



NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

Mallard Creek STEM 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
919-807-3491

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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 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: Mallard Creek STEM Academy

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

Name of non-profit organization under which charter will be organized or operated: *Alliance Preparatory Schools, 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: *Jennifer Lucas*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *President of the Board*

Mailing address: 11536 Foggy Bank Lane
Charlotte NC 28214

Primary telephone: 954-732-3122 Alternative telephone: 954-732-3122

E-Mail address: jenniferlucas54@gmail.com

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

County: MECKLENBURG

LEA: 600-Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

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

No: X

Yes:

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

No: X

Yes:

What is the name of the nonprofit organization that governs this charter school? Alliance Preparatory Schools, Inc.

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

Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment:

Projected School Opening: Year 2015 Month August

Will this school operate on a year round schedule?

No: X

Yes:

Proposed Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment (

10

Years)

Academic School Year	Grade Levels	Total Projected Student Enrollment
First Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06	616
Second Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07	704
Third Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	808
Fourth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	828
Fifth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	828
Sixth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	828
Seventh Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	828
Eight Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	828
Ninth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	828
Tenth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	828

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.

jluucas
Signature

Jennifer Lucas, President
Title

jluucas
Printed Name

11/25/2013
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:

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will provide all students the opportunity to attain successful careers and fulfilling lives by preparing them for high school, college and careers in an ever changing, highly competitive, global community and by developing their sense of social responsibility to encourage and serve others. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will be founded upon a STEM-focused program in a safe and inviting school that encourages all students to strive for success in an appropriately challenging environment designed to understand and meet the needs of students of the 21st Century, which will deliver a sense of accomplishment to the entire community which it serves.

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.*

Mallard Creek STEM Academy is designed to meet two imperative educational needs. The first is to help close the widening achievement gap among our students based on a variety of educational reports. From a broad perspective, the US is producing just over 5% of STEM graduates each year compared to our global competitors who are producing between 27-47% of STEM graduates respectively. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics is predicting another 120,000 job openings in computer science, yet we are expected to graduate only 40,000 students from accredited computer science programs. Over the next 10 years, research projects growth of STEM based careers from 16-62% on average. An article published by the National Math + Science Initiative details the urgent need to provide students a STEM centered curriculum as soon as possible. We are not preparing our children with the skills necessary to meet the demands of our own local and national workforce. Students given the opportunity to engage in these subjects and master the content via project-based learning will be more successful than their peers. MCSA will implement a unique STEM-centered program for all students K-8 that will prepare them to be successful in competitive high school programs, colleges and careers.

Secondly, Mallard Creek is one the regions within Charlotte-Mecklenburg in desperate need for additional school options. The NC state average for enrollment in elementary schools is 499. The district LEA average is 708, yet almost all of the elementary schools in Mallard Creek have well over 800

students enrolled. The NC state average for middle school enrollment is 668. The district LEA average is 1002, yet the middle schools in the Mallard Creek region have over 1400 students enrolled. The student to teacher ratio in Charlotte for public schools is 16:1, which is 8.3% greater than the North Carolina state student to teacher ratio. According to the demographics posted on the CMS website, the school district has grown about three percent each year since 1994. This equates to about 3,500 students per year. Much of the growth has been evidenced within the northern and southern portions of the county. It is anticipated that this growth trend will continue for at least the next ten years. Based upon specific data released in a bond referendum, CMS recognizes it has and will continue to have challenges assigning students into schools. There are not enough school facilities to house the growing student population in this area and new development is not expected to occur until 2017-2020. Yearly changes in school assignments that are reactive to overcrowding lend themselves to other challenges within the schools and communities. CMS has recently proposed a bond referendum worth \$290 million to achieve 3 goals: Provide more academic options for schools, relieve overcrowding, and facility renovations/replacements for schools in need. MCSA will achieve all three goals by 2015. MCSA has partnered with Vance High School to ensure our students can be successful in a competitive high school program and The Discovery Center to provide initial and ongoing professional development for staff to ensure their competence in delivering the STEM program for our students and to provide them with the additional instructional support and resources they will need to be successful in the classroom.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will offer an open enrollment period and lottery system to admit any student entitled to enroll in a public educational facility pursuant to federal NCLB title V part B Charter Schools Program Non-Regulatory Guidance (USDOE2004) provided by the US Department of Education. No child shall be denied enrollment based upon intellectual ability, disabilities, race, creed, gender or national origin. The population is expected to mirror that of the LEA:

Caucasian 58.26
African American 32.62
Asian 3.24
American Indian 0.43
Native Hawaiian 0.07
Mixed 1.89
Other 3.49

- 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 target enrollment number for initial membership at the Mallard Creek STEM Academy is 616 students. This number represents less than 1% (.76) of the 80,497 K-6 students currently enrolled in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools system. In years 3 and beyond when enrolled to capacity as a K-8 school with 808 students, the school will represent less than 1% (.78) of the expected number of students enrolled in the CMS system. These enrollment

expectations are based on historical growth of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District at approximately 3,500 students per year as posted on the CMS website.

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

Mallard Creek STEM Academy leadership believes that given the opportunity and resources, all students will develop a love for learning through a curriculum model founded upon research based instructional best practices that incorporates hands-on projects and experiments to activate the students' desire to learn. Our students, regardless of age, gender, race or religion will become critical thinkers, capable of integrating their knowledge and understanding of each core content area and apply it in real-life simulations in order to help them solve the problems that they will face as our communities become globally connected and the needs of our populations continue to change. Our focused inclusion of STEM based learning to help our students develop a skill set in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics will empower them to overcome challenges in their futures as the competition for careers and resources continues to increase. Most importantly, our schools will instill in our students the inherent understanding that their academic success must be integrated with their desire to become socially responsible, and productive citizens within our growing communities. Project-based learning and a required component for service learning is included in our curriculum program. Areas of focus: Although some schools have begun to incorporate pieces of STEM instruction into their program as a supplement, MCSA will teach STEM across all grade levels and content areas including English/Language Arts to help students make real-life connections with text. Teachers will be trained and supported through the programs offered by our community partner, Discovery Place, Inc. Our staff will become instructional leaders for STEM and the in-field experts from Discovery Place, Inc. will provide ongoing support.

MCSA has identified and developed partnerships with current organizations supportive of the STEM movement willing to offer their expertise and resources to provide our students with the technology, tools and knowledge they will need to be successful. These partnerships include onsite support, offsite field excursions, summer programs, after school clubs and a natural, focused progression plan into STEM based high schools. MCSA will utilize a curriculum with a focused scope and sequence that will enable all students to meet the expectations of the North Carolina Common Core and New Essential Standards written using the Revised Blooms Taxonomy (RBT). NC has recognized the need for increasing student achievement levels and our school will provide the resources, curriculum design and support necessary for student success. Students will be expected to meet the expectations for the READY end of course and end of grade assessments.

Our core program will include the STC for Elementary STEM curriculum developed by the Smithsonian Science Education Center and will be supplemented with a STEM literacy series. Our program will incorporate units of study designed by the Museum of Science in Boston. The Engineering is Elementary provides 20 units that combine global studies through literacy, high level vocabulary, and nonfiction text with culminating projects in math and science that can be differentiated by grade level and ability level. Our project-based learning will hold students and teachers accountable by using rubrics from the Buck Institute. Our students will work with local high school students from Vance High School and local community partners such as

Discovery Place, Inc., and Camp Invention which offers a variety of modules for students to deepen their STEM knowledge and practice their 21st Century skills by working in collaborative teams on real-world problems. Finally, our school will offer an extended day program to meet the needs of our high achieving students through enrichment programs such as Odyssey of the Mind as well as tutoring camps and interventions for struggling students.

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.*

Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunities to be responsible for the learning program at the school site:

All staff will be required to attend professional development workshops for the selected curriculum adopted at the school site (EIE, BIE, NMAC, STC). Our teachers will be trained directly under the experts from The Discover Place through their multiple STEM education programs designed to teach educators how to incorporate STEM in the classroom and what that instruction looks like for students. Our staff will have the opportunity to work closely with Discovery Place, Inc. to set learning goals for students and to create units of study across content areas to assist students in mastering the content. Our staff will also work directly with school administration to learn how to interpret student data in order to drive instruction. Teachers will be supported by administration and through our focused professional learning communities (PLC's) on campus and with our STEM experts in Discovery Place, Inc. as they incorporate new and best practices in the classroom and monitor student achievement data to identify those in need of remediation, acceleration or intervention.

Hold schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy students will participate in End of Grade assessments to measure and monitor achievement of benchmarks in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for grades K-2 per SBE policy GCS-C-016. Students in grades 3-8 will also take the READY end of course exams. All test data will be aggregated under the North Carolina Accountability model and the school will publish its "report card" in newsletter format and on the website per Section 7A.3. (c) G.S. 115C-238.92F. MCSA is aware it must publish the report card through a wide distribution including the local press. MCSA may elect to purchase proprietary student testing services to measure internal progress as related to new curriculum implemented at the site. Data will both drive and refine instruction. All students in need will have documented Personalized Education Plans (PEP). These plans will document their baseline knowledge, areas of weakness and will serve as an ongoing progress monitoring tool.

Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy is specifically designed to offer all students a unique educational experience that is completely infused with STEM based topics and real-life applications for learning content. Each theme or unit will include an exploratory activity and/or culminating project to demonstrate mastery of content in addition to any standardized testing. Students will get to work with high school students in STEM programs through Vance High School which will provide them peer mentor support for academic projects, as well as an understanding of what STEM looks like at the high school level. Students will be exposed to real businesses and commercial expectations for STEM careers through onsite presentations and offsite field experiences supported by local commerce in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area including Discovery Place, Inc., The STEM Center, EPRI and other local commerce. Students will be encouraged to compete in local competitions including Science/STEM Fairs, robotics, engineering, chess and other clubs. The school will host quarterly data chats and individual conferences to share student achievement and progress. Students will take ownership of their learning by setting appropriate goals, participating in focused, in-depth inquiry projects, and presenting their projects and assessment data to their parents.

Improving student learning:

Students who are exposed to learning that is student-centered with exploratory and hands on activities in conjunction with explicit instruction will inherently perform better on the most rigorous measures for student performance in all grade levels. Students who are excited about learning and given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery through experiential learning will naturally improve their own academic progress. Our program is data-driven. The Personalized Education Plans will be implemented for all struggling students to help identify strengths and weaknesses, and measure progress growth, document interventions, and determine additional support structures needed to increase learning gains. The PEP will follow students throughout the year and as they articulate into advanced grade levels to ensure open communication between staff, students and parents regarding ongoing efforts to increase academic achievement.

Increasing learning opportunities for all students, with a special emphasis

on at-risk or gifted students:

A STEM program is good for all learners, specifically those that fall into the "at-risk" populations. For students who are currently struggling, an educational program that is different from a traditional setting naturally helps the struggling students to learn by delivering the content in a new and meaningful ways. Igniting their confidence and desire to achieve is a large piece of the improvement. Gifted students, who also fall into an "at-risk" category will have the opportunity to grow and explore in meaningful ways that they may never have in a traditional setting. Gifted students will be encouraged and supported to participate in local, state and national competitions for STEM based projects which will enable them to use their creative talent and "out of the box" thinking to solve real-world problems and projects. Both at risk populations will thrive in our school. The PEP's offer documented support system to help increase student academic achievement and our high achieving students will have increased opportunities to compete in local competitions and will have open access to enrichment activities offered through Discovery Place, Inc. and other STEM partners.

Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods:

Classrooms will be outfitted with the technology and tools required for interactive teaching and learning. Student materials will include hands-on manipulatives to activate learning in all 3 domains; concrete, representational, and abstract. Classrooms will be outfitted with experiment kits for all grades with nonfiction text selections aligned to our project-based learning modules. Students will have educational experiences in the classroom, on field excursions and virtual learning opportunities. Our students will have a unique experience with a STEM focused curriculum and teachers who have been trained by experts to deliver engaging units of study across many fields to help them ignite a passion for learning. Technology will be immersed in the curriculum to sharpen students' skills and broaden the number and type of resources used in the classroom.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy has a vision, mission and focused curriculum plan that meets all six of the Legislative Purposes of a Charter School by offering a unique STEM program that requires teachers to participate in thematic lesson planning in order to incorporate project based learning in the classroom across all content areas and help students master the grade level expectations by going deeper into the content and keeping them engaged and on task. The ultimate goal of Mallard Creek STEM Academy is to meet the SMART goals written in collaboration with our Governing Board aligned to the school improvement plan which will eventually lead to a high performing public school status with the designation of "school of distinction" or "school of excellence".

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.*

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will write a school improvement plan each year as part of the continuous improvement model. "SMART Goals" inclusive of academics, attendance, behavior, service learning, and school climate will be written by school leadership and shared with the Board in the beginning of the year. The SMART goals will serve as a collective quantitative/qualitative measurement of progress and achievement of continuous improvement as defined in the SIP.

Assessment of student performance in core academic areas will be achieved in various ways, depending on the subject area. Benchmarks for improved student academic performance will be identified using various regimens (formal and informal) taken throughout the year. Student academic progress will be based on the benchmark tests. For students entering our school from another public school, past test results and cumulative records will be requested from the previous school to provide baseline data and student academic levels. The first administration of our baseline assessments will identify initial student performance levels as well as the areas where growth is necessary. Continual monitoring of student achievement data will be provided at least three times during the school year. These exams will be openly shared and discussed with students in order for them to understand what they have successfully mastered as well as what they need to improve. This data will be used for students to set appropriate goals for themselves and will be shared with their families during our student-led data nights. Through analysis and evaluation of data, administrators, teachers, and parents, are able to devise a personalized academic plan for each student (PEP) to achieve greater learning gains. Student attendance, behavior and participation in the school's culture contribute to academic achievement. Assessments serve as a measurement of instructional capacity for teachers as well as students, and teachers will use the data to reflect on their teaching and improve their instruction, delivery and activities to stretch students.

The yearly goals include, but are not limited to target the following:

- * The lowest quartile (25%) of students will be monitored through PEP's and participate in the NCRtI model
- * 90% ADM as reported in Powerschool
- * Less than five percent (5%) of the student body will receive an out of school suspension
- * 100% of eligible EC and AIG students will have an Individual Education Plan or EP and accommodations will be provided to teachers within the first 20 days of school
- * 100% of ELL students will be identified, assessed and provided an appropriate program and supports
- * 100% of school administration and faculty will be highly qualified
- * 80% or more responses on the student, staff and parent surveys regarding school climate will show that MCSA meets or exceeds goals or expectations in all areas assessed including climate/culture reflective of
- * 75% of students will participate in documented service learning activities

The academic plan mandates that student performance data drives instruction and maintains a continuum of teaching the content based upon the expectations of Common Core and NC Essential Standards (Standard Course of Study) by following a sequential pacing guide that is designed to deliver the core curriculum for each subject area that will be reviewed and revised

as interval benchmarks and assessments for student learning are examined. MCSA will monitor and evaluate specific, measurable goals regarding academic performance for all students.

Academic performance measures include: making yearly progress by increasing the percentage of students who are proficient on Basic or Above on READY (EOG) and READY EOC assessments as averaged by subject. The School will continually increase its percentage of students who are proficient by an average of at least 2% during the 5 years following receipt of an AYP score.

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

The governing board will work closely with site based administration to create and review the yearly School Improvement Plan as designed through the continuous improvement model. The Board will review academic achievement data, teacher retention data, and family satisfaction and retention data to assess the progress of the school's continuous improvement. The results of that measurable process will result in the creation of new or revised yearly SMART Goals. The yearly SMART goals include student academic achievement, attendance rates, student discipline rates, parent involvement as defined by the school's volunteer requirement policy, retention of the desired "highly qualified" staff, economic sustainability as defined by the school's monthly budgets and yearly audits, and student participation in service learning activities. The governing board will assemble monthly to review student academic achievement data when available, survey data from students, teachers and parents to assess the climate and culture progress of our school, economic sustainability via budget v. actual expenditure reports, and participation and support of the community the school serves through the business and community-based partnerships. Each month the Board will have the opportunity to measure ongoing progress for our school, make recommendations and provide specific feedback to school leadership. The governing board will be invited to view and participate in all onsite activities and events as well as any local events in which our students participate (competitions, fairs, presentations etc.).

The Principal will be required to provide the board with a monthly report which will include current enrollment data, academic progress, behavior and attendance reports as maintained by Powerschool, financial reports and family survey data in the spring. Parent retention and satisfaction will also be measured through withdrawal reports that will be maintained by the registrar. The Board will have the opportunity to review these materials and ask qualifying questions regarding student achievement, district compliance, and fiscal responsibility. The Board will receive copies of any reports sent to the LEA as well as the State in a timely fashion and will have the opportunity to provide feedback or concerns regarding any such reports. The Board understands that the school "report card" will be published widely through the website, local press and newsletter.

The Governing Board will hold meetings with school administration to review the progress towards achieving the SMART goals, provide feedback and assistance for measuring and increasing progress, and cultivate additional resources to support the growth of the program. All grades will participate in the NC End of Grade exams, MAP benchmarks, and NC End of Course Exams. Mallard Creek STEM Academy has its own proprietary assessments to measure

student progress and to determine those students who need documented interventions, as defined in their Personalized Education Programs (PEP) and participation in the extended learning program. The school Principal will conduct teacher evaluations using the NC Educator Evaluation System and share the results of the evaluations. At the end of the year, the Board will be given the opportunity to review all survey data, performance data and compliance reports to address any concerns that may arise and to offer a cumulative evaluation report of the school's performance. The Board understands that the ultimate goal for the school is to achieve high performing status in the state and receive a School of Excellence or School of Distinction designation and will assist the school in reaching that goal.

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.

The instructional program at Mallard Creek STEM Academy is a research-based curriculum which employs inquiry and project-based learning for all students. National studies show that our curriculum selections have improved student learning for all student populations, including at-risk of academic failure and academically-gifted students. The instructional approach and school environment will sharpen students' skills and prepare them to pursue college and careers in STEM fields. Our average class size will fall below the average student:teacher ratios in CMS.

All educators at MCSA will implement the instructional best practices as defined by Robert Marzano. (Classroom Instruction That Works, Marzano, 2001) Teachers will employ a variety of methods to support and ensure high academic expectations and indicators for student performance.

Teachers will also offer students:

Project-based Performance Tasks

* Inquiry Based Projects Students participate in problem solving tasks, hands-on experiments, and other inquiry based projects described by Marzano as learning activities for Generating and Testing Hypothesis (Marzano, 2001) and Buck Institute for Education (BIE 2010).

* Real World Application Teachers ensure deep understanding of standards by utilizing instructional strategies such as non-linguistic representations, cooperative learning, comparisons, and other strategies that ensure students apply knowledge to real world scenarios (EIE)

* Thematic Units of study with student work samples that focus on and document the development of reading, writing, and communication skills (EIE and STC)

All educators will be expected to demonstrate proficiency for teaching in the classroom using the gradual release model for explicit instruction, modeling activities, shared practice, and individual assessment. This method of instruction will be used throughout the curriculum across all content areas. In mathematics, our teachers will also be required to use a research based practice for incorporating hands-on learning and exploratory activities called the CRA approach. Students have shown increased achievement when they are taught in a progressive method called Concrete, Representational, and Abstract. (CRA) is a three step instructional approach that has been found to be highly effective in teaching math concepts. The first step is called the concrete stage. It is known as the "doing" stage and involves physically manipulating objects to solve a math problem. The

representational (semi-concrete) stage is the next step. It is known as the "seeing" stage and involves using images to represent objects to solve a math problem. The final step in this approach is called the abstract stage. It is known as the "symbolic" stage and involves using only numbers and symbols to solve a math problem. CRA is a gradual systematic approach. Each stage builds on to the previous stage and therefore must be taught in sequence.

Although our students will all be expected to meet or exceed the Common Core and NC Essential Standards, we will not "teach to the test". MCSA will administer interval benchmark assessments to ensure that the teachers are following our scope and sequence for appropriate teaching and learning at each grade level. The instructional program is specifically designed to engage the students with authentic learning opportunities with teachers facilitating learning through modeling. Our students will be expected to complete authentic artifacts and examples to demonstrate mastery of content. The portfolio program will monitor student progress in project-based learning. Projects give students the chance to apply the skills they learn in school to personally relevant and real-world situations. Children also learn skills such as how to think critically, solve problems, work in teams, and make presentations. These skills will help students succeed in the future, both in school and in today's STEM workforce. (Buck Institute)

K-5 Curriculum and Instructional Design:

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

Mallard Creek STEM Academy is designed to offer students a challenging and supportive learning environment. The student to teacher ratio is expected to meet or fall below the approved NC class size averages. The goal of MCSA is to alleviate the challenges created by overcrowded classrooms and schools and to offer students an authentic, hands-on approach to learning. Classes with lower student to teacher ratios will be able to accomplish more and each child will receive more individualized attention and appropriate supports to meet their personal needs and academic goals.

Each classroom will be outfitted with the curricular resources outlined in our education plan that are research based to support STEM centered learning. The classrooms will also be outfitted with the technology and equipment necessary to implement the selected curriculum. The facilities will be designed to provide the infrastructure for appropriate classrooms and labs. Each class will receive explicit whole group instruction, as well as collaborative group work, teacher-led small group instruction and independent studies. All classrooms will display common configuration boards which will include the Essential Questions and Learner Outcomes by subject area written in a student-friendly language. Teachers will provide whole group explicit instruction for each new skill or concept being taught. After checking for understanding, students will then work in collaborative groups to practice what they are learning. The work groups will include lab experiments, hands-on activities and exploratory activities. Parent and mentor participation will be encouraged so that our families and our business partners can support and encourage student development.

A master schedule will be created by administration that prioritizes instructional time and is in compliance with statutory requirements. All

students will have protected instructional minutes for all core content areas as well as lunch and recess. Elementary classes will offer a combination of self-contained classes with inter-disciplinary instruction. All middle school classes will operate on a block schedule to allow teachers to provide explicit instruction and to "go deeper" into the content as students have additional time for small group practice, experiential learning, and independent studies. All students will work in heterogeneous, collaborative groups for certain project-based learning opportunities. MCSA will employ ability grouping for small group instruction based on benchmark data and progress monitoring efforts. The master schedule will also provide grade level common planning time which will allow for interdisciplinary planning and give students the opportunity to work with multiple peer groups. Students will also be encouraged to work individually on certain topics and prepare an authentic artifact that can be presented to their class. These types of activities will build each students' individual capacity that can be documented and monitored. A peer mentor program will be designed for older students to mentor and support their younger counterparts while reinforcing their understanding of the core content areas. This program also reinforces the service learning component in our educational model. Peer assistance will be available from the students in Vance High School. Each class will follow the school wide positive behavior support plan with a PARR program in place for setting expectations and escalating consequences for undesirable behavior. Teachers are expected to create an environment in their classroom most conducive to learning. Each teacher will be trained in the expectations for the PBS plan and implementing PARR. Students who are disruptive to the learning environment will have the opportunity to re-learn expected behavior. Those who continue to fail to meet PARR expectations meet with administration, the student will be removed from the classroom and the parents will be notified.

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.*

The curricula for all subject areas are rigorous and aligned with the NC Standard Course of Study. In addition, students with stronger mathematics skills at early grades perform better on mathematics and reading tests in upper grades. Thus, the focus of the: Grades K-3 is to build a strong language, literacy, and mathematics skills. Science and social studies are naturally integrated through themes. All instruction will be supported by the technology. Grades 4-5: Focus starts shifting from general elementary education towards more science related classroom activities and advanced mathematics while NC Standard Course of Study are followed. Grades 6-8, besides all core subject areas (NC Standard Course of Study and Common Core Standards), will have a strong focus on science and mathematics skills through integrated technology.

The curriculum program at Mallard Creek STEM Academy is specifically designed to meet the Charter's primary goal: To give our students the opportunity to attain successful careers and fulfilling lives by preparing them for competitive high school programs so they can move on to college and

careers. The educational program is built upon a core curriculum that is research based and designed by experts in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. A STEM aligned Reading/Language Arts core will occur throughout all subjects as teachers plan thematic units of study. Our hiring practices require our educators to be masters of their trade and to employ best practices in the classroom which include explicit instruction, collaborative work groups, differentiated instruction with scaffolding for the struggling learners and enrichment for the high level learners. Our business partners will add to the real-life application models for learning material and offer to support the program to help MCSA meet its goals.

Goal setting is viewed as a catalyst for the cohesion of the school as a team working toward the same goals. These goals are academically focused, and they allow students to track their own progress. Goal setting is also used after formative assessments as a means to track improvement and areas for growth with regards to academic standards. Included within goal setting is the development of a Personalized Education Plan for each student. The PEP is designed to track an individual student's strengths, weaknesses, and cumulative progress in attaining a year's worth of learning at a specific grade level. The plan's development is a collaborative effort between the teacher, parent, student, and other staff involved with the student's academic achievement. The Personalized Education Plan identifies the students strengths and weaknesses, and lists goals for improvement. The following information is considered when assessing the students strengths and weaknesses:

- * The student's academic performance prior to enrollment
- * The results of any achievement testing and classroom assessments
- * Authentic student work and project-based learning portfolios
- * Reports and observations from the students' teachers
- * Information and suggestions from the students' parents and the students themselves

A measure of each student's academic gains will be determined at the end of the year, and a comparison of learning gains made throughout the year will also be conducted. Teachers will be evaluated based upon the academic growth of their students as well as their instructional pedagogy in the classroom. All educators will be required to hold current NC licenses and certifications to teach and will be evaluated multiple times throughout the year and held accountable for performance under the extensive North Carolina Teacher-Evaluation System. The targeted student population is residents of the Mallard Creek region who will benefit from a smaller school with a highly focused educational plan. Our unique program with individual learning goals (PEP) will benefit all students who attend our school.

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.*

The "best instructional strategies" previously stated and submitted in the appendices are based on the research of Robert J. Marzano in *The Art and Science of Teaching* and John Hattie's *Visible Learning* for teachers. The implementation of each strategy under the Marzano model is associated to specific behaviors to be exhibited by teachers appropriate to the grade level and course. Each behavior is adaptable and guides teachers as to the most appropriate use of research-based instructional strategies to meet the needs of students at each grade level. Teachers at the school will utilize

these strategies within their classrooms during the school year. A second research based instructional plan MCSA will implement is based on the research of John Hattie in Visible Learning for Teachers (2012) which sets high expectations for teachers and requires them to understand their role as a facilitator of education. Visible Learning describes the holistic approach to student achievement that is a collective effort from each member of the staff (administration, instructional staff, support staff) and requires teachers to reflect on their instructional methods as they measure student performance. Having teachers reflect on classroom practices, procedures and instructional strategies implemented in their classroom is a technique that can assist them in raising the quality of their classroom instruction. Visible learning encourages teachers to employ and implement only the instructional strategies in the classroom that have been statistically proven to positively impact student learning in their classes. The school Principal will monitor planning and instruction to ensure implementation of the appropriate instructional strategies. The principal will provide professional development, data analysis, and feedback based upon classroom visits, to support effective classroom instruction at the school. Teachers will be supported through professional development in order to be able to successfully apply the innovative learning methods listed as well as the "highly effective teaching attributes" also stated in the appendices. These instructional best practices will help guide teachers to utilize data-driven instruction to assist in appropriate student goal setting for all students.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will create scope and sequence calendars for Reading, Math, Language Arts and Science to insure that all aspects of the NC Essential Standards are being taught in a timely manner by effective teachers. Students will be able to achieve more in the core subject areas when the most effective teachers can:

- * Focus on the most important standards (for high-stakes tests and for learning in the following years)
- * Monitor students academic performance using interim assessments
- * Analyze those assessment results in group meetings and plan appropriate interventions

By identifying the state-specific standards that students must master in order to move to the next grade level teachers will determine what students should know and be able to do to demonstrate proficiency on high-stakes assessments, as well as, in foundational skills that are important for success in future grade levels. Teachers will plan curriculum using the NC Standards and they will choose which classroom activities are likely to produce a greater returning terms of student achievement for their investment of time.

Through the use of Scope and Sequence calendars and Pacing Guides teachers will pace essential standards over the school year to ensure proper sequencing and adequate teaching time is allocated for mastery of the essential standards. This pacing ensures Mallard Creek STEM Academy teachers spend more time on fewer, but more critical standards. By integrating data analysis, research and best classroom practices the curriculum can continuously be adjusted to meet the needs of the students.

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.*

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will follow the posted academic calendar for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and follow the posted holiday calendar for students. Students will attend Mallard Creek STEM Academy for 185 instructional days. Each school day will run approximately 7 hours with approximately 390 instructional minutes per day. In addition, Mallard Creek STEM Academy will offer an Extended Learning Program (ELP) for students we identify as struggling to master their expectations based upon benchmark data and formal assessments and for the AIG students who elect to participate in local competitions including Odyssey of the Mind and other clubs. Certified teachers will assist with scaffolding instruction and providing tutoring services as needed through a protected NCRTI block within the school day and during the extended learning program (ELP). The operational calendar will include 13 Professional Development days to ensure that the staff has the proper training to implement our selected curricular resources, utilize the best instructional practices defined above and the interpret student data to refine and reform instructional pedagogy. Instructional personnel will report for 198 days. Most field excursions will occur during the regular school day both on and off site at our local business partners who support our STEM focus. We will be offering an extension of the science program by hosting a summer program called "Camp Invention". Our proposed calendar also includes quarterly data chats for parents so the families can be well informed of their students' progress and either support or challenge them at home. All students will host quarterly data chats with their teacher serving as facilitator, thus taking ownership of their learning and progress. Finally, the calendar includes quarterly "presentation" dates for students to experience presentations from local experts in science, technology, engineering and math as well as to share their finished projects with their families and our business partners. This yearly calendar is included in Appendix C.

6-8 Curriculum and Instructional Design:

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

Mallard Creek STEM Academy is designed to offer students a challenging and supportive learning environment. The student to teacher ratio is expected to meet or fall below the approved NC class size averages. The goal of MCSA is to alleviate the challenges created by overcrowded classrooms and schools and to offer students an authentic, hands-on approach to learning. Classes with lower student to teacher ratios will be able to accomplish more and each child will receive more individualized attention and appropriate supports to meet their personal needs and academic goals.

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area written in a student-friendly language. Teachers will provide whole group explicit instruction for each new skill or concept being taught. After checking for understanding, students will then work in collaborative groups to practice what they are learning. The work groups will include lab experiments, hands-on activities and exploratory activities. Parent and mentor participation will be encouraged so that our families and our business partners can support and encourage student development.

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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.*

The curricula for all subject areas are rigorous and aligned with the NC Standard Course of Study. In addition, students with stronger mathematics skills at early grades perform better on mathematics and reading tests in upper grades. Thus, the focus of the: Grades K-3 is to build a strong language, literacy, and mathematics skills. Science and social studies are naturally integrated through themes. All instruction will be supported by the technology. Grades 4-5: Focus starts shifting from general elementary education towards more science related classroom activities and advanced mathematics while NC Standard Course of Study are followed. Grades 6-8,

besides all core subject areas (NC Standard Course of Study and Common Core Standards), will have a strong focus on science and mathematics skills through integrated technology.

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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.*

The "best instructional strategies" previously stated and submitted in the

appendices are based on the research of Robert J. Marzano in *The Art and Science of Teaching* and John Hattie's *Visible Learning for teachers*. The implementation of each strategy under the Marzano model is associated to specific behaviors to be exhibited by teachers appropriate to the grade level and course. Each behavior is adaptable and guides teachers as to the most appropriate use of research-based instructional strategies to meet the needs of students at each grade level. Teachers at the school will utilize these strategies within their classrooms during the school year. A second research based instructional plan MCSA will implement is based on the research of John Hattie in *Visible Learning for Teachers* (2012) which sets high expectations for teachers and requires them to understand their role as a facilitator of education. *Visible Learning* describes the holistic approach to student achievement that is a collective effort from each member of the staff (administration, instructional staff, support staff) and requires teachers to reflect on their instructional methods as they measure student performance. Having teachers reflect on classroom practices, procedures and instructional strategies implemented in their classroom is a technique that can assist them in raising the quality of their classroom instruction. *Visible learning* encourages teachers to employ and implement only the instructional strategies in the classroom that have been statistically proven to positively impact student learning in their classes. The school Principal will monitor planning and instruction to ensure implementation of the appropriate instructional strategies. The principal will provide professional development, data analysis, and feedback based upon classroom visits, to support effective classroom instruction at the school. Teachers will be supported through professional development in order to be able to successfully apply the innovative learning methods listed as well as the "highly effective teaching attributes" also stated in the appendices. These instructional best practices will help guide teachers to utilize data-driven instruction to assist in appropriate student goal setting for all students.

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By identifying the state-specific standards that students must master in order to move to the next grade level teachers will determine what students should know and be able to do to demonstrate proficiency on high-stakes assessments, as well as, in foundational skills that are important for success in future grade levels. Teachers will plan curriculum using the NC Standards and they will choose which classroom activities are likely to produce a greater returning terms of student achievement for their investment of time.

Through the use of Scope and Sequence calendars and Pacing Guides teachers will pace essential standards over the school year to ensure proper sequencing and adequate teaching time is allocated for mastery of the

essential standards. This pacing ensures Mallard Creek STEM Academy teachers spend more time on fewer, but more critical standards. By integrating data analysis, research and best classroom practices the curriculum can continuously be adjusted to meet the needs of the students.

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.*

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will follow the posted academic calendar for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and follow the posted holiday calendar for students. Students will attend Mallard Creek STEM Academy for 185 instructional days. Each school day will run approximately 7 hours with approximately 380 instructional minutes per day. In addition, Mallard Creek STEM Academy will offer an Extended Learning Program (ELP) for students we identify as struggling to master their expectations based upon benchmark data and formal assessments and for the AIG students who elect to participate in local competitions including Odyssey of the Mind and other clubs. Certified teachers will assist with scaffolding instruction and providing tutoring services as needed through the protected NCRtI block within the school day and during the ELP. The operational calendar will include a minimum of 13 Professional Development days to ensure that the staff has the proper training to implement our selected curricular programs and the interpretation of student data to refine and reform instructional pedagogy. Instructional personnel will report for 198 days. Most field excursions will occur during the regular school day both on and off site at our local business partners who support our STEM focus. We will be offering an extension of the science program by hosting a summer program called "Camp Invention". Our proposed calendar also includes quarterly data chats for parents so the families can be well informed of their students' progress and either support or challenge them at home. All students will host quarterly data chats with their teacher serving as facilitator, thus taking ownership of their learning and progress. Finally, the calendar includes quarterly "presentation" dates for students to share finished projects with their families and our business partners. This yearly calendar is included in Appendix C.

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.*

Initial enrollment applications to MCSA will include parent authorization for release of records forms so that the school can collect as much student data as possible during registration. MCSA will collect all district and state test results, prior report cards and other relevant reports from parents. During our planning year, MCSA leadership will review all available student data to identify students performing below grade level expectations as they enter school. During the first couple weeks of school, MCSA will

administer baseline assessments to correctly identify those students in need of interventions and additional support. Kindergarten students will have completed profiles. The curriculum resources for reading, mathematics, writing, and science are embedded with differentiated instructional lessons, strategies, and assessments that are associated with the Response to Intervention (NCRtI) Tier Model that support and prepare all learners for the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests. The CST will identify and monitor the progress of students in need of expanded learning opportunities and remedial assistance, including the at-risk population. The school's NCRtI Method is a three-tiered instructional and assessment framework designed to address the learning needs of all students through progress monitoring, data analysis, support and intervention.

TIER I Core, Universal Academic and Behavior Support- all students participate in Tier I

TIER II Targeted, Supplemental Interventions & Supports targeted students participate if they are performing below grade level expectations

TIER III: Intensive, Individualized Interventions & Supports- small groups of students participate if they fail to show appropriate progress through Tier II interventions in the classroom instruction.

Child Study Teams will utilize a process based on the student's response to scientific, research-based intervention tools, consistent with the comprehensive evaluation procedures. NCRtI involves the systematic use of assessment data to most efficiently allocate resources in order to improve learning levels of intensity for all students. This includes multiple tiers of evidence-based instruction service delivery, a problem-solving method designed to inform the development of interventions, and integrated data collection systems to inform decisions at each tier of service delivery. Initial screening assessments are used to identify students who need additional learning opportunities and academic interventions in order to achieve required benchmarks. After the screening assessment, those students who are identified as low-performing or possess skill gaps will receive reading intervention in accordance with their tier level. This is in accordance with the Response to Instruction requirement of Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act 2004, which requires each school to identify whether appropriate instruction in reading has offered through the use of North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCS). MCSA will employ a certified and experienced Exceptional Child Educator to chair the Child Study Team. The "CST" will be comprised of the homeroom teacher, EC specialist, and other appropriate staff (ELL, Reading Resource, AIG, etc.) who can help assess students' needs who are not performing at expected levels and who fail to progress in order to offer support and interventions within the classes and throughout the day. Ongoing progress monitoring will be used to measure and graph students' progress and growth. Each 6 weeks, the students receiving Tier III interventions will be reassessed to determine the effectiveness of the interventions. The school will support the individual needs of students who, based on diagnostic data, have been identified to have significant skill deficiencies, and/or read two or more years below grade level through additional instructional minutes using a research-based intervention program. All struggling students will have IEP's.

- 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.*

All students who register to enroll in the school must complete an application which will include a home language survey. The WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test, the North Carolina initial language placement test (W-APT). Eligibility assessment on the W-APT is based on results of the Home Language Survey (HLS) process. The HLS process, identification, and subsequent placement of limited English proficient students in English as a Second Language (ELL/ESL) services are guided at the state level by the NCDPI Curriculum and Instruction Division. A committee meeting will be held to enter the student into an approved ELL program which will be comprised of the parents, ESOL liaison, and assigned homeroom teacher of record.

The school will employ specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for our ELL students. An ESOL endorsed staff member will provide instructional staff with strategies for meeting the additional needs of the student. Some of these approved methods for supporting instruction are:

- * Provide alternative instruction whenever the class lessons are extremely difficult for the ELL student
- * Arrange small discussion and talking activities that permit students to practice verbal skills
- * Utilize oral techniques, such as cueing, modeling elicitation and chunking

- * Utilize graphic organizers such as webbing and semantic maps
- * Modify your lesson objectives according to the language level of the ELL student
- * Use manipulatives to help students visualize the math concepts
- * Allow students to use computational aids such as number lines, counters, and computation charts

MCSA will provide equitable access to services needed, and ensure provisions and accommodations are made for the student. The hands-on approach to instruction and the STEM infused curriculum with experiential learning and technology driven academics will naturally assist these students in any grade level. Literacy support will be offered for these students and the core program will be inclusive of ELL appropriate tests that offer students a chance to demonstrate appropriate progress and growth as they move towards mastery of expectations.

Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of ELL students, including exiting students from ESOL service: The Child Study Team meetings as described for students failing to make academic progress will be used to monitor the progress of the ELL students. An ESOL liaison will provide teachers with instructional strategies needed in the classroom to support the ELL and internal benchmark data will be disaggregated to determine learning gains and academic progress for these students. The Personalized Learning Plan will be used to show the areas of success and growth that the student maintains. It further identifies the type of help

needed to equip the student with the ability achieve high standards of proficiency and to comprehensively communication in English. In addition, all ELL students will be referred to Tier 2 of NCRtI, where the Intervention Team will meet to discuss interventions and strategies to support the ELL student continued academic success. The ELL strategies will be documented in the teachers lesson plan and in the students Personalized Learning Plan and ELL folder. The effectiveness of these ELL strategies will be determined by the teachers observations, student achievement and progress on READY EOG/EOC assessments, administrative classroom walk-throughs, site visits, and fidelity checks from EC/ELL resource teacher.

ELL students who continue to make academic gains and show a minimum of "basic" performance levels on NC End-of-Grade exams shall meet the criteria to begin exiting the student from the ESOL program. The CST shall convene with the parents to discuss exit plans and future support strategies for the student as appropriate.

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.*

A Gifted endorsed staff specialist will provide the instructional staff with strategies for meeting the additional needs of the AIG student. MCSA will provide equitable access to services needed, and ensure provisions and accommodations are made for the student. Teachers and parents of the students identified as gifted candidates will complete Renzulli checklists that identify academic and behavioral indicators for the gifted. Those students who meet the criteria, will receive an initials gifted screening with parental consent. If a student meets the criteria on the K-Bit, they will be recommended for full psychological battery tests including the Kaufman IQ test or the WISC to determine Gifted (AIG) eligibility. The hands-on approach to instruction and the STEM infused curriculum with experiential learning and technology enriched academics will be a natural fit for these students in any grade level. Our model naturally lends itself to enrichment at all of the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

In a review of research on gifted students in the regular classroom, Johnson and Ryser (1996) describe five overall areas for differentiation: modifying content, allowing for student preferences, altering the pace of instruction, creating a flexible classroom environment, and using specific instructional strategies. The following have been established as effective strategies (Johnson & Ryser, 1996):

- * Posing open-ended questions that require higher-level thinking
- * Modeling thinking strategies, such as decision-making and evaluation
- * Accepting ideas and suggestions from students and expanding on them
- * Facilitating original and independent problems and solutions
- * Helping students identify rules, principles, and relationships
- * Taking time to explain the nature of errors

Gifted students will be given the same benchmark assessments as their grade level peers and will have the opportunity to "test out" of some aspects of

the general ed classroom instruction in order to have extended time on their hands-on learning projects. The CST will meet with the gifted services provider, the parents and the students to set appropriate goals which may be academic, social or emotional at its core. All gifted students will have measurable goals to meet to demonstrate critical thinking skills, the opportunity for presentations of culminating projects and benchmark assessment of specific goals set for each individual child. Norm referenced and criterion referenced test data will be used to measure grade level performance progression and portfolios and authentic projects will be incorporated into their daily instruction to ensure that all gifted students stay engaged and on task.

Gifted and Talented students are often competitive by nature, but if left unchallenged, will become bored and may show academic regression. To meet the needs of these students, MCSA will provide them the means to compete in local, state, and national competitions including, but not limited to: The National Geographic Geo Bee, an international Mathletics competition, Robotics competitions and other extracurricular clubs. MCSA has identified local high schools willing to work with our students at higher grade levels, and to create mentor relationships for these types of students who need to be challenged. They will have field excursions to the high schools and local STEM centers as part of their enrichment. The partnerships we have created with Vance High School offers one additional method for support through our Peer Mentor Program. Gifted students will have the opportunity to work on above grade level tasks with high school partners on our campus as well as travel to their campus to hone their STEM skills at a higher and deeper level. Students will have additional opportunities for enrichment through Camp Invention and our partnerships with The Discovery Place and EPRI in Charlotte.

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)*

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will provide a Free and Appropriate Public

Education (FAPE), including special education and related services, to all children with disabilities pursuant to the North Carolina Public Schools Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities and federal special education guidelines and regulations. Students with special needs, including students eligible under Section 504, will be identified according to the NC Department of Public Instruction regulations and recommended procedures. Students will be provided with a full range of services and placements to fulfill the special education requirements identified for students with disabilities. A Personalized Education Plan (PEP) will be developed in accordance with standard practices for each student with disabilities by team including: parents or guardian; the student where appropriate; the special education teacher and/or the special education related service provider as appropriate; at least one of the student's general education teachers; a Local Education Agency (LEA) representative who can commit resources; a school psychologist if evaluation results are discussed or if a reevaluation plan is developed by the Charter School; and other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student, The Child Study Team will be responsible for the development of Personalized Education Plans. Further, the CST team will determine appropriate services to be provided for students.

The school will also act in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with respect to students with disabilities. Students who enter the school with a current Individual Education Plan or Section 504 Plan will receive services as designated on the 504. A transferring ESE/504 student is a student who was previously enrolled in another district or out-of-state public/charter school with an active Section 504 Accommodation Plan and who is enrolling in the Sponsors school district. Upon notification that a transferring student is one with an active 504 Plan, the school will review the existing IEP/504 Plan and will revise it as needed in cooperation with the Sponsors ESE Department. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will ensure to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities will be educated in the least restrictive environment. The School will utilize a service delivery model of inclusion for exceptional children in order to support them in the least restrictive environment. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will also comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that states that no person with a disability can be excluded from or denied benefits of any program receiving federal financial assistance. A person is disabled within the definition of Section 504 if he or she has a mental or physical impairment, which substantially limits one or more of a persons major life activities. Section 504 requires that a school evaluate "any person who, because of a disability, needs or is believed to need special education or related services." If it is determined that a student is disabled under Section 504, the school must develop and implement the delivery of needed services and/or accommodations. The determination of what services and/or accommodations are needed must be made by a group of people knowledgeable about the student. Our school will provide special education and related services according to the federal mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the regulations of the North Carolina Public School Law, Article 9. To ensure record compliance, our school will develop and implement a record compliance monitoring system. The 504 Coordinator at our school will monitor the 504 Accommodation plans' compliance as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

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.*

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), including special education and related services, to all children with disabilities pursuant to the North Carolina Public Schools Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities and federal special education guidelines and regulations. The school will also act in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with respect to students with disabilities. A transferring EC student is a student who was previously enrolled in another district or out-of-state public/charter school with an active individualized Education Plan (IEP) and who is enrolling in the charter school. Upon notification that a transferring student is one with an active IEP, the school will review the existing IEP Plan and will revise it as needed in cooperation with the prior school's EC Department. The school is aware that exceptional children must be evaluated in accordance with NC 1503-3 through NC 1503-5. A student may not be given special instruction or services as an exceptional child until after he or she has been properly evaluated, classified, and placed in the manner prescribed by rules of the State Board of Education. The IEP Team for each child must include the parent, a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, a qualified representative of the LEA, and an individual that can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results. The IEP Team will determine a student's eligibility for services based on the results of the evaluation data. Placement of the student in student with disabilities services will be in the least restrictive environment. The IEP Team will:

- * Make placement decisions and ensure that the individual instructional needs of the exceptional student are reflected in the student's IEP
- * Review placement decisions annually at the IEP review meeting
- * Ensure accurate placement occurs for the student based on that student's IEP and Free and Appropriate Public Education guidelines
- * Review and evaluate cumulative folders of all students coming from another state to determine their eligibility status for exceptional student educational services. Services will be provided through contracts with an appropriate agency if necessary or a school staff member will be employed having the appropriate certificate in that exceptionality. The school will provide services to students whose needs can be met in the traditional classroom setting for at least 60% of the school day as most in this category require minimal services for success according to their IEP. This group of students may require consult services while receiving instruction in the regular classroom setting. Speech and Language and OT/PT services would also be included for students in this category. These services will be contracted with outside agencies, as available, by the school. Students with additional needs for service will be captured in the next category.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy believes that it is imperative that each student

has the opportunity to learn and grow within their community so that they will be productive citizens upon graduation from the school. In providing for the educational needs of the exceptional student, the principal, exceptional children teacher and the general education teacher will utilize the regular school facilities, which are physically designed and adapted to meet the needs of exceptional students as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and IDEA. The IEP Team will determine the least restrictive environment and proper placement within the full continuum of services offered for students with special needs. Appropriately licensed teachers will serve students meeting the eligibility criteria for special education in our educational program.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will develop and oversee annual strategic plan for exceptional children services that includes (1) how students will be identified and evaluated for exceptionalities, (2) the procedures for developing and implementing IEPs, (3) how students with exceptionalities will be integrated in the school's instruction and culture, and (4) specific procedures and expectations for including parents and other stakeholders in the process of delivering special services. Based on the enrollment of exceptional children, The School will hire and train the appropriate number of teachers/para-professionals, to ensure adherence to the Federal and state guidelines for class size and caseload, to ensure all necessary IEP services are being implemented. Opportunities for in-service education regarding Least Restrictive Environment and working with mainstreamed/integrated exceptional students will be provided for school administrators, teachers, school staff, parents/guardians, students, and the community. This in-service will be designed to promote a better understanding of the special education process and exceptional students. Teachers will be provided with appropriate accommodations and strategies for working with EC students.

Funding for EC services is generated by the student's level of services as documented on the Matrix of Services form and the school shall utilize this supplemental funding to provide for each exceptional students education needs. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will use a variety of assessment to determine the effectiveness of the program including district and state assessments and classroom performance. The IEP team considers the following factors in the development, review, and revision of the IEP: a) Strengths of the student and concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child b) Results of the initial or most recent evaluation or reevaluation c) As appropriate, results of the student's performance on state or district-wide assessments d) Academic, developmental, and functional needs of the student

Quarterly updates will monitor the students progress towards meeting the measurable annual goals as stated on the IEP. The goals include academic and functional goals designed to meet the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum. As appropriate, the goals enable the student to participate in appropriate activities and meet each of the student's other educational needs that result from the student's disability.

The school will develop procedures for updating, at least annually, the effectiveness of the individualized education programs in meeting the educational needs of special education students, including parent/family involvement in the evaluation process. Students eligible for special education and related services will be re-evaluated every three years or sooner if deemed necessary by multi-disciplinary (CST) team, in accordance

with state and federal requirements.

For accountability purposes, all students will participate in assessment procedures for students with disabilities. Appropriate accommodations will be in place based on the individual needs of each student to afford an accurate assessment. Accountability for the learning of all students is the cornerstone of the School. The North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) Test and Alternate Assessments (NCEXTEND2 / NCEXTEND1) are used to measure the achievement of individual student on the NCSCS. Students with disabilities are required to participate in state and district assessments for accountability purposes. The ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities participate in the statewide testing program and be offered appropriate accommodations in instruction and assessments.

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.*

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will comply with the North Carolina Testing Program, including The ABC Accountability Model, and the READY EOG and EOC Tests. We will use as a school improvement program that combines successful, standards-based instructional practices with school created assessments, MAP assessments and State Mandated Assessments. The assessment tools are used to analyze student performance on state and district assessments and to create school-based interim reports that are aligned to benchmarks within the Standard Course of Study. The result is a balanced approach to assessment that combines the benefits of state, district and school-wide assessments with the instructional value of day-to-day classroom assessments and assignments.

By identifying the state-specific standards that students must master in order to move to the next grade level teachers will determine what students should know and be able to do to demonstrate proficiency on high-stakes assessments, as well as, in the foundational skills and understanding necessary for success in future grade levels.

MCSA will implement a continuous model to measure academic progress and to measure instructional effectiveness and teacher capacity. The data-driven cycle of assessment, analysis, and action, which is indispensable for increasing student achievement, is deeply embedded in the school's culture and is a top priority for school-wide improvement. Administrators examine the data and teachers will begin to identify/implement additional strategies to use for closing the gaps by identifying the following:

- * Which strategies are already in place

- * What resources are needed to implement new strategies
- * What new actions are needed Strategies that support the schools achievement plan may include the following:
 - * Identify students who need additional instructional support
 - * Support students via mentors, tutoring, peer support networks, and role models
 - * Reorganize the instructional day to maximize time for learning
 - * Extend learning to before- and after-school programs, as well as, summer programs
 - * Use varied, effective strategies to instruct diverse learners
 - * Use test and other information on students' performance in instructional planning
 - * Target literacy and math instruction
 - * Safeguard instructional time
 - * Use research and data to improve practice
 - * Make closing gaps a school-wide responsibility
 - * Set high expectations and provide rigorous, deep curricula
 - * Provide safe, orderly learning environments for students and educators
 - * Use test data and other research on students' performance to inform instruction
 - * Provide time for faculty to meet and plan
 - * Provide continuous, data-driven professional development
 - * Engage businesses, universities, foundations in schools' work

A students proficiency and progress toward meeting the standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science, must be assessed in order to monitor student progress and provide appropriate instructional programs and/or interventions. The standards for evaluating student performance and the specific levels of performance for each grade and content area must be considered in this process. In addition to the determination of whether the student has attained acceptable levels of performance based on the established indicators, the evaluation of each students progress must be based upon classroom work, district, school, and classroom tests; and other relevant information. If a student fails to meet all of the district performance indicators, or if a student fails to meet the state assessment indicators or if the teacher judges that the student is not proficient, the student must be provided with appropriate interventions, and student progress will be monitored by subject area, grade level, and assessment as specified in the Personalized Education Plans (PEP).

Entrance Requirements: Any student that is qualified to enter a North Carolina public school pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat.1150-364(a) is qualified for admission to The School. The School, consistent with the applicable state requirements, will ensure that students master the necessary goals and objectives to succeed in the future grade levels, prepare for high school graduation, and ensure readiness for college and career.

When transferring a student from one school to another within the district, it is the sending schools responsibility to ensure that all student records are complete prior to withdrawing the student. The grade placement of students transferring from within the state, from other states, non-public schools, home education programs, or other countries, will be determined by the principal of the receiving school, after an evaluation of the students record has been made using the criteria as found in the Student Progression Plan. Grade placement on the transcript from the sending school must be

honored. Student promotion is based on proficiency in reading, writing, mathematics, and science and the evaluation of each students achievement in terms of appropriate instructional goals. The basis for making the determination will reflect teacher judgment based on the following: progress tests, classroom assignments, daily observation, standardized tests, state assessments, and other objective data. The primary responsibility for determining each students level of performance and ability to function academically, socially, and emotionally at the next proficiency level is that of the classroom teacher, subject to review and approval of the principal. A student who does not meet appropriate levels of performance for student progression in any grade in any subject may be retained. Performance levels of proficiency are determined by state assessments, district assessments, and other selected indicators, such as, classroom work, observations, tests, homework, portfolios, and other relevant information. In order for a student to be retained, the academic grades in core subjects on a students report card must reflect the students inability to meet appropriate levels of performance.

Exit and Promotion: The School will meet and exceed the North Carolina Promotion and Retention Policies to include:

a) Kindergarten students must meet the minimum Kindergarten NC Essential and the Common Core State Standards (depending on the year of adoption) in Language Arts and mathematics by receiving a grade of "Outstanding" or "Satisfactory".

b) Grades one through six: students must receive a passing grade of "D" or higher in Reading, Math, English, Social Studies, and Science. A mandatory retention following third grade will be required for students not meeting the mastery levels in reading. A mandatory retention following fifth grade will be required for students not meeting the mastery levels in reading and mathematics. Credit recovery opportunities will be provided for students in sixth grade not meeting mastery requirements in math. These credit recovery options will include virtual school opportunities to ensure our students are adequately prepared for success in Algebra.

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.*

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will implement a Positive Behavior Support System. PBS is an empirically validated, function-based approach to

eliminate challenging behaviors and replace them with pro-social skills. Use of PBS decreases the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions (i.e., punishment or suspension) and can lead to both systemic as well as individualized change. PBS can target an individual student or an entire school, as it does not focus exclusively on the student, but also includes changing environmental variables such as the physical setting, task demands, curriculum, instructional pace and individualized reinforcement. Thus it is successful with a wide range of students, in a wide range of contexts, with a wide range of behaviors. Students engaged in hands-on learning projects will truly reap the rewards of this type of behavioral model. Blending behavioral science, empirically validated procedures, durable systems change and an emphasis on socially important outcomes, PBS always involves data-based decision making using functional behavioral assessment and ongoing monitoring of intervention impact.

PBS plans work for all students, especially those with disabilities. The goals of PBS include changing inappropriate behavior and keeping students in school. Appropriate services can readily address and modify many of these behaviors, leading to more positive outcomes than simple punishment. PBS is based on behavioral theory; problem behavior continues to occur because it is consistently followed by the child getting something positive or escaping something negative. By focusing on the contexts and outcomes of the behavior, it is possible to determine the functions of the behavior, make the problem behavior less effective and efficient, and make the desired behavior more functional. This often involves changing systems, altering environments and teaching new skills, as well as focusing on the problem behavior.

The most crucial part of devising PBS plans is the Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), which reveals information about the antecedents, consequences, and frequency of challenging behavior. FBAs also help to identify any co-occurring variables. Conducting FBAs doubles the success rate of an intervention.

PBS plans are individualized and data-based and include procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reassessing the process. PBS should be a collaborative effort among parents, school psychologists, teachers, counselors and administrators. PBS is more effective when it includes the target individual as well as peers, teachers, and parents. Fidelity of implementation is required to maximize outcomes; therefore, interventions should be applied by educators in the school environment. This type of behavior plan is most conducive to our intentionally planned school climate that demands student leadership and service learning as a component of our curriculum.

All students, both disabled and non-disabled, can benefit from PBS: Research conducted over the past 15 years has shown that PBS is effective in promoting positive behavior in students and schools. Use of PBS as a strategy to maintain appropriate social behavior will make schools safer. Safer schools are more effective learning environments. Schools that implement system-wide interventions also report increased time engaged in academic activities and improved academic performance. Schools that employ system-wide interventions for problem behavior prevention indicate reductions in office discipline referrals of 20-60%.

All staff, students and parents will receive a copy of the code of conduct and will understand the expectations and culture of our school. Students will receive explicit instructions for our expectations and will understand the process for rewards as well as consequences. Included is a sample copy of a training tool, behavior reports, and consequences for undesirable behavior.

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: Alliance Preparatory Schools, Inc.

Mailing Address: Jennifer Lucas

City/State/Zip: Charlotte NC 28214

Street Address: 11536 Foggy Bank Lane

Phone: 954-732-3122

Fax:

Name of registered agent and address: United States Corporation Agents, Inc
101 N. Brand Blvd. 11th floor
Glendale CA 91203

FEDERAL TAX ID: 46-4207477

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)
X 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.

Board Member Name	Board Title	County/State of Residence	Current Occupation
Michael Palmieri	member	IREDELL	High School

			Coach
Greg Kolander	member	MECKLENBURG	Business Owner
Michelle Gilbert	secreatry	MECKLENBURG	Business Owner
Jennifer Lucas	chair	MECKLENBURG	Principal
Seth Berger	treasurer	MECKLENBURG	Developer
Richard Corbin	member	MECKLENBURG	VP of Learning Experiences
Justin Matthews	member	MECKLENBURG	Principal/COO

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.*

A North Carolina Not-for-Profit Corporation has been established for sole and exclusive purpose to establish and operate a Charter School under the Charter School Act of 1996, as codified in North Carolina Statues 115C-238.29A et seq. All business and affairs shall be managed by a volunteer Board of Directors, or by such committees as the Board of Directors may establish to accomplish the goals of the school and its programs. Directors will be required to demonstrate commitment to the mission and purpose of Mallard Creek Preparatory School, and will be required to attend regular meetings and accept committee memberships. Such committees shall have such responsibilities as the Board of Directors shall specify. Committees may include, but are not limited to: Finance, Personnel, Facility, Curriculum, Exclusion or others as needed. The Board will bear final responsibility for the schools academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to the terms of the charter by developing and approving the annual budget in addition to school policies. It will set goals and review strategy to continually guide the school towards the fulfillment of its mission. The board shall perform a national search utilizing a wide array of established educational leadership job posting sites, and will hire the founding principal with the following characteristics at a minimum:

Masters Degree in Educational Leadership or equivalent

Professional Educators Certificate in Educational Leadership or Equivalent

Minimum three years prior experience as a principal of a charter school

Verifiable and quantifiable evidence of ensuring student academic success

Prior experience as a start-up school leader

The Board of Directors will supervise the school principal via a continuous improvement and reflective leadership process consisting of data review of the following:

Academic benchmark and end of course/grade data

Financial data including monthly budget versus actual, cash flow, enrollment and financial audits

Stakeholder data including annual parent, staff, student surveys, staff and student attrition data

Strategic planning toward achievement of the schools short term and long term goals

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.

The Board of Directors currently consists of six and may include up to a maximum of nine members. Directors shall serve for terms of three years, or until their successors assume office. The powers of the Board are comprehensive in scope, designed to effectively operate the charter school, and are detailed in Article IV of the bylaws. Duties of the board are to attend scheduled meetings, contribute through expertise and service, and vote on matters related to school, in the best interest of the school and in support of the schools mission and purpose. The Boards officers consist of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and such other offices as deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors. Designated officers shall have such authority to perform duties as sanctioned by the Board of Directors, in addition to specific responsibilities outlined in the bylaws. These officers shall be elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors. The current skills and expertise represented by the Board are purposefully requisite to the needs of Mallard Creek Preparatory School: expertise in education, specifically both regular public and charter school, local and national business expertise, financial expertise, and construction expertise. Additionally, professional educators serve as a preponderance of the Board, a majority of the Board are parents of school age children, and all Board members are local residents with a deep and pervasive connection to the local community. The structure and composition of the Board will ensure success of the school by combining a well-established governance model evidenced by highly successful charter schools, with talented local stakeholders with not only a vested interest in local educational choice, but verifiable experience in opening and operating highly successful charter schools. The success of the school will be evaluated through systematic review of the schools goals through an annualized school improvement process, state academic data collected via the READY accountability model, compliance checks from the state and successful financial audits. The principal will be evaluated utilizing the evaluation process for school leaders found within the NC Educator Evaluation System (NCEES).

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?*

The initial founding board was recruited by a grassroots effort targeted toward attracting an active group of community members which together provide the necessary balance of educational background, parent support, business acumen and local experience necessary to open and operate a highly successful charter school. Interested candidates attended an informational meeting hosted by the original founding board member, and chose to serve in support of the schools mission and purpose. Board seats have staggered terms such that 1/3 of the positions expire each year, to allow for consistency in board operations while at the same time allowing for the composition of the board to thoughtfully evolve in parallel to the school. Directors may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms with a one-term waiting period required before being eligible for re-election. The Board members shall be elected by a majority vote of the Board of Directors members, or by such committees as the Board of Directors may establish pursuant to the bylaws. Vacancies occurring due to events outside of the natural term expiration will be filled as quickly as possible with qualified candidates as identified and approved pursuant to the bylaws, and any

replacement member will continue the term of the previous board member as to preserve imposed staggered term limits.

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

The board shall meet at least 6 times per year and according to the by-laws.

- 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).*

The staggered term limits imposed via the bylaws ensure that there remains a consistent number of inveterate Board members who can provide guidance and leadership to new members of the Board. Each new member shall receive a Board Book which will include: a copy of the charter application, charter contract, North Carolina School Board Association Governance Standards, bylaws, school policies and procedures, budget, prior year financial audit, conflict of interest policy and prior year board minutes. At the first meeting following a new member joining the board, new member orientation training will be conducted by the Board Chair. This training will explain all items within the Board Book, and articulate how the documents are used in the discharge of duties as a member of the Board. In addition to new member orientation, the Board will undergo at least six hours of professional development, in one hour modules at each board meeting, in the following areas: Charter School Legal and Legislative Updates, Financial Policy and Oversight, Data Driven Decision Making, School Improvement Planning, Instructional Leadership, and Effective Governance. All board members are required to attend the trainings, or otherwise acquire the information after the board meeting, and pass an assessment after each module which demonstrates understanding of the curriculum.

- 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.*

The Mallard Creek Board of Directors will accept only the highest standards of ethical and moral conduct from its Members and the school staff. Due to the important role played by the Board, all Directors will undergo the same background check procedures as employees of the school, and will conduct themselves in accordance with the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA) standards. A Director may be removed with or without cause only by a simple majority vote of the Board of Directors at any meeting. Directors will be considered for dismissal for any one the following breaches of integrity, including violation of confidentiality, undermining the directives of the Board, being indicted or convicted of a felony, failing to oversee and abide by terms and conditions stated in the bylaws, or by acts that would constitute a general breach of integrity in the views of the members of the Board of Directors.

Matters that come before the Board of Directors which places a Director in conflict of interest between the interests of the Corporation, The Alliance Preparatory Schools and the interest of the Director, his/her family or business, the Director with the conflict shall be prohibited from participating in the discussion and recuse his/herself from voting on the particular matter. The Board of Directors shall comply with the voting and disclosure provisions of Director Conflict of Interest Section of the Non-Profit Corporation Law NCGS 55A-8-31. Article XII of the bylaws details

specific and comprehensive measures the Board will adopt to proactively avoid actual conflicts, including the requirement that all Board of Directors sign an annual statement that he/she:

1 has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy

2 has read and understands the policy,

3 has agreed to comply with the policy, and

4 understand that the foundation of Mallard Creek Preparatory School is a charitable organization and that in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

The bylaws also include a due process by which a perceived conflict may be investigated fully in order to decide if a legitimate conflict exists, and empowers the Board to act in a decisive manner to correct the conflict should one exist. As of the submission of the charter application, the Mallard Creek Preparatory School Board of Directors has adopted the Corporations bylaws inclusive of the conflict of interest language, and has agreed to sign the annual statement so that no perceived or real conflicts exist, or will arise should the charter application be approved.

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

Guided by the schools mission, the board will set policies regarding finances, enrollment, program evaluation, and other operational aspects. The boards policies will have two purposes: to provide direction to the school staff in implementing the schools goals, and to ensure the school meets legal requirements and obligations of the charter contract. The board may also adopt policies throughout the year to address situations and crises. To adopt proven practices and avoid adopting unsound or illegal policies, the board may research policies established at other charter schools in the county and state. Guided by existing research and established best practice, the board may also seek legal consultation when developing policy. Both the board and school leadership will adopt the "School Improvement Life Cycle" as published by AdvancED/SACS, to guide all decision-making processes and particularly those that involve school policy. The cycle begins and ends with the gathering and thoughtful analysis of relevant school data. Goals will be established for school policies that match a SMART format (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound). The board will implement the policies in furtherance of the schools mission, and will evaluate the impact and relative effectiveness of the policies, thus renewing the cycle of continuous improvement. Furthermore, the school will undergo AdvancED accreditation in its third year of operation to provide external review and feedback to the schools programs and decision-making process.

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.

There are two main advisory groups who serve critical roles within the organizational structure of Mallard Creek STEM Academy: the School Advisory Council (SAC) and the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). The School Advisory Council is responsible for the development and review of the School Improvement Plan, in addition to other roles and duties assigned to it by the Mallard Creek Board of Directors. Given the importance of the School Improvement Plan as the document which will both guide and evaluate the schools programs, both the Principal and the Board Chair will serve as ad-hoc members of the SAC. The remaining composition of the SAC will consist

of parents, staff, community members and, when appropriate, students. To ensure that parents and the local community have the largest voice in the school improvement process, at least 51% of the SAC will be comprised of non-school staff. The Parent-Teacher Organizations role in the school is responsive in nature, therefore the PTO will evolve to meet different needs as the school grows and becomes more established. In the initial years, the PTO will help to establish a positive school culture, broaden the base of volunteers, and increase school-to-home and home-to-school communication. As the school becomes established, the PTO will transition toward increasing vibrancy to the school programs through development of social and community service opportunities for the school. The membership of the PTO will be free of charge to any and all school community members in the first two years of the school. An executive committee will be established in the first year of the school to provide leadership and direction to the PTO. The Principal as well as an active Governing Board member will serve on the PTO executive committee in order to ensure continuity of the schools mission and purpose as realized in the decisions, actions and events that arise from the PTO.

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

Parents or Staff who have a grievance at Mallard Creek STEM Academy will use the following procedure in order to solve issues with other interested parties. Grievances will be resolved promptly, equitably and in the educational best interests of children. This policy is not intended to replace other professional, informal discussion and resolution of issues as they may arise. The Aggrieved Party will raise the grievance with the lowest-level appropriate member of the faculty or staff via written note or email, and the staff member will then seek to resolve the issue. The faculty or staff member may involve other, higher-level members of the school staff. Staff will endeavor to resolve issues at this level within 3 school days of initiation of this grievance. If the problem persists and cannot be solved at the staff level, the Aggrieved Party can appeal to the appropriate school leadership team member. School leadership will endeavor to resolve issues at this level within 3 school days of initiation of this next step. If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved by School Leadership, the grievance may be submitted to the Board Chair in writing for mediation. The Board will review and their decision will be final. Resolution at this level will occur by the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, unless that Board meeting is less than 3 school days after reporting at this level. The only student disciplinary matters that may be appealed to the Board are those taken under N.C. Gen. Stat. 115C-390.7, 115C-390.10, or 115C-390.11. Recommendations from the Principal to exclude a student from the School can also be heard by 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.

X Not Applicable

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:

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will implement a non-discriminatory Human Resources procedure, which will be fully compliant with the North Carolina State laws and No Child Left Behind Act. The school believes that the quality of the teachers is an important factor in determining the quality of education offered. It is the responsibility of the principal to locate and recruit the best-qualified candidates to meet the school's educational needs. The Board will be responsible for selecting the school administrator. Once identified, the administrator will create a hiring committee to recruit and identify potential candidates that are highly qualified for their assignments and who are willing and able to live the mission of Mallard Creek STEM Academy. At least one member of the Board will sit on the hiring committee. The interview process for hiring instructional staff uses a panel or team interview approach, assembled by the Principal. Final candidates progress to an interview with the Principal.

The interview protocol asks teacher applicants about their past performance and experience. The interviewer or interview team uses an anchored rubric to evaluate applicants responses.

Processes are in place to ensure hiring is consistent with all state and federal law and supports the school budgets. Approval processes are followed that include school requirements, human resources consistency, and financial accountability.

If the candidate successfully completes the pre-employment requirements and meets all the desired qualifications, an offer of employment will be extended. Every hired employee will sign an offer of employment. Staff will be hired "at will" on a year-to-year basis. Extensions of employment offers are recommended on an annual basis.

The school will offer a competitive compensation model where the longevity with the school is rewarded, hence helping to retain our high performing 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.*

The Principal fulfills the hiring process on behalf of the Board. At the beginning of the recruitment process, the open positions are identified by the administration based on the number of students, grade levels, and subjects to be taught, and justified in the school's budget. Positions are then posted on the school's website, a local newspaper, and a third party website (such as www.teachers-teachers.com). A resume screening is done by the administration, and the employment application form is sent to the selected applicants. After reviewing the employment application forms and supporting documents, the candidate is invited for an interview. The Principal makes the hiring decision. Finally, the list of new hires are presented to the Board and approved in the first Board meeting. Employment at the school is contingent on fingerprinting and successful criminal background checks. Similarly, the Principal also fulfills the dismissal decision, and he/she will dismiss the personnel after applicable notice requirements, and will present to the board for approval in the first board meeting after dismissal. The Board reserves the right to hire the most qualified instructional and non-instructional staff as evidenced by their education credentials, competencies and demonstrated abilities and expertise for the position.

Elementary and secondary teachers must hold a Bachelors or higher in Education or related discipline, demonstrate content area mastery, and be "highly qualified" in each core academic subject they teach. EC and ELL teachers must be "highly qualified", through a state exam and hold a clear renewable license in the appropriate subject area through DPI. Teachers will hold a clear renewable license and meet the requirements of DPI. Paraprofessionals with instructional support duties will meet guidelines of Section 1119 of the No Child Left Behind Act and ESEA.

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

At the beginning of the recruitment process, the open positions are identified by the administration based on the number of students, grade levels, and subjects to be taught, and justified in the school's budget. Positions are then posted on the school's website, a local newspaper, and a third party website (such as www.teachers-teachers.com). The Principal fulfills the hiring process on behalf of the Board. A resume screening is done by the administration, and the employment application form is sent to the selected applicants. After reviewing the employment application forms

and supporting documents, the candidate is invited for an interview. The Principal makes the hiring decision. Employment at the school is contingent on fingerprinting and successful criminal background checks. Elementary and secondary teachers must hold a Bachelors or higher in Education or related discipline, demonstrate content area mastery, and be "highly qualified" in each core academic subject they teach. ESE and ELL teachers must be "highly qualified", through a state exam and hold a clear renewable license in the appropriate subject area through DPI. The Board reserves the right to hire the most qualified instructional and non-instructional staff as evidenced by their education credentials, competencies and demonstrated abilities and expertise for the position.

Similarly, the Principal also fulfills the dismissal decision, and he/she will dismiss the personnel after applicable notice requirements. Mallard Creek STEM Academy reserves the right to dismiss employees "at will" but without being in violation of federal and state laws. Employees will be provided a reasonable amount of time for performance improvement. In cases where the administrator has demonstrated coaching and counseling, both verbally and in writing, and the employees performance fits poorly with the school, termination procedures maybe initiated.

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

The board recognizes that in order to attract and retain qualified, effective school staff members, that both the salary and benefits offered to staff must be competitive with the existing market. As evidenced in the schools budget, the average salary for all instructional staff is \$36,000 per year, and is reflective of an annual salary of a teacher with a Bachelors Degree and six years of prior teaching experience in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County. School expects to hire a range of instructional staff with a wide range of experience, and will adjust the budget accordingly. School Leadership salaries also reflect local market rates as well. Non-instructional staff has been budgeted to include a range of \$14-15 dollars per hour for front office and custodial staff, which is the competitive market rate. For other specialized non-instructional 12 month staff, such as the Business Manager and Comptroller, the board will be seeking Bachelors Degree or higher candidates for these 12 month positions, and have created salary schedules as proposed in the budget to confer salaries within the current market that are competitive. The school will offer health insurance through the North Carolina State Health Plan and to all employees who work an average of 30 hours per week or more. Additionally, dental, vision insurance, disability, and life insurance will be offered to employees at market rates and to those who qualify according to applicable state and federal law. A 403(b) tax-advantaged retirement plan with an employer match of 100% of up to 3% of the employees contribution will be offered to all employees through a licensed, reputable vendor.

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

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will not unlawfully discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, citizenship, age, veteran status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will not unlawfully discriminate against any qualified employee or

applicant on the basis of a physical or mental disability. Should an employee believe a work condition or treatment is unjust, inequitable, a hindrance to effective operation or creates a problem; he or she is encouraged to discuss the condition or treatment with school administration. School policy provides for alternative lines of communication when the employee has such issues with his or her direct supervisor. If the teacher or staff member feels he or she has been treated unfairly as a direct result of actions from the schools Administration, the employee can present a formal grievance with the Governing Board and/or Alliance Education Services. A further investigation will be conducted and the information will be shared with the Governing Board. The Board will act in cooperation with Alliance Education to address the results of the internal investigation. The ultimate goal will be to retain highly qualified staff, and to ensure that each employee is demonstrating a commitment to the vision and mission of Mallard Creek STEM Academy.

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

It is possible that custodial, office and school leadership will also assist in the breakfast and lunch service during the school day. The staff will be funded through the regular operating budget and the school will receive no net revenue from the school lunch program. There are no additional positions inside or outside of the organization that will have dual responsibilities.

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.

After reviewing the initial enrollment applications, Mallard Creek STEM Academy will identify the unique and supplemental staffing needs anticipated based upon student demographics and data. As we collect cumulative student records and files, we will continue to identify students with special needs and place them with the correct teachers. All certified staff will be identified and hired to properly meet the needs of our ELL, ESE and gifted populations. These instructional and support staff will be "highly qualified" and hold current licenses and certificates per the NCDPI as stated above. Specific roles and requirements are detailed in the section below.

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).

Pursuant to 16 N.C.A.C. 06C .0304, North Carolina has two classifications of professional licenses. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will only employ licensed teachers and requires certification for all instructional and administrative staff. Before employing any teacher and with the teachers prior written consent, the School will obtain from DPI and review a copy of the teachers professional license. The School will assist its teachers in meeting the licensure requirements established by DPI and the SBE, including all programs and services required to assist teachers to obtain standards professional II licensure status.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy educators of core subject areas shall be certified in those subjects as defined in Section 1119 of the No Child Left Behind Act. All hired educators must meet the requirements prior to employment and ensure any conditional requirements are met by the educator within the time required. Non-renewable certificates and 5 year renewable requirements will be monitored for compliance.

Pursuant to North Carolinas requirements for teachers from outside the state must be completed for clear renewable certification. These requirements are incorporated into North Carolinas approved teacher preparation programs and must be completed within five years.

The Board has specified the following minimum requirements for each main site position:

PRINCIPAL

(MS Educational Leadership, 3-5 years classroom experience required)

- * Establishes and maintains an effective learning environment in the school.
- * Initiates, designs, and implements programs to meet specific needs of the school.
- * Assists in the management and preparation of the school budget.
- * Interprets and enforces district and corporate policies and procedures.
- * Budgets school time to provide for efficient conduct of school instruction and business.
- * Assist in the development, revision, and evaluation of curriculum.
- * Maintains high standards of student conduct and enforces discipline when necessary.
- * Attends special events held to recognize student achievement and attends school sponsored activities, functions and athletic events.
- * Works with Registrar to assume the responsibility for the attendance, conduct, and maintenance of health of students.
- * Assists in recruiting, screening, hiring, training, assigning, and evaluating the schools professional staff.
- * Supervises the schools teaching process.
- * Approves the master teaching schedule and any special assignments.
- * Works with corporate office to orient new teaching staff and assists in their development.
- * Evaluates and counsels all staff members regarding their individual and group performance.
- * Assists in the in-service orientation and training of teachers.
- * Assists in the removal of teachers whose work is unsatisfactory in accordance with established procedure.
- * Plans and supervises fire drills and emergency preparedness program.
- * Provides for adequate inventory of school property and for the security and accountability for the property.
- * Serves as an ex officio member of all committees and councils within the school.
- * Assumes responsibility for all school correspondence and news releases.
- * Establishes and maintains relationships with local community groups and individuals to foster understanding and solicit support for overall school objectives and programs.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

(MS in Educational Leadership or equivalent required)

- * Teacher observations
- * Observe new teachers within the first 45 days of school (informal)
- * Coordinate and supervise all details of Extended Learning Program
- * Assist principal in setting curriculum standards that drive academic performance

- * Works with committees and individuals on problems of content area
 - * Meets with department heads to insure compliance with standards
 - * Produce data from testing and classroom performance to assess student performance
- Assist teachers in creating portfolios for documentation of student performance
- * Administers or supervises the administration of achievement tests
 - * Curriculum purchases and previous for all subjects
 - * Oversees Department Chairs
 - * Mandatory attendance at all staff meetings
 - * Holds monthly department chair meetings providing agendas and minutes to Principal in a timely manner
 - * Mandatory attendance at monthly School Advisory Committee meetings
 - * Monitor weekly tutorials in Math, Language Arts, Reading and Science
- Acts as Administrator in charge in absence of Principal and Assistant Principal
- * Provide communications from school to home with submissions for monthly newsletter
 - * Assists in safety inspections and safety drill practice activities
 - * Works with Facilities Coordinator to insure transportation, custodial, cafeteria and other support services are provided when needed.
 - * Maintains discipline for assigned grade levels.

EC/ELL/Gifted SPECIALIST

(MS in Exceptional Student Education, ESOL/Gifted Endorsement, and Staffing/IEP experience required)

- * Supervise EC teachers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and unique aids
- * Attends parent conferences and IEP meetings
- * Coordinates testing for gifted program
- * Coordinates testing for EC students
- * Participates in CST
- * Oversees speech and language services
- * Oversees occupational therapist
- * Liaison with outside agencies
- * Responsible for EC student file compliance
- * Set department goals and initiatives
- * Provide monthly EC report to Principal
- * Attend all EC meetings held by District and provide updates to ESE teachers and principal
- * Oversees 504 Compliance

TEACHER

(Bachelor of Arts/Science in Education or field of instruction, NC Licensure, ELL endorsement)

- * Meets and instructs assigned classes in the locations and at the times designated.
- * Plans a program of study that, as much as possible, meets the individual needs, interests and abilities of the students.
- * Creates a classroom environment that is conducive to learning and appropriate to the maturity of the students.
- * Prepares classes for the classes assigned and shows written evidence of preparation upon request.

- * Encourages students to set and maintain standards of classroom behavior.
 - * Guides the learning process toward the achievement of curriculum goals and in harmony with the goals, establishes clear objectives for all lessons, units and projects to communicates these objectives to students.
 - * Employs a variety of instructional techniques and instructional media, consistent with physical limitations of the location provided and the needs and capabilities of the students involved.
 - * Strives to implement by instruction and action the schools philosophy of education and instructional goals and objectives.
 - * Assesses the accomplishments of students on a regular basis and provides progress reports as required.
 - * Diagnoses the learning disabilities of students on a regular basis seeking assistance from the ESE Specialist as required
- Maintains accurate, complete and correct records as required by law and administrative regulation.
- * Assists the administration in implementing all policies and rule governing student life and conduct, and for the classroom develop reasonable rules of classroom behavior and procedures and maintains order in the classroom in a fair and just manner.

TEAM LEADER

(Certificated teacher, 3 years classroom experience recommended)

- * Coordinates activities of the team
- * Assumes responsibility of continual improvement of the quality of instruction of the team.
- * Coordinates interdisciplinary units of study with teaching team.
- * Assist team members in developing an intervention to assist students with learning problems.
- * Encourage team members to use new methods and materials.
- * Attends pertinent conferences and meeting.
- * Meets with parents when necessary.
- * Assists team in the evaluation of students' data

Staff Evaluation and Professional Development

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

The school administrator and business manager are responsible to ensure teachers maintain current licenses through ongoing professional development via workshops and educational courses. The Board will receive yearly reports of same.

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.*

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 simplifies the process of identifying and hiring "highly qualified" teachers. Mallard Creek STEM Academy provides procedural guidelines and support that enhances the likelihood of recruiting highly effective staff. The comprehensive recruitment effort is focused on identifying certified teachers who come from diverse backgrounds and uses a system of intensive screening designed to hire the most qualified applicants. All positions including instructional and administrative will be responsible to maintain current licenses and to meet the requirements for re-certification (DPI and SBE). Administration will observe all instructional and supportive staff utilizing the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model under the NC Teacher Evaluation System. Mallard Creek STEM Academy

educational focus on STEM with the inclusion of project-based learning requires a high level of instructional pedagogy and a willingness for teachers to attend professional development in order to implement the new curricula with fidelity. The school Principal will be responsible to identify and name Grade Level Team Leaders to assist their teams in cohesive lesson planning for thematic units and serve as a liaison for the Leadership Team. Mallard Creek STEM Academy also has a mentor program which offers teachers a "partner" to support them in their professional development. The mentor program offers assistance to new teachers as well as those identified by school leadership as needing additional support and coaching as evidenced by results from informal and formal observations and professional conversations. All teachers will be evaluated utilizing the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES). Any teachers identified as low performing in any one or more of the measured domains will be assigned a mentor who has demonstrated mastery in the particular domain. Informal observations and twice yearly formal observations will drive the identification process for needs and ongoing professional development. Our partnership with The Discovery Place will provide professional development and support for staff to maintain teacher certification and "highly qualified" status.

Teacher retention is a measure of school success and assures future success for student achievement and parent satisfaction. Team Leaders will serve as members of the school Leadership Team and will keep the lines of communication open and the needs of the teachers present in the Leadership Team meetings. Grade Level meetings and Leadership Team meetings will ensure that the concerns and needs of the teachers are heard and solutions to problems are developed and implemented. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will issue climate surveys to the entire faculty each spring to have a formal means of gauging school climate and culture. The data will be disaggregated to identify specific trends and indicators. These surveys will be shared with the Board. Should the Leadership Team and/or Board identify areas of weakness in the school program that lend itself to turnover, an action plan will be initiated. If the data shows high teacher satisfaction, the Leadership Team and Board will take steps to maintain the policies, procedures and school culture that lends itself to high retention.

The primary goal of Mallard Creek STEM Academy is to retain the "high performing" teachers as identified through the extensive NC Teacher Evaluation System. Only the teachers who receive positive evaluations in all domains based on the expectations of teaching under the Marzano Model and the high expectations for quality teaching with measurable success according to Visible Learning, and who strive to meet the mission for the Mallard Creek STEM Academy will be offered a contract to teach for the following year. Lastly, it is the responsibility of the teacher to maintain current NC licenses and certifications in their teaching assignment.

- 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.*

Employee development planning is almost universally recognized as a strategic tool for the schools continued growth, productivity and ability to retain valuable employees. Managing the schools development planning process

is a current and on-going process. Short term plans for projects, long term plans for the school, career development plans for the employee and skill building for the immediate performance deficiencies are all a part of professional development. In addition to what the education team and school leaders do in terms of professional development, Mallard Creek STEM Academy will conduct a series of professional development programs for all employees prior to the school opening and throughout the year as needed. Our professional development plan has two main components: In-service and out-of-school training. In-service training includes such activities as in teacher orientation week, periodic departmental training, and other in-school instructional and content-based enrichment programs. Out-of-school training includes professional workshops offered through The Discovery Place and other professional associations providing training to enhance knowledge-base, sharpen instructional and leadership skills. During the pre-planning weeks, all faculty will attend a variety of workshops that will be led by members of the school Leadership Team and the Administrative support staff.

- * New Hire Orientation
- * Employee Handbook
- * Student Handbook
- * Grade level expectations
- * Safety and Crisis Management
- * Vendor-led training in all new curricula
- * PD specific to STEM teaching delivered by "The Discovery Place"

All of the professional development offered for staff during Pre-planning weeks and throughout the year will have the focused intent of meeting the mission of Mallard Creek STEM Academy.

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.*

All of the professional development offered for staff during Pre-planning weeks and throughout the year will have the focused intent of meeting the mission of Mallard Creek STEM Academy.

Pre-planning professional development is an important time frame for a successful school start. The pre-planning week will include a welcome breakfast, a tour of the school facility, staff enrollment into medical insurance and payroll system, grade and room assignments, drop-off/dismissal/emergency procedures, smart board and school network system training, an overview of employment policies and parent/student handbook, and several workshops on classroom management, effective parent-teacher communication, common core curriculum standards, and students with disabilities. During this time, the staff will be able to learn all the tools necessary to successfully manage through the school year as well as making their classrooms and lesson plans ready. A sample schedule for pre-planning weeks includes:

Pre-Service Summer Orientation:
Welcome and Introduction
Rules and Expectations
Mallard Creek STEM Academy Culture
Pre-Planning Schedule

Academic Team leaders
Master Schedule and Rosters
Attendance
Website expectations
Arrival/Dismissal/Crisis Plan
General Procedures
PBS/PARR
NCRtI Process
Early/Aftercare
Human Resources

Mallard Creek STEM Academy Pre-planning Schedule:

Day 1:

8:30-12:30 Common Core Training and NC Essential Standards
1:30-3:30 North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES)

Day 2:

9:00-11:00 Text Complexity /Literacy Units Training
12:00-3:00 Cooperative Planning/Team Planning

Day 3:

9:00-11:00 PBS and PARR Training
12:00-3:30 Project-Based Learning (BIE)

Day 4:

8:30-10:30 Data Review and Goal Setting
10:30-12:30 Mentor Program Assignments
1:30-3:30 Team Planning

Day 5:

8:30-11:30 STC (Science, Math Out of the Box, Literacy Units)
12:30-3:30 Portfolios for students

Day 6:

8:30-12:30 Engineering is Elementary
1:30-3:30 Team Planning (Units of Study)

Days 7-10:

Professional Development for STEM provided by The Discovery Center

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.

Professional Development is an important part of the school's success in all areas of expectations. To that point, Mallard Creek STEM Academy requires more professional development days during the course of the year and will reward teachers for attending supplemental professional development opportunities offered through the district or through professional courses. All faculty will be expected to report to work for 198 contracted work days. These include pre-planning days and professional development during the school year. The school's calendar daily schedule and staffing structure accommodate this plan. The Master Schedule protects instructional time and provides for scheduled meetings for grade level planning, subject area planning, incorporation of thematic units, and PLC's with a focused mentor program. The staffing structure is inclusive of certified teachers as well

as support staff for ELL, AIG, and ELL students. Administration will be instructional leaders prepared to help support best practiced in the classroom including the Marzano Model for teaching methods and guided by John Hattie's Visible Learning for Teachers.

Our partnership with Discovery Place, Inc. will be a very strong component of our ongoing, long-term professional development for our faculty to build their instructional capacity for delivering a STEM curriculum. Each workshop is grade level specific to help teachers understand how to teach the curriculum in meaningful ways to help students increase their levels of academic achievement.

The staffing structure is fully supportive of moving the academic agenda for our students. The staffing model as submitted in the budget section, provides for highly qualified administrators, assistant principals, and instructional staff; classroom teachers, contracted staff for Exceptional students, English Language Learners and Gifted students. The salaries budgeted also allow for grade level team leaders and mentors.

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 reflects 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)).

Mallard Creek STEM Academy is designed to alleviate the overcrowded schools in the Mallard Creek and surrounding region, therefore, our marketing plan will concentrate in the Mallard Creek region. Immediately following approval of an operating Charter Contract, postcards announcing the opening of a K-8 STEM school of choice will be sent out to all residences in Mallard Creek and surrounding communities. Leadership for the Mallard Creek STEM Academy will hold monthly informational meetings at various locations to inform area residents about the charter school program and school choice opportunity. Presentations will include information about charter schools in general and specifically about the curriculum focus of Mallard Creek STEM Academy including the procedure for submitting applications. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will place mass media advertisements in various media including radio and print. Flyers will be developed in multiple languages for distribution at area businesses, community centers, churches, and child care facilities. School leadership will make extensive efforts to address people where they meet, work, pray and play in order to communicate the opportunities available at the new school. Parent informational sessions will be delivered at local preschools and day care centers when available. When the new school site is completed, parent tours and informational sessions will be held on campus. Special effort will be taken to ensure that

marketing, application and registration materials are available in multiple languages. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will embrace all students, regardless of their racial, cultural, ethnic or religious orientation. This message will be clearly communicated in all oral presentations and printed materials. MCSA will be open to all eligible students residing in the Mallard Creek and surrounding areas with special recruiting efforts focused on those residents living within a five mile radius of the school site. The school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national, ethnic origin, or disability in the admission of students.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and operations. The school will not charge tuition or fees except for those fees normally charged by other public schools. MCSA will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities will receive a free and appropriate public education in accordance with the regulations set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title 11 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

All parent sessions and marketing materials will present to families the STEM focus of our program and the variety of instructional methods that will be employed. The print advertisements and flyers will notice families of the grade levels we will serve each year, the process for application submission, the timelines for registration and notification of acceptance and the instructional program, enrichment opportunities and business and community partnerships secured.

Each informational session will include descriptions of grade level expectations and core curriculum that has been selected and will explain the proposed school culture, parent participation expectations and volunteer requirements and answer any additional questions or concerns they may have regarding our unique program.

Marketing via print, direct mail, and informational sessions, will be an ongoing effort throughout the planning year to ensure that the School is enrolled to capacity in order to meet its financial obligations.

Although any eligible student in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County can submit an application to enroll, all formal marketing will be directed at eligible students that reside in the Mallard Creek region to help alleviate the disadvantages caused by overcrowding in the current public 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.*

Mallard Creek Preparatory is designed to alleviate the overcrowded schools in the Mallard Creek region, therefore, our marketing plan will concentrate in the Mallard Creek and surrounding communities. Immediately following approval of an operating Charter Contract, postcards announcing the opening of a K-8 STEM school of choice will be sent out to all residences in Mallard Creek. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will hold periodic informational meetings

at various locations (preschools, child care facilities, churches) to inform area residents and other interested persons about the charter school program and school of choice opportunity. Presentations will include information about charter schools in general and specifically about the curriculum focus for STEM in the Mallard Creek STEM Academy including the procedure for submitting applications. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will place mass media advertisements in various media including radio and print. Flyers will be developed in multiple languages for distribution at area businesses, community centers, churches, and child care facilities. School leadership will make extensive efforts to address people where they meet, work, pray and play in order to communicate the opportunities available at the new school. Special effort will be taken to ensure that marketing, application and registration materials are available in multiple languages. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will embrace all students, regardless of their racial, cultural, ethnic or religious orientation. This message will be clearly communicated in all oral presentations and printed materials. Mallard Creek STEM Academy will be open to all eligible students residing in Charlotte Mecklenburg County with special recruiting efforts focused on those residents living within a five mile radius of the school site. The school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national, ethnic origin, or disability in the admission of students. The school will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and operations. The school will not charge tuition or fees except for those fees normally charged by other public schools. MCSA will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities will receive a free and appropriate public education in accordance with the regulations set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title 11 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. All parent sessions will present to families the STEM focus of our program and the variety of instructional methods that will be employed. The print advertisements and flyers will notice families of the grade levels we will serve each year, the process for application submission, the timelines for registration and notification of acceptance and the instructional program, enrichment opportunities and business and community partnerships secured.

The informational sessions will include descriptions of grade level expectations, proposed school culture, parent participation and volunteer requirements for continued enrollment (20 hours per family per year) and answer any additional questions or concerns they may have regarding our unique program. The volunteer requirement lends itself to informed, involved families equally invested in the school's progress and success.

Marketing via print, direct mail, and informational sessions, will be an ongoing effort throughout the planning year to ensure that the School is enrolled to capacity in order to meet its financial obligations.

Although any eligible student in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County can submit an application to enroll, all formal marketing will be directed at eligible students that reside in the Mallard Creek Region to help alleviate the disadvantages caused by overcrowded schools.

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.*

Any student that is qualified to enter a North Carolina public school pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat.1150-364(a) is qualified for admission to our public school. Pre-admission parent informational sessions will define the mission and goals of MCSA to prepare our students for future high school matriculation and ensure readiness for challenging colleges and careers. Admission policies accepted by the Board of Directors include:

* All students regardless of disability will have equal access to our school in accordance with state law, and all necessary accommodations that do not impose an "undue hardship" will be made by the school to include students with disabilities.

* MCSA will be in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

* All students served in Exceptional Student Education (EC) or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs, shall have equitable opportunity of being selected for enrollment.

* All students may withdraw from the school and transfer to another school at any time and enroll in another public school in accordance with federal, state and district policy.

* MCSA will enroll any eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the program, class, grade level, or building, at which time a lottery shall be conducted. In such cases, all applicants shall have an equal chance of being admitted through a random selection process.

Enrollment will also follow 115C-238.29F (g), which includes enrolling students according to racial/ethnic balance provisions in 115C-238.29F (g) (5). In accordance with this statute, enrollment preference is first given to currently enrolled students for each successive school year.

Beyond current students, enrollment preferences are given to the following ordered categories of applicants;

* In the first year of the schools operation, children of the initial members of the Mallard Creek STEM Academy Board of Directors, so long as these children are limited to

* The lesser of 15% of the school's total enrollment or 25 students

* Children of the school's principal, teachers, and teacher assistants

* Siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted in a previous year

* All remaining applicants

MCSA will advertise the open enrollment beginning November 1 through January 1. Parents will submit a short "application to attend". Upon submission of an application the information is reviewed for eligibility of attendance. Proof of residence and age requirements will be verified. At each phase of the admission process the appropriate correspondence will be communicated to each applicant. The data will be monitored and reports created to determine

the need for a lottery, wait lists, and letters of acceptance. At the end of the open enrollment, if there is an over subscription for any grade level a lottery will be conducted. A lottery will be held the second week of February and notifications of acceptance will be sent out the end of February. As recommended in the Enrollment and Lottery Guidance letter, all databases of wait lists will be updated for accuracy and ease of communication to parents who inquire about their enrollment status.

All accepted applicants will be provided with written registration requirements. Documentation required by the District is collected for review and verification. The following items are required for all students:

- * Proof of residence
- * Social security number (optional)
- * Birth certificate
- * Report card, transcript
- * Current immunization/medical history

Once all students are registered and classes have been assigned, class size will determine the need for subsequent marketing efforts. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and maintained on a waiting list.

Reports detailing status of student registration items are produced using Powerschool.

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT 2015-16 through 2019-2020

IDENTIFY LEA FROM WHICH STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY COME

LEA #1 Charlotte-Mecklenburg 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 600	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 000
Kindergarten	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0
Grade 01	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0
Grade 02	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0
Grade 03	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0
Grade 04	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0
Grade 05	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0
Grade 06	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0
Grade 07	0	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0
Grade 08	0	0	0	0	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0
	616			704			792			792			792		

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.

Enrollment is open to all students eligible to enroll in a public school of choice. Buses will be provided as needed for students who live outside of 2 miles and within 4 miles of the school. Admission to the school, however, is not predicated upon residence. Therefore, any child eligible to enroll in a public North Carolina School may enroll at Mallard Creek STEM Academy. For families who enroll into Mallard Creek Preparatory School who do not qualify for bus transportation, parents may provide transportation to the school on a daily basis. The school will also contract with approved vendors for field trips, local competitions and athletic events as needed.

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.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will contract with a food service vendor for breakfast and lunch. The school's food vendor will provide appropriate food service equipment including warming ovens, hand wash sinks, triple sinks (for equipment & utensil washing), and refrigeration to store food once it has been delivered to the school site and prior to serving students. All food handlers will be required to complete Food Handling Training as mandated by the Department of Health. Student meal counts and records of student participation in the National School Lunch Program will be maintained at the school.

The Governing Board will require the vendor to supply a monthly menu meeting the requirements of the National School Lunch Program. These menus will be published monthly and presented to parents and students. A copy of these menus will be kept with the record(s) of student participation. The meal provider will be required to submit evidence of proper meal balance and portion size for the students served. The vendor will ensure that its point-of-sale system accurately provides a count of reimbursable meals by category (i.e., free, reduced price, paid) served to eligible students. These counts will be taken at the time and point of meal service and only meals that meet meal pattern requirements will be counted and claimed for reimbursement. The School will adopt the sanitation and reporting requirements prescribed by the Health Department. The local health department will be notified of the schools existence and intent to provide food service to public school students. The School will make application for a "Permit to Operate" and maintain that certification/licensure in a current state and the School will post the results of health and food inspections on its website.

Mallard Creek STEM Academy will follow all required procedures when distributing and processing Free and Reduced Meal Applications. Procedures included as an attachment in the appendices.

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 coverage	Proposed amount of coverage		Cost (Quote)
Comprehensive General Liability	\$1,000,000		\$3,500.00
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$1,000,000		\$3,500.00
Property Insurance	\$4,600,000		\$5,750.00
Motor Vehicle Liability	\$1,000,000		\$3,500.00
Bonding Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$1	\$250,000	\$500.00
Other	\$2,937,408		\$13,300.00
Total Cost			\$30,050.00

*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.

jucas 12/06/2013

(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).

Mallard Creek Preparatory School is already in final negotiations with a

private real estate developer who will construct the school facility, and will then lease the facility to Mallard Creek Preparatory School. The budget provided in this application includes a projected half-million dollar lease payment for the facility to demonstrate the viability of the school, which targets a current commercial lease market rate of approximately 10-14 dollars per square foot per year, based on the final size of the facility. Before the school begins operations, DPI will be provided with documentation of ownership or lease of the facility and certification that the building satisfies all occupancy requirements. The facility layout will be decided upon through a collaborative effort of the Board and the developer, and will include a design based on current research on safe schools, adequate classroom and office space, appropriate outdoor recreational areas, designated pick-up and drop-off zones, and parking for staff and visitors. The Board will work closely with the developer to ensure a timely completion of the facility.

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.*

The Board will carefully monitor the construction progress schedule and will receive weekly updates from the developer as to the progress of the facility. However, should the construction progress not be sufficient to guarantee delivery of the school facility by August, 2015, a contingency plan has been established and will activate approximately six to eight months prior to the initial opening of school. Mallard Creek Preparatory School has received offers from both Mobile Modular and ModSpace to construct a school facility in the event that the primary facility is not ready for August 2015. The focus of the Board will shift to the development of a site which will suit the schools needs for a 1-3 year span, utilizing modular classroom space. Approximately four modular units of eight classrooms each would be required to open the school according to the initial years K-6 plan. Additional units may be added should the school choose to remain at the alternate site for the following school year. Local churches and other similar organizations have been contacted to open dialogue in the event a contingent location is needed. It is expected that no programs will be delayed should an alternate facility be used, and the school will encumber no lease payments or otherwise incur any debts for the primary facility until such time as the primary facility is ready for school use. The Board at that time will negotiate a transition plan in the academic and financial best interests of the 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 1st 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 #1600 - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Revenue	2013-2014 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2015-2016
State Funds	\$4,582.77	616	\$2,822,986.32
Local Funds	\$2,318.00	616	\$1,427,888.00
Federal EC Funds	\$3,743.48	40	\$149,739.20
Totals			\$4,400,613.52

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

INCOME: REVENUE PROJECTIONS	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
-State ADM Funds	\$2,822,986	\$3,232,801	\$3,744,336	\$3,781,843	\$3,781,843
-Local Per Pupil Funds	\$1,427,888	\$1,631,872	\$1,891,488	\$1,919,304	\$1,919,304
-Exceptional Children Federal Funds	\$149,739	\$156,429	\$175,152	\$178,801	\$178,801
-Other Funds*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
-Working Capital*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Z - TOTAL REVENUE	\$4,400,614	\$5,021,102	\$5,810,976	\$5,879,948	\$5,879,948

***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:															
Lead Administrator	1	\$90,000	\$90,000	1	\$90,000	\$90,000	1	\$90,000	\$90,000	1	\$90,000	\$90,000	1	\$90,000	\$90,000
Assistant Administrator	2	\$52,000	\$104,000	2	\$52,000	\$104,000	2	\$52,000	\$104,000	2	\$52,000	\$104,000	2	\$52,000	\$104,000
Finance Officer	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000
Clerical	4	\$19,807	\$79,228	4	\$19,807	\$79,228	4	\$19,807	\$79,228	4	\$19,807	\$79,228	4	\$19,807	\$79,228
Custodians	2	\$28,000	\$56,000	2	\$28,000	\$56,000	2	\$28,000	\$56,000	2	\$28,000	\$56,000	2	\$28,000	\$56,000
Business Manager	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000
Registrar	1	\$33,500	\$33,500	1	\$33,500	\$33,500	1	\$33,500	\$33,500	1	\$33,500	\$33,500	1	\$33,500	\$33,500
School Nurse	1	\$11,584	\$11,584	1	\$11,584	\$11,584	1	\$11,584	\$11,584	1	\$11,584	\$11,584	1	\$11,584	\$11,584
A - Total Admin and Support:	13	\$322,891	\$462,312	13	\$322,891	\$462,312	13	\$322,891	\$462,312	13	\$322,891	\$462,312	13	\$322,891	\$462,312
Instructional Personnel:															
Core Content Teacher(s)	28	\$36,000	\$1,008,000	32	\$36,000	\$1,152,000	36	\$36,000	\$1,296,000	36	\$36,000	\$1,296,000	36	\$36,000	\$1,296,000
Electives/Specialty Teacher(s)	6	\$36,000	\$216,000	7	\$36,000	\$252,000	8	\$36,000	\$288,000	8	\$36,000	\$288,000	8	\$36,000	\$288,000
Exceptional Children Teacher(s)	2	\$36,000	\$72,000	3	\$36,000	\$108,000	3	\$36,000	\$108,000	3	\$36,000	\$108,000	3	\$36,000	\$108,000
Instructional Support	2	\$36,000	\$72,000	2	\$36,000	\$72,000	2	\$36,000	\$72,000	2	\$36,000	\$72,000	2	\$36,000	\$72,000
Teacher Assistants	0	\$0	\$0	1	\$19,807	\$19,807	1	\$19,807	\$19,807	1	\$19,807	\$19,807	1	\$19,807	\$19,807
Guidance Counselor	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	2	\$40,000	\$80,000	2	\$40,000	\$80,000	2	\$40,000	\$80,000

Mallard Creek STEM Academy

Ec Related Service (Speech/Ot)	1	\$55,000	\$55,000	1	\$55,000	\$55,000	1	\$55,000	\$55,000	1	\$55,000	\$55,000	1	\$55,000	\$55,000
B - Total Instructional Personnel:	40	\$239,000	\$1,463,000	47	\$258,807	\$1,698,807	53	\$258,807	\$1,918,807	53	\$258,807	\$1,918,807	53	\$258,807	\$1,918,807
A+B = C - Total Admin, Support and Instructional Personnel:	53	\$561,891	\$1,925,312	60	\$581,698	\$2,161,119	66	\$581,698	\$2,381,119	66	\$581,698	\$2,381,119	66	\$581,698	\$2,381,119
Administrative & Support Benefits															
Health Insurance	13	\$5,414	\$70,382	13	\$5,414	\$70,382	13	\$5,414	\$70,382	13	\$5,414	\$70,382	13	\$5,414	\$70,382
Retirement Plan--Other	13	\$452	\$5,876	13	\$452	\$5,876	13	\$452	\$5,876	13	\$452	\$5,876	13	\$452	\$5,876
Life Insurance	13	\$10	\$130	13	\$10	\$130	13	\$10	\$130	13	\$10	\$130	13	\$10	\$130
Social Security	13	\$2,824	\$36,712	13	\$2,824	\$36,712	13	\$2,824	\$36,712	13	\$2,824	\$36,712	13	\$2,824	\$36,712
Unemployment	13	\$215	\$2,795	13	\$215	\$2,795	13	\$215	\$2,795	13	\$215	\$2,795	13	\$215	\$2,795
D - Total Admin and Support Benefits:	65	\$8,915	\$115,895	65	\$8,915	\$115,895	65	\$8,915	\$115,895	65	\$8,915	\$115,895	65	\$8,915	\$115,895
Instructional Personnel Benefits:															
Health Insurance	40	\$5,414	\$216,560	47	\$5,414	\$254,458	53	\$5,414	\$286,942	53	\$5,414	\$286,942	53	\$5,414	\$286,942
Retirement Plan--Other	40	\$452	\$18,080	47	\$452	\$21,244	53	\$452	\$23,956	53	\$452	\$23,956	53	\$452	\$23,956
Social Security	40	\$2,824	\$112,960	47	\$2,824	\$132,728	53	\$2,824	\$149,672	53	\$2,824	\$149,672	53	\$2,824	\$149,672
Life Insurance	40	\$10	\$400	47	\$10	\$470	53	\$10	\$530	53	\$10	\$530	53	\$10	\$530
Unemployment	40	\$215	\$8,600	47	\$215	\$10,105	53	\$215	\$11,395	53	\$215	\$11,395	53	\$215	\$11,395
E - Total Instructional Personnel Benefits:	200	\$8,915	\$356,600	235	\$8,915	\$419,005	265	\$8,915	\$472,495	265	\$8,915	\$472,495	265	\$8,915	\$472,495
D+E = F - Total Personnel Benefits	265	\$17,830	\$472,495	300	\$17,830	\$534,900	330	\$17,830	\$588,390	330	\$17,830	\$588,390	330	\$17,830	\$588,390
A+D = G - Total Admin and Support Personnel (Salary & Benefits)	78	\$1,277,761	\$578,207	78	\$1,338,001	\$578,207	78	\$1,393,060	\$578,207	78	\$1,425,847	\$578,207	78	\$1,440,916	\$578,207
B+E = H - Total Instructional Personnel (Salary & Benefits)	240	\$942,653	\$1,819,600	282	\$1,014,191	\$2,117,812	318	\$1,053,862	\$2,391,302	318	\$1,060,305	\$2,391,302	318	\$1,060,305	\$2,391,302
G+H = J - TOTAL	318	\$2,220,414	\$2,397,807	360	\$2,352,192	\$2,696,019	396	\$2,446,922	\$2,969,509	396	\$2,486,152	\$2,969,509	396	\$2,501,221	\$2,969,509

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

BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS		2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
	Administrative & Support:					
Office:	Office Supplies	\$21,000	\$24,225	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
	Paper	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
	Computers & Software	\$10,000	\$11,600	\$15,500	\$15,500	\$15,500
	Copier leases	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
Professional Contract	Legal Counsel	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$14,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
	Student Accounting	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
	Financial	\$33,880	\$38,720	\$44,880	\$45,540	\$45,540
	Other Professional	\$18,000	\$21,500	\$22,000	\$32,000	\$32,000
Facilities	Facility Lease/Mortgage	\$560,000	\$571,000	\$582,624	\$594,276	\$606,162
	Maintenance	\$17,000	\$18,000	\$19,000	\$20,000	\$22,000
	Custodial Supplies	\$10,000	\$11,500	\$11,500	\$11,500	\$11,500
	Custodial Contract	\$38,000	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$46,000
	Insurance (pg19)	\$30,050	\$32,000	\$34,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
	Other	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$9,000
Utilities	Electric	\$45,000	\$52,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000
	Water/Sewer	\$30,000	\$38,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
	Trash	\$6,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500
Transportation	Gas	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
Other	Marketing	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
	Travel	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
	Other	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Books And Supplies	Postage	\$1,775	\$2,000	\$2,600	\$3,000	\$3,000
	Memberships	\$4,000	\$4,600	\$4,600	\$4,600	\$4,600
Utilities	Telephone	\$5,000	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500
	Internet Service	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
	Mobile Communication	\$5,000	\$5,800	\$6,800	\$6,800	\$6,800
Books And Supplies	Safety Supplies	\$3,500	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Professional Contract	Audit Services	\$10,500	\$10,500	\$10,750	\$11,825	\$13,008
	Human Resource Services	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Books And Supplies	Health Supplies	\$750	\$750	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
	K - TOTAL Administrative & Support Operations	\$945,955	\$1,006,195	\$1,061,254	\$1,094,041	\$1,109,110
	Instructional:					

Mallard Creek STEM Academy

Classroom Technology	Computers	\$75,000	\$50,000	\$42,000	\$42,000	\$42,000
	Software	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
	Instructional Technology	\$17,000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
	Other	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Instructional Contract	Instructional Support	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
	Staff Development	\$15,000	\$22,000	\$23,000	\$23,000	\$23,000
Books and Supplies	Instructional Materials	\$44,000	\$75,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
	Curriculum/Texts	\$50,000	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
	Copy Paper	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
	Testing Supplies	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Books And Supplies	Library Books	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
	Ec Supplies	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
	Athletic Supplies	\$13,000	\$15,351	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Instructional Contract	Instructional Equipment (Ffe) Lease	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000
	Ec Services	\$30,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
Other	Contingency	\$219,818	\$250,598	\$290,020	\$293,463	\$293,463
Instructional Contract	Substitute Teacher	\$25,920	\$29,520	\$33,120	\$33,120	\$33,120
	L - TOTAL Instructional Operations	\$694,738	\$746,469	\$786,140	\$792,583	\$792,583
	K+L = M - TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$1,640,693	\$1,752,664	\$1,847,394	\$1,886,624	\$1,901,693

Overall Budget:

BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
J - TOTAL PERSONNEL	\$2,397,807	\$2,696,019	\$2,969,509	\$2,969,509	\$2,969,509
M - TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$1,640,693	\$1,752,664	\$1,847,394	\$1,886,624	\$1,901,693
J+ M =N TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$4,038,500	\$4,448,683	\$4,816,903	\$4,856,133	\$4,871,202
Z - TOTAL REVENUE	\$4,400,614	\$5,021,102	\$5,810,976	\$5,879,948	\$5,879,948
Z - N = SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$362,114	\$572,419	\$994,073	\$1,023,815	\$1,008,746

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.

Projected enrollment of the school is based on a customary matriculation pattern of four classes of approximately 22 students per class, per grade level, Kindergarten through sixth grade. The school will add grade levels seven and eight and welcome new Kindergarten classes in successive years until the school is at its full capacity of 828 students.

Mallard Creek is one of the regions within Charlotte-Mecklenburg in need for a charter school to alleviate the overcrowding in local schools. The NC state average for enrollment in elementary schools is 499. The LEA average is 708, yet the elementary schools in Mallard Creek serve over 800 students. The NC state average for middle school is 668. The LEA average is 1002, yet the middle schools in the Mallard Creek serve over 1400 students. The student to teacher ratio in Charlotte is 16:1, which is 8.3% greater than the North Carolina state ratio. According to the CMS website, the school district has grown about 3% each year since 1994. This equates to about 3,500 students per year. It is anticipated that this growth trend will continue for at least the next ten years. CMS recognizes it will continue to have challenges assigning students into schools. There are not enough school facilities to house the growing student population in this area and new development is not expected to occur until 2017-2020. Overcrowding can be alleviated by opening a public charter school which can serve over 800 students. There are hundreds of students sitting in overcrowded classrooms and schools that would consider membership in our school because membership is not impacted by "assignment". Furthermore, the proposed Mallard Creek Preparatory School will offer a unique STEM program for all students K-8. National research shows that American students are far below their international peers and that our schools are not preparing them for college and careers. MCSA has partnered with Vance High School and The Discovery Place to provide our students a strong, focused STEM program. The STEM focus will serve as the draw for this market and school leadership will deliver numerous parent information sessions to educate the public about our specialized STEM program, and to offer them an option to attend a school that is not overcrowded. The schools budget is built on a conservative foundation: a combined 5% contingency with an 8% projected fund balance, with an overall expense to revenue percentage of 87% or 536 equivalent students. the Board has pre-identified \$400,000 in salary and benefits for non-core instructional and related staff and \$328,000 in non-staffing

related expenses that can be reduced should enrollment not meet expectations, for a total of reduction to 80% of the original projected budget, or 431 student equivalent revenue. This enrollment would reduce the core instructional requirement by 8, for an overall reduction to 63% of anticipated projected revenue, the equivalent of 388 students needed to break even.

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

The five year budget proforma is purposefully built to provide an accurate, yet fundamentally conservative financial basis, ensuing that the school is sustainable over the long term. Three important aspects of the budget which protect the school against unforeseen negative revenue scenarios are: the 5% contingency fund built into the expense section of the budget, all source revenue projections are flat (no annual percentage increase) in the first five years of the school, and the budget does not rely on any outside sources of funds such as grants, fundraising or donations to operate. Should these proactive measures not fully ameliorate a deteriorating revenue situation, the Board and school leadership team through its established budget review process will identify potential expenses that can be reduced and act in the combined best interest of students and the financial longevity of the school.

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

Not Applicable. *The schools budget is built to sustain itself solely on the accumulated per-pupil funding from federal, state and county sources. Any fundraising, grants or donation that the school receives will serve to enrich the existing program and assist the school in achieving its programmatic and financial goals sooner than forecasted.*

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

22:1 Student to Core Instructional Teacher Ratio.

- 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.*

The board has contracted with the North Carolina Public Charter Schools Association for comprehensive financial and relates services support, including: preparation of financial reports each month, preparation of vendor payments , reconciliation of bank accounts, preparation of payroll (including payroll deductions and withholdings), preparation and submission of state and federal payroll taxes and associated reports, preparation and transmission of state and federal reporting in accordance with the Uniform Education Reporting System, provide financial, budget and other reports and data independent auditor to plan and conduct annual audit, and confer with staff and board as necessary at reasonable intervals and provide consulting relating to accounting and financial matters. The board may elect to contract with other independent entities or vendors should the school staff require additional assistance in areas necessary to operate the school, or otherwise not be able to provide a specific service through in house staff. Examples of this would include contracting with a licensed vendor for speech

and occupational therapy services, should the school not be able to hire qualified candidates, or should the EC service requirement be such that contracting with an outside vendor at an hourly rate would be in the best financial interests of the school versus hiring employees directly. In instances where the board will contract for services with an outside vendor, there will be strict criteria and a robust selection process to ensure that the contracted services are performed appropriately and school funds are expended in the best interest of students. Minimally, potential vendors will be licensed in their respective fields, insured or otherwise bonded, and undergo background checks which mirror the school and the local LEA. The Board or a school leadership designee will research available vendors and independently obtain data (such as a client list for reference checks) to gauge the quality of potential vendors. The Board will vote to contract with specific vendors based on this criteria, and such contracts will be subject to periodic review for efficacy. When appropriate, the board will enact a full Request for Proposal (RFP) process and adjust to fit the individual need as articulated by the board and allowable under state law.

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

The schools budget was developed based on actual per-pupil spending drawn from published financial audits of existing charter schools located in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County. Primary spending priorities are on expenses directly related to student instruction and a conducive learning environment. This would include: salaries and benefits of instructional and support staff, instructional materials and supplies, contracted services for educational support, insurance, facility costs and related costs necessary to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students. Secondary spending priorities are for those non-essential but beneficial expenses to improve student learning. These costs are usually incurred as the School reaches its targeted student capacity. This would include: additional enrichment, auxiliary supplemental instructional materials, intramural uniforms, etc. The school will contract with an outside food service vendor who is pre-approved to process Free and Reduced Lunch applications and serve within the guidelines of the National School Lunch Program. It is anticipated that the costs associated with this program will be pass through. School staff is sufficient in number to assist and otherwise facilitate the breakfast and lunch service if necessary. The school will allocate funds as necessary to comply with state law regarding charter school students and transportation to and from school. Safe and efficient transportation a top priority, and every effort will be made to facilitate carpooling within families of students who attend the charter school. The acquisition and operation of school buses to transport students to and from school, within a two to four mile radius of the school, will be the first use of surplus funds beyond the anticipated fund balance.

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.

The Board has set an anticipated goal of approximately 5-8% percent of annual expenditures to develop the schools unrestricted fund balance. At no point will the fund balance decrease below 2% of the schools annual approved budget, or one full months worth of operating expenses, whichever is the greater amount.

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

Developing and maintain a healthy fund balance will be a primary component of the schools budgeting process. The systematic budgetary review process conducted by the Board and school leadership consists of four main budgeting periods: Early Bird (June of preceding fiscal year), Post ADM (September), Spring (February) and Final (July of following fiscal year). This schedule of compulsory budget review will ensure a balance between revenue and expenses, and empowers the Board and school leadership with the agility needed to quickly adjust the budget. This practice when combined with monthly review of financial Budget versus Actual statements prepared by the schools financial accountant, local comptroller and school principal will allow the school to thoughtfully and methodically develop an appropriate unrestricted fund balance.

Based upon current discussions with brokers, real estate developers and potential lessors, the developers estimate that the per square foot lease cost of the completed facility will be between \$10-\$14 per square foot, which will result in an annual lease of between \$450,000 and \$570,000. The rate variation is due variation to the actual size of the facility and whether the school leases an existing facility (\$10-\$12/square foot per year) or builds a new facility (\$12-\$14/square foot per year). These costs are consistent with leases that have recently been executed in the area. These costs are also consistent with our information on current land costs and construction costs. From our research and discussions with commercial real estate brokers, general contractors and real estate developers, we estimate the total cost of a new facility would be between \$4 million and \$6 million depending on the location and size of the facility. This would translate into annual lease costs of between \$500,000 and \$600,000 assuming a typical lease rate of between 9% and 10%. The Board has already received a funding commitment for all furniture, fixtures and equipment necessary to open and operate the school from an internationally reputable company who specializes in equipping new schools and specifically charter schools: 3 Oaks Corporation.

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*

Not Applicable. The school will not rely on assets from any external sources. As described in the budget and financing narrative, the Board has arranged for a long term lease for all necessary furniture, fixtures and equipment (FFE) to open and operate the school. Additional asset needs are provided for in the annual operating budget and increase as the school grows in enrollment.

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?

The board will work in conjunction with the financial accountant, auditor and school leadership to develop policies that comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP), and all federal, state and local law and policy related to monitoring and use of public school funds and those funds received and discharged by a North Carolina Non-Profit Corporation. The internal control system will be documented and evaluated regularly by the board, school leadership, and financial accountant, and will be reviewed as part of the annual financial audit. An accounting policy and procedures manual will be developed that includes the following: an organizational chart which sets forth the actual lines of responsibility and that shows individual names and titles, accounts payable and accounts receivable listings, listing of all bank accounts and authorized signatories, payroll calendar and processing information, vendor files, lease and contract documents, segregation of duties chart, cash handling procedures, credit card policy, travel and expense policy, master copies of school-based forms (time sheets, expense reports, etc.) School staff will receive training about the internal control system and their individual responsibilities within the system. The organizational chart, accounting procedures, record retention policy, vendor list, and chart of accounts will be maintained on a timely basis to eliminate outdated information and include current information. Procedures will be followed by the schools office and leadership team that mirror widely established segregation of duties habits, such as the person making bank deposits is not the same person as who is reconciling those deposits. The school will inventory and track items purchased with school funds, especially those items with an initial value of \$700 dollars or more, and also items purchased as a set with a combined initial value of \$700 or more, such as a textbook adoption. Items in these categories may be considered capital purchases and depreciated over time to accurately reflect the schools real asset position. Items in this category that break or no longer serve a useful function may be disposed of by the school. A disposal form which includes a record of the reason for the disposal as well as relevant tracking information on the item will be used, and noted in the inventory.

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

Not Applicable. There are no known or possible related party transactions the board is aware of at this time.

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.

Potter and Company, Certified Public Accountants
7239 Pineville-Matthews Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
Phone: (704) 926-3300
Fax: (704) 926-3333

VI. AGREEMENT PAGE

Application Fee:

Pursuant to § 115C-238.29B(e) the charter school applicant must submit a \$500 application fee to the Office of Charter Schools. The applicant must submit their application fee by the December 6, 2013 5:00 pm EST deadline. Payments will be accepted in the form of a check only. Cash or credit cards are not accepted.

**Application Note: The applicant must mail the check along with a copy of the proposed charter LOI to be received before or on the due date of December 6, 2013 5:00 pm EST. Failure to submit payment by the stipulated timeline to the Office of Charter Schools will deem the application incomplete.*

Payments should be made payable to North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

*North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Office Of Charter Schools
6303 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6303*

I understand the requirements pursuant to G.S. 115C-238.29B(e).

jluucas

Date: 11/25/2013

Applicant Signature:

The foregoing application is submitted on behalf of Mallard Creek STEM Academy (*name of non-profit corporation or individuals submitting application*). The undersigned has read the application and hereby declares that the information contained in it is true and accurate to the best of his/her information and belief. The undersigned further represents that the applicant has read the Charter School Law and agrees to be governed by it, other applicable laws, and SBE regulations.

Print/Type Name: jluucas

Board Position: Jennifer Lucas, President

Signature: _____

Date: 12/06/2013

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
_____ day of _____, 20____.

Notary Public

Official Seal

My commission expires: _____, 20____.

