

Running Head: MOUNTAIN PATHWAYS SCHOOL A HISTORY

THE MOUNTAIN PATHWAYS SCHOOL A HISTORY OF THE FIRST YEARS:
FOUNDING AN EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVE IN THE
NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAINS

A Dissertation

by

ERIN COBB KIRBY

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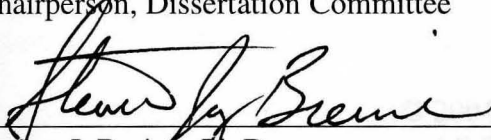
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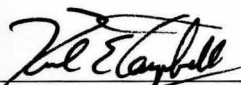
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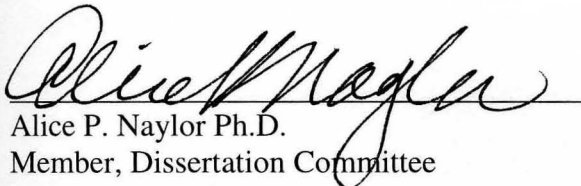
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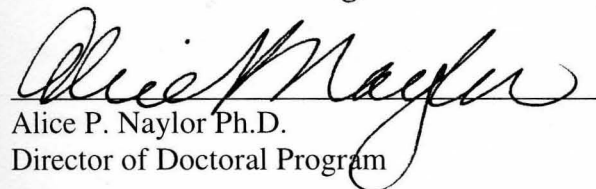
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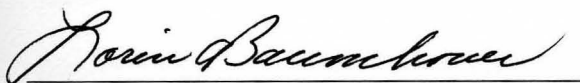
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ABSTRACT

THE MOUNTAIN PATHWAYS SCHOOL A HISTORY OF THE FIRST YEARS:
FOUNDING AN EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVE IN THE
NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAINS (December 2004)

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Many alternative schools do not survive; those that do have a clear mission in place and tailor their programs to their populations (M. D. Fantini, 1976; D. Duke, 1978; and M.A. Dunn, 1998). Education and outreach to the public, teachers, students, and parents about an alternative school's mission and philosophy are critical to success. Studies of alternative schools that survive beyond the crucial first years could inform not only those educators interested in successful alternative education but also those who are interested in broader educational reform. Mountain Pathways School for Children is an independent Montessori school situated in the mountains of western North Carolina that began as an independent alternative school. The school's original philosophy of putting the child first in an ungraded, nongraded environment promoted a love of learning and self-discovery in elementary-aged children. This study examines the founding of Mountain Pathways through the interviews and historic documents of its founders, parents, and board members from the first few years of its operation through the decision to adopt a Montessori curriculum while maintaining its philosophical identity.