

# NORTH STAR CHARTER SCHOOL

IB World School – International School of Business & Economics

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December 5, 2012

Dear North Star Parent,

There is no question about it... The letter you are holding in your hands is the result of a tremendous amount of deliberate thought and careful consideration. I have rewritten it so many times that I've lost count! Why have I gone through the trouble? Simply because I believe your child's education is worth every ounce of effort.

***So, before I go any further, thank you in advance for reading my entire letter.***

You will be glad you did because if you want your child to maximize their learning potential, be fully prepared for the next level of education, and acquire real life skills that they will actually use, then this will be one of the most important letters you read all year.

Isn't it wonderful to have a choice of where you send your child to school? There's a reason why you have enrolled them here at North Star Charter School. You had other options, but they didn't quite fit the needs of you and your child, right? I admit, as the Head of Schools I may be a little biased, but I wholeheartedly agree that North Star provides an extraordinary education for your child.

***North Star is an excellent place for your child to learn, grow and prepare for life as an adult:***

- Between the disciplined Modified Harbor Method (Harbor) and the challenging International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, we've earned respect and praise on local and national levels.
- This past year 20% of North Star seniors obtained early admission to colleges of choice. Collectively, the class was offered over \$3.5 million in scholarships.
- We've reached exceptional levels of performance in areas of IRI (grades K-3) and ISAT (grades 3-10) scores.
- Student Alumni report being exceptionally well prepared for college level courses and receiving college credits for North Star IB classes.
- The Washington Post identified North Star as the top scoring high school in the State of Idaho and 82<sup>nd</sup> out of 2,009 schools nationwide for the Challenge Index.

With that being said, allow me to provide you a financial perspective regarding the state of our school:

**Invest in the future of your child at [www.nscsdonate.org](http://www.nscsdonate.org)... Every little bit helps!**

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## **Where We Have Been**

North Star was founded in 2003 and has experienced steady growth over the last nine years. With approximately 920 students enrolled for the 2012-13 school year, North Star has become the largest on-site public charter school in Idaho.

In 2009 we were fortunate enough to move into our new facility here on Linder Road. As you already may be aware, the expansion process was a trying time for the school. It was originally anticipated that the cost of construction would be approximately \$7 million financed by facility bonds at approximately 6.75%.

In the fall of 2008, during construction the national markets collapsed and bond interest rates rose significantly. These timely issues, coupled with changes to building plans and cost overruns, caused North Star to sell more bonds than anticipated at higher than expected rates of approximately 9.5%.

## **Where We Are Now**

Notwithstanding those troubled times, today's North Star continues to achieve tremendous levels of academic success. Your child is in good hands with the Treasure Valley's best teachers! Moving forward, a key emphasis of our school is to continue to recruit, train and retain high quality teachers. Volunteer hours are on the rise and we are committed to our top-notch instructional programs (Harbor and IB).

We have not let three years of state funding reductions stand in the way of achieving success for our students. In spite of these funding shortfalls, limited spending on classroom support, technology and text books, and essentially no building support, we recently were recognized by the Idaho State Department of Education for meeting AYP standards in all 41 categories. There are very few schools in Idaho that meet this level of accomplishment.

True, we've experienced some growing pains and have made some mistakes along the way. However, I am not discouraged because we are dealing with them and North Star Charter School's future looks bright.

### ***What does it really mean to be a charter school?***

At North Star we have the benefit of operating under our own standards of conduct and curriculum. We have the freedom through our charter to establish our methods of education and operations, similar to how many private schools operate, but without any tuition.

There are some critical distinctions between traditional public schools and public charter schools:

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- Many assume we are part of the Meridian School District, but this is not the case. Charter schools are not connected to local geographic school districts. By statute, North Star is a public school within its own school district.
- Unlike traditional public schools, which receive local property tax revenue in addition to state funding, North Star also gets NO LOCAL PROPERTY TAX REVENUE. Nor does North Star have the ability to generate supplemental tax levy revenue!
- Earlier this year voters approved a combined \$42 million in supplemental levies to support the Boise and Meridian school districts. Unfortunately, North Star will not see a dime of this money.

There is also the perception that North Star is an independent private school. Again, this is not true. The situation with private schools is quite different. If a local private school needs funds, they raise tuition and/or conduct extensive fundraising campaigns. Currently, in the Treasure Valley, it costs parents between \$7,000 and \$15,000 to send a child to a private or IB school.

- **As a public school, North Star cannot legally charge tuition in order to generate revenue. Our only alternative is through effective fundraising activities.** As an example, last month's International Dinner kicked off the "Framework for the Future" fund raising campaign.

## **Where We Are Going**

We don't anticipate any slowdown in our students' overall progress! We fully expect to maintain the exceptional test scores and academic performance as well as to increase scholarships being offered to our graduates. And even in the face of significant budget constraints, our North Star teaching professionals have remained committed to the school, its mission, and providing excellent instruction to your child.

Even so, with the two largest portions of our budget making up 93% of it (staff expense - 65% and annual debt service - 28%) we need to raise additional revenue to support our great school.

Through the efforts of the North Star Fundraising Committee, we are dedicated to raising critically needed dollars through our ***Framework for the Future Campaign***. Our goal of raising \$1 million is lofty indeed, but achievable. To date we have raised approximately \$14,000, well short of where we need to be.

## ***What does the Framework for the Future entail?***

The Fundraising Committee has categorized their efforts into 3 different focus areas, each geared to ensure future success of the school through financial support from the entire North Star community.

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## **FOCUS #1: Immediate Needs**

**In order to meet the highest priority needs for student success (technology, training, classroom support and teacher retention), we need to raise \$350,000. This works out to approximately \$350 per North Star student.** We understand this will be a stretch for some families, especially those still facing challenging economic times. Please understand... ALL donations are greatly appreciated. If you are able, please consider contributing an amount larger than \$350 per child.

We urgently encourage you to contribute today. To make it easy, we have just set up the ability for North Star to accept credit cards and electronic bank transfers for online and pay-over-time donations. Please visit our online website for more details at [www.nscsdonate.org](http://www.nscsdonate.org).

## **FOCUS #2: Leveraged Donation Opportunities**

Here are two ways you may be able to maximize every dollar you graciously donate to North Star:

### **#1: Idaho Education Tax Credit**

The State of Idaho allows eligible individuals to take a tax credit if they make contributions to public education entities like North Star. Tax payers filing a joint return are eligible for up to a \$1,000 tax credit (50% of all donations up to \$2,000). And, depending on your taxable income, you may be eligible for federal and state deductions.

<b>Donation to North Star</b>	<b>Federal Deduction</b>	<b>State Deduction</b>	<b>Idaho Credit</b>	<b>Net Tax Benefit</b>	<b>Net Cost of Donation</b>
<b>\$2,000</b>	\$300	\$148	\$1,000	<b>\$1,448</b>	<b>\$552</b>
<b>\$1,000</b>	\$150	\$74	\$500	<b>\$724</b>	<b>\$276</b>
<b>\$500</b>	\$75	\$37	\$250	<b>\$362</b>	<b>\$138</b>
<b>\$350</b>	\$52	\$25	\$175	<b>\$252</b>	<b>\$98</b>
<b>\$250</b>	\$38	\$19	\$125	<b>\$182</b>	<b>\$68</b>
<b>\$125</b>	\$19	\$9	\$63	<b>\$90</b>	<b>\$35</b>

These figures reflect 2011 rates for a joint return of \$40,000 taxable income and are based on the taxpayer who itemizes personal deductions. North Star Charter School, its Board and Administration do not provide any tax advice regarding the above. As such, any potential donor should consult with their tax advisor for details and applicability of the Idaho Education Tax Credit.

### **#2: Matching Corporate Gifts**

Many corporations are committed to supporting nonprofit organizations and education. They do this in many ways, one of which is called a company match program. This is where you make a donation coupled with a matched donation from your company. Please check with your HR department to see if your company will match your donation.

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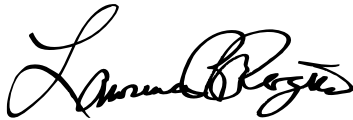
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## **FOCUS #3: Annual Giving Program**

The Fundraising Committee is in the process of establishing an annual giving program. This program will be similar to others operated at most nonprofit organizations including schools, universities, churches, and local and national support organizations such as the Red Cross, United Way and many others.

Please stop and take a moment to carefully consider the importance of North Star to all its students, teachers and families. **Imagine what we can do if we reached our funding goal!** As you do, I am confident you will promptly act and make a contribution to help North Star better serve our students and our community.

Respectfully,



Lawrence R. Rogien  
Head of Schools

PS: Thank you again for taking the time to read my letter. On behalf of everyone at North Star, I thank you for your generosity and ongoing support of our fundraising efforts. We could not do it without you!

PPS: If you have questions or would like to meet with Administration, please feel free to call the front office and set up an appointment to discuss your questions.

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