



## NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

# Gateway Charter Academy

**Public charter schools opening the fall of 2015**

**Due by 5:00 pm, December 6, 2013**

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
NCDPI/Office of Charter Schools  
301 N. Wilmington Street  
Raleigh NC 27601-2825  
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6303 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-6303

## CHARTER SCHOOL 2013 Application Process

To open a charter school in the 2015-2016 school year

### APPLICATION DUE DATE/TIME

- September 6, 2013** A letter of intent to apply for the 2015-2016 school year **must** be received electronically to Deanna Townsend-Smith in the Office of Charter Schools **no later than 12:00 noon at deanna.townsend-smith@dpi.nc.gov**. If the Letter of Intent is not submitted, an application from this group will not be accepted. You can find the Letter of Intent requirements on the NC Office of Charter School web site.
- December 6, 2013** A complete online application package, in the Office of Charter Schools **by 5:00 pm.**
- December 13, 2013** A copy of the application due to the Local Education Agency in which the proposed charter school will reside in. Applicant must provide an attached PDF version as evidence to the Office of Charter Schools (i.e. signed letter).

### APPLICATION SPECIFICATIONS

Applicants can submit applications prior to the deadline December 6, 2013 at 5:00 pm. **All applicants must be submitted using the online portal** and applicants are to use the following specifications:

1. All required Appendices should be clearly titled, include page numbers (i.e. Appendix A and page numbers as- A1, A2, B1...), and submitted as a FULL PDF document.
2. Review all elements of your application for completeness before submitting. **An incomplete application will result in the elimination of the application.**
3. Late submissions **will not** be accepted. No exceptions.
4. Provide confirmation electronically to the Office of Charter Schools to [deanna.townsend-smith@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:deanna.townsend-smith@dpi.nc.gov) that within seven (7) days the applicant has provided one full copy of the application to the LEA in which the proposed charter school will be located.

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## I. APPLICATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of proposed charter school: Gateway Charter Academy

Has the organization applied for 501(c)(3) non-profit status: Yes No

Name of non-profit organization under which charter will be organized or operated: *Gateway Charter Academy, Inc.*

Provide the name of the person who will serve as the primary contact for this Application. The primary contact should serve as the contact for follow-up, interviews, and notices regarding this Application.

Name of contact person: *Robert Parrish*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *Lead Applicant*

Mailing address: 201 N. Green Street  
Greensboro NC 27401

Primary telephone: 317-997-7331 Alternative telephone: 317-997-7331

E-Mail address: rparrish3@elon.edu

Name of county and local education agency (LEA) in which charter school will reside:

County: GUILFORD

LEA: 410-Guilford County Schools

Is this application a Conversion from a traditional public school or private school?

No:

Yes:

Is this application being submitted as a replication of a current charter school model?

No:

Yes:

What is the name of the nonprofit organization that governs this charter school? Gateway Charter Academy, Inc.

Is this application for Virtual charter school: Yes: No:

### **Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment:**

Projected School Opening: Year 2015 Month August

Will this school operate on a year round schedule?

No:

Yes:

Proposed Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment (

10

Years)

<b>Academic School Year</b>	<b>Grade Levels</b>	<b>Total Projected Student Enrollment</b>
First Year	K,01,02,03,04,05	520
Second Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06	604
Third Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07	688
Fourth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	772
Fifth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	772
Sixth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	772
Seventh Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	772
Eighth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	772
Ninth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	772
Tenth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	772

*The State Board of Education provides funds to charter schools, approves the original members of the boards of directors of the charter schools, has the authority to grant, supervise, and revoke charters, and demands full accountability from charter schools for school finances and student performance.*

*I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that the initial board members and I were regularly involved in the development of this application. All information contained herein is complete and accurate. I realize that any misrepresentation will result in disqualification from the application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered. The person named as the contact person for the application is so authorized to serve as the primary contact for this application on behalf of the non-profit organization.*

robertparrish  
*Signature*

Mr. Robert Parrish  
*Title*

robertparrish  
*Printed Name*

12/05/2013  
*Date*

## II. MISSION and PURPOSES

(No more than three total pages in this section)

### **Mission:**

*State the Mission of the proposed charter school in **one hundred words or less**. The mission statement defines the organization's purpose and primary objectives, describing why it exists. The mission statement provides the foundation for the entire proposal.*

*The mission statement of the proposed charter school is as follows:*

Every student at Gateway Charter Academy will develop the knowledge, tools, and skills for lifelong success in and outside of the classroom. High standards, clear expectations, and meaningful instruction will support a safe learning environment where achievement thrives, and where students are instilled with a commitment to academic excellence, hard work, good citizenship, and personal responsibility.

### **Educational need and Targeted Student Population of the Proposed Charter School:**

- 1. Provide a description of Targeted Population in terms of demographics. In your description, include how this population will reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the school system in which it is located. Describe the rationale for selecting the location and student body.*

The city of Greensboro is marked by an east-west divide. Local leadership is doing their best to create the perception of a unified city, as are members of the Board proposing this new charter school through our service on the Guilford Board of County Commissioners, our work at Elon University, our business ownership, and our involvement in numerous community initiatives. Yet, the reality is that the west side of the city is growing and prospering while the east side faces significant economic and social challenges. On the east side, property values are much lower, family poverty is more pervasive, unemployment rates are higher, there is less private business activity, and, of critical importance, there is limited quality public school choice for students.

We want to help. We are requesting authorization to create Gateway Charter Academy as a new public K-8 school of excellence for students and families on the east side of Greensboro. We will be partnering with National Heritage Academies (NHA), a full-service school management company, to operate the school. As our city's economic development committee considers whether to grant tax breaks in an attempt to create east side "prosperity zones" for businesses, Gateway Charter Academy will provide its own "prosperity zone" for neighborhood students and their families. The plan in this application reflects specific preparation and support for the education of students entering with skills below grade-level.

Rationale: A new, high quality public school choice is desperately needed. Consider the performance of the city's east side schools:

- Of the nine east side elementary schools, five performed below the

district average (which itself is below the state average) on every state reading and math test administered at the school. Three of the remaining four schools fell below the district average on two-thirds of all state tests.

- At two elementary schools, less than half of all students tested proficient in reading in every tested grade.

- At one of the three east side middle schools, student proficiency rates on state exams are below district average in every grade for both math and reading. At a second middle school, passing rates topped the district average on only one test.

Our planned K-8 model is an appealing aspect of this proposal. A consistent K-8 experience, with less transition and greater stability, can increase appropriate student development that better prepares students to face the challenges of high school academically, socially, and emotionally. Currently, not a single K-8 model public school exists in east Greensboro.

Additionally, our management partner will supply a new school building (either new construction or a fully renovated space) suitable for our full K-8 education program. We want Gateway Charter Academy to be part of the neighborhood's economic and social rebuilding efforts, an institution that actively contributes to the community's success.

Demographics: According to data available from the state, at three-fourths of schools on the east side of the city, the percent of students from economically disadvantaged families exceed 90%; at one in every four schools, the rate is 100%. District schools in the eastern part of Greensboro that serve the K-8 student population are: 71.1% Black; 11.2% White; 9.4% Hispanic; 4.3% Asian; and 3.5% Multiracial. For comparison, Greensboro's student body as a whole is 41% Black; 37% White; 12% Hispanic; 6% Asian; and 4% Multiracial. Our marketing and outreach plan to the community will be broad, unbiased, while seeking to saturate east Greensboro. Thus, we expect Gateway Charter Academy will attract and enroll a student body with similar demographic proportions to the east side of Greensboro.

- 2. What will be the total projected enrollment at the charter school and what percentage of the Average Daily Membership (ADM) does that reflect when compared to the Local Education Agency (LEA) of the same offered grade levels? (i.e. If the proposed school will be grades 9-12, only compare the total enrollment to the total enrollment of the LEA is grades 9-12).*

The projected enrollment for our school's first year, when the school will serve grades K-5, is 520 students. After expanding by one grade level per year until the school serves grades K-8, we are projecting total full enrollment of 772 students. Due to the fact that east Greensboro is centrally located in Guilford County, we expect that 100% of our students will come from the Guilford County Schools LEA (with the vast majority coming from the east side of the city of Greensboro).

Guilford County Schools serves approximately 72,400 students, of which approximately 49,750 (68.7%) are K-8 students. The first-year projected enrollment of Gateway Charter Academy represents 1.0% of Guilford County's total K-8 student population. Full K-8 enrollment in the school's fourth



year of operation will represent approximately 1.6% of the LEA's total K-8 student population.

3. *Explain how the charter school's education plan will compare to or differ from that of the local LEA(s).*

Gateway Charter Academy will implement an innovative and proven educational program that is distinguished from a traditional school in Guilford County in several significant ways.

The Simple Rules: Through partnership with NHA, our school will implement a system of six high-probability educational practices called the "Simple Rules:"

1. Manage Instruction: To maximize effectiveness and impact, all school staff will be fully supported and carefully developed by managers who are completely focused on the success of those individuals.

2. Behave With Care: Students and staff do best when they are cared about, treated fairly, and required to operate in an environment that has clear expectations. Our school will create and maintain such an environment.

3. Implement the Formative Assessment Process: All teachers must understand what students should learn, what successful student performance looks like, and how to develop instructional plans to help students achieve learning goals. At our school, the formative assessment process (a planned process in which teachers and students adjust their approaches to teaching and learning based on insights from frequent, varying, and ongoing evaluations of progress) will be a key part of this commitment to excellence in instruction.

4. Calendarize Priorities: Priorities are scheduled on school and staff calendars.

5. Measure Results: Evidence about student performance is effectively and efficiently collected, and instructional practice is adjusted based on this evidence.

6. Engage Parents: It is not just a desired practice but the school's responsibility to proactively engage parents and support them in becoming fully engaged in their children's education.

Distributed Leadership Model: To prioritize a more comprehensive hands-on management of instructional staff than most public schools, we will implement a distributed leadership model in which the leadership team consists of a principal and academic deans sharing administrative responsibilities. Each dean will be responsible for a team of grade-level staff: e.g., K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. Deans will serve as the direct managers for teachers, ensuring that teachers receive frequent and ongoing coaching and support, including weekly classroom observations and feedback sessions.

K-8 School Design: Our school will be a K-8 school. A consistent K-8 experience, with less transition and greater stability, can increase student development that prepares students to face the challenges of high school academically, socially, and emotionally.

**Character Development:** Character development at our school will not be an occasional superficial lesson, but a fully developed program that is integrated into our instructional and educational program. The character development curriculum we will use builds on such virtues as prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Through lessons in these areas, students will build strong personal character and develop qualities needed to earn academic success while becoming good citizens.

Our students will understand what is expected of them, and after putting forth their best efforts, they will be encouraged to take pride in the results of their work. From day one at our school, students will be taught that their best effort is vital to academic success, and teachers will strive to reinforce the importance of responsibility for their education.

Combining student responsibility and character development will help create a culture that expects excellence from our students, is conducive to teaching and learning, and encourages parents and educators to become true collaborators in the learning process.

4. *In the appendices (Appendix A), you must provide evidence through a narrative or visual of this educational need through survey data, or times and locations of public meetings discussing this proposed charter school. (Please do not provide more than one sample survey form).*

**Purposes of the Proposed Charter School:** *In one page or less, describe how the proposed charter school will achieve one or more of the six legislated purposes, as specifically addressed in the NC charter school statute GS 115C-238.29A, and the proposed school's operations.*

*The Six Legislative Purposes of a Charter School are:*

1. *Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunities to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.*
2. *Hold schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.*
3. *Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.*
4. *Improving student learning.*
5. *Increasing learning opportunities for all students, with a special emphasis on at-risk or gifted students.*
6. *Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.*

We believe that the structure and programs of Gateway Charter Academy fulfill each of the six legislative purposes stated for charter schools.

1. **Professional Opportunities for Teachers.** Our educational program includes a robust and purposeful professional development program, offered through NHA, that not only coaches teachers through the instructional phase of their career, it also establishes a formal career path that allows stellar teachers to become teacher leaders and mentors to new teachers, and then

supervisory deans overseeing and coaching teams of multiple grade-level staff. Outstanding deans are then coached and developed to become principals across NHA's 76 partner schools if they choose to do so. NHA also implements a "School Leadership Academy" to provide ongoing support to potential and new school leaders throughout the year. The "Staff Evaluation and Professional Development" section of this application offers detailed information on the professional development opportunities that will be offered to teachers at our school.

2. Accountability for Results. Our school will implement all required state assessments and will abide by and embrace North Carolina's READY Accountability Model for acceptable performance. Additionally, our school will institute a comprehensive formative assessment program that evaluates individual, class-wide, and school-wide student academic performance. The evaluation at the beginning of each year will provide a baseline. The evaluation in the middle of the year gathers important and detailed data that will be used to drive and revise instructional practices. And, the evaluation at the end of the year will measure annual growth. Accountability for performance will also extend to other areas of the school's operations, such as attendance rates, fiscal stability, and parental satisfaction. Our goal is to offer area families a public school choice that is not merely different, but better.

3. Expanded School Choice. Gateway Charter Academy will offer parents and students a choice of the first charter school in the city targeted to a high-needs student population.

4. Improving Student Learning. We will hold NHA accountable to improving student learning. Across the country, student achievement is excelling at NHA partner schools:

- In 2012-13, schools partnering with NHA ranked in the top quartile of the nation's public schools based on the percentage of students who met or exceeded typical academic growth.

- The rate of academic growth for students entering NHA partner schools below grade-level is 133%, compared to the national average of 100%, for the 2012-13 school year. This means that students below grade level at NHA partner schools are progressing academically faster than expected and are closing achievement gaps.

- For the 2012-13 school year, state test results show that NHA partner schools outperform their local school district three-fourths of the time; that rate is even higher in schools in urban areas.

- Ninety-six percent of students completing 8th grade at NHA partner schools go on to graduate from high school, easily surpassing the national average for low-income students (70%) and all students combined (80%). Additionally, 37% go on to graduate college with their bachelor's degree or higher, nearly five times higher than the national average rate for low-income students (8%, NCES, 2013), and outperforming the rate for all students combined (31%).

Continued) 5. Increased Learning Opportunities for Students. Because a fundamental purpose of charter schools is to search out new approaches to

effective teaching and learning, we embrace innovation and change to further our ability to meet the needs of our students. Following the NHA partner school model, Gateway Charter Academy will create a learning environment in which all students thrive. This model is supported by underlying fundamental principles of excellence that support purposeful and proven educational strategies (such as The Simple Rules, detailed elsewhere in this application). NHA is committed to meeting the needs of students who are at-risk of falling behind academically and will ensure that the needs of these students are addressed systematically. NHA also has a robust formative assessment program that helps quickly identify students who need extra attention as well as students surpassing grade-level standards, who also require differentiated instruction. Our school model is designed with such adaptability in mind.

6. Innovative Teaching Methods. Our school's multiple layers and styles of professional development for teachers (described further elsewhere in this application) are designed not just to support instructors during their time in the classroom or to prepare them for expanded responsibility and leadership positions. They exist to encourage innovation through purposefully scheduled peer group planning time and structured learning communities. These times are designed as professional learning communities to allow the sharing of ideas and best practices, and for brainstorming creative and innovative approaches to the unique challenges teachers face.

We will meet each purpose through the four pillars of our educational model:

**Academic Excellence:** A high-quality K-8 education sets the critical foundation for a student's success in high school, college, and beyond. Achievement may look different for each individual, but our goal is to prepare each student for college. The curriculum is designed to meet or exceed the relevant learning standards and ensure that our students master the specific skills and knowledge at each grade level.

**Student Responsibility:** Children thrive in an environment where they clearly understand what is expected of them, and after putting forth their best effort, they take pride in seeing the results. Students will be taught that their best effort is vital to academic success. Teachers will reinforce consistently the importance of students' accountability for their education and actions.

**Character Development:** A great school should aim to develop students' hearts as well as their minds. Our character development curriculum builds on such virtues as prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Students will build and maintain strong personal character and become good citizens.

**Parental Partnerships:** Gateway Charter Academy is committed to fostering strong partnerships with parents. Our school will actively engage parents in their children's learning and consistently communicate with parents. An example is the parent room specifically for ongoing "anytime" interaction between parents and teachers.

### **Goals for the Proposed Charter School:**

1. *Provide specific and measurable student achievement performance goals for the school's educational program and the method of demonstrating that students have attained the skills and knowledge specified for those goals. Address how often and when the information will be communicated to the governing board and other stakeholders. These goals should include specific and measurable performance objectives over the first five years of the schools existence.*

Well aware that we are likely to enroll a student population disproportionately in need of intensive and ongoing academic intervention, Gateway Charter Academy still will hold itself to a "no excuses" standard regarding student academic performance. The school will establish meaningful student performance goals that allow comparison to area district schools, state performance standards, and other NHA-partner schools both with and without significant proportions of at-risk students.

Goals: One of our top priorities as a Board will be to monitor student academic performance goals closely, and hold staff and NHA accountable for reaching those goals. We will use measures of academic growth and proficiency beyond those required by state law. Our school will have the following academic goals for the first five years to measure student achievement:

On average, students in at least their second year at the school will score at or above the 65th percentile in a majority of grades and tested subjects in grades 2-8 as measured by beginning-to-end-of-year growth on a nationally normed standardized assessment.

- On all state End-of-Grade (EOG)/End-of-Course (EOC) assessments administered, students who are enrolled in at least their second year at the school, on average, will meet or exceed the performance of demographically similar schools in the LEA.

- Each year, the mean normal curve equivalent (NCE) gain on the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) for the school will be, at a minimum, meets expectations.

- As North Carolina transitions to the READY accountability model, the school's accountability status will meet or exceed the expectations of the model in each year.

(Please see "Student Performance Goals" later in this application for more detail.)

Our school will establish operational goals, too:

- Student Attendance: Each year, Gateway Charter Academy will average a student attendance rate at or above 93%.

- Parent Engagement: Each year, Gateway Charter Academy will have an overall parent satisfaction rate of 80%, with at least 50% of parents responding to our survey.

- Performance of Management Partner: Each year, our Board of Directors will review the performance of, and provide feedback to, our education management

partner. The review will be used to identify our management partner's successes and opportunities to improve its future performance. Accountability goals expected to be put upon our management partner include: a 100 percent compliance record in reporting and other regulatory areas; and, the development of an annual comprehensive school improvement assessment and plan of action.

- Audit: Each year, Gateway Charter Academy will receive an unqualified audit.

Communication to Board: As detailed below, our Board will receive status reports on progress toward these goals at each monthly meeting. Throughout the course of each school year, our Board will be provided data that answer critical questions, such as: Are students meeting expectations and are they proficient and growing academically? How are special student subgroups performing? Are our 8th-grade students college-ready? Are parents satisfied?

Parents and students, too, will be informed of the school's progress toward its goals through periodic informational newsletters and special bulletins. Of course, individual student performance will be communicated through regular report cards and during scheduled parent-teacher conferences, at a minimum.

*2. How will the governing board know that the proposed public charter school is working toward attaining their mission statement?*

Our school will be one where everyone (Board members, teachers, administrators, students, parents, and our management partner) uses information to measure success. As a Board, we are focused on ensuring that our membership includes experience in education, business, real estate, insurance, and financial planning, so that we are able to effectively plan for and oversee progress toward achieving our mission. Further, our work throughout the community, on boards of other organizations, and on the Guilford County Commissioners, will provide valuable insight and access to community leaders who will help ensure our school starts well and remains a valuable asset for the community for years to come.

We will require monthly reports to inform us of the schools progress in achieving our mission and charter goals. These reports, provided by both school leadership and our management partner, will detail benchmarks met, document trends toward the achievement of overarching goals, and discuss potential challenges in meeting each performance objective and how to address them.

These reports also will include operational information pertinent to student performance, such as student count numbers, attrition percentages, student attendance, student discipline, percent of students below grade-level, percent of exceptional children, and more. School leadership, in conjunction with NHA as appropriate, will provide us with the information needed to assess all aspects of the school's performance, including:

- Absolute and comparative student performance on internal diagnostic and interim assessments.
- Growth in student learning.
- Current status under state and federal accountability systems.

- College readiness status.
- Vital statistics on our student population, including demographics, enrollment count, free or reduced-priced lunch count, and exceptional children count, as well as the corresponding achievement levels of these subgroups.
- Parent satisfaction and other stakeholder information.

Discussions will be held between school leadership and our Board on the status of school culture; the delivery and results of professional development to staff; student attendance and enrollment trends; programs of parental and community involvement; results of various elements of the school's internal formative assessment program; staff performance recognition programs; and, employee and staff grievances or concerns. Our Board will be continually apprised on how the school is operating, how staff is delivering the educational program, and how students are performing. There should never be a situation in which testing results come as a surprise to school leadership or the Board. Should our school be lacking in any area, our Board and operational partner are committed to bringing the necessary resources to bear to address the area of need. We will also look to annually contract for a review of NHA's performance to ensure that we are meeting all performance requirements in our charter and we are satisfied with NHA's commitment to our school.

School staff and parents also will be informed on the school's standing on each performance goal at meaningful measurement points. For single-point measurement goals, for example, we will expect data annually. We will also use trend data as appropriate, such as monthly attendance rates, to forecast annual outcomes and make necessary adjustments during the school year if possible.

We will take advantage of the online and in-person training opportunities offered through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Office of Charter Schools, which offers a webinar-based series of training sessions totaling more than 15 hours of training to board members on various aspects of charter school governance. Additional training opportunities will be pursued through organizations such as the North Carolina Alliance for Public Charter Schools, which has historically offered training for charter school board members.

### III. EDUCATION PLAN

(No more than ten total pages in this section)

**NOTE:** *All sections of the Education Plan should align with all other sections of this application. The State Board of Education shall give priority consideration to the applicants who demonstrate potential for significant, meaningful innovation in education. Provide precise and clear explanations. Lack of response to any question or proper documentation will deem the application incomplete.*

#### **Instructional Program:**

Provide a detailed description of the overall instructional program of the proposed charter school, including major instructional methods, assessment strategies, and explain how this instructional program and model meet the needs of the targeted student population.

Our instructional program will be built on four pillars: academic excellence, student responsibility, character development, and parental partnerships (see the "Purposes" section for further discussion of these foundational pillars).

**Instructional Methods:** Teachers will use various instructional methods to promote engagement, describe instructional intent explicitly, and implement appropriate rigor. Focused lessons will include direct instruction, modeling, demonstration, development of metacognitive awareness, and teacher think-alouds, among other methods, and they will be conducted in whole-group or small-group settings as student needs dictate. Guided instruction may be done with large groups or small, needs-based groups during workshop time or during content-area learning blocks to allow for differentiation of instruction. At times, collaborative learning will be used to provide opportunities for students to learn from peers, to discuss or debate ideas and information, or to participate in collaborative, inquiry-based learning of curricular content. Finally, independent work will be assigned to provide students time to practice applying skills or knowledge that has been previously learned; to extend individual learning through the application of knowledge and skills to novel situations; or, to promote the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Teaching will include effective, research-based instructional strategies embedded within daily lesson plans and implemented during daily instruction. Strategies that have high probabilities of effectiveness, such as those identified by researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001), will be employed by teachers in accordance with student need. Because effective learning requires that teachers shift the cognitive load to students, teachers will develop students' knowledge, understanding, and skill incrementally through appropriately sequenced lessons and units of instruction.

**Assessment Strategies:** Our school will administer all state-required assessments and other required measurements of academic progress and proficiency. We will have a robust and purposeful formative assessment process embedded into our instructional approach. Included in our school's formative assessment process will be the administration of a nationally normed exam, such as the NWEA MAP, multiple times each year. This approach will provide internal diagnostic measures of student learning from an annual



baseline; allow comparisons with other NHA partner schools; measure individual student progress over time; and, provide us with a national peer-group comparison point. We also will measure students' readiness for postsecondary success by administering the ACT Explore exam to all 8th-grade students. The ACT Explore helps students and families to plan courses in high school and can help to choose a career direction. We will use those results with students and their families in a manner that empowers students to go on to a challenging college-preparatory high school.

Meeting Student Needs: At-risk programming will include staff dedicated solely to interventions, plans for extended learning time, and increased focus for targeted student subgroups. This will include some or all of the following: an academic intervention coach to coordinate our systematic intervention strategy; full-time teachers and part-time tutors to provide interventions; an after-school blended-learning program and onsite summer learning; and biweekly progress monitoring to ensure that goals are being met.

These instructional methods and assessment strategies have worked. Students entering NHA-partner schools below grade-level grow academically 33% faster than average yearly growth, rapidly moving to close achievement gaps. NHA partner schools also outperform their local school district three-fourths of the time, and post an even higher rate at partner schools in urban areas.

### **K-5 Curriculum and Instructional Design:**

*Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure.*

Learning Environment and Structure: Each classroom will be primarily structured as a direct-instruction model, led by one instructional leader. Each teacher will be effectively trained and frequently coached to employ a variety of instructional approaches (including modeling, think-alouds, etc.), and to use differentiated instruction as appropriate. Small-group settings also will be created when they best benefit the delivery of the lesson at hand. Teachers will establish opportunities for collaborative and inquiry-based learning to deepen students' understanding of various topics. As noted above, independent work will be assigned as practice in applying previously learned concepts and to promote the development of higher-order thinking skills.

As we have planned our academic program, we have seen student academic performance levels in east Greensboro that make us expect that Gateway Charter Academy is likely to open with a large percentage of students already at-risk of academic failure. Launching a school for students with these challenges will require a comprehensive approach to intervention from day one. Such an approach has been developed at NHA-partner schools serving greater populations of at-risk students, and this approach will be replicated at Gateway Charter Academy.

To accommodate the needs of what is expected to be a sizable at-risk student population, Gateway Charter Academy will provide more specific at-risk instructional programming, additional staff dedicated solely to interventions, plans for extended learning time, and increased learning

intensity in specific areas to targeted student subgroups. This front-end investment funded with grant money from federal Title I funding, private foundations, and/or supplemental investments from NHA will be used for some or all of the following:

- An academic intervention coach to coordinate the systematic intervention strategy.
- Full-time intervention teachers to provide tier two and tier three tutoring.
- Part-time tutors to provide Tier Two or Tier Three interventions.
- An after-school blended-learning program and onsite summer learning.
- Bi-weekly monitoring to ensure that interventions are achieving the goals they are designed to achieve.

We will structure our instruction through intentional planning. Instruction at the school will be driven by a collaborative planning approach that includes the implementation of a formative assessment program, which in turn offers frequent and varying measures of progress to help determine the best approaches to teaching and learning. Planning is characterized by three sequential but interrelated steps: year-long planning, unit planning, and daily planning.

**Year-long Planning:** Year-long planning organizes the grade-level curriculum into a long-range framework. Teachers' year-long plans are used to ensure that students have the time and opportunity to learn what is necessary to meet all grade-level standards.

**Unit Planning:** Unit-level planning stems from the year-long planning process, and results in specific units of instruction that are based on the scope and sequence of the educational objectives outlined in the year-long plan. Unit planning aligns with the implementation of the school's formative assessment process. Adjustments to instruction are made based on this student-elicited evidence. Students also use the assessment results to track their learning and measure growth toward their academic goals using graphing or another form of record keeping.

**Daily Planning:** Once unit-level plans are developed, daily instructional planning allows teachers to connect standards with specific instructional resources, effective teaching strategies, and the instructional methods that best support students' daily learning.

**Class Size:** We will have four kindergarten classes with approximately 25 students in each class. In grades one to five, we will have three classes per grade level with approximately 28 students per class.

Provide a synopsis of the planned curriculum, including:

1. *One sample course scope and sequence (preferably in graph form) in the Appendices (Appendix B) for one core subject (specific to the school's purpose) for the elementary division the school would ultimately serve.*
2. *Identify how this curriculum aligns with the proposed charter school's mission, targeted student population, and North Carolina Accountability Model.*

Our curriculum has been carefully aligned to the Common Core State Standards

and the North Carolina Accountability Model by our management partner, NHA. Checkpoints for understanding are integrated throughout the instructional program.

**Alignment to Mission:** This curriculum follows a thoughtful progression of standards that is designed to ensure that we prepare students for lifelong success in and outside the classroom, which is our key mission goal. Our inclusion of a strong character development curricular component aligns with our mission of creating "a safe learning environment where achievement thrives, and where students are instilled with a commitment to academic excellence, hard work, good citizenship, and personal responsibility."

**Alignment to Student Population:** Gateway Charter Academy will be the first charter school in our community designed and prepared from the outset to serve an at-risk student population. We will have additional staff dedicated solely to interventions, plans for extended learning time, and increased focus of instruction for student subgroups to help ensure that the school's standards are met. The assessment program we will have in place will ensure that the curriculum and instructional approaches work for our students.

**Alignment to Accountability Model:** To ensure that the curriculum is properly supporting instruction and student learning, and that achievement is on track to meet and exceed the performance goals contained in North Carolina's Accountability Model, our school will implement and maintain a strong internal formative assessment process (Simple Rule 3). This formative assessment process consists of four main components:

1. **Identifying Objectives and Determining Assessments:** Teachers will collaborate to identify objectives for units of instruction based on the year-long plan and will determine end-of-instruction assessments to gauge students' learning status at the end of each unit. Assessment methods will be selected based on the chosen learning goal and sound assessment design.

2. **Developing Building Blocks:** After the educational objectives are reviewed and appropriate end-of-instruction assessments are determined, grade-level teams will identify building blocks of instruction that scaffold student learning towards mastery of each educational objective. These building blocks will be used to construct a variety of formative assessments that will be woven into daily instruction and serve as check points during the learning process.

3. **Analyzing Evidence:** Whether gathered through building-block assessments or end-of-instruction assessments, teachers will analyze evidence at the student and classroom level. The specificity of the building-block assessments enables teachers to determine exactly what knowledge or skills need further development for particular students. As teachers meet to examine student work, they will gauge the effectiveness of their instruction and determine students' degree of mastery of the educational objectives. They will analyze evidence to discover student misconceptions and to identify knowledge or skill gaps that may inhibit successful student learning.

4. **Responding to Evidence:** As units are prepared, teachers will identify opportunities for planned instructional adjustments prompted by evidence

from the building-block assessments or end-of-instruction assessments. If learning progresses more quickly than expected, then instruction will move at an accelerated rate through the unit plan. If learning progresses more slowly than expected, then more time will be spent delivering instruction within the unit. Teachers will consider end-of-instruction assessment evidence to develop subsequent units of instruction.

This process will help ensure the school's curriculum, instructional approach, and, most importantly, student progress are aligned with and on track to meet the state's Annual Measureable Objectives in its Accountability Model.

*3. Describe the primary instructional strategies that the school will expect teachers to master and explain why these strategies will result in increased academic achievement for the targeted student population.*

**Mastery of Instructional Strategies:** As noted previously, our teachers will be prepared and expected to use a variety of instructional methods representing the most effective way to enhance learning for each individual student. Our primary methods will include direct instruction, modeling, demonstration, think-alouds, and more. Guided instruction may be done with large groups or with small, needs-based groups during workshop time or during content-area learning blocks to allow for differentiation of instruction (please see the prior section for details of the instructional program).

As part of the school's overall effort to manage instruction (Simple Rule 1), the school's instructional leadership will work individually with teachers to ensure that appropriate teaching techniques are used to enhance student learning and promote high expectations. Teachers will receive training through focused professional development. They will receive support through weekly observations and subsequent coaching and feedback sessions to ensure that they successfully implement teaching techniques that have been shown to promote student learning. These practices will be embedded within the school's formal Teacher Observation Protocol (defined later in this application) and are akin to many practices that are identified as teaching best practices and techniques that optimize learning for students (Lemov, 2010). Such techniques will include, among others: redirecting; start-up routines; do now; do it again; use of attention signals; circulation; prompts; precise praise; "I-can" statements; and, checking for understanding.

Instruction at our school will be driven by an intentional and collaborative planning approach spearheaded by teachers. This approach includes three sequential and interrelated steps: year-long planning, unit planning, and daily planning. Our formative assessments will inform planning by offering frequent and varying measures of progress to help determine the best approaches to teaching and learning.

Teachers also are expected to help students embrace the school's instructional efforts by initiating strategies that help students to take responsibility for their own learning. This may include the use of learning goals as an instructional tool and helping students set individualized goals for themselves. This approach provides both students and teachers with a

clear understanding of the desired focus skill, and allows teachers to articulate what they are teaching while allowing students to describe what they are learning and work at the appropriate level of difficulty (Marzano, 2009).

In addition to scheduled school-wide professional development sessions and intensive summer pre-school opportunities, teachers will be observed frequently and provided formal feedback weekly with their dean as a way to receive timely coaching, brainstorm strategies for unique challenges, and offer modeling of especially effective techniques to other teachers.

**Increased Academic Achievement:** These instructional strategies provide both a comprehensive approach to delivering educational content and the flexibility to adapt instructional approaches to individual student needs and learning styles. Combined with a formative assessment process that provides multiple measures of individual student performance levels, this flexibility will allow our school, as a whole, to adapt the delivery of educational content as student needs dictate. In turn, this is expected to result in the ability of each and every student, regardless of his or her academic starting point, to make measurable academic progress throughout the school year.

This combination of effective research-based instructional strategies, attention and adaptation to individual student needs, and meaningful and student-centered professional development closely aligns our instructional approach with our mission and will result in academic success for the students we will serve.

4. *Provide a school academic calendar in Appendix C (minimum of 185 instructional days or 1,025 hours).*
5. *Describe in a brief narrative below on how the calendar coincides with the tenets of the proposed mission and education plan.*

The envisioned school-year calendar for Gateway Charter Academy, which appears in Appendix C, will align with the Guilford County Schools standard calendar. We will exceed the minimum instructional hours and anticipate providing 1,170 hours of instruction each year. Also included are 12 days dedicated to professional development, and four parent-teacher conference days. As envisioned, the school day will run seven hours, starting at 8:15 a.m. and ending at 3:15 p.m., and providing 6.5 instructional hours per day. Of course, we may modify our schedule based on the needs of the students who will eventually enroll.

We believe teachers and staff need to be in the classroom and will hold teachers and staff accountable for absenteeism. If a student is scheduled for a day of class, we believe the teacher should also be in the classroom. Obviously, emergencies happen and there may be academic conferences or professional development needs that take a teacher out of the classroom.

**Correspondence with Tenets of Mission and Instructional Plan:** Instruction will be organized around a master schedule in which every attempt will be made to schedule math and ELA/reading courses in the morning, and science and social studies are focused priorities (Simple Rule 4, Calendarize

Priorities). The proposed schedule provides time for daily grade-level teacher team planning meetings while students participate in special and co-curricular areas (e.g., music, art, and physical education, etc.). Planning teams will meet at least weekly to adjust teaching on the basis of student learning evidence.

The proposed school academic calendar has been designed to provide students with the opportunity to learn the content included in the school's curriculum while providing instructional staff with the support and professional development they need to grow as teachers. The additional hours of instructional time will ensure the effective implementation of our mission, an environment that values high standards, clear expectations, and meaningful instruction.

### **6-8 Curriculum and Instructional Design:**

*Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure.*

Learning Environment and Structure: Each classroom will be structured on a direct-instruction model, led by one instructional leader. Each teacher will be effectively trained and frequently coached to employ a variety of instructional approaches (including modeling, think-alouds, etc.), and to use differentiated instruction as appropriate. Small-group settings also will be created when they best benefit the delivery of the lesson at hand. Teachers will establish opportunities for collaborative and inquiry-based learning to deepen students' understanding of various topics. As noted above, independent work will be assigned as practice in applying previously learned concepts and to promote the development of higher-order thinking skills.

As we have planned our academic program, we have seen student academic performance levels in east Greensboro that make us expect that Gateway Charter Academy is likely to open with a large percentage of students already at-risk of academic failure. Launching a school for students with these challenges will require a comprehensive approach to intervention from day one. Such an approach has been developed at NHA-partner schools serving greater populations of at-risk students, and this approach will be replicated at Gateway Charter Academy.

To accommodate the needs of what is expected to be a sizable at-risk student population, Gateway Charter Academy will provide more specific at-risk instructional programming, additional staff dedicated solely to interventions, plans for extended learning time, and increased learning intensity in specific areas to targeted student subgroups. This front-end investment funded with grant money from federal Title I funding, private foundations, and/or supplemental investments from NHA will be used for some or all of the following:

- An academic intervention coach to coordinate the systematic intervention strategy.
- Full-time intervention teachers to provide tier two and tier three tutoring.
- Part-time tutors to provide Tier Two or Tier Three interventions.
- An after-school blended-learning program and onsite summer learning.
- Bi-weekly monitoring to ensure that interventions are achieving the goals

they are designed to achieve.

We will structure our instruction through intentional planning. Instruction at the school will be driven by a collaborative planning approach that includes the implementation of a formative assessment program, which in turn offers frequent and varying measures of progress to help determine the best approaches to teaching and learning. Planning is characterized by three sequential but interrelated steps: year-long planning, unit planning, and daily planning.

**Year-long Planning:** Year-long planning organizes the grade-level curriculum into a long-range framework. Teachers' year-long plans are used to ensure that students have the time and opportunity to learn what is necessary to meet all grade-level standards.

**Unit Planning:** Unit-level planning stems from the year-long planning process, and results in specific units of instruction that are based on the scope and sequence of the educational objectives outlined in the year-long plan. Unit planning aligns with the implementation of the school's formative assessment process. Adjustments to instruction are made based on this student-elicited evidence. Students also use the assessment results to track their learning and measure growth toward their academic goals using graphing or another form of record keeping.

**Daily Planning:** Once unit-level plans are developed, daily instructional planning allows teachers to connect standards with specific instructional resources, effective teaching strategies, and the instructional methods that best support students' daily learning.

**Class Size:** In sixth through eighth grade, we will have three classes per grade with up to 28 students per class. Class sizes are projected, and are subject to change based on parent demand, for example.

Provide a synopsis of the planned curriculum, including:

1. **One** sample course scope and sequence (preferably in graph form) in the Appendices (Appendix B1) for one core subject (specific to the school's purpose) for the middle school division the school would ultimately serve.

2. Identify how this curriculum aligns with the proposed charter school's mission, targeted student population, and North Carolina Accountability Model.

Our curriculum has been aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the North Carolina Accountability Model by our management partner, NHA. Unit plans at each grade level have been created that identify the standards to be taught and a timeline for implementation. Checkpoints for understanding are integrated throughout the instructional program.

**Alignment to Mission:** The thoughtful progression of standards followed by the curriculum is designed to ensure that we prepare students for lifelong success in and outside of the classroom, our key mission goal. Our inclusion of a strong character development curricular component aligns with our mission of creating "a safe learning environment where achievement thrives, and where students are instilled with a commitment to academic excellence, hard work, good citizenship, and personal responsibility."

**Alignment to Student Population:** Gateway Charter Academy will be the first charter school in our community designed and prepared from the outset to serve an at-risk student population. We will have additional staff dedicated solely to interventions, plans for extended learning time, and increased focus of instruction for student subgroups to help ensure that the school's standards for excellence apply to every student enrolled.

**Alignment to Accountability Model:** To ensure that the curriculum is properly supporting instruction and student learning, and that achievement is on track to meet and exceed the performance goals contained in North Carolina's Accountability Model, our school will implement and maintain a strong internal formative assessment process (Simple Rule 3). This formative assessment process consists of four main components:

1. **Identifying Objectives and Determining Assessments:** Teachers will collaborate to identify objectives for units of instruction based on the year-long plan and will determine end-of-instruction assessments to gauge students' learning status at the end of each unit. Assessment methods will be selected based on the chosen learning goal and sound assessment design.

2. **Developing Building Blocks:** After the educational objectives are reviewed and appropriate end-of-instruction assessments are determined, grade-level teams will identify building blocks of instruction that scaffold student learning towards mastery of each educational objective. These building blocks will be used to construct a variety of formative assessments that will be woven into daily instruction and serve as check points during the learning process.

3. **Analyzing Evidence:** Whether gathered through building-block assessments or end-of-instruction assessments, teachers will analyze evidence at the student and classroom level. The specificity of the building-block assessments enables teachers to determine exactly what knowledge or skills need further development for particular students. As teachers meet to examine student work, they will gauge the effectiveness of their instruction and determine students' degree of mastery of the educational objectives. They will analyze evidence to discover student misconceptions and to identify knowledge or skill gaps that may inhibit student learning success.

4. **Responding to Evidence:** As units are prepared, teachers will identify opportunities for planned instructional adjustments prompted by evidence from the building block assessments or end-of-instruction assessments. If learning progresses more quickly than expected, then instruction will move at an accelerated rate through the unit plan. If learning progresses more slowly than expected, then more time will be spent delivering instruction within the unit. Teachers will consider end-of-instruction assessment evidence to develop subsequent units of instruction.

This process will help ensure that the school's curriculum, instructional approach, and, most importantly, student progress are aligned with and on track to meet the state's Annual Measureable Objectives in its Accountability Model.

3. *Describe the primary instructional strategies that the school will expect teachers to master and explain why these strategies will result in increased academic achievement for the targeted*



*student population.*

**Mastery of Instructional Strategies:** As noted previously, our teachers will be expected to use a variety of instructional methods representing the most effective way to enhance learning for each student individually. Our primary methods will include direct instruction, modeling, demonstration, think-alouds, and more. Guided instruction may be done with large groups or with small, needs-based groups during workshop time or during content-area learning blocks to allow for differentiation of instruction (please see the prior section for details of the instructional program).

As part of the school's overall effort to manage instruction (Simple Rule 1), the school's instructional leadership will work individually with teachers to ensure that appropriate teaching techniques are used to enhance student learning and promote high expectations. Teachers will receive training through focused professional development. They will receive support through weekly observations and subsequent coaching and feedback sessions to ensure that they successfully implement teaching techniques that have been shown to promote student learning. These practices will be embedded within the school's formal Teacher Observation Protocol (defined later in this application) and are akin to many practices that are identified as teaching best practices and techniques that optimize learning for students (Lemov, 2010). Such techniques will include, among others: redirecting; start-up routines; do now; do it again; use of attention signals; circulation; prompts; precise praise; "I-can" statements; and, checking for understanding.

Instruction at our school will be driven by an intentional and collaborative planning approach spearheaded by teachers that includes three sequential and interrelated steps: year-long planning, unit planning, and daily planning. Our formative assessments will inform planning by offering frequent and varying measures of progress to help determine the best approaches to teaching and learning.

Teachers also are expected to help students embrace the school's instructional efforts by initiating strategies that help students to take responsibility for their own learning. This includes the use of learning goals as an instructional tool and helping students set individualized goals for themselves. This approach provides both students and teachers with a clear understanding of the desired focus skill, and allows teachers to articulate what they are teaching while allowing students to describe what they are learning and work at the appropriate level of difficulty (Marzano, 2009).

In addition to scheduled school-wide professional development sessions and intensive summer pre-school opportunities, teachers will be observed frequently and provided formal feedback weekly with their dean as a way to receive timely coaching, brainstorm strategies for unique challenges, and offer modeling of especially effective techniques to other teachers.

**Increased Academic Achievement:** These instructional strategies provide both a comprehensive approach to delivering educational content and the flexibility to adapt instructional approaches to individual student needs and learning styles. Combined with a formative assessment process that provides multiple measures of individual student performance levels, this

flexibility will allow our school as a whole to adapt the delivery of educational content as student needs dictate. In turn, this is expected to result in the ability of each and every student, regardless of his or her academic starting point, to make measurable academic progress throughout the school year.

The combination of effective research-based instructional strategies, attention and adaptation to individual student needs, and meaningful and student-centered professional development is aligned closely with our mission and will result in academic success for the students we will serve.

4. *Provide a school academic calendar in Appendix C (minimum of 185 instructional days or 1,025 hours).*
5. *Describe in a brief narrative below on how the calendar coincides with the tenets of the proposed mission and education plan.*

The envisioned school-year calendar for Gateway Charter Academy, which appears in Appendix C, will align with the Guilford County Schools standard calendar. We will exceed the minimum instructional hours and anticipate providing 1,170 hours of instruction each year. Also included are 12 days dedicated to professional development and four parent-teacher conference days. As currently envisioned, the school day will run seven hours, starting at 8:15 a.m. and ending at 3:15 p.m., and providing 6.5 instructional hours per day. Of course, we may modify our schedule based on the needs of the students who eventually enroll.

We believe teachers and staff need to be in the classroom and we hold teachers and staff accountable for absenteeism. If a student is scheduled for a day of class, we believe the teacher should also be in the classroom. Obviously, emergencies happen and there may be academic conferences or professional development needs that take a teacher out of the classroom.

Correspondence with Tenets of Mission and Instructional Plan: Instruction will be organized around a master schedule in which every attempt will be made to schedule math and ELA/reading courses in the morning, and science and social studies are focused priorities (Simple Rule 4, Calendarize Priorities). The proposed schedule provides time for daily grade-level teacher team planning meetings while students participate in special and co-curricular areas (e.g., music, art, and physical education, etc.). Planning teams will meet at least weekly to adjust teaching on the basis of student learning evidence.

The proposed calendar has been designed to provide students with the opportunity to learn the content included in the school's curriculum while providing instructional staff with the support and professional development they need to grow as teachers. The additional hours of instructional time will ensure the effective implementation of our mission, an environment that values high standards, clear expectations, and meaningful instruction.

## **Special Programs and "At-Risk" Students**

1. *Describe the methods and clear systems of prevention and intervention teachers will utilize to provide assistance to students that are not performing at expected levels: ensuring continued progress and academic student growth.*

We will be prepared to serve students who enter our school below grade-level academically or at-risk of academic failure. We understand and accept our responsibility to ensure that students master grade-level content articulated in applicable learning standards. If students struggle to master content, or fail to achieve a learning trajectory that corresponds with college readiness, instruction must be adjusted and, if needed, intervention must be provided. The earlier a teacher sees a student struggling, the sooner the student will receive additional help.

**Systems of Prevention and Intervention:** We will use a three-tier approach (Response to Intervention, or RtI), described below, to prevent students from becoming academically at-risk, to proactively identify students struggling academically, and to provide needed academic support to put them on a path to success.

**Tier One Intervention:** In Tier One, classroom teachers will respond to student learning needs as a part of regular classroom instruction. All students will complete a screening assessment at the start of each school year, which will provide useful information for planning more effective instruction. In addition, short-cycle assessments will be used during daily instruction to check for understanding. Students who have not yet demonstrated mastery will receive supplemental support in the classroom through re-teaching, cooperative learning, differentiated instructional strategies targeting individual student need, and use of learning centers and alternative materials.

**Tier Two Intervention:** If students do not master content through the first tier of intervention, more prescriptive interventions will be applied based on teacher referrals, data from classroom and end-of-instruction assessments, results from nationally normed assessments, state test results, and parent input. Students will receive supplemental interventions using programs and approaches proven to accelerate student learning. Other intervention strategies may be provided in the classroom or in a workshop setting, or delivered through supplemental support outside of class during non-core educational programming. Progress will be monitored frequently to ensure that the interventions are effective.

**Tier Three Intervention:** If data show that a student is not making sufficient progress after Tier Two interventions, a teacher will refer that student for Tier Three interventions. The teacher and intervention support staff will review current intervention strategies and student progress, and work together to monitor that student's learning patterns and progress. Tier Three interventions will include an intensified approach that focuses on selected high-priority reading and math skills. One-on-one concentrated tutoring will also be considered when appropriate. If these interventions do not succeed in achieving the desired level of learning, the school's exceptional children team will conduct a special education referral meeting to decide whether exceptional child testing is needed. We recognize that special education referrals can be conducted prior to the completion of Tier

Three interventions, as dictated by student need.

Continued Academic Progress and Growth: Our comprehensive plan to address the needs of students at-risk of academic failure underscores our school's mission to ensure that "each and every student is given the opportunity for success." This approach has been proven effective at other NHA partner schools, where the rate of academic growth for students entering below grade-level is 133% compared to the national average of 100%; this represents faster academic progress than expected and reflects the closing of achievement gaps.

2. *Explain how the instructional plan and curriculum will meet the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students, including the following:*

- a) *Methods for identifying ELL students.*
- b) *Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for ELL students.*
- c) *Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of ELL students, including exiting students from ELL services.*

Identification: Our staff will work with families to identify English language learners (ELLs) through home-language surveys, informal interviews, and the state's screening assessment (W-APT, provided by WIDA). Initially, the school will give all new students the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ). If the HLQ indicates that a student's home language is something other than English, the student will be identified as a potential ELL student.

Our ELL coordinator will conduct an informal interview of each student identified as a potential ELL. If the interview confirms that a student speaks a language other than English, the student will be given a screening assessment to determine his or her proficiency in English. If the student scores at a level designated as not requiring ELL services, the screening process will stop. If the student scores at any lower level, the student will be classified as an ELL student and placed appropriately in our ELL program.

Parents or guardians will be informed in writing about our available ELL programs and services. Written in a language the parent or guardian understands, information will include the placement decision for their child and their right to refuse ELL services at any time. This note will be provided within 30 days for students enrolling at the beginning of the year and within 10 days for students enrolling during the year. ELL students will participate in all required state, school, and classroom assessments to monitor their progress in core content areas and English proficiency.

Instructional Programs: Our school will implement a two-part program: Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) will be used in the general classroom, and a program called English Language Development (ELD) will be used for students requiring specific English language acquisition instruction. SEI will be the vehicle for ELL students to acquire grade-level content, while ELD will be used to specifically increase proficiency in English. All ELL students will have a Language Acquisition Plan (LAP) that will contain specific goals for each student to quickly acquire both social and academic proficiency in English. The LAP will detail accommodations and modifications needed to be implemented in the classroom, as well as on standardized

assessments to support our ELL students.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Each year, we will administer the ACCESS test to measure students' progress learning English. For students not testing sufficiently proficient in English, we will use the results combined with teacher observation and input to determine services to be provided through the ELL program for the coming school year.

For an ELL student to exit the program, he or she must score at the state-approved level for exit on the ACCESS. In addition, the school will examine data to verify that the student's classroom performance also indicates that the student is ready to exit the ELL program and succeed without additional supports and programming. School staff will closely monitor students for two years after they leave the ELL program to ensure that they are not experiencing academic regression due to language barriers. If a student who leaves the ELL program is found to be experiencing difficulty due to language constraints, the student may be reassessed and may re-enter the ELL program.

We believe that all teachers are teachers of ELL students, and we will include ELL students in all school classes and activities at our school. ELL students will have access to high-quality education and instruction, and will become fully proficient in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, consistent with the school's common standards and goals. While being held to the same high expectations of learning and behavior established for all students, ELL students will be evaluated with assessments that are aligned with state and local standards and that take into account the language-acquisition stages and cultural backgrounds.

3. *Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of intellectually gifted students, including the following:*
  - a) *Specific instructional programs, practices, strategies, and opportunities the school will employ or provide to enhance their abilities.*
  - b) *Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of intellectually gifted students.*

Students who possess exceptional gifts and talents will receive the direction, time, encouragement, and resources to maximize their potential. We will work with parents and students to identify gifted and talented students from all backgrounds, and to provide instruction that nurtures and fully grows that excellence.

**Identification:** As part of our assessment program, Gateway Charter Academy will use an assessment in reading, language usage, and mathematics that is aligned to national norms. This will allow the school to identify students who are performing at the very highest levels, a potential indicator of a student's identification as gifted and talented. For all students, including those performing at the highest levels, we believe it is critical to ensure continued growth. For this reason, we are committed to continually monitoring students' progress and adjusting learning opportunities when growth is inadequate. In addition to using assessment results, classroom teachers will monitor mastery of curricular content, measured through classroom assessments that are administered as part of the school's formative assessment program. The formative assessment program is a planned

process by which teachers and students adjust their approaches to teaching and learning based on insights from frequent, varying, and ongoing evaluations of progress.

**Instructional Programs:** Classroom teachers will offer gifted and talented students differentiated instruction and extended opportunities through a variety of means, including: enrichment lessons, exercises, and content; differentiation in content, process, products, and/or learning environment; infusion of tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills; and individualized learning opportunities. When needed, the school will accelerate grade-level or content-level learning for individual students, taking into consideration his or her specific needs. Students at or above grade-level will be consistently challenged with classroom curricular content and high-quality instruction.

If necessary, we will create an entire accelerated cohort group comprised of students both above grade-level proficiency and students who are designated as gifted and talented, allowing an entire student subgroup to move through the curriculum at a more rapid pace. This allows opportunities for students to be systematically challenged with higher-order thinking skills and project-based learning within a common peer group, and by the creation of an accelerated section at each grade level.

The school's professional development program also will include training on the education of gifted students. The school leadership team will be responsible for working with teachers to develop plans for addressing the needs of students identified as gifted and talented; for evaluating gifted and talented services; and, for evaluating the progress that these students make with respect to their learning goals. Other topics for professional development may include professional learning communities, differentiated instruction, and co-teaching strategies targeted to gifted and talented students. Deans will meet weekly with instructional staff to review lesson plans and provide feedback. Deans also will observe staff weekly and provide them with feedback on the quality of their instruction and effectiveness in meeting the needs of all students, including those who are gifted and talented.

**Plan to Monitor and Evaluate:** The school's periodic nationally normed assessments will generate results that help set individual learning targets and measurable objectives for all students. The school will use results from these assessments to set higher individual learning targets and more rigorous growth objectives to monitor and measure the progress of gifted and talented students.

### **Exceptional Children**

*The public charter school cannot deny admission to any child eligible for special education services as identified under the federal legislation Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), IDEA regulations, and Article 9 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes, North Carolina Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities. **All public schools are responsible for hiring licensed and 'highly qualified' special educators pursuant to law.** Public schools are required to provide a full continuum of services to meet the unique needs of ALL students with disabilities.*

### **Identification and Records**

1. *Explain how you will identify students who are enrolled within the charter school that have previously been found to be eligible for special education services or are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.*
2. *Provide the process for identifying students who may be eligible for special education services as identified in the federal 'Child Find' mandate. Be sure to include how student evaluations and assessments will be completed.*
3. *Provide a plan detailing how the records of students with disabilities and 504 Accommodation plans will be properly managed.*
  - a) *Requesting Records from previous schools*
  - b) *Record Confidentiality (on site)*
  - c) *Record Compliance (on site)*

Identification: Exceptional children will be identified upon entry at our school by either an active individualized education plan (IEP) or the ChildFind process. If parents of a new student state their child has previously received special education or has an IEP or Section 504 plan, we will ask the parent for any documentation. If the parent has no documentation, we will initiate a records request from the prior school. Staff will also review all student files to see if they were enrolled in a special education program at the previous school; if so, we will immediately ask that school for relevant records. We will implement the student's existing IEP or Section 504 Plan until we convene a meeting to review this plan.

ChildFind: We will include ChildFind in our marketing efforts to attract the broadest possible spectrum of students, including those with special needs. Our outreach will use media, direct mail, and parent information meetings to target all area families with students of appropriate ages. Parents expressing interest in enrolling exceptional children will be invited to meet with our special education department to review the program and to ask questions. Our school will comply with ChildFind requirements of IDEA, including 34 CFR 300.125, and will provide notification to parents consistent with state and federal requirements.

We will be responsible for identifying students who need special education services but enter our school without an active IEP. If a student struggles with classroom assignments, a teacher or parent may refer the student to the Intervention Assistance Team (IAT), which will include the principal, a classroom teacher, and the referring teacher. The student's parents or guardian will also be invited to participate. The IAT will determine appropriate education and service options by analyzing screening data, Response to Intervention results, classroom performance, discipline data, state assessments, and any information parents provide. Outcomes include: continuing current intervention and progress monitoring through the RtI process; conducting additional interventions; referring for a Section 504 evaluation; referring to the special education team for a possible comprehensive evaluation; and conducting no further action while monitoring academic and social experience. In addition, in accordance with IDEA and Section 504, at any time, the parents can refer the student for a special education evaluation, and a properly convened team will decide whether to proceed with the evaluation. If parents disagree with an IEP Team decision not to conduct an evaluation, the parent has all procedural rights, including the right to request a due process hearing, as set forth in the

## North Carolina Handbook on Parent's Rights.

The IEP Team will include a special education teacher, parent, a general education teacher of the child, an appropriate LEA representative, and anyone else with relevant knowledge of the child. The team will determine whether psycho-educational or other testing is needed to determine if the student has an eligible exceptionality in accordance with state policies. Parental notice and consent will be requested before testing. If eligible, this team will be responsible for identifying the student's needs, developing an IEP to address these needs, and then implementing the IEP.

**Record Request, Confidentiality, and Compliance:** We will request records from the student's previous school or district of origin. If we don't receive complete records within 14 days of the date the school is notified that the student is a special education student, we will reach out to the prior school for more information. If the requested information is not obtained, our school will initiate the special education referral or re-evaluation process. We will collect, handle, secure, and share these documents with parents in accordance with all relevant state and federal laws and regulations.

### Exceptional Children's Education Programming

1. *Describe the educational programs, strategies, and additional supports the school will provide to ensure a full continuum of services for students with disabilities.*
2. *Describe the methods and support systems that will be in place to ensure students with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).*
3. *Describe how implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be monitored and reported to the student, parents and relevant staff.*
4. *Describe the proposed plan for providing related services.*

**Educational Programs and Staffing:** We will offer exceptional children individualized services and tailored instruction that provides access to, and promotes progress in, the general education curriculum. We will serve all children according to their individualized academic, functional, social, and emotional needs.

We are committed to serving students in the least restrictive environment (LRE), while providing the full spectrum of placements, as appropriate for each student. These placements may include the general education setting and individualized one-to-one and small-group instruction with both disabled and non-disabled peers as appropriate. We will prepare and execute individualized strategies for our full range of students, realizing that the LRE for some students may be in a more supportive environment.

Students requiring specially designed instruction will have their services delivered in the general education classroom or will receive services in a resource or separate setting based on individual needs and a decision by the IEP Team considering the requirement for services to be provided in the LRE. Teachers of exceptional students will be provided with consultation and staff development by a dean and special educator to ensure that students receive the modification of instruction and assessment accommodations required by student IEPs.

The school will recruit and hire highly qualified teachers certified in



special education to help ensure high-quality instruction. All new staff, including special education teachers, will participate in an orientation session prior to the start of the school year. Each teacher will work closely with a dean on a weekly basis to focus on his or her specific professional development needs.

Special education teachers will be on staff to provide academic support to students with IEPs. The school will also provide ancillary staff, such as a school psychologist, occupational and speech therapists, and a school social worker, as either employees or contracted providers. Additional staff may be added once the school determines the needs of its student population. Credentials of all staff will be reviewed to ensure compliance with the highly qualified teacher requirements, and teachers who do not possess the required credentials will be provided with a reasonable amount of time to meet state requirements. Ancillary staff will possess state-required credentials before providing services to eligible students.

**Support Systems and Oversight:** Our school will employ special education personnel to provide programs and services for exceptional children and manage the administrative responsibilities and compliance associated with the services. A member of the school leadership team will oversee the special education program. The principal will serve as the school's Section 504 compliance official, ensuring that the school adheres to all applicable provisions of federal and state law relating to exceptional students, including ensuring that all students qualifying under Section 504 and the IDEA receive a free and appropriate public education.

At a minimum, the role of our special education staff will include the following responsibilities: facilitate effective communication with students, parents, teachers, the school leadership team, special education staff, and appropriate social service and community-based agencies; form a partnership with the classroom teacher to develop appropriate instructional practices to meet student needs as detailed in the IEPs and act as a resource to classroom teachers; meet all requirements for special education activities at the school; schedule and hold all initial, re-evaluation, and annual review meetings pertaining to each student's special education program within required timelines;

Continued) ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal special education requirements; provide instruction in a general education classroom setting to the greatest extent possible (consistent with LRE requirements); provide instruction to an individual or groups of students in a separate location, as appropriate; administer formal and informal educational assessments to guide instructional decisions when appropriate; and, maintain documentation of services, progress monitoring data, data specific to progress on IEP goals and objectives, observation logs, communication logs, and any other data specified in a student's IEP.

We will abide by the applicable provisions of IDEA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as they relate to exceptional children. The school will retain this data and prepare any reports needed by the state to comply with federal and state law and regulation.

**Monitoring IEP Implementation and Academic Progress:** A dean will be designated to oversee the implementation of IEPs and will conduct weekly

one-on-one meetings with special education staff to discuss exceptional student progress and the timing of annual reviews and three-year re-evaluations. In addition, each IEP will be reviewed to determine the duration of services to verify compliance with the student's IEP. Progress reports will accompany report cards, and deans will discuss student progress relative to IEP annual goals at one-on-one meetings with teachers. General education teachers will keep a record of the accommodations and modifications that are to be made in the general education setting relative to instruction and testing.

The school will administer its norm-referenced assessment multiple times each year and results will be used to gauge progress against goals. Special education teachers will use this information to determine areas of critical need for special education students and make instructional decisions to positively affect student achievement. In addition to this norm-referenced assessment, special education providers will use curriculum-based assessments and other data collection tools to monitor progress on IEP goals and objectives.

Communication on IEP Implementation: Parents will be provided progress reports on IEP goals and objectives consistent with the school's report card marking period. Special education teachers also will discuss these progress reports individually with students. Special Education Procedural Safeguards will be provided to each student's parent or guardian: upon referral for special education testing; at least annually when conducting an annual review of the student's IEP; whenever there is a change of placement; and, whenever a manifestation determination meeting is being conducted. School staff involved in the education of exceptional students will meet regularly to share strategies that are resulting in the meeting of IEP academic and other goals, and discuss opportunities to improve special education programming.

Related Services: Students with IEPs requiring related services (including speech, social work, physical, and occupational therapy, etc.) will be provided such services consistent with their IEP. Services will be provided by properly certified and licensed therapists and providers who will be employed, contracted through an agency, or, if the option is available and desired, contracted through the local school district or other entity.

## **Student Performance Standards**

1. *Describe the student performance standards for the school as a whole.*
2. *Explain the use of any evaluation tool or assessment that the proposed charter school will use in addition to any state or federally mandated tests. Describe how this data will be used to drive instruction and improve the curriculum over time for the benefit of students.*
3. *Explain the policies and standards for promoting students, including students with special needs, from one grade level to the next. Discuss how and when promotion criteria will be communicated to parents and students.*
4. *Provide the public charter school's exit standards for graduating **ALL** students. These standards should set forth what students in the **last grade served** will know and be able to do. Be sure to include plans for the "At-Risk" population.*

Goals:

Briefly stated, our school performance standards (goals) are:

- On average, students in at least their second year at the school will score at or above the 65th percentile in a majority of grades and tested subjects in grades 2-8 as measured by beginning-to-end-of-year growth on a nationally normed standardized assessment.
- On all state End-of-Grade assessments administered, students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will, on average, meet or exceed the performance of demographically similar schools in the LEA.
- Each year, the mean NCE gain on the EVAAS for the school will be, at a minimum, meets expectations.
- As the state transitions to the READY Accountability Model, each year the school's status will meet or exceed the expectations of the model.

Evaluation Tools: The school will administer a nationally normed assessment in the fall and the spring to measure each year's academic growth. These assessments also will be used as a tool to improve instruction. Beginning-of-year and mid-year tests will allow teachers and school leaders to gauge student progress, change instruction where necessary, and measure the effectiveness of those changes. Additionally, the ACT Explore exam will be administered to all 8th-graders. This exam will provide students with feedback on competency gaps relative to their career aspirations and offer insights into their academic readiness for college.

Promotion/Retention: The principal is authorized to make initial grade placement of students and has the final decision regarding the promotion, acceleration, and retention of students. A student is expected to progress through one grade each year, but the practice of promoting students who have failed to master grade-level curriculum is incompatible with our mission. On occasion, it may be in a student's best interest to accelerate him or her more than one grade or retain him or her to repeat a current grade. If a parent or teacher wishes a grade-level change to be considered, a written request is to be provided to the principal for consideration. These criteria will be shared with families in the parent-student handbook.

If a student fails to score proficient on the state's 3rd-grade EOG reading test and the results are validated through re-testing, additional interventions and a personalized reading improvement and monitoring plan will be offered. If not proficient after these interventions, the student will be retained unless they meet a good-cause exemption. Retained students will receive additional intervention support.

Any decision to retain an exceptional child will be determined by the principal, in consultation with the IEP Team. Special education students may not be retained based solely on their exceptionality, but retention may account for factors such as a student's ability to fit in socially and emotionally with their present grade level.

Exit Standards: Students will exit our school and be promoted to highschool in accordance with the North Carolina Student Accountability Standards. As stewards of student learning, however, we believe that students should leave our school academically prepared for a rigorous high school program and with the required skills, both social and academic, to graduate from high school

and be college ready. The practice of promoting students who have failed to master part of their grade-level curriculum is incompatible with the state's gateway standards, our academic goals, and our mission to ensure "every student develops the knowledge, tools, and skills for lifelong success in and outside of the classroom."

**Student Conduct:**

*Provide a brief narrative that disseminates how student conduct will be governed at the proposed charter school and how this plan **aligns** with the overall mission and proposed Education Plan of the charter school.*

*Provide a draft copy of the student handbook specific to the proposed charter school within the appendices (Appendix D).*

*Be sure to include:*

- 1. Practices the school will use to promote effective discipline.*
- 2. A preliminary list and definitions of the offenses which may result in suspension or expulsion of students.*
- 3. An explanation of how the school will take into account the rights of students with disabilities in regards to these actions that may or must lead to suspension and expulsion.*
- 4. Policies and procedures disseminating due process rights, including grievance procedures, for when a student is suspended or expelled.*

Promotion of Effective Discipline: The guiding philosophy behind our school discipline policy and our positive school culture begins with a commitment to offer families a public charter school with a challenging academic program. We will adopt a program called Behave with Care (Simple Rule 2), which includes school-wide behavior and classroom management practices. We will establish a learning environment that ensures that students feel welcomed and supported while outlining clear rules, procedures, and structures to help students understand the consequences of their actions. This program will be similar in all classrooms and grades to foster a consistency in expectations, ensure that students are familiar with the rules, and help teachers develop self-managing classrooms and reduce disruptive behavior. As a result, the discipline policy will become an embedded part of the culture of our school.

Behave with Care is designed to reinforce positive student behaviors so other behaviors become less likely. Teachers and school staff will consistently reinforce positive behavior using strategies such as relationship-building, development of classroom contracts, precise praise of positive behavior, and individual student affirmations. Teachers will set expectations for their students at the beginning of the year and will refer to and reinforce the expectations, supported by a school-wide formal behavior management system, throughout the year. Students will always know what is expected of them and will be challenged to hold themselves and each other accountable.

Our Behave with Care approach is built on research-based programs for reinforcing positive behaviors, correcting problem behaviors, setting clear expectations, and building teacher-student and peer relationships. It emphasizes preventing problem behavior, developing pro-social skills, and addressing negative behaviors by solving problems and applying consistent

consequences. These proactive measures will establish and strengthen a positive culture at the school.

**Equitable Application:** We will ensure that the Behave with Care program is equitably applied to all students at the school, while remaining mindful of individual student needs. Our six-level, school-wide system clearly outlines examples of behaviors at each level and appropriate consequences. Teachers record the details of incidents in AtSchool, our computerized student information system. This will ensure that all behavior incidents are noted and treated consistently, and that records of the incidents are always available to parents. Weekly teacher observations and feedback will help ensure consistency from student to student and from classroom to classroom.

**Professional Development:** To successfully implement Behave with Care, our school will provide professional development specifically designed to help school leaders and staff build positive, productive, and trusting relationships with students. This includes training before the start of each school year, with ongoing support throughout the year in the form of additional face-to-face professional development, e-learning, virtual classroom instruction, observations with feedback and coaching, and video modeling. Teachers will learn strategies to establish safe and orderly classrooms, reinforce positive behaviors, address problem behaviors, and encourage students to take responsibility for their actions.

**Offenses; Application to Students with Disabilities; Due Process:** Our draft parent-student handbook (Appendix D) includes information on major aspects of the formal student discipline policy, including offenses eligible for disciplinary action, applicability, and the disciplinary process itself. We will adhere to the NCDPI policies and procedures to ensure that we follow due process and grievance procedures when we are considering suspending or expelling students with disabilities or suspected disabilities.

**IV. GOVERNANCE, OPERATIONS and CAPACITY**

(No more than ten total pages in this section)

**NOTE:** Please answer all sections completely. Do not use "same as LEA" or "whatever the law states". Lack of proper documentation could deem the application incomplete.

**Governance:**

**Private Nonprofit Corporation:**

\*The nonprofit corporation must be officially authorized by the NC Secretary of State by the final approval interview date.

*Name of Private Nonprofit:* Gateway Charter Academy, Inc.

*Mailing Address:* 201 N. Green St.

*City/State/Zip:* Greensboro NC 27401

*Street Address:* 201 N. Green St.

*Phone:* 317-997-7331

*Fax:*

*Name of registered agent and address:* Robert Parrish  
201 N. Green St.  
Greensboro, NC 27401

*FEDERAL TAX ID:* 46-4192980

**Tax-Exempt Status 501 (c)(3)**

The private nonprofit listed as the responsible organization for the proposed charter school has received 501 (c)(3) status:

Yes (copy of letter from federal government attached: Appendix E)  
 No

**NOTE:** If the non-profit organization has yet to obtain the 501(c)(3) status, the tax-exempt status must be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service within twenty-four (24) months of the date the Charter Application is given final approval.

**Governance and Organizational Structure of Private Non-Profit Organization:**

The private nonprofit corporation is the legal entity that has responsibility for all aspects of the proposed charter school. Its members should reflect the ability to operate a charter school from both business and education perspectives.

Please complete the table provided depicting the initial members of the nonprofit organization.

<b>Board Member Name</b>	<b>Board Title</b>	<b>County/State of Residence</b>	<b>Current Occupation</b>
Olga Wright	Director	GUILFORD	Paralegal, Smith

			Moore Leatherwood LLP
Jeffrey Hyde	Director	GUILFORD	Owner-Operator, Aesthetic Images Photography
Robert Parrish	Lead Applicant	GUILFORD	Assistant Professor, Elon Law School
Ashlee Wiley	Director	GUILFORD	Director of Marketing and Development
Debra Wilson	Director	GUILFORD	K-12 Educator
Jeffrey Phillips	Director	GUILFORD	Guilford County Commissioner; Phillips Wealth Mgmt

**Please provide the following in this location of the APPLICATION:**

1. *A description of the governance structure of the proposed charter school, including the governing board's functions, primary duties, roles and responsibilities as it relates to overseeing the charter school. Include how the board will recruit, hire, and supervise the lead administrator.*

Functions and Duties: Our Board understands and takes seriously our charge to uphold the expectations and goals set forth in our mission statement and charter and to act as fiscal stewards at the school. Our Board has the primary responsibility of promoting the goals of the school, and will do so by adopting and implementing policies that ensure effective governance, transparency, and good patterns of communication among the Board, school leaders, and our management partner. We will perform the functions essential to governing an excellent school, ensuring that students are learning, that funds are appropriately managed, and that our school complies with all charter, state, and federal requirements. We will review and update policies as necessary with input from our legal counsel, John Flynn of Carruthers & Roth.

Roles and Responsibilities: Our Board will perform functions including but not limited to:

- Articulating, maintaining, and driving our mission throughout the school community.
- Reviewing and approving academic goals.
- Reviewing and approving school policies.
- Holding NHA accountable for the efficient and effective operation of the school and for the achievement of academic goals.
- Monitoring performance toward academic and operating goals.
- Reviewing and approving the school's annual budgets and ensuring that proper financial procedures are in place and effectively implemented.
- Ensuring that sufficient enrichment programs are created to supplement the education program.
- Appointing officers and committees as needed.
- Adopting, amending, and repealing bylaws as needed.
- Retaining independent legal counsel to assist in oversight, and hiring an independent auditor to conduct an annual school audit.
- Developing and maintaining effective relations with NCDPI and the Office

of Charter Schools.

- Ensuring that meetings are conducted in accordance with open meetings laws and that we comply with conflict of interest and freedom of information laws.

We also will regularly receive reports on student performance and assessment data from the school, which will include operational information pertinent to student performance such as student count numbers, attrition percentages, attendance, discipline, percent of students below grade-level, percent of students with an IEP, and more. School leaders, with NHA as appropriate, will provide us with the information needed to assess all aspects of the school's performance.

Our Board is independent of NHA. As the charter holder for the school, we are responsible for achieving charter goals and advancing our mission. We are partnering with NHA to deliver an educational program that we are confident will serve our community well, achieve our charter goals, and advance our mission. Our Board will hold NHA accountable for results. We will retain independent legal counsel, will annually contract with an independent auditor, and will contract with a third-party evaluator of the educational program as deemed appropriate.

Hiring Lead Administrator: The Board will collaborate with NHA in hiring, evaluating, and overseeing the school principal. NHA offers an experienced and expert school leadership recruitment team that identifies and evaluates school leaders for their skills, experience, and personal attributes. These specialists are experienced in evaluating both internal and external applicants, and while our Board and NHA will leverage their recruitment networks to identify qualified external applicants, we will work with NHA to first identify and recruit outstanding candidates from within the network of NHA partner schools. Please see Appendix F for an organization chart outlining our intended governance structure.

2. *Describe the size, current and desired composition, powers, and duties of the governing board. Identify key skills, areas of expertise, and constituencies that will be represented on the governing board. Explain how this governance structure and composition will help ensure that a) the school will be an educational and operational success; b) the board will evaluate the success of the school and school leader; and c) there will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders, including parents.*

Our Board is currently comprised of six members. Our disparate backgrounds in education, business, finance, nonprofit governance, and community advocacy and service will help us ensure that the school will always be academically, operationally, and financially viable.

As needed, we will seek new members who possess the experience and ability to individually make a meaningful contribution to the Board and to effectively govern the school. Qualifications for Board members will include an interest in children and their education, enthusiasm for the school and commitment to its mission, and willingness to give time and energy to the school. Board members' special expertise in such areas as finance, education, law, business, and governance will help address the ongoing needs of the school. Board members must be willing and able to represent the community and interpret our student community's needs and views; be committed to an innovative and high-standards approach to public education;



and, demonstrate a commitment to represent the school to the community.

**Ensuring Educational and Operational Success:** As the Board, we will be responsible for overall school governance, including: the adoption of fiscal, academic, personnel, discipline, and grievance policies as appropriate; decisions about hiring and terminating teachers; and our core responsibility of managing the relationship with NHA. It will be our primary responsibility to hold NHA accountable for the successful operation of the school.

**Evaluation of the School and the School Leader:** We will require school leaders and NHA to provide us with regular reports on student performance, assessment data, operational data, and any perception data. We will use this information to assess the school's progress towards our performance goals, and performance of the school leader. When necessary, we may also contract for an evaluation of NHA to ensure that NHA and school leaders are meeting and exceeding expectations. Through our services agreement with NHA, our Board maintains the authority to express reasonable dissatisfaction with the principal. If NHA and the principal have been given sufficient time and support to remedy an issue and there has been insufficient improvement, the Board can order that the principal be terminated.

**Involvement of Key Stakeholders:** We will ensure that all stakeholders are represented before us, and we have reserved a position on our Board for a parent. This will make us attentive to parent desires and needs in our governance. We will also welcome feedback from parents and any parent groups at our board meetings.

- 3. Explain the procedure by which the founding board members have been recruited and selected. If a position is vacant, how and on what timeline will new members be recruited and added to the board?*

Our membership came together as a result of our passion for the east Greensboro community, and the desire to invest in our community. We believe that providing the opportunity for and access to high-quality public school choices for area families is one of the best long term investments we can make. Our Board members bring to the school extensive experience in education, law, business, finance, nonprofit governance, and community advocacy and service. We have diverse and deep commitments to the community, including service on the Board of County Commissioners and non-profit boards, including the Greensboro Children's Museum, Justice for All NC, Inc., Interactive Resource Center, and Transition Network.

We understand how important it is to offer high-quality public school choices to our families and community. As an example, we've seen the impact made by the Elon Law School and its Greensboro campus. The campus opened in 2006 and helped spark some revitalization in the downtown area with new student economic and social activity and with an influx of highly educated men and women from across the country. Our lead applicant, Mr. Parrish, recognized an opportunity to match his long-time interest in leading a charter school board with Greensboro's efforts for economic and social revitalization.

We will seek to anticipate vacancies to the greatest extent possible. For example, we will ask members to notify the Board Chair early in the year of

the member's term expiration if he or she does not wish to renew his or her term. We will be proactive in recruitment for potential vacancies by maintaining a list of contacts and associates who may wish to serve on the Board. Appointments to the Board to complete the terms of vacant seats will be made in accordance with our bylaws.

4. *Outline below the strategic board calendar detailing how often the board will meet according to the bylaws established.*

We will meet monthly and more often if needed to effectively govern the school.

5. *What kinds of orientation or training will new board members receive, and what kinds of ongoing professional development will existing board members receive? The plan for training and development should include a timetable, specific topics to be addressed, and requirements for participation (Board Policies Draft: Appendix J).*

Board Orientation and Training: All our founding Board members will participate in orientation before and during the first year of operation. Future Board members will also be trained using this framework during their first year of Board service. This training will be structured around three modules that cover a broad range of governance topics. A typical example of structure and content follows.

- Module 1 will discuss, among other things: the governance model of the school, including Board roles and responsibilities; details about Board processes and procedures; the structure of Board meetings and the open meetings and public records laws; and, information about the school's programs, systems, and policies.

- Module 2 will discuss, among other things: parliamentary procedures and the role of Board members in the use of such procedures; a review of the school's bylaws and articles of incorporation; a review of the services agreement with the school's management partner, including a discussion about roles and responsibilities of both the Board and NHA, autonomy of the Board and oversight of NHA, reports due to the Board, and termination procedures; a review of the charter and delineation of responsibilities to the authorizer; and, a discussion of the lease and its provisions.

- Module 3 will discuss, among other things: proper use of executive sessions and the limitations on items that can be discussed out of public; structure of public comment periods at Board meetings; reviewing, approving, and overseeing school budgets; allocation of Board funds and their proper use; meaning and impact of AYP/No Child Left Behind requirements; meaning, impact, and reporting of state assessments and the school's formative assessment process; the School Improvement Plan process; our student discipline policy and behavior management system; our parent-student handbook; resources available to the Board and the school through NHA; parent satisfaction survey; annual reporting requirements; and, crisis management.

We will schedule a minimum of three to five hours of governance training for Board members each year, and we will select programs that best meet the current needs of individual members and the school. Our Board certainly will take advantage of the training opportunities offered through the Office of Charter Schools. We understand that this webinar-based series of training sessions offers more than 15 hours of valuable training to board members on

various aspects of charter school governance.

We will also seek support and advice on board governance training from a number of national and local sources, such as the Center for Public Skills Training, the National Charter School Resource Center, and the North Carolina Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

- 6. Describe the board's ethical standards and procedures for identifying and addressing conflicts of interest. Identify any existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts if the application is approved; discuss specific steps that the board will take to avoid any actual conflicts and to mitigate perceived conflicts.*

**Ethical Standards and Conflicts of Interest:** Our Board will govern the school with respect, dignity, and the utmost consideration for ethical behavior and processes. Pursuant to the Board's bylaws, a Board member shall inform the Board of any actual or perceived conflict of interest with regard to any transaction contemplated by the Board. Conflicts of interest include transactions in which a member of the Board has a material financial interest, or with which the member is presently serving as a director, trustee, officer, or general partner of another party. The transaction may be approved only by a vote of the majority of Board members who have no conflict of interest.

**Existing Conflicts of Interest:** There are no existing relationships of founding Board members that could pose an actual or perceived conflict of interest if this charter school application is approved. The Board will consult our independent legal counsel should any real or apparent conflict of interest ever arise.

**Avoiding Actual and Perceived Conflicts:** As noted, pursuant to the Board's bylaws, a Board member shall inform the Board of any direct or indirect conflict of interest related to any transaction contemplated by the Board. The Board will consult our independent legal counsel should any real or apparent conflict of interest ever arise. Our legal counsel will also provide support and advise as we review transactions for any actual and perceived conflicts of interest.

- 7. Explain the decision-making processes the board will use to develop school policies.*

With assistance and guidance from our legal counsel, the Board will ensure that our school has all necessary policies and procedures in place, including those related to discipline, student records and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), special education, English language learner (ELL) student identification and related services, emergency procedures, and fiscal operations. School leaders, in conjunction with our legal counsel, will develop draft policies consistent with law and our operating model for consideration by the Board. The Board will review and discuss these draft policies, revising as necessary and desired to ensure that such policies are aligned with the school's mission and are appropriately consistent with the Board's responsibilities. When in final form, we will present the policies for adoption at a public meeting.

- 8. Describe any advisory bodies, councils, or associations listed in the organization chart or to be formed, including the roles and duties of that body, and the reporting structure as it relates to the school's governing body and leadership.*

At this time, our Board does not intend to establish any formal advisory bodies, councils, or associations affecting the governance of the school. Should it be deemed necessary or desired, the Board will create committees

(e.g., finance; school culture; etc.) to meet as a subset of the Board on specific topic areas and report back to the entire body at regular Board meetings.

Appendix F presents an organization chart illustrating the structure of the school, including the relationship among the Board, our management partner, the school leader, the academic leadership team and teachers, and other staff. The Board will oversee the school's management partner (NHA) and, in collaboration with NHA, the school's principal. In turn, the principal oversees the academic deans, each of whom oversees a group of grade-level teachers (such as: K-2; 3-5; and 6-8). The principal also oversees the administrative functions, headed by the school's registrar. Our Board and NHA will jointly employ teaching staff. The Board will have ultimate hiring and firing authority. Consistent with our mission, we will also have a parent body at our school that will help fulfill our mission.

*9. Discuss the school's grievance process for parents and staff members.*

Parent Grievances: Classroom teachers will be the first line of communication for parents and guardians to address concerns. Teachers will respond to parent inquiries promptly, respectfully, and in accordance with our guidelines for handling parent grievances. If parents are unsatisfied with the response from their student's classroom teacher (or if the nature of the complaint does not involve a classroom teacher), parents may contact a designated member of the school leadership team, to arrange a meeting to discuss the concerns. Gateway Charter Academy will make every reasonable attempt to respond appropriately to parent concerns in a way that resolves the issue satisfactorily at the building level.

On the rare occasion when speaking directly with the teacher or the school leadership team does not resolve the concern, parents or guardians may bring the unresolved concern to the parent relations department of NHA. This department helps parents and guardians work with school leaders to resolve such conflicts. Parents have several ways to report a concern. They can call the department using a toll-free number. That number is provided in the parent-student handbook and also may be requested from the school's main office. Parents may also report concerns using the "Contact Us" page of the NHA website or by emailing NHA at its general contact email address. That address is also listed in the handbook and available from the school's main office.

If school-level efforts and NHA-level efforts do not resolve the issue to a parent's satisfaction, concerns may be brought directly to our Board. Parents should directly contact the Board if they have concerns directly relating to a Board policy or decision, if there is an alleged violation of laws or the terms of the charter, or if parents have concerns about the school management or operations. Concerns brought to the Board may be presented verbally in an open meeting or in writing. The Board will address the concern at or before the next public meeting.

Procedures for Employee Grievances: We will adopt a process to help staff resolve concerns or grievances. The dean will be teachers' first line of communication for addressing concerns (deans will address any concerns to the principal). As a second option, staff may contact a representative at the NHA Service Center. Employees also may take advantage of a third option, an employee hotline that lets them provide feedback anonymously. Concerns

submitted confidentially via the hotline (online or via phone) are immediately escalated to the NHA service center for review. In the rare event that staff cannot resolve a concern by speaking directly with the school leaders; by communicating with an NHA representative; or, by communicating through the hotline, staff may bring the unresolved concern to our Board.

Employment between staff and the Board and NHA is on an at-will basis, and teachers will be jointly employed by the Board and NHA. Policies and procedures have been defined to handle unacceptable performance by teachers or school leaders. We will create a working environment that allows administrators to make decisions sensitive to the demands of students. We believe our administrators should be able to identify and support or terminate ineffective staff as appropriate. We will determine staff structuring and restructuring based on skill and performance to best serve the needs of students. In the event that performance is unacceptable, and depending on the particular circumstances, discipline may occur. Discipline may include a warning, creation of a performance coaching plan or performance improvement plan, or suspension/administrative leave. Employees will receive additional coaching when necessary because we hope all employees can grow and succeed. If a teacher does not meet performance expectations or if there is a significant violation of policies or procedures, termination of employment may be recommended to the Board.

### Governance and Organizational Structure of Private Non-Profit Organization (continued)

#### Include in the Appendices:

1. A well-defined organizational chart showing the relationship of the Board of Directors to the parents and staff of the proposed charter school. This chart should also include lines of authority to and from any outside entity that will play a role in managing or supporting the charter school (such as educational service providers, advisory bodies or parent/teacher councils). (Appendix F)
2. A one-page resume from each founding board member and responses to the questions found on the Charter School Board Member Form (Appendix G).
3. The proposed by-laws, which must include a Conflict of Interest Policy for board members and a stated commitment to the NC Open Meetings Law (Appendix H).
4. A copy of the articles of incorporation, if available. If not available, this document must be available prior to interview by SBE, the applicant must demonstrate that it has been applied for prior to submission of the proposed application. (Appendix I)
5. Copy of any board policies if adopted already (Appendix J).
6. Copies of meeting minutes (if available), relevant to the development of the charter school plan, during the application process (Appendix K).

### Proposed Management Organization (Educational Management Organization or Charter Management Organization)

*If the proposed school does not intend to contract with an education service provider, mark "Not Applicable" and follow the direction #3 in the Application Specifications.*

**Not Applicable**

If the Charter School plans to contract for services with an educational management organization (EMO) or charter management organization (CMO), please specify the contact information below.

Name of the Company: National Heritage Academies  
Address: 3850 Broadmoor Ave SE  
Grand Rapids MI 49512  
Website: [www.nhaschools.com](http://www.nhaschools.com)  
Phone Number: 616-222-1700  
Contact Person: Mack Moore  
Fax: 616-222-1701  
Email: [mmoore2@nhaschools.com](mailto:mmoore2@nhaschools.com)

1. *Explain how the contract with the specified EMO or CMO will be in the best educational and financial interest of the charter school. Please include a copy of the proposed management agreement as Appendix L of the specified EMO or CMO.*

Our Board has reviewed the draft services agreement with NHA. We have concluded that it provides the desired arrangement for the school. We commit to due diligence in our oversight of NHA's performance.

The NHA partnership offers a comprehensive educational program including: curriculum, professional development, staffing, and more, as well as a facility for our school. NHA serves more than 51,000 students in 76 schools in nine states, and has more than 20,000 students on waiting lists. This includes six schools in North Carolina serving more than 4,000 students with waiting lists totaling nearly 2,500 students.

**Best Educational Interest:** We chose to partner with NHA because of its strong academic record and its long-standing, successful partnerships with schools:

- A partner charter school board has never terminated its services agreement with NHA.

- In 2011-12, all 21 charters for NHA partner schools up for renewal by authorizers were successfully renewed; in 2012-13, all five charters up for renewals were reauthorized. Since 1995 when the first NHA partner school opened, NHA partner schools have successfully applied for and been granted renewal of their charters on all but one occasion (in 2005, Rochester Leadership Academy Charter School in New York was not renewed after failing to meet goals in its accountability plan).

**Best Financial Interest:** Our Board welcomes NHA's solid financial footing and the direct investment it has pledged to our school. In the operation of partner schools and the construction of facilities, NHA has invested significant financial resources, as well as its reputation:

- In building a new school, NHA typically leverages millions of dollars in private capital to create a new or renovated facility.

- Consistent with our services agreement, NHA will fund and deliver the educational program desired by the Board even if public revenues come up short. In this way, NHA assumes all financial risk.

2. *What other EMO/CMOs were pursued and why did the applicant select this particular one?*

*Please include information regarding other management organization's fees and financial/academic records that led to the selection of the proposed EMO/CMO as the best fit for this proposed school.*

Through our personal and professional networks, we have followed the public charter school movement for years. We've seen the successes, the failures, and, importantly, characteristics of schools that have been able to persevere. We have been impressed by those schools, and their ability to consistently improve student achievement while maintaining financial viability and effective operations. One such school is Greensboro Academy, operated by NHA, here in Guilford County. The school is perennially a top performer and has overwhelming parent demand. We are also watching the new NHA partner school in our area, Summerfield Charter Academy, and have been impressed with the resources and programs we have seen to date.

While we are aware of and have researched other EMOs and CMOs, it is NHA's full-service commitment including commitment of financing with no indebtedness for our Board that was a key factor in our decision. We were motivated in particular by seeing NHA's work locally, including their recent construction of Summerfield Charter Academy, and NHA's success in urban areas around the country.

NHA also encouraged us to look at other options and to examine national studies on charter school performance, such as the well-known reports issued by CREDO, and other state-specific charter-school analyses. Stanford University's CREDO study (Jan. 2013) found that the change in performance associated solely with attending an NHA partner school was positive in both reading and math. These effects have been maintained across the large and diverse portfolio of NHA partner schools.

NHA's track record of academic success and its commitment to long-term successful partnerships with its schools makes it uniquely positioned and unquestionably qualified to deliver the educational program envisioned for Gateway Charter Academy. We will develop systems and policies to hold NHA accountable for academic, financial, and organizational viability, if we are granted this charter.

- 3. Provide and discuss student performance, governance performance and financial data from other schools managed by the management company to demonstrate how this organization is a good fit for the targeted student population. Nationally, what is the highest and lowest performing school of the EMO/CMO? Why are these two schools so different in overall achievement?*

We are partnering with NHA because students at its partner schools consistently succeed. NHA schools consistently earn clean independent audits, and no NHA partner board has ever terminated a services agreement with NHA.

NHA partners with six schools in North Carolina, five of which have academic performance data (one just opened in fall 2013). Greensboro Academy is the highest-performing NHA partner school. The other four (Queen's Grant Community School, Forsyth Academy, Research Triangle Charter Academy, and PreEminent Charter School) are case studies that support our choice of NHA as our management partner.

Queen's Grant Community School (K-8), in Mecklenburg County, outperformed

Charlotte-Mecklenburg averages in 11 of 12 subjects and grades as measured by the North Carolina EOG assessments. In 2012-13, performance for new students there grew at a rate of 175% in reading and 166% in math, compared to the national average of 100% (measured on NWEA MAP). Economically disadvantaged students grew faster than students not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

PreEminent, in Wake County, serves twice as many at-risk students as the district average; in fact, only nine of 166 schools in the county serve a higher proportion. Nonetheless:

- In math, PreEminent increased proficiency by 11.5 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.

- Based on results from the Common Core-aligned NWEA assessment given three times in 2012-13, PreEminent's academic growth averaged 115% compared to the national average of 100%. That includes 20% above-average growth in reading. PreEminent was a Reward school in 2013, and earned a five-year charter renewal.

Forsyth Academy enrolls more than 78% minority students, compared to a state average of approximately 50% and a county average of nearly 60%. Yet the percentage of minority students proficient in both math and reading is markedly higher at Forsyth than both the county average (57% vs. 47%) and the state average (57% vs. 54%). Additionally:

- Serving similar students, Forsyth Academy in 2012-13 outperformed three of five neighboring schools in reading and four of five in math. It also met more annual measurable objectives (AMOs) (26 of 29, 89%) than nearby schools.

- From fall-to-spring 2013, Forsyth students grew at a rate 25% above the national average, including 33% above-average growth in language usage.

NHA and Research Triangle have installed a new school leader, and there are signs their commitment to improving student performance is producing results:

- Serving similar students, Research Triangle outperformed all five neighboring schools in reading, and one in math. It also met more AMOs (84%) than three neighboring schools.

- Research Triangle has 94% minority students, a percentage that is nearly twice the state average and 13 points more than Durham County schools and a higher percentage of these minority students are proficient in both math and reading compared to county schools.

Highest and Lowest Performers: On average, students increase their academic performance each year they attend an NHA partner school. This is true at new schools and those that have operated for years. On the fall 2013 baseline assessment administered at all NHA partner schools, the highest-performing school was Greensboro Academy, which opened in 1999, where 82.7% of students tested proficient. NHA's lowest-performing school was Regent Park Scholars Charter Academy in Detroit, which is in just its third year of operation and



where 87% of students began the year below the national proficiency average.

Students first entering an NHA partner school average at the 31st percentile compared to national norms but their first-year academic growth averages in the 74th percentile nationally. Nearly 70% of students at all NHA partner schools meet or exceed typical growth in an academic year. At more than 75% of NHA partner schools, students outperform their peers at the neighboring district schools.

- 4. Describe how the governance structure will be affected; if at all, by the EMO/CMO and particularly discuss how the board of directors of the charter school will govern the school independently of the EMO/CMO.*

Governance Structure: The Board will oversee NHA and, with NHA, will oversee the principal. The principal will oversee the academic deans and the school's administrative staff. Please see Appendix F for a copy of our organizational chart.

Board Independence: Our Board is independent of NHA. We will hold the charter for the school and will be responsible for achieving our goals and advancing our mission. The terms of our services agreement with NHA are favorable to us, and allow us to hold NHA accountable for school results as NHA provides the educational program. We will also retain independent legal counsel, annually contract with an independent auditor, and contract with a third-party evaluator of the educational program as desired.

Our use of the school facility will be defined in a separate Lease Agreement. If we choose to terminate our management relationship with NHA, the lease entitles us to remain in the building for the rest of the school year, with an option to rent for another year at the same rate, while public per pupil aid continues to flow to the school to sustain operations. This gives us additional independence.

Throughout its history, NHA has worked with local community leaders to develop and launch four to six new charter schools each year. As it has amassed this experience, NHA has honed its process. NHA's expertise in opening and operating charter schools also means that our founding Board members can appropriately focus their energies on governance. And, with NHA providing start-up funding and facility arrangements, our founding Board members will not be required to raise funds, secure real estate, or arrange difficult-to-obtain facilities financing. Our proposed services agreement has been legally reviewed, authorizer-approved, and successfully followed with authorizer oversight for six existing and one preliminarily approved NHA partner schools in North Carolina. We are confident we have chosen the right management partner.

- 5. Provide a description of the relationship that will exist between the charter school employees and the Management Organization.*

With help from independent legal counsel, the Board and NHA have drafted a proposed services agreement that spells out relationships that will exist among charter school employees, the school, and our management partner, NHA (see Article VIII of the draft agreement in Appendix L). We believe that the best structure for our school is to have joint employment of the teachers with NHA, and to have the school's principal and deans directly employed by NHA. Our Board will govern the school, and essentially hires NHA to operate the school. In the process, we will hold NHA and school leaders accountable

for the success of the educational program and, as an essential part of that, the management of school staff.

Through our services agreement with NHA, the Board maintains the authority to express reasonable dissatisfaction with the principal. If NHA and the principal have been given sufficient time and support to remedy an issue and insufficient improvement has happened, the Board can order that the principal be terminated.

6. *Explain how the contract includes measurable objectives whereby the charter school board can evaluate annually the performance of the EMO/CMO; and if necessary, terminate the contract without significant obstacles.*

We have ensured, through review with our independent legal counsel, that our services agreement with NHA requires NHA to keep our Board in compliance with our charter contract at all times including achieving the performance objectives below.

Annual Evaluation Metrics: Accountability metrics expected to be used to hold NHA accountable for academic, operational, and financial results include:

- On average, students in at least their second year at the school will score at or above the 65th percentile in a majority of grades and tested subjects in grades 2-8 as measured by beginning-to-end-of-year growth on a nationally normed standardized assessment.
- For students enrolled two years or more, the school will meet or exceed the performance of similar nearby schools.
- The Board will conduct a formal annual performance review of NHA.
- Attendance will meet or exceed 93%.
- A parent-satisfaction survey will generate a response rate of 50% or more and will show satisfaction of 80% or higher.
- The school will receive an unqualified audit annually.

Contract Termination: We may terminate our agreement with NHA prior to the end of the term, with or without cause, with 90 days' written notice. We also may terminate the agreement if NHA fails to remedy a material breach within 30 days' notice (e.g., failure to account for or make expenditures approved by us; failure to follow Board-approved policies; receipt of an unsatisfactory performance rating for the school; etc.). If we terminate our management relationship with NHA, our lease agreement will allow us to remain in the school for the rest of the school year and to rent it for another year at the existing rate. In any instance of termination, per-pupil funding aid will continue to flow to our Board to finance operations.

We expect the highest level of excellence from NHA. If that mark of excellence is not met, we will work with NHA to fix it or we will look for alternate ways to best serve our students.

7. *Is the facility provided by the EMO/CMO? Y*
8. *List the fund balance and surpluses for each school managed by the EMO/CMO over the last*

*three years in North Carolina.*

Six charter schools in North Carolina partner with NHA in arrangements that are similar to the proposed partnership for our school. Five schools have maintained the following fund balances over the past three fiscal years (2011, 2012, 2013) respectively:

- Greensboro Academy: \$56,408, \$24,376, and \$25,369.
- Forsyth Academy: \$6,114, \$14,977, and \$19,410.
- Research Triangle Charter Academy: \$14,663, \$28,525, and \$25,926.
- PreEminent Charter School: \$34,270, \$43,829, \$30,248.
- Queen's Grant Community School (K-8 program only): \$66,469, \$65,831, and \$67,943.

Summerfield Charter Academy opened in fall 2013 (fiscal year 2014) and has not yet generated audited financial statements.

A significant benefit of our partnership with NHA is the company's commitment to providing the initial and ongoing investment needed to ensure a successful opening. This investment will include securing a facility, making contributions to ensure that the educational program is fully implemented from day one, and committing to contributing (not loaning) further financial support if revenues fall short of expenses.

Through both the services agreement and Board oversight, NHA will be obliged to manage and operate the school in accordance with the budget approved by the Board. Expenditures during the academic year shall not deviate materially from the provisions of the approved budget without advance Board approval. As necessary, the Board will review and approve amended budgets based on student need.

The services agreement with NHA also clarifies that NHA assumes the obligation for all expenses, and thus assumes all the financial risk: if expenses exceed revenues in any given year, the obligation to cover the shortfall is NHA's, and NHA must cover all Board-approved operating costs of the school. In exchange, logically and appropriately, the Board allocates all revenue to NHA. The residual between revenue and expenses, if any, is NHA's financial compensation.

***Private School Conversions: complete ONLY if the proposed charter is a private school conversion.***

***Otherwise, mark "Not Applicable" and follow the direction #3 in the Application Specifications.***

**X Not Applicable**

***Applicable" and follow the direction #3 in the Application Specifications. Understand that the replication means that a new charter school will be governed separately from the charter school the application is modeled after.***

**X Not Applicable**

**Projected Staff:**

Provide, as Appendix M, a list of positions anticipated for the charter school; (e.g., principal or director; finance officer, administrative support staff; teachers (part-time and full-time); paraprofessionals/teaching assistants, clerical, and maintenance.). Be mindful that your predicted administration and staff match the projected enrollment noted in Section I, course offerings and align with the proposed budget.

## **Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management**

Include the following information for the proposed charter school:

**Recruiting:** Excellent teaching in each classroom is fundamental to student academic achievement. Our school will benefit here from our partnership with NHA, which will draw on its extensive candidate network and recruitment capabilities to conduct the teacher recruiting process. Below are recruiting strategies that are among those to be used by the NHA talent acquisition team.

**Traditional Recruiting:** NHA has a very strong and experienced team of recruiters that have been trained to recruit high-caliber teaching candidates while leveraging local, regional, and national networks. NHA is constantly seeking out and screening potential candidates through traditional and new media strategies, including job fairs, university career fairs, social media, and direct referrals. Open positions will be advertised online, in select local markets, and internally throughout the NHA network of 76 operating charter schools. Partnering with industry leading consultants gives NHA the ability to thoroughly assess candidate quality prior to interviewing or hiring. This gives us a deeper insight to teacher potential and cultural fit. Our Board will also be able to recruit candidates, and applications for employment will be available through our school's website.

**Diversity Sourcing:** The NHA talent acquisition team includes members specifically tasked to increase the pool of racially diverse teacher candidates. Minority teacher candidates are found and contacted on an ongoing basis to proactively develop stronger pools of diverse talent. We believe that this active approach to finding and attracting teachers of color gives our school an advantage in maintaining a diverse staff.

- 2. Provide a description of the relationship that will exist between the charter school employees and the nonprofit board. Provide as Appendix L, a draft of the employment policies to be implemented by the proposed charter school.*

In accordance with this application and our proposed services agreement with NHA, teachers will be jointly employed by the Board and NHA, and administrators and other staff will be employed directly by NHA. This arrangement facilitates the effective administration of employment benefits while not reducing our Board's authority to collaborate on the hiring and firing of teachers. As we have been advised, this arrangement also complies with N.C.Gen.Stat. 115C-238.29F(e)(1) and was reviewed and approved by legal counsel for the Department of Public Instruction in 2012. Please reference Appendix N for more detail on our draft employment policies.

- 4. Outline the board's procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel, including conducting criminal background checks.*

**Hiring; Background Checks:** Our management partner uses a standardized human resource software system to manage all personnel-related transactions. In addition to managing compensation and payroll functions, NHA also oversees all background check, licensure, and compliance functions, doing so not only for employees at our school, but for its approximately 4,000 employees at partner schools in nine different states. Our Board will adopt a criminal background check policy consistent with that of Guilford County Schools as

required by law. Please see Appendix J and N for a draft of this policy.

Teachers will be jointly employed by our Board and NHA. Teachers will be recommended by school leadership to the Board for hiring consideration, and NHA will collaborate with and thoroughly brief the Board on personnel selected to fill school leadership positions.

**Dismissing Personnel:** Employment at the school will be on an at-will basis. We will create a working environment that allows administrators to make decisions sensitive to the demands of students, and that includes identifying ineffective staff, terminating their employment, or offering additional support to them as appropriate. In the event that the performance of an employee is unacceptable, and depending on the nature, degree, and circumstances of the incident or incidents, disciplinary action may be taken. Discipline may include a warning, creation of a performance coaching plan or performance improvement plan, suspension, or administrative leave. If an employee does not meet performance expectations after appropriate interventions, or if there is a significant violation of policies or procedures, termination of employment may be recommended to the Board.

Our school's Employee Handbook will include information on the corrective-action and termination processes. We will ensure that it is provided to each employee on or before the first day of work and always available at the school's front office.

*5. Outline the school's proposed salary range and employment benefits for all levels of employment.*

The school budget included in this application offers detail on proposed salaries for all positions.

Gateway Charter Academy will operate under a performance-based compensation philosophy, and will implement NHA's "Total Rewards" approach to compensation. This approach rewards administrators, faculty, and staff who have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement. The Total Rewards approach uses and evaluates all aspects of staff compensation (base pay, incentive pay, recognition programs, benefit design, tuition programs, etc.) to help recruit staff, invest in them, and encourage and reward behaviors that are proven to enhance student learning.

Our "pay for performance" philosophy rewards outcomes. We will measure student academic growth and proficiency robustly, and hold staff accountable for success. Staff will be evaluated and rewarded based on the accomplishments of the school. Teachers and deans will be evaluated on the academic performance of students in the classrooms they oversee. As part of the annual review process, base salaries or hourly wages for administrators, faculty, and staff will be evaluated and modified based on these individuals' accomplishments. Our administrators also will be empowered to identify and terminate ineffective staff, or offer them additional support, as appropriate.

Components of the Total Rewards structure include: base pay, differentiated based on years of experience and performance; incentive bonus plans by category of employee, and additional compensation for supporting other activities (tutoring; mentoring new teachers; coaching sports; etc.); medical, dental, and vision insurance, historically with relatively with low

co-pays and deductibles; a 401(k) retirement plan with employer match; life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance; short- and long-term disability insurance; a tuition reimbursement program, and more.

*6. Provide the procedures for employee grievance and/or termination.*

Grievance: Our school's distributed leadership approach includes weekly one-on-one time for instructional managers to provide coaching and feedback to teachers. This coaching time, distinct from the weekly observations, specifically includes discussions designed to elicit and address concerns teachers may have. Most issues of concern to teachers should be addressed in this cooperative and collaborative forum. If a teacher's concern requires additional attention, the matter will be referred to the principal and if necessary, heard by the Director of School Quality (DSQ), an experienced school administrator who supervises and mentors small groups of schools and school principals. In addition, NHA's employee ethics hotline is an avenue for employees to anonymously report concerns if they do not feel comfortable speaking directly to their principal or Director of School Quality. The Board will be informed of this step and kept fully apprised of the situation. As a final step, and recognizing the role as joint employers of the school's teachers, the Board will ensure that there is a structure and time to hear grievances from teachers, in executive session if necessary.

Termination: Our staff evaluation data will inform retention, promotion, and termination decisions. If data show that a teacher is not performing adequately, he or she will receive additional coaching and professional development to foster improvement in identified areas. Final employment decisions, made by the school leader with help from the NHA employee relations team, will be sensitive to the needs of students and can include terminating the employment of ineffective staff. Our Board will participate in all teacher termination decisions.

*7. Identify any positions that will have dual responsibilities (within or without the organization) and the funding source for each position.*

No positions are expected to have dual responsibilities outside the school. If it is necessary to have a position with dual responsibilities within the school, such as a social worker who is funded from the general budget and also serves exceptional children through exceptional children's funds, we will ensure that this position is appropriately funded, that accounting is accurate, and that all compliance and reporting requirements are met.

*8. Describe the plans to have qualified staffing adequate for the anticipated special needs population, means for providing qualified staffing for ELL and gifted students.*

The school will recruit teachers licensed in special education to ensure quality instruction for exceptional children. We will have teachers to provide academic support to exceptional students with IEPs, and we will hire or contract with a school psychologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, and social worker as needed. Additional special education staff may be added as the needs of our students become clear. We review credentials to ensure compliance with "highly qualified teacher" requirements; ancillary staff will have state-required credentials before providing services. We also will add qualified staffing for ELL and gifted students as needed.

Our first-year budget includes 7.5 full time equivalent (FTE) staff to meet the needs of exceptional children in year one. When our school is full, we expect to have 11.13 FTE. We have also predicted 0.75 FTE in ELL staffing in

year one and 1.0 FTE at full enrollment.

9. *Provide a narrative detailing the roles and responsibilities, qualifications and appropriate licenses that each position must have to be hired by the non-profit organization and effectively perform the job function(s).*

Principal: The principal will be dedicated to achieving our school's mission. He or she must hold the unwavering belief that all children can and will learn if they receive the right opportunities. Qualified applicants for our school will have a proven record of achieving significant rates of student growth. Strong leadership and management skills are also required, as is the ability to provide instructional support to teachers. To these ends, the principal must be committed to and capable of developing school culture, promoting student achievement, and implementing seamless school operations. Among the numerous responsibilities involved in this are: developing and evaluating the educational program to ensure conformance to state, federal, Board, and NHA standards; collaborating with our Board on hiring and evaluating school staff; implementing a school-wide tool for parent and community communication; reporting school activities and academic achievement to our Board at regular Board meetings; establishing all school procedures and systems; monitoring the use of data in lesson planning and evaluating effectiveness in student academic growth; and, much more.

Principal candidates will have: a bachelor's degree (Master's degree preferred) and three or more years related experience and/or training or equivalent combination of education and experience; exceptional language skills, mathematical skills, reasoning ability, and interpersonal skills. Principals will possess all administrative licensure as required by law.

Deans: In addition to sharing administrative responsibilities of the school with the principal as assigned, the primary responsibility of the deans is to observe, coach, and provide feedback to all assigned teachers through weekly one-on-one conversations. Additional responsibilities include overseeing and monitoring the character development curriculum and its lesson integration, design, and delivery; delivering professional development; and, providing training for effective classroom management. Deans will typically have: a bachelor's degree and a minimum of three to five years of experience in teaching or administration, or an equivalent combination of education and experience; superior language skills, mathematical skills, and reasoning ability; and, an effective collaborative approach to mentoring and developing those who report to him or her. Deans will possess administrative licensure as required by law.

Teachers: Teachers will possess a bachelor's degree, be highly qualified, and have the appropriate teaching licensure as required by law. In addition, teachers will have a demonstrated ability to: communicate and work effectively with parents; adapt teaching style to individual students' specific needs; adapt to differences and changes in characteristics of students, programs, leadership, staff, and community; use varied teaching methodologies to accommodate students' unique learning styles; evaluate tests and measurements of achievement; and, work effectively as a team member. Teachers will be responsible to show capabilities in implementing the curriculum; coordinating with educational assistants; maintaining current achievement level information; assigning additional studies to students not meeting or exceeding achievement; keeping accurate student

records; establishing classroom procedures; ordering supplementary education materials; requesting parent volunteers; and, reporting all education-related activities to the principal. Qualifications will include a bachelor's degree and appropriate teaching license. Special education and ELL teachers also will evidence knowledge about education strategies particular to the special student populations they serve, and will demonstrate effectiveness in adapting instructional and behavioral approaches as necessary.

Continued from 1) Referral Networks: As research indicates that most teachers find teaching positions through referrals, NHA actively pursues new candidates through referrals from its employees and will continue to do so. The current referral program creates a strong pipeline of new candidates applying for positions within its school system.

Career Fairs and Conferences: Recruiters and ambassadors will actively participate in local, regional, and national career fairs and conferences. These representatives will participate in recruiting fairs in North Carolina and around the country. This allows access to upcoming teacher graduates and current teachers who are in the market for new employment opportunities.

Workforce and Talent Pipeline Planning: NHA offers a unique and competitive aspect to strategic planning through its workforce planning team. The workforce planning function allows NHA to gain a deep understanding of the current labor supply and demand. This planning function helps to prepare for current and future hiring as serves as another competitive advantage.

NHA currently employs more than 2,400 teachers and 1,300 supporting school staff, effectively managing recruitment and other elements of school staffing across the nine states in which its partner schools operate.

Retaining: A number of systems and practices will be implemented to encourage a positive culture among school staff and to motivate, engage, reward, develop, and retain school faculty and staff. The school leadership team will have multiple opportunities to formally and informally recognize faculty and staff for example, at scheduled staff celebrations, such as American Education Week, Teacher Appreciation Week, and National Charter Schools Week. The school leadership team also will have opportunities to recommend teachers for the Excellence in Teaching Award, an annual award that formally recognizes teacher achievement throughout the national network of NHA partner schools. An instant "spot rewards" program and a peer-recognition program also will be implemented. Importantly, all employees will be surveyed for job satisfaction at least annually, providing school leaders with an opportunity to improve teacher-retention strategies.

Continued from 4) Teacher salary rates at our school align closely with the district's salary scales for teachers of similar experience and education levels. Even then, our teachers are slated to get annual increases while the district's teachers are slated to stay flat for their first five years on the job. By then, teachers in our school will be earning more than district teachers with the same education and experience. Teachers in district schools with their Master's degrees won't see an annual raise until their sixth year either; at our school, these teachers are budgeted to get annual raises that quickly catch up their salary and then exceed the district schedule.



## **Staff Evaluation and Professional Development**

1. *Identify the positions responsible for maintaining teacher licensure requirements and professional development.*

NHA will manage teacher licensure and professional development reporting and compliance, and will report this information to our Board and other entities as required.

2. *Provide a detailed plan noting how the school will mentor, retain, and evaluate staff in a format that matches the school's mission, educational program, and meet the teacher certification and licensure requirements for teachers as prescribed by state law and No Child Left Behind. Be sure this overview matches with the projected staff and funding of the proposed budget section.*

**Mentor:** All new teachers will be assigned a mentor teacher who will address day-to-day questions and concerns. Scheduled meetings with the mentor will provide consistent and ongoing support for new teachers surrounding the curriculum, instructional practice, and classroom management. Mentors also will conduct periodic classroom observations and provide feedback to the teachers after each visit to further improve teaching and learning in the classroom. We will also ensure that all new teachers participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program for additional mentoring and support.

The school's leadership structure is intentionally designed to enable each teacher to work closely with his or her grade-level dean on a weekly basis to focus on specific development needs. Each teacher is observed weekly, and weekly meetings are then held with the dean to provide feedback and coaching based on these observations or other needs stated by the teacher. This is time for the teacher to reflect on his or her teaching practices and ask questions. Teachers will work with their dean to address individual professional development needs as identified from teaching practices found in the Teacher Observation Protocol (TOP). The TOP includes over 60 research-based teaching skills and techniques, additional resources (such as Teach Like a Champion and e-learning), and coaching questions that guide in teacher development.

**Retain:** Several factors combine to support a commitment to individual professional growth and the retention of exceptional instructional staff. These include: the frequency and quality of coaching around instructional practice; the extensive plan of professional development; the intentional tracking of high-performing teachers to positions of greater responsibility and stature; the "Total Rewards" approach to compensation and benefits; the creation and maintenance of a school environment that promotes scholarly learning; and, a culture of building-wide respect of students and staff.

**Evaluate:** Teacher performance will be continuously evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative measures. Our school will use a pay-for-performance compensation model, with performance measured by student achievement. The evaluation system for teachers will have four main components: (1) student learning results; (2) instructional and classroom management practices; (3) parent engagement; and (4) professional accountabilities. All components are rated using a five-level scale: exemplary, highly effective, effective, inconsistently effective, and ineffective.

Each teacher will be evaluated twice each year by his or her dean. Deans will use data from their weekly teacher observations for the entire

evaluation period to form the evaluation scores, and will discuss the results with each teacher during a one-on-one session. Each dean will receive professional development training on how to properly conduct evaluations as a part of his or her comprehensive new dean training program. In addition, as each dean finishes this training, he or she will sign a statement of accountability pledging to implement the evaluation tool with fidelity and integrity.

Teachers' competence in classroom management and instructional and professional practices will be evaluated based on multiple observations, feedback, and coaching provided by deans. The weekly observations and feedback (using the TOP) and the mid-year and year-end evaluations will help define professional development goals for each teacher. Progress toward those goals will be used to evaluate teachers. Parent engagement data will be collected from our annual parent satisfaction surveys.

This comprehensive approach is designed to continuously grow our school's talent and to keep our top-performers for the long term. It focuses on coaching and evaluating staff; developing an internal professional advancement track; and, practicing a "Total Rewards" merit-based program of compensation.

- 3. Describe the core components of professional development plan and how these components will support effective implementation of the educational program. Describe the extent to which professional development will be conducted internally or externally and will be individualized or uniform.*

High-quality instruction stems from clear expectations, frequent observation, consistent feedback, and an intentional focus on developing teachers' professional practices. Professional development will be integrated throughout our culture, beginning with an intensive orientation and training before the first school year and prioritized as an element of the school calendar thereafter.

**Core Components:** Our professional development program will include: assigning mentors to new teachers; weekly teacher observation, feedback, and development; creation of professional learning communities; daily time for common grade-level planning; weekly grade-level team meetings with deans to provide feedback on and support for our common approach to instruction; and, monthly grade-level team meetings with the principal to ensure a unified school-wide approach to instruction. Regular grade-level and cross-grade-level team meetings also will be scheduled where teachers can share ideas for increasing student achievement and mentor one another.

Through our partnership with NHA, our teachers will have access to a wide variety of resources and learning opportunities. These include seminars, conferences, video libraries, web-based resources, book studies, e-learning, and access to both internal and external consultants.

**Effective Implementation of Educational Program:** Our school leadership team will be responsible for determining professional development needs and will work in conjunction with NHA to develop a customized plan to meet those needs. Each year, the school will draft a School Improvement Plan (SIP), a comprehensive needs assessment and identification of strategies to meet those needs in the coming year. The SIP will analyze student achievement,

the school environment, the teacher community, the parent community, and the administration. The school then will focus and prioritize building-wide professional development efforts on the areas identified in the SIP.

4. *Provide a schedule and explanation of professional development that will take place prior to school opening. Explain what will be covered during this induction period and how teachers will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods.*

Prior to school opening: We believe that there should be no artificial limits to professional development opportunities. All new teachers will participate in New Teacher Orientation (NTO), a four-day immersion program designed to ensure buy-in to the school's purpose and vision, and to address specific curricular and instructional needs. The NTO training is then actively supported with coaching and additional training throughout the year. NHA has developed a collection of effective, industry-leading practices known as the Simple Rules. These guiding principles are implemented throughout NHA partner schools to build a common approach to providing outstanding academic results. During NTO, teachers and leaders will learn why these practices are effective and see how they play out in daily activities such as classroom management and instructional planning and delivery. Participants in the training will experience these principles both as they occur in a classroom environment and as they exist throughout the entire school. This will allow new teachers the ability to begin applying the Simple Rules the moment they enter our school.

A sample NTO agenda is outlined below:

- Monday: Purpose & Vision, Behave with Care (Simple Rule 2).
- Tuesday: Behave with Care (Simple Rule 2: Continued).
- Wednesday: Curriculum and Curricular Tools (Simple Rule 3: Formative Assessment).
- Thursday: Curriculum and Curricular Tools, Grade-Level Best Practices, Keynote Address.

During NTO, our new teachers and leaders will begin to build the desired learning culture by learning the practices necessary to connect with students, establish expected behaviors and routines, and manage classrooms. The training provided at NTO will focus on establishing a positive and proactive culture and self-management of classrooms by training teachers how to: structure the classroom in ways that promote responsible student behavior; engage students in building school culture; intentionally develop strong positive relationships with students; explicitly teach students how to behave responsibly in every classroom situation; focus more time, attention, and energy to acknowledge responsible behavior than to respond to misbehavior; and, pre-plan responses to misbehavior to ensure they are brief, calm, and delivered in a consistent manner.

All new teachers and leaders will also be instructed on the principles of effective instruction and the instructional strategies used to enhance learning in each of the core content areas. Each grade-level teacher will also receive specific training in the use of the curricular tool components.

Participants in NTO will have the opportunity to interact with and receive instruction from master teachers in their specific content area or at their specific grade level. The focus of these sessions will be developing classroom management plans, examining the school's character development curriculum, reviewing effective instructional practices, and sharing practical ideas for working with specific students. This includes new special education teachers and ELL teachers who will be trained in relevant topics by master special education and ELL teachers and expert representatives from NHA.

Ongoing opportunities: To supplement NTO, new leaders and teachers will participate in additional school-based staff-development days prior to the start of school. This professional development will communicate additional expectations to teachers and staff, including non-instructional processes and procedures, and will provide new teachers with the opportunity to conduct grade-level planning with their colleagues. These days are also designed to deepen knowledge around core concepts related to the formative assessment process, classroom management, building student relationships, and school-wide behavior support systems.

5. Describe the expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year, and explain how the school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate this plan.

The school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate robust professional development for Gateway Charter Academy teachers and leaders.

A total of 12 days are allocated for professional development, including: New Teacher Orientation (see above); NHA-University, a collaborative leadership training week for school leaders and teachers across NHA's 76 partner schools; and four full days within the school year. In addition, our teachers' daily schedule incorporates 45 minutes of planning time for teachers. At least one planning period each week will be dedicated to development in grade-level teams, and 30 minutes of a planning period each week will be dedicated to a one-on-one meeting with each teacher's dean to discuss feedback and provide coaching for ongoing development. We will allow administrators to schedule faculty meetings at appropriate times that do not impede teaching and learning. Teaching staff schedules also will be established to permit cooperative and collaborative meetings with parents.

The school's staffing structure meshes with the daily calendar to allow core-subject teachers both individual and common planning time while student instruction in "specials" art, gym, music, etc. is occurring. To support collaboration among peers, professional learning communities will be established that allow common grade-level planning during this time. Together, teachers will review the current week's lesson plans and plan upcoming lessons in ways that ensure common delivery and alignment with the school's curriculum. The school's calendar and staffing plan also allow regular grade-level and cross-grade-level team meetings to be scheduled where teachers can share ideas for increasing student achievement and mentor one another.

### **Enrollment and Marketing:**

-

Reaching the full capacity for enrollment will be critical to obtain the necessary financial resources to keep your school viable and operating efficiently. In addition, it is required by law that charter schools provide equal access to all students. Read the charter school state statute regarding admissions GS 115C.238.29F(g) (1-7) carefully.

### **Marketing Plan**

*Marketing to potential students and parents is vital to the survival of a charter school. Provide a plan indicating how the school will market to potential students and parents in order to reasonably reflect the racial/ethnic and demographic composition of the district in which the charter school will be located or of the special population the school seeks to serve: (G.S.115C-238.29F(g)(5)).*

Our school's marketing and outreach efforts will be designed both to achieve a broad awareness of the school and to ensure it is known as a valuable institution immersed in the local culture and an active contributor to the economic and social success of our community. This will include significant grassroots outreach to families in the local area. Not intending to serve a special population of students, the school will be marketed to all area residents without bias so that we reflect the demographic composition of the Guilford County Schools in our area.

Our knowledge of the community will form the basis of our marketing efforts. Together, the Board and representatives from NHA will assess the interest of prospective parents through the use of diverse community focus groups, public opinion polls, and more. This will provide important information about perceptions of the neighborhood, education needs that are not being met, and the relative attractiveness of features of our new school.

If we are notified of the preliminary approval of our charter application, marketing efforts will intensify. A dedicated local admissions representative with strong community knowledge will be hired (at NHA's expense) before the opening of the school. The representative will lead grassroots marketing and the building of community relationships including outreach to groups such as area daycare suppliers; local chambers of commerce and other community businesses; area churches, temples, and other houses of worship; HeadStart and other community educational programs; local Police Athletic League and community recreational organizations; Boys/Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and other youth activity centers; and more.

Formal advertising efforts may include outdoor ads (municipal buses and bus stops; billboards; etc.), radio spots, television announcements, local and community newspaper display ads, and/or Internet media advertisements several months before the school's opening, as needed.

School representatives will host monthly enrollment information meetings for parents at a location convenient for broad community participation. These meetings will be promoted by various means such as direct mail, digital marketing, and grassroots marketing to the neighborhoods within a three-mile radius of the school. At these meetings, parents will learn more about the school's mission, design, and overall academic program, and will have the opportunity to ask questions and engage the school's representatives in productive dialogue. The school also will host events specially designed for parents of students with special needs to provide a forum allowing these families to learn more about the school's exceptional children's services. These meetings will be an open dialogue, sharing information with parents

about our school but also hearing from parents about matters important to them. Feedback from parents and guardians will directly impact the type of before- and after-school programming hosted at our school, as an example.

Parents interested in enrolling their children will be invited to various orientation events to learn more detail about the curriculum; meet the principal and teachers; obtain information about the school's character development program; and, learn how they can take an active role in their child's education. These events will also have a social component to encourage parents to come together to help us develop a vibrant school community even before the start of school.

### **Parent and Community Involvement**

1. *Describe how you will communicate with and engage parents and community members from the time that the school is approved through opening.*
2. *Describe how you will engage parents in the life of the public charter school. Explain the plan for building engaging partnerships between the family and school that strengthen support for student learning.*

Communication with Parents before Opening: Strong parental involvement often is the result of effective and robust school-home communication. Gateway Charter Academy is committed to maintaining an atmosphere of open dialogue between school leaders and parents. We will begin these partnerships as early as possible.

As soon as we are notified of the preliminary approval of our charter application, our development team will begin building relationships with parents. Families will be contacted through a variety of methods to inform them about our school, the enrollment process, and how they can become involved in the school.

A monthly newsletter, website, and Facebook page will keep interested families aware of and connected to the latest happenings of the school as it prepares to open. Social media websites will be used to help form and maintain connections between school leaders and parents. While our school is constructed, a temporary school office will be available for staff contact and prospective parent visits.

During these months before the school opens, school staff and parents will initiate the relationships that will strengthen and grow throughout our school community. This pre-opening rapport with prospective parents will peak with a family orientation held at the end of the summer to allow enrolled students and their families to meet the principal, the student's teacher and classmates, and other school staff.

Engaging Parents: Starting in our first year, parents will have two opportunities each year to complete a survey called "Voice of the Parent." This survey will seek to ensure that parents' expectations and students' needs are understood and met. Voice of the Parent is designed to systematically drive action and accountability so that we remain parent-, student-, and community-focused. These surveys will be confidential, and the feedback received will be compiled into summary statistics for use at the school leadership and Board levels.

To encourage parents' presence and active involvement, the school building will include a dedicated parent room. This room will allow parents a place to gather and build relationships with one another, discuss matters of mutual interest, and afford them an opportunity to feel comfortable and take ownership in the school. The room will also be equipped to provide parents access to online school materials and AtSchool, an online student information platform developed by NHA. AtSchool will allow parents to monitor their children's academic progress, behavior, and attendance over the course of the year. AtSchool provides information related to assigned student homework; offers resources for homework assistance; presents scores on various assessments and progress growth information; and, posts newsletters and school calendars. AtSchool will synchronize with teachers' monitoring of student progress, and help remind teachers of previous and ongoing student needs.

Our school will actively engage parents in their children's learning. Prior to each school year, we will make parents and each student aware of grade-level performance expectations. Student progress against those goals will be communicated to parents regularly through: direct teacher communication; AtSchool; progress reports; report cards; and, parent-teacher conferences.

Parents also will be encouraged to help form clubs or groups to support extracurricular or school-time activities in the building. Consistent with our mission, we will facilitate the formation of a parent organization at our school. Our Board will expect that the parent organization support our mission and student body in all it does and report to the board frequently on the organization's initiatives. We will ensure our parent organization has the necessary policies and procedures in place to stay in compliance with law, including those necessary for sound financial management.

## **Admissions Policy**

Provide the school's proposed policies and the procedures for admitting students to the proposed charter school, including:

1. *Tentative dates for the open enrollment application period; enrollment deadlines and procedures. \*Please be advised schools cannot accept applications until after final approval from the SBE.*
2. *Clear policies and procedures detailing the open enrollment lottery plan including policies regarding statutory permitted student enrollment preferences.*
3. *Clear policies and procedures for student waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers.*
4. *Explanation of the purpose of any pre-admission activities (if any) for students or parents.*
5. *Clear policies and procedures for student withdraws and transfers.*

Gateway Charter Academy will comply with all applicable federal and state laws for admissions and enrollment. We will not discriminate on the basis of intellectual or athletic abilities, measures of achievement or aptitude, disability, status as a handicapped person, homeless status, English proficiency, religion, creed, race, sex, color, national origin, or any other basis that would be illegal for a public school.

Enrollment Period and Procedures: If our charter is approved, we will establish a timeframe for accepting enrollment applications for our first

year. The starting date for accepting applications will be as early as practical, and will be specified in a widely distributed public notice of open enrollment. Once the school is open, and in every school year thereafter, we will establish an open-enrollment period from the first day of school until 5 p.m. on the last business day in February. Enrollment applications will be accepted throughout the open-enrollment period and through the end of the school year, although applications received after the open-enrollment period will be separately categorized for the enrollment lottery.

**Random Lottery and Waiting Lists:** For each grade level in which fewer applications are received than there are seats available, all applicants will be admitted. For each grade level in which a greater number of applications are received than there are seats available, a random-selection process will occur one grade level at a time to admit students. If a student has one or more siblings who are applying for admission, all students will be entered under one surname and if the student is selected, the siblings will be admitted if there are seats available in the requested grade, or will be placed on the waiting list with sibling preference if no seats are available. Multiple-birth siblings will be entered under one surname. If that surname is selected, then all multiple-birth students are accepted.

After all seats are filled in a grade level, the random-selection process will continue. We will place students' names on a waiting list in the order they are selected. Applicants whose applications were received after the open-enrollment period will be added to the end of the waiting list for the appropriate grade, with such students entered on the list in the order in which their applications were received.

When a seat becomes available in a particular grade, if that grade has a waiting list, the parent or guardian of the first student on the waiting list for that particular grade will be notified of the availability of a seat for their child, and if the family still desires to enroll their student at the school, the student will fill that seat.

**Preferences:** For its first year of operation, children of the initial members of our Board will be granted preference in the school's lottery. Children of the school's full-time employees are also granted preference in the lottery. Once a student has attended the school, he or she will be able to enroll for the subsequent school year, and then preference will be granted to siblings of that student.

Parents of accepted applicants must confirm their children's intent to attend the school within four weeks of acceptance by returning certain documents, including an Admissions Form, an Official Release of Records Form, and Proof of Residency documentation.

**Re-Enrollment:** Students enrolled in the school will be eligible to re-enroll for successive years without entering the random-selection process. All applicants on a waiting list must re-submit an application for the following school year to be eligible for enrollment.

**Withdrawals; Transfers:** When a student withdraws, that creates an open seat to be filled by another student through the wait-list process outlined



above. Students wishing to legally transfer into the school mid-year shall be admitted if a seat in that grade is available or will be placed on the waiting list.

**PROJECTED ENROLLMENT 2015-16 through 2019-2020**

IDENTIFY LEA FROM WHICH STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY COME

LEA #1 Guilford County Schools  
 LEA #2  
 LEA #3

In the following tables, please list for each year and grade level, the numbers of students that the school reasonably expects to enroll. In addition, please indicate any plans to increase the grade levels offered by the school over time and be sure these figures match those on the initial cover page.

	2015-2016			2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020		
	LEA 410	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 410	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 410	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 410	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 410	LEA 000	LEA 000
Kindergarten	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0
Grade 01	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0
Grade 02	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0
Grade 03	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0
Grade 04	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0
Grade 05	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0
Grade 06	0	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0
Grade 07	0	0	0	0	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0
Grade 08	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	84	0	0	84	0	0
	520			604			688			772			772		

## **Transportation Plan:**

*Describe in detail the transportation plan that will ensure that no child is denied access to the school due to lack of transportation. The details of this plan should align with the Mission, identified need for the charter school, targeted student population, and the budget proposal.*

Aligned with Mission: Gateway Charter Academy will work diligently to ensure that the school is accessible to all students and that transportation needs are not a barrier to any child attending the school. We do not plan to provide bus transportation to the general student population, either directly or through contract with Guilford County Schools. However, we will offer parents and guardians resources and support to coordinate their transportation needs, and we will provide transportation as required by an individual student's IEP or other applicable law.

Transportation Program: Our school will establish a program for parents called "RideFinder." This is an online tool established in other NHA partner schools with great success that matches parents seeking to carpool with other parents. Parents log in to the school's website, enter their address, and automatically see other parents who have expressed an interest in carpooling and how near those families live. Both personalized and written training on the use of this program (including appropriate reminders of the assumption of risk when operating a vehicle) will be offered by the school to all parents of enrolling students.

The RideFinder program to be established by the school will streamline the process of information-gathering and provide parents instant access to carpooling options within their school community.

We believe that asking parents to partner with us in transportation will allow members of the staff to greet students and parents during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, providing students a transition between school and home that is safe, smooth, and feels welcoming. This approach also will allow staff an additional point-of-contact with parents, and allow parents an additional opportunity to become a part of the day-to-day life of the school. Finally, this method has worked well at other NHA partner schools in North Carolina and elsewhere. It allows students to arrive at school more focused on the activities of the day and with lower levels of anxiety and distraction often attributed to school bus rides.

We recognize that this transportation strategy may not prove to be a viable option for every family, however. Before the first day of school, during an orientation program for families, we will work with parents to address and coordinate their transportation needs to ensure these needs are not a barrier to any child wishing to attend the school. In addition to the RideFinder program, school staff will work to identify and plan the use of public transportation options that are available, and if needed, make arrangements with private carriers. The school's budget also has built in \$5,000 to cover the cost of such transportation needs, which also may include transportation for students who may be experiencing homelessness or exceptional children with transportation needs noted in their IEPs.

Targeted Population: Gateway Charter Academy will not be targeting a specific student population, but will be marketing to, and serving students throughout the local area. With the assistance of the RideFinder program, families living near other families will be able to access all needed information for arranging carpooling or other transportation options.

Aligned to Budget: This transportation plan aligns with the budget plan, which as noted above includes an allocation of \$5,000 to cover special transportation arrangements. NHA will incorporate the RideFinder online parent's tool into the school's technology network.

**School Lunch Plan:**

*Describe in detail the school lunch plan that will ensure that no child is lacking a daily meal. The details of this plan should align with the targeted student population and school budget proposal.*

At Gateway Charter Academy, the importance of providing meals to our students will be actively recognized and meals will be provided. Following the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) procurement requirements and in compliance with Federal Regulation 7 CFR 210.16, a food-service provider will be contracted to operate our food-service program. Students will pay the full set price for school meals unless they qualify for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program.

All meals will meet the nutritional requirements set forth by the USDA in accordance with the National School Lunch Program. Our food-service provider also will provide extensive support to the school with menu planning, nutritional analysis, food-handling safety, and sanitization. A hot meal for lunch will be offered daily, and a cold breakfast will be offered if needed. The goal is to meet students' needs and ensure that students can focus on the work of learning and not their physical hunger.

As the school's operating partner, NHA will contract with the food-service provider on behalf of our school. NHA has experience in handling all the required aspects of these programs, and the Board will hold NHA accountable to ensure the efficient management of our school's breakfast and lunch programs. As necessary, we will look to the North Carolina Department of Child Nutrition Services for resources in overseeing the compliance of our food services program.

**Civil Liability and Insurance (GS 115C-238.29F(c)):**

The Charter School shall obtain and maintain insurance at a minimum in the following amounts:

1. Errors and omissions: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per claim;
2. General liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence;
3. Boiler and machinery: the replacement cost of the building;
4. Real and personal property: the appraised value of the building and contents;
5. Fidelity bonds: no less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to cover employee dishonesty;
6. Automobile liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence; and
7. Workers' compensation: as specified by Chapter 97 of the General Statutes.

Area of proposed	Proposed amount of coverage	Cost (Quote)
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coverage			
Comprehensive General Liability		\$2,000,000	\$4,000.00
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions		\$2,000,000	\$.00
Property Insurance		\$25,000	\$.00
Motor Vehicle Liability		\$1,000,000	\$.00
Bonding Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$.00
Other		\$1,000,000	\$1,300.00
Total Cost			\$5,300.00

\*The applicant must provide a quote from an insurance provider as part of this application (as Appendix O) to demonstrate the levels of insurance coverage and projected cost.

**Health and Safety Requirements:**

All public charter schools are required to follow the regulations regarding health and safety as stated in § 115C238.29F (a).

We, the Board members at (Charter School Name) will develop a written safety plan and policies to be shared with staff, parents and students and be available upon inspection from the Department of Public Instruction and local Health Departments.

robertparrish 12/05/2013

(Board Chair Signature) (Date)

**Facility:**

*Note that the SBE may approve a charter school prior to the school's obtaining a facility; however, students may not attend school and no funds will be allocated until the school has obtained a valid Certificate of Occupancy for Educational use to the Office of Charter Schools.*

*What is your plan to obtain a building? Identify the steps that the board will take to acquire a facility and obtain the Educational Certificate of Occupancy. If a facility has been identified please fill out the Facility Form (Appendix N).*

In anticipation of approval of this charter school application, our members have begun to combine our knowledge of the local community with support of NHA's real estate acquisition team to begin an exhaustive review of opportunities to construct a new school building or to renovate an existing facility suitable to our school's programmatic needs.

Acquiring a Facility: If our charter application is approved, the real estate we have worked with NHA to identify will be purchased by NHA, and construction or renovation will begin. NHA's typical construction period lasts less than five months, and NHA has a very successful history in both building new school facilities and renovating existing structures to accommodate schools.

NHA makes a multi-million-dollar up-front investment to cover construction and construction-related costs. The school and the Board do not pay anything up front. The school's facility, which will be financed privately, is built to house the entire planned K-8 academic program from day one, even though the school will be launched with fewer grades. Although this strategy may be more costly for NHA, it is valuable to our school because it eliminates potential disruption to the academic program in future years from having to undertake additional construction while school is in session.

Being able to occupy a facility specifically designed to house the educational program we intend to offer is a huge plus for our students and our faculty. We will be able to avoid the situations we've heard about where new charter schools try to fit into church basements or crowd into a facility that is too small or ill-designed for their programs. A partnership with NHA that gives us the top-notch facility we need for our program is one of the great advantages of our school plan.

**Obtaining an Educational Certificate of Occupancy:** The Board and NHA will ensure that we are in compliance with all building codes in the development of a facility for our school. We will work with a local building inspector to timely determine if modifications to an existing facility must be approved by the North Carolina Department of Insurance for building code compliance. Our Board, and NHA, will ensure that we receive an educational certificate of occupancy for our school from a local building inspector. If the decision is made to build a new facility, we will ensure that NHA complies with all applicable land use processes, building requirements, and certifications, and that we obtain our educational certificate of occupancy prior to our school opening.

We will also ensure that we have insurance coverage at or above what is required by applicable law. Our insurance quote in Appendix O includes coverage in all required areas. Some of these items are encompassed under the Property Insurance and Umbrella policy specifications (boiler and machinery, real and personal property, and fidelity bonds).

**Facility Contingency Plan:** *Describe the method of finding a facility if the one the board has identified will not be ready by the time the public charter school will be opening. Include information regarding the immediate spatial needs of the school and identify any programs that will not be immediately offered because a permanent facility has yet to open.*

To ensure that the school's facility plans stay on track, a number of properties that will suit the construction of a new facility, or will allow the renovation of an existing facility, will be identified in the initial facility search process. If there are unforeseen hurdles with the preferred property that cannot be overcome in a reasonable timeframe or at reasonable expense, the Board and NHA will be well positioned to move expeditiously to secure one of the other properties from the "short-list" of viable real estate opportunities.

The total square footage of the building targeted for occupancy by Gateway Charter Academy will be approximately 45,000 square feet. This will include sufficient space for a play area, a play field, and adequate parking. The envisioned school building will include: classrooms (estimate: 28); student support rooms (estimate: seven); an art room; a music room; a media center and library; a gymnasium; a parent room; a front office, and administrative

spaces (estimate: seven). If constraints on space are needed for any reason, contingency options could include: combining the music and art rooms; modifying the play area, play field, or parking; consolidating administrative offices; and/or waiting and scaling up the number of classrooms and student support rooms only as the school grows from its starting configuration as a K-5 school to a K-8 school over three years.

Importantly, the school will have continued use of its facility even if the Board decides to terminate its services agreement with NHA. Through provisions in a separate lease agreement, if the Board terminates its services agreement with NHA, our school is authorized to stay in the facility, with NHA obliged to continue to manage and maintain the facility, for the remainder of the current school year. Additionally, our Board has the ability to lease the facility for a subsequent school year at the current rental rate. After that, our Board is free to purchase the building, negotiate a new lease agreement (with advice from our independent legal counsel), or find another location for our school.

**V. FINANCIAL PLAN**

In the following sections present a detailed description of assumptions and revenue estimates, including but not limited to the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and costs. The narrative should specifically address the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income.

**Budget: Revenue Projections from each LEA 2015-16**

**SHOW  
CALCULATIONS  
FOR FIGURING  
STATE  
AND LOCAL  
DOLLARS  
FOR THE  
PROPOSED  
CHARTER  
SCHOOL**

*Refer to the  
Resource Manual  
Finance Section  
for guidance on  
estimated funding  
amounts*

**State Funds:** Charter schools receive an equivalent amount per student as the local education agency (LEA) receives per student receives from the State. Funding is based on the 1<sup>st</sup> month average daily membership.

- In year 1 – Base state allotments are determined by the LEA in which the student resides
- In year 2 and beyond- Base State allotments are determined by the LEA in which the school is located.

**Local Funds:** Charter schools receive a per pupil share of the local current expense of the LEA in which the student resides.

**Federal Funds:** Charter schools must qualify and apply for the individual federal grants based on their population of students.

**REFER TO RESOURCE GUIDE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

LEA #1 410 - Guilford County Schools

Revenue	2013-2014 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2015-2016
State Funds	\$4,656.79	520	\$2,421,530.80
Local Funds	\$2,329.20	520	\$1,211,184.00
Federal EC Funds	\$3,578.93	81	\$289,893.33
<b>Totals</b>			\$3,922,608.13



**Total Budget: Revenue Projections 2015-16 through 2019-2020**

<b>INCOME: REVENUE PROJECTIONS</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
<b>-State ADM Funds</b>	\$2,421,531	\$2,766,634	\$3,151,398	\$3,536,161	\$3,536,161
<b>-Local Per Pupil Funds</b>	\$1,211,184	\$1,406,837	\$1,602,490	\$1,798,142	\$1,798,142
<b>-Exceptional Children Federal Funds</b>	\$289,893	\$329,894	\$375,774	\$421,653	\$421,653
<b>-Other Funds*</b>	\$1,512,925	\$1,168,894	\$913,657	\$649,514	\$649,513
<b>-Working Capital*</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Z - TOTAL REVENUE</b>	\$5,435,533	\$5,672,259	\$6,043,319	\$6,405,470	\$6,405,469

**\*If the applicant is depending on other funding sources or working capital to balance the operating budget, please provide documentation such as signed statements from donors, foundations, bank documents, etc., on the commitment of these funds. If these figures are loans, the repayment needs to be explained in the narrative and found within the budget projections.**

**Assurances are needed to confirm the commitment of these additional sources of revenue. Please include these as Appendix R.**

**Personnel Budget: Expenditure Projections 2015-16 through 2019-2020**

The personnel list below may be amended to meet the staffing of individual charter schools: This list should align with the projected staff located in the Operations Plan (Appendix M).

BUDGET EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS Personnel	2015-2016			2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020		
	Num Staff	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary
Administrative & Support Personnel:															
Principal	1	\$70,000	\$70,000	1	\$72,100	\$72,100	1	\$74,300	\$74,300	1	\$76,500	\$76,500	1	\$78,800	\$78,800
Dean	3	\$41,600	\$124,800	4	\$42,400	\$169,600	4	\$43,300	\$173,200	4	\$44,100	\$176,400	4	\$45,000	\$180,000
Registrar	1	\$30,000	\$30,000	1	\$30,600	\$30,600	1	\$31,200	\$31,200	1	\$31,800	\$31,800	1	\$32,400	\$32,400
Office Administrator	1	\$23,300	\$23,300	1	\$23,800	\$23,800	1	\$24,300	\$24,300	1	\$24,700	\$24,700	1	\$25,200	\$25,200
Admissions Representative	.38	\$28,080	\$10,670	.38	\$28,920	\$10,990	.38	\$29,790	\$11,320	.38	\$30,684	\$11,660	.38	\$31,604	\$12,010
A - Total Admin and Support:	6.38	\$192,980	\$258,770	7.38	\$197,820	\$307,090	7.38	\$202,890	\$314,320	7.38	\$207,784	\$321,060	7.38	\$213,004	\$328,410
Instructional Personnel:															
Core Content Teacher(s)	21.1	\$34,300	\$723,730	26.1	\$35,000	\$913,500	29.1	\$35,700	\$1,038,870	32.1	\$36,400	\$1,168,440	32.1	\$37,100	\$1,190,910
Music Teacher	1	\$34,300	\$34,300	1	\$35,000	\$35,000	1	\$35,700	\$35,700	1	\$36,400	\$36,400	1	\$37,100	\$37,100
Physical Education Teacher	1	\$34,300	\$34,300	1	\$35,000	\$35,000	1	\$35,700	\$35,700	1	\$36,400	\$36,400	1	\$37,100	\$37,100
Art Teacher	1	\$34,300	\$34,300	1	\$35,000	\$35,000	1	\$35,700	\$35,700	1	\$36,400	\$36,400	1	\$37,100	\$37,100
Paraprofessionals (Intensive Learning Program)	1.71	\$14,000	\$23,940	1.84	\$14,000	\$25,760	.67	\$14,000	\$9,380	.75	\$14,000	\$10,500	.75	\$14,000	\$10,500
Summer Teachers/Tutor (Intensive Learning Program)	14	\$2,690	\$37,660	22	\$2,800	\$61,600	20	\$2,800	\$56,000	21	\$2,800	\$58,800	21	\$2,800	\$58,800
English Language Learner Teacher	.75	\$36,200	\$27,150	.75	\$36,900	\$27,675	1	\$37,600	\$37,600	1	\$38,400	\$38,400	1	\$39,100	\$39,100
Library Technology Specialist	1	\$33,300	\$33,300	1	\$34,000	\$34,000	1	\$34,700	\$34,700	1	\$35,300	\$35,300	1	\$36,100	\$36,100
Exceptional Children Teacher(s)	4	\$34,300	\$137,200	4	\$35,000	\$140,000	5	\$35,700	\$178,500	5	\$36,400	\$182,000	5	\$37,100	\$185,500

Gateway Charter Academy

Exceptional Children Aides	3.5	\$23,000	\$80,500	4.38	\$23,500	\$102,930	6.13	\$24,000	\$147,120	6.13	\$24,500	\$150,185	6.13	\$24,903	\$152,655
Social Worker	.2	\$36,200	\$7,240	.4	\$36,900	\$14,760	.5	\$37,600	\$18,800	.5	\$38,400	\$19,200	.5	\$39,100	\$19,550
Recess Aides	.75	\$21,100	\$15,825	.88	\$21,699	\$19,095	.88	\$22,398	\$19,710	1	\$23,000	\$23,000	1	\$23,700	\$23,700
Substitute Teachers	1	\$15,800	\$15,800	1	\$18,400	\$18,400	1	\$21,000	\$21,000	1	\$23,700	\$23,700	1	\$24,200	\$24,200
B - Total Instructional Personnel:	51.0 1	\$353,790	\$1,205,245	65.3 5	\$363,199	\$1,462,720	68.2 8	\$372,598	\$1,668,780	72.4 8	\$382,100	\$1,818,725	72.4 8	\$389,403	\$1,852,315
A+B = C - Total Admin, Support and Instructional Personnel:	57.3 9	\$546,770	\$1,464,015	72.7 3	\$561,019	\$1,769,810	75.6 6	\$575,488	\$1,983,100	79.8 6	\$589,884	\$2,139,785	79.8 6	\$602,407	\$2,180,725
Administrative & Support Benefits															
Health & Dental Insurance	6	\$10,900	\$65,400	7	\$11,400	\$79,800	7	\$11,800	\$82,600	7	\$12,300	\$86,100	7	\$12,800	\$89,600
Retirement Plan	6.38	\$1,000	\$6,380	7.38	\$1,000	\$7,380	7.38	\$1,061	\$7,830	7.38	\$1,080	\$7,970	7.38	\$1,120	\$8,266
Life & Disability Insurance	6	\$100	\$600	7	\$100	\$700	7	\$100	\$700	7	\$100	\$700	7	\$100	\$700
Worker'S Compensation	6.38	\$141	\$900	7.38	\$149	\$1,100	7.38	\$160	\$1,181	7.38	\$163	\$1,203	7.38	\$170	\$1,255
Fica/Medicare Tax	6.38	\$3,790	\$24,180	7.38	\$3,960	\$29,225	7.38	\$4,059	\$29,955	7.38	\$4,160	\$30,701	7.38	\$4,250	\$31,365
Futa & Suta	6.38	\$391	\$2,495	7.38	\$420	\$3,100	7.38	\$425	\$3,137	7.38	\$435	\$3,210	7.38	\$450	\$3,321
Benefit Waive	0	\$0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0
Tuition Reimbursement	1	\$2,200	\$2,200	1	\$2,200	\$2,200	1	\$2,300	\$2,300	1	\$2,300	\$2,300	1	\$2,400	\$2,400
Incentives/Stipends/Bonuses	6.38	\$9,000	\$57,420	7.38	\$10,210	\$75,350	7.38	\$10,521	\$77,645	7.38	\$10,830	\$79,925	7.38	\$11,131	\$82,147
D - Total Admin and Support Benefits:	44.9	\$27,522	\$159,574	51.9	\$29,439	\$198,854	51.9	\$30,426	\$205,348	51.9	\$31,368	\$212,110	51.9	\$32,421	\$219,053
Instructional Personnel Benefits:															
Health & Dental Insurance	31.5	\$10,900	\$343,350	37.3 8	\$11,400	\$426,132	43.1 3	\$11,800	\$508,934	45.1 3	\$12,300	\$555,099	45.1 3	\$12,800	\$577,664
Retirement Plan	50.0 1	\$490	\$24,505	64.3 5	\$493	\$31,725	67.2 8	\$500	\$33,640	71.4 8	\$510	\$36,455	71.4 8	\$520	\$37,170
Life & Disability Insurance	49.0 6	\$50	\$2,453	63.0 7	\$50	\$3,154	65.9	\$50	\$3,295	69.9 8	\$50	\$3,499	69.9 8	\$50	\$3,499
Worker'S Compensation	50.0 1	\$100	\$5,001	64.3 5	\$100	\$6,435	67.2 8	\$101	\$6,795	71.4 8	\$105	\$7,505	71.4 8	\$105	\$7,505
Fica/Medicare Tax	50.0 1	\$1,800	\$90,018	64.3 5	\$1,800	\$115,830	67.2 8	\$1,940	\$130,523	71.4 8	\$1,990	\$142,245	71.4 8	\$2,000	\$142,960

Gateway Charter Academy

Futa & Suta	50.0 1	\$300	\$15,003	64.3 5	\$310	\$19,949	67.2 8	\$340	\$22,875	71.4 8	\$340	\$24,303	71.4 8	\$350	\$25,018
Benefit Waive	17.6	\$205	\$3,608	25.7	\$210	\$5,397	22.8	\$260	\$5,928	24.9	\$270	\$6,723	24.9	\$270	\$6,723
Tuition Reimbursement	1	\$12,800	\$12,800	1	\$14,700	\$14,700	1	\$16,600	\$16,600	1	\$18,600	\$18,600	1	\$18,900	\$18,900
Incentives/Stipends/Bonuses	50.0 1	\$500	\$25,005	64.3 5	\$500	\$32,175	67.2 8	\$511	\$34,380	71.4 8	\$520	\$37,170	71.4 8	\$530	\$37,884
E - Total Instructional Personnel Benefits:	349. 21	\$27,145	\$521,743	448. 9	\$29,563	\$655,496	469. 23	\$32,102	\$762,971	498. 41	\$34,685	\$831,599	498. 41	\$35,525	\$857,323
D+E = F - Total Personnel Benefits	394. 11	\$54,667	\$681,317	500. 8	\$59,002	\$854,349	521. 13	\$62,528	\$968,319	550. 31	\$66,053	\$1,043,709	550. 31	\$67,946	\$1,076,376
A+D = G - Total Admin and Support Personnel (Salary & Benefits)	51.2 8	\$2,650,702	\$418,345	59.2 8	\$2,651,859	\$505,943	59.2 8	\$2,691,716	\$519,668	59.2 8	\$2,780,428	\$533,170	59.2 8	\$2,781,693	\$547,463
B+E = H - Total Instructional Personnel (Salary & Benefits)	400. 22	\$1,240,935	\$1,726,988	514. 25	\$1,016,262	\$2,118,216	537. 51	\$1,038,200	\$2,431,751	570. 89	\$1,097,485	\$2,650,324	570. 89	\$1,037,028	\$2,709,639
G+H = J - TOTAL PERSONNEL	451. 5	\$3,891,637	\$2,145,333	573. 53	\$3,668,121	\$2,624,159	596. 79	\$3,729,916	\$2,951,419	630. 17	\$3,877,913	\$3,183,494	630. 17	\$3,818,721	\$3,257,101

**Operations Budget: Expenditure Projections 2015-16 through 2019-2020**

<b>BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS</b>		<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
	Administrative & Support:					
Office:	Office Supplies	\$19,400	\$21,300	\$24,400	\$27,700	\$28,300
	Office Equipment	\$12,200	\$11,600	\$12,200	\$12,700	\$13,000
Facilities	Facility Lease/Mortgage	\$1,151,400	\$1,151,400	\$1,151,400	\$1,151,400	\$1,151,400
	Rent Of Equipment	\$9,800	\$10,500	\$11,200	\$11,900	\$12,000
	Maintenance & Repair	\$130,000	\$169,700	\$126,600	\$131,800	\$129,600
	Custodial	\$118,200	\$120,700	\$123,100	\$125,500	\$128,000
Utilities	Phone	\$3,700	\$3,800	\$4,200	\$4,600	\$4,700
	Gas	\$4,800	\$4,900	\$5,000	\$5,100	\$5,200
	Electric	\$47,600	\$48,500	\$49,500	\$50,500	\$51,500
	Water/Sewer	\$7,100	\$8,400	\$9,800	\$11,100	\$11,400
	Trash	\$4,900	\$5,800	\$6,700	\$7,600	\$7,800
Transportation	Transportation Plan	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Other	Administrative Support	\$116,400	\$116,400	\$116,400	\$126,276	\$116,568
	Contracted Services	\$163,800	\$210,900	\$238,500	\$245,600	\$263,900
	Curriculum Development And Intervention Services	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$52,100	\$48,100
	Facility Acquisition	\$124,900	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Food Plan	\$187,300	\$216,000	\$244,700	\$273,400	\$273,400
	Insurances	\$19,200	\$19,500	\$19,800	\$20,100	\$20,400
	Legal And Audit	\$82,700	\$83,100	\$90,800	\$96,700	\$92,100
	Marketing Plan	\$63,400	\$56,900	\$57,000	\$61,700	\$57,300
	Partner Relations	\$52,500	\$52,500	\$52,500	\$57,000	\$52,600
	Travel And Meetings & Meals	\$13,900	\$15,100	\$16,400	\$17,700	\$18,000
	Other:Field Trips, Dues & Fees, Board Expenditures	\$44,000	\$44,600	\$45,200	\$45,800	\$46,000
	<b>K - TOTAL Administrative &amp; Support Operations</b>	<b>\$2,430,200</b>	<b>\$2,424,600</b>	<b>\$2,458,400</b>	<b>\$2,541,276</b>	<b>\$2,536,268</b>
	Instructional:					
Classroom Technology	Software	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Technology Services	\$114,300	\$115,400	\$116,400	\$122,800	\$118,800
Instructional Contract	Staff Development	\$123,700	\$95,400	\$99,800	\$105,500	\$104,300
	Staff Recruitment And Retention	\$157,900	\$87,200	\$93,600	\$101,700	\$83,700
Books And Supplies	Instructional Materials & Supplies	\$140,700	\$131,300	\$127,200	\$131,700	\$134,800
	Curriculum/Texts	\$181,300	\$47,100	\$40,800	\$52,400	\$5,100

	Copier & Printing Costs	\$14,100	\$16,300	\$18,700	\$21,100	\$21,500
	Testing Supplies	\$41,300	\$40,700	\$42,300	\$46,200	\$43,700
	Instructional Equipment	\$86,700	\$90,100	\$94,700	\$99,300	\$100,200
	L - TOTAL Instructional Operations	\$860,000	\$623,500	\$633,500	\$680,700	\$612,100
	K+L = M - TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$3,290,200	\$3,048,100	\$3,091,900	\$3,221,976	\$3,148,368

**Overall Budget:**

<b>BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
J - TOTAL PERSONNEL	\$2,145,333	\$2,624,159	\$2,951,419	\$3,183,494	\$3,257,101
M - TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$3,290,200	\$3,048,100	\$3,091,900	\$3,221,976	\$3,148,368
J+ M =N TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$5,435,533	\$5,672,259	\$6,043,319	\$6,405,470	\$6,405,469
Z - TOTAL REVENUE	\$5,435,533	\$5,672,259	\$6,043,319	\$6,405,470	\$6,405,469
Z - N = SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$0	-\$0	-\$0	\$0	-\$0

**Budget Narrative:** (No more than one and a half pages)

Please include additional information that showcases all assumptions for your budgetary calculations.

1. *How was the student enrollment number projected?*

*Provide an explanation as to why you believe there is a demand for the school that will meet this enrollment projection.*

*Provide the break-even point of student enrollment.*

Our school will open to serve 520 students in grades K-5, increasing to full capacity of 772 students in grades K-8 by 2018-19.

Our management partner, NHA, supports our school's mission to institute its complete educational program from day one by pledging any funds necessary to cover expenses that exceed revenues. We have not set a break-even point of student enrollment and appreciate NHA's commitment to our school despite any fluctuations in enrollment as we open. Our market research makes us confident we will attract students and fill to our enrollment targets and thus revenue projections, the pledge of support by NHA ensures the school that we will never be in a position that requires cuts to our envisioned educational program.

*Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.*

Our services agreement with NHA, and a letter of financial commitment from the organization, offers funds, if necessary, to cover expenditures that exceed revenues in the early years of the school's operations as it grows to full K-8 capacity (see Appendix R, Revenue Assurances). The budget includes an expected contribution from NHA of approximately \$1,073,417 in the first year of operation, \$658,892 in Year 2, and \$333,149 in Year 3. These are contributions to the school, not loans. The services agreement maintains NHA's commitment to providing sufficient revenue to meet the school's budgeted expenses in subsequent years if public revenues drop below our projections.

*Does the budget rely on sources of funds other than state, county, and federal (e.g. loans, donations etc.)? If so, please provide the source and amount. Be sure that the appropriate assurances documentation is provided in the appendices*

*As described above, the expenditure projections in the first two years of operation do rely on funds other than state, county, and federal sources. These funds are in the form of no-obligation contributions from NHA, which are not loans. Assurance documentation is provided in Appendix R.*

*Provide the student to teacher ratio that the budget is built on.*

See additional space.

- 2. Does the school intend to contract for services such as student accounting and financial services, exceptional children instructional support, custodial etc. Describe the criteria and procedures for the selection of contractors and large purchases.*

Our Board's services agreement with NHA calls for NHA to provide the school with all necessary back-office functions, including purchasing, accounting, business services, informational technology, data reporting, data warehousing, human resources, and payroll.

NHA uses a standardized human resource, purchasing, and payroll software system to internally manage all transactions related to the personnel, purchasing, and payroll function. This administrative infrastructure supports full compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. NHA effectively manages compensation, payroll, licensure, and compliance for approximately 4,000 school-based employees in nine states. On behalf of our school, NHA will follow applicable state and federal law with respect to the selection of contractors and large purchases on behalf of the school, including competitive bidding or sole-source documentation as applicable.

- 3. Explain how the budget aligns with the school's mission, curricular offerings, transportation plans, and facility needs.*

Gateway Charter Academy will annually maintain a balanced budget. Our school's management partner, NHA, has an established record of opening and operating 76 schools in nine different states, and in each has ensured the effective establishment of the school's entire educational program with the level of public revenue received and additional contributions by NHA. Not a single NHA partner school has closed because of financial difficulties of any type.

NHA partner schools reflect the proper level of financial commitment to priorities within the schools' educational program. These priorities include: a robust professional development program; a distributed leadership model that allows greater coaching of classroom teachers; a full curricular program that emphasizes the core areas of math, ELA, science, and social studies while also allowing for art, music, gym, and other "specials." NHA partner schools also are marked by a consistently competitive salary and employee benefit structure that encourages rewards to high-performing employees and creates an atmosphere that allows excellent teachers to take advantage of opportunities to grow in responsibility and leadership.

Gateway Charter Academy will work diligently to ensure that the school is accessible to all students, and that transportation needs are not a barrier to any child attending the school. The school's budget also has built in \$5,000 to cover the cost of such transportation needs, which also may include transportation for students who may be experiencing homelessness or exceptional children with transportation needs noted in their IEPs.

Our facility, and our lease agreement with NHA, assumes that no funds from banks, other lending institutions, outside corporations, foundations, or other sources will be needed.

- 4. What percentage of expenditures will be the school's goal for a general fund balance? Describe how the school will develop the fund balance.*



Per our services agreement with NHA, our Board will allocate funds for discretionary expenditure purposes and/or carry that money over year-to-year in order to establish a small budget surplus. We are contemplating using these funds to create a fund balance and may set aside up to 50% of these funds each year to build our fund balance. We will revisit our fund balance needs after each year of operations, as we annually evaluate the performance of NHA. If, as we believe will occur, we are satisfied with the performance of NHA and the strength of our services agreement, we will choose to reinvest these funds into the educational program at our school.

While a substantial reserve fund is not intended, the risk that such a reserve fund would be designed to mitigate is in large part borne directly by our operating partner, NHA. NHA is committed to providing the educational program according to the budget we approve, regardless of fluctuations in public revenue. In our due diligence of NHA, we noted that it partners with six schools in North Carolina, dating back to 1999. These schools have been operating with academic, organizational, and financial success and have been successfully renewed by their authorizer. We recognize, however, the guidance from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to schools to show additional indicators of financial viability beyond the proposed services agreement with NHA. Our due diligence has revealed that no school partnering with NHA has ever been closed for financial reasons and NHA has never walked away from a partnership with a school, even when enrollment or funding at the school has decreased.

While there is no substantial surplus envisioned, there is also no deficit. Private monies that NHA commits to the school's operating budget are contributions, not loans, there is no payback required. Should our Board need to terminate our agreement with NHA, we will have no debt, and potentially a small reserve fund, as evidenced by the fund balances that exist at other NHA partner schools. Further, we'll retain our operational revenue through the local, state, and federal per-pupil funds that flow to our board as a result of our school's enrollment. This funding, coupled with our separate lease agreement, will give us both the revenue and facility we need to continue operating smoothly while we develop plans to self-manage our school or seek the services of other management organizations.

Our budget with this application does not reflect this potential surplus as we haven't yet determined as a Board how we utilize these discretionary monies. It is our belief that these monies should be utilized for our students during the same school year.

*5. Provide a description of proposed financing structure. Include financing of facilities, other asset financing and leases.*

This budget assumes that no funds from banks, other lending institutions, outside corporations, foundations, or other sources will be needed. We want our school to start as a K-5 school and grow slowly to a K-8 school while still taking advantage of a fully implemented educational program. We also see the wisdom in occupying a facility constructed to house the K-8 model. Accordingly, NHA has pledged operating grants sufficient to meet operating expenses above revenues received in the school's early years. Appendix R includes a letter of revenue assurances from NHA, which further details the organization's initial and ongoing commitment to our school.

7. *Will the school have assets from other sources (e.g. building, furniture, chairs, computers, etc.)? If yes, please provide a list. Note which are secured and which are anticipated, and include evidence of commitment for any assets on which the school's core operation depends*

The school will not have assets from other sources. Through our services agreement, NHA will purchase and provide assets on behalf of our school.

(Student to teacher ratio) The budget is not built on a specific student-to-teacher ratio. The main drivers for budget expenditures are the number of students served, the number of classrooms utilized, and overall operational costs incurred by the school. As depicted in the budget projections, in the first year of operation the ratio of students to content teachers (full-time equivalent) is 24 to 1. The ratio of students to all instructors serving students is 21 to 1 (not including teachers and aides serving exceptional children). The ratio of students to core content teachers stabilizes in the second year at 25 to 1 and that ratio is maintained at full capacity. Beginning in the second year and following, the total ratio of students to instructors is maintained at 22 to 1.

**Financial Compliance:** (No more than a half of a page)

*How will the school ensure adequate internal controls, including segregation of duties, safeguarding of assets, accurate and adequate recording keeping?*

Our school will have adequate internal controls and our Board will ensure these controls are followed consistently.

There will be many controls surrounding our financial processes, including that:

- Supervisors must approve and release entries into the payroll system before payroll is generated.

- Any requested changes require the approval of both the school principal and an official at NHA.

- Regular comparisons are done to staff rosters and payroll ledgers.

- An integrated computerized system manages all purchasing, general ledger, grant accounting, fixed assets accounting, and cash disbursements activities.

NHA also has formal written policies for purchasing, accounts payable, the use of corporate credit cards, board discretionary funds, principal discretionary funds, school money handling, deposits, and security policy. Our Board will review all of these policies, revise them as deemed necessary, and then adopt them.

We will contract with an independent auditor each year to perform a financial audit of the school. The audit fieldwork will be conducted in a timely manner to ensure that the report will be completed by the state-specified deadline. The audit expense will be included in the school's Board-approved budget.

*Provide any known or possible related party transactions (relationship, description of transaction and estimated dollars involved)*

There are no known or possible related party transactions at our school.

*Provide the name and contact information of the independent audit firm who will conduct the annual financial statement audit. If a firm has yet to be identified please list the firms the board has investigated.*

Our Board is currently investigating and considering the following firms to conduct our audit:

Name: BDO USA, LLP

Address: 1001 Morehead Square Drive, Ste. 300, Charlotte, NC 28203

Phone Number: 704-887-4236

Name: Deloitte & Touche, LLP

Address: 550 S. Tryon Street, Ste. 2500, Charlotte, NC 28202

Phone Number: 704-887-1500

Name: Plante & Moran, PLLC

Address: 634 Front Avenue NW, Suite 400, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Phone Number: 616-774-8221



