



NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

Town Center Charter High School

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: Town Center Charter High School

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

Name of non-profit organization under which charter will be organized or operated: *The NC HS for Accelerated Learning, Inc.*

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: *Anthony Lindsey*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *President, Board of Directors*

Mailing address: 5112 Central Avenue
Charlotte NC 28205

Primary telephone: 980-721-4350 Alternative telephone: 000-000-0000

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

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

County: GASTON

LEA: 360-Gaston County Schools

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

No:

Yes:

If so, provide the name of the third party person or group. Accelerated Learning Solutions, Inc.

List the fee provided to the third party person or group. \$0

Provide a **full** detailed response of the assistance provided by the third party person or group while preparing this application and when the assistance will end.

The Board has made the decision to replicate the ALS model based on the continued success of this instructional and program model currently being used at twenty-four dropout prevention and recovery schools operated by ALS for charter school boards in Florida and North Carolina, including Commonwealth and Stewart Creek High Schools, which were approved by the NC State Board of Education in 2013.

The Board of Directors of The North Carolina High School for Accelerated Learning, Inc. directed ALS to develop and submit a charter application for a high school designed to help at-risk students earn a standard high school diploma and prepare for post-secondary success. ALS staff drafted the application narrative, attachments, and budgets to fully describe a school model that successfully addresses the needs of high school students ages 16-21 in one of two target groups: students at-risk of dropping out of their traditional high school, or students who have already dropped out and are interested in returning to school to earn a high school diploma. The Board

reviewed the drafts and approved this application for submission to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Office of Charter Schools.

The assistance will end upon approval of the application.

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

No:

Yes:

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

No:

Yes:

If replication, please provide the name of the charter school and the state that charter school has been authorized to operate in. Commonwealth High School NC

What is the name of the nonprofit organization that governs this charter school? The NC HS for Accelerated Learning, Inc.

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

Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment:

Projected School Opening: Year 2017 *Month* August

Will this school operate on a year round schedule?

No:

Yes:

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.

anthony lindsey
Signature

President
Title

anthony lindsey
Printed Name

09/24/2015
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:

The mission of the Town Center Charter High School ("the School") is to help at-risk students earn a standard high school diploma and prepare for post-secondary success.

(Source: ALS)

Clearly describe the mission of the proposed charter school:

The sole Mission is to provide a non-traditional high school graduation option to students who have either dropped out of high school or are likely to drop out due to low academic performance or other circumstances. The program will address their academic, social, and family needs within a supportive environment where they can focus on their learning, graduation, and post-secondary success. It is for these students that we, the Board, propose this alternative option.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

a. Demographics: Any child qualified under the laws of the State of North Carolina for admission to a public school will be qualified for admission to the School. Notwithstanding, the Board of Directors of the School ("the Board") is specifically committed to establishing a dropout prevention and recovery program. Our focus is to address the unique needs of these at-risk students. Students who will enroll in the program will likely have the following characteristics: average age of 17-18 years old, 12 or fewer previously earned high school credits, reading at or below the 8th grade level, two to three years behind his/her 9th grade cohort, performing at the lowest 2 levels on standardized tests, and in need of special services. We estimate that 10-20% of our students will need special education and related services or other accommodations, that 12-20% will be English Language Learners, and that 8-12% will be parenting, pregnant, or caring for other children.

b. Reflecting the Local Population: Although the exact location of the

School has not been determined, the School will likely be located in central Gaston County (see map in Appendix A), an area with low median annual household income and a recent history of high dropout rates. We anticipate that the majority of students will live within a 5-8 mile radius of the proposed school and a current Gaston (GCS) high school. As a result, the School's population will reflect the local ethnic and racial mix of the community being served.

c. Rationale: The high school dropout crisis has been well documented in our nation's largest cities by numerous researchers. Diplomas Count 2015 projected that three-quarters of a million students from the 2013 high school class would not graduate with a diploma. North Carolina faces similar challenges. Approximately 34,000 students did not graduate with their 9th grade peers (dropped out or did not achieve a 4 year graduation rate) in the Classes of 2014 and 2015. Twenty-eight percent (137 of 466) of high schools had 4 year graduation rates of less than 85% in school year 2014-15. 28,621 high school students repeated a grade in school year 2014-15, a key indicator of whether students will graduate with their peers.

The Board of Directors has selected the Gaston area for this proposed school primarily because 36% of GCS high schools had graduation rates below 85% compared to 28% of high schools statewide. This is 8 percentage points higher than the percent of North Carolina high schools with low graduation rates.

In addition, 723 GCS students did not graduate with their 9th grade peers (dropped out or did not achieve graduation within 4 years) from the Classes of 2014 and 2015. 591 (6%) of GCS high school students repeated a grade in 2013-14. High school grade repetition is a key indicator that students will not graduate on time.

A research-based summary of the need for our proposed school in the Gaston area is presented in Appendix A. We plan to locate the school in the central Gaston County area and to serve students primarily from the following GCS high schools: Ashbrook, Bessemer City, East Gaston, Highland, Hunter Huss and North Gaston. These schools account for 3 of every 5 non-graduates in the district.

(Source: ALS)

- 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 School's projected enrollment at full capacity will be 600 students. The projected enrollment is 6.2% of high school ADM in the Gaston County Schools. The district ADM for grades 9-12 is 9697 (600 divided by 9697 = 6.2%). (ADM source: "Best 1 of 2 Allotted ADM for 2014-2015 School Year (LEAs and Charters)," NCDPI website, accessed 9/21/15.)

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

Our School will be able to focus resources and efforts towards meeting the

needs of the target student population. Many unique elements set our proposed school apart from the local educational options. The foundation of our unique educational program will be a teacher-directed, individualized, mastery-based, and technology-enhanced teaching and learning environment designed to specifically address each student's unique and diverse learning needs.

The School will operate two sessions per day of 4 hours each (morning and afternoon). A 3rd four-hour session in the evening may be added based on need and demand. These schedule options are designed to accommodate students' life circumstances by allowing students to choose which session to regularly attend. The session design also allows for a small student population, serving approximately 200 students in each session. Local high schools, in comparison, have an average student enrollment of 1000.

The curriculum, delivered through a blended learning approach that combines face-to-face classroom instruction with computer-generated activities to form an integrated instructional model, will be based on the Common Core State and North Carolina Essential Standards, but informed by each student's foundational skills in reading and math as determined through a standardized assessment completed during the student's orientation to the program.

A unique academic plan will be designed to accelerate each student's progress toward accumulation of course credits leading to a high school diploma. The plan will identify all of the required coursework, necessary interventions, and supplemental instruction needed to ensure that North Carolina course requirements and graduation standards are met. The School will also offer an online career and technology education course component for those students who want to develop skills that will prepare them for employment immediately after high school graduation. Students and teachers will have opportunities to be trained and certified in Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Bundle: Word, Excel and PowerPoint; valuable credentials leading to proficiency credit at post-secondary institutions and enhancing employability and marketability.

Many students who drop out or are at risk of dropping out of school face barriers to educational success unrelated to their school experience. Students report that family obligations, pregnancy, child care, mental health issues, addiction, homelessness, or the need to work can distract them from their educational success. Our Board understands that unless social, emotional, and behavioral needs are effectively addressed, learning will be difficult and academic growth will be an unrealistic objective. A key differentiator of this School will be the provision of social and crisis intervention services to students. Students will be provided with comprehensive social services, crisis intervention, and behavioral health services.

Students will be surrounded by a climate of respect in which school leadership, faculty, and staff understand that the complex, often disruptive lives of these students frequently impede attendance and learning. Underpinnings of this climate of respect will include significant adult connections, positive adult interactions, greeting students by name and with a handshake at the door, celebrations of successes, and a spirit of hard work.

Each student will be provided with individual attention, foundational skills development, and the social, emotional, and behavioral support needed to address specific individual challenges to advance to his/her age-appropriate grade level.

No other school in the local school district provides students with a similar educational model that includes multiple daily instructional session options, individualized curriculum and support, full integration of technology, and wraparound support services.

(Source: ALS)

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. **PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:** Professional Learning will be aligned to school goals, differentiated, linked to real issues, and provide both individual and collaborative opportunities for learning. The sharing of best practices and the use of formative feedback will drive a culture of continuous improvement aimed at providing the best opportunities for teaching and learning. Professional development will be rooted in evidence-based strategies and resources proven to be successful with the School's target population, and best practice research supporting the growth of teachers. The plan for professional development is described in detail below in Staff Evaluation and Professional Development.

2. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** As stated below and in the Student Performance Standards section, student performance goals aligned with the School mission and appropriate to the target population have been established in the areas of credit earning rate, graduation rate, higher expectations for student

achievement, persistence in enrollment, and acceptance in post-secondary options. In addition, goals for School operation, finance, and governance have been established as below.

3. CHOICE: This School will be unique within the school district, and will provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available.

4. IMPROVING LEARNING: Our proposed school will have the capacity to provide 1:1 learning in a blended learning model that supports the academic achievement of at-risk students and successful transition to post-secondary opportunities. A collaborative team of teachers will provide responsive teaching based on data from the curriculum. For students who need additional support, teachers will work with students to accelerate, differentiate, and remediate. Using blended and personalized learning, as well as leveraging a web-based curriculum, has shown an increase in graduation rates for at-risk youth (Evergreen Education Group and Clayton Christensen Institute. 2015. Proof points: Blended learning success in school districts. Retrieved from <http://www.kpk12.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/Spokane-Public-Schools.pdf>).

5. INCREASING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: The School will serve as a dropout recovery (retrieval) program along with serving students who are at risk of dropping out. The Board understands that unless social, emotional, and behavioral needs are effectively addressed for this population of students, learning can be difficult and academic growth can often be an unrealistic objective. Licensed teachers will facilitate small-group instruction, off-line anchor activities, disaggregate student course activity, and provide content-specific instructional strategies to address the needs of struggling students. The Family Support Specialist (FSS) and Career Coach will work with each student during enrollment and/or orientation to identify, address, and/or mitigate the personal, social, and behavioral barriers that prevent students from being successful. In addition, the FSS will work closely with other faculty and staff, and/or an outside provider throughout the school year to identify students in need of ongoing support services, and will link with community resource providers to identify programs that will provide wraparound services to meet students' personal needs. The Career Coach will provide additional instructional time to students in the areas of employability skills, career and college readiness, and post-secondary options based on each student's Individual Success Plan (ISP).

6. INNOVATIVE METHODS: A blended learning approach of direct instruction and technology enhancement will allow students to progress through coursework at their own pace while also receiving support for foundational gaps in any of the core areas. The School's blended learning program uses technology to individualize educational plans, address knowledge gaps, differentiate instruction based on student needs, and provide acceleration opportunities for students. The School's blended learning model combines small and large group, individual, and online technology-based instruction to join the best aspects of both direct and online instruction. The technology will provide students and teachers with the tools, resources, and curriculum to be successful learners and increase student achievement.

A unique academic plan will be specifically designed to take each student

where he/she is and outline all of the curriculum and necessary interventions and supplemental instruction needed to ensure that course requirements and graduation standards are met. The academic plan will have as its base the means to accelerate each student's progress toward the accumulation of course credits, which will result in improved student performance, grade promotion, and a high school diploma.

The curriculum is based on a three-component model of personalization, performance data, and intervention support. Research has consistently shown this three-pronged strategy will significantly increase student achievement levels when implemented in a Web-based learning environment (Chou & Wang, 2000; Federico, 2000; Rasmussen & Davidson-Shivers, 1998; Wang, et. al. 2006).

Classroom time will be used to engage students in multimedia-rich, content-based instruction, including interventions to eliminate barriers. Successful instruction will include focused reading and writing activities, math remediation, foundational skills development, test-taking skills, social skills development, and parenting skills. This instructional delivery design allows for increased flexibility for scheduling interventions, social support, and career/post-secondary guidance for students.

HOW IT WORKS:

Kevin is 16 years old and has only earned enough credits to be classified as a 9th grade student. Kevin settles into his classroom and logs into the computer to review his Dashboard (See Appendix U-1), which provides him with up-to-the-minute information about his progress in the courses in which he is currently enrolled, his progress towards graduation, his reading progress, and his goals. This helps him stay focused and provides motivation as he sees how much progress he is making.

Kevin logs into his English course and begins the lesson on "The Most Dangerous Game" by Richard Connell. As Kevin reads, he uses note-taking strategies taught to him during orientation, writing down key terms that are confusing or giving him trouble, highlighting, and annotating. With headphones on, Kevin clicks on words for definition or pronunciation. After he finishes the text, Kevin prints his assignment where he is required to answer comprehension questions, including short response.

As the teacher monitors the class, she notices that Kevin appears to be struggling with his assignment. She meets with him at a small table in the classroom for direct instruction and support. At the end of the lesson, Kevin takes a quiz. He won't be able to move onto the next lesson unless he shows mastery.

Kevin's schedule includes a reading block. When he logs into the Reading Plus program, he can select a story that he is able to read without assistance because of the placement test he took during orientation. At the end of each passage, Kevin is presented with standards-aligned questions that determine his comprehension of what was read, and also identify which anchor standards need to be remediated by the reading teacher. Kevin's reading teacher generates a Skills Group Report from the Reading Plus database to form small groups for remediation.

At the end of Kevin's instructional session, he meets with the teacher to review the day's progress as shown on his Dashboard and establish goals for the next day. Kevin's individual needs and his growth toward mastery of grade level content are supported by this blended model of whole group instruction, small group reinforcement, and instructional technology.
(Source: ALS)

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.*

Student performance goals aligned with the School mission and appropriate to the target population have been established in the areas of credit acceleration, graduation rate, higher expectations for student achievement, persistence in enrollment, and acceptance in post-secondary options. Detail on these goals is provided in the Student Performance Standards section. In addition, goals for School operation, finance, and governance have been established as below.

Operations Goals:

Leadership and highly-qualified teachers will be in place prior to School opening and will be maintained throughout the charter term. Monthly staffing reports will be provided to the Board by the management company.

The number of community members involved in the School (as measured by hours of service by community members, social service providers, and/or other organizations that are not paid vendors to the School) will increase each year of School operation as evidenced by sign-in sheets and data recorded in the student services tracking system. Monthly reports by the Principal will be provided to the Board regarding community member involvement.

The percentage of student, parent, and staff respondents expressing satisfaction with the School will increase each year as measured by an annual satisfaction survey. A report of satisfaction survey results will be provided to the Board by the Principal and posted on the School website.

Finance Goals:

The annual budget will be reviewed and approved by the Board by June 30 of each year as evidenced by Board minutes.

The monthly expenditures compared to budget will be reviewed and approved by the Board at each monthly meeting as evidenced by Board minutes.

The annual audit will be reviewed and approved by the Board by October 31 of each year as evidenced by Board minutes.

The actual budget will not exceed the approved budget by more than 20% as evidenced by School financial statements.

Governance Goals:

During the planning year, one hundred percent (100%) of Board members will participate in orientation and training on legal and fiduciary responsibilities conducted by the Board's legal counsel.

The charter board will execute or re-authorize agreements with an accountant, auditor, and legal counsel prior to the beginning of the school year.

Prior to the end of the first year of operation, the charter board will conduct a self-evaluation to assess its effectiveness as the governing body and ability to work as a team.

One hundred percent (100%) of board members will attend at least three of the NCDPI charter board member trainings.

(Source: ALS)

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

The sole mission of the Town Center Charter High School ("the School") is to help at-risk students earn a standard high school diploma and prepare for post-secondary success.

The goals specified above will be reviewed regularly by School Administrators and the Board to assure progress toward and attainment of the School mission. The Board of Directors will be accountable for the academic, financial, and operational performance of the School and will govern all operations of the School, but will delegate day-to-day management to the administrative staff. The Board expects the Principal and all vendors contracted by the Board, including the Educational Management Organization (EMO) to report on the School's progress to attain and sustain the School's mission.

Reports to the Board regarding progress will be informed by data reports from the School's instructional software. Administrators and faculty will be able to review multiple sources of data by individual student as well as by classroom and School. These data will be analyzed to inform instructional interventions, school improvement decisions, test preparation, and professional development.

The Principal will use the School Dashboard (See Appendix U-2) and the Student Information System (SIS) to review student data every day: including school-level data, class data, and individual student data. Teachers will meet regularly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) organized by content-area to review student data. PLCs will use data to solve real problems and expand the knowledge base of all employees through an inquisitive problem solving manner. Each PLC will have a system-wide focus on student learning needs, which is articulated from the Principal to the Leadership Team to all school-based teams to individual students. Faculty meetings will be a data meeting to review School data overall, including, but not limited to: attendance, credit earning, academic progress, graduation, course access, student growth, etc.

Detailed class and student reports, available from an electronic Gradebook (See Attachment U-5), will provide teachers with performance information for an entire class and individual students. The Gradebook will show achievement and progress in the course for the class as a whole and for each student, including the number of days since the class was accessed, overdue activities, and course grade to date. Teachers will review Class reports from Gradebook every day to determine student growth, progress, student access to courses. Every day, each teacher will meet with each student to review course academic progress and attendance.

These reports will provide substantive information to School staff on progress towards academic success. School administrators will regularly review instructional methods, curricular resources, and staff effectiveness to support continuous improvement as reflected in School data. All of these monitoring strategies will ensure success for students and attainment of the School mission.

(Source: ALS)

III. EDUCATION PLAN

(No more than ten total pages in this section)

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

Instructional Program:

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

Our accelerated learning model provides an innovative option for high school students ages 16-21 who are at-risk of dropping out of their traditional high school or who have already dropped out and are interested in returning to school to earn a high school diploma. The instructional program aligns with the School's mission and responds to the needs of the target population. The foundation of our educational program is a teacher-directed, individualized, mastery-based, and technology-enhanced teaching and learning environment designed specifically to address each student's diverse learning needs, and provide schedule options that accommodate life circumstances. Our School will offer a blended learning program that allows students to progress at an appropriate pace based on individual learning needs.

Blended learning combines face-to-face group and individual instruction by a licensed teacher with a technology-based curriculum to form an integrated instructional approach. Through intentional use of time, research-based strategies are used that deliberately build a system of support for personalized learning. The School's blended learning program uses technology to individualize educational plans, address foundational knowledge gaps, and provide acceleration opportunities for students. The goal of this blended approach is to join the best aspects of face-to-face and online instruction. Staff will participate in professional development on how to effectively plan and implement Personalized Learning-Direct Instruction.

Key elements of the instructional program include the following:

A baseline academic assessment administered to all students using the General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN), a criterion-referenced measure of English and math skills, or similar diagnostic assessment.

An Individual Success Plan (ISP) created for each student based on the results of the baseline entry assessment, past academic performance, previous school records, a career interest inventory and career plan, social/personal needs inventory, disciplinary records, and parent/student input.

Course Placement that matches student's skill levels as documented on the ISP.

Flexible Schedule Options provided where students can choose to regularly

attend a morning (7:30-11:30 AM) or afternoon (12:00-4:00 PM) instructional session (or both as space permits). A third 4-hour session in the evening (4:15-8:15 PM) may be added based on need and demand.

Targeted, face-to-face instruction conducted by licensed teachers in large and small groups, or individually, to assist struggling students with mastery of course content using supplemental reading and math resources. This targeted instruction will be differentiated to address identified gaps in learning and provide appropriate interventions.

Engagement in online learning experiences using Apex Curriculum supplemented with curriculum lessons from effective resources such as Reading Plus, MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach (MVRRC), Ascend Math, March2Success, School Connect, FDIC Money Smart, and the College Foundation of NC (CFNC).

Formative assessments to monitor progress and identify gaps. Summative assessments will determine content mastery. (Assessment strategies are described in further detail in Student Performance Standards.)

The provision of support services and focused college and career preparation. Students will be provided with on-site comprehensive social services, crisis intervention, and behavioral health services. They will also receive instruction and support regarding employability skills, career and college readiness, and post-secondary options.

Outcomes for students will be enhanced in the following ways: 1) build foundational skills in reading and math; 2) accelerate the successful completion of courses and earning of credits; 3) pass required standardized assessments; and 4) provide a foundation for students to become successful members of their communities.

(Source: ALS)

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.

Students will choose to regularly attend one four-hour session for instruction, college and career preparation, and counseling. Thus, the learning environment, staffing, and facility design are based on serving up to 200 high school students in each of the sessions at full enrollment.

The School's curriculum and instructional design, which combine face-to-face instruction with a technology-based curriculum, align with the direction in which NC is moving related to digital instruction. "North Carolina is committed to providing the personalized digital-age education K-12 students need to be successful in college, in careers, and as productive citizens" (Digital Learning Plan Policy Brief, 6-2014). Legislative action S.L. 2013-12 required a transition from funding textbooks to funding digital materials, and S.L. 2013-11 and S.L. 2013-226 required the development and implementation of digital teaching and learning standards for teachers and schools.

A collaborative team of licensed teachers will provide responsive teaching based on data from the curriculum. Students will work independently at their individual level. For students who need additional support, teachers will work with the students to accelerate, differentiate, and remediate.

Following is a typical day for students enrolled in our School. Since this is an individualized program, not all students will participate in the same learning activities or the same counseling programs at the same time or in the same order.

Arrive at School; greet School staff at the door; get settled in the classroom; review MY SUCCESS Student and Parent Dashboard (Appendix U-1), an online, secured private portal available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; and prepare for instruction. MY SUCCESS links with the School's student information system to provide up-to-date information on student attendance, grades, state assessment results, skills development, and academic performance.

Student accesses instructional software (e.g., Apex Learning, Reading Plus, or math software such as Ascend Math) and works independently to make progress in assigned coursework. The curriculum builds basic knowledge and understanding of content, exposes students to collaborative learning with their peers, and builds deeper understanding by engaging students in challenging activities and tasks.

Teachers facilitate learning, provide direct instruction, and monitor student progress. This may occur individually or in a large or small group as determined by the teacher to best meet students' needs.

Each day student has time allocated to receive interventions, skill support, and acceleration and enrichment at his/her level of learning.

Student may spend time with the Family Support Specialist or onsite service provider to address social/personal barriers to learning.

Student may spend time with the Career Coach in the College and Career Center to work on college and/or career planning, preparation, and post-secondary transition.

Student will have the option to remain on campus for an extra session to accelerate progress.

Depart School at end of learning session.

The Board is committed to operating a state-of-the-art facility designed to attract students, and creating an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. The specially-designed facility will be approximately 12-15,000 square feet and will include space to accommodate students, instructional staff, and social service providers (See School Layout in Appendix U-3). The facility will be rich in technology, and retrofitted and equipped with new equipment and infrastructure for this purpose and to meet curricular standards.

The School's student/teacher ratio will not exceed 25:1. The enrollment

forecasts, tables, and budgets included with this application are all consistent with class size projections.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

a. Mission Alignment

The School will offer an individualized program that will allow each student to progress at an appropriate pace based on his/her learning needs. Accordingly, the major focus of the curriculum and instructional methods aligns directly with its mission.

The primary curriculum, Apex Learning (accredited by the Commission on Schools of the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools), provides comprehensive online instructional content and assessments that help teachers individualize instruction, ensuring each student has the opportunity to achieve to his/her potential. Through the utilization of the Apex curriculum, the School will be able to offer courses that can be aligned to individual student needs.

The School will use a variety of resources to support and enhance student learning. Apex Learning may be supplemented with curriculum lessons from effective resources such as Reading Plus, MindPlay's Virtual Reading Coach (MVRC), Ascend Math, March2Success, School Connect, FDIC Money Smart, and CFNC. Reading Plus, MVRC, and Ascend Math will help students achieve proficiency in reading and math through online and off-line lessons. March2Success provides online tutorials and practice tests for state assessments, EOCs, ACT, and SAT. School Connect is designed to help students develop personal/social skills. FDIC Money Smart is a comprehensive financial education curriculum designed to enhance financial literacy. CFNC will be used for career planning and preparation.

b. Student Alignment

The School's educational program design was developed based on effective strategies to reduce dropout rates and meet the needs of at-risk youth identified by the National Dropout Prevention Center (<http://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/overview/>). Apex Learning aligns with the learning needs of the target population through interactive, original subject material and active learning experiences that keep students alert and engaged, which are critical to academic success. Multimedia tutorials provide opportunities to explore and discover new material.

Manipulative tools encourage hands-on interaction to master concepts. Interactive exercises and self-checks give frequent opportunities to confirm understanding and apply new concepts. Multiple representations help teachers reach each student.

Online diagnostic assessments pinpoint student strengths and weaknesses. Detailed reports provide teachers with performance information for an entire class and individuals. Study plans help teachers guide students to relevant instructional content to master skills and develop conceptual understanding. Apex Learning gives teachers the flexibility to determine how to most effectively use these online curriculum resources to enhance classroom instruction.

c. North Carolina Accountability Model Alignment

Our charter school will submit a request to the SBE under GCS-Q-001 (V.) to be designated as an alternative school. Upon designation, approval will be sought to be included in the NC Alternative Schools' Accountability Model (State Board Policy GCS-C-038). The curriculum, mission and goals of the School and the measurement of student achievement and academic growth closely align with the Alternative Schools' Accountability Model.

Apex Learning courses "...in math and English Language Arts fully align to and incorporate the instructional intent of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) including rigorous instruction, active learning experiences, and meaningful assessment" (online at http://www.apexlearning.com/info/Common_Core.pdf). Sample correlation reports are available online: <http://www.apexlearning.com/correlations/>; User Name: correlate; Password: standards. In order to ensure that students are on track for success on state assessments, assessment opportunities - including diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments - are integrated throughout Apex Learning's digital curriculum.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

The School's primary instructional method is a blended model of face-to-face and online instruction that takes into account the instructional and social/emotional needs of at-risk students. The strongest case for blended learning programs comes from the U.S. Department of Education's meta-analysis of 45 studies that indicated that instruction combining online and face-to-face elements (blended learning) had a larger academic achievement advantage relative to purely face-to-face instruction or totally online instruction (Means, et al., 2010). The primary strategies used to implement blended learning at this School will be technology-based instruction, small group and individual instruction, differentiated instruction, embedded assessment, and continuous progress monitoring.

Carefully selected and licensed, highly-qualified teachers will provide instruction aligned to the state standards that addresses each student's ISP and academic intervention when necessary; assist students with setting daily

goals and course work; monitor students' goals and academic progress; help students daily to become independent learners and develop appropriate personal/social skills; assist in planning for transition after high school; facilitate the use of student assessment results for future career decision making; teach skills necessary for success in post-secondary education and the workplace; and communicate with each student and his/her family about the student's progress.

Instructional strategies used during large and small group and individual instruction will incorporate effective strategies identified by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) including, but not limited to: identifying similarities and differences; summarizing and note taking; reinforcing effort and providing recognition; nonlinguistic representations; setting objectives and providing feedback; generating and testing hypotheses; and using cues, questions, and advance organizers.

The entire instructional team will track student progress and provide formative feedback on a continuous basis using a specially designed data management system that includes a Learner Profile for each student. These tools are important to the instructional team, as research has shown that formative feedback provides students with the means to achieve a goal and thus orients students towards a learning goal (McAlpine 2004). As a result, students may invest more effort or adopt different strategies when they face failure (Elliott and Dweck 1988). According to Schunk and Zimmerman (2007), students' conceptions of ability may influence self-efficacy. The Learner Profile will collect, store, and analyze student test data as well as document tiered academic interventions and other services provided to the student. Test data will populate into the student's graduation plan to show which state assessments the student is required to pass to graduate as per state regulations for the student's cohort year. The Learner Profile will enable faculty and administrators to use the data to ensure that all students have customized learning plans and interventions resulting in students graduating prepared for post-secondary success.

The School's instructional program, support services, and facility design were developed based on the needs identified in the latest research on success with high need students. The National Dropout Prevention Center has stated that dropouts are not a homogeneous group and that dropping out of school is related to a variety of factors across multiple domains, often the result of a long process of disengagement, and often described as a process, not an event. Understanding who our student population is, why they are high need, and what their needs are enables the School to deliver accelerated learning in a personalized learning environment to help our students succeed personally, socially, and academically.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

The primary purpose of the proposed school is to increase learning opportunities for at-risk students. The educational program, instructional

plan, and graduation requirements are specifically designed to successfully transition each student to a post-secondary opportunity. The comprehensive curriculum plan will not only prepare students academically through the use of a rigorous and relevant individualized curriculum, but will also ensure that students have appropriate personal/social skills, financial literacy skills, and knowledge and skills to engage in meaningful career planning. As stated earlier, one of the School's goals, in alignment with the School mission, is successful graduation and transition to post-secondary college or career.

The technology-based curriculum provides students with the tools, resources, and content to be successful learners. The use of technology helps to ensure student readiness for course progress and grade promotion by integrating differentiated instruction based on student needs. The curriculum is based on a three-component model of personalization, performance data, and intervention support. Research has consistently shown this three-pronged strategy will significantly increase student achievement levels when implemented in a web-based learning environment (Chou & Wang, 2000; Federico, 2000; Rasmussen & Davidson-Shivers, 1998; Wang, et. al. 2006). The curriculum software tracks student achievement and can add or remove practice and application assignments based on student success. Students can move through the lessons at their own pace - moving as fast or as slow as needed to fully understand the content and demonstrate that understanding. Technology provides students with the opportunities to easily access pronunciation and definitions for unfamiliar words; access a video, graphic, or photo to illustrate a concept; listen to text using headphones; or utilize supplementary resources for additional practice. The use of technology can prohibit progress to the next lesson until the student demonstrates mastery in each lesson within each course.

Students will have their own ISP that is constructed for each student based upon the results of a baseline entry assessment, past academic performance, previous school records, a career interest inventory and career plan, social/personal needs inventory, disciplinary records, and parent and student input. The ISP will be a comprehensive plan that serves as a "roadmap" to student success and will include the following essential components: 1) Individual Graduation Plan, 2) Personal Goals Statement, 3) Foundational Skills Assessment and Growth, 4) Social/Personal Needs Intervention Plan, 5) Career Interests Inventory, 6) Employment and Workforce Assistance, and 7) Individual Transition Plan. The ISP will outline all academic, social, and career needs and goals for each student, including graduation requirements.

The Career Coach will work closely with students to teach job skills, assist with finding employment, and prepare students for a successful post-secondary transition to college or career. The Career Coach will provide instructional time to students in the areas of employability skills, career and college readiness, and post-secondary options based on each student's ISP.

All students will have access to Career and Technology Education (CTE) courses designed to provide the workforce skills and certification necessary to compete for a local, high need job. Students and teachers will have opportunities to be trained and certified in Microsoft Office Specialist

(MOS) Bundle: Word, Excel and PowerPoint; valuable credentials leading to proficiency credit at post-secondary institutions and enhancing employability and marketability. This certification will be provided through Certiport, the Sole Source Provider of Microsoft products in the world.

(Source: ALS)

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?*

a. Future-Ready Core Requirements: The School will meet the Future-Ready Core requirements by focusing on strengthening foundational skills and planning with the end in mind for every student in support of college and career readiness. An ISP (as previously described) will be developed for each student to track and monitor individual student progress and outcomes, including meeting Future-Ready Core requirements.

The Graduation Committee comprised of, but not limited to the Principal, Assistant Principal, Career Coach, and Data Specialist on behalf of the Board of Directors, will review each student's ISP and confirm that all requirements have been met by completing the Graduation Checklist (in Appendix U-4) in order to deem the student ready for graduation.

b. Earning Credit Hours: To receive credit for a high school class, students must earn a passing average (70% or above) in the course. The Assistant Principal will verify all credits by reviewing the credit verification form, supporting documentation, and final assessment. Course completion information will be entered in the student information system (SIS) and management information system (MIS).

c. Calculating Grade Point Average: Grade Point averages (GPA) will be calculated on a weighted 4.0 scale with a .5 additional point awarded for an honors course and 1.0 additional point added for an Advanced Placement course. Class rank will be based on the weighted GPA.

d. Transcript Information: All course credit information will be recorded in the SIS and MIS. The School will produce and certify its own transcripts.

(Source: ALS)

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 School will operate 205 student days each year and will mirror the local district calendar relating to holidays.

The School will provide the flexibility for students to regularly attend one of three daily sessions, each 4 hours in length, for curriculum, instruction, college and career preparation, and personal/social needs counseling. Students will choose to attend one of the sessions (or more as space permits). Our School will work on a tight "bell-to-bell" learning

schedule. Without students changing classrooms, the four-hour day is similar in actual instructional time to that of a traditional high school.

Earlier in this application we met Kevin, a 16 year old student not on track with his cohort because he has not earned enough credits. Kevin's mother is a single parent and is working two jobs to support her family; yet, she still finds her income below the poverty line. Kevin has 3 younger siblings and is expected to help with childcare and hold a part-time job to contribute to the household income. These family responsibilities distracted him from focusing on his schoolwork and prevented him from regular attendance at his neighborhood school. He found himself falling farther and farther behind his peers. Enrollment in a non-traditional high school is helping Kevin get back on track. The flexible daily schedule and extended school-year calendar allow Kevin to both attend school on a regular basis and hold a part-time job that positively impacts his family's economic needs. Not only is he optimistic about finishing high school and graduating, but he has been able to identify dreams for his future, and has received guidance on the path necessary to realize those dreams.

School leaders will be creative in program delivery and programs that allow students to progress by demonstrating mastery in essential learning standards. The School will implement the schedule that best fits and accommodates its students, programs, and mission.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

Using a combination of direct instruction, instructional software aligned to state standards, and supplemental materials, the curriculum will have the breadth and depth to meet the needs of the student population, including those not performing on grade level, and provide students with the required courses to succeed. Students of all abilities, including those who are members of special populations, will be welcomed at the School and provided with a rigorous and relevant education that incorporates data intensive interventions from the North Carolina Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Model and the National Center on Intensive Intervention.

MTSS is a multi-tiered framework that promotes school improvement through engaging, high quality instruction by using a team approach to guide educational and behavioral practices, and a problem solving model based on data to address student needs and maximize growth for all. Upon enrolling in the School students will complete screening exams to determine their immediate level of MTSS support.

Three tiers of intervention define the interventions for the MTSS process. These tiers include increasing levels of intervention intensity. Tier I Intervention: Instruction for all students, prevention, and differentiation.

High quality instruction and universal screening will be provided to all students in the general education classroom. Tier 2 Interventions: Targeted interventions for students at-risk. Struggling learners will be provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning during individual and small group instruction. Tier 3 Interventions: Planned/Intense interventions by a Problem-Solving team for students with intensive needs. Students will be provided with individual intervention, one-on-one tutoring, and ongoing analysis of progress through progress monitoring tools.

The School's MTSS team members will include, but are not limited to: advisory teacher, administrator, reading specialist, exceptional children teacher, Career Coach, and Family Support Specialist. The team will be responsible for ensuring that interventions and instructional resources are matched to students' needs.

Significant to effective interventions is the use of data. The team will: 1) Define the problem; 2) Analyze the problem using available data; 3) Develop and implement a plan that includes one or more performance goals for the student; 4) Measure the student's response to the intervention by using data from progress monitoring; and 5) Continue or adjust the intervention based on the student's response and progress.

The main goal of MTSS academic interventions will be to identify students who are struggling academically and to help them learn the skills needed to succeed. For students who are not performing at expected levels, the School will intensify the interventions accordingly.

HOW IT WORKS

Mr. Wilson, an English teacher at the School, monitors student progress by observing students in the classroom and reviewing data. Mr. Wilson can locate all aspects of a student's progress by viewing Student Dashboards and Activity Score Reports to determine how each student is performing. By combining observations of a student's progress during class sessions with the data collected from multiple sources, Mr. Wilson is able to identify in what areas, if any, students are not showing progress. He can then plan to assist those students by applying interventions in one-on-one, small-group, and whole class scenarios. One day, Mr. Wilson assembles a small group of students for instruction on the use of reflexive pronouns in speech and writing. Students who are not responsive to these Tier 1 interventions may be referred to the MTSS team.

Family members will be included in MTSS meetings and community providers will be recruited to provide behavioral or social/emotional interventions to students and families.

(Source: ALS)

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.

a. Identification: A Home Language Survey will be administered to every student at enrollment. If the dominant home language is a language other than English, the student will be scheduled for the state-identified English language proficiency screener/test, the WIDA. If the student is identified as LEP based on performance on the WIDA, ESL staff will document the identification, appropriate language instructional program goals, and appropriate instructional and testing accommodations in the LEP plan.

b. Instruction: The purpose of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program will be to help ensure that English Language Learners (ELL) (including immigrant youth) attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same state academic content and student academic achievement standards that all students are expected to meet. Faculty and the student's parents will plan the means for instruction in English and/or specific modifications or accommodations. ELL students shall have equal access to appropriate English language instruction and instruction in basic subject areas that is: 1) understandable to the students given their level of English proficiency; and 2) equal and comparable in amount, scope, sequence, and quality to that provided to English proficient students.

Our School will use the ESL co-teacher model that involves collaboration between the classroom teacher and ESL teacher. The ESL teacher will be certified and knowledgeable in ELL/SIOP strategies and will work with each classroom teacher to address student language needs. Classroom accommodations may include differentiated instruction, visuals and graphic organizers, simplified language of instruction without changing the content, and alternate assessment as necessary.

The instructional software to be used by the School offers courses with extensive scaffolding. Controlled vocabulary and syntax, chunked text, and short page lengths with limited scrolling facilitate reading comprehension. Students will be able to listen to instructional text read aloud in English (and in Spanish for math courses), review rollover vocabulary supporting academic language proficiency, use media to observe and study multiple representations of concepts, and participate in interactive self-assessments with immediate feedback.

c. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Exit: In order to determine when students no longer need ESOL assistance, the School will determine the content knowledge and language skills necessary for successful functioning in the regular classroom. Multiple instruments as well as teacher judgment may be used to evaluate English listening and speaking skills, English literacy skills, and content area knowledge. The students will not be maintained in alternative language programs longer than necessary based on program exit criteria, and will be monitored after exiting such programs for a minimum of 6 months. Additional academic and English language support shall be provided if students begin to have difficulty. If it is determined that a student is not making satisfactory progress, an ELL Committee meeting with parental participation will take place to review all pertinent information and recommend an appropriate plan.

State and federal law require ELL students to be annually assessed on the state-identified English language proficiency test until the student meets the exit criteria. The test currently used by North Carolina for annual assessment is the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners or the ACCESS for ELLs. The School will comply with state requirements for exiting students from ELL services. The criteria for exiting LEP status is known as the Comprehensive Objective Composite (COC), which requires minimum scores of 4.8 Composite, 4.0 Reading, and 4.0 Writing.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

Instructional Programs, Practices, Strategies, and Opportunities: The screening process for students who are gifted will be ongoing, with recommendations for consideration taken throughout the year. Any student may be referred for gifted services by a teacher, student, parent, or administrator. Students who demonstrate accelerated performance, compared to that of other peers their age, in APEX coursework completion, credit earning rate, short-cycle GAIN assessments in math and reading, combined with End-of-Course test scores in the 95th percentile or higher will be referred to the RtI team for Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) screening. During the screening process, the RtI team will solicit input from advisory teachers, administrators, parents, content-area teachers and specialists, as well as carefully review testing data, to determine if the student should be administered the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT).

Identification: Students who score in the 90th percentile or above on the CogAT, or score between the 85th and 90th percentile on the CogAT and have at least one EOC score of 5, will be classified as gifted and a Differentiated Educational Plan (DEP) will be developed by the RtI Team based need of the student and AIG area. The DEP will outline the services appropriate for the student.

Placement: Placement into the AIG program will be based on multiple criteria; students will not be excluded from the program on the basis of any single criterion. An AIG Committee, consisting of the principal or assistant principal, Career Coach, AIG Specialist, advisory teacher, and/or support personnel, will evaluate student data and determine if the criteria for AIG identification are met. Following the collection of data, the AIG Committee will review the students identified and begin to determine the level of differentiation needed for each individual student.

Each school year, advisory teachers will collaborate with AIG Specialists to complete a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) for identified gifted students. Students will receive in-class differentiation in the area(s) of identification with the support, both directly and indirectly, of the AIG

Specialist. Students may also receive enrichment through a pull-out program with the AIG Specialist.

Our program model and curriculum resources will support gifted and high ability learners through access to Honors and Advanced Placement courses and technology-based individualized learning that allow students to complete accelerated coursework at their own pace. Differentiated instruction, to include more complex tasks, exposure to a broadened scope of information, an emphasis on multiple perspectives, more rapid pace of instruction, a greater focus on higher order thinking skills, and more sophisticated products/performances will be used as strategies to address the needs of gifted students in the school. Alternative programs, resources, and textbooks may be utilized so that each student has the opportunity to successfully progress through the curriculum at an appropriate depth, complexity, abstractness, and pace.

Monitoring and Evaluating: The School will monitor and evaluate the progress and success of intellectually gifted students based on each student's course progress and completions, credit accumulation rate, successful grade promotion, graduation, and successful post-secondary transition. There will be an annual performance review for each student to determine the appropriateness of his/her program. The decision for a student to continue receiving services will be based on the student's performance, and academic or social needs. If a decision is made by the committee, including the student's parent, for the student to return to the general education program, an Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) will be developed and support will be provided to the student in order to receive gifted services at a later date, if appropriate.

(Source: ALS)

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)*

Enrolled Students with Disabilities, including Section 504: The School will comply with all federal and state authority concerning the education of students with disabilities, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Students previously identified as eligible for special education services or protected under Section 504 will be identified either through self-report, PowerSchool, or upon receipt of the student's prior school records. The EC teacher will serve as the lead for EC students and as the 504 Coordinator.

Child Find: The School will comply with the federal Child Find mandate to identify and evaluate students who have, or are suspected of having, disabilities and need exceptional children services. The School or parent will complete a Referral of Concern form to address behavioral, medical, physical, or emotional issues that are limiting the student's ability to function in the academic environment. This referral will be given to the principal, the child's teacher, or other school professional for review. Within 30 days of the receipt of written notification of concerns regarding a child, the IEP team, including the parent, will meet to review existing data and determine whether a referral for consideration of eligibility for special education is necessary.

a. Evaluation: The School will use evaluation procedures in accordance with NC 1503-2 through NC 1503-3 to determine whether a student has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the student needs. The School will use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability under NC 1500-2.4. A full individualized evaluation will be conducted before the initial provision of special education and related services.

Informed consent will be obtained before conducting an evaluation.

b. Determination of Eligibility: Qualified professionals and the parent will determine whether the student is a student with a disability based on documented information from various sources. A copy of the evaluation reports and the documentation of eligibility will be provided at no cost to the parent.

If a determination is made that a student has a disability and needs special education and related services, and parental consent has been obtained, an individual education program (IEP) will be developed in accordance with federal and state law. The IEP team will consist of both parents (if possible), the student, the EC teacher, the student's advisory teacher, a professional who understands and can explain the evaluations of the student, the Principal or designee who understands EC resources, and other people invited by the parent or School.

The initial evaluation, eligibility determination, and for an eligible student, IEP development will be completed within 90 days of receipt of a written referral.

Records

a. Requests: The School will take reasonable steps to promptly obtain the student's prior records including the IEP and supporting documents from the previous LEA within 30 days of enrollment.

b. Confidentiality: All student records will be kept confidential in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and IDEA. The School will keep a record of parties obtaining access to education records in accordance with NC 1505-2.5.

c. Compliance: Student records will be prepared, retained, and disposed of in a manner consistent with federal and state statutes. Student records will be stored in fireproof cabinets or a fireproof room behind double locks. Records that have met retention requirements, and are not subject to other legal or audit holds, will be destroyed in accordance with Chapters 121 and 132 of the NC General Statutes.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

Continuum of Services: The School will ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of students with disabilities for special education and related services. Service delivery options may include consultation, itinerant instruction in regular and special classes, and resource room in conjunction with regular class placement. Students who do not make educational progress may work directly with the exceptional children (EC) teacher and/or content area teachers in individual and small group settings. Accommodations to the curriculum and/or pace of delivery may be provided. In cases where a need for more services, accommodations, or supplements aids and supports is suspected, the IEP will be reviewed and may be revised by the IEP team.

FAPE: Each student with a disability is entitled to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) that will enable the student to progress in the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible. Specially designed instruction may employ universal design for learning, assistive technology, accommodations, and/or modifications.

To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities will be educated with non-disabled peers. A range of service delivery options will be available to meet the students' needs, e.g., consultation, itinerant instruction, and resource room for one-on-one or small group instruction or other services. Removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment will occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. In such

cases, the School will consider the continuum of placements available.

The School will ensure that placement decisions are:

- o Made by a group of persons, including the parents, and other persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of evaluation data, and the placement options.
- o Made in accordance with LRE provisions.
- o Determined at least annually based on the student's IEP.

To maximize accessibility to the curriculum, students will access the state standards through appropriate programming, support from EC and regular education teachers, support in the use of assistive technology, and through the use of universal design principals. For most students with disabilities, these supports will support progress towards a standard high school diploma.

Students will receive instructional support through specially designed instruction and related services as determined through the IEP process. The level of service will be aligned to the severity of the student's disability. Teachers will be trained in designing and implementing individualized instruction to address the learning needs of all students at the School. Teachers will instruct students in the unique skills necessary to access and benefit from the core curriculum documented on the student's IEP.

Supplementary aids will be provided by the School. Supplementary aids may include peer tutoring, interpreters, or referral to the EC teacher or other staff member as well as resources such as calculators, tapes, tape recorders, noise reducing headphones, shared note-taking, and other technology devices and services.

IEP: The School will ensure that IEPs meet the requirements of section 636(d) of IDEA, and are developed, reviewed, and revised for each student with a disability in accordance with NC 1503-4 through NC 1503-5.1. Students will receive instruction and support through specially designed instruction and related services as determined by the IEP process. The EC teacher will be responsible for monitoring the progress of students in achieving IEP goals. Parents will receive periodic reports on the progress the student is making toward the annual goals. IEP meetings will be held at least annually for each eligible student to determine whether the annual goals for the student have been achieved and to review and revise the IEP as appropriate. Each student with a disability will be re-evaluated every 3 years to determine if the student still qualifies as a student with a disability. If the student is no longer an eligible student with a disability, the student will be dismissed from services.

Related Services will be provided in compliance with each student's IEP.

Transportation services documented on a student's IEP will be provided by the School through a contract with the school district or an approved private transportation provider.

Counseling and social work services will be available onsite through a referral by the Family Support Specialist (FSS). Highly qualified service

providers will be available for individual, family, and group counseling along with immediate crisis intervention services. The FSS will work with faculty and staff to identify students in need of wraparound services to meet students' personal needs.

Other related services (such as speech-language pathology, audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, and physical and occupational therapy) will be provided as needed through contracts with qualified providers.

(Source: ALS)

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. Student Performance Standards

The School will submit a Proposal to Implement an Alternative Learning School to the SBE in accordance with SBE Policy GCS-Q-001(V) that states, "A charter school may apply to the State Board of Education for designation as an alternative school if it designates in the charter that the school will serve as an alternative school as defined in Section I-C of this policy." Our School will be an alternative school, as described in Section I-D of this policy, offering an alternative learning program that meets the requirements set forth in Section I-C. Upon designation, the School will seek approval to be included in the NC Alternative Schools' Accountability Model (SBE Policy GCS-C-038). The curriculum, mission, goals, and achievement and academic growth measures closely align with the Alternative Schools' Accountability Model.

The Student Performance Standards below align with the School's mission. Proposed growth levels are based upon 2014-15 results at Commonwealth High School and long term results at other ALS-managed schools.

Goal 1: Improve successful per semester credit earning rate (with a "C" or higher in the course) among students compared to the successful credit earning rate at prior schools. The annual baseline will be per semester credit earning rate at prior school for students who attend our school at least 1 semester.

2017-18 Baseline + 0.0 credits/semester
2018-19 Baseline + 0.25
2019-20 Baseline + 0.50
2020-21 Baseline + 0.75

2021-22 Baseline + 0.75

Goal 2: Improve 4 year standard high school diploma graduation rate, as reported by NCDPI, compared to the percent of on-track students who enrolled in the School. The annual baseline will be the percent of students for the year's graduation cohort who enrolled already on-track to graduate. Reporting will be limited to years in which the on-track cohort exceeds 20 students.

Class of 2018 No goal proposed because very few Class of 2018 students are expected to enroll during the first academic year.

Class of 2019 Baseline + 2 percentage points Class of 2020: Baseline + 3

Class of 2021 Baseline + 4

Class of 2022 Baseline + 5

Goal 3: Improve student grades, as measured by the % enrolling with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0+ from prior schools compared to the percent who achieve a cumulative 2.0+ GPA or who improve their GPA by 0.5 points after attending for at least 1 semester. The annual baseline calculation is the % of students entering school with a cumulative GPA of 2.0+ who attend the School for at least 1 semester.

2017-18 Baseline + 5 percentage points

2018-19 Baseline + 10

2019-20 Baseline + 15

2020-21 Baseline + 20

2021-22 Baseline + 20

Goal 4: Improve the persistence rate (continuing enrollment in school or graduation) among students.

2017-18 67% persistence rate

2018-19 70%

2019-20 72%

2020-21 74%

2021-22 75%

Goal 5: Improve the percentage of graduates accepted in 2- and 4-year post-secondary institutions, technical schools, and trade schools within 1 year of high school graduation.

Class of 2018 50% acceptance rate

Class of 2019 55%

Class of 2020 65%

Class of 2021 70%

Class of 2022 75%

2. Evaluations in Addition to State Assessments: The assessment, evaluation, monitoring, and feedback tools will be used to identify students' strengths and needs; determine starting points for targeted instruction; determine appropriate pacing for on-schedule completion of courses; differentiate instruction; re-teach content and key concepts; identify immediate intensive interventions; determine mastery and grade promotion; modify instructional program at the classroom, school, and program levels; and develop targeted professional development.

A baseline academic assessment will be administered to all students using the General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN), a criterion-referenced

measure of English and math skills, or other similar diagnostic assessment. This initial assessment allows the MTSS team to begin identifying student academic strengths and needs, thus informing instructional decisions. GAIN results are used to place students in courses that match skill levels. Students are monitored after 120 days of attendance. Those not making progress are referred to the MTSS team to identify appropriate interventions.

Additional evaluation tools used to monitor progress and identify students in need of support will include: quizzes, tests, and checklists; classroom observations; benchmarking (which may include district benchmarks, pre-tests, locally developed mini-assessments, or other diagnostic assessments) used to modify instruction and tutorials for state assessment success; and content mastery measured through the achievement of benchmarks and successful completion of each course. Assessment opportunities including baseline, formative, and summative assessments are integrated throughout the digital curriculum. Summative evaluations will include student performance on EOCs.

The School's technology-enhanced courses and content will provide teachers and students the ability to monitor student progress continuously. Reports are available from an electronic Gradebook and provide teachers with performance information for an individual student or entire class (See Appendix U-5). Teachers will use this along with the evaluation tools described above to identify students in need of additional instruction and/or support.

3. Promotion: The principal will be responsible for making the decision to promote, retain, or accelerate each student on a case by case basis. This decision will be based on the classroom teachers' and the principal's judgment of what best serves the educational welfare of the student. It is the expectation that the principal or his/her designee will confer with parents during the decision-making process regarding retention or acceleration and follow Promotion Standards for all students, including those with special needs. Promotion standards are as follows:
9th to 10th Grade: 6 credits (to include English I and Math I)
10th to 11th Grade: 12 credits
11th to 12th Grade: 18 credits
Credits to Graduate: 22 credits completed if 9th grade entry date is 2012-13 or after

4. Exit Standards: To earn a diploma, students must complete all School and state graduation requirements, including: a) earn the required number of credits in an approved course of study based on 9th grade entry year; b) satisfy the state high school exit standards for EOC tests; c) complete required exit activities, e.g., student satisfaction survey, post-secondary transition plan, and/or essay.

The School's educational program and focus is to prepare all students to meet Future-Ready Core Courses of Study, state graduation requirements, including students with disabilities and those requiring ESOL services.

To receive course credit, students must earn a passing average (70% or above). The Assistant Principal will verify all credits by reviewing the

credit verification form, supporting documentation, and final assessment. Course credit information will be entered in the student information system (SIS) and management information system (MIS). The School will produce and certify its own transcripts.

Grade point averages (GPA) will be calculated on a weighted 4.0 scale with a .5 additional point awarded for an honors course and 1.0 additional point added for an Advanced Placement course. Class rank will be based on the weighted GPA.

For 12th graders who have not earned a passing score on the required EOC assessments and are at-risk of not graduating, the School will conduct appropriate remediation activities through the MTSS process.

The Graduation Committee comprised of, but not limited to, the Principal, Assistant Principal, Career Coach, and Data Specialist, on the Board's behalf, will review each student's ISP and confirm that all requirements have been met by completing the Graduation Checklist (Appendix U-4).

(Source: ALS)

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.*

Effective Discipline: The School is committed to helping students build positive relationships within the School in order to feel connected and supported. The tone of the campus will be generated through respect and care for all students from administrators and staff that will include significant adult connections, positive adult interactions, greeting of students by name, handshakes at the door, and celebrations of successes.

The School recognizes that a positive learning environment cannot exist without maintaining order and discipline conducive to teaching and learning. All students will be required to know and follow the Code of Conduct. A well-defined, universally communicated, and consistently enforced discipline code will ensure that students understand what is expected of them, the consequences for noncompliance, and how and by whom their performance will be judged.

The Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) model will be utilized as our data-driven problem-solving model with an integration of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) strategies and interventions for decision making to address student misconduct as well as academic deficiencies. This data-based team problem-solving approach includes: establishing the goal to be obtained based on a review of data; discussion of any barrier to meeting the goal; development of a plan that includes research-based strategies; and follow-up meeting to assess the effectiveness of the strategies.

The School believes that specialized individual, group, and universal interventions have a greater likelihood of enabling students to change their behavior in a way that does not interfere with their learning or the learning of others than a model of discipline that relies solely on consequences for misbehavior. An added component will be interventions such as anger management instruction, guidance counseling sessions, teacher-parent-student meetings, and other interventions designed to identify root problems and teach appropriate behaviors.

Suspension and Expulsion: The Principal may impose short-term suspensions (up to 10 days) for, or recommend to the Board of Directors the long-term suspension (11 days or more) or expulsion of, any student who willfully engages in conduct that violates a provision of the Code of Student Conduct. Serious violations of the Code of Conduct that threaten the safety of students, staff, or school visitors, or threaten to substantially disrupt the educational environment, at the discretion of the Principal, will result in corrective action up to and including a suspension or expulsion. A complete list of behaviors considered offenses is included in the draft Student Handbook in Appendix D.

Students with Disabilities: Discipline for students with disabilities will be in accordance with federal and state requirements and the School's Code of Conduct. When Tier I and 2 interventions are exhausted and problematic behavior occurs on a frequent basis, a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) will be administered, and a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) developed. If needed, the IEP and the BIP may be reviewed to assess the need for wraparound support. If the behavior results in more than 10 cumulative days of suspension in one year, a manifestation determination will be held as required to review the behavior that led to the suspension. Parents will be notified in writing of any long term removal and will be provided with their Procedural Safeguards. Compensatory time will be provided to the student consistent with federal and state requirements.

Due Process: All students will have access to their due process rights, including grievance procedures, in the Student Handbook, provided at enrollment. The Principal will also provide any student with his/her due process rights, including grievance procedures, at the time of a short-term suspension or recommendation for a long-term suspension or expulsion.

(Source: ALS)

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: The NC HS for Accelerated Learning, Inc.

Mailing Address: 5112 Central Avenue

City/State/Zip: Charlotte NC 28205

Street Address: Same as above

Phone: 980-721-4350

Fax: 704-391-3720

Name of registered agent and address:

Donna Rascoe
4140 Parklake Avenue, Suite 200
Raleigh, NC 27612

FEDERAL TAX ID: 46-2140704

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:

X Yes (copy of letter from federal government attached: Appendix E)

No

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

Governance and Organizational Structure of Private Non-Profit Organization:

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

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

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.*

Board Functions, Duties, Roles, and Responsibilities: The Board of Directors will be legally accountable for the academic, financial, and operational performance of the School. The Board will provide oversight of all operations of the School, delegating day-to-day management to the leadership team and educational management organization (EMO), Accelerated Learning Solutions (ALS), under an approved management agreement and as appropriate and allowed by law. The Board will meet regularly to approve budgets, set policy, establish and approve procedures, approve the selection of a Principal as lead administrator, approve the selection of teachers, and ensure that the financial and administrative management of the School meets regulatory requirements, maintains sound fiscal standards, and remains financially viable.

Members of the Board will not have authority except as a whole and will not, as individuals, exert undue influence over staff except as defined in the Board's policies. Details on these policies can be found in the Bylaws included in Appendix H.

Lead Administrator: The Board believes that the selection of the Principal, the lead administrator, is the most important decision the Board will make prior to the opening of School. The Principal will have the most influence on the success of the School. Although the Principal will be an employee of the EMO, the Board will oversee and have substantial involvement in the ultimate selection of the Principal. The ideal candidate for this position will have an exceptional ability to lead and inspire administrative and instructional staff. The Principal will be a qualified education leader with experience in managing schools for students who require accelerated mastery of foundational skills and earned course credits. He/she will also be skilled at building and managing internal teams as well as collaborating with other stakeholders in the community to build partnerships that are beneficial to the School's students. The Principal will be a collaborative leader who will provide frequent and routine communications with stakeholders, including Board members.

Recruitment and hiring will include a national search, including referrals from board members, job postings in Education Week, Monster.com, CareerBuilder.com, the Gaston Gazette, and other pertinent publications. The Board or designee will review all resumes. Screening interviews will be conducted. First round interviews will be conducted with members of the Board or designee. Background and extensive reference checks will be conducted. Upon the return of a successful background check, the Board will interview final candidates. An offer of employment from the EMO will be extended to the candidate, offering a compensation and benefits package competitive with the local job market.

The Board will supervise the EMO and the EMO will supervise the Principal. The EMO's Regional Director of Schools will provide direct supervision of the School's Principal, e.g., conduct formative assessments via meetings, walkthroughs, and observations; daily review of School performance data; and annually complete the final appraisal as described below by July 1. The Board will review the final rating and add comments, if applicable, prior to the final appraisal being provided to the Principal for signature and comments.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

a. **Composition:** The non-profit applicant Board is governed by leaders of the community who are committed to the success of public education. A diverse Board of no fewer than 5 or more than 9 individuals able to recognize, articulate, and address the needs of students will provide governing leadership. Board members include individuals with a range of professional skills and specific expertise in real estate, governance, education, and finance. This Board is fully capable of the organizational, pedagogical, legal, and other tasks required to open and operate a public school.

b. **Powers and Duties:** The Board is legally responsible for all transactions of the School and will be accountable for academic, financial, and operational performance. The responsibilities of the Board shall include: approval of operating policies and procedures; hiring the management company and managing agreements with all direct School vendors; compliance with state laws and terms of the Charter; approval of the annual budget; approval of Principal selection; review of Principal's job performance and professional development goals; review and decide appeals of student disciplinary decisions as set out in the Student Handbook; audit review and compliance; compliance with Public Records and Open Meetings Laws; and documenting minutes, Board actions, and approval of policies. The Board will not be involved in the day-to-day leadership or administration of the School, and will empower the Principal with these duties.

c. **Ensuring School Success:** The organizational structure of the School will facilitate the delivery of instructional and support services to students in an effective and efficient manner. Clearly defined responsibilities and reporting lines will ensure that everyone understands their responsibilities in the success of the School. The Board will expect its legal advisor, accountant, auditor, and EMO, Accelerated Learning Solutions, to report on its activities using a pre-defined schedule for board meeting agendas.

d. **Evaluation of the School and School Leader:** At the direction of the Board, evaluations of the School Principal will be completed every year by the education management organization. The Principal will complete a self-assessment and reflection, and gather input from various stakeholders, which will provide a basis for goal-setting, professional development, and

demonstration of performance on specific standards.

The EMO will develop the Principal Evaluation System to align with the Marzano Evaluation System, which embeds the 7 critical standards used as the framework for the North Carolina School Executive Standards. At least 35% of the Principal's summative evaluation will be based on learning growth achieved annually and measured by statewide assessments and learning targets (e.g., credits earned, student retention, and growth in reading as measured by reading software).

An annual Satisfaction Survey will be administered to parents and students to assess School performance, and the results considered by the Board as important input regarding the success of the School. A corrective action plan will be developed, if necessary, after Board review and discussion.

e. Stakeholder Representation: The Board will welcome input from community stakeholders including teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members. The Board will hold regular meetings to discuss the successes of the School, including reporting on the performance of the School with data regarding enrollment, attendance, academic performance, parent/student satisfaction, withdrawals, suspensions, and dismissals. Notices and agendas of these meetings will be posted well in advance in accordance with all applicable open meetings laws.

(Source: ALS)

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?*

a. Recruitment and Selection: The founding Board members were identified, recruited, and selected by individuals who are committed to the approval and implementation of a non-traditional high school graduation option for at-risk students or former students in the Gaston area.

b. Board Vacancies: Board members have been divided into three classes to serve for terms of one, two, or three years, and until their successors shall be elected and shall qualify. The successors in each class of directors shall be elected to serve for terms of three years and until their successors are elected. Each Director shall hold office for the term for which he/she is elected and until his/her successor shall have been elected and qualified or until his/her earlier resignation, removal from office, or death. Any officer and/or employee may be removed by a majority vote of the Board whenever, in the judgment of the Board, the best interests of the Corporation will be served thereby. Any Director may be removed at any time by a majority of the Directors then in office.

Details on the Board of Directors' selection process and terms of office can be found in the Bylaws included in Appendix H. The Board Bylaws were approved at the Board's meeting on February 21, 2013.

(Source: ALS)

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

The Board will meet monthly at a time/place designated in the meeting notice.

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).*

In order to assure that board members have the range of professional skills required to open and operate a successful public charter school, after preliminary approval of the charter application and prior to final approval, members of the Board will participate in the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), Office of Charter School's year-long planning program prior to the charter school's opening for students. The planning year will include regular meetings with consultants from the Office of Charter Schools to provide information on the following topics: school opening plans, staff development, finance, governance, board training, marketing, policies and procedures, securing a school site, and hiring a school administrator.

In addition, our selected Board legal counsel, Donna Rascoe, will provide professional training on governing, reporting, and fiduciary responsibilities. The Board's accountant and financial auditor will orient the Board to financial statements and key indicators of financial performance and viability. The EMO will be expected to orient the Board to accepted pedagogy for at-risk and over-age for grade students and key indicators of student achievement as well as North Carolina accountability standards.

After the charter application is submitted, the Board will enter into a series of training, orientation, and school development steps consistent with the expectations of NCDPI and the State Board of Education. The steps will include:

- a. In-depth training and orientation to legal and fiduciary responsibilities by charter board legal counsel.
- b. NCDPI Board training during preliminary approval phase.

Directors are expected to complete as many phases of the Board training and orientation as possible. As many Directors as can reasonably travel to other sites will visit successful dropout prevention and recovery programs which will serve as models for development of school culture and student achievement.

On an ongoing basis, Board members will participate in training and professional development. This will include, but is not limited to: legislative updates, funding changes, understanding school performance reports, etc. The Board will annually evaluate its performance in fulfilling its responsibilities and its ability to work as a team. New Board members will be required to participate in a new member orientation.

(Source: ALS)

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 School's governing body is guided by Bylaws that define how the board will govern, including conflicts of interest and the proposed meeting schedule. The Bylaws are included in Appendix H. A member of the Board may not be an employee of the Corporation (in any capacity, including, but not limited to, as a teacher or principal) and may not be an employee of the non-profit corporation's management company.

In connection with any actual or possible conflicts of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of his or her financial interest and must be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and/or members of the committees with board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

If the board or committee has reasonable cause to believe that a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the response of the member and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the board or committee determines that the member has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

To avoid any actual conflicts and to mitigate perceived conflicts, ethics and conflicts of interest will be specifically addressed during the Board's orientation and training. Additionally, each Board member will sign the Conflict of Interest Policy prior to becoming a Board member and annually thereafter.

There are no existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts if the application is approved.

(Source: ALS)

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

The Board is a governing and policy-setting body with expertise in real estate, governance, education, and finance to effectively develop School policies. When the application is approved, the draft Board policy manual will be further reviewed, edited, and finalized with the advice of counsel, Donna Rascoe, charter board attorney with Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP.

The decision-making process will always involve the advice of content area experts who have experience in the field. In particular, the Board will look to its attorney and educational management company, ALS, for recommendations

on policies relating to the instructional model, student achievement, and school operations.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

Not applicable because there are currently no plans for advisory bodies, councils, or associations.

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

All grievances, from either parents or staff members, will be handled fairly and promptly, in a professional manner, with dignity and respect.

Grievances about the School should be registered in writing with the Principal or Assistant Principal within 30 days of the concern. The administrator will determine the nature of the grievance and begin collecting all the relevant information and data. The administrator will take steps to resolve the situation in a reasonable, agreed upon time frame.

Depending on the nature and severity of the grievance, or if the parent or guardian is not satisfied with the resolution, the administrator may inform the Governing Board Chair in writing of the grievance and the plan to address the grievance. The parent/guardian may also contact the Governing Board Chair, whose contact information may be obtained at the School's front desk.

The Board will make every effort to consider the grievance within 30 days. The Board shall have final authority to hear and decide on actions as a result of parental concerns.

Parents will always be welcome to attend monthly Board meetings. Public notice for these meetings will be placed on the front door of the School and posted online. Parents will be welcome to voice comments, concerns, or recommendations during the Public Comment period of any meeting of the Board.

Any employee with a grievance will present the issue or concern in writing to the Principal or Assistant Principal within 48 hours of any offending event. The Administrator will meet with the employee to determine the nature of the complaint. He/she will inform the employee that a full investigation of the complaint will be undertaken and a resolution provided in a reasonable, agreed-upon time frame. The Principal will collect all of the relevant information and data (who, what, when, why, and where).

The follow-up communication with the employee will be accomplished in an appropriate manner and may include a meeting to discuss the results of the investigation and next steps. If the employee is not satisfied with the results, he/she may appeal, in writing, through the chain of command. Depending on the nature and severity of the issue, the Principal may inform the Board of the complaint and the plan to address it.

(Source: ALS)

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.

Not Applicable

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

Name of the Company: Accelerated Learning Solutions, Inc.

Address: 2636 Elm Hill Pike, #500

Nashville TN 37214

Website: <http://www.als-education.com>

Phone Number: 443-463-1056

Contact Person: Robert Essink

Fax: 615-850-3854

Email: Robert.Essink@als-education.com

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

The Board of Directors is choosing to contract with Accelerated Learning Solutions, Inc. (ALS) for two primary reasons. First, ALS has been selected because it is successfully operating 22 charter high schools in Florida and two in Charlotte, NC, and has accumulated a positive track record of academic success with at-risk students. Highlights include improvement in students' foundational skills; improved credit earning rates for high school students; successful non-traditional solutions for dropout prevention and

recovery; increased graduation rates; and successful post-secondary transition for at-risk high school students. Second, ALS has an educational approach that aligns with the philosophy of the Governing Board and School mission. ALS assumes all students can improve their academic performance if given the time, opportunity, tools, structure, and encouragement from caring, competent adults.

The ALS leadership team has decades of experience in Education, Finance, Business Management, Public Relations, and related fields and has a proven track record of successfully opening multiple schools each year within expected timelines and budgets. For example, in the fall of 2014, ALS simultaneously opened three schools, including Commonwealth High School in Charlotte. School district administrators, board members, and business and community leaders in current school districts contracting with ALS attest to ALS' ability to implement programs in a cost-effective, efficient, and on-time manner that has consistently met their needs and requirements. Because of its experience working with ALS to open and operate Commonwealth and Stewart Creek High Schools, the board believes that the successful organization and management of the School are assured.

A copy of the executed management agreement is included in Appendix L.

(Source: ALS)

- 2. What other EMO/CMOs were pursued and why did the applicant select this particular one? Please include information regarding other management organization's fees and financial/academic records that led to the selection of the proposed EMO/CMO as the best fit for this proposed school.*

The Board understands that there are no EMO/CMO organizations operating in North Carolina other than Accelerated Learning Solutions (ALS) that provide the proposed program and instructional model for at-risk students. A review of other EMOs in Florida (where ALS manages 22 schools) serving similar students indicates that ALS is achieving a far greater number of contractual performance measures and provides a much more extensive set of student support services in partnership with community-based organizations. The other EMOs reviewed were Mavericks in Education, Pivot Schools, and Richard Milburn Academies.

Among these education management organizations, only ALS met more than 90% of the contractual performance requirements. Only ALS provides onsite social services. Only ALS has clearly defined and structured school support services. ALS is the only company with no contract terminations or school closures, except for Pivot, which only operates two schools. Charter boards pay a management fee to these organizations ranging from 10% to 97% of revenues, depending upon the proportion of expenses that are the direct responsibility of the management company.

There are no other school management organizations serving at-risk students with the scale and impact that has been developed by ALS. A more detailed ALS Track Record and results are included in Appendix U-6.

(Source: ALS)

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

ALS' educational and business related accomplishments among the 24 schools it manages include the following.

- o 88% of students participating for a semester or more in the Reading Plus program have demonstrated at least 1 grade level of skill growth in Reading; while 61% of participating students demonstrated at least 3 grade levels of Reading skill growth.
- o On average, students attending for a semester or more earned an average of 5 credits per year. Prior to enrollment, these students were earning an average of 3 credits per year. Our students increased credit earning by 67%.
- o 30 percentage point increase in students with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 after a semester of attendance. 20% enrolled with a GPA of 2.0 or higher from their prior school, while 50% achieved a cumulative 2.0 GPA after attending an ALS school for a semester or more.
- o Full accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS-CASI).
- o The IRS has recognized the governing authority and independence of the charter school boards governing these schools. IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status has been awarded to the Board that operates Commonwealth High School as well as 20 Florida non-profit charter school boards. ALS has supported each in the process to achieve tax-exempt status.
- o ALS schools have realized increasing acceptance and growth. As of the 2015-16 school year, ALS has contracts to serve approximately 13,000 students.
- o Students are pleased with the program being provided. 89% of the students strongly agree or agree that the ALS faculty, staff, and administrators are friendly, respectful, and helpful.
- o Parents are pleased with the program being provided.

Charter school boards remain pleased with the performance of ALS. The contracts with Florida school district sponsors for three schools in Broward County, one school in Hillsborough County, two schools in Lee County, three schools in Orange County, and one school in Duval County have each gone through the renewal process. As the charter authorizer and renewal authority, each respective school district board unanimously voted to renew the contracts for all of the schools for terms ranging up to 15 years.

In addition, all charter schools managed by ALS have had clean financial audits. Documentation of the organization's financial standing can be found in Appendix N.

In February 2012, ALS was awarded initial AdvancED Corporation Systems Accreditation with a status of Accredited. With this award, every school managed by ALS is considered SACS accredited.

An analysis of critical criteria revealed that the highest and lowest performing schools managed by ALS were Sheeler and Island Park High Schools. At Sheeler, students earned an average of 3.0 credits per semester (or 6 credits per year) as compared with 2.2 credits earned per semester (or 4.4

credits per year) at Island Park. Students at Sheeler showed a 50% improvement in their credit earning rate from their prior school, while students at Island Park showed a 12% improvement.

The difference between the schools is attributed to the length of school operation, the principals' experiences with the school model, and transition time for students to acclimate to the non-traditional school environment. Sheeler has been in operation since 2008, while the Island Park results above represent the School's first year of operation in 2014-15.

The Board is convinced that ALS is dedicated to the mission of providing a quality education for all students in the schools they serve. These passionate individuals use their education, experience, and expertise for the sole purpose of serving the Board of Directors and students.

(Source: ALS)

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

The Board of Directors of the School will be the policy-maker and have ultimate responsibility, authority, and control over the School and its relationship with the EMO, as further outlined in the Management Agreement. The Management Agreement specifies performance expectations of ALS with regard to business and academic expectations. The duties and responsibilities of both parties are outlined in the charter contract and reinforced in the Management Agreement. Not only will this Agreement assure a proper and legally appropriate relationship with the Board, it will also simplify and streamline the operation of the School with little need for complex, multiple agreements between the Board and vendor/suppliers. The Board will expect ALS to report on student achievement results at each Board meeting. The Principal, with support from ALS, will be the policy executor and undertake the day-to-day responsibility of carrying out the Board's directives.

The Board has independent legal counsel, board accounting services, and financial auditors. Legal counsel has assisted the Board in developing and negotiating the formal management agreement with ALS. If ALS breaches its agreement with the Board, does not live up to performance measures in the Charter School Contract, and cannot cure those breaches within the required timelines, then the Board reserves the right to discharge ALS from its duties and take over all day-to-day operations to ensure that the School can continue to educate students as desired by the Board.

The IRS has awarded tax-exempt status to all non-profit charter school boards of schools managed by ALS. Applications from ALS schools are being prepared or are pending IRS approval. The IRS uses a strong test of governing independence when awarding tax-exemption and has judged these agreements to be fully consistent with "arms-length" relationships that reflect the Board's independence and oversight.

(Source: ALS)

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

Pursuant to the management agreement, teachers will be jointly employed by the Board and ALS, and administrators and staff will be employed by ALS. The Board has opted out of the state retirement system as benefits will be provided by ALS for all school staff, administrators and teachers. The joint arrangement is necessary for the administration of employee benefits by the EMO, does not reduce the Board's authority to hire and fire teachers, and complies with N.C. Gen. Stat. s. 115C-218.90(a)(1).

The joint employment of charter school teachers by a charter board and its selected EMO has been submitted as part of a management agreement on a number of prior occasions. The arrangement has been reviewed and approved by legal counsel for the NC Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education prior to submission of this application.

(Source: ALS)

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

The management agreement specifies performance expectations of ALS with regard to business and academic expectations. The duties and responsibilities of both parties will be outlined in the charter contract and reinforced in the Management Agreement. As stated in the proposed Management Agreement, ALS will be responsible and accountable to the Board of Directors for the administration, operation, and performance of the School in accordance with the School's Contract, the Statement of Mission and Purpose, and the laws of the State of North Carolina. The Board will work with counsel to negotiate the final language of agreement and will ensure that appropriate language related to termination or other sanctions is included as a way to protect the school and students. The Board will hold the management company accountable to the language in the charter application, charter contract, and school budget.

While the Board retains the ultimate decision-making authority, the management company will be held responsible for the daily execution of the School's mission, operations, and outcomes according to the terms of the management agreement. If these are not fulfilled, the Board will be able to terminate the relationship with ALS as provided under the management agreement.

(Source: ALS)

7. *Is the facility provided by the EMO/CMO? Y*

- If yes, include as Appendix M a detail of the buyout formula for the nonprofit board of directors to purchase the facility if a buyout formula or process exists.

8. *List the fund balance and surpluses for each school managed by the EMO/CMO over the last three years in North Carolina.*

ALS is currently contracted to manage two charter schools in North Carolina for The North Carolina High School for Accelerated Learning (TNCHSAL). TNCHSAL obtained its two charters for Commonwealth High School and Stewart Creek High School in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area before the beginning of

the 2014-2015 school year. Of these charters, Commonwealth High School began operations in August 2014. Stewart Creek High School began operations in August, 2015. Commonwealth had a year-end fund balance of \$0. Stewart Creek has not yet had substantial operations nor governmental revenue since its inception, so also had a year-end fund balance of \$0 (zero).

(Source: ALS)

9. *Provide as Appendix N the financial history and statements of the EMO/CMO over the last three years. Specifically, if contracting with an EMO provides confirmation that the EMO is in good financial standing with either financial statements, bank letter, D & B report or credit rating.*

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.

Not Applicable

1. The proposed charter school will be governed by an existing charter school board
2. Describe the rationale for replicating the application based upon the success of another charter school. Include documentation and evidence that the existing charter school model is successful in student achievement, charter school governance, and fiscal responsibility. Base this explanation upon academic data available through state and national summative assessments, financial audits, and state compliance reports.

The proposed charter school is a replication of Commonwealth Charter HS (opened August 2014). Commonwealth was a replication of ALS-managed Chancery HS in Orlando, FL, so our rationale also includes achievement data from that school.

1. Student Achievement: After its first year of operation, Commonwealth achieved a rating of "Highly Effective" as reviewed by the NC-SBE at its September 2, 2015 meeting. Commonwealth's "Highly Effective" Alternative Education Model accountability rating is to be confirmed by a final NC-SBE vote on September 30, 2015.

In 2014-15, Chancery received the highest rating available for schools serving similar populations. This rating is awarded to schools with a significantly higher percentage of students achieving Reading Learning Gains than the percentage of these same students making gains at their prior schools.

A student achievement summary for Commonwealth and Chancery is included in Appendix U-6.

2. Provision of Student Services: 99.7% of active Commonwealth students received social services such as: counseling, crisis intervention, internships, health and medical services, and academic interventions. At

least 14 service provider partnerships (Appendix U-7) provide significant support, as well as onsite and offsite services.

3. School governance: All ALS model schools have independent governing boards with the authority to hire and terminate the agreement with ALS. All school boards of ALS-managed schools have been approved as IRS 501(c)(3) organizations.

4. Fiscal responsibility: All charter boards overseeing schools managed by ALS have independent auditors, accountants, and legal counsel. ALS model schools are achieving and maintaining sound and positive, financial results. Commonwealth has not yet undergone an audit. Audit reports for Chancery for all years of operation are located here: http://www.myflorida.com/audgen/pages/chschools_efile%20pages/chancery%20high%20school.htm.

(Source: ALS)

3. Depict and analyze the current enrollment trends and student demographics of the replicated charter school model over the past three academic years.

The enrollment trend at Commonwealth High School indicates that there is both need and demand for this innovative program. In its first year of operation, the School had an eighth-month ADM (final number not yet available) of 238, which exceeded its first-year projection of 200 students.

At Florida's Chancery High School, enrollment data over the past several years show that the school is consistently over 90% of capacity. For example, enrollment in 2012-13 was 452 (90.4%), 2013-14 was 468(93.6%) and 2014-15 was 500 (100%).

The Board believes the student population of the proposed school will closely resemble the demographics of the surrounding community as it does at the school being replicated, Commonwealth High School. Commonwealth's demographics are: 71% Black, 15% Hispanic, 3% White, 3% Multi-Racial, 1% Asian, 1% Native American, and 6% Other. The demographics of Chancery High School, of which Commonwealth was a replication, are also representative of that community. These are: 9% White, 45% Black, 40% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 3% Two or More Races.

Additional demographics of students at schools operated by ALS with this model are: 17-18 years old with 12 or fewer previously-earned high school credits; reading at or below the 8th grade level; 2-3 years behind his/her 9th grade cohort; performing at the lowest 2 levels (below grade level proficiency) on standardized tests; and in need of special services: 10-20% need special education and related services or other accommodations, 12-20% are English Language Learners, and 8-12% are parenting, pregnant, or caring for other children.

(Source: ALS)

4. Explain why the governing board of the proposed charter school is a good fit for the proposed student population as noted in Section II Mission and Purposes.

There are three reasons why the Board members of the proposed charter school are a good fit for the proposed student population.

a. Board members have a strong desire to address the needs of the students who will be served in the School. Our Board members understand the range of circumstances in students' lives that can be effectively addressed with this type of program.

b. Board members have relationships with other stakeholders in the community who have an interest in serving these students. This School will require the support of school district and community leaders, and our board members can help to immediately begin these discussions.

c. Board members understand the role of board governance versus the role of school operations and management by having served in leadership roles in their business and civic duties. The School's leadership and operating team provided by ALS will have the authority to deliver the proposed instructional and support services components to students.

(Source: ALS)

5. Provide a copy of the organization's IRS Form 990 for the last three years as Appendix T

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.

The positions anticipated for the School include: Principal, Assistant Principal, Classroom Teachers, EC Teacher, ESOL Teacher, Reading Specialist, Math Interventionist, Related Services Staff (Career Coach and Family Support Specialist), and Support Staff, including Executive Assistant, Security Specialist, Data Specialist, and Enrollment Specialist.

(Source: ALS)

Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management

Include the following information for the proposed charter school:

Recruitment will generally include a variety of strategies, but may be modified slightly for particular positions. A nationwide search will be conducted, including referrals from board members, and job postings in Education Week, Monster.com, CareerBuilder.com, the Gaston Gazette, and other pertinent publications.

The School will assure that a competitive, comprehensive salary and benefit package (as described below) is used for attracting and retaining high-performing teachers, administrators, and other staff members. The Board will continuously monitor the employee benefits levels, salaries, and other

factors to ensure that all high-quality employees remain on the job.

Ensuring high teacher and staff retention begins with providing a strong training program on roles and responsibilities, as well as replicating and implementing best practices to ensure a greater likelihood for high quality job performance. All staff will participate in intensive new hire training. The School will also foster high staff retention by providing leadership and growth opportunities within the School and promoting professional development opportunities focused on building instructional leadership skills. In addition, staff will be given opportunities to be involved in School-wide decision making, curriculum planning, teacher mentoring programs, and other School initiatives. Giving teachers and staff a voice in the decision making processes will create a positive impact on job satisfaction and, thus, retention.

(Source: ALS)

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 Board intends to contract with ALS for the provision of certain management services. The management agreement between the Board and ALS is included in Appendix L. Pursuant to that agreement, teachers will be jointly employed by the Board and ALS, and administrators and other staff will be employed by ALS. The Board has opted out of the state retirement system, as benefits will be provided by ALS for all school staff, administrators and teachers. The joint employment arrangement is necessary for the administration of employee benefits by the EMO, does not reduce the Board's authority to hire and fire teachers, and complies with N.C. Gen. Statute 115C-218.90(a)(1).

The joint employment of charter school teachers by a charter board and its selected EMO has been submitted as part of a management agreement on a number of prior occasions. The arrangement has been reviewed and approved by legal counsel for the Department of Public Instruction prior to the submission of this application.

(Source: ALS)

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

The steps in the hiring process will generally include the following steps, but may be modified slightly for particular positions: The Principal will review all resumes for teachers and staff. All faculty and staff will have the licensure, certification, endorsement, or other credentials required for their positions. Screening interviews will be conducted by phone. First round interviews will be conducted with the Principal or Assistant Principal. Background and extensive reference checks will be conducted. Upon the return of a successful background check, an offer of employment will be extended to the candidate.

In the event an employee is not meeting the expectations of his/her job

description, the School will implement progressive discipline procedures. The steps involve counseling employees, providing professional development and support, and evaluating the employee's performance. If, despite all attempts to assist the employee, he/she is not meeting the expectations of his/her job description, then the School will follow due process, as outlined in the response below, to dismiss the employee.

(Source: ALS)

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

The salary ranges will be as follows:

Principal \$85,000-\$95,000

Assistant Principal \$55,000-\$60,000

Career Coach \$40,000-\$44,000

Data Specialist \$30,000-\$35,000

Enrollment Specialist \$30,000-\$35,000

Executive Assistant \$30,000-\$35,000

Family Support Specialist \$40,000-\$45,000

Instructional Assistant \$14.42- \$15.86 per hour

Security Specialist \$14.42- \$15.86 per hour

Core Teachers \$40,000-\$44,000

Graduation Coach \$39,000-\$43,000

Math Interventionist \$40,000-\$44,000

Reading Teachers \$40,000-\$44,000

ESE Teachers \$40,000-\$44,000

The School intends to offer the following components in its compensation plan applicable to all school administrators, teachers, and staff, with an understanding that benefits and compensation levels may need to be adjusted based on the School's overall financial condition: competitive salary scales, medical insurance, prescription drug plan, Life Insurance, Supplemental Life Insurance, 401(k) retirement program, Long-Term and Short-Term disability insurance, Health Care Reimbursement Account, Dependent Care Reimbursement Account, Professional Development and Promotional Opportunities, and Paid Leave - sick/bereavement and jury duty. These benefits will be provided by the management company, ALS.

(Source: ALS)

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

Employee grievances will be handled fairly and promptly. Any employee with a grievance will present the concern in writing to the Principal within 48 hours of any offending event. The Principal will respond within 24 hours by holding a face-to-face meeting with the employee. The Principal will inform the employee that a full investigation of the complaint will be undertaken and a resolution provided in a reasonable, agreed-upon timeframe. The Principal will collect all of the relevant information and data (who, what, when, why, and where). Depending on the nature and severity of the dispute, the Principal will inform the Board Chair of the complaint and the plan to address the complaint.

The follow-up communication with the employee will be accomplished in an

appropriate manner and may include a meeting to discuss the results of the investigation and next steps. If the employee is not satisfied with the results, then the Principal will offer to refer the dispute to the Board. The Board shall have final authority to hear and decide on actions as a result of employee concerns.

No termination will occur unless the procedures below are followed:

-A Termination Checklist will be completed that includes, in writing, the reasons for the termination, and supporting documentation.

-Information submitted will be reviewed along with a review of the personnel file.

-If a determination is made to proceed with termination, a Human Resources Review, Legal Review, and Stakeholder Review will be completed.

-Once all portions of the termination checklist are complete, the completed termination checklist will be forwarded to all appropriate parties for signature.

-If all items are not in place, documentation is not clear and concise, or if all employees in similar situations are not receiving the same action (if appropriate), the Principal/Regional Director will be advised regarding appropriate actions needed to continue the improvement process with the employee.

(Source: ALS)

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

The School is not planning any positions with dual responsibilities.

(Source: ALS)

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

The initial Special Education staffing for the School will be one Exceptional Children (EC) teacher, with more EC teachers or other support personnel added as student enrollment requires and IEPs dictate.

EC staffing levels are based on serving up to 200 students in each of 3 daily instructional sessions at full enrollment. With an EC population projected to be 13% of student enrollment, staffing plans assume 20 EC students in each session, served effectively by 1 full time EC teacher. As necessary, contract EC services may also be utilized.

The School teaching staff will include at least one ELL licensed teacher.

Teachers of students with special needs will have a Bachelor's degree in Education, Educational Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education, or a related field from an accredited college or university, and teacher licensure appropriate to the teaching assignment.

(Source: ALS)

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).

All (100%) of the classroom teachers at the School will hold a valid North Carolina teaching license; and the School will develop, maintain, and, as necessary, have approved by the Department of Public Instruction a teacher licensure program, allowing teachers to progress from a Standard Professional 1 License to a Standard Professional 2 License, and renew Standard Professional 2 Licenses from time to time. All faculty and staff will hold the licenses and fulfill the roles and responsibilities identified in their job descriptions; provide the services for which they are licensed, consistent with the mission of the School and the needs of its unique target population; and be subject to the hiring and firing authority of the Board.

The Principal will provide educational leadership, contractual accountability, and day-to-day leadership of educational and operational activities of the School. Qualifications include: possession of a valid state teaching license; the required administrative license, or ability to obtain within 18 months of hire date; and a master's degree in Education, Educational Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction, or a related field from an accredited college or university.

The Assistant Principal is responsible for managing the academic progress of students; maintaining a climate conducive to teaching and learning; ensuring effective delivery and improvement of instruction; supervising, mentoring, and developing instructional staff; and ensuring that the School meets its defined goals. Qualifications include: possession of a valid state teaching license; the required administrative license or ability to obtain within 18 months of hire date; and a master's degree in Education, Educational Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction, or a related field from an accredited college or university.

Teachers are responsible for coaching, motivating, and instructing high school students within the School's model with attention given to each student's Individual Graduation Plan (IGP). Qualifications include Bachelor's degree in Education or related field from an accredited college or university and appropriate licensure.

The Reading Specialist will work with students as identified through the MTSS process on developing fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and any other reading gap. Reading curricula will be delivered in classrooms, in specialist's office, and via the use of Reading Plus, MVRC, or other approved software. Qualifications include a Bachelor's degree in Education, Educational Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction, or related field from an accredited college or university; a Master's degree in Secondary Education, Reading, or reading-related field; and three years of experience teaching, tutoring, and/or coaching high school students.

The Math Interventionist will work with students identified through the MTSS process on math skills and standards. Math curricula will be delivered in classrooms, in specialist's office, and via math software, URLs, consumables, and other appropriate resources. Qualifications include a Bachelor's degree from an accredited university with concentration in math education; a Master's degree in Secondary Education or related math field; and three years of experience as a math teacher, coach, tutor, or

specialist.

The Career Coach is responsible for working with students in career exploration, research, and planning; employment skills; interpretation of career and college assessments; job placement; assisting students through the process of post-secondary exploration, application, and selection; and working closely with other staff, employers, and others to accomplish the goal of all students successfully transitioning to a post-secondary pathway. A Bachelor's degree is required along with two years of paid, professional experience coaching high school students in career and post-secondary options.

The Family Support Specialist is responsible for working in collaboration with professional social/educational services and agencies to obtain health, financial, vocational, and social services for students and families. Qualifications include: Bachelor's and Master's degrees from an accredited college or university with major course work in social work, psychology, counseling, sociology, secondary education, or related field; and experience in education, social services, and/or community services.

The Data Specialist is responsible for entering/updating data; organizing cumulative records; responding to records request upon withdrawal; and recording all required information in the Student Information System (SIS) and in the State's system. High school diploma/GED is required.

The Enrollment Specialist is responsible for ordering records upon enrollment, assisting with student recruitment, conducting student/parent orientation sessions, processing required paperwork, and working with the Principal to ensure the School is meeting or exceeding contractual enrollment goals. High school diploma/GED is required.

The Executive Assistant is responsible for providing administrative assistance and general office support to the Principal. Qualifications include: High school diploma or GED; high degree of knowledge of general office and telephone equipment; computer literate with a high degree of knowledge and experience with Microsoft operating systems, i.e. Windows, Excel, Word, and PowerPoint; and excellent verbal and written communication skills, demonstrated computer literacy skills, and word processing abilities.

The Security Specialist is responsible for assisting with the daily arrival, dismissal, and management of students, including managing and securing confiscated items; assisting the Principal with safety procedures and drills according to School policy and procedures; and monitoring School facilities (e.g., grounds, adjacent areas, parking lot) to provide visibility, ensure safety, and deter crime. Qualifications include a High School diploma, and two years of paid, exemplary experience in a similar role.

(Source: ALS)

Staff Evaluation and Professional Development

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

The Principal is responsible for the School's licensure renewal program and

professional development. The Executive Assistant will ensure that requirements for teacher licensure and professional development are maintained and current.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

a. Mentors: The School will have a Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) to aid the successful transition of beginning teachers with a Standard Provisional License (SPI) to a Standard Professional 2 (SP2) license. All beginning teachers will be assigned a North Carolina certified mentor. The mentor will be trained by the Assistant Principal using the NC Mentor Roles and Responsibilities Handbook. The Assistant Principal will monitor the effectiveness of the program with the development of a monthly compliance timeline. Both the Standard Provisional Licensed (SPI) teachers and Standard Professional 2 (SP2) licensed teachers will be provided with onsite training opportunities through the internal, online Learning Management System (LMS) by the Assistant Principal, and will be guided to off-site professional development opportunities, workshops, and partnership programs with local colleges and university that offer teacher licensure courses in all content areas.

b. Retention: The School will assure that a competitive, comprehensive salary and benefit package is used for attracting and retaining high-performing teachers, administrators, and other staff members.

c. Evaluation: The School will develop a teacher evaluation system that is properly validated and includes standards and criteria similar to those in the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and North Carolina Teacher Evaluation System. The teacher will actively participate through the use of self-assessment, reflection, and classroom demonstration(s). The Marzano model has been selected for the School's Teacher Evaluation System as it aligns to the School's accelerated learning model, North Carolina Code of Ethics for Educators, and North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards.

Based on the Marzano Teacher Evaluation tool, an observation schedule will be created to ensure compliance with the minimum number of observations based on the state's teacher observation requirements. Based on this tool, teachers will be identified as Category I (1-3 years of service or new to the charter school) or Category II (more than 3 years of service or Career Teachers), and multiple observations will be completed in an academic year.

Observations will be scheduled in a manner that allows for an orientation to the evaluation tool, the development of a professional growth plan, review of observations, and post-conference.

The Principal will conduct summative performance evaluations for all teachers. Evaluation results will be based on data from (and not limited to) formal and informal Principal and Assistant Principal observations, reviews of evidence/artifacts of student learning, and level of performance on evaluation criteria listed in the job description for each job

responsibility.

EVAAS (Education Value-Added Assessment System) will also be used to evaluate teacher effectiveness. As a local option, we will use Domain 3: Reflection on Teaching from the Marzano Evaluation Instrument to measure student learning, which correlates with the Standard VI of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Instrument. A teacher's rating on this domain will be determined by student growth on the APEX final exams and will be weighted based on the established performance expectations as outlined by the State Board of Education.

Non-instructional staff will be evaluated based on the average of ratings for each job responsibility listed in their appraisal. Final evaluations should be completed annually by July 1.

(Source: ALS)

- 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.*

The purpose of the School's professional development is improving student achievement. The School will use a Learning Management System (LMS) to deliver, track, and monitor professional development. Training evaluation will be conducted on a regular basis and a formal needs assessment survey will be conducted on an annual basis to inform the Board about the effectiveness of current professional development practices and guide the content, form, and structure of future endeavors. Over 300 online courses will be available via the LMS from any Internet-connected computer workstation. iObservation contains a resource library that may be used for individual or group professional development.

All instructional staff will participate in training necessary to maintain their teaching licenses. Professional learning will focus on effective classroom management; evidence-based instructional strategies; differentiating instruction; assessment and evaluation to inform instruction; and effective utilization of technology.

All School staff working directly with special needs students [including students with disabilities and English Language Learner (ELL) students] will participate in state and local professional development focused on success with special needs students. Topics shall include: Federal, state, and local policies; developing IEPs; ELL Committee role and responsibilities; accommodations and modifications in instruction and assessment; positive behavior supports; curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities; least restrictive environments; family engagement and involvement; assistive and adaptive technologies; transitions and transition planning; and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

All support staff, including the Career Coach, Family Support Specialist, Enrollment Specialist, etc. will participate in training necessary to perform all job functions and maintain job-specific licensure, if applicable.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

Teacher and staff quality, experience, and preparation are critical to students' and the School's initial and ongoing success. Professional development is extensive, ongoing, focused, and innovative; incorporating evidence-based strategies and resources proven to be successful with the School's target population. Professional learning modules and activities focus on the use of flexible class periods, integration of technology into instruction, familiarity with a variety of learning activities to engage students in higher-order competencies, differentiation of instruction, coaching and mentoring, team teaching, and development and use of assessments to establish uniform coverage and external evaluations in common courses.

The School will use a blended model of professional development to deliver and support relevant learning opportunities for teachers, as well as all staff. The professional development modules are: evidence-based and targeted for success with at-risk students; job-embedded for direct application and improved performance; aligned to the innovative instructional programs of the School; and, synchronous and asynchronous for efficient use of time.

The Principal and Assistant Principal (AP) will participate in ongoing leadership development training, two week summer staff training, and all required state training. In addition, the Principal will participate in a four to six week Principal Induction that will include residency at two or three high-performing charter schools working alongside a mentor principal, as well as learning and performing the job functions of each position on the School's organizational chart.

The AP will participate in an intensive, minimum two-week residency training, at one or two high-performing charter schools, focused on job specific responsibilities, educational program, building a culture of climate and success, and school accountabilities. Trainers and subject matter experts will be scheduled to provide job-embedded professional development during and beyond the APs residency period.

All leadership, instructional, and support staff will participate in two weeks of summer professional development prior to the beginning of school during the first year of operation and during the week before school opening thereafter. Topics will include, but are not limited to, curriculum software, Code of Ethics and The Standards of Professional Conduct for NC Educators, classroom management, using data to inform instruction, working in a technology enhanced environment, attendance and retention strategies, identifying and referring students for services, etc.

(Source: ALS)

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.

Ongoing professional development, dedicated to personal and professional growth, will occur on a regular basis as well as during scheduled professional development days as part of the school calendar. At a minimum, once each month, staff meetings will be dedicated to professional development as well as during scheduled professional development days as part of the school calendar.

The timeline for professional development for the first year of School's operation is as follows:

March - June: Job specific training for Principal and Assistant Principal

April - July: Job specific training for the Executive Assistant and Data/Enrollment Specialist

July: Leadership Conference for Principal and Assistant Principal (three to five days)

August: All Staff Training (two weeks prior to student start date)

September: Professional Growth Plan completed by September 28 (beginning year 2)

Sept. - May: Regular training and Professional Learning Community meetings

The School will use a blended model of professional development to deliver and support relevant learning opportunities for teachers, as well as all staff. The professional development modules will be:

- Evidence-based and targeted for success with at-risk students;
- Job-embedded for direct application and improved performance;
- Aligned to the innovative instructional programs of the schools; and
- Synchronous and asynchronous for efficient use of time.

Professional development will be delivered face-to-face by subject matter experts. Staff and administrators may also participate in any local, state, and/or national conferences.

Online professional development will consist of participating in WebEx trainings or any of the over 300 online courses in the School's Learning Management System (LMS). iObservation, which is a tool for managing teacher and leadership evaluation, also contains a resource library of videos and print resources. Both the LMS and iObservation will be available 24/7 from any workstation with Internet access. The discussion feature of iObservation allows for collaboration and sharing of ideas/resources resulting in Professional Learning Communities within or among schools. The School's Intranet also will contain professional development resources and training modules which can be delivered via face to face or reviewed independently. All training will be tracked on the LMS.

(Source: ALS)

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)).

The School will use a variety of methods to make students aware of the benefits and opportunities that will be provided at the School. These methods are: 1) Outreach to local high school principals and guidance counselors to encourage referrals for students who are unable to be successful in a traditional high school setting; 2) Informational meetings with local community, civic, and religious organizations; community leaders; and other people who may be able to inform and/or influence families and students to enroll at the School; 3) In-depth briefings with organizations such as Junior Achievement, Boys and Girls Clubs, and 100 Black Men of America to explain the program and establish a referral network; 4) Advertisements (including print, social media, radio and television, and transit) placed in the neighborhoods surrounding the School; 5) Toll-free enrollment information number answered 7 days a week posted on the website and included on enrollment and outreach literature.

In the early stages of the School's outreach to the community, there will be materials and information distributed to the community as described above; however, one emphasis in student enrollment will be establishing relationships between the School and local principals and/or guidance counselors who will refer students to the School. The School enrollment will increase and be maintained because of the relationships and trust established with these local high school principals and guidance counselors who will regard the School as a partner and resource for students.

In the two ALS-managed schools in Charlotte (Commonwealth and Stewart Creek), the Principals actively communicate with local high school principals and guidance counselors to discuss the opportunity to provide at-risk students with a graduation option that has the flexibility and support each student needs to earn a standard high school diploma.

Other marketing strategies that may be used include advertising in local community newspapers (particularly those published for minority groups) or contacting community social service organizations that target the at-risk and/or dropout population (youth organizations, courts, churches, etc.). "Outreach" and advertising may also include an emphasis on the services the School can provide for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students.

The Board recognizes the importance of community awareness and recruitment of parents and students. In order to promote a neighborhood school environment, the marketing strategy will start in the immediate area and then broaden to the mass market. In order to ensure strong demand, marketing will occur to all appropriate populations (e.g., geographic, ethnic, age, etc.).

We anticipate that the majority of students will live within a 5-mile radius

of the School and, thus, reflect the local community being served. Targeted marketing will be used to focus on this geographic area. Additionally, select marketing materials will be created and produced in multiple languages based on the demographics of the local area.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

The School is committed to engaging parents and community members in meaningful ways. Strategies will include but not be limited to: direct mailers to identify homes with age appropriate students; meetings with community stakeholders (e.g., commissioners, volunteer groups, social service agencies, school district employees) to gain their support and determine services they may be able to provide; community meetings in various locations; meetings with principals and counselors at local high schools; and family/student meetings at the local high schools. Stakeholder meetings will include an overview of the School's Mission and Vision, and discussing the impact that the School will have on the students/families and the community.

Research results indicate that parent and community involvement are key elements in the success of students at risk of dropping out of school (Balfanz, Fox, Bridgeland, & McNaught, 2009; Gunn, Chorney, & Poulsen, 2009; Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007; Princiotta & Reyna, 2009). Therefore, the School will ensure substantial parent and community involvement through a variety of strategies.

a. **Parent/Legal Guardian Involvement:** Parents will have a number of opportunities for involvement in their student's education. Parents will be informed of opportunities, expectations, and requirements of the program. This will set the stage for student progress and achievement. This will be supplemented by mailings to homes, newsletters, phone calls from staff, and student/parent conferences. Throughout the year, parents will be encouraged participate in school functions, including open houses, school sponsored workshops, parent nights, student award ceremonies, and other events led by School staff and community partners on topics including post-secondary readiness, and personal development. School staff will make home visits to communicate student progress and successes, and will provide travel options for parents/guardians without transportation to attend School events. Parents will be invited to participate on a School Leadership Team that will meet prior to the opening of the School and monthly thereafter.

Additionally, an annual Parent/Student Satisfaction Survey will be administered to assess performance as judged by parents and students. The results of this survey will be considered by the Board as important input regarding the success of the School. A corrective action plan will be developed, if necessary, after review and discussion with the Board.

Section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), requires each Local Education Agency (LEA) and school that receives funds under Title I, Part A, to develop and distribute to parents of participating children a written parent involvement policy (PIP). If the School is designated as Title I school, the School will comply with all federal and state regulations for parent involvement.

b. Community Involvement: The Board understands that unless social, behavioral, and emotional needs are effectively addressed, learning will be difficult and academic growth will be an unrealistic objective. The Board, with assistance from the management company, will identify and develop partnerships with community-based private and public service providers, faith based groups, and civic leaders who will support student success. These partnerships will result in the direct provision of onsite social and behavioral health services as well as mentoring, advocacy, and community-wide influence to create employment and post-secondary opportunities. School leaders and the Board will ensure that parental involvement, community partnerships, and collaborations will be enduring and include commitments to ongoing evaluation and improvement, access to available human and financial resources, adequate representation of stakeholders, adequacy of staffing and resources to perform key functions, and adequate performance/accountability mechanisms.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

The School will have open admission procedures and policies, and will open an Enrollment Office in April 2017. The application period shall be no less than 30 consecutive days in compliance with TCS-U-003. Enrollment will not be denied to any eligible applicants on the basis of ethnicity, gender, national origin, or disability.

Interested students will complete an application and meet with the Enrollment Specialist. If there is space available, the student/parent will complete the enrollment packet and receive information about the School. If there is not space available, the student's application will be entered into the lottery.

The following categories of students may receive enrollment priority in compliance with Article 14A of Chapter 115C, G.S. 115C-218.45(f):

- a. Siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to the charter school in a previous year.
- b. Siblings of students who have completed the highest grade level offered by that school and who were enrolled in at least four grade levels offered by the charter school or, if less than four grades are offered, in the maximum number of grades offered by the charter school.
- c. Limited to no more than 15% of the School's total enrollment, unless granted a waiver by the State Board of Education, the following:
 - * Children of the School's full-time employees.
 - * Children of the charter school's board of directors.
- d. A student who was enrolled in the charter school within the two previous school years but left the school (i) to participate in an academic study abroad program or a competitive admission residential program or (ii) because of the vocational opportunities of the student's parent.

If the number of applicants exceeds School capacity, the School will implement a random lottery. All applicants shall have a fair and equal chance of being admitted. The lottery will be advertised at least 30 days prior to the drawing through various forms of media.

The Principal or his/ her designee will manage the lottery process as follows and maintain appropriate documentation.

- a. Each application will be time and date stamped, assigned a number, and all numbers will be placed in a container. Numbers will be drawn on a random basis by a neutral party. All slots will be filled based on the order of the drawing. The remaining numbers will be drawn and used to create the wait list.
- b. There will be at least 2 staff members present during the lottery drawing. The lottery will be publicly noticed and open to the public.
- c. As openings arise throughout the year, the next student on the wait list will be offered the "space." The parent or eligible student has 7 days to accept/refuse the opening and complete required documentation for admission. If the parent or eligible student does not respond, the space will go to the next student on the waiting list.

Upon enrollment, the Enrollment Specialist will request transcripts and other relevant information from all schools the student previously attended. The student will complete individualized assessments to determine academic skill levels and vocational interests. The student and parent will meet with appropriate school staff to review assessment information and establish the student's ISP.

Following the enrollment process, each student will participate in a 3-day student orientation program that includes information concerning programs, assessments, procedures, and expectations.

Should an eligible student decide to withdraw from the program, required documentation will be gathered as to the reason for withdrawal, including an exit interview. Academic advisement on programs/schools that may better suit the student's needs will be provided. A student will be allowed to re-enroll into the program if a seat is available. If not, the student's application will be processed through the lottery drawing procedure. Students transferring out of the School will be provided with academic options.

(Source: ALS)

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT 2017-18 through 2021-2022

IDENTIFY LEA FROM WHICH STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY COME

LEA #1 Gaston County Schools
 LEA #2
 LEA #3

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

	2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022		
	LEA 360	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 360	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 360	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 360	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 360	LEA 000	LEA 000
	240			370			425			465			500		

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.

The School will ensure that transportation is not a barrier to any student. The School will be serving students ages 16-21, and will locate along major lines of the public transportation system in order to use public transportation passes to meet the transportation requirements.

Students who live beyond a reasonable distance from the School may receive a public bus pass if they choose to accept it. The School has allocated funds for purchasing transit passes and will issue the passes to meet students' transportation needs. Documentation of purchasing transportation passes will be kept on file for a total of three (3) years noting the passes purchased and issued to the students. Students will be required to sign for each pass provided to them solely for the use of getting to/from School.

An eligible student must reside and continue to reside two (2) or more miles, or reside in a hazardous zone, between the home and the School. A reasonable walking distance for any student who is not physically disabled is any distance not more than two (2) miles between the home and the School or one-and-one-half (1 1/2) miles between the home and the assigned bus stop. Such distance shall be measured from the closest pedestrian entry point of the School building or to the bus stop. A reasonable walking distance will be identified during the enrollment session for students who are eligible for a bus pass. The Enrollment Specialist will assist with determining the shortest pedestrian route to the bus stop and to School whether or not it is accessible to motor vehicle traffic.

Bus passes will be purchased from the area transit system and provided to all eligible students free of charge. The School will keep an ample supply of transit passes throughout the school year to meet current and anticipated enrollment needs. Eligible students will be issued a bus pass upon and throughout their entire enrollment period.

The following items are applicable for a student to receive a bus pass:

-The student will receive assistance, if needed, during the Student/ Parent enrollment session to identify the closest transit stop and the light rail/ buses the student will have to ride to get to School.

-The student will receive a bus pass upon enrollment and thereafter upon determination of ridership.

-The student's name must appear on the School's Attendance Roster noting the student is fully enrolled prior to receiving passes.

-The student will be solely responsible for the safety and security of his/her transit passes at all times.

-If the student is a minor, the parent/guardian must provide written approval for the student to utilize public transportation to/from School.

In addition, transportation service will be provided by the School to any

student whose IEP stipulates that this must occur. Should a student with a disability require special transportation accommodations, the School will contract with the school district or an approved private transportation provider.

(Source: ALS)

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.

Since the School will operate multiple four-hour sessions, there will not be enough time to serve meals, so the School will ensure the eligible students receive a nutritious snack based on need. Healthy snacks are also available in vending machines to all students.

Upon enrollment the Enrollment Specialist will visit with all students and families to identify potential students that have limited resources in the home, express the need, and would benefit from receiving a healthy snack upon need.

Snacks may include, but will not be limited to, the following: fruit and nut bars, chewy granola/yogurt bars, protein bars, oatmeal bars, and peanut butter bars. The snacks will help provide a mental boost that will increase students' concentration and energy levels which will help them remain alert while in school and meet basic needs.

All staff members will be trained and made aware of this policy and will refer disadvantaged students in their classrooms or in the School to the Family Support Specialist (FSS) to discuss the need to receive a healthy snack.

(Source: ALS)

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	\$2,800.00
Officers and	\$1,000,000	\$6,200.00

possibilities, and neighborhood demographics. The entire scope of the project will be managed by experienced ALS leaders to ensure that the School will be able to open on-time and on-budget.

Once the facility has been leased, ALS will begin the permitting and renovation process. ALS has typically used local architects and contractors to complete all of the renovation work and intends to follow the same process for this School. Funding for renovation and remodeling will be provided by the Landlord or another lending source.

The Board of Directors and ALS will ensure that all local building code approvals, compliance with the Fire Prevention Code and the Educational Certificate of Occupancy are secured before the School is occupied. At no time will students or staff work or attend school in a building that is unsafe or does not have proper certificates of occupancy. In addition, all school facilities will comply with applicable health codes, inspection/safety requirements, and will be properly maintained according to the North Carolina Building Code.

The timetable below describes the major steps in the facility acquisition, permitting, and renovation process.

September, 2015: Submit Charter Application
October 2015-March 2016: Application Reviewed and Approved March-September 2016: Governing Board Planning Period
July 2016: Begin Site Search
September 2016: Begin Lease Negotiations
January 2017: Sign Memorandum of Understanding for Facility Lease or Purchase Agreement
January 2017: Finalize school facility design
February 2017: Execute Facility Lease or Purchase Agreement February 2017: Begin Plans and Secure Permits
March 2017: Begin Facility Renovation April 2017: Enrollment office opens
May 2017: Sign Charter School Contract with NCDPI June 2017: Facility Renovation Completed
July 2017: Set up Administrative and Classroom Space
July 2017: Verify all appropriate inspections and clearances including Educational Certificate of Occupancy
August 2017: School Opening

(Source: ALS)

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.

A facility location has not been determined. The cost of a 15,000 s.f. facility will be approximately \$14-\$18 per s.f. This includes common area maintenance (\$2.00), taxes (\$.70), and insurance (\$1.30). See Appendix U-8.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

If opening is delayed to the point where the School will not be able to open on-schedule, we will do the following: Define the specifics of the delay and determine a realistic opening schedule. Coordinate and communicate this information with North Carolina Department of Public Instruction staff. Determine whether the School can open on a delayed schedule later in the school year.

Depending on the outcome of the above items, the School will proceed as follows:

Option 1: If the building is not ready to occupy by the first day of school, plans will be in place to rent 3 modular classrooms. Modular classrooms will be situated in the parking lot of the School and hooked up to existing electrical and plumbing services. Modular classrooms will be furnished with the furniture and equipment purchased for the School building.

The School will operate on the established schedule in the modular classrooms until such time as the School receives the Certificate of Occupancy.

Option 2: If modular classrooms are not feasible and the School can open on a delayed schedule, School staff will relay all relevant information to the parents, students, local stakeholders, and the NCDPI.

Option 3: If the School cannot open on a delayed schedule, the School will temporarily lease and utilize appropriate space from a school or other educational institution such as a Community College, Private Technical College, Charter School, etc. Contingency plans for temporary space and short-term leases will be in-place by February 2017.

Option 4: If the construction schedule is such that the School opening is delayed seven or more months, the School will (as a last resort) request a one-year deferral for opening.

(Source: ALS)

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 #1 360 - Gaston County Schools

Revenue	2015-2016 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2017-2018
State Funds	\$4,549.62	240	\$1,091,908.80
Local Funds	\$1,350.00	240	\$324,000.00
Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	31	\$116,811.41
Totals			\$1,532,720.21

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.

The proposed School's sole mission is to provide a dropout prevention and recovery program to high school students in grades 9 through 12, which will result in a non-traditional pattern of student enrollment at our School. The Board therefore intends to request funding based upon the new 5th month Average Daily Membership (ADM) funding policy revision made to TCS-M-003, The Allotment Policy Manual, by the State Board of Education at its September 3, 2015 meeting. Accordingly, the enrollment projections for each year are estimates of the 5th month ADM.

Demand for the School is based on an analysis of the number of young adults in the Gaston county area who are at-risk of dropping out or have already dropped out of high school. This analysis is summarized in Appendix A and was performed by ALS for the Board based on its experience serving students in similar schools in North Carolina and Florida. Because of the high number of students who are not succeeding in traditional schools, and because of ALS's history of enrolling students in similar circumstances, we are confident our enrollment numbers will be achieved and that a financially viable school will result.

Due to the terms of the management agreement and the requirement that ALS is responsible for all operating expenditures of the School, no break-even point for enrollment is provided.

(Source: ALS)

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

In the management agreement, ALS is responsible for all School operating expenditures with the exception of board related expenses.

If enrollment projections are lower than expected, ALS will be responsible for all operating shortfalls in accordance with the terms of the management agreement. These amounts are represented in the projections as Working Capital in the form of contributions by ALS to the School. In addition, a surety bond will be purchased in the amount of \$50,000 in accordance with G.S.115C-218.100. If lower than expected revenue occurs, the Board will work with ALS to strengthen the relationships with community stakeholders who refer students to the School.

The terms of the management agreement with ALS ensure the School will remain solvent with a positive fund balance in all years of operation. The School will net approximately \$55,000 over the five year term with no outstanding debt.

(Source: ALS)

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

As stated above, in accordance with the management agreement included in Appendix L, ALS is responsible for all School operating expenditures with the exception of board legal, accounting, audit, D&O, and meeting expenses. ALS will provide all facilities, equipment, and start-up funding in accordance with the agreement. It is expected that the management company will contribute approximately \$450,000 to the School in its first year of operations.

(Source: ALS)

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

1 teacher for every 25 students served

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

The Board intends to contract with ALS to deliver specific school management services, including financial management and funding consulting services, as outlined in the management agreement included as Appendix L. ALS's role in financial management will include: budget oversight and financial reporting; accounts payable and accounts receivable functions; purchasing and procurement services; and managing all other financial aspects of the School including payroll, human resources, benefits administration, information technology, insurance, and risk management. The Board understands its fiduciary responsibilities for the public funds we receive and will engage an independent certified public accountant to complement the financial services provided by ALS. The Board recognizes that we have the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that the financial information is accurate and that the internal control environment is designed so that it appropriately safeguards the School's assets.

(Source: ALS)

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

The School's spending priorities are based on the need to provide the services outlined in this application for a projected maximum student enrollment of 600 students. The School anticipates that the following items will constitute the most significant expenditures:

a. Personnel and Human Resources: Due to the mobility of the student population, the School expects to have fluctuating enrollment throughout the next five years with a maximum enrollment of 600 students. Based on historical data from similar existing charter schools, staffing will include

both full and part-time staff to accommodate serving up to 200 students in each of up to 3 four-hour sessions. ALS will provide human resources and payroll service to support the School.

b. Curriculum and technology: ALS will provide the instructional program, curriculum, and related technology services to support personnel as they work with students to accelerate their learning in a technology-enhanced, mastery-based instructional program. The School has also outsourced their IT Support Services to ALS.

c. Facility related costs: Facility lease costs are provided are based on a 15,000-17,000 square foot facility. Other related costs such as janitorial, facilities management, and maintenance are also based on these facility estimates. Tenant improvement costs are the responsibility of the management company and are not included in these projections.

d. Transportation Plan: School facilities will be strategically located near public transportation stops. The School will offer free public transportation passes to all students commuting to the School.

e. Other Administrative Expenses: These expenses include insurance, board expense, accounting, and other miscellaneous administrative expenses. In addition, a surety bond has been budgeted and will be purchased in the amount of \$50,000 in accordance with G.S. 115C-218.100.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

In accordance with the management agreement included in Appendix L, the School will receive 3% of the revenues and, in accordance with the budget, the School will net approximately \$55,000 over the five year term with no outstanding debt. In this agreement, the management company is responsible for 100% of all school operating expenditures with the exception of board related expenses.

(Source: ALS)

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

The management company will provide the leased facility, all technology, and furnishings including the student desks and technology equipment in accordance with the management agreement. In addition, ALS will be responsible for 100% of all operational costs of the School. Any shortfalls will be contributed by ALS to the School in the form of a charitable contribution. The School has received a letter of commitment from ALS (see Appendix S). As the School grows and establishes its reputation for effectively serving students in the area, the Board may work with ALS and other local stakeholders to request that local foundations and grantors support the cost of programs that benefit our students.

(Source: ALS)

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.*

No assets will be secured until the School's application is approved. The School anticipates acquiring assets before the School begins operations including instructional equipment (computers, interactive white boards, etc.) and furnishings (desks, tables, and chairs), and office equipment and furnishings (staff computers, printers, desks, chairs, file and storage cabinets, etc.).

In addition, tenant improvements will be required before the start of School operations. The funding of these expenditures will be the responsibility of ALS in accordance with the Management Agreement (Appendix L), which provides evidence of commitment.

(Source: ALS)

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

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

The Board is accountable for the financial performance of the School. It approves budgets, sets policy, establishes and approves procedures, ensures that financial reports are made and controls are in place, and makes certain that the financial management of the School meets regulatory requirements, maintains sound fiscal standards, and remains financially viable.

The Board delegates to the management company, ALS, the responsibility for certain financial aspects of the School including purchasing, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, human resources, benefits administration, information technology, and insurance and risk management. The Board understands that it is responsible for the oversight of ALS in performing these duties.

The Board has retained a certified public accountant to compile monthly reports of the results of the School operations. In addition, the Board has retained an independent auditor to provide audited financial statements at the School's fiscal year end.

Various internal controls including segregation of duties are utilized in the cash receipts and disbursements cycle of the School's financial system. Some of these controls include, but are not limited to:

Funding will come from three primary sources:

- o State funding allotments based on student enrollment
- o County funding received via County school systems based on per head count of students from the respective counties
- o Federal grants passed through the NCDPI

Revenue from the State will be requested by the Board Accountant and wired by the State into the Boards checking account. The Board Accountant will record State revenue in the G/L ISIS system.

County funding will be received by check. The School/Principal receives checks and makes the deposits. The School/Principal gives deposit slips to the Board Accountant for posting into the G/L ISIS system. Other miscellaneous deposits are handled the same way with the School/Principal noting on deposit slip the source of funds.

Funding and Payment Process

At the end of each month the Management Company (ALS) sends the Board Accountant detail of actual expenses ALS incurred for the month relating to payroll, instructional supplies, etc. for the operations of the School. The Board Accountant and ALS discuss variances from the Budget. At the monthly Board meetings, the Board reviews the monthly expenses of ALS and votes to approve the expenses for payment. ALS sends the Board an invoice for payment. If State funds are available, the Board Accountant will request the funds from DPI. Three days after the request date, the funds will be deposited into the Boards bank account. The Board Treasurer will then transfer the funds from the Boards bank account into the ALS bank account

paying the invoice. The School is not allowed to hold State funds in their bank account for more than three days. Once Local funds are deposited into the School's bank account, they are available to pay for expenses as needed.

ALS provides a "Service Organization Control (SOC 1) Report" signed by an independent auditor. This report provides an assertion about the fairness of the presentation of the description and suitability of the design and operating effectiveness of the controls to achieve the related control objective around the disbursements processing system for the Board, the Board's CPA, and the School's independent auditor.

An additional annual audit report will be performed by the independent auditor in accordance with Governmental Auditing Standards at the end of each fiscal year and furnished to the Board.

(Source: ALS)

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

Related party transactions will primarily be the result of the relationship between the School and Accelerated Learning Solutions, Inc. (ALS). ALS has provided a letter of commitment to the School for any cash shortages that are anticipated during the start-up phase of the School (in Appendix S). Currently, it is anticipated that ALS will contribute approximately \$580,000 in the first two years of operations to sustain operations in accordance with the management agreement.

In addition, the School will have outstanding payables to ALS for monthly management fees equal to one month of fees.

(Source: ALS)

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.

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