be based on district assessments to ensure sufficient progress and growth for future student success. We will be looking at three primary measurements:

- Scores on Ogden School District’s CFAs (Common Formative Assessments)
- Scores on standardized tests such as SAGE
- NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) Growth

Using these three metrics, we will monitor student performance quarterly to assess our efficacy in closing the SES achievement gap. The UMS goal is a 5% annual increase in growth toward grade-level proficiency. Additionally, starting after five years of operation, we will track graduation rates of students who have attended UMS.

## 2. Program of Instruction

2a. Does the school intend to offer any of the following programs: N/A

Career education is a focus of the charter school.

Distance and/or online education will be offered.

A partnership with a four-year college or university to offer early college options will formed.

2b. Briefly present the overall vision for how the school will operate.

Time	Class	Duration	7th Grade	8th Grade
8:00 - 8:45	Advisory	45 minutes	Advisory - Focus	
8:50 - 9:05	Movement Break	15 minutes	Ex: Soccer	Ex: Basketball
9:05 - 10:05	Block 1	60 minutes	ELA/Utah History	STEM/Elective
10:10 - 10:25	Movement Break	15 minutes	Ex: Tag	Ex: Hiit Workouts
10:25 - 11:25	Block 2	60 minutes	ELA/Utah History	STEM/Elective
11:30 - 12:00	Lunch	30 minutes	Lunch	
12:00 - 12:20	Extensions	20 minutes	Extensions	
12:25 - 1:25	Block 3	60 minutes	STEM/Elective	ELA/U.S. History
1:30 - 1:45	Movement Break	15 minutes	Ex: Rugby	Ex: Pickleball
1:45 - 2:45	Block 4	60 minutes	STEM/Elective	ELA/U.S. History
2:50 - 3:00	Advisory	10 minutes	Advisory - Reflection	

A day in the life of a UMS student will begin at our Base Campus. Here, we will prepare students for the day in a 45-minute advisory block. Advisors will use cooperative, team-building activities to reinforce a sense of community and facilitate daily goal setting for each student’s day. At this point, students will move through four 60-minute blocks covering core subjects (ELA, STEM, History) with elective coursework integration happening throughout the day. Students will be given the opportunity to integrate visual arts, performing arts, and CTE into their collaborative project based learning, thus creating a well-rounded portfolio based on Utah Educator Network (UEN) standards.

Staff will use daily assessments to check for understanding. These assessments will be tailored to the conditions of the day and material covered. Base Campus facilities will include a fine arts studio, a high-tech “maker-space,” a traditional woodworking shop, performing arts stage, and various outdoor classrooms to ensure that students have the opportunity to explore their interests and further develop their portfolios.

We will partner with community-based businesses such as climbing gyms, public recreation centers, and other educational institutions to provide a diverse array of learning opportunities when green spaces are inaccessible. Students will end the day back with their advisors where they will have the opportunity to reflect on the day, goals accomplished, and objectives yet to be met.

2c. Describe the school’s overarching educational philosophy.

Utah Mountain School envisions students learning in the most natural of environments: the outdoors. With our “Base Campus” just minutes from Ogden Nature Center, 4th Street Park, and 12th Street Canyon Road, we seek to offer middle school students the opportunity to “unplug” from their daily distractions and dig into the ordered chaos of wilderness. Our school seeks to produce students who recognize their role as stewards of the environment, leaders amongst their peers, and representatives of their community.

2d. Provide a description of the intended educational program that includes methods of instruction and either sample curriculum choices or a description of how curriculum will be selected/developed.

**Advisory:** Students will start and end the day grouped in outdoor environments where they can increase student ownership of learning, build a sense of community, increase positive attitudes toward school, and be exposed to green spaces, thus reducing poverty-induced stress. Students will use this time to focus on tasks to be completed throughout the day, as well as reflecting on what they plan to accomplish by the end of the day.

**Movement Breaks:** Students will have the opportunity to participate in 15 minutes of aerobic exercise before each proceeding block. These movement breaks will give students an introduction to a variety of lifelong fitness activities, while increasing their heart rates to improve blood flow and endorphin release. Studies have shown this type of movement increases executive functioning.

**Extensions:** Following lunch, students will have the opportunity to participate in various extra-curricular activities both independently and through guided instruction with staff members. This will give student the time for self-exploration and choice in how they manage their time.

Students will be grouped into grade level cooperative learning communities of 30-35 pupils. Teachers will use outdoor activities to assess and review previous grade level standards (see appendix E), leading to push-in interventions as needed. Each module will be based on UEN core standards, and curriculum planning will begin with an end-of-module project-based assessment. From the end-of-module project, we will backwards design a curriculum that involves a minimum amount of traditional “teacher in front of class” direct instruction.

Lessons (see appendices H and I) will involve diverse strategies that will revolve around four pillars of learning: exploratory learning; cooperative peer learning; frequent checks with interventions; and access to physical activity. Throughout lessons and projects, paraprofessionals will be available for both push-in and pull-out small group remediation. Level one teachers will be required to follow lesson plans and curriculum that have been established in order to provide them with the freedom to focus on classroom management. Experienced teachers will be encouraged to improve curriculum while guided by our educational principles.

End of module projects will serve not only to demonstrate competency in UEN core standards, but will allow opportunities for elective integration. Integrating electives into core curriculum projects will create increased choice and opportunities for student enthusiasm. Throughout the term, students will build “Elective Portfolios” in which they will demonstrate mastery of elective subjects. Students will be guided in portfolio development by advisors and in advisory blocks. At the end of each quarter, parent-teacher conferences will allow parents to support portfolio completion. At the end of each semester, students will have an opportunity to show their portfolios to parents, siblings, and community members in a Celebration of Learning.

2e. Provide a description of how the Utah Core Standards will be taught and assessed in the school.

**Teaching/Assessing Utah Core Standards Pre-assessment:**

- Each module will include pre-assessments based on the previous grade level standards which will be crafted based on UMS principles (see appendix G)

- Para-professionals will be available to reteach previous grade skills in pull out groups

**Lessons (See sample lesson plan in appendix H):** Each lesson will be back-mapped from summative assessments and will have four essential elements

- Cooperative, group based exploratory learning
- Peer-learning interventions built in to each lesson for struggling students
- Access to physical activity
- Frequent checks for understanding

**Assessment:**

1. Access to Ogden School District CFA’s will ensure core standard acquisition
2. Projects will be used as summative assessments with three prongs of evaluation
  - Student Rubric Self-Evaluation
  - Teacher Rubric Evaluation
  - Peer Evaluation or Community Member Evaluation

2f. Explain how the school will meet the needs of all students, including special education students, advanced students, students with disabilities, educationally disadvantaged students, and the like.

Utah Mountain School will serve students of all ability levels. Students and families from low SES backgrounds desiring a community that recognizes and celebrates diversity, outdoor education, and creativity while respecting each student as a valued individual of great potential and promise, will find they fit at UMS. Two of the founders of UMS have worked for years as special education teachers and intend to meet each student’s individual needs with ongoing assessment, ability grouping, and Individual Education Plans (IEP), per federal and state law. The school believes these tools will allow students to set and achieve individual goals and be supported in creating their own success.

UMS will provide comprehensive interventions for students who are identified as having a disability as identified in the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The comprehensive program will include a “push-in” program to support students in teacher directed small group instruction, a “pull-out” program to provide students with specialized instruction to assure the student’s IEP goals are met. The service time and pattern will be determined by the student’s IEP.

2g. If any grades 9-12 will be served, explain the proposed graduation requirements.

N/A

2h. If any boxes were checked in 2a, please elaborate.

N/A

### 3. Market Analysis

3a. State the school’s intended location. Be as specific as possible. If the exact location is unknown, describe the characteristics of the areas the school will be seeking and how the governing board will

population has been identified as coming from low SES homes. The Utah Mountain School offers a solution for the SES achievement gap through constant access to aerobic exercise, access to green spaces, community involvement, and a commitment to project-based learning.

Research has shown that the SES achievement gap can be attributed to two primary factors: Selective Attention Deficits do to both chronic and acute poverty-related stress, and negative attitudes toward school stemming from a lack of parental and community support (Kuo, 2001; Tine, 2014; Brown, Seyler, Knorr, Garnett, & Laurenceau, 2016; Lai, Stevens, Martinez, & Ye, 2015). The outdoor classroom is a natural choice to combat poverty-related selective attention deficits because of access to exercise and access to green spaces, two of the most thoroughly proven strategies (Kuo, 2001; Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis, & Garling, 2003; Shin, 2010). The UMS will serve to increase community involvement and therefore student attitudes toward school because the types of project based learning, while meeting learning targets, will feature the use of non-academic skills that will allow for increased volunteerism, and bonding between the school and community.

3e. Provide the characteristics of the proposed charter school that sets it apart from other schools in target location.

The Utah Mountain School will be an institution that promotes rigorous physical activity as a consistent component within all core and elective subjects. Students on a daily basis will have opportunity to participate in project based learning with an experiential mindset. UMS will utilize open and green space in and around the Ogden valley as our classroom. While our goal will be to help close the low SES gap, our curriculum and school will benefit any student who attends.

find and acquire the location.



Utah Mountain School is considering 870 Wall Avenue as the current site our campus. UMS considers this commercial location ideal because of its ease of access (city bus stop in front), proximity to Frontrunner (1.4 miles), and its equidistance between Highland Junior High (1.6 miles) and Mound Fort Junior High (1.5 miles). Beyond the centralized location, this school also has:

- A single point of entry for students and parents, thus providing a secure and safe location.
- Over 10,000 square feet for both indoor and outdoor classroom experiences.
- Close proximity to 4th Street Park (0.2 miles) and the Ogden Nature Center (1.4 miles) for easy access to green spaces, recreation activities, and curriculum collaboration with the Nature Center.
- This location has an average daily traffic (ADT) rate of 30,535 cars passing by. This prominent location would help serve to help leverage marketing efforts.



3b. Justify why this school’s educational program is needed in the selected location.

PACE reporting, as seen in the tables below, indicates the SES (Socioeconomic Status) achievement

gap is severe among Ogden School District Junior High school students. The disparity in achievement based on SES can be seen when comparing SAGE-testing results both between Mound Fort Junior High (97% of students were identified as low SES) and Mount Ogden Junior High (64% of students were identified as low SES). Although ethnicity could be seen as a leading factor in achievement, data suggests that it should be seen as a dependent covariate with SES.

**Grade Level Proficiency Achievement Gap**

School/Subject	Mt. Ogden Jr. High	Mound Fort Jr. High
7th Grade ELA	40% proficient	28% proficient
7th Grade Math	36% proficient	23% proficient
8th Grade ELA	36% proficient	19% proficient
8th Grade Math	27% proficient	10% proficient

Given the severe SES achievement gap among Ogden School District students, and the fact that it has not been improving through conventional interventions, more targeted interventions seem to be indicated. We propose considering the outdoor classroom.

3c. Provide the demographic information for the selected location.

**Ogden City School District Public School Population**

School	7th & 8th Grade Population	% of Low SES Students	Total # of Low SES 7th/8th Graders
Highland Jr. High	569	80%	455
Mound Fort Jr. High	484	97%	469
Mount Ogden Jr. High	580	64%	371
<b>Totals:</b>	1633	79%	1295

*\*numbers sourced from UTAH PACE reporting (2016-2017 school year)*

Performance of students in Ogden School District generally follows student SES. While graduation rates of low SES students rose 8 percent between 2016 and 2017, a significant achievement gap both in test scores and graduation rates persists. Based on the most recent Education PACE report cards, there are currently 1,633 7th and 8th grade students attending the three junior high schools in Ogden School District. Of those students, there are approximately 1,295 students who have been identified as low SES. Additionally, in 2017 Forbes magazine listed Ogden as the 13<sup>th</sup> fastest growing city in America, with a 4.32% increase in jobs.

3d. Explain in detail how the proposed mission, vision, and program of instruction align with the educational needs of the population described in 3c.

Because UMS is a school seeking to work primarily with low SES students using the outdoor classroom model, Ogden School District is an ideal location to serve as 79% of the student

population has been identified as coming from low SES homes. The Utah Mountain School offers a solution for the SES achievement gap through constant access to aerobic exercise, access to green spaces, community involvement, and a commitment to project-based learning.

Research has shown that the SES achievement gap can be attributed to two primary factors: Selective Attention Deficits do to both chronic and acute poverty-related stress, and negative attitudes toward school stemming from a lack of parental and community support (Kuo, 2001; Tine, 2014; Brown, Seyler, Knorr, Garnett, & Laurenceau, 2016; Lai, Stevens, Martinez, & Ye, 2015). The outdoor classroom is a natural choice to combat poverty-related selective attention deficits because of access to exercise and access to green spaces, two of the most thoroughly proven strategies (Kuo, 2001; Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis, & Garling, 2003; Shin, 2010). The UMS will serve to increase community involvement and therefore student attitudes toward school because the types of project based learning, while meeting learning targets, will feature the use of non-academic skills that will allow for increased volunteerism, and bonding between the school and community.

3e. Provide the characteristics of the proposed charter school that sets it apart from other schools in target location.

The Utah Mountain School will be an institution that promotes rigorous physical activity as a consistent component within all core and elective subjects. Students on a daily basis will have opportunity to participate in project based learning with an experiential mindset. UMS will utilize open and green space in and around the Ogden valley as our classroom. While our goal will be to help close the low SES gap, our curriculum and school will benefit any student who attends.