



NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

Acorn to Oak

Public charter schools opening the fall of 2017

Due 5:00 pm EST, September 25, 2015

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
NCDPI/Office of Charter Schools
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh NC 27601-2825
919-807-3491

Mailing Address:
6303 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6303

CHARTER SCHOOL

2016 Application Process

To open a charter school in the 2017-2018 school year

APPLICATION DUE DATE/TIME

September 25, 2015 A complete **online** application package, in the Office of Charter Schools **by 5:00 pm EST.**

Non-Refundable \$1000 Application fee due to the Office of Charter Schools

Application Fee Payment Details can be found on the Office of Charter Schools Website

APPLICATION SPECIFICATIONS

Applicants can submit applications prior to the deadline September 25, 2015 at 5:00 pm EST. **All applications 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 in the appropriate places within the application.
2. **Any** answer given within the application which is not original to the applicant, the applicant must provide a citation to the source of the answer.
3. Review all elements of your application for completeness before submitting. **An incomplete application will result in the elimination of the application.**
4. **Any** document attached to the application or within the online system **must be** in PDF format.
5. Late submissions **will not** be accepted. No exceptions.

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I. APPLICATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of proposed charter school: Acorn to Oak

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: *Acorn to Oak - Waldorf Methods Charter*

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

Name of contact person: *Melissa Stansbury*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *Board Director*

Mailing address: 216 Brandon Court
Raleigh NC 27609

Primary telephone: 919-637-7741 Alternative telephone: 919-901-7567

E-Mail address: *acorntoakcharter@gmail.com*

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

County: WAKE

LEA: 920-Wake County Schools

Was this application prepared with the assistance of a third party person or group?

No: X

Yes:

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? *Acorn to Oak - Waldorf Methods Charter*

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

Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment:

Projected School Opening: Year 2017 Month July

Will this school operate on a year round schedule?

No:

Yes: X

Proposed Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment (5 Years)

Academic School Year	Grade Levels	Total Projected Student Enrollment
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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 governance, operations, finances and student performance.

I certify that I have the authority to submit this application, that the initial board members and I were regularly involved in the development of this application, and that no part of this application is plagiarized. 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.

mdstansbury

Melissa Stansbury, Board Chair

Signature

Title

mdstansbury

09/25/2015

Printed Name

Date

II. MISSION and PURPOSES

(No more than three total pages in this section)

Mission:

*State the Mission of the proposed charter school in **thirty-five 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:

Acorn to Oak is a community-initiated, environmentally conscious school offering a K-8 Public Waldorf Education. We nurture the whole child through an integrated curriculum that cultivates each individual's innate creative, intellectual, emotional, physical, and social capacities.

Clearly describe the mission of the proposed charter school:

Acorn to Oak (ATO) will educate the whole child - head, hands and heart. ATO shall provide a professional, educator-led pedagogical program inspired by Waldorf Education, and strengthened by our parents and community's talents and resources. ATO shall stimulate each child to flourish into a creative, inquisitive, critically thinking individual with a self-image of competency, a vision of social responsibility, an acumen for cross-cultural communication, and a reverence for our planet.

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.*

Currently there are no Waldorf-Inspired programs in Wake County, yet the community has voiced a need for such a program (see appendix A1). ATO plans to fill this need by offering a Public Waldorf education for families seeking alternatives to the Wake County Public School System. ATO will target families who place a high value on nurturing the whole child (head, hands, heart) and subscribe to the school mission. The ATO community will recruit families who value an educational program with an emphasis on creativity, imagination, environmental stewardship, appreciation of nature, and a play-based early childhood education. ATO will identify families who value an education that includes handwork, visual arts, music, movement, theater and foreign languages.

Wake County is approximately 69% White, 21% Black or African American, 10% Hispanic/Latino, 6% Asian, and 2% two or more races (US Census Bureau, 2014). According to the Wake County Public School System (2015), the school district for the 2013-2014 school year was 48.6% White, 24.4% African American, 15.7% Hispanic/Latino, 6.8% Asian, 4.5% Mixed Race or Other. Acorn to Oak is committed to serving a student body reflective of our diverse

community. Therefore, the board of directors will strive to reflect Wake County and school district demographics. Targeted outreach will help ATO to achieve the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity that the school desires. ATOs board of directors includes members with Spanish language fluency, marketing skills and relationships within ethnically and racially diverse segments of Wake County. Board Members will use these skills to create a strategy to meet marketing goals and achieve a diverse student body. ATO will also provide informational and marketing materials that are inclusive and available in Spanish.

ATO has not identified the situs of our proposed school, and finds it premature to do so now. Our target population, according to our intent-to-enroll survey, prefers a North Raleigh location, and ATO aspires to accommodate that preference. Nevertheless, ATO must balance amongst competing factors such as real property costs and our target population's demographic presence to ascertain the ideal location for our school.

- 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 total projected enrollment for Acorn to Oak in the 2017-2018 school year is 125 students. This will increase by about 40 students per year, with not more than a 20% increase years 3-5. In the seventh year of operations and beyond the projected enrollment is 365 students in grades K-8. 365 students represents .003% of the ADM for Wake County for grades K-8 (109,061 students, according to <http://tinyurl.com/p8qqlzd>).

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

ATO shares a vision of academic excellence with the Wake County School System. The school will follow all required state standards and assess students accordingly. ATO, like the local LEA, will uphold the common core standards in our curriculum.

ATO will address learning in several unique ways:

1. ATO will focus on teaching academic subjects while also supporting the physical and social-emotional needs of each child. In Waldorf philosophy, physical and emotional development are just as important as intellectual growth to the success and fulfillment of each child.

2. ATO will be the first public school in North Carolina to rely on Waldorf Methods. The administration of ATO will hire faculty members who are highly qualified and when possible trained in Waldorf pedagogy. ATO will seek teachers who work toward continuous professional growth, embodying the path of the lifelong learner. ATO will provide professional development, specifically in Waldorf methodology and other similar techniques on an on-going basis. ATO will encourage collaboration between faculty members.

3. Interdisciplinary thematic units will be taught through the Main Lesson throughout the grades. These carefully crafted curriculum blocks interweave all the subjects so students can make connections between real-world

concepts and the abstract. Learning units will integrate visual and performing arts, storytelling and handwork (knitting, crocheting, hand sewing, embroidery, cross stitch, wet felting, paper crafts, machine sewing, woodworking) to provide experiential learning of core subjects. This extended length of time devoted to the Main Lesson is deeply rooted in Waldorf methodologies.

4. Students at ATO will be encouraged to observe the world around them and use experiences in the natural world to build problem-solving skills, creativity, develop STEM skills, learn team cooperation, and develop stewardship for the environment. Curriculum will be seamless from the indoor to the outdoor classroom. ATO will offer daily outdoor classroom activity in every season and all weather. There is reverence for nature and environmental rhythms in Waldorf pedagogy and this will be at the core of the activities selected for the students.

5. ATO will work to build a learning community of administration, faculty, parents, students, and community partners. ATO understands that the optimal learning environment for students is a supportive learning community that engages children in every aspect of their lives. Seasonal festivals; student, faculty, and community performances; and other events will bring the learning community together to celebrate achievements, mark the passage of time, and build relationships.

6. ATO will engage in play-based and project-based activities to encourage the development of imagination and intelligence, language, social skills, and perceptual-motor abilities. Playful learning and child-centered classrooms will encourage joy in students and be a hallmark of ATO school.

7. ATO will use arts integration techniques to enrich lessons and deepen students understanding for core curriculum content. While there are some schools in the local LEA that provide arts integration, ATO will have this as a core tenet and offer the target population another option for an arts integrated school.

8. Technology will be de-emphasized and limited in the early years at ATO. Computers will be supplied for student use at developmentally appropriate stages to support the project-based curriculum components. Research suggests limiting children's media exposure improves children's sleep, school performance, and less aggressive behaviors (Gentile, et. al., 2014).

4. *In the appendices (Appendix A1), 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-218, 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.*

1) Acorn To Oak will be the first North Carolina Public Waldorf Methods school. As such, ATO will provide educators a unique opportunity to learn the application of Waldorf principles within a public school setting. Staff development is key to the schools success. The ATO board of directors is developing strategic partnerships with several organizations that will offer mentoring and training locally and on site. The ATO board is forging relationships with the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, A+ schools program through the NC Arts Council, and Emerson Waldorf School. Additionally, ATO will provide opportunities for professional development at institutions for Waldorf teacher training including Antioch University and Sunbridge Institute. Teachers who are licensed and certified in Waldorf will receive a salary incentive.

3) There are currently no Public Waldorf schools in North Carolina. Hallmarks of the Waldorf-inspired program include play-based early childhood education, ample outdoor recreation, education of the whole child (head, hands, and heart), emphasis on the role of imagination in learning, and the artistic development of children through music, movement, drama and visual art. The ATO curriculum will interweave environmental stewardship, appreciation for nature, and ecological rhythms throughout, and these shall be practically taught using an exemplary methodology of inquiry-based learning through tasks such as gardening, outdoor observation of natural phenomena (season differentiation, wildlife activity, daily rhythms), and the celebration of multicultural seasonal festivals. Empirical studies have shown Waldorf students are better motivated to study science, and they achieve greater scientific understanding than their non-Waldorf public school peers. (Schreiner and Schwantner, 2009).

4) Educators employed by ATO will focus on the whole child, seeking to understand each student's academic strengths and needs, physical health, and social-emotional development needs. Students will be supported and celebrated in their individuality and their path to fulfillment as citizens of both our Earth and the human community. Studies have shown that when students are accepted and have a strong relationship with their school community, academic achievement significantly improves (Klem, 2004).

The classroom at ATO will be a dynamic active learning environment incorporating a variety of learning modalities to foster success in each child. Academics will incorporate movement; visual and performing arts; and tactile, hands-on activities into their main lesson blocks, thus aiding students in understanding core concepts experientially. All of these

activities will culminate in a Main Lesson book, a student-made textbook/portfolio that embodies a student's achievement and understanding. This ownership over a student's own development and growth empowers children and supports a lifelong love of learning.

6) There are just over forty Public Waldorf schools in the USA. Most are on the West Coast, and none are in NC. Providing a Waldorf opportunity, a well-documented method for improving students' success, in Wake County, offers parents who believe in the principles of the school an option for their children. Waldorf methods include learning through movement, storytelling and puppetry, practical and fine motor skill learning through knitting and other handwork, and the interweaving of art and imagination throughout the various core subjects. ATO will offer teacher-looping where the teacher remains with the same class cohort from first through fifth grade, the use of main lesson books developed by each individual student, and natural rhythmical teaching. Biological rhythms are honored through strategic placement of stillness and movement activities; daily rhythms are honored with classroom routine, songs and verses; and seasonal rhythms are honored with nature displays in all classrooms, reciting or singing seasonal verses, daily time spent in nature during differing weather events, seasonal activities and thematic units, and seasonal festivals. While other Wake County public schools may offer some of these methods, ATO's combination of all of these elements will be a unique. ATO will provide experiential learning that underlie the later academics of science/chemistry (bread baking); development of regions of the brain associated with math knowledge acquisition (sewing, music, movement); "stillness", listening to/observing puppet plays help develop focus/concentration and extended attention missing from learning via short 'sound-bites' and rapidly changing visual input characteristic of video/web-based learning.

Goals for the Proposed Charter School:

- 1. Provide specific and measurable goals for the proposed school for the first 5 years of operation outlining expectations for the proposed school's operations, academics, finance, and governance. Address how often, who, and when the information will be communicated to the governing board and other stakeholders.*

ATO school goals are organized around the Waldorf concept of educating the whole child - head, heart and hands. Board members, the Parent Circle and teachers will examine progress towards goals by evaluating data for each measure during regularly scheduled quarterly meetings. Operational, academic, financial and governance goals are grouped under Head, Heart and Hands in the outline below:

1. The goals of the HEAD are about strategic and independent thinking.

GOAL: Efficient and effective leadership creates the space for whole child education.

Measures: ATO will operate within established budgetary guidelines, observe financial management policies, demonstrate positive cash flow, and build increasing fund balances starting in year one and increasing in subsequent years.

GOAL: Teachers, administrators and Board members align all school activities with ATO mission.

Measures: Staff members participate in at least two Waldorf-specific staff development offerings each year. Parents report increased knowledge and

awareness of Waldorf concepts on surveys. Students articulate Waldorf concepts and philosophies by fifth grade.

GOAL: Students achieve academic gains, as well as meeting or exceeding NC Board of Education student performance standards.

Measures: 80% of students exhibit growth as measured by a series of ongoing, authentic assessments in addition to performance on State EOG's in year one. Rising percentages of growth continue in subsequent years.

2. The goals of the HEART are about feeling happy and connected to community and nature.

GOAL: ATO will seek to increase emotional intelligence in students.

Measures: Numbers of student disciplinary measures decrease steadily. Improvements in emotional intelligence will increase steadily year-to-year.

GOAL: ATO will seek to create an ever increasing community of students, teachers, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders who support and are supported by the schools influence.

Measures: Fundraising efforts meet or exceed goals. Parents and teachers surveyed report at least 85% overall school satisfaction in year one with increasing satisfaction rates in subsequent years. At least 50% of ATO parents volunteer time, money or other resources to ATO in year one, increasing to 75% in subsequent years.

GOAL: To establish and increase connection between the community and ATO.

Measures: Attendance at school events meets or exceeds stated goals; 85% retention rate for students. Attrition of staff members leaving due to job dissatisfaction in any given year is one or less. Average daily student attendance is 90% or higher; ATO maintains school capacity at 100% of projected enrollment each year. The number of applicants will increase by 80 students each year.

3. The goals of the HANDS involve taking actions to make positive contributions to the individual, community, and society.

GOAL: To create a learning environment that encourages physically active and productive students. In the US, only 42% of elementary school children and less than 8% of teens get the recommended levels of physical activity, based on DHHS 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. ATO will implement school-based policy recommendations from the CDC report, School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity, including daily recess with ample game equipment, and integrating classroom physical activity breaks into the school routine.

Measures: ATO conducts daily physical education classes as well as recess for all grades. ATO students meet or exceed the Physical Activity Guidelines by engaging in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Physical activity breaks are included in all curricula. Students also contribute handwork and other projects to the school community.

GOAL: School positively impacts community.

Measures: Classrooms will select and complete at least one Service Project per year.

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

During monthly board meetings, the lead administrator will report to the board. As part of the report, specific measures will be cited as to how the school is achieving its mission in accordance with school goals above. Report will include examples of theme from main lessons, evidence of

incorporating arts, movement and handwork into the main lesson, examples of integrating and incorporating subjects across the main lesson and how students are working as a team in their classrooms.

Additionally, the school administrative team will provide data to the board yearly on how specific, measurable data in goals listed above are being achieved. This will be reflected in student attendance, student retention, teacher retention, teacher satisfaction, parent satisfaction, test scores, fundraising achievement and budget report.

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.

ATO is part of a national movement to incorporate Waldorf pedagogy in public schools. Austrian scholar Rudolf Steiner developed Waldorf education in the wake of World War I. Since Nevada's Yuba River Charter School opened in 1994, forty-three public schools across the US have adopted Waldorf methods (Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, 2015). The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education is an organizational network of public schools within this movement. With Alliance support, ATO will use successful Waldorf-based public schools as educational models. Using demographic and achievement data, ATO will tailor its program to meet target students' needs.

Waldorf pedagogy is founded upon developing not only the child's intellect, but also the child's physical and social-emotional self. Waldorf education traditionally refers to this as "head, hands, and heart". ATO bases its mission and educational framework on teaching the whole child as follows:

HEAD (Intellectual Growth): Students will engage in lessons that stimulate imagination and curiosity. Lessons allow for discovery and discussion of ideas in a student-centered, teacher-guided environment. Teachers emphasize skills that develop lifelong learners. This standards-based program will support achievement in language, math, science, social studies, visual and performing arts, and foreign language.

HANDS (Physical Health): ATO recognizes the need to develop healthy habits early in life. Lessons incorporating movement, nutrition, gardening and outdoor experiences will nurture this development. Students gain tactile and fine motor skills as well as concentration and focus through handwork, studio art, woodwork, and instrumental musical instruction.

HEART (Social/Emotional Development): ATO curriculum design emphasizes cooperation, empathy, self-advocacy, diplomacy, conflict resolution and effective communication skills. These virtues are essential for academic achievement and for a successful life in the 21st century. ATO Educators demonstrate exemplary use of these skills, and exhibit reverence for learning and respect for the individuality of our students, parents, and community members.

From K to grade level classes, art, handwork, storytelling, song, and movement shall serve as instructional vehicles that can accommodate all learners and bridge core disciplines and subjects through unifying concepts.

For instance, art and handwork promote dexterity that supports students' mechanical mastery of writing, and with movement, a teacher may guide students to clap, jump and stamp in patterns recited to times tables.

ATO will collect data to measure our instructional program's success. Waldorf pedagogy dictates that instructors utilize a myriad of authentic, qualitative assessments of student progress. Qualitative measures shall include teacher observation, student portfolios, and oral testing coupled with formative assessments, summative assessments and other quantitative measures. This partnership of assessment techniques will assure students receive proper instruction at their level to maximize their growth as guided by Common Core State Standards.

Educator collaboration is an essential part of the ATO instructional design; all teachers shall be given time to exchange ideas and techniques, share data, and improve upon their craft in a professional setting.

ATO's target population includes children from diverse backgrounds and needs whose families seek an innovative, developmentally appropriate, whole child education. ATO's inclusive and culturally relevant Public Waldorf education will address students' needs by incorporating the arts, handwork, movement, and hands-on activities in an integrated curriculum grounded in long-term teacher-child relationships, knowledge of child development (individual and by age group) and in-depth study of concepts over time (Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, 2013, pp 8-9).

Curriculum and Instructional Design:

Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure for each grade span (i.e. elementary, middle, high) the school would ultimately serve.

Waldorf classrooms are carefully-crafted, inviting spaces that imbue warmth. The ATO classroom will provide tools sourced from natural materials that lend themselves to imaginative play and encourage discovery, curiosity, and personal growth. Class sizes will be 12-15 in Kindergarten; and 20-22 in subsequent grade levels (compliant with GS 115C-301). Teaching assistants who collaborate closely with classroom teachers will be used as necessary, maintaining a low student/teacher ratio.

As in traditional Waldorf pedagogy, ATO will practice "teacher looping", wherein one teacher follows a cohort of students from grades one through five. This benefits both teacher and student; teachers achieve a deeper understanding of students' strengths and areas for growth throughout their elementary career, and teachers more effectively individualize and differentiate instruction to ensure academic success. Looping fosters respect, develops long-term relationships between faculty and students' families, and models conflict resolution and diplomacy techniques (Northeast and Islands Regional Education Laboratory at Brown University, 1997).

Educators will use diverse instructional methods that engage students in developmentally appropriate ways. By giving equal importance to each child's development in all areas (intellectual, physical, social-emotional, and creative), ATO upholds its mission to educate the whole child's head, hands,

and heart. For instance, movement plays a large role in the early grades, and classrooms will accommodate for movement as necessary (Dunn 1994). The curriculum will grow with the students as they become ready to receive it. This approach will ensure that students remain confident to explore, thereby developing a love of learning and a strong sense of self.

ATO will supplement classroom curriculum with activities that bring the community to the students and the students into the community. These activities will include: guest-taught master classes, field trips, community and student-initiated projects, and partnerships with organizations making a difference in the Triangle area. The ATO board has started, and will continue throughout the lifetime of the school, to build bridges with influential programs and organizations that can help students expand their horizons, foster stewardship for fellow citizens and the environment, and make a positive change in the community.

The classroom environment in the middle grades at ATO will support the students through a transition to a high school environment. Teacher looping at this level will involve a homeroom subject-area teacher who will remain with a student cohort throughout the cohort's middle school career. In addition to the homeroom teacher, students will rotate as a cohort to highly qualified subject-area teachers throughout the day. This arrangement benefits students by maintaining a stable, continuous relationship with an adult and a group of peers, while allowing students to experience a range of teaching styles and personalities through other subjects. Teachers at this level will be experts in their field and capable of providing greater insight on their subject area.

Teachers at the middle grades level will collaborate to develop 3-4 week thematic blocks that shall serve as the main thread throughout the school day. Each subject will be taught through the lens of the main lesson theme so core concepts are explored at a deeper level of understanding. Teachers will come together on a regular basis to discuss student progress and develop strategies to assist any student who struggles. Teachers at this level will be trained in child development research for this age and will serve as guides for their students as well as educators. The environment will be carefully designed to encourage comfort and discovery. Student-centered lessons will involve using a diverse set of instructional techniques adapted to reach students of every learning modality.

Provide a synopsis of the planned curriculum, including:

- 1. One sample curriculum outline (in graph form) in the Appendices (Appendix B) for one core subject (specific to the school's purpose) for each grade span (i.e. elementary, middle, high) the school would ultimately serve.*
- 2. If you are proposing a high school, as Appendix B2, provide a visual disseminating what courses (core content and electives) will be offered at the charter high school to ensure students meet the proposed charter school's graduation requirements. Please ensure the projected staff and budget aligns with the course offerings.*
- 3. Identify how this curriculum aligns with the proposed charter school's mission, targeted student population, and North Carolina Accountability Model.*

ATO mission and curriculum inform one another, are guided by Waldorf

curriculum and methods and will align directly with the North Carolina Accountability Model. At the center is the whole child supported and nurtured by parents, educators, and the larger community. With adult support and guidance students have access to an enriching academic, creative, and hands-on curriculum that honors children's uniqueness and individuality. ATO faculty educates the head, hands, and heart of each child by addressing all areas of child development (intellectual, physical, social-emotional, and creative). ATO will live and teach its mission daily.

Families attracted to ATO in the intent to enroll survey want this Waldorf inspired, holistic approach to education for their children. Parents want to be active participants in the learning community as well. The targeted student population is expected to grow and evolve over time to mirror the larger community in Raleigh and Wake County. ATO includes and celebrates all of human diversity. The learning community culture will be interwoven naturally into the curriculum because of its student-centered focus with strong parent and community involvement. By using developmentally appropriate teaching methods and experiences we are able to individualize and differentiate our program to meet the needs of diverse learners.

ATO curriculum is strongly and directly aligned with North Carolina Common Core Standards (see Appendix B for example). ATO will participate fully in all requirements of the North Carolina Accountability Model. ATO will follow the guidelines set forth in the detailed report entitled Public Waldorf-Common Core Curriculum Alignment (Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, 2013) that can be found on the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education website:
<http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/research-and-resources>.

"Children are thinking, moving, feeling, and interacting human beings. To teach them well involves considering and fostering their development and learning in all domains." (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p.20). ATO's mix of academic, creative, and developmental education will help students reach their fullest potentials and be ready for the North Carolina READY End of Grade exams (EOGs) beginning in third grade and continuing through eighth grade. The emphasis on hands-on, experiential activities enables students to use and practice the skills and concepts outlined in the North Carolina Common Core Standards in context and for a purpose. This provides children with a deeper level of understanding and more practice with the open-ended questions and real-world applications included in the EOGs. The time devoted to working with students on team collaboration, expressing themselves through multiple modalities, and engaging in discussion will enable them to "express ideas clearly and with supporting facts" (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2013). Ongoing authentic assessments (both formal and informal) will monitor student progress and identify areas of need so that teachers and support faculty may offer extra support and interventions as determined necessary by the child's teachers and parents. ATO believes that building "reciprocal relationships with families is important because parent and family involvement is a key ingredient for success" for students (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p.326). ATO shares the North Carolina READY Initiative's focus on preparing students for life, not simply for success at each grade level in school.

4. 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 for each grade span (i.e. elementary, middle, high) the school would ultimately serve.

ATO teachers must master the instructional strategies of Main Lesson; Main Lesson Book; Instructional Block Learning; Play- and Project-based Learning; and Arts Integration.

1. ATO builds the school day upon the Main Lesson which introduces new concepts early in the day while minds are fresh. The Main Lesson alternates amongst the core subjects of science, mathematics, language, and social studies in 3- 4 week Instructional Blocks. Instructional Block Learning emphasizes in-depth learning, thereby providing students an opportunity to integrate the core subject matter. Instructional Blocks provide project-based learning environments for varied, interactive teaching methods that result in equal or better mastery and retention, as well as reduced suspension and dropout rates (Sharman, 1990). Instructional Blocks also foster stronger student/teacher relationships (Carroll, 1994).

In kindergarten, teachers present the Main Lesson at circle time by storytelling from a multicultural literary base. Classic and modern fairy tales expand children's concentration, vocabulary and comprehension, and plant the seeds for reading comprehension. Through drama, rhythmic poetry and songs, teachers immerse children in vivid oral literature. Teachers use puppetry and engage children to act out stories. They lead singing games to teach comprehension strategies.

In grades 1 - 8, the Main Lesson emphasizes core curriculum in two-hour Instructional Blocks in an ascending spiral in which students continually revisit ideas and concepts, and each new exposure affords greater depth and insight. For each Block, students create their own Main Lesson Book, thereby becoming active documentarians of their learning. The Books' compositions, observations, diagrams, and illustrations evince students' grasp of learned content. The Books help students to develop concentration and writing skills, and reflect students' engagement in the curriculum. Additionally, the Books offer to each child a tangible ownership stake in education.

2. Play is the chief vehicle in which infants and young children develop imagination, intelligence, language, social skills, and perceptual-motor abilities (Frost, 1992). At ATO, student-directed Play-Based Learning (grades K-2) and Project-Based Learning (grades 3-8) are the curricular backbone. Educational play improves children's health outcomes while it foments broad development (Gill, 2015). The outdoor classrooms reflect the indoor classrooms. Teachers' Play-Based Learning strategies seamlessly transition from one to the other. The instructional day interweaves Movement, Physical Education, and Games as a means to develop the whole child. Games and playground activities encourage social-cognitive development, for which few opportunities exist outside the presence of dominant adults (Baines & Blatchford, 2010)

3. Arts Integration improves engagement and achievement in both low and high socioeconomic background youths (Catterall, et al., 2012; Upitis & Smithrim, 2003, cited in Upitis 2011; Walker, et al., 2011). Beyond engagement and achievement, Arts Integration support and encourages healthy risk-taking, teaches students to recognize skills in themselves and others, fosters student/teacher collaboration, bridges cultural differences, and draws in

parents and community (Nobori, 2012). Arts Integration also demands variegated information processing, which improves long-term memory (Rinne, et al., 2011). ATO teachers must integrate the arts as fundamental elements of their lesson plans. Teachers will utilize Arts Integration techniques to enrich each Main Lesson to deepen students' grasp of core curriculum, and students' Main Lesson Books constitute part of Arts Integrated learning. Arts educators outside the core curriculum may provide creative movement, eurythmy, music, instrumentation, painting, sculpting, and theatre instruction, and they collaborate with core classroom teachers to incorporate Arts themes into the Main Lesson.

5. Explain how the proposed instructional plan and graduation requirements will ensure student readiness to transition from grade to grade and to the next grade span upon program completion.

Teachers at ATO will ensure student readiness for grade-to-grade transition for the next grade span upon completion of each term using three unique strategies. At ATO, the belief is that every student unfolds in their own time. With this as the premise, it follows that the most valid assessment is one that is extended over time. ATO teachers will utilize observational and concrete assessments to provide them with the information required to evaluate the educational achievement, social-emotional and physical development and creative growth of their students. The relationship between teacher and student is essential to the child's growth and progress. Developing this student-teacher relationship through early grade looping offers a unique and thorough perspective for evaluation at ATO. Specific expectations of achievement for each grade level will reflect the child's developmental stage and determine grade-to-grade matriculation.

In addition to utilizing the standards outlined by the Common Core, teacher-written assessment rubrics will be one of the main tools used to measure student achievement by clarifying and illustrating what a student should know and be able to do. This allows for a more in-depth analysis of where students are individually as well as their strengths and weaknesses. By using a qualitative approach in conjunction with a standardized assessment, teachers will ensure that students have the tools they need to transition to the next grade.

The Main Lesson Book/student portfolio provides the teacher with the students' finished work, but also provides an invaluable illustration of the learning process. Upon close examination, the student-made books will reveal the teachers implicitly taught learning outcomes and how the student has retained and integrated what they've been taught. Students in grades 6-8 will be invited to self-evaluate. The teacher can then determine whether the student is prepared to move on or pinpoint where a different approach to instruction should be utilized.

Finally, the teacher will conduct a year-end qualitative analysis of what the student has achieved both academically and developmentally. This will provide insight into not only what has been learned, but also how it has been learned. These analyses are especially valuable in pinpointing the most effective strategies for giving the student the appropriate tools needed to overcome academic obstacles and will be vital to ensuring the long-term success of our students.

Parents will receive an evaluation at a mid-year parent-teacher conference and at the end of each academic year. Annual state standard test results, given in the applicable grades, will be provided to parents/guardians (Kona Pacific Public Charter School, Circle of Seasons Charter School).

6. *If you are proposing a high school, describe how the proposed charter school will meet the Future-Ready Core requirements. Provide details on how the students will earn credit hours and how grade-point averages will be calculated?*
7. *Provide a school academic calendar in Appendix C (minimum of 185 instructional days or 1,025 hours).*
8. *Describe in a brief narrative below on how the calendar coincides with the tenets of the proposed mission and education plan.*

The board of ATO collected data and feedback from our potential students, parents, and community members to assist us in adopting a school calendar that would best meet the needs of our constituents. After deliberation, ATO chose the year-round modified calendar because it best allowed for the following accommodations as dictated by our mission and curriculum design:

The calendar will provide for the completion of two uninterrupted 3- to 4-week lesson blocks that allow for proper dissemination of curriculum material. Breaks will occur after the completion of a lesson block, rather than in the midst of one.

The calendar will provide a sufficient break (at least four weeks) at least once a year to allow faculty time for continuing education and professional development.

The calendar will follow a rhythm of seasonal flow, as informed by Waldorf philosophy, allowing for rest at each seasonal change throughout the calendar year.

The calendar will include 177 instructional days, but the total instructional hours for the year will be 1044. There will be 171 full days with 6 hours of instructional time that total 1026 hours. The instructional day schedule will be 8:45 AM to 3:45PM. There will be 6 early release days of 3 hours of instructional time that total 18 hours. On these days, the schedule will be 8:45 AM to 12:15 PM.

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.*

ATO will follow the North Carolina Responsiveness to Instruction (NCRtI) model to ensure there are clearly defined systems of prevention and interventions in place that teachers can use to support students who are not making expected progress. This system also acts as support for teachers as they collaborate as a caring community of learners to ensure all students reach their potential.

RtI is a three tier system of supports.

Tier I: ATO curriculum provides the first level of support to all students. Teachers will differentiate instruction to address the strengths and needs of each student. Teachers will use ongoing informal assessments to monitor student progress and areas of need; consequently, they may plan and adapt activities. Waldorf methods reach the whole child by offering plentiful hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities and materials thus introducing multiple modes of accessing the curriculum simultaneously allowing students to demonstrate their learning. Teachers document students' progress with portfolios that can easily be shared with parents to show areas of strength and need.

ATO will follow the North Carolina Student Accountability Standards and refer any student who is performing below grade level in reading, writing, math, or who is having issues related to behavior, to the Child Study Team (CST) thus initiating Tier II supports to be provided and documented.

Tier II: The Child Study Team (CST) will be coordinated by an experienced, licensed teacher and will include the CST coordinator, the lead administrator, the student's teachers, the parents, the student (if deemed appropriate by the child's parents and teachers), and other relevant professionals. Parents and/or teachers who have concerns about a student's academic or behavioral needs may bring their concerns to the CST and the process will begin. The CST will develop a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) detailing specific goals and the evidence-based interventions that will be used within the classroom by the teacher. The CST will meet regularly to discuss the effectiveness of the interventions and monitor student progress. If parents cannot be present at the CST, teachers will schedule conferences to keep them up to date. If these supports prove effective, the teacher will continue them. If not, additional supports may be tried or the CST can utilize Tier III supports.

Tier III: The student will receive one-on-one and/or small group, intensive instruction while also continuing to receive core classroom instruction and the Tier II classroom interventions in the PEP. ATO will use research-based programs to target the student's specific area(s) of need. If there are behavioral concerns, the CST will develop a clear behavioral contract with the student and parents.

If Tier III supports prove effective, they will be continued and progress monitored regularly by the CST and shared with parents at least quarterly. If the CST, with strong parental input, determines that Tier III supports have not helped the student make adequate progress, the team can refer the student for a Special Education Evaluation. Please see the Exceptional Children section for further information.

ATO will monitor the progress of all students and provide teachers with professional support during bi-monthly pedagogical meetings. Our commitment to strong parent involvement will allow us to keep parents informed of each child's strengths and needs so that we may collaborate to ensure success.

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.*

1) ATO will follow the North Carolina policies for English Language Learners (ELL). At enrollment, all parents will complete a home language survey. If a primary language other than English is identified on this survey, the parents will be informed that their child will be screened with the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State Placement Test (W-APT). This will determine if they will be identified as Limited English Proficient and, if so, what accommodations/modifications they need in class and during state testing, and what ELL services they will receive. Teachers can also refer students to the Child Study Team if they have observed signs that the child is an English Language Learner (if parents did not indicate a primary language other than English on the Home Language Survey).

2) An ELL coordinator will be on staff to monitor ELL programs, student progress and to ensure that students who are ELL can access our core curriculum. The ELL coordinator will provide training to teachers to help them support students who are ELL. Possible areas of training and support for our staff and students include sheltered instruction so that teachers maintain the integrity of the academic content while making the material accessible to students of various levels of English proficiency. Sheltered instruction involves reducing the linguistic demands of lessons and using such strategies as: modifying speech rate and tone, using contextual clues and models, relating instruction to students' experiences, adapting the language of texts/tasks, and using other differentiated instructional and hands-on techniques. These more specific techniques include: demonstrations, visuals, graphic organizers, and cooperative work. These techniques allow all students to access the curriculum (adapted from Northwest Regional ESD, Best Practices for ELLs, <http://ell.nwresd.org/>). ATO's hands-on, integrated approach relies on differentiated and developmentally appropriate instruction to each child. These strategies allow ATO to address the needs of English Learners.

The WIDA-ACCESS test helps teachers plan appropriate instructional strategies for ELLs with the support of an ELL coordinator as well as planning for testing accommodations. ATO will make efforts to recruit staff who reflect the student population's language diversity to facilitate clear communication with all students and their parents. ATO will encourage and support parents in nurturing the ongoing development of their primary language proficiency in the home (adapted from Kona Pacific Public Charter School, 2007, p. 42).

3) Teachers along with the ELL coordinator will monitor the progress of ELL students and make adjustments to instruction as necessary. ELLs will be given the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for ELLs (ACCESS) test annually as required by NC Accountability to monitor their LEP status. Students will be withdrawn from ELL services only when they achieve a Comprehensive Objective Composite (COC) on the ACCESS for ELLs according to the requirements outlined in North Carolina Policy and Procedures related to WIDA ACCESS for ELLs (2014).

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.*

1)ATO will identify academically and intellectually gifted (AIG) students by reviewing prior school records and talking to parents. Students not already identified may be referred to the CST by parents, teachers, the student, and other staff. The CST will review both formal and informal assessment data to determine if a referral for further testing by a contracted, qualified diagnostician (i.e. school psychologist) is warranted. ATO will seek to partner with the LEA or contract with a qualified diagnostician as necessary.

Students receive support at all needed levels of the RtI process to aid in documenting educational need for AIG programming and to individualize the curriculum for students who need further challenge. Students can continue receiving this support even if they are not identified as AIG. ATO will follow state AIG program standards to ensure all identification, testing, parental involvement, and procedural safeguard requirements are met. ATO will provide equal opportunity for all students using the following: Multiple criteria for decision-making including informal assessments such as benchmark assessments, state assessments, end-of-course and end-of-grade assessments. Other assessments include: those that go beyond a narrowed conception of giftedness, reliable instruments/strategies for assessing giftedness, appropriate instruments to be used with underserved populations, and data rather than labeling, thus providing relevant information for instructional decision-making (Standard 1: Student Identification, North Carolina Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program Standards, State Board of Education Policy GCS-U-000, 2012).

Students identified as AIG will receive individualized instruction based on their areas of giftedness and areas of interest. The CST will write a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) for the student to identify appropriate goals, strategies, programs, and opportunities. ATO recognizes that children express their strengths in many different ways and students identified as AIG often require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program. ATO will employ a variety of strategies individualized to each AIG student's needs which may include, but are not limited to, differentiation strategies exemplified by enrichment, extension, and acceleration; supporting the social and emotional needs of AIG students; and developing and monitoring a PEP that articulates the differentiated curriculum and instruction services that match the identified needs (Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction, North Carolina Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program Standards, 2012). ATO will make efforts to recruit a teacher or contract with an endorsement in AIG education. ATO hopes to partner with the LEA and other area schools to provide additional programming options and opportunities for AIG students. ATO will seek partnerships with such community programs as: Duke Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP) "a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving academically gifted and talented youth. As a world leader in gifted and talented education, Duke TIP works with students, their families, and educators to identify, recognize, challenge, engage, and help students reach their highest potential" (<https://tip.duke.edu/node/11>) and

the American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) at Duke University. Teachers and support staff will employ strategies individualized to each AIG student's strengths, needs, and areas of interest. Strategies will be based on best practices and current research in AIG education.

2) Students identified as AIG will be monitored and evaluated according to our student performance and the student's PEP. The CST will meet at least annually and as required to monitor progress, and adjust goals, strategies, and opportunities for these students. Progress reports from teachers will be shared with students and parents quarterly.

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)*

1) At enrollment, parents will be asked to indicate if their child is eligible for special education services or protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If so, parents will be asked to share their children's records to include IEPs and 504 plans to initiate and provide seamless services to each child. Parents will be asked to provide signed consent to allow ATO personnel to request these records from the child's previous school.

2) ATO will comply fully with the 'Child Find' mandate. Children can be referred for further evaluation via a written request to the Lead Administrator to determine if the child has a disability and needs special education services. Parents, staff, and the student may also refer the child to the Child Study Team (CST). The CST will include an administrator, the CST coordinator, the student's teacher(s), the parent(s), others as appropriate (SLP, OT, PT, counselor) and the student. If limited progress is made after receiving Tier III RtI supports, the CST will submit a written request for an evaluation for suspected disability with signed informed parental consent for diagnostic evaluations by an appropriate, contracted diagnostician (such as a school psychologist) to determine if special education services are required. This request will contain information about the reason for the referral, the parent's, teacher's, student's or the CST's

concerns, and the child's current strengths and needs. The CST will include all interventions and results in the request. The Lead Administrator will submit the request to the LEA with a copy going to parents and the ECE coordinator. ATO will contract with appropriate and qualified diagnosticians as needed if one cannot be provided by partnering with the LEA.

If the student is found to be eligible for ECE services, the IEP team (an administrator, general education and special education teacher, parent, and student, and relevant related service providers) will hold an IEP meeting. They will develop goals to address the student's needs and determine the related services required to support the student in ATO's inclusive environment. The IEP will be shared with the child's teachers, parents, and related services staff for implementation. If the student does not qualify, the CST will meet to either begin or continue (with modifications) the RtI process.

3a) ATO will request records from the child's previous school about special education services and 504 Accommodation plans. Parent's signatures of consent will be required. 3b) ATO will maintain confidential files in a locked room and locked filing cabinet. A sign on the cabinet will indicate who has access to the information. The lead administrator, ECE coordinator, and administrative assistant will have direct access and will monitor who is accessing the files. Each file will include a sign-out document to record the following: printed and signed name, the date, and reason for file review. Files must be kept in the file room. Parents have the right to request their child's records and receive them in a timely manner. Parents give signed consent to release records to a third party. 3c) The Lead Administrator and ECE coordinator will be responsible for monitoring compliance with all federal and state laws, policies, timelines and ensuring that all files include quarterly progress notes from the EC teacher and related services staff. IEPs will be held at least annually. Evaluations will be completed at least every three years. The ECE Coordinator will ensure that all services in the child's IEP are provided and documented. The 504 coordinator will ensure that 504 accommodation plans are reviewed, implemented by teachers and other staff, and updated annually or after the specified time.

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.*

1) ATO's use of Waldorf methods allows focus on the uniqueness and wholeness of each child. The child is first. Each child has preferences, strengths and needs. ATO's goal is to have each child contribute and participate fully in the school community. ATO will encourage self-determination and self-advocacy by using child-centered planning where the child and family will direct educational planning and be supported in advocating for their needs, dreams and long-term goals. Educational advocacy improves education services. (Fiedler, 2000). The Waldorf philosophy requires each child be

honored where they are developmentally. The use of differentiated instructional techniques within an integrated curriculum, allows each child the time, space, and tools to flourish. By developing programs to meet the needs of all children who attend, a full continuum of services will be offered.

A highly qualified special education teacher will be part of our faculty to coordinate services and provide support to teachers, students, peers, and families to ensure that each child with an Individualized Education Plan receives a Free Appropriate Education in the Least Restrictive Environment. Students will receive their course content from licensed classroom and core content teachers, and extra-curricular teachers with strong, ongoing support from our ECE coordinator, and required related service providers. The ECE coordinator and related service providers will provide support within the typical instructional area (classroom, playground, etc.) as much as possible. The ECE coordinator will spend time working in each child's classroom and working one on one with the child as required to provide needed supports and interventions and reinforce instruction. The ECE coordinator will work closely and collaboratively with classroom and extracurricular teachers and other school staff to provide them with support and training so they may appropriately address students' goals and provide required accommodations and modifications. The ECE coordinator will also ensure that all required materials (adaptive equipment, communication assistance devices, etc.), additional classroom staff (such as a one on one TA), and related service providers (such as SLP, OT, PT) are in place as documented in students' IEPs. Pull-out services will be provided when the IEP team decides that these are necessary for the child to receive appropriate supports.

2)ATO seeks to reflect, embrace and celebrate the full diversity of the community including children with exceptional needs. ATO will provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities within an inclusive model of education ensuring children are educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). ATO will create the educational program with mindful universal design (NC 1500-2.38) so that children of all abilities are considered and the need for adaptations are lessened. This will allow ATO to meet the needs of children by providing ECE services, accommodations and/or modifications as necessary to help them fully participate in and have access to the entire curriculum, school community and facilities, and all extra-curricular classes and activities. ATO will comply with all federal and state laws and policies relating to children with disabilities.

3)The child's ECE coordinator will spend time working in the child's classroom and working one-on-one with the child as required to address and monitor the progress on IEP goals, keep documentation of progress, and keep IEPs current. The ECE coordinator and any related service providers will complete quarterly progress reports about students' progress towards IEP goals. The special education teacher will ensure that parents and the child's teacher(s) receive all updated IEP information on the needed accommodations, modifications, and interventions. The ECE coordinator will ensure all IEPs are monitored and reported in a timely fashion, at least quarterly.

4)Describe the proposed plan for providing related services.

ATO will ensure that all related services documented in students' IEPs are provided. ATO will partner with the LEA to provide related services (speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling,

etc.) as much as possible. If needed, ATO will partner with other charter schools and/or contract with private providers.

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.*

1) ATO expects students to graduate the school having grown in all capacities (head, hands and heart) as stated in the mission. ATO standards will meet and exceed that of the common core, encouraging students to become independent thinkers, problem solvers, team players and upstanding citizens that contribute to the greater good in society. We will measure students not only by their academic achievement but will monitor social-emotional development, resiliency, and overall character. In academics, our five year goal is as follows:

- a. Year 1: 80% of ATO students will exhibit a year's growth as measured by a series of ongoing, authentic assessments in addition to performance on State EOG's.
- b. Year 2: 85% of ATO students will exhibit a year's growth as measured by a series of ongoing, authentic assessments in addition to performance on State EOG's.
- c. Year 3: 90% of ATO students will exhibit a year's growth as measured by a series of ongoing, authentic assessments in addition to performance on State EOG's.
- d. Year 4 and beyond: 95% of ATO students will exhibit a year's growth as measured by a series of ongoing, authentic assessments in addition to performance on State EOG's.

Classroom teachers at ATO will be trained in and use a suite of assessment tools which will be developed to determine student growth in academic and developmental areas. These tools will drive individual instruction for all students, ensuring a personalized and differentiated approach. Some examples of evaluations will be: student portfolios, teacher observations, teacher-designed rubrics, feedback from in-class assignments, and results from summative and formative in-class assessments. Students will also be invited to self-evaluate at higher grades (6-8) and this will be taken into account as well. Social-emotional and character development will be monitored using teacher observations, conference notes, and classroom data. Parents will receive an evaluation at a mid-year parent-teacher conference and at the end of each academic year. A year-end narrative report produced by the teacher will outline the data collected and include and summarize the students growth throughout the year. This report will be presented to the

student and parents at the conference to provide for a culture of clear understanding, collaboration, and communication. ATO will regularly assess and evaluate our programs, policies, teachers, and staff to ensure compliance with the vision and mission of our school and connection to North Carolina State public school standards.

2) ATO teachers will use data from these multiple assessments to plan for both individual and group learning, development and areas of need. Teaching staff will communicate across grades regarding assessment data to support student transition between grades or subjects (in grades 6-8). Sharing assessment information with families and gathering information on the child's skills and behaviors at home will create an environment of shared responsibility for student learning and growth. Administration will use this data to make larger curricular and programmatic decisions that will enhance student learning and development. ATO's use of multiple assessments will provide the community with insight to the ATO educational program and ATO student performance.

3) Promotion to subsequent grade levels will be driven by the evaluations completed by classroom teachers. All students promoted to the next grade level must show a year's worth of growth and perform at or near grade level in all subjects as directed by the common core standards and state testing, and show the social-emotional maturity to proceed to the next grade. We will use the same policies and standards for promoting students with special needs unless the student's IEP team has determined that alternative criteria need to be used. In these instances, we will follow the alternative grading criteria in the student's IEP to make decisions about the student's promotion to the next grade level with a focus on the student meeting their IEP goals rather than the results of grade level assignments and/or standardized tests. Ultimately, promotion will be recommended in the annual report prepared by the classroom teacher.

4) Students of ATO will exhibit the highest standards of high school readiness in 8th grade. To graduate, all students will perform at or above grade level on state exams and as guided by the READY accountability model. In addition, classroom teachers will evaluate students to ensure that all leave the school showing strong communication skills, perseverance, the social skills required to work collaboratively with peers and educators, and a competence in all academic areas. Students who are "at risk" will be identified and coached by the Child Study Team to provide appropriate supports that ensure academic success.

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.*

ATO's approach to student conduct will focus on the social-emotional development (the Hearts) of children by honoring each child's individuality within a nurturing community and supportive environment. ATO will have a broad view of environment to include the relationships and interactions between members of our learning community. ATO will aim to protect and develop children's self-esteem so they can feel capable, valued and included. ATO staff will guide children to be respectful, contributing members of the school and the larger community.

1) Student conduct will be supported by responsive adults educated in child development and positive guidance techniques. Adults model and directly teach appropriate behaviors and provide opportunities for children to express themselves clearly and respectfully. Conflicts that arise will be used as teaching opportunities. With adult guidance, children practice and learn social-emotional skills such as: cooperation, emotional literacy, conflict resolution, empathy, compassion, communication, self-control and self-regulation.

Staff will focus on teaching appropriate social interactions and helping students find productive, appropriate outlets to express their emotions. By utilizing teacher looping and strong parental involvement, ATO will provide a relationship-based approach to student conduct. In Waldorf education, "forming the class" is a main focus at the start of the year. Students are actively engaged in forming the rules that govern how they will behave.

Waldorf education places equal importance on the areas of social-emotional, physical, intellectual and creative development. The whole child is educated by providing many ways for students to express themselves and their learning. These areas of development are integrated across the curriculum throughout the school day. Arts Integration provides students with other avenues to express their emotions and ideas. Incorporating movement during lessons, offering movement class, and providing opportunity for free play outdoors helps minimize the need for disciplinary action. Play is a powerful tool in social-emotional development and offers another outlet for expressing emotions.

The school environment will offer opportunities for collaboration and for children to have space to themselves as needed to practice self-regulation. Daily rhythms build in a consistent routine so children know what to expect, and what is expected of them. Predictability gives a sense safety and security, allowing children to relax and focus. Natural body rhythms are taken into account by offering academic, intellectually challenging content in the morning, movement and creative based experiences and classes later in the day, and alternating active and quiet experiences. Nature is a calming, centering force incorporated by offering daily time in nature and bringing natural items into the classrooms.

Student misconduct will be seen as a learning opportunity. Limits and consequences will be made clear and reasonable. When needed, a child whose behavior is concerning and challenging will be provided additional supports in the Child Study Team (CST). A behavior contract will be written to assist the child in taking full ownership of the child's own actions and choices. The contract offers a clear plan the adults will follow to support the child to achieve more appropriate behavior.

(2-4) ATO's student handbook has clear details on the consequences of student misconduct (Appendix D. Student Handbook), which cover the list and definitions of the offense which may result in suspension or expulsion of a student, an explanation of how the school will take into account the rights of students with disabilities in regard to these actions that may or must lead to suspension and/or expulsion, and further policies and procedures disseminating due process rights, including grievance procedures for when a student is suspended or expelled.

IV. GOVERNANCE 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 upon application submission.

Name of Private Nonprofit: Acorn to Oak - Waldorf Methods Charter

Mailing Address: 216 Brandon Court

City/State/Zip: Raleigh NC 27609

Street Address: 216 Brandon Court

Phone: 919-637-7741

Fax: 919-782-3867

Name of registered agent and address:

Melissa Stansbury
216 Brandon Court
Raleigh, NC 27609

FEDERAL TAX ID: 47-4842792

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	Board	County/State	Current	Past or Present	Has any disciplinary
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Member Name	Title	of Residence	Occupation	Professional Licenses(s) Held	action been taken against any of these professional licenses?

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.*

The board of the Acorn to Oak will serve as the governing body of the school, specifically hiring, advising and supporting the school's administration in the following areas:

- *Hire, support and evaluate Lead Administrator
- *Determine compensation for Lead Administrator, administration and original faculty
- *Support Lead Administrator in carrying out school's mission
- *Vote on/approve all personnel decisions
- *Develop, understand, and abide by charter's bylaws
- *Determine and develop the Board's governing structure of school personnel
- *Develop and provide guidance around school decisions and policies
- *Work with administration to develop short and long term strategic plans for school growth, success, and sustainability
- *Monitor and adhere to the charter's financial responsibilities
- *Monitor the charter school's programs and services
- *Ensure adequate resources and manage them effectively
- *Set goals, develop strategic plan, and reflect upon and evaluate the board's performance in meeting goals
- *Fulfill elected roles within Board
- *Be well informed about relevant Charter School Laws and NCDPI policies and conduct all Board business and manage meetings in accordance with those policies
- *Ensure compliance with NC Open Board Meeting Laws (NC Statutes: Chapter 143, Article 33C; G.S., 143:318)
- *Avoid conflicts of interest and put welfare of organization before personal benefit.

Roles of board members will include: Board Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Additionally, board members will participate in at least one sub-committee such as Budget and Audit, Development, Community Engagement, and Facilities to be voted on in accordance with bylaws.

The Board will serve as a task force to identify a Lead Administrator. They may recruit candidates through contacts in the local community and post on national and higher education recruiting sites including the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education. Interested candidates will participate in a behavioral based interview that includes a range of questions from diverse perspectives, role-playing scenarios designed to elicit examples of previous experience and behavior, and providing a writing sample. The Board will focus its search on applicants with prior school leadership experience, particularly in the areas of new school design and start-up, Waldorf education methods, developmentally appropriate instructional practices, arts integration and managing significant external partnerships. Candidates with experience working with diverse populations will also be a priority. The

best candidate will be selected utilizing this rubric. The Lead Administrator will build consensus and inspire passion within teachers to teach, students to learn, and parents to engage in their child's development and learning while following the mission of the school. The Lead Administrator will be responsible for the overall school operation, working with parents, students, support staff and teachers. The Board will receive monthly reports from the Lead Administrator and his/her team as to all major functions of the school. The Lead Administrator will serve as a non-voting member of the board.

The Board will review the Lead Administrator's performance three times throughout each school year. The first meeting will be during late summer and will include goal-setting for the coming year, a discussion of his/her specific, written plan for achieving those goals and the interim benchmarks for assessing and monitoring progress, and reviewing a detailed plan for relevant professional development. The second meeting during mid-year will include a progress update on collaboratively determined goals; adjustments will be made based on emerging priorities. The third and final meeting will include discussion of the following topics: goals met, various data including teacher and family feedback survey, teacher retention, student attendance, application numbers, safety and discipline data, and goals for the coming year.

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.*

Guided by the NCDPI "Elements of a High Functioning Public Charter School Board," the Acorn to Oak School Board will include a range of 7-11 members, preferably an odd number, and will seek to represent diverse skills, experiences, constituents, and areas of expertise. The current board includes members with expertise in public and Waldorf-inspired teaching and learning, curriculum planning and design, special education, child development, marketing, development, fundraising, business, strategic planning, community engagement, human resources/diversity, social inclusion, finance, research, non-profit management, project management, public relations, grant writing and business management. Several board members are also parents of potential students. Current Acorn to Oak Board members are well connected with diverse Raleigh communities, business leaders, cultural institutions, higher education institutions, and have connections with educators in both private and public schools. Additionally, relationships have been forged with the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education and leaders in public Waldorf inspired schools around the country. We have identified key individuals to serve as an advisory council to the board of directors with experience in starting public charters, Waldorf education, charter school administration, library science, technology, law, finance, public school administration, school district administration, research, early childhood education, special education and counseling (see appendix U, for a list of current Advisory Council members).

Acorn to Oak Board members will provide governance and support to ensure that the vision and mission of Acorn to Oak School are fulfilled, keeping

students creative, intellectual, emotional, physical and social capabilities at the core of all decision-making. The Acorn to Oak Board will hire, supervise, and evaluate the Lead Administrator and will approve all personnel decisions made by the Lead Administrator through a vote. The Acorn to Oak Board will ensure success of Acorn to Oak School by a) Development of clear short and long-term SMART goals and related strategic plans and benchmarks; b) Quarterly review and evaluation of operational, financial, and academic progress by school and Lead Administrator; c) Supervision of the Lead Administrator through Board meetings and reports; and d) Ongoing opportunities for professional development of Board members. The Acorn to Oak Board will announce and post all activities, opportunities, and meeting dates on the Acorn to Oak website, in accordance with NC Open Meeting Laws. To manage its own effectiveness, the Acorn to Oak Board will review its roles and responsibilities on an annual basis to ensure ongoing support and successful implementation of the school's mission and vision. Several tools will inform the development of the Board's self-assessment rubric, including a National Council Nonprofit Board Self-Assessment Tool and various tools from BoardSource. The Acorn to Oak Board will also abide by all laws, rules, and best practices regarding conflict of interest to always ensure stewardship of the Acorn to Oak organization.

As Acorn to Oak Board members complete their term(s), as outlined in the bylaws, they will be involved in the recruitment and training of replacement Board members. The diversity of background and expertise, as well as representation from parents and community members, will remain a priority.

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?*

Founding Acorn to Oak Board members were recruited through an informal series of informational discussions, the sharing of the Acorn to Oak vision, and an evaluation of skill-sets to drive the strategy for recruitment of a diverse and representative board. Board members were ultimately selected based on their interest in and commitment to the vision and mission of the Acorn to Oak School and their commitment to providing additional school options to all students in the Raleigh and Triangle area. Currently, the Acorn to Oak School Board is staffed with directors committed to serving a two-year term, which will take the school through its opening months. However, ATO may recruit members between now and school opening in an effort to bring additional expertise in the areas of Waldorf Education, Real Estate, Experience with Founding a school, or a newly identified area of potential need.

According to the Acorn to Oak Bylaws (Article VI, #3), "All officers may serve no more than two (2) consecutive two-year terms. Former officers, after a break in service of one (1) year, may be elected to another term as an officer." At time of re-election, Board members must be in good standing, according to the Board's self-evaluation system. According to Acorn to Oak Bylaws (Article V, #6), "Vacancies on the Board of Directors shall be filled by election at the Board meeting immediately prior to the end of the expiring directors term. Vacancies occurring mid-term shall be filled by election at the next Board meeting. Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent an individual director from being reelected to office." As described earlier, all outgoing Board members are expected to identify potential

replacement Board members and to present those names and initiate that contact prior to resignation. In the event that a Board member must resign unexpectedly or is dismissed, Board members will be asked to identify potential candidates for discussion at the next Board meeting, with the goal of finalizing election within two subsequent Board meetings. In order to most proactively anticipate and plan for vacancies, the Board Chair will conduct quarterly check-ins with all Board members to assess ongoing interest and ability to commit to the position.

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

The Acorn to Oak Board will meet at least 10 times per year, in accordance with the bylaws for 2-3 hours and hold committee work sessions regularly. An annual board retreat will be held once per year for planning.

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).

Professional Development for Acorn to Oak Board members will include the following activities and schedule. Board members are required to participate in a minimum of three (3) professional development opportunities each year in addition to the yearly "retreat" sessions.

Sept 2015-Jan 2016: Visits to existing charter and Waldorf schools: Magellan Charter School, Raleigh Charter High School, Quest Charter, Circle of Seasons, Eastern NC Prep School, Emerson Waldorf and any others deemed fit for research purposes.

January 2016: Board Member Orientation: What it means to be a charter school board member - overview of responsibilities, guest speaker from existing charter school board member, policy review.

February-March 2016: Charter School Law 101: The Board will invite a guest speaker/expert to provide an overview and training to board members on important legal issues associated with NC charter school governance.

January 2016-June 2017: Additional visits to existing charter schools and other Waldorf school models; some Board members will attend various conferences on Waldorf teaching and learning, effective arts integration, curriculum and planning, including Alliance for Waldorf Education Annual Conference, NC Public Charter Schools Association Conference, A+ Schools Conference, Steam and Arts Integration Online Conference; after each school visit or conference, participating board members will present new learning and implications for the Acorn to Oak School to the entire board.

Yearly: The Board will meet with the school faculty for a verbal feedback session to gauge the success of goals and mission in the classroom. This feedback will be utilized for the yearly review process of Acorn to Oak.

Yearly: The Board will meet for a retreat session where they will review

progress of the school and board, review data, including the teacher feedback, to drive discussion and decision-making, provide feedback to the Lead Administrator, and adjust strategic plans as needed to ensure that Acorn to Oak is successful and on-track to achieve goals. During these meetings, the Board will also assess its own effectiveness as a collaborative team through the administration and review of feedback surveys.

August 2017: Board member orientation for new members.

As the founding board develops its initial orientation program in January 2016, best practices and critical information will be captured and compiled into an Acorn to Oak Board Member handbook. When new Board members join, they will be given a copy of the handbook and the outgoing Board member will provide an orientation during the transition. Each summer during the Boards retreat, the entire Board will review bylaws, Acorn to Oak mission and vision, Board policies, etc., providing new members with a complete orientation.

- 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 Acorn to Oak Board bylaws discuss expectations for board members' ethical behavior in Article VII. Acorn to Oak Board members will commit to avoiding potential conflicts of interest, always exercising their positional authority for the express benefit of the Acorn to Oak School as a whole. Potential areas of conflict include a) inside and confidential information regarding employees and students; b) acceptance of gifts and favors; c) preferential treatment of their own children who may be Acorn to Oak students; d) financial benefit to their represented organization; and e) any financial, or other interest from which they might benefit. The Acorn to Oak Board bylaws specify that any individual(s) identified to have a potential conflict shall be excused from relevant decisions and voting, and excluded from quorum requirements for that particular meeting.

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

The Acorn to Oak Board recognizes the importance of ensuring that the school abides by all North Carolina State Laws for Charter Schools. The Board will oversee the development of all policies related to teacher licensure, student admissions, charter renewal, and employee and relevant Board member screening.

For most school policies, however, the Acorn to Oak Board will serve as a governance board, delegating day-to-day decision-making power to the Lead Administrator. The Board will focus on developing and voting on school-wide policies to support the big picture - the vision, mission, and achievement of school goals. The Lead Administrator and his/her designated team will develop policies to be outlined each year in faculty and family handbooks. Each year, the Board will vote on and approve those policies. The Board will also vote on addendum or changes to those policy handbooks as needed throughout the year. The implementation of those policies will be delegated to the Lead Administrator. Policies that affect school outcomes, students and families experiences related to the achievement of desired outcomes, and/or the resources/finances required to achieve those outcomes will remain

the focus of Board policy-making.

When initiating and approving school policies, the board will take the following steps:

-Data collection: Board members will closely review the issues related to the policy. What are the different perspectives? What are the current issues? What are the needs? What does the data reveal? What is the potential impact/consequences? What is the cost (real and otherwise)? This data collection period may include informal discussions and data gathering (including the use of surveys) from various stakeholders and input and reporting from the Lead Administrator and his/her team.

-Discussion: After a collection and review of available data and perspectives, Board members will share opinions, brainstorm solutions, and propose alternatives.

-Consensus-building: After deliberation and discussion, Board members will work to compromise in areas of disagreement, by keeping the focus on the needs of students. While only a majority vote is required for the adoption of a policy, the Board will make all efforts to reach consensus to increase buy in and support for all school policies, in the best interests, harmony, and ongoing collaboration of the larger school community.

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.

In addition to the Acorn to Oak Board subcommittees listed earlier (Budget and Audit, Development, and Community Engagement and Facilities), Acorn to Oak School will establish an Advisory Council (see appendix U for current Advisory Council members.) The Council advises board members and the Lead Administrator and is made up of experienced community members that are dedicated to the success of Acorn to Oak School. The purpose of this Council is to act as a sounding board and to provide multiple perspectives when the Board of Directors is gathering data for decisions and the Lead Administrator is making decisions in daily operations. The Advisory Council has no formal authority and does not play a role in the evaluation of the Lead Administrator. The Council may, when necessary, bring issues to the attention of the Acorn to Oak Board, but does not play a formal role in the Acorn to Oak Board.

A Parent Association, referred to as The Parent Circle, will be formed for the Acorn to Oak School as a way for parents to become more actively involved in supporting the school and ensuring our policies and practices are family centered. The Parent Circle will be responsible for coordinating volunteers, fundraising, planning and running school-wide and community events, supporting new families, and may offer parent workshops and special programs. The Parent Circle has no formal authority and no direct reporting to the Acorn to Oak Board. The Parent Circle plays no role in the evaluation of the Lead Administrator or any other faculty/staff. The Parent Circle will provide the Board quarterly reports at scheduled board meetings and a representative from the Parent Circle will attend each meeting.

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

The following steps outline Acorn to Oak's grievance process for parents and staff members:

Step 1: A parent or employee who wishes to file a grievance must first provide a request in writing to the Lead Administrator or other appropriate member of the administrative team. A meeting will be scheduled and the matter may be resolved at that time.

Step 2: If a grievance cannot be resolved directly with the Lead Administrator, the parent or employee may request, within 15 days of the action or incident, a hearing with the Board. The Board has 30 days from receipt of that written notification to schedule and hold the requested hearing or deny the request for a hearing, with or without cause. The Board will provide written notice of the time and place to the parent or employee who filed the grievance, as well as the Lead Administrator and any other relevant personnel.

Step 3: The Board will communicate its final decision to all involved parties within 30 days of the hearing. The Board's final decision is the final step for all grievances.

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 from the NC Department of the Secretary of State. (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

Charter School Replication: *complete ONLY if the proposed charter is a replication of an existing charter school. Otherwise, mark "Not 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:

Outline below, 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.

1. Lead Administrator (1 position, full-time year 1 and thereafter)
2. Pedagogical Chair (1 position, half-time year 1, full-time year 2 and thereafter)
3. Assistant Administrator (1 position, half-time year 2, full-time year 3 and thereafter)
4. Office Manager (1 position, full-time year 1 and thereafter)
5. Teachers (7 positions, full-time year 1, adding 2 positions every year from years 2-7, then maintaining 19 full-time positions year 7 and thereafter)
6. ECE Coordinator/Teacher (1 position, half-time year 1, full-time thereafter, adding additional full-time ECE teacher position year 4, maintaining 2 full-time positions thereafter)
7. Teacher Assistants (4 positions, full-time year 1, adding additional position year 2, maintaining 5 full-time positions thereafter)
8. Specialty Teachers (2 positions, part-time, 26 hours/week, adding 1 position from years 2-7, then maintaining 8 part-time positions thereafter)

Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management

Include the following information for the proposed charter school:

ATO recognizes that recruiting and retaining high-performing teachers is essential to school success and therefore will be a high priority for Board members and staff.

The Lead Administrator, hired and supported by the board, will have the primary responsibility for recruiting and retaining high-performing teachers. The recruitment process will involve posting open positions on internet job sites, professional association websites, Waldorf organization websites, social media, and at Waldorf Education training programs and the area's colleges and universities. An apprenticeship program will be developed in which graduates of Waldorf Education training programs and area universities/colleges are recruited as teacher assistants or during their student teaching with the goal of hiring them as classroom teachers in future years. While consideration will be given to teachers who have Waldorf experience or training, ATO's belief in lifelong learning, celebrating diversity and creating a learning community will leave space to consider teachers from various backgrounds. Faculty-led professional development sessions will provide opportunities for Waldorf teachers and teachers with public school backgrounds to share knowledge and collaborate to improve both curriculum and instruction. ATO's board and administrative staff will lead the school community in creating an atmosphere of collaboration and accountability among professional educators who are both motivated to improve their own learning and committed to the school, students, and ATO's mission.

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

The recruitment, hiring, coaching, evaluation, and recommendation for termination of employees are all responsibilities of the Lead Administrator. The Board will provide final approval, via majority vote, for all decisions regarding hiring and dismissals.

Employees of Acorn to Oak Charter School will have the following opportunities for direct interaction with the Board:

*Faculty members may raise concerns officially to the Board via email to any Board Member.

*Faculty members may submit to the Board grievances, in writing, regarding dismissals.

*Faculty members will provide direct feedback to the board as a group once per year in an open forum with the Board of Directors.

*Employees may be asked to participate in various Board events, fundraisers, etc.

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

ATO success will be directly related to the recruitment of exceptional teachers and staff who embrace the mission of ATO. If teachers are not formally trained in Waldorf, they will have an understanding of the Waldorf methods and be willing to participate in professional development to learn more about Waldorf philosophy. Each candidate will:

*Submit resume

*Submit writing sample (if applicable)

*Submit teaching portfolio (if applicable)

*Participate in phone screening

*Participate in interview

*Facilitate model lesson (if applicable)

At least two professional references will be contacted and a criminal background check and a review of citizenship or eligible status will be completed. Pending the results, the Lead Administrator will seek Board approval for hiring.

ATO will utilize a rubric and essential questions to evaluate candidates on these qualities:

*Impact and influence: Does candidate value whole child teaching philosophy, incorporating intellectual, creative, social, emotional and physical development?

*Collaboration: Will candidate be comfortable teaching in an atmosphere of ongoing collaboration, coaching and feedback?

*Innovation: Does candidate offer unique ways to think about learning?

*Initiative and persistence: Will candidate seek professional development to

strengthen presence in the classroom?

*Pedagogical Experience: Does candidate understand Waldorf Methods and core curriculum content? Does candidate have special skills that contribute to Waldorf methods education?

Violation of any employee policy pursuant to the ATO Staff Handbook is grounds for dismissal. Unsatisfactory job performance can lead to dismissal; the Lead Administrator will make every effort to resolve the issues prior to dismissal, but if not resolved, the employee will receive a two week's notice.

The hiring and dismissal of all ATO employees (except Lead Administrator) is ultimately the responsibility of the Lead Administrator, with the Board providing final approval.

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

Lead Administrator: \$40,000-\$60,000

Pedagogical Chair: \$35,000 - \$45,000

Assistant Administrator: \$35,000 - \$45,000

Office Manager: \$28,000-\$45,000

Teachers: \$30,000 - \$40,000

EC Teachers: \$35,000 - \$45,000

Teacher Assistants: \$20,000-\$30,000 (no benefits)

Specialty Teachers: \$15/hour, 26 hours/week (no benefits)

All positions, other than Teacher Assistants and Specialty Teachers, will receive health insurance and enrollment in the NC State Employees Retirement plan starting in year one. An average 2.5% salary raise will be awarded by each year based upon individual performance review.

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

Grievance procedures at ATO:

Step 1: An employee who wishes to file a grievance must first provide a request in writing to the Lead Administrator or other appropriate member of the leadership team. A meeting will be scheduled and the matter may be resolved at that time.

Step 2: If a grievance cannot be resolved directly with the Lead Administrator, the employee may request, within 15 days of the action or incident, a hearing with the Board. The Board has 30 days from receipt of that written notification to schedule and hold the requested hearing or deny the request for a hearing, with or without cause. The Board will provide written notice of the time and place to the employee who filed the grievance, as well as to the Lead Administrator and any other relevant personnel.

Step 3: The Board will communicate its final decision to all involved parties within 30 days of the hearing. The Board's final decision is the final step for all grievances.

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

The funding source for all positions are allotments from state, federal and local sources.

The Office Manager will serve as both a front office receptionist, be an assistant to the Lead Administrator and provide some bookkeeping services for ATO.

The Lead Administrator will serve as the 504 Coordinator.

The Pedagogical Coach will serve as our Homeless coordinator.

Child Study Team coordinator and English Language Learners Coordinator roles will be filled by one of our classroom teachers who has appropriate experience and education/training. Based on the ATO student population, a teacher with an add-on endorsement in AIG may be recruited.

ATO will contract with related service providers (i.e. SLP, PT,OT, etc.), counselors, social workers, and school psychologists as required. Staff, parents, and volunteers may also teach our extracurricular classes (handwork, foreign language, etc.) if qualified.

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.*

ATO will hire a part-time, highly qualified special education teacher to fill the ECE coordinator role. Because ATO will be an inclusive school, efforts will be made to recruit and hire classroom teachers who are dually certified in general and special education. Additional ECE staff will be added as needed. ATO will meet the needs of students who are ELL by making efforts to recruit and hire a teacher who is dually certified in ESL to be the ELL coordinator. ATO will meet the needs of students who are identified as gifted by making efforts to recruit and hire a teacher who is holds a NC certification in AIG or has additional coursework in educating AIG students. If ATO is unable to recruit and hire adequately certified/trained staff, staff will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete the required credentials while the school contracts with educators who can fill these roles by partnering with the LEA, other schools, and/or community programs as as necessary.

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).*

Lead Administrator: Master's degree or higher, hold or obtain a NC Principal Certification, previous leadership/supervisory and teaching experience.

Responsibilities:

- *Recruit, Hire, Supervise, Support and Evaluate staff
- *Monitor progress towards SMART goals and goals in strategic plan; develop plans to address areas of need
- *Plan for and organize staff professional development
- *Ensure safety of students and staff
- *Lead efforts to recruit and admit students
- *Develop and monitor all programs
- *Oversee daily operations of the school
- *Communicate and collaborate with, and report to the School's Board and

other stakeholders

- *Make and maintain positive community relationships
- *Oversee disciplinary actions of students
- *Ensure compliance with all federal and state charter and public school laws and policies
- *Attend Child Study Team and IEP meetings
- *Act as 504 Coordinator

Assistant Administrator: Master's degree or higher, has a strong background in grant writing and support, previous leadership and supervisory experience in a school setting, and teaching experience.

Responsibilities:

- *Assist Lead Administrator in supervising, supporting and evaluating staff
- *Identify and write grants, manage grants received
- *Interface with schools contracted financial officer
- *Assist in monitoring progress towards SMART goals and goals in strategic plan; developing plans to address areas of need
- *Make and maintain positive community relationships
- *Oversee disciplinary actions of students
- *Assist in ensuring compliance with all federal and state charter and public school laws and policies

Pedagogical Chair & Curriculum Coordinator: Previous Waldorf experience required and Waldorf certification preferred. Consideration given for Master's Degree.

Responsibilities:

- *Develop curriculum with colleagues; integrate arts, movement and nature activities into lessons; and assess students based on ATO policies/programs.
- *Provide training in Waldorf Methods teaching.
- *Act as testing coordinator
- *Participate in ongoing professional development and teacher evaluation
- *Monitor and ensure school curriculum complies with all federal and state charter and public school laws and policies
- *Act as Homeless Education Coordinator

Exceptional Children Coordinator: Holds a Master's in Special Education and holds a North Carolina Special Education teaching license. Committed to educating a diverse student population in an inclusive environment, experience meeting children's special needs in inclusive environment, knowledge of special education law(federal and NC state). Strong communication skills in communicating and collaborating with families, faculty, administrators, and related service providers. Organized.

Responsibilities include:

- *Ensure that students with disabilities have all their educational needs addressed and related services provided as documented in their IEPs
- *Monitor and assess eligible students' progress towards their IEP goals; report quarterly to parents
- *Ensure that related service providers document services and report student progress quarterly
- *Ensure compliance with all federal and NC special education laws and policies
- *Plan, Organize, and Head IEP team meetings
- *Provide 1:1 instruction to students with disabilities as needed
- *Provide support and training to school staff to promote and nurture an

inclusive program

*Ensure all needed modifications, accommodations, and adaptive equipment are in place so all students have access to and may participate in ATO's curriculum, facilities, activities and state required testing

*Train, supervise, support, and evaluate any ECE teacher assistants

*Ensure that parent and child rights are protected

Teachers: Bachelor's degree or higher, demonstrate the qualities outlined in question 4. Preferred: Highly qualified teachers, those that are fully licensed by the State of NC. Teachers may have previous Waldorf experience and special consideration will be made for those with Waldorf certification. Consideration for experience in inclusive education, dual licensure in ESL, AGI, ECE, or Response to Instruction. Content area teachers: hold a Bachelor's or higher in subject area, hold or obtain specific content area licensure. Responsibilities:

Developing curriculum collaboratively with colleagues; integrating arts, movement and nature activities into lessons; and assessing students based on ATO policies/programs.

Responsibilities:

Facilitate instruction

Incorporate main lesson in all activities.

Assess student learning and development

Communicate regularly with families of students.

Participate in ongoing professional development and teacher evaluation process.

Supervise students

Maintain a nurturing, peaceful, safe, and positive classroom learning environment.

Teacher Assistants: Associate's Degree or two years of higher education. Experience working with elementary age students.

Responsibilities:

Plan and work with teachers to reinforce skills and concepts

Assist in instruction of individual or groups of students as directed by the teacher.

Participate actively in professional development and the ATO faculty evaluation process.

Assist with daily record-keeping and tasks as assigned by teacher.

Assist in supervising students and maintaining a nurturing, peaceful, safe, and positive classroom learning environment.

Participate in transportation, lunch, and student supervision duties as assigned.

Specialty teachers: Willingness to collaborate with teachers and staff to integrate specialty lessons into larger curriculum. Consideration for previous Waldorf movement experience, comfort with arts integration, and strong interpersonal skills.

Movement: Experience in teaching a wide variety of movement, knowledgeable about child motor development. Bachelors Degree in movement/physical education and PE license preferred.

Responsibilities:

Teach developmentally appropriate movement classes to students

Communicate and collaborate with staff

Music Teacher: Experience in music instruction; experience teaching children and adults; Experience in Waldorf Music Instruction preferred.

Responsibilities:

Teach developmentally appropriate lessons to students
Collaborate and communicate with staff

Spanish Language Teacher: Bachelor's degree. Consideration will be given to those with advanced degrees, Waldorf experience/certification and/or native fluency.

Responsibilities:

Teach developmentally appropriate Spanish language classes to students
Communicate and collaborate with staff

Office Manager: High school diploma, secretarial and bookkeeping experience. Receptionist, assistant to Lead Administrator. Proficient in Microsoft OfficeSuite, QuickBooks, office practices, written and verbal communication skills, and strong interpersonal skills. Bilingual preferred. Able to meet deadlines, and maintain flexibility.

Responsibilities:

Greet visitors
Answer phones, taking messages
Make copies, file, and organize
Maintain school calendar and student/teacher attendance
Purchase supplies
Basic bookkeeping

ALL POSITIONS: should be mission-aligned and place value on whole child education: creative, intellectual, social, emotional and physical.

ALL Education faculty and staff: committed to educating a diverse student population in an inclusive environment. Familiar with common core curriculum, testing practices and willing to embrace the challenge of marrying Waldorf Methods to common core curriculum. Consideration given to previous Waldorf experience, leadership potential, comfort with arts integration, and strong interpersonal skills.

Staff Evaluation and Professional Development

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

The Lead Administrator will be responsible for maintaining teacher records and licensure requirements. Professional development will be coordinated between the Lead Administrator and the Pedagogical Chair.

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.*

Faculty development is at the core of ATO's mission. It is crucial that educators at ATO embody the spirit of the life-long learner and show a passion for their craft. Faculty will be expected to continually improve instructional techniques and contribute to the learning community through the sharing of knowledge and pedagogical ideas. The administration will support this through a coaching evaluation approach and through rigorous and meaningful professional development programs. ATO will follow all NC guidelines regarding teacher licensure requirements as stated by state law

and No Child Left Behind.

The coaching evaluation approach fosters respect between administration and faculty through a series of personal, qualitative assessments. All Administrators responsible for evaluation will be present in classrooms on a regular basis (at least once a week), and provide continuous feedback in an open dialogue with the classroom teachers. Once a year, administrators will conduct a formal observation with a pre and post meeting, and summarize a year of observational data as well in a year-end conference with the teacher. To accomplish this in a professional and meaningful way, each administrator (Lead Administrator, Assistant Administrator, and Pedagogical Chair) must be well versed in Waldorf methods and have an excellent grasp of what an effective use of those techniques looks like in the classroom at every grade level. This understanding will be shared with faculty on a regular basis through monthly faculty meetings/workshops. At the request of a faculty member, administrators must also be available on a regular basis to provide feedback on specific instructional techniques that are being practiced in the classroom.

To ensure a close relationship between the evaluators and the environment where teachers are exposed, administrators will be encouraged to teach in the classroom part-time (as an assistant teacher or extra-curricular teacher) on a rotating basis every 3-5 years.

Retention of highly qualified, excellent, staff will be achieved by cultivating a culture of respect and professionalism at every level within the governance model. While expectations of all staff members will be high, it is equally important that every member of the school acknowledges and shows reverence for the deep transformative work that is educating the whole child.

When available, ATO will support an apprenticeship program. Recent Waldorf education graduates will be hired as assistants in the classroom, giving them a year of practical experience with the goal of bringing them on as classroom teachers in the future. These assistants will have the benefit of coaching and mentoring from the administration as well as the paired classroom teacher.

- 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.*

Professional development will be approached at ATO using several methodologies:

Internally, teachers will continually improve technique through mentoring and coaching from administration, monthly faculty meetings/master classes that focus on pedagogy, and time given to collaborate and plan with peer teaching groups. Teachers and administrators will participate in at least one book study a year that will be relevant to ongoing instructional endeavors. All of these opportunities will support the goal of a vibrant learning community that does not end with the student, but is shared by the entire school.

Externally, partnerships with Emerson Waldorf School, local universities, Waldorf training centers (such as the Sunbridge Institute or Rudolf Steiner College), A+ schools, the NC Arts Council, the local LEA, local museums, and nation-wide programs such as the Center for Teaching and Learning, CedarSong Nature School, and the Edible Schoolyard Academy, are anticipated for high quality programming that will enrich the faculty experience. Teachers will participate in workshops revolving around Waldorf pedagogy, child development research, brain and education research, relevant literature, instructional techniques, and enrichment through the visual and performing arts, handwork, woodwork, and outdoor education.

Traditional Waldorf teachers are expected to better themselves beyond the classroom, pursuing personal growth in areas of their interest. At ATO teachers will be supported in these endeavors and encouraged to share their experience with students, faculty, and the community.

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

Prior to school opening, school staff will participate in a three week-long orientation period with large-group sessions and break-out workshops.

Topics will include:

Week One - Introductions, employee information, operational structure, team building exercises, and a pedagogical overview.

Week Two - Waldorf philosophy and child development, expected instructional techniques, art instruction, nature instruction, facilities tour (including outdoor areas), and classroom design.

Week Three - Assessment methods, professional development plans, individual goal-setting, in-depth look at instructional methods, collaborative planning, and collegial model governance.

During this orientation, a Waldorf expert consultant will visit ATO to provide hands-on instruction and coaching within the school environment. The budget provides for two days of this type of training in year 1, four days in year 2, six days in year 3, eight days in year 4 and ten days in year 5.

While the goal at ATO is to employ as many Waldorf trained teachers as possible, it is understood that there is a high probability there will be teachers with an interest but no formal training. Therefore, teachers in this position will be expected to attend at least one extra week during the summer before orientation to engage professionally trained Waldorf teachers in the methods that will be used at the school.

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.

In addition to state mandated requirements of teachers to maintain their professional teaching license (when applicable), teachers and administration will participate in the following professional development schedule:

1. One whole-group faculty meeting centered on instructional techniques once a month (approximately 1-2 hours each for 10 months)
2. Small peer group discussions held at least 2 times per month (approximately 1 hour each)
3. A book study group consisting of faculty and one administrator once a year; this will consist of between 5-9 discussion sessions, depending on the length of the book. (5-9 discussions lasting approximately 1 hour)

All regularly scheduled professional development meetings will take place during the afternoons on early release days or at the end of the school day. We have six early release in our school calendar.

All staff will be encouraged to participate in workshops focused on their areas of interest and study (as appropriate). When available, substitutes will be provided. The ATO budget includes funds for some staff members (administrators and teachers) to attend national conferences and regional trainings each year.

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.218.45(a-i) carefully.

Marketing Plan

Marketing to potential students and parents is vital to the survival of a charter school. Provide a plan indicating how the school will market to potential students and parents in order to reasonably reflect the racial/ethnic and demographic composition of the district in which the charter school will be located or of the special population the school seeks to serve: (G.S.115C-218.45(e)).

Acorn to Oaks board members understand the importance of a well designed marketing plan to ensure full capacity for enrollment. Financial resources are vital to the school's success. ATO is dedicated to ensuring that every opportunity to market the school is done with strategies and tactics that remain consistent with efforts to make a Public Waldorf Education accessible to all and to ensure a diverse school community. The board has identified a core group of volunteers willing to help the implement the marketing plan detailed below.

Now - July 2016

Continue to Engage Community through Facebook Page which now has over 200 members

Continue to meet with and identify community leaders to gain school support and develop relationships, including the faith community

Coordinate Strategic Outreach Efforts to Latino Community in collaboration with El Pueblo
Continue to foster relationships with area charter schools, Emerson Waldorf School and the Triangle Home Nursery Association
Complete website development and announce to community using Facebook and Email
Develop a Logo
Host tabling events at Local Farmers Markets
Host a free Puppet Show in partnership with the Waldorf-Inspired Triangle Home Nursery Association
Contact Volunteers who expressed an interest in committee work in the "Interest in Enrollment Survey." Begin meeting with individuals to form working groups and offer volunteer training.
Translate the "Interest in Enrollment Survey" into Spanish
Develop a photo album or montage of Waldorf methods activities
Develop media kit and marketing materials for tabling events and festivals

August 2016 - May 2017

Keep community updated through social media, website and email
In September, announce open enrollment process on Facebook, Website and via Email to all interested parties
Ensure Website is available in both English and Spanish
Develop marketing and branding materials such as banner, signs, and other marketing materials as necessary
Engage volunteers in community outreach efforts
Expand tabling efforts to include community churches, area businesses, flea markets, events and festivals such as Fiesta del Pueblo, African American Cultural Festival and International Festival. Bilingual volunteers will host tabling events where a large number of Spanish speakers are expected.
Hang flyers are area preschools
Host at least one community fundraiser with the goal of raising \$5000 and school publicity
Host additional puppet show awareness event
Continue to foster and develop relationships with community members
Research and compare advertising options through outlets such as social media, print ads, online, billboards and radio. Implement an advertising plan using the funds raised from our community fundraisers.
Host family orientation for potential new students
Collaborate with Raelee Peirce, Parent Coach, to host Simplicity Parenting workshops in Wake County
Host at least one school festival
Mount school sign at facility

June 2017 - July 2017

If enrollment is not at capacity:
Continue efforts to engage community through focused efforts on social media
Target neighborhoods closest to the school for outreach efforts such as tabling, puppet shows, and other community wide events
Identify volunteers living in neighborhoods surrounding the school and ask for word of mouth support

Remainder of School Year:

Host Open House
Host festivals celebrating the seasons

Host parent education workshops at least two times per year
Maintain School Calendar Visible on Website
Continue to engage community through social media and website
Continue to develop and foster relationships with community partners
Host puppet show
Engage parent volunteers from Parent Circle in marketing strategy

The board will evaluate effectiveness of the marketing plan and make adjustments as needed. All families who complete enrollment packets will be asked how they heard about the school to optimize the marketing plan in future years.

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.*

ATO will encourage the commitment and involvement of parents and community members. From charter application approval through opening, ATO will focus on engaging parents and the community through the implementation of our strategic marketing plan. In addition to the numerous activities in the marketing plan, the board will organize planning meetings with parents who expressed an interest in committee work in the "Interest in Enrollment Survey." Parents showed a strong interest in volunteering with more than 55% of the respondents expressing interest.

During the enrollment period, parents will be asked to attend an informational meeting where they will learn about the curriculum and Waldorf Methods used at ATO. The school will include a volunteer packet in the enrollment materials so parents can indicate in which volunteer capacity they would be willing to serve. This information will be maintained in a database so that faculty members may reference it to access expertise in the parent community as appropriate.

Once the school opens, ATO will develop a Parent Circle (PC) which provides opportunities for parent service and encourages all parents to participate. The Parent Circle will build community and serve as the vehicle for full parent involvement in the life and development of the school community. The responsibilities of the Parent Circle will be to promote parent participation in school life, build a trusting relationship between parents and the school, provide feedback to the Board of Directors on school operations and strategic goals, and work collaboratively so that everyone feels respected within the school organization. Each classroom will identify at least one official Parent Representative who will attend regular Parent Circle meetings and coordinate activities, but all parents and immediate family members such as grandparents will be encouraged to participate. The Parent Circle leadership team will provide the ATO board of directors with reports on progress and will host a yearly community-wide meeting to discuss school related matters with the staff and board.

The Parent Circle leadership team of parents, in collaboration with faculty and administration, shares responsibilities in the following areas:

Assisting in promotion and support of volunteerism at ATO
Organizing volunteers for our Seasonal Festivals and other community projects, events, and programs
Assisting in the support and promotion of fund raising activities
Supporting new families and providing "social warmth" at events
Providing a forum for information, consultation and feedback on matters affecting the school, such as parent education or policy issues.
Enhancing communications between ATO parents and all other members of the ATO Community

The Parent Circle will seek to be a channel through which parents can direct their ideas and skills, nurture their self-development, and constructively communicate any concerns.

Additionally, all parents will have the opportunity to engage with the school faculty and staff throughout the year via seasonal festivals, parent education workshops, community work days, the school website and parent-teacher conferences which will be offered at least twice a year. During other times of the year, parents or staff can request additional conferences should the need arise. Teachers will also send out informational leaflets to all parents at the beginning of each new block of study describing the content to be covered and offering suggestions on how parents can support the students learning. Teachers and staff at ATO will maintain open and on-going communication with the families we serve by responding to emails, offering greetings at drop off or pick up and keeping families informed about school activities.

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.*

ATO has adopted an admissions policy similar to the one proposed in the Charlotte Lab Charter School Application. The ATO application period will be from September 1, 2016- January 31, 2017. Applications must be received by the ATO office no later than 11:59pm on January 31, 2017. They will be reviewed for completeness, checked for a valid North Carolina address and will be entered into a database. If the number of applications exceeds available seats, a public lottery will be held in March, in accordance with all NC charter school laws. After the lottery, any applications not accepted will be placed on a waitlist based on the order pulled from the lottery. Any application submitted after January 31st will be added to the end of the wait list according to the date/time submitted.

All students will be notified of acceptance via a phone call and email or a mailed written letter if no email was provided (in both English and Spanish). Families will be required to attend a school information session to complete the registration process. This session will inform parents about the methods of instruction and parent involvement at ATO. Sessions will be offered in February-April at varying times of the day to accommodate all parents' schedules; special arrangements will be made for parents with extenuating circumstances. Once a family attends the session, they must turn in the registration packet by April 30, 2017; the enrollment process is then complete. If a family does not complete the registration process prior to April 30, their seat may be forfeited and the next applicant on the waitlist will be accepted. Students who fail to attend the first day of school must call in to notify the school of the absence or they will forfeit their enrollment and must complete another application to be considered in the future.

ATO will admit, and/or place in the lottery, any student who completes the application prior to the deadline. Notwithstanding any recent law to the contrary, a charter school may refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from the public school under G.S. 115C390.5 through G.S. 115C390.11 until the period of suspension or expulsion has expired.

The public lottery will be run as follows: ATO will notify all applicants and the public (through posting on website) of the date, time, and location of the lottery. Applications will be reviewed for completeness and verified for valid NC address. Each completed application is assigned a unique number and a ticket will be created. Any applicant that meets the State rules for priority admission will be placed on the acceptance list. Siblings will be grouped on a single lottery ticket for the grade level that the parent chooses. Numbered tickets will be pulled at random during a videotaped, public lottery for the remaining seats at each grade level until all seats are filled. All remaining tickets will be drawn and placed on a waitlist for each grade in the order they are pulled.

Per State rules, ATO will give admissions preference to children of current employees and Board members and to current students' siblings. If the number of applicants in these groups exceeds the available seats, a separate preference group lottery will be held. Once a student is enrolled at ATO, families do not have to re-enroll each year; however they must submit an "Intent to Return" form so ATO administrators can plan accordingly. Any applicant on the waitlist from the previous year, must re-submit an application and participate in the lottery again.

Families who wish to withdraw a student must notify ATO in writing at least 3 days prior to withdrawal. Upon completing a required withdrawal form and receiving a transfer form from the student's new school, ATO will provide all relevant and required records. If the family chooses to later re-apply, they must complete a new application and participate in the lottery process again.

*Adapted from Charlotte Lab Charter

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT 2017-18 through 2021-2022

IDENTIFY LEA FROM WHICH STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY COME

- LEA #1 Wake County Schools
- LEA #2 Durham Public Schools
- LEA #3 Johnston County Schools

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.

	2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022		
	LEA 920	LEA 320	LEA 510	LEA 920	LEA 320	LEA 510	LEA 920	LEA 320	LEA 510	LEA 920	LEA 320	LEA 510	LEA 920	LEA 320	LEA 510
	94	25	6	124	33	8	150	38	10	180	47	12	214	57	14
	125			165			198			239			285		

V. OPERATIONS

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.

Acorn to Oak will provide all families with a transportation survey in their enrollment packets in order to better understand their transportation needs, as well as to ensure that no child is denied access to ATO due to lack of transportation. We will offer families resources and support to coordinate their transportation needs, and we will provide transportation as required by an individual student's IEP or other applicable law.

Carpooling: Based on responses about the importance of environmental stewardship in the Interest in Enrollment Survey, the school believes that many families will use carpooling to meet their transportation needs. To address this need, ATO plans to implement the use of an online tool such as RideFinder that matches parents interested in carpooling based on location. In programs such as these, parents would log in to the school's website, enter their address, and automatically see other parents who have expressed an interest in carpooling and how near those families live. Training on the use of any implemented program will be provided by the school to all families of enrolling students.

ATO classroom teachers will greet each individual student every morning, as is common practice in Waldorf Education. This personal greeting gives insight into the child's world. When parents are able to collaborate with the school to offer transportation it extends this opportunity to connect not only with the student, but the family. This connection builds relationship between the school and the greater community, and offers staff a better understanding of the child's individual needs.

Additionally, ATO will also offer after school programming in an effort to minimize transportation needs for parents who work past the end of the school day.

ATO recognizes that this transportation strategy may not prove to be a viable option for every family, so in addition to the carpooling program, school staff will work to identify other public and private transportation options that are available. The school's budget has built in \$8,550 in year one to cover the cost of such transportation needs. Budgeted funds increase each operating year with the goal of funding transportation for 10% of projected enrollment.

Once a location has been determined for ATO, we will explore options to expand our transportation program. We hope to collaborate with the public transit system to offer discounts on rider passes, as well as partner with the local LEA to provide transportation in future years. By offering various options we are better able to meet the needs of each individual family.

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.

ATO researched existing charter school lunch programs and will implement a free and reduced lunch program modeled after Francine Delany New School (FDNS). Ms. Fowler, Operations Director at FDNS, described the program's success, "I feel this has been an amazing program. We have only had about 4 families that were not able to follow through on providing a healthy lunch" (B. Fowler, personal communication, August 17, 2015). ATO will partner with a grocery store that is easily accessible to our highest percentage of students. Kroger is currently under consideration as there are many in North Raleigh and they offer a Community Rewards program where consumers can choose to have Kroger donate a percentage of their purchase to the school. Parents will be expected to pack a nutritious lunch for their children and those who qualify for free or reduced lunch will be able to sign up for the gift card program using forms included in the ATO enrollment packets. The program is in line with ATO's mission and will support the school in the early years until a more robust lunch program is developed.

ATO will mail gift cards on the last Monday the month throughout the school year to all enrolled families. No one will know who receives the gift cards outside of required accounting purposes, so there will be no stigma. If a family is not providing an adequate lunch, ATO will request a conference to assist the family in developing a plan for success. If there is no improvement within one month, ATO will stop sending the gift cards and buy items for that child to be kept in the school lunch pantry. The pantry will be available to any student who forgets his or her lunch and needs to purchase one.

ATO will support parents by offering information about whole foods, nutrition, lunch ideas, eating healthy on a budget, and eco-friendly lunches. ATO budgeted \$5300 for this program in year one to cover 10% of projected enrollment, scaling in future years to accommodate increased enrollment.

Civil Liability and Insurance (GS 115C-218.20):

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	\$1,000.00

Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions		\$1,000,000	\$1,600.00
Property Insurance		\$150,000	\$512.00
Motor Vehicle Liability		\$0	\$.00
Bonding Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$1,582.00
Other		\$570,500	\$2,703.00
Total Cost			\$7,397.00

*The applicant must provide a quote from an insurance provider as part of this application (as Appendix P) 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 § 115C218.75.

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.

mdstansbury 09/25/2015

(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 Q).

The majority of respondents to the "Interest in Enrollment Survey" desire that our school to be located in North Raleigh; therefore, ATO will seek to secure space in that area. Ideally, the school will be located in an area that is both convenient to the survey respondents and with considerable access to nature. Spending time outdoors is an important aspect of Waldorf education: it helps to nurture students in the rhythm of our world, fosters a greater appreciation for nature and enhances our efforts in the education of good environmental stewardship. Additionally, having an adequate area to garden will strengthen the overall curriculum.

We anticipate a need for 15,000 square feet of space for our year 5 projected enrollment of 285 students.

The steps we will take to secure a space will include:

January-March 2016:

Form a Facilities Committee among members of the Board and begin researching the options available for expert commercial real estate agents and charter school consultants. Compile a list of grants and loans available for developing charter schools. The Facilities Committee will tour school facilities, including Emerson Waldorf, Circle of Seasons Public Waldorf Charter, and environmentally conscious schools. The Facilities Committee will identify possible locations, funders, and area organizations that support and promote eco-friendly designs, charter schools, and Waldorf education; the Committee Chair will set up meetings as appropriate. We will also explore spaces used by previous charter schools.

April 2016:

Develop a facilities requirements document to determine actual space needs, including total space, classrooms, restrooms, common learning areas, recreation areas, teacher planning spaces, administrative offices, reception area, multi-purpose spaces, power, and technical infrastructure needs.

May-July 2016:

The Facilities Committee will have identified funders and all other specific requirements. Committee will begin touring potential sites.

August-September 2016: Committee will select property and if applicable, determine the types of renovations needed. If needed, service contracts will be negotiated.

October 2016 February 2017: Facilities Committee will monitor renovation process and begin to focus on internal set-up and design, furniture and use of space. Vendors and suppliers will be selected for furniture, school equipment, and IT infrastructure. The committee will ensure the facility meets all applicable fire, safety and sanitation standards.

March-April 2017: Open portion of space in order to conduct open houses for prospective families, Board meetings, and faculty information sessions and interviews.

May 2017: Facility is ready and Certificate of Occupancy issued.

July 1, 2017: Facility is ready for move-in. Installation and set-up of furniture and equipment is finalized.

Please attach copies of Facilities Inspections as Appendix R.

What is the breakdown of cost per square foot for the proposed facility? Outline how this cost is comparable to the commercial and educational spaces for the proposed school location.

ATO budgeted \$13/ft². Commercial real estate website LoopNet.com shows Raleigh at avg \$/ft² in 8/15 of \$18.38 office, \$16.51 retail and \$8.55 industrial. A 9/15 LoopNet search found 13 Wake commercial properties of 10 - 20,000 ft² @ \$8 - \$18/ft².

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.

From the beginning, our Facilities Committee will work with real estate and charter consultant experts to explore contingency plan possibilities. These are likely to include temporarily renting modular school units or renting office space. We do not anticipate the need to limit programs. We have also created a "contingency" line item in the working budget of 1.1% of expenses - these funds can be used for any facility overages or emergencies if necessary.

VI. 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 2017-18

**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 #1 920 - Wake County Schools

Revenue	2015-2016 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2017-2018
State Funds	\$4,501.95	94	\$423,183.30
Local Funds	\$2,069.00	94	\$194,486.00
Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	9	\$33,912.99
Totals			\$651,582.29

LEA #2 320 - Durham Public Schools

Revenue	2015-2016 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2017-2018
State Funds	\$4,759.31	25	\$118,982.75
Local Funds	\$3,037.64	25	\$75,941.00
Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	3	\$11,304.33
Totals			\$206,228.08

LEA #3 510 - Johnston County Schools

Revenue	2015-2016 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2017-2018
State Funds	\$4,750.57	6	\$28,503.42
Local Funds	\$1,511.00	6	\$9,066.00
Federal EC Funds	\$3,394.88	1	\$3,394.88
Totals			\$40,964.30

Total Budget: Revenue Projections 2017-18 through 2021-2022

INCOME: REVENUE PROJECTIONS	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022

***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 S.

Personnel Budget: Expenditure Projections 2017-18 through 2021-2022

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.

BUDGET EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS Personnel	2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022		
	<i>Num Staff</i>	<i>Avg Salary</i>	<i>Total salary</i>	<i>FTE</i>	<i>Avg Salary</i>	<i>Total salary</i>	<i>FTE</i>	<i>Avg Salary</i>	<i>Total salary</i>	<i>FTE</i>	<i>Avg Salary</i>	<i>Total salary</i>	<i>FTE</i>	<i>Avg Salary</i>	<i>Total salary</i>

Operations Budget: Expenditure Projections 2017-18 through 2021-2022

BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022

Overall Budget:

BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022

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.

We project 125 first year enrollment based upon:

3 kindergarten classes x 15 students each (45)

2 first grade classes x 20 students each (40)

1 second grade class x 20 students (20)

1 third grade class x 20 students (20)

TOTAL (125)

Since forming the initial interest group and starting to gauge interest from parents, ATO has had a high level of interest from many community members. There are no Waldorf schools located in Raleigh and community members are excited and motivated to see the ATO dream become reality. Over 170 families completed the Intent to Enroll survey within 2 weeks. Additionally during a 1 month period, 28 individuals donated over \$1250 to support application fees and development. The break-even point for student enrollment is 120 students, we project increasing enrollment each year as we add classes and grade levels.

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

ATO will have a marketing and fundraising plan and will use parent volunteers to staff fundraising activities. Additionally, board members will search out and complete grant applications for appropriate funding opportunities.

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

Budget revenues are 100% state, county, and federal allotment funds.

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

K - 8:1 1st - 13:1 all other grades 20:1

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.*

ATO will contract for financial auditing and custodial services. ATO will contract with qualified diagnosticians (such as a school psychologist) to

determine when students are eligible for special education services or AIG services as needed. ATO will contract with counselors and social workers to meet our student's needs. ATO will ensure that all related services documented in students' IEPs are provided. We will partner with the LEA to provide related services (speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, etc) as much as possible. If needed, we will partner with other charter schools and/or contract with private providers.

Contractors and large purchases will be reviewed by the Board. When deciding on a large purchase or contract, three estimates or examples of goods will be provided and the Board will select the choice. After the Lead Administrator is hired s/he will make these decision within budgetary parameters set by the board (contract not to exceed budgeted amount, for example). ATO will avoid conflict of interest by developing a conflict of interest policy for Board members and staff to prevent these individuals, their associates or family members from unduly profiting from contracts or other payments.

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

The school's budget allocates the appropriate funding for ATO to create the space and the team to nurture our students through an integrated curriculum that cultivates each individual's innate creative, intellectual, emotional, physical, and social capacities. The ATO curricular offerings will follow Waldorf methods to develop the whole child - head (academics, logic, intellectual development), heart (arts, community, social-emotional and creative development) and hand (crafts, building, service, physical development). The Waldorf model includes specific instructional materials, often made of natural materials; therefore, the ATO budget includes several line items particular to a Waldorf Methods school. We budget \$2500 for each new classroom and \$800 for each continuing classroom specifically for Waldorf equipment and furniture such as play stands, Choroi Pentatonic flutes, and play skills. We budget \$700 for each new classroom and \$300 for each continuing classroom for instructional materials and musical instruments. We budget an additional \$700 for each new classroom and \$300 for each continuing classroom for student curriculum texts to include well stocked "libraries" in classrooms (fiction and nonfiction) and materials for developing main lesson books. Technology for students is not a focus of Waldorf education. We budget \$1000 for computers for each administrative staff and each classroom. Computers will be replaced once every four years.

As part of the commitment to continuing education and training in Waldorf methods, ATO includes budget funds for professional development for all staff. In year 1, funds are budgeted for administrative staff to attend one out of town conference and three regional Waldorf trainings, and these funds increase in subsequent years. Instructional staff have professional development funds available for a Waldorf expert consultant to visit ATO for two days in year 1 (\$125/hour x 6 hours x 2 days) and \$800 for offsite Waldorf teacher training for 2 teachers. Each year ATO adds funds for 2 additional days of on-site consultant professional development and offsite training for 2 additional teachers per year. ATO budgets funds for membership in professional development organizations as a way to connect with, support, and gain expertise from groups outside our organization. We budget \$85 for year 1 and \$1200 thereafter for membership with the NC Center

for Nonprofits, \$250 for year 1, \$500 for year 2 and \$5/student thereafter for membership with the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, and \$3 per student for years 1-5 for membership with the NC Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

Transportation needs are budgeted for 10% of projected enrollment, scaling up each year as projected enrollments rise, \$4/day/student for 177 school days.

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.

ATO will set aside 1.5% of expenses each year to create a general fund balance, with the goal of building reserves to cover three months of operations. By the end of year 5 we project a fund balance of \$105,730. If carryover funds are larger than budgeted projections, the ATO board will increase the percentage of expenditures reserved for fund balance.

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

ATO does not have plans to finance any large purchases. We plan to lease facility space and have budgeted a graduated 5 year lease for a 15000 sq foot building at \$13 per square foot. The graduated lease schedule is common in Wake County and will allow ATO to get off the ground financially in beginning years. We budget paying 8% of the total lease cost in year 1, 15% in year 2, 22% in year 3, 27% in year 4, and 28% in year 5 to equal a total of 100% of lease costs paid over the 5-year period. ATO will use existing transportation options, such as transportation services and public transportation, rather than purchasing vehicles. The budget includes costs for leasing a copier to include a larger amount year 1 for initial purchase, installation and service. Copier costs in years 2-5 will be for an ongoing service contract for the copier(s).

6. *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.*

ATO has no assets from other sources at this time.

ATO has budgeted \$13/square foot for our facility, which is in line with comparably-sized facilities in our target market. According to LoopNet.com, a commercial real estate website, the average lease cost per square foot in Raleigh for August 2015 is \$18.38 for office space, \$16.51 for retail space and \$8.55 for industrial space. In September 2015, a search on LoopNet for institutional/governmental, flex space, freestanding buildings, community centers, strip centers, and neighborhood centers between 10,000 - 20,000 square feet in Wake County returned 13 properties currently for rent ranging between \$8 - \$18/square foot. We have budgeted additional funds for facility renovation, buildout, and maintenance, more in year 1, then additional funds in later years as more classrooms are added. .

The budget reflects the board's commitment to sound fiscal management by budgeting a surplus for each of the first 5 years. We increase costs year to

year by 2.5% or tied to student enrollment depending on how costs are based. We have increased insurance costs by 5% each year based on our insurance agent's advice.

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?

ATO Board members have drafted a set of Financial Management policies which include putting the following Internal controls in places:

Physical controls: All cash, checks, bank account numbers, passwords, petty cash, credit card numbers will be kept in locked offices or safes. The Board will designate a policy on key management.

Passwords: ATO administrative computers used to administer or monitor financial business will be password protected. Computers used for administration will be set to require a password for login after 5 minutes of no activity. All computer passwords will be changed at least annually and after any staff turnover.

Purchasing: Board of Directors approval is required for expenditures over \$300. Staff or Board members will obtain 3 quotes, estimates or samples and include this documentation with each purchase request or explain in writing why this is not possible.

ATO recognizes the importance of separation of duties in financial management and will do the following:

Check preparation: The Treasurer will prepare checks the Board Chair will sign checks.

Bank statement review and reconciliation: The Secretary will review bank statements online or receive unopened bank statements from the bank and review these monthly. The Treasurer will reconcile the bank statements monthly and report this and other prepared financial statements to the Board of Directors at least quarterly.

Cash transactions: For amounts over \$100 cash received, two people will count the cash, agree on income amount and initial the deposit slip.

Bookkeeping: The Treasurer will record each credit and debit in general ledger. Copies of each receipt, check, deposit slip, etc. will be kept for each entry and organized in binders by month. Staff or Board members submitting requests for reimbursement must provide a receipt. The Treasurer will prepare the general ledger for bank statement reconciliation by the 5th of the month for the previous month.

Budget and reporting: Staff and/or board members will prepare an annual budget each year. The Board of Directors will approve budgets and budget amendments. The Treasurer will prepare a budget vs. actual statement for Board review each month.

ATO strives to have a high degree of transparency and pledges the following:

Conflict of interest: ATO has developed a conflict of interest policy for Board members and staff to prevent these individuals, their associates or family members from unduly profiting from contracts or other payments.

Audits and reports: An annual financial audit will be conducted by a contracted firm. Staff and/or Board members will prepare all federally required financial reports and tax filings. Budgeting and financial management documents will be open and available for review by parents, teachers, and members of the public during public meetings and online via the ATO website.

ATO financial management and bookkeeping will be conducted according to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

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

There are no known related party transactions at this time. ATO Board members and staff will agree to abide by a conflict of interest policy to prevent these individuals, their family members and/or business associates from profiting unduly from ATO contracts or other expenditures.

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.

ATO has selected the firm of Elliot Davis Decosimo to conduct the annual financial statement audit. Mailing address: 5410 Trinity Road, Suite 320, Raleigh, NC 27607. Telephone number: 919-783-7073. Fax number: (864) 232-7161.

VII AGREEMENT PAGE

Application Fee:

Pursuant to § 115C-218.1(c) the charter school applicant must submit a \$1000 application fee to the Office of Charter Schools. The applicant must submit their application fee by the September 25, 2015 5:00 pm EST deadline. Payments will be accepted in the form of a certified check. Cash is not accepted.

*Application Note: The applicant must mail the certified check along with a letter indicating the name of the proposed charter school, contact information and the enclosed payment amount to be received before or on the due date of September 25, 2015 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-218.1(c).

mdstansbury

Date: 09/25/2015

Applicant Signature:

The foregoing application is submitted on behalf of Acorn to Oak (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: mdstansbury

Board Position: Melissa Stansbury, Board Chair

Signature: _____

Date: 09/25/2015

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

Notary Public Official Seal
My commission expires: _____, 20____.