



## **NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION**

# Hillside Academy

**Public charter schools opening the fall of 2018**

**Due 5:00 pm EST, September 19, 2016**

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
NCDPI/Office of Charter Schools  
301 N. Wilmington Street  
Raleigh NC 27601-2825  
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**CHARTER SCHOOL  
2016 Application Process**

**To open a charter school in the 2018-2019 school year**

**APPLICATION DUE DATE/TIME**

**September 19, 2016** 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 19, 2016 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.
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: Hillside Academy

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

Name of non-profit organization under which charter will be organized or operated: *South Piedmont Charter Development, 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: *Nalan Karakaya Mulder*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *Board President/Lead Applicant*

Mailing address: 8240 Ballantyne Commons Parkway #49  
Charlotte NC 28277

Primary telephone: 704-341-1217 Alternative telephone: 704-968-7665

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

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

County: MECKLENBURG

LEA: 600-Charlotte-Mecklenburg 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. National Heritage Academies

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.

This application for a new charter school in South Charlotte is the result of dedicated and passionate work by our founding team. The school's initial Board of Directors, in collaboration with a team of charter school planning experts and education professionals from our management partner, National Heritage Academies (NHA), intends to replicate the successes of other NHA-partner schools in the state, notably Summerfield Charter Academy (SCA). In addition to the 10 operating NHA-partner schools, three new schools are approved to open in 2017. No other charter management organization has as much experience in our area or in North Carolina.

In developing this application, we needed to ensure that we described and detailed the NHA-partner school model accurately. As such, we welcomed the collaboration of various experts at NHA to properly portray key components of our proposed school - the educational plan, the staffing structure, professional development programs, the enrollment and marketing process, and the financial plan, for example - to fully reflect the NHA-partner school model. Details including the curriculum and instructional design, the

approach to educational programming for at-risk students, English Language Learners (ELL), and exceptional children (EC), and student conduct and discipline expectations all are consistent with NHA's model school. All sections of this application were reviewed by our Board and modified as necessary. Other standard NHA-model practices and procedures also have been reviewed by our Board before incorporating them into this application.

The mission and rationale for the school presented in this application are, of course, developed as directed by the Board. All governance and oversight sections of the application similarly reflect the Board's vision.

A number of other sections - importantly the academic and operational goals for the school and other accountability elements - were developed in collaboration with NHA. This ensures a proper match with the school model and that the school will deliver the results we envision.

We understand that two other groups (High Point Charter Academy in Guilford County and North Wake Preparatory Academy in Wake County) are also submitting applications to establish NHA-partner schools in this round. We view this as an extremely positive development, one that both underscores NHA's commitment to the education of students across this state and enhances the opportunity for our school to grow with, learn from, and replicate the best practices of new schools that are similarly modeled to ours. We recognize this also means that the portions of our application that describe the structure and operation of an NHA-partner school model will be nearly identical to the same sections in these groups' applications.

Each section of the application includes a note of attribution to the Board, to NHA, or to both the Board and NHA. Whatever this primary attribution is, our founding Board has reviewed and approved this application. We also sought independent legal counsel for many items, including our governance structure and the audit requirements for the school.

We plan to continue to collaborate with NHA throughout the approval process for this application. If approved, our relationship with NHA will be governed by our formal Services Agreement (see Appendix I) from that point forward.

*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.* Summerfield Charter Academy NC

*Do you want your application to be considered for Fast Track?*

Yes:

No:

*Are you a non-profit corporation board partnering to replicate an existing model operated by an*

EMO/CMO?

Yes:

No:

Eligibility Criteria

*A non-profit corporation board that does not currently operate a charter school in NC is eligible to apply to replicate through fast-track replication an existing model operated by an EMO/CMO. The non-profit corporation board is eligible to apply only if the schools operated by the EMO/CMO have a consistent track record of academic, financial, and operational success. The non-profit corporation is eligible replicate an existing model operated by the EMO/CMO only if the non-profit corporation board meets each of the following conditions:*

*The non-profit corporation board must demonstrate that each of the schools being managed by the EMO/CMO in North Carolina (1) have an academic proficiency comparable to the LEAs in which the current schools are located; or (2) meet or exceed growth for the three years immediately preceding the application at issue. If the EMO/CMO does not manage any schools in NC or the schools it manages in NC*

*do not yet have the data listed above, the non-profit corporation board must demonstrated to the SBE that the schools operated in other states by the EMO/CMO meet similarly rigorous standards for academic performance. The EMO/CMO must continue to meet these standards throughout the application period.*

Yes:

No:

*\*Attach as Appendix A the educational outcomes for the replicated school for the last three academic years.*

*The non-profit corporation board must demonstrate that each of the schools in North Carolina managed by the EMO/CMO have unqualified audits without fiscal compliance issues for three years immediately preceding the application. If the EMO/CMO does not currently manage any schools in NC or the schools it manages in NC do not yet have the data listed above, the non-profit corporation board must demonstrate to the SBE that the schools operated in other states by the EMO/CMO meet similarly rigorous standards for financial performance. The non-profit corporation board must maintain this standard through the application period.*

Yes:

No:

*A majority of the non-profit corporation board members and 50% or greater of the board officers must be North Carolina residents.*

Yes:

No:

*What is the name of the nonprofit organization that governs this charter school?* South Piedmont Charter Development, Inc.

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

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

Projected School Opening: Year 2018

Month August

Will this school operate on a year round schedule?

No:

Yes:

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

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

*The State Board of Education provides funds to charter schools, approves the original members of the boards of directors of the charter schools, has the authority to grant, supervise, and revoke charters, and demands full accountability from charter schools for school 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. Additionally, the board is aware that if this application is approved by the State Board of Education, the approval is contingent upon successful completion of such planning year.*

nmulder

Board President, Nalan Karakaya Mulder

*Signature*

*Title*

nmulder

09/15/2016

*Printed Name*

*Date*

## II. MISSION and PURPOSES

(No more than three total pages in this section)

### **Mission:**

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

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

The mission statement for Hillside Academy is as follows, "To provide a high-quality education that places each student on the path to college readiness through a rigorous curriculum and collaboration between parents, students, and staff in an environment that values achievement and strong character."

*Clearly describe the mission of the proposed charter school:*

The school will implement a rigorous curriculum, the use of data and formative assessments to inform instruction, a professional development program designed to help teachers become the best they can be for students, and a school culture that provides a safe and nurturing learning environment designed to help develop the skills and personal qualities important for success in life.

### **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.*

Hillside Academy will start as a K-6 school and grow to K-8 by our third year of operation. We sought out National Heritage Academies (NHA) as our management partner for the school. NHA is a full-service education management organization that operates 83 partner schools in nine states, including 10 here in North Carolina. Although an exact location for our school has not been identified, we intend to locate in south Mecklenburg County or northern Union County.

**Targeted Population:** We will not target a specific population for enrollment. We will likely draw students from the south and southwestern portion of Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) and northern portion of Union County - including Marvin and Weddington. We will market broadly to Mecklenburg County and northern Union County. Our school will likely reflect demographic and socioeconomic composition to that of CMS and Union County Public Schools (UCPS) in our area. Student ethnicity in CMS is: 30% White; 40% Black; 22% Hispanic; 7% Asian; 4% multiracial; and less than 1% other. Over one-third (47%) participate in the free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) program, 13% are EC, and 8% are English Learners (ELL). UCPS student population is 64% White; 13% Black; 17% Hispanic, 3% Asian, 3% multiracial;



and less than 1% other. Approximately 36% participate in the FRL program and 10% are EC.

Rationale for Location: Charlotte is the largest city in North Carolina and the second largest city in the south. Mecklenburg County's public school enrollment is expected to grow by roughly 3,200 students next year and it is believed that for every student that chooses CMS, the district expects five to pick charter schools. Due to district enrollment shifts and anxiety over student assignment, South Charlotte residents have mobilized and discussed splitting the county into smaller school districts. While there are high-performing CMS schools, magnet schools are limited and there is a continued lack of charter school presence in southern Mecklenburg County. The primary school of choice options are private schools, with tuition fees ranging from \$10,000 to \$22,000 a year. Many families in our area are choosing to relocate to Union County or Fort Mill for various reasons, primarily for the lack of public school choice options and overcrowding in CMS. The charter schools in our area, including the new Union Preparatory Academy at Indian Trail, Queens Grant Community School (QGCS), and new NHA-partner school Matthews Charter Academy (MCA), are in extremely high demand. QGCS has maintained a waitlist of over 1,000 students, and MCA, only in its first year, received over 1,800 applications for enrollment.

Hillside Academy's partnership with NHA will result in a new school building - either new construction or a fully renovated space - developed by NHA with no public funds.

To help gauge parents' receptivity to a new charter school, a survey of parents in the south CMS area with at least one child in grades K-8 was conducted in May 2016 and found that 35% of parents would be "likely" or "very likely" to send their child to a new charter school with a focus like we are proposing, and 29% of respondents rated college preparatory curriculum as their number one issue in choosing a school. Of these parents, two-thirds asked to be contacted with further information if our school is approved to open. These survey results are encouraging and confirm our plans to locate in the South Charlotte area. With our community's explosive population growth, overcrowded schools, concerns about potential changes to CMS student assignment, lack of specialized focus programs such as STEM, and the significant parent demand for a school such as ours, we know Hillside Academy will be successful. South Charlotte is an excellent place to locate our new charter school.

Attribution: Board and NHA

- 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).*

Hillside Academy will serve students in kindergarten through 8th grade. Following the NHA-partner school structure, we will plan to open in 2018-19 serving 604 students in grades K-6, and will grow each of the next two years to serve approximately 772 students in grades K-8 by 2020-21. Our partnership with NHA allows us to have a fully-staffed administrative team in place from day one, as well as a completed facility that will accommodate

our full K-8 program even though we are starting out serving fewer grades and students. This approach allows our school to better focus on having the right programs and procedures in place from the start, and more easily allows our school to adapt and incorporate any needed changes in its early operating years as it grows to full capacity.

We expect that 80% of our students will come from families living within the CMS LEA and 20% will come from the UCPS LEA. We have built our budget and expected student population profile on this assumption, but of course will adjust our calculations if necessary as we actually enroll students.

In 2015-16, CMS enrolled over 103,000 K-8 students. Eighty percent of our projected full enrollment of 772 at Hillside Academy represents less than one percent (0.6%) of the LEA's comparable student enrollment. Eighty percent of our initial first-year enrollment of 604 represents less than one half of one percent (0.47%) of CMS' total K-8 enrollment.

In 2015-16, the UCPS LEA enrolled 28,422 K-8 students. Twenty percent of our projected full enrollment of 772 at Hillside Academy represents half of one percent (0.5%) of the LEA's comparable student enrollment. Twenty percent of our initial first-year enrollment of 604 represents less than one half percent (0.4%) of UCPS LEA's total K-8 enrollment.

Charlotte is the largest city in North Carolina and one of the fastest growing areas in the state. The surrounding areas, like Marvin and Weddington, are also growing exponentially. As such, should our school be approved to open in the fall of 2018, we expect that our percentage of each LEA's average daily membership would actually be lower upon opening, and ultimately upon full enrollment in the 2020-21 school year.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Hillside Academy will replicate the NHA-partner school model and implement NHA's four pillars: academic excellence, student responsibility, moral focus, and parental partnerships. A few key features will distinguish Hillside Academy from nearby schools.

**K-8 Structure:** We will be a K-8 school. CMS offers 168 schools, with only 13 K-8 "academies" - none of which are in our area. UCPS district offers 53 schools and no K-8 academies. A K-8 structure with open enrollment means that students will transition to a new school less often, offering greater stability to enhance student academic, emotional, and behavioral development. Moreover, there are no magnet elementary or middle schools in South Charlotte and only two charters (Socrates and Union Day) within a 20 minute drive of our target location. Our non-zoned enrollment is desired as evident in our parent survey: 24% of parents would consider enrolling their child in a charter school such as the one we are proposing due to concerns with district student reassignments. CMS proposed plans for potential changes to student assignment and possible busing bring discomfort to the community, as many parents have relocated their families and arranged their lives to enjoy the benefits of neighborhood schools. In addition, our Board plans to assess the feasibility of incorporating select STEM components into

our curriculum.

**Moral Focus:** Our moral focus program will teach and model accountability, high expectations, and admirable behavior. We will integrate a curriculum that builds on such virtues as perseverance, courage, compassion, and integrity. Lessons will develop strong personal character and the qualities needed to become good citizens. Students will be taught that their best effort is vital to academic success, and teachers will ensure that students understand what is expected of them and will take pride in their work.

**Distributed Leadership:** NHA-partner schools feature distributed leadership, where deans are responsible for a team of grade-level staff (e.g., K-2; 3-5; 6-8), and serve as the direct managers of classroom teachers. This structure allows deans to coach teachers weekly to increase effectiveness. The principal and deans will constitute our school leadership team.

**Parental Partnerships:** We will foster strong partnerships with parents, actively engaging them in their children's learning. This partnership will be exhibited by, among other things, frequent and meaningful communication and a welcoming atmosphere that includes dedicated space specifically for parents to interact with school staff.

**School-Wide Framework:** Hillside Academy will benefit from NHA's experience and clear framework developed to deliver exceptional academic results. Our principal will be held accountable for ensuring fidelity of implementation.

- **Establish a Professional Culture of Excellence:** The principal leads a community that is motivated to achieve high expectations and that exhibits high care for all members of the community.

- **Systematize Collaborative Improvement:** Staff work in collaborative, data-driven teams, seeking improved student learning through the shared study and implementation of instructional best practice.

- **Lead Instructional Excellence:** Deans ensure high-quality learning for every student in every classroom every day.

- **Implement Systematic Intervention:** The needs of academically at-risk students, EC students, ELLs, and students with behavioral challenges are identified, services are provided, and progress is monitored through a systematic process.

- **Cultivate Meaningful Parent Partnerships:** Parents and school staff authentically connect to understand and support each other in a caring and meaningful way, working in partnership to help every child achieve college readiness.

The school-wide framework will be supplemented by the classroom framework of instructional competencies: classroom culture, planning, teaching, and assessing.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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.*

Hillside Academy's mission statement is the driving force behind our school, and the NHA-partner school model will embody this vision and fulfill North Carolina's legislative purposes for charter schools.

1. Professional Opportunities for Teachers. NHA will provide our staff with a comprehensive benefits package, competitive salary structure, and quality retirement plan that will attract excellent educators. We recognize that we can help students learn by helping teachers grow. Our educational program includes a robust and purposeful professional development program that coaches teachers throughout their career. Through our school design, a career path exists where stellar teachers can become teacher leaders, mentors, and then deans. Outstanding deans also are developed to become principals if they choose. NHA conducts a 'School Leadership Academy' that provides ongoing support to new and potential principals throughout the year. The 'Staff Evaluation and Professional Development' section of this application offers more detail.

2. Accountability for Results. Just as we intend to hold students accountable for what they learn, at Hillside Academy we will hold teachers, school leaders, and ourselves as the Board accountable for the results at our school. We will administer all required state assessments and will embrace North Carolina's READY Accountability Model. Additionally, our school will institute a comprehensive formative assessment program that evaluates individual, class-wide, and school-wide student academic performance. Evaluations at the beginning of each year will provide a baseline, and subsequent evaluations will gather important and detailed data that will be used to drive and revise instructional practices and measure annual growth. Accountability for performance also will extend to other areas of the school's operations, such as attendance rates, fiscal stability, and parental satisfaction. Annually, we will create a school improvement plan that examines performance data for all aspects of our school and presents a plan of action for the following school year.

3. Expanded School Choice. A recent survey of families in South Charlotte showed that nearly half (48%) felt their child was being given a "great" education, yet two-thirds (60%) said they wanted to be contacted if our proposed charter school was approved to open, and 35% said they would be "very likely" or "likely" to send their child to such a school. CMS has experienced explosive growth in its student population, and is currently using 1,220 modular classrooms to try to accommodate and alleviate overcrowding at an affordable cost to taxpayers. Recently, the CMS board voted to request \$33 million of Mecklenburg County to assist with renovations and new schools (including three new South Charlotte schools). This is further evidenced by the large charter school waitlists in our area. Hillside Academy will offer parents and students in our community the public school choice they desire, and the additional capacity our community needs.

4. Improving Student Learning. We will hold NHA accountable to improve student learning at our school. At NHA-partner schools, student achievement is excelling:

- Four of NHA's seven NC partner schools operating in the 2014-15 school year ranked in the top 12 of all charter schools for EVAAS growth (see: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/>).

- 96% of students completing 8th grade at NHA-partner schools go on to graduate from high school, easily surpassing the national average for low-income students (70%) and all students combined (80%). Additionally, 37% earn a bachelor's degree or higher. That graduation rate is nearly five times higher than the national average for low-income students (eight percent), and it exceeds the rate for all students (31%) combined (NCES, 2013).

\*See overflow section for more information.

\*Continued from "Purposes of Proposed Charter School"

- Nearly 80% of NHA-partner schools outperformed their local school district on state testing according to the most recent data available (2014-15).

5. Increased Learning Opportunities for Students. A fundamental purpose of charter schools is to seek new approaches to effective teaching and learning. As such, we will embrace innovation and change to enhance our ability to meet the needs of our students. Hillside Academy will create a learning environment supported by fundamental principles of excellence focused on college and career readiness (see description of the differences of our school model from district schools, above). Our school will use small-group instruction and the infusion of blended learning. We will personalize instruction through online learning tools, which will lead to greater classroom collaboration through online group work, online discussions, email, instant messages, blogs, and electronic portfolios. Small group and blended learning approaches also allow for greater flexibility on the time, pace, and place students learn.

6. Innovative Teaching Methods. Hillside Academy's hands-on oversight and coaching of teachers and purposeful professional development is a design that not only supports instructors in the classroom but also prepares them for expanded responsibility and future leadership positions. Weekly coaching, along with peer-group planning time and a structured professional learning community, is designed to quickly replicate and institute best

practices and allow brainstorming for creative approaches to the challenges teachers face.

The legislative purposes for charter schools will be fulfilled by Hillside Academy's structure and programs. The four foundational pillars of our educational model help illustrate this:

**Academic Excellence:** A high-quality K-8 education sets the critical foundation for a student's success in high school, college, and beyond. Achievement may look different for each individual, but our goal is to prepare every student for college. We believe this starts by creating a culture focused on high care and high expectations for each student each day.

**Moral Focus:** A great school should aim to develop students' hearts as well as their minds. Our moral focus curriculum builds on the monthly virtues of wisdom, courage, compassion, gratitude, respect, encouragement, integrity, self-control, and perseverance. Hillside Academy students will build and maintain strong personal character and become good citizens as part of our program.

**Parental Partnerships:** Hillside Academy is committed to fostering strong partnerships with parents. Our school will actively engage parents in their children's learning and there will be consistent communication. Included in this effort will be a dedicated parent room specifically to allow ongoing interaction between parents and teachers.

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

In addition, Hillside Academy and NHA plan to assess the feasibility of incorporating STEM components and language classes into the curriculum to further support students to excel and obtain skills to be successful in life.

Attribution: Board and NHA

### **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.*

Goals: Our Board is committed to measuring student progress, achieving excellence, and holding NHA and our staff accountable for reaching established goals. As with other NHA-partner schools, we will use measures of academic growth and proficiency beyond those required by state law, and will share similar goals with other NHA-partner schools in North Carolina and elsewhere. Academic goals for the first five years include:

- In both kindergarten and first grade, students will score at or above the 65th percentile in reading and math as measured by beginning-of-year to end-of-year learning growth on a nationally-normed standardized assessment.
- By the end of the charter term, students at Hillside Academy will exceed the average performance of local district students by at least five percent on state assessments.
- Seventh grade students returning to Hillside Academy in 8th grade will successfully complete Math I (formerly Algebra I) and earn a 75% passing rate on the Math I end-of-course exam.
- Each year, Hillside Academy will, at a minimum, "Meet Expected Growth." Our objective is to exceed state standards of expected progress by the end of our first charter term.

Our goals will be a barometer for our school's performance. We will be pleased to meet them, but not satisfied, and will continue to make upward adjustments to our goals during our annual school improvement planning process.

As required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), we will administer a national assessment of college readiness to every 8th-grade student and use the results to develop a plan for each student's success in high school and college. As noted above, one of the reasons we chose to partner with NHA was the track record of success NHA-partner schools have ensuring that students are ready for high school and college.

We expect our school to achieve operational goals established for NHA-partner schools, too. These include:

- Each year, our school will average a student attendance rate at or above 93%.
- Each year, our school will have an overall parent satisfaction rate of 90%, with at least 50% of parents responding to the survey.
- Each year, our Board will review the performance of NHA. The review will be used to identify and provide feedback about their successes and opportunities to improve future performance. Accountability goals we expect to implement include a 100% compliance record in reporting and other regulatory areas and the development of an annual comprehensive school assessment and coordinated plan of action for improvement.
- Each year, our school will receive an unqualified audit.

Communication to Board and Others: Our Board will receive status reports on progress toward our goals at each monthly meeting, with detailed data provided on components of each goal that include the performance of student population subgroups (EC, ELL, newly enrolled students, etc.). Parents and students, too, will be informed of the school's progress toward its goals through periodic informational newsletters and special bulletins.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Hillside Academy's mission provides focus for our Board's governance, while reviewing oversight of operational and financial aspects of the school. Four key questions will drive our work:

- Are all students learning on a path to attain our mission and meet charter goals?
- Are parents active participants in their children's learning?
- Are funds being spent appropriately?
- Is our school in compliance with all state and federal requirements?

An early indicator that our model is working will be student enrollment; we expect to see demand significantly exceed the number of seats we plan to offer. Once the school is operational, we expect to maintain enrollment waiting lists. Because of the established demand for more charter school seats in our community, we are planning to start K-6.

Our Board will require monthly reports from our principal and NHA that demonstrate progress toward our mission and charter goals. These reports will detail benchmarks met, document trends toward the overarching and mission-specific goals, discuss challenges in meeting each performance objective, and present ideas on how to address those challenges. Included in these reports will be specific information on:

- Absolute and comparative student performance on internal diagnostic and interim assessments.
- Growth in student learning.
- Current status under state and federal accountability systems.
- College-readiness status.
- Vital statistics on our student population, including demographics, FRL, EL, and EC counts, as well as the corresponding achievement levels of these subgroups.
- Parent satisfaction and other stakeholder information.

These reports also will include operational information, such as statistics on enrollment, attrition, attendance, student discipline, and more. We will also annually report to our parents and the community our school's status under the North Carolina and federal accountability systems.

Discussions will be held between school leaders and our Board on: the status of school culture; the delivery and results of professional development for staff; student attendance and enrollment trends; programs of parental and community involvement; results of various elements of the school's internal formative assessment program; staff performance recognition programs; and, employee and staff grievances or concerns.

Our Board will be continually apprised on how the school is operating, how staff is delivering the educational program, and how students are performing. There should never be a situation in which testing results surprise school leaders or the Board. Should our school be lacking in any area, our Board and operational partner are committed to bringing the necessary resources to address the area of need.

Staff and parents also will be informed on the school's standing on each performance goal at meaningful measurement points. For single-point measurement goals, for example, we will expect data to be generated annually. We also will use select trend data, such as monthly attendance rates, to predict annual outcomes. Our Board also will take advantage of the online and in-person training opportunities on various aspects of charter



school governance offered through the NCDPI's Office of Charter Schools. Additional training opportunities will be pursued through organizations such as the National Association for Public Charter Schools and North Carolina Public Charter Schools Association.

We will contract for an independent review of NHA's performance periodically to ensure that we are meeting all performance requirements in our charter and that we are satisfied with NHA's commitment to our school.

Attribution: Board and NHA

### 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.

Hillside Academy will be designed as an NHA-partner school, with our instructional program built on four foundational pillars: academic excellence, student responsibility, moral focus, and parental partnerships (see the "Purposes" section).

**Instructional Methods:** Teachers will use various instructional methods to promote engagement, describe instructional intent, and implement appropriate rigor for our students. It is anticipated that most lessons will begin with a small block of direct instruction, and then students will transition to small-group settings. Collaborative learning will provide students the chance to learn from peers, discuss or debate ideas and information, or participate in inquiry-based learning of curricular content. Small-group instruction will also include time for students to work on Google Chromebooks with software that provides instruction at their specific level, such as i-Ready. The i-Ready program is an online math and reading program that personalizes instruction for students and instantly downloads cross-grade-level assessments that identify areas of strength and weaknesses so teachers can differentiate instruction. Finally, independent work will be assigned to provide students time to practice applying skills or knowledge that have been learned, extend individual learning to novel situations, or promote the development of higher-order thinking skills.

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

**Assessment Strategies:** Hillside Academy will administer all state-required assessments and additional measures of growth and proficiency. We will also administer a norm-referenced assessment to allow teachers and school leaders to gauge student progress, adjust instruction where necessary, and measure the effectiveness of those changes. As required by NCDPI, all 8th graders will take a high school- and college-readiness exam. The exam will provide feedback on competency strengths and gaps relative to students' career

aspirations and offer insights into academic readiness for college. Our school will also administer mock state assessments to prepare students for the testing format through use of released sample questions.

We know formative assessment is critical to adjust instruction and identify needed intervention and enrichment. Students will be assessed at the end of each quarter to gauge mastery of the state standards taught during each nine week period. This assessment data will be analyzed in professional learning communities (PLCs) and will be used to benchmark student progress and plan for any needed intervention. This process is referred to as "Common Assessment."

Meeting Student Needs: We plan to implement NHA's successful K-8 program, a model that uses blended learning to help to pinpoint where each student is on their educational path. Successful NHA-partner schools have shown above average proficiency gains and greater growth the more years a student spends at an NHA-partner school. (See Appendix O)

The instructional methods and assessment strategies described above will be designed to help our teachers challenge each student at his or her level, whether below, at, or above grade-level proficiency.

Attribution: NHA

### **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.*

Along with our school-wide framework for success (discussed under the Educational Need and Targeted Student Population section), Hillside Academy will adopt the classroom framework of instructional competencies developed by NHA to increase student achievement.

- Classroom Culture: Teacher leads a self-managing classroom by building positive relationships, maintaining physical space, sustaining classroom routines and procedures, and holding students accountable to behavioral expectations.

- Planning: Teacher plans for instruction by identifying and analyzing standards to be taught throughout the year, aligning instructional resources and activities to those standards, and preplanning differentiated opportunities to meet individual learning needs.

- Teaching: Teacher delivers content at a level of rigor that challenges students, cognitively engages them, intentionally uses all time for learning, and personalizes instruction.

- Assessing: Teacher implements assessment strategies to understand student learning needs, provide actionable feedback, and guide instructional decisions.

To guide the implementation of the school-wide and classroom frameworks, our staff will have access to an interactive web-based application that provides real time updates on student attendance, behavior, mastery of learning objectives, and more. This innovative approach allows staff a clear roadmap for effective instruction and provides opportunities for feedback to

teachers through specific actions and indicators.

**Learning Environment and Structure:** Personalized instruction will be a focus at our school. We will use online learning tools to create a blended learning environment. We believe that interlacing media together makes students stronger. Each classroom teacher will be effectively trained and frequently coached to employ a variety of instructional approaches (including modeling, think-alouds, etc.), and to use differentiated instruction as appropriate. Teachers will establish opportunities for collaborative and inquiry-based learning to deepen students' understanding of various topics. As noted above, independent work also will be assigned as practice for applying previously learned concepts and to promote the development of higher-order thinking skills. Importantly, small-group settings also will be created to ensure students are engaged with the standards at their current level of learning. This approach will ensure each student's education is specific to his or her needs.

**Personalized Instruction:** We plan to have small blocks of direct instruction. In order to meet each student at their individual learning level and to make the most effective use of our resources, we intend to leverage technology during small group instruction. It is our intent that each classroom have approximately 10 Google Chromebooks to aid small-group instruction and leverage software platforms such as i-Ready.

**Class Size:** We will have four kindergarten classes with 25 students on average in each class. In grades one to eight, we are planning to serve up to three classes per grade level with an average of 28 students per class.

**Structure:** Classroom teachers will receive support and weekly coaching from grade-level deans, and will work in grade-level teams to better meet student needs and plan effectively. Teachers will also meet in vertical teams to ensure that students are learning the needed skills at each grade level for success in the next grade.

**Attribution:** NHA

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.*

Our curriculum is aligned to the North Carolina Standards and Accountability Model. Effective research-based instructional strategies, adaptation to individual student needs, and meaningful and student-centered professional development will help fulfill our mission.

**Alignment to Mission:** Our focus on personalized instruction is designed to prepare each student for success and aligns with our mission: To provide a high-quality education that places each student on the path to college readiness through a rigorous curriculum and collaboration between parents, students, and staff in an environment that values achievement and strong character. Our moral focus program, interwoven throughout our school, will foster strong character in our students.

**Alignment to Student Population:** We expect to enroll students who have academic deficits, others who are learning at grade level, and others who are intellectually gifted, but we are not targeting enrollment efforts at any specific population. We will implement the following cyclical process to teaching and assessing to meet all student needs.

**Identifying Objectives and Determining Assessments:** Teachers will collaborate to identify objectives for units of instruction, and use end-of-instruction (EOI) assessments to gauge student learning. Staff will also use periodic interim, mock state, and short-cycle assessments. Adjustments to instruction will be made based on evidence.

**Developing Building Blocks:** After the educational objectives are reviewed and EOI assessments are determined, grade-level teams will identify building blocks of instruction to scaffold student learning towards mastery of each objective. These building blocks will be used to construct formative assessments in daily instruction.

**Analyzing Evidence:** Whether gathered through building-block or EOI assessments, teachers will analyze evidence at the student and classroom level. Teachers will determine what knowledge or skills need further development for students through the specificity of building-block assessments. As teachers meet to examine student work, they will gauge the instructional effectiveness. They will analyze evidence to discover student misconceptions and knowledge or skill gaps that may inhibit student learning.

**Responding to Evidence:** Teachers will identify opportunities for planned instructional adjustments prompted by evidence as they prepare their units. If learning progresses more quickly than expected, instruction will be accelerated. If learning progresses more slowly, more time will be spent delivering instruction. Teachers will consider EOI assessments to develop subsequent units. We also will allocate resources and work with NHA to hire additional intervention staff if ever needed for student success.

**Alignment to Accountability Model:** We will use our instructional framework to ensure that the curriculum and instructional approaches are producing academic gains for our students and that achievement is on track to meet and exceed measures in the state's Accountability Model.

**Planned Components:** Our school will benefit from the curriculum developed by NHA, which meets North Carolina requirements. We plan to use the following curricular tools:

- Math K-5: Math Expressions
- ELA K-5: Reading Street
- Math 6-8: Big Ideas

- ELA 6-8: Holt McDougal Literature
- Social Studies: The primary tools expected include: Scott Foresman's Social Studies series (K-4); TCI's Social Studies Alive! (Grade 5); Journey Across Time (Grades 6-7); and, The American Journey: Early Years (Grade 8).
- Hillside Academy has yet to identify a primary science curricular tool but is considering: Interactive Science by Pearson (K-8), ScienceFusion by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (K-8), and Inspire Science (K-5) / iScience (6-8) by McGraw Hill.
- Other: Intervention and accelerated materials will be available for use with Google Chromebooks, including i-Ready software for reading and math.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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.*

Mastery of Instructional Strategies: Teachers at Hillside Academy will be expected to use a variety of instructional methods that provide the most effective way to enhance learning for each individual student. Our primary methods will include direct instruction, modeling, demonstration, and think-alouds. Guided instruction may be done with large groups or with small, needs-based groups during workshop time or during content-area learning blocks to allow for differentiation of instruction (also see "Instructional Program," above). A blended learning approach will also be used during workshop to meet the individual learning needs of students at all levels.

Our deans will effectively manage instruction by working individually with teachers to ensure that appropriate teaching techniques are used to advance student learning and promote high expectations. Teachers will receive focused professional development and training and will receive the support of weekly coaching and matching feedback sessions to ensure they successfully implement teaching techniques to promote student learning.

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

Teachers are expected to implement strategies that help students take responsibility for their learning. This includes using learning goals as an instructional tool and helping students set individualized goals for themselves. Through this approach, both students and teachers are provided a clear understanding of the desired focus skill, and teachers are empowered to articulate what they are teaching while allowing students to describe what they are learning and to work at the appropriate level of difficulty (see R.J. Marzano, *Designing & Teaching Learning Goals & Objectives*, 2009).

In addition to scheduled school-wide professional development sessions, teachers will be observed frequently and provided feedback weekly by their grade-level dean to receive timely coaching, brainstorm strategies for

unique challenges, and model especially effective techniques to other teachers.

**Increased Academic Achievement:** These instructional strategies provide a comprehensive approach of delivering educational content while incorporating the flexibility to adapt instruction to meet individual student needs and learning styles. Combined with the use of formative assessment to provide multiple measures of student performance data, our school as a whole will be able to adapt the delivery of educational content as student needs dictate. This is expected to result in the ability of each student, regardless of his or her academic starting point, to make measurable academic progress throughout the school year. Our approach is designed for student academic success and will build upon foundational content and skills in the early grades to implement more complex inquiry and learning strategies in the later grades.

Attribution: NHA

- 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.*

Hillside Academy will be a K-8 school and as such will not have high school graduation requirements. Students will be expected to progress academically through one grade level each year, however. Our program is designed to ensure that graduating 8th grade students have the opportunity to attend and succeed in a challenging high school program. We plan to provide to our students a guide to area high schools and their performance to ensure our 8th grade graduates are aware of the opportunities available to them.

The principal will have the final decision regarding the promotion, acceleration, and retention of students. If a student fails to meet the third-grade requirement of the NC Read to Achieve mandate, additional interventions and a personalized reading improvement plan will be offered. The practice of promoting students who have failed to master the grade-level curriculum is incompatible with our mission. A variety of structures and procedures are incorporated into the school model to ensure that students do indeed receive the content, instruction, and interventions necessary to progress academically as expected. Deans will serve as the direct managers for teachers in specific grade-level cohorts and ensure that instructional plans are aligned and scaffold appropriately across all grade-levels to ensure smooth upward transitions for students.

Hillside Academy will use formative assessments designed to include multiple checkpoints throughout instruction to measure student understanding of content. Teachers will analyze data at both the classroom and individual student level and then will scaffold student learning towards student mastery of each educational objective. The specificity of short-cycle formative assessments enables teachers to determine exactly what knowledge needs further development in each student, and to individualize instruction as appropriate to ensure that each student learns as expected. School leaders will consistently review the data for all grade levels and ensure that the school's curriculum and instructional approach is accelerating student learning and will report this information to our Board throughout

the year.

For students who struggle and show indications that they may not acquire the expected knowledge and skills planned for a particular grade level, we will have a formal, comprehensive, progressive structure of intervention designed to bring those students back on track (see the section on at-risk students, below). These programs, supported and informed by the school's formative assessment process, are designed specifically to ensure that by the end of one grade level, students are academically ready to transition to the next grade.

As part of our internal assessment program, our school will administer norm-referenced assessments multiple times each year. These assessments will supplement the annual state exams. Results of these assessments will allow us to better gauge how our students compare to peers across the country, with the intent to better inform our school leaders and teachers that each student is being given the opportunity for success.

This envisioned success is real and achievable. Students attending NHA-partner schools have a tremendous track record of preparedness for high school: 96% of students completing 8th grade at NHA-partner schools go on to graduate from high school, easily surpassing the national average for low-income students (70%) and all students combined (80%).

Attribution: NHA

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

The envisioned school-year calendar for Hillside Academy is a standard school calendar, beginning in August and ending in June. Our draft calendar is included in Appendix C, and aligns with the CMS and UCPS school calendars. Our K-8 structure and traditional calendar will allow families with elementary and middle school children a choice that, while generally reflecting the schedule of many district schools, allows students to enroll in one school for nine years.

As currently envisioned, our school day will run seven hours, starting at 8:15 a.m. and ending at 3:15 p.m., and will provide 6.5 instructional hours per day. This structure offers students and parents more educational time than traditional district schools in our area. Anticipating that we will provide 1,110 hours of instruction each year, our school will exceed the required minimum instructional hours.

Also included in our calendar are 18 days (13 prior to school year, five days when school is in session) dedicated to professional development. We will schedule between two and four parent-teacher conference days. We



believe teachers and staff need to be in the classroom, just as we expect our students to be, and we will hold teachers and staff accountable for absenteeism. Of course, we may modify our schedule based on the needs of the students who eventually enroll.

Correspondence with Tenets of Mission and Instructional Plan: Instruction will be organized around a master schedule in which every attempt will be made to schedule math and ELA/reading courses in the morning and maintain science and social studies as focused priorities. This is designed to ensure priority attention is given to core subjects. The proposed schedule provides time for daily grade-level team planning while students participate in specials and co-curricular areas (e.g., music, art, and physical education, etc.). Grade-level planning teams will meet at least weekly to adjust teaching based on student learning evidence. This approach to instruction will allow students to be critical thinkers, active collaborators, and eager contributors to their own learning.

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

Attribution: NHA

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

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

We will have a comprehensive process that ensures students who are in need of intervention are consistently identified, served, and monitored. Our systematic intervention program is designed to stimulate early action that helps prevent academic failure and maximize the effectiveness of grade-level instruction. We will comply with the NC Read to Achieve mandate. This process is based on a framework consisting of six key practices:

**Schedule Intentionally:** A strategic schedule is set for the delivery of all needed services to each identified student. Scheduling also will accommodate the dedication of the most skilled interventionists to the students with the highest needs.

**Create Collaborative Teams:** Intervention staff and classroom teachers will meet every four to six weeks to discuss student assessment data, monitor progress, and update intervention plans. This monitoring also will include students recently exited from intervention services.

**Allocate Resources Appropriately:** School leaders, with NHA staff, will collaborate to ensure that funds are allocated in ways that will allow the school to maximize resources to best meet student needs.

**Develop Intervention Plans:** Internal diagnostic assessments will be used to determine student needs, with data supporting the initiation of intervention

services shortly after enrollment in the school. A written plan will be developed that details the interventions that will meet student needs and will be updated regularly.

**Monitor Progress:** Students struggling to make progress will be assessed at a minimum every two weeks, and those students identified with the most severe academic needs will be assessed weekly. Intervention goals will be set individually for each student based on these monitoring results.

**Provide Professional Development:** One-on-one meetings between school leadership and intervention staff will be scheduled twice each month, and weekly coaching sessions will be set to focus on individual student data and strategies being used to meet student needs.

Within this systematic intervention framework we will follow a three-tiered approach to provide intensified academic support.

**Tier I Intervention:** In Tier I, classroom teachers will respond to student learning needs within the context of regular classroom instruction. The initial screening assessment used at the beginning of each school year will be used to define the needed individualized instruction. During the school year, we will leverage our formative assessment process, classroom assessments, NHA's common assessments, and a benchmark assessment (likely, NWEA) to ensure individual student learning progresses appropriately.

**Tier II Intervention:** If a student does not master content through the first tier of intervention as measured by the assessments in the previous section, or if early screening shows significant academic deficits, more prescriptive Tier II interventions will be used. This includes supplemental instruction and coaching using programs and approaches that are proven to accelerate student learning. These well-researched intervention programs will be used to quickly increase student achievement. Other intervention strategies may be provided in the classroom in a workshop setting or delivered through supplemental support outside of the general education classroom during non-core educational programming.

**Tier III Intervention:** If progress monitoring data shows that a student is not making sufficient progress after Tier II interventions, the student will be moved into Tier III interventions. Tier III interventions will include an intensified approach that focuses on selected high-priority reading and math skills. Depending on the need, one-on-one concentrated tutoring will also be considered whenever appropriate. If these interventions do not succeed, the school's EC team will meet with the student's parents and may recommend an EC referral meeting.

Attribution: NHA

2. *Explain how the instructional plan and curriculum will meet the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students, including the following:*
  - a) *Methods for identifying ELL students.*
  - b) *Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for ELL students.*
  - c) *Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of ELL students, including exiting students from ELL services.*

Identification: School staff will work with enrolled families to ELLs through home-language surveys, informal interviews, and the state's screening assessment (currently the W-APT, provided by WIDA). We anticipate that approximately eight percent of our students will be classified as ELL, reflecting the local CMS average. Initially, our school will give all new students the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ). If the HLQ indicates that a student's home language is something other than English, the student will be identified as a potential ELL student.

Our ELL coordinator will conduct an informal interview of each student identified as a potential ELL. If the interview confirms that a student speaks a language other than English, the student will be given the W-APT to determine his or her proficiency in English. If the student scores proficient (Level 5.0-Bridging), ELL services are not required, and the screening process will stop. If the student scores at any lower level, the student will be classified as an ELL student and placed appropriately in our program.

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

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

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

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

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

Attribution: NHA

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.*

The demand reflected in our survey of area parents, and the substantial waitlists, leads us to anticipate enrolling at least some students who may be classified as intellectually gifted (IG). Students with such skills will receive the direction, time, encouragement, and resources to maximize their potential. We will identify IG students from any background and provide instruction that nurtures and grows that excellence.

Identification: It is our responsibility to ensure all students master the grade-level context expected and we firmly believe that all students can learn at high levels when provided with high-quality instruction in a nurturing yet challenging environment. As part of our educational program, Hillside Academy will use a nationally normed assessment. This will allow the school to identify and track students who are performing at the very highest levels, a potential indicator of a student's identification as IG. For all students, we believe it is critical to ensure growth. We are committed to regularly monitoring students' progress and adjusting learning opportunities when growth is inadequate. In addition to using assessment results, classroom teachers will monitor mastery of curricular content as measured by the school's formative assessment program. This program is a planned process by which teachers and students adjust their approaches to teaching and learning based on insights from frequent, varying, and ongoing evaluations of progress.

Instruction: Classroom teachers will offer IG students personalized instruction through pre-planned extensions (including enrichment lessons, exercises, and higher-order thinking skills) in a whole group, small group, or individualized settings to address advanced learning needs. When needed, the school may accelerate grade-level or content-level learning for individual students, taking into consideration his or her specific needs. Students at or above grade level will be consistently challenged with classroom curricular content and high-quality instruction. Hillside Academy and NHA plan to assess the feasibility of incorporating select STEM and foreign language components into the curriculum to further differentiate our program and challenge our high achievers.

If desired, we may create an entire accelerated cohort group that will include both students who are above grade-level proficiency and students who are designated as IG. This will allow an entire student subgroup to move through the curriculum at a more rapid pace, paired with teachers particularly suited for providing instruction of these students. This allows opportunities for students to be systematically challenged with higher-order thinking skills and project-based learning within a common peer group, and it allows the opportunity for the creation of an accelerated section at each grade level.

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

**Monitoring/Evaluating:** Our norm-referenced assessment will generate results that help set individual learning targets and measurable objectives for all students. The school will use results to set higher individual learning targets and more rigorous growth objectives to monitor and measure the progress of IG students.

Attribution: NHA

### **Exceptional Children**

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

### **Identification and Records**

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

Identification: Exceptional children (EC) will be identified upon entry to

our school by either an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or through the ChildFind process. If parents state that their child has previously received EC services or has an IEP or Section 504 plan, we will ask the parent for any documentation. If the parent has no documentation, we will initiate a records request from the student's prior school. Staff will review all student files for evidence of enrollment in an EC program at the previous school; if found, we will immediately ask that school for relevant records. We will implement the student's existing IEP or Section 504 Plan, providing comparable services until the IEP or 504 team either accepts the plan or develops a new plan.

**ChildFind:** We will include ChildFind in our marketing efforts to attract the broadest possible spectrum of students, including EC students. Our outreach will target all area families with students of appropriate ages. Parents expressing interest in enrolling exceptional children will be invited to meet with school staff to review the program and ask questions. We will comply with ChildFind requirements of IDEA, including 34 CFR 300.125, and Section 504, and will provide notification to parents consistent with state and federal requirements.

We understand our responsibility to identify students who need EC services but enter our school without an active IEP. If a student struggles with classroom assignments, a teacher or parent may refer the student to our Intervention Assistance Team (IAT), which will include the principal or designee, a classroom teacher, and the referring teacher. The student's parents will be invited to participate. The IAT will determine appropriate educational and service options by analyzing screening data, response to intervention results, classroom performance, discipline data, state assessments, and any other pertinent information including from the parent. Outcomes may include: implementing or continuing current intervention and progress monitoring through the systematic intervention process; implementing additional interventions; referring for a Section 504 evaluation; referring to the IEP team for a possible comprehensive evaluation; and, taking no further action while monitoring academic, behavioral and social data. In accordance with IDEA and Section 504, at any time, a student's parents can refer the student for an EC evaluation, and a properly convened team will decide whether to proceed with the evaluation. If parents disagree with an IEP team's decision not to conduct an evaluation, the parent has all procedural rights, including the right to request a due process hearing, as set forth in the North Carolina Handbook on Parent's Rights and under Section 504.

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

**Record Request, Confidentiality, and Compliance:** School staff will request records from the student's previous school or district. If complete records aren't received within 14 days of the date the school is notified that the

student is an EC, staff will reach out to the prior school for more information. If the requested information is not obtained, our school will initiate the EC referral or re-evaluation process. Staff will collect, handle, and secure the records at Hillside Academy, and share these documents with parents in accordance with all relevant state and federal laws and regulations.

Attribution: NHA

### Exceptional Children's Education Programming

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

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

As required by federal law, we are committed to serving students in the least restrictive environment (LRE), while providing the full continuum of educational placements as appropriate for each student. These placements may include, but are not limited to, the general education setting, and small-group instruction with both disabled and non-disabled peers as appropriate. We will prepare and execute individualized strategies for our full range of students, realizing that the LRE for some students may be in a more supportive alternative setting.

Students requiring specially designed instruction will have their services delivered in the general education classroom or will receive services in a resource room or separate setting based on individual needs and a decision by the IEP team, considering that services are to be provided in the LRE. EC teachers will be provided with consultation and staff development provided by a dean and special education supervisor or other entity to ensure that students receive the modification of instruction and assessment accommodations required by their IEPs.

The school will recruit, hire, or contract highly qualified and certified EC teachers and related services staff to help ensure high-quality instruction. All new staff, including EC teachers, will participate in an orientation session prior to the start of the school year. Each teacher will work closely with a dean on a weekly basis to focus on his or her specific professional development needs. EC teachers will be on staff to provide academic support to students with IEPs.

The school will also provide needed ancillary staff, such as a school psychologist, occupational and speech therapists, and a school social worker, etc. as either employees or contracted providers. Additional staff may be added once the school determines the needs of our student population.

We estimate that between 10 and 15% of our students will need EC services. Credentials of all staff will be reviewed to ensure compliance with state credentialing requirements; teachers who do not possess the required credentials will be granted a reasonable amount of time to meet state credentialing requirements. Ancillary staff will possess state-required credentials before providing services to eligible students.

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

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

At a minimum, the role of our EC staff will include the following responsibilities:

- Implement state IEPs.
- Facilitate effective communication with students, parents, teachers, the school leadership team, EC staff, and appropriate social service and community-based agencies.

\*See overflow section for further detail.

\*Continued from Exceptional Children's Educational Programming.

- Form a partnership with the classroom teacher to develop appropriate instructional practices to meet student needs as detailed in the IEPs.
- Act as a resource to classroom teachers.
- Meet all requirements for EC activities at the school.
- Schedule and hold all initial, re-evaluation, and annual review meetings pertaining to each student's EC program within required timelines.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal special education requirements.
- Provide instruction in a general education classroom setting to the greatest extent possible consistent with LRE requirements.
- Provide instruction to an individual or groups of students in a separate location as appropriate.
- Administer formal and informal educational assessments to guide instructional decisions when appropriate.
- Maintain documentation of services, progress monitoring data, data specific to progress on IEP goals and objectives, observation logs, communication logs, and any other data specified in a student's IEP.

Monitoring Implementation and Reporting Academic Progress: A dean or the principal will oversee the implementation of IEPs and 504 plans. The dean or principal will conduct weekly one-on-one meetings with EC staff to discuss the academic progress of exceptional children, the timing of annual reviews, and the conduct of three-year re-evaluations. In addition, each IEP will be



reviewed to determine the duration of services to verify compliance with the student's IEP or 504 plan. Progress reports will accompany report cards, and deans will discuss student progress relative to 504 plans and/or IEP annual goals at one-on-one meetings with teachers. General education teachers will keep a record of the accommodations and modifications that are to be made in the general education setting relative to instruction and testing.

At least twice a year, we will give all students a norm-referenced assessment to gauge progress toward goals. This will include EC students as allowed in their IEPs. EC teachers will use the resulting information to determine areas of critical need for exceptional children and will make instructional decisions that positively affect these students' achievement. In addition to this assessment, EC providers will use curriculum-based assessments and other data collection tools to monitor progress on IEP goals and objectives.

Communication on IEP Implementation: Parents will be provided progress reports on IEP goals and objectives consistent with the school's report card marking period. EC teachers also will discuss these progress reports individually with students. The Procedural Safeguards: Handbook on Parents' Rights from NCDPI will be provided to each student's parent or guardian as follows:

- Upon referral for EC testing.
- At least annually when we conduct an annual review of the student's IEP.
- Whenever there is a change of placement.
- Whenever a manifestation determination meeting is being conducted.

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

Attribution: NHA

## **Student Performance Standards**

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

Goals: We will establish the following school performance standards as benchmarks against which student academic progress will be measured:

- In both kindergarten and first grade, students will score at or above the

65th percentile in reading and math as measured by beginning-of-year to end-of-year learning growth on a nationally-normed standardized assessment.

- By the end of the charter term, students at Hillside Academy will exceed the average performance of local district students by at least five percent on state assessments.

- Seventh grade students returning to Hillside Academy in 8th grade will successfully complete Math I (formerly Algebra I) and earn a 75% passing rate on the Math I end-of-course exam.

- Each year, Hillside Academy will, at a minimum, "Meet Expected Growth." Our objective is to exceed state standards of expected progress by the end of our first charter term.

**Evaluation Tools:** The school will administer a norm-referenced assessment multiple times per year to measure academic growth and to improve instruction. This will allow teachers and school leaders to gauge student progress, adjust instruction where necessary, and measure the effectiveness of those changes.

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

If a student fails to meet the third-grade requirements of the NC Read to Achieve mandate, additional interventions and a personalized reading improvement and monitoring plan will be offered. If not proficient after these interventions, the student will be retained unless they meet a good cause exemption. Retained students will receive additional intervention support.

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

**Exit Standards:** Students will exit our school and be promoted to high school in accordance with the North Carolina Student Accountability Standards. We believe strongly that students should leave our school academically prepared for a rigorous high school program and with the required skills, both social and academic, to graduate from high school and be college-ready. The practice of promoting students who have failed to master part of their grade-level curriculum is incompatible with the state's gateway standards, the academic goals of our school, and our mission. Our Board is committed to meeting the needs of students who are at-risk academically. Our school model has a robust formative assessment program that helps quickly identify students who need extra attention, as well as those who are surpassing grade-level standards, all deserving differentiated instruction. As such, we will use

those tools to ensure that at-risk students receive the appropriate supports and are exited from our school successfully.

Attribution: Board and NHA

### **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.*

*Be sure to include:*

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

Promotion of Effective Discipline: Time spent on student discipline is time not spent on student learning. The philosophy behind our discipline policy is to create and maintain a culture that commits to individual student achievement. We will adopt, implement, and sustain a program called Behave with Care, which includes school-wide behavior and classroom management practices, is rooted in the concept of engagement, and is aligned with the U.S. Department of Education's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support model. Behave with Care includes a six-level color-coded, school-wide behavior management system to ensure positive behaviors are reinforced. Teachers and staff will consistently reinforce positive behavior using strategies such as relationship building, classroom motivation systems, development of social contracts, precise praise of positive behavior, and individual student affirmations.

To supplement the Behave with Care program, teachers will also have Positive Behavior Replacement Plan (PBRP) tools. The PBRP is a collection of 30 mini-course packets - available online - that serve as a resource for teachers on student behavior issues. This information helps students understand the consequences of their behaviors, why they are not acceptable, and how they can change. Specifically, the program:

- Fosters dignity and respect for students.
- Gives students positive behavior alternatives.
- Saves time dealing with negative behavior issues.
- Reduces school suspensions due to negative behavior.
- Helps students facilitate positive change.
- Instills in students an awareness of current and future consequences that their actions have.

Our moral focus programming, too, is designed to help create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning and help students learn how to manage their own behavior and develop strong personal character. As a result, behaviors such as cooperation, respect, and compassion are expected to replace apathy, bullying, and a disregard for authority.

Equitable Application: We will ensure our program is equitably applied to all students at Hillside Academy, while remaining mindful of individual student needs. Hillside Academy will care for its students the way a family cares for its children. The system clearly defines examples of behaviors at each level and appropriate consequences, and details of incidents will be recorded in our student information system to help ensure that all behavior incidents are noted and treated consistently and that these records are available to parents. Teacher observations and feedback ensure consistency from student to student and from classroom to classroom which in turn will create a familiarity of the rules among all students.

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

Offenses; Application to Exceptional Children; Due Process: Our parent-student handbook will include information on major aspects of the student discipline policy, including offenses eligible for disciplinary action. We will follow federal and state laws as well as NCDPI policies to ensure that due process and grievance procedures are followed whenever suspending or expelling students with disabilities or suspected disabilities is considered. These processes will be further detailed in an EC handbook provided to staff at all NHA-partner schools.

Attribution: Board and NHA

**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:* South Piedmont Charter Development, Inc.

*Mailing Address:* 8240 Ballantyne Commons Parkway

*City/State/Zip:* Charlotte NC 28277

*Street Address:* 8240 Ballantyne Commons Parkway

*Phone:* 704-968-7665

*Fax:* 704-968-7665

*Name of registered agent and address:*

Nalan Karakaya Mulder

8240 Ballantyne Commons Parkway #49086, Charlotte, NC 28277

*FEDERAL TAX ID:* 81-3824895

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

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

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

X No

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

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

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

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

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Board Title</b>	<b>County/State of Residence</b>	<b>Current Occupation</b>	<b>Past or Present Professional</b>	<b>Has any disciplinary action been taken</b>
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Name				Licenses(s) Held	against any of these professional licenses?
Rebecca McNeerney	Director	MECKLENBURG	Attorney	NC, SC Law License	N
Rana Karakaya Fox	Vice President	MECKLENBURG	NC Real Estate Agent	NC Real Estate Agent License	N
Nalan Karakaya Mulder	Board President	MECKLENBURG	Senior VP of Compliance	NC Real Estate Agent License	N
Catherine Mitchell	Secretary	MECKLENBURG	Assistant General Counsel	NC Law License	N
Denise Holmes	Treasurer	MECKLENBURG	Homemaker	Notary; Licensed Realtor; Tax Preparer	N

**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.*

Our Board President had the opportunity to meet with the Board President at Matthews Charter Academy (MCA) to discuss his experience with the charter process and opening of a new school in partnership with NHA. We are also in the process of reaching out to other local charter boards for further insight on effective governance practices. Our Board will be focused on governance, while NHA focuses on day-to-day operations.

**Functions and Duties:** It is our responsibility as the Board to ensure Hillside Academy fulfills our mission. We will make sure our school has the needed systems, personnel, and resources in place to create an environment conducive to scholarly learning and designed to meet our goals. We will perform the functions essential to governance, including ensuring that students are learning, that funds are appropriately managed, and that our school complies with all charter, state, and federal requirements. We have retained legal counsel to advise us. Annually, we will contract with an independent auditor to ensure fiscal propriety. We may also contract with a third-party evaluator of the educational program as necessary for an independent perspective of the performance of our school.

We are confident that our partnership with NHA will deliver an educational program that will serve students well, become an asset to the community, achieve our charter goals, and fulfill our mission. It is our responsibility to ensure that happens.

Our Board also will adopt and implement policies that promote transparency and good patterns of communication among the Board, school leaders, NHA, parents, and the community.

**Roles and Responsibilities:** Our Board will perform functions including, but

not limited to:

- Articulating, maintaining, and driving our mission throughout the school community.
- Holding NHA accountable for the efficient and effective operation of the school and for the achievement of academic goals.
- Reviewing and approving the school's annual budgets and ensuring that proper financial procedures are in place and effectively implemented.
- Reviewing, approving, and monitoring progress toward academic, financial, and operational goals.
- Reviewing and approving school policies.
- Ensuring that sufficient enrichment programs are created to supplement the education program.
- Appointing officers and committees as needed.
- Adopting, amending, and repealing bylaws as needed.
- Developing and maintaining effective relations with NCDPI and the Office of Charter Schools.
- Ensuring that meetings are conducted in accordance with open meetings laws and in compliance with North Carolina conflict of interest and public records laws.

The principal, with NHA as appropriate, will provide us with the information needed to assess all aspects of the school's performance.

Hiring Lead Administrator (Principal): Under our partnership arrangement, teachers will be jointly employed by our Board and NHA and school leaders and other non-teaching staff will be employed directly by NHA. NHA has an experienced and expert school leadership recruitment team that identifies and evaluates school leaders for their skills, experience, and personal attributes. Thus, while our principal will report as an employee directly to NHA, the principal will be responsible for regularly reporting about the school to the Board and the Board will hold our principal accountable, along with NHA, for the school's performance.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Board has strong roots in South Charlotte. We have school-age children and are involved with our children's schools. Our backgrounds in real estate, business, legal, finance, higher-education and management ensure that our governance team will have the high-quality and broad skill set we need to make Hillside Academy an academic and operational success. Our local ties help us relate to the families and organizations that make up our school community. With 10 other NHA-partner schools already operating in the state - including MCA and QGCS nearby - and three more approved to open, we also are uniquely situated to reach out to those boards and collaborate to replicate best practices.

Ensuring Educational and Operational Success: We fully understand and embrace our responsibility as a board to govern Hillside Academy with

integrity, oversee its fiscal and educational operations, and ensure that we fulfill our mission. This responsibility comes with the authority we need to make this happen: to adopt all needed policies and ensure their effective enactment; to implement the school's educational program and achieve our goals; and, to ensure that the school operates in ways that will achieve academic excellence. As we demand continuous improvement from our school, so too do we expect our Board to become better at its responsibilities with each passing school year.

Evaluation of the School and the School Leader (Principal): We will require our principal and NHA to provide the Board with regular reports on student performance, assessment data, operational data, and any parent survey data. We will use this information to assess Hillside Academy's progress towards our performance goals and performance of the principal. We also will contract for an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of NHA and school leadership in meeting expectations. Under the provisions of our Services Agreement with NHA, we maintain the authority to express reasonable dissatisfaction with the principal. If NHA and the principal have been given sufficient time to remedy an issue and there has been insufficient improvement, the Board can direct NHA to terminate the principal.

Additionally, our contract with NHA allows us to terminate the entire partnership at any time if we decide that is the best course of action for our school. Should we opt to terminate the agreement with NHA (which no board has ever done in the 21-year history of the organization), we retain the right to lease the school building for the remainder of the current school year and the next school year. Importantly, the per-pupil funding will continue to flow to us to fund school operations independently. This allows us to transition management to another company or to become more of an operational board and contract for the individual services we need.

Involvement of Key Stakeholders: Parents are one of the most critical stakeholder groups to consider in the success of Hillside Academy. The members of our Board are large proponents of school choice. Other key stakeholders in the school and the community will always be invited to attend our Board meetings, and we will actively solicit feedback from community groups.

Our Board membership has the experience and ability to make meaningful contributions and effectively govern our school. Qualifications for current and future Board members include passion for challenging students through high expectations, enthusiasm for this school and commitment to our mission, dedication to our community, and willingness to give the time and energy needed to undertake this important venture.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Board came together as a result of our need and desire to establish more high-quality public school choices in the South Charlotte area. We live and raise families here, and want the best for our children, and our friends' and neighbors' children. We need more school choices now, not later. Our



schools are already overcrowded, families are consistently redistricted, and more growth is coming. We believe that providing the opportunity for and access to high-quality public school choices for area families is one of the best long term investments we can make. Our Board members bring to the school extensive experience in law, business, finance, nonprofit management, and higher education.

Our Board will seek to anticipate vacancies to the greatest extent possible. For example, we will ask members to notify the Board President early in the year of the member's term expiration if he or she does not wish to renew his or her term. We will be proactive in recruitment for potential vacancies by maintaining a list of contacts and associates who may wish to serve on the Board. Appointments to the Board to complete the terms of vacant seats will be made in accordance with our bylaws.

Attribution: Board

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

Our Board will meet at least monthly. We will meet more frequently as needed, especially during our start-up phase.

Attribution: Board

*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 Orientation and Training: Our founding Board members bring experience from serving on other governing boards. We have already begun training for our service as the Board of Hillside Academy. We have heard presentations from our legal counsel and an independent auditor on the requirements of non-profit charter school boards and our fiduciary responsibilities. Further, we have reviewed the charter school statute. We also are eager to participate in the Ready-to-Open orientation process required by the Office of Charter Schools (OCS) and have conversations with board members at other NHA-partner schools. Additional training for all current and future Board members will be generally structured around the three modules outlined below.

Module One will discuss, among other things:

- The governance model of the school, including board roles and responsibilities.
- Details about Board processes and procedures.
- The structure of Board meetings and the open meetings and public records laws.
- Information about the school's programs, systems, and policies.

Module Two will discuss, among other things:

- Parliamentary procedures and the role of Board members in the use of such procedures.
- A review of the school's bylaws and articles of incorporation.
- A review of the charter and delineation of responsibilities to the authorizer.

- A review of the Services Agreement with the school's management partner, including a discussion about roles and responsibilities of both the Board and NHA, autonomy of the Board and oversight of NHA, reports due to the Board, and termination procedures.
- A discussion of the lease and its provisions.

Module Three will discuss, among other things:

- Proper use of closed sessions and the limitations on items that can be discussed outside of public meetings.
- Structure of public comment periods at board meetings.
- Reviewing, approving, and overseeing school budgets.
- Allocation of board funds and their proper use.
- State assessments and their meaning, impact, and reporting and the school's formative assessment process.
- The School Improvement Plan process.
- Our student discipline policy and behavior management system.
- Our parent-student handbook.
- Resources available to the Board and the school through NHA.
- Parent satisfaction surveys.
- Annual reporting requirements.
- Crisis management system/protocol.

We will continue to seek training opportunities for the duration of our service. We will schedule a minimum of three to five hours of governance training for our members each year, and we will select programs that best meet the current needs of individual members and the school. Our Board plans to take regular advantage of the training opportunities offered through OCS. We understand that in the past, OCS has made available a webinar-based series of training sessions that provide more than 15 hours of valuable training to Board members on various aspects of charter school governance.

We will seek support and advice on board governance training from a number of national and local sources, such as the Center for Public Skills Training, the National Charter School Resource Center, the North Carolina Association for Public Charter Schools, and our own legal counsel. We also will leverage our professional resources, including those our members can draw upon from their own experience, to ensure that we are considering a diverse set of viewpoints on effective governance. Our Board members will connect with board members at other existing charter schools, too, including NHA-partner schools, to discuss and share best practices in board governance. Our Board President met with the MCA Board President and plans to observe a Board meeting at MCA and other area charter schools as well.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Ethical Standards and Conflicts of Interest: Our Board will govern the school with an unwavering commitment to ethical practices. This definitive standard of behavior in governance also is held by NHA. Pursuant to our bylaws, a member shall inform the Board of any actual or apparent conflict of interest with regard to any transaction contemplated by the Board.

Conflicts of interest include transactions in which a member of the Board has a material financial interest, or with which the member is presently serving as a director, trustee, officer, or general partner of another party. The transaction may be approved only by a vote of the majority of members who have no conflict of interest.

Existing Conflicts of Interest: There are no known existing relationships of founding Board members that could pose an actual or perceived conflict of interest if this charter school application is approved.

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

Criminal Background Checks: In cooperation with our legal counsel, our Board has completed criminal background checks for our members and included those in Appendix F.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Board will be a governing board and should have authority and responsibility for the school's fiscal and academic policies. It is the responsibility of each Board member to answer key critical questions, such as:

- Are we in compliance with our charter contract?
- How well are our students performing?
- What is our overall financial performance?
- What is the level of involvement of parents?

These questions will drive the decision-making processes for the development of school policies. Because of our school's partnership with NHA, which manages 10 operating schools in North Carolina, we have access to established school policies that have been tailored to state and charter requirements, implemented, revised, and updated by those existing boards and their respective legal counsels. The policies have also been adapted by the newest boards to meet the requirements of the state's Ready-to-Open process. The policies have been tried and tested in real situations at real schools, which is a key benefit providing our school with a head start on completing and validating many draft policies. These and other policies will be reviewed, discussed, and modified as necessary upon approval of our charter, and then they will be presented at a public meeting of our Board for comment and adoption.

All policies developed for and by our Board are drafted in alignment with our mission and our vision for the school, and our Board will manage these policies to ensure this alignment and compliance with all applicable law. At least annually, each policy will be reviewed by our Board and legal counsel, and any desired revisions will be put before the Board for discussion and action.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

At this time, our Board does not intend to establish any formal advisory bodies, councils, or associations as part of the governance of the school. As needed, the Board will create committees (e.g., finance; school culture; etc.) to meet as a subset of the Board on specific topic areas and report back to the entire body at regular Board meetings.

Appendix E presents an organization chart illustrating the structure of the school, including the relationship among the Board, NHA, the school leadership team (principal and deans), teachers, and other staff. The Board will oversee the school's management partner and, in collaboration with NHA, the principal. The principal will oversee the academic deans, each of whom will oversee a group of grade-level teachers (such as: K-2; 3-5; and 6-8). The principal also will oversee the administrative functions, headed by the school's registrar. Our Board and NHA will jointly employ teachers, as is permitted by law and previously recognized by OCS and the State Board of Education. The Board retains ultimate hiring and firing authority of teachers, as required by law.

Consistent with our strategy to engage parents in the educational lives of their children, we will facilitate the development of a parent organization at Hillside Academy. Our Board will ask that the parent organization support our mission and student body in all it does. We also will ensure that our parent organization has the necessary policies and procedures in place to stay in compliance with law, including those necessary for sound financial management. We will require our parent organization to report to our Board frequently on fundraising efforts, financial management, leadership activities, and governance decisions, as well items such as upcoming events.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Parent Grievances: Hillside Academy will create an open environment for parents, and will make every reasonable attempt to respond appropriately to parent concerns in a way that resolves issues satisfactorily. Classroom teachers will be the first line of communication for parents and guardians to address any concerns. Teachers will respond to parent inquiries promptly, respectfully, and in accordance with established guidelines for handling parent grievances. If parents are dissatisfied with the response from their child's classroom teacher (or if the nature of the complaint does not involve a teacher), parents may contact a designated member of the school leadership team - a dean and then the principal - to arrange a meeting to discuss the concern.

On the rare occasion when speaking directly with a teacher or school leader does not resolve the concern, parents may bring the concern to the parent relations department at NHA, a unit dedicated specifically to help parents and guardians work with school leaders to address concerns and resolve conflicts. Parents will have several ways to report a concern, including: calling the department using a toll-free number, which is provided in the

parent-student handbook and made available from the school's main office; reporting concerns using the "Contact Us" page of the NHA website; or by emailing NHA at its general contact email address (also listed in the handbook and available in the school's main office).

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

**Employee Grievances:** We will adopt a process to help staff resolve concerns or grievances. The school's deans will be teachers' first line of communication for addressing concerns; concerns about deans shall be addressed to the principal. As a second option, staff may contact a representative at NHA's Service Center. Employees also may take advantage of a third option, an employee hotline that lets them provide feedback anonymously, and such concerns are immediately escalated to the NHA Service Center for review, investigation, and resolution. In the rare event that staff cannot resolve a concern by speaking directly with school leaders, by communicating with an NHA representative, or by communicating through the hotline, staff may bring an unresolved concern to our Board.

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

## 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 E)

2. A one-page resume from each founding board member and responses to the questions found on the Charter School Board Member Form (Appendix F).
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 G).
4. A copy of the articles of incorporation from the NC Department of the Secretary of State. (Appendix H)

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

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

**Not Applicable**

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

Name of the Company: National Heritage Academies  
Address: 3850 Broadmoor Ave., SE  
Grand Rapids MI 49512  
Website: [www.nhaschools.com](http://www.nhaschools.com)  
Phone Number: 231-343-8705  
Contact Person: NaTasha Brown  
Fax: 616-954-3083  
Email: [nbrown@nhaschools.com](mailto:nbrown@nhaschools.com)

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

NHA provides a comprehensive educational program that includes curriculum, professional development, staffing, and more, plus a school facility. NHA has extensive experience in the charter-school sector, serving more than 55,000 students in 83 schools, with nearly 20,000 students on waiting lists. This includes 10 schools in North Carolina serving more than 5,300 students with waiting lists totaling close to 4,000 students.

Best Educational Interest: NHA-partner schools have a strong academic record and long-lasting partnerships:

- A partner charter school board has never terminated its Services Agreement with NHA, reflecting long-term satisfaction by boards and a long-term commitment by NHA.

- Since 2011-12, all 48 charters for NHA-partner schools up for renewal were successfully renewed by those schools authorizers. In fact, since the first NHA-partner school opened, NHA-partner schools have successfully applied for and been granted renewal of their charters in all instances except Rochester Leadership Academy Charter School in 2005, which was not renewed for not meeting the goals outlined in its accountability plan.

Best Financial Interest: Our Board appreciates NHA's solid financial footing and is excited about the direct investment NHA has pledged to our school.

- Consistent with our executed Services Agreement, NHA will fund and deliver the educational program desired by the Board even if public revenues come up

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If you have questions regarding the application process, please contact the Office of Charter Schools via email at [deanna.townsend-smith@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:deanna.townsend-smith@dpi.nc.gov).

short of our approved budget. In this way, NHA assumes all financial risk, and our Board is guaranteed in our ability to deliver the envisioned program.

- In building a new school, NHA typically leverages millions of dollars in private capital to create a new or renovated facility, investing in the community without taxing its residents.

Our Board and legal counsel have reviewed the Services Agreement with NHA and concluded that it provides a desired arrangement to achieve our mission and serve our community.

Attribution: Board and NHA

- 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 commitment of our management partner to North Carolina is evident: NHA has more experience opening and operating schools in this state than any other charter management company. Our discussions with NHA have reassured us of this commitment. Our Board President reached out to NHA after learning about MCA and has had conversations with MCA's board president and has had an overwhelming positive experience. We want to the same experience for Ballantyne, and the families in the surrounding areas.

Importantly, we also have discussed with NHA representatives some of the challenges faced by partner schools in this state to achieve high academic performance. NHA has explained to the Board the changes made for success with personnel, school leaders, systems and processes. NHA is committed to invest and improve as necessary to meet the mission of each school.

NHA's comprehensive model and its commitment to support that model is a key factor in the Board's decision to partner with NHA. The moral focus component of the NHA educational program also was very attractive to members of our founding Board, and a unique element from other EMO/CMOs. Finally, we also wanted a comprehensive management arrangement where the Board could oversee and govern the school without needing to fundraise, construct a building, or participate in other activities that could distract from our primary focus to ensure excellence in academic performance, and NHA offered that arrangement.

We will hold NHA accountable for our school's academic performance and financial integrity, will not shy away from questioning NHA in these areas, and will not hesitate to separate from NHA if it fails to live up to our expectations.

Attribution: Board

- 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?*

Nationally, NHA-partner schools post impressive student success: the most recent comparable state data (2014-15) shows that nearly 80% of NHA-partner

schools outperform the local district. NHA and its partner boards around the country and in North Carolina have exceptional rates of compliance and consistently clean audits, demonstrating sound governance practices.

In North Carolina, NHA partners with 10 schools. In 2015-16, three of eight operating schools exceeded growth and three met growth. QGCS, which serves grades K-12, did not meet growth and Winterville Charter Academy, a new school that opened in fall 2015 also did not meet growth. All NHA-partner schools saw gains in science proficiency in 2015-16 and six of seven also had year over year gains in math. Additional highlights are below:

- Greensboro Academy (GA) is the highest-performing school on the NWEA assessment. Even with this high-level of proficiency, GA has regularly achieved growth rates above the national average and exceeded growth in 2015-16. For the second year in a row, GA had a letter grade of "A+NG."

- Summerfield and Wake Forest Charter Academies both exceeded growth and received "B" letter grades.

- Research Triangle Charter Academy and PreEminent Charter School both serve at-risk student populations and met growth in 2015-16 after exceeding growth in 2014-15, showing that achievement gaps are closing each year.

- Two other NHA-partner schools, Gate City Charter Academy in Guilford County and Matthews Charter Academy in Mecklenburg, opened in August of 2016 and data is not yet available.

Highest and Lowest NHA-Partner Schools: On the spring 2016 NWEA assessment of math and reading, the highest-performer was Greensboro Academy with 91% proficiency. The lowest-performer was Regent Park Scholars Charter Academy (RPSCA) in Detroit, MI with 21% proficiency. The majority of students enter RPSCA well below grade-level proficiency. Additionally, like many schools in Detroit, RPSCA is struggling to maintain high levels of student attendance and retain students year-over-year. NHA and the Board of RPSCA remain committed to improving student performance at the school. On the 2015 administration of Michigan's state test, RPSCA did outperform its local district, Detroit Public Schools, in most grades and subjects tested.

Research shows that on average students increase their academic performance each year they attend an NHA-partner school (CREDO, 2013). Results of the study found that as a whole, NHA-partner schools had a positive growth effect size of 0.04 in math and 0.03 in reading. According to CREDO, there is no EMO as large as NHA that also has a higher positive growth effect size. This demonstrates that when the NHA program is implemented with fidelity it generates above average educational results for students.

Attribution: NHA

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.*

Independence: We recognize that it is our Board that holds the charter license and we are responsible for achieving our goals. We will hold NHA accountable for the academic results of our school, and for helping our



Board meet our charter goals. Because NHA manages our school operations, we will also hold NHA accountable for the fiscal and operational soundness of Hillside Academy.

The provisions of the Services Agreement and Lease Agreement will allow the Board substantial autonomy to govern the school and to demand this level of accountability from NHA. We have retained independent legal counsel, will contract with an independent auditor for annual financial reviews, and we will arrange an external third-party expert evaluation of our educational program as necessary.

Our Lease Agreement, which is separate from our Services Agreement, guarantees that Hillside Academy can occupy the school facility for at least one additional full school year even if we terminate our management relationship with NHA (see Appendix I). This provides us the independence to dissolve our management partnership without jeopardizing the continued operation and housing of our school.

Each year, we will develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP) based on a top-to-bottom review of the academic performance and operations of our school. The SIP will include action steps to improve any element of school operations. In addition to responding quickly to the needs of our school community, the SIP serves as an additional accountability check for the Board on the performance of our management partner.

Structure: The Board will oversee NHA and, in collaboration with NHA, will oversee the principal. The principal will oversee the academic deans and the school's administrative staff. The Board will retain the authority for the hiring and firing of teachers.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

The relationship among school employees and NHA is detailed in our formal Services Agreement (see Article VIII of the Agreement, which appears in Appendix I). Teachers will be jointly employed by the school and NHA, and the school's principal and deans will be directly employed by NHA. We have reviewed the Services Agreement with our legal counsel and sought advice about this arrangement, determining it is in the best interest of the school. We will work closely with NHA to ensure we have the right school leaders, teachers, and other staff in place to achieve our mission.

As outlined in our Services Agreement, we require NHA to recruit excellent teaching candidates for the principal's recommendation and the Board's review and eventual determination of employment. Our Board maintains the authority to express dissatisfaction with the principal, providing NHA and the principal sufficient time and support to remedy any identified issues. If insufficient improvement results, the Board can direct that the principal be terminated by NHA.

NHA's comprehensive benefits package, competitive salary structure, and quality retirement plan will serve to attract excellent educators. Additionally, our school will benefit from NHA's substantial and professional teacher recruitment efforts and its 83 school network to find

the right staff for our school. Our Board plans to visit area NHA-partner schools in the near future.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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.*

Our Services Agreement requires NHA to keep our school in compliance with our charter at all times. This includes a mandate to achieve our performance objectives.

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

- Academic growth, proficiency, and achievement goals (outlined in the "Goals" section of this application).
- Operational target goals, including on student attendance (at least 93%), parent satisfaction (90% or higher with at least 50% of parents responding to the satisfaction survey), and fiscal soundness (an unqualified audit annually).
- NHA will be required to work with school leaders to perform a comprehensive annual review of the school's education program, developing a formal, action-specific School Improvement Plan provided to our Board for review, input, and approval.
- The Board will conduct a formal performance review of NHA.

Contract Termination: Our Services Agreement provides the authorization and ability to terminate our partnership with NHA prior to the end of the term of the agreement (which is designed to run concurrently with the charter term), with or without cause, with 90 days' written notice. We also may terminate the agreement if NHA fails to remedy a material breach within 30 days' notice - for example, failure to account for or make expenditures approved by the Board, failure to follow Board-approved policies, or receipt of an unsatisfactory performance rating for the school. If we terminate our management relationship with NHA, our Lease Agreement will allow us to remain in the school for the rest of the school year and to rent it for another year at the existing rate. In any instance of termination, per-pupil funding will continue to flow to our school for the Board to finance school operations.

Attribution: Board and NHA

7. *Is the facility provided by the EMO/CMO? Y*
  - If yes, include as Appendix J 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.*

In 2015-16, eight charter schools partnered with NHA in arrangements similar to our proposed partnership and maintained positive fund balances over the past three fiscal years (2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16):

- Greensboro Academy: \$23,362, \$43,514, and \$45,446.
- Forsyth Academy: \$10,698, \$8,494, and \$8,402.
- Research Triangle Charter Academy: \$43,013, \$31,616, and \$25.837.

- PreEminent Charter School: \$37,622, \$41,352, and \$60,420.
- Queen's Grant Community School (K-8 program only): \$61,243, \$56,966, and \$57,581.
- Summerfield Charter Academy (opened fall 2013): \$30,134, \$21,605, and \$36,523.
- Wake Forest Charter Academy (opened fall 2014): \$11,446, and \$19,718.
- Winterville Charter Academy (opened fall of 2015): \$24,900.

Please note that the school audits for 2015-16 are not yet complete, figures included are thus unaudited. The budget includes a set-aside of up to \$35,000 per year, for use at the school as directed by the Board. The Board may direct the expenditure of these funds for educational or extracurricular expenses outside of the model educational and operational program, or they may accumulate these funds into a reserve for later use. A significant benefit of Hillside Academy's partnership with NHA is the company's commitment to providing the initial and ongoing investment needed to ensure a successful opening. This investment includes making contributions to ensure that the educational program is fully implemented from day one, and committing to contributing (not loaning) further financial support if revenues fall short of expenses. Our Services Agreement with NHA clarifies that NHA assumes the obligation for all expenses, and thus assumes all the financial risk. If expenses exceed revenues in any given year, NHA has the obligation to cover the shortfall.

Through both the Services Agreement and Board oversight, NHA will be obliged to manage and operate Hillside Academy in accordance with the budget approved by our Board.

Attribution: NHA

9. *Provide as Appendix K 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 a new governing 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.

Summerfield Charter Academy (SCA) currently is one of the highest performing of all 83 NHA-partner schools across the country in math and reading as measured by the NWEA MAP, as well as among the highest performing in North

Carolina. SCA completed its third year of operations in the 2015-16 school year and has shown significant gains in comparison to the local district, Guilford County Schools. In 2015-16, the rate of growth on NWEA was 125%; state assessment results showed 77.2% proficiency in math, 74.5% proficiency in reading, and 90% proficiency in science; SCA received a letter grade of "B" and exceeded expected growth. With expressed parental demand for a high-quality, college-focused charter school choice such as the one we envision, it makes sense to look to the top-performing SCA as a model for Hillside Academy.

Along with other NHA-partner schools, the high academic performance of SCA across all grades and all subjects is detailed in Appendix O. The school has maintained a balanced budget, generated a positive fund balance each year, and has earned an unqualified independent audit each year. SCA also has remained in full compliance with all charter, state, and federal requirements. The success of SCA also is further evidenced by parental demand for seats for their children, the enrollment waiting lists maintained by the school, parental satisfaction measured by annual surveys, student re-enrollment rates, and teacher retention levels. Over 93% of parents at SCA were satisfied or highly satisfied with the school on the most recent parent satisfaction survey.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

In August 2013, SCA opened just a few miles away from Greensboro Academy in Guilford County and quickly filled to capacity and established a waiting list.

Over the past three school years, SCA maintained steady, full student enrollment averaging 740 students for 2015-16 school year.

Student demographics at SCA have averaged as follows: White: 76%; Black: 10%; Asian: 12%; other ethnicities: two percent. Additionally, on average 12% of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. We expect our student demographics to reflect the demographic makeup of nearby CMS and UCPS schools. We are prepared to meet that need.

Student enrollment at all NHA-partner schools in the nine states in which they operate has increased over the past three years from approximately 48,000 students to an estimated 55,000 students in 2015-16. On the whole, the 81 operating NHA-partner schools served 68% of students categorized as minority and 66% of students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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.

Our Board universally recognizes the population growth and boom in school-aged children in our community. We also recognize the strain on CMS school facilities, the effect on CMS academic performance, and the desire of parents in our area for additional school choice. It was our lead applicant who reached out to NHA, after learning about MCA. She was interested in MCA

for her child, but changed her mind due to the long waitlist and greater than 30 minute commute. She wondered if NHA would be interested in partnering to build a charter school near Ballantyne to offer another choice to parents that does not current exist in the area. Members of our Board have attended community meetings to remain informed of CMS plans overall, in particular for new relief schools and possible student re-assignment/school boundaries.

Our Board brings a passion to provide a new and excellent school choice to the area, and we bring a broad range of talent and expertise including legal, higher education, financial, nonprofit management, and more. We are committed to the effective governance of the new, high-quality charter school proposed here.

Our Board members work, live, and serve in the community, and we have a strong commitment to ensure that Hillside Academy becomes a significantly contributing member of our community. We believe that our Board and the design of Hillside Academy will help ensure that this happens.

We will also partner with NHA who we believe has the experience, capital, vision, and commitment necessary to complement our Board members' skill sets and to ensure the success of our school. NHA's track record on compliance with all reporting requirements and the history of sound audits at its partner schools assures the integrity of our managing partner

Our members know our community, understand the educational needs of its families, and are deeply committed to the academic and social success of each student who enters our school.

Attribution: Board

5. Provide a copy of the organization's IRS Form 990 for the last three years as Appendix N

### **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.

At full enrollment, our school is projected to have staff as outlined below, with total full-time equivalent figures noted. We anticipate adding primarily classroom teachers and the necessary support staff as we grow.

Administration:

Principal: 1.0

Deans: 3.0

Registrar: 1.0

Office Administrator: 1.0

Student Recruitment Specialist: 0.5

Instructional:

Core Content Teachers: 28.0  
Music, Art, PE, etc. Teachers: 3.0  
ELL Teachers: 1.5  
Interventionists: 4.40  
Library Technology Specialist: 1.0  
Exceptional Children Teachers: 4.0  
Exceptional Children Aides: 3.5  
Social Worker: 0.8,  
Recess Aide: 1.0  
Substitute Teachers: 1.5

Total Personnel: 55.2

Hillside Academy also will have access to and benefit from many staff members of the NHA service center who will provide services such as back office support to the school. On our behalf, NHA will also contract for all additional necessary services, including food and janitorial services.

Staffing levels likely will be adjusted once students are enrolled at the school and additional needs are identified.

Attribution: Board and NHA

**Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management**

Include the following information for the proposed charter school:

1. *Explain the board's strategy for recruiting and retaining high-performing teachers.*

Hillside Academy will focus on recruiting and retaining excellent classroom teachers to ensure effective instruction.

Recruiting: We will rely primarily on the strong candidate network and teacher recruitment capabilities of NHA. NHA has extensive experience staffing 83 charter schools. Our Board members' knowledge of and connections to the local community will supplement these efforts. Recruiting strategies among those to be used include:

- Traditional Recruiting: NHA is constantly seeking and screening potential candidates through traditional and digital marketing strategies, including job fairs, university career fairs, social media, advertising, and direct referrals. We will advertise online, in select local markets, and throughout the NHA network.

- Campus Relationships: On behalf of Hillside Academy, NHA will leverage its partnerships with colleges and universities (including NHA's relationships with the teacher education programs at NC State, East Carolina University, all UNC campuses, and others) to tap pipelines of teacher candidates. This will give our school prime access to the best student teachers and the ability to hire new high-quality teacher graduates as soon as possible.

- Referral Networks: Recognizing that most teachers find teaching positions through referrals, we will actively pursue new teacher candidates through referrals from NHA-partner schools in North Carolina and around the country.

- Career Fairs and Conferences: Recruiters and ambassadors will actively participate in local, regional, and national career fairs and conferences.

This will allow direct contact with both new graduates and current teachers who are in the market for new employment opportunities.

\*See overflow section for further detail.

2. *Provide a description of the relationship that will exist between the charter school employees and the nonprofit board.*

Teachers will be jointly employed by our Board and NHA, and school leaders and other staff will be employed directly by NHA (this employment relationship is specified in our Services Agreement with NHA). Our Board will require NHA to recruit teaching candidates that meet state credentialing for the principal's recommendation and the Board's review and eventual determination of employment. Our Board will hold the school principal as well as NHA accountable for student academic performance. Our Board maintains the authority to express dissatisfaction with the principal, providing NHA and the principal sufficient time and support to remedy any identified issues. If insufficient improvement results, the Board can direct that the principal's employment be terminated by NHA.

We have been advised that this arrangement complies with NC General Statute and was reviewed and approved by legal counsel for the Department of Public Instruction in 2012. Our partnership with NHA for the employment of school personnel allows our school to use NHA's comprehensive and time-tested systems to administer employee benefits, payroll, retirement programs, employment compliance documentation, and other human resource functions. This model is in place at other NHA-partner schools in North Carolina, including Summerfield Charter Academy, the school we are replicating.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Hiring; Background Checks: Our Board, through NHA, will be an equal opportunity employer. In addition to compensation, payroll, and employment administration functions, NHA oversees many licensure and compliance functions at its partner schools, and will do so for our school as well. Our Board will adopt a background check policy that mirrors the legally required policy of CMS and UCPS.

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

Dismissing Personnel: Employment at the school will be on an at-will basis. We will create a working environment that allows administrators to make decisions sensitive to the needs of students, and that includes identifying ineffective staff, offering additional support to them, or terminating their employment as appropriate.

In the event that the performance of an employee is unacceptable, and depending on the nature, degree, and circumstances of the incident or incidents, disciplinary action may be taken. Discipline may include a warning, creation of a performance coaching plan or performance improvement plan, suspension, or administrative leave. If an employee does not meet

performance expectations after appropriate interventions, or if there is a significant violation of policies or procedures, employment may be terminated. Recommendations to terminate the employment of any teacher will be presented to our Board for consideration and action.

Our employment policies and Employee Handbook will offer information on the corrective-action and termination processes. We will provide these policies and an Employee Handbook to each employee on or before the first day of work.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

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

Teacher salary guidelines will be implemented that differentiate pay based on market rates and performance. Teachers' starting salaries will match the weighted average of districts surrounding Hillside Academy, ensuring that base pay is competitive in the market. Salaries will match the local market for the first three years, and beginning in the fourth year employees will be eligible for merit increases in their salary of up to four percent per year (additional increases may be available for truly exceptional teachers). Combined with a generous benefits package, an emphasis on career progression with the support necessary to grow professionally, and a respectful and professional working environment, employment at our school will be a very attractive choice.

In our budget plan, consistent with recent teacher pay increases in the state and current local supplements, we projected a salary range for core content teachers of \$40,250 to \$47,500, and used an average of \$43,400 for financial planning.

Hillside Academy will hold staff accountable for success, measured by student academic growth and proficiency, and will have a pay-for-performance philosophy to appropriately recognize this success. Our school will use the "Total Rewards" compensation structure of NHA-partner schools which rewards staff who have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement. Components of the Total Rewards structure include: market increases for the first three years of teaching and merit-based salary increases after three years; competitive health insurance choices, including low employee-cost plans; retirement plan choices, including a 401(k) and Roth 401(k) with an employer-match component; life insurance; a tuition reimbursement program; and, employee recognition and reward programs.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Grievances: Hillside Academy will enact a process to handle employee grievances. Our deans will be teachers' first line of communication for addressing concerns (deans will address their concerns to the principal). Staff may instead contact a representative at the NHA Service Center dedicated to handling staff issues, and also may take advantage of an employee hotline that allows them to provide feedback and raise concerns



anonymously. Concerns submitted through the hotline (online or by phone) are immediately reviewed by NHA's Service Center. In the rare event that staff cannot resolve a concern by speaking directly with the school leaders, or by talking with an NHA representative, staff may bring an unresolved concern to our Board.

**Termination:** Employment at Hillside Academy will be on an at-will basis. Teachers will be jointly employed by the Board and NHA, and school leaders will determine the staff structure based on skill, performance, and how to best serve the needs of students. Support and/or training programs will be developed for ineffective staff, and termination of employment may be recommended as appropriate.

If the performance of an employee is unacceptable, and depending on the nature, degree, and circumstances of the incident or incidents, disciplinary action may be taken. Discipline may include a warning, creation of a performance coaching plan or performance improvement plan, suspension, or administrative leave. If an employee does not meet performance expectations after appropriate interventions, or if there is a significant violation of policies or procedures, employment may be terminated. Recommendations to terminate the employment of teachers must be presented to our Board for consideration and action. The school's Employee Handbook, provided to each employee on or prior to the first day of work, will offer information on the corrective-action and termination processes.

**Attribution:** Board and NHA

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

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

**Attribution:** NHA

- 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.*

Licensed EC teachers will be recruited to provide high-quality instruction for exceptional children. Other staff will be available to provide academic support and the school will hire or contract with a school psychologist, occupational and/or physical therapist, speech therapist, and social worker to meet the needs of students enrolling in our school. We will review credentials to ensure compliance with state credentialing requirements. Each year we will examine the need for additional staff to provide services for EC, ELL, and gifted students. Our projected first-year budget includes funding for 4.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to meet the needs of exceptional children; when fully enrolled, we expect to have 7.5 FTE EC staff. We also plan to start with a 1.0 FTE ELL teacher, growing to 1.5 FTE, and will adjust that number based on student need.

**Attribution:** NHA

- 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).*

As outlined in our Services Agreement with NHA, our Board will jointly employ teachers and NHA will employ the administrative and non-teaching staff at Hillside Academy.

Principal: Our principal will be dedicated to fulfilling our mission. He or she must hold the unwavering belief that all children can and will learn. Qualified applicants will have a record of achieving significant student performance growth. Strong leadership and management skills and the ability to provide instructional support to teachers is required. The principal must be committed to and capable of developing school culture, promoting student achievement, and implementing school operations. Among the numerous responsibilities are:

- Demonstrating and modeling all aspects of the school-wide framework.
- Evaluating the educational program for conformance to state, federal, Board, and NHA standards.
- Collaborating with our Board on hiring and evaluating teachers.
- Implementing tools for parent and community communication.
- Reporting school activities and academic achievement to our Board regularly.
- Establishing school procedures and systems.
- Monitoring the use of data in lesson planning and evaluating student academic growth.

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

Deans: The deans will share administrative responsibilities with the principal, and have the primary responsibility for:

- Personally mastering and modeling all aspects of the classroom framework.
- Building relationships with and among teachers and investing in the professional success of all staff.
- Coaching teachers toward instructional mastery.
- Holding teachers accountable to college readiness through development.
- Routinely analyzing student and grade-level cohort data to drive instruction, student growth, and professional development to ensure student needs are met.
- Promoting, modeling, and reinforcing all Hillside Academy and NHA procedures.

Deans will have a bachelor's degree and a minimum of three years of experience in teaching or administration, or an equivalent combination of education and experience, and will possess administrative licensure as required by law. Deans will exhibit superior language skills, mathematical skills, and reasoning ability, and will demonstrate an effective collaborative approach to mentoring and developing their direct reports.

Teachers: Teachers will have a demonstrated ability to:

- Communicate and work effectively with parents.

- Adapt teaching style to students' specific needs.
- Adapt to differences and changes in characteristics of students, programs, leadership, staff, and community.
- Use varied teaching methodologies to accommodate students' unique learning styles.
- Evaluate tests and measurements of achievement.
- Work effectively as a team member.

Teachers will be responsible to show capabilities in implementing the curriculum with responsibilities for:

- Coordinating with educational assistants.
- Maintaining current achievement level information.
- Assigning additional studies to students not meeting or exceeding expected achievement.
- Keeping accurate student records.
- Establishing classroom procedures.
- Ordering supplementary education materials.
- Requesting parent volunteers.
- Reporting all education-related activities to the principal.

Teachers will have earned a bachelor's degree, meet state credentialing requirements, and have the appropriate teaching licensure as required by law. EC and ELL teachers and aides also will demonstrate knowledge about education strategies particularly suited to the student populations they serve, and be appropriately certified.

Attribution: NHA

\*Continued from "Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management."

- Workforce and Talent Pipeline Planning: NHA's workforce planning function is designed to assist our school in understanding the current local labor supply and demand in the area, helping us prepare for current and future hiring needs.

NHA currently employs more than 2,900 teachers and 2,100 supporting school staff, effectively managing recruitment and other elements of school staffing across the nine states in which its partner schools operate.

Retaining: The NHA-partner school model includes systems and practices designed to motivate, engage, reward, develop, and retain high-quality school faculty and staff. Importantly, our school's "Total Rewards" approach to compensation (see more detail below) offers a very strong benefits package and opportunity for merit salary increases for staff who have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement. Our budget included in this application reflects paying new teachers above the market for hard to fill positions such as ELL and EC teachers. We will also provide competitive health plan choices, including low employee-cost plans; retirement plan choices, including a 401(k) and Roth 401(k) with an employer-match component; life insurance; a tuition reimbursement program; and, employee recognition and reward programs.

Attribution: NHA

### **Staff Evaluation and Professional Development**

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

*professional development.*

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

Attribution: NHA

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

The NHA-partner school model that will be used by Hillside Academy has a robust and successful staff development structure designed to attract, train, and retain the highest-quality personnel.

**Mentor:** New teachers will be assigned mentor teachers to address daily questions and concerns. Scheduled meetings with mentors will provide ongoing support in curriculum, instructional practice, and classroom management. Mentors will also conduct periodic classroom observations and provide feedback to teachers directly after each visit to improve classroom instruction. New teachers will also participate in the North Carolina Beginning Teacher Support Program.

Classroom teachers will work closely with their grade-level deans to target specific development needs. Each teacher will be observed weekly and meetings will be held with the dean to give feedback and coaching based on observations or other teacher-stated needs. Teachers will reflect on teaching practices, ask questions, and get coaching to address individual development needs aligned to our classroom framework teaching practices. Deans are in turn observed, coached, and evaluated by the principal on their effectiveness in supervising teachers.

**Retain:** Several factors combine to support retention of excellent instructional staff, including:

- Frequent, high-quality coaching around instructional practice.
- An extensive professional development plan and individual commitment.
- Intentional tracking of high-performing teachers to positions of greater responsibility, including as mentors, content leaders, and deans; outstanding deans are coached to become principals.
- The "Total Rewards" approach to compensation, including performance-based raises.
- A school environment promoting scholarly learning and a culture of building-wide respect for all students and staff.

**Evaluate:** Teacher performance will be evaluated using quantitative and qualitative measures in accordance with applicable law and policy. Our school will use a pay-for-performance compensation model, with performance measured by NHA's internally developed evaluation tool and student achievement. Components are rated using a four-level scale: exemplary, effective, developing, and ineffective.

The teacher evaluation system will have the following main components:

- Classroom Culture:** Teacher leads a self-managing classroom by building

positive relationships, maintaining physical space, sustaining classroom routines and procedures, and holding students accountable to behavioral expectations.

-Planning: Teacher plans for instruction by identifying and analyzing standards to be taught throughout the year, aligning instructional resources and activities to those standards, and pre-planning differentiated opportunities to meet individual learning needs.

-Teaching: Teacher delivers content at a level of rigor that challenges students, cognitively engages them, intentionally uses all time for learning, and personalizes instruction.

-Assessing: Teacher implements the assessment strategy to understand student learning needs, provide actionable feedback, and guide instructional decisions.

-Professional Accountabilities: Teacher embodies expectations of professional accountabilities through dependability, dedication, communication, and teamwork.

-Quality of Student Learning: Teacher achieves expected performance in academic proficiency and growth as measured by state tests; makes satisfactory progress toward necessary growth expectations on NWEA MAP and MPG assessments.

Deans will formally evaluate teachers yearly using data from regular coaching sessions for the whole year and will discuss the results with each teacher during a one-on-one session. The regular observations, feedback, mid-year check-in, and year-end evaluations will help define professional development goals for each teacher. Progress toward these goals will be included in teacher evaluations.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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.*

Core Components: Supporting high-quality teaching, the instructional program at Hillside Academy will include clear expectations, regular observations, consistent feedback, and an intentional focus on developing teaching practices. Professional development will be integrated throughout our culture, beginning with an intensive orientation and training before the school opens. Other training will be prioritized and incorporated as a purposeful element of the school calendar, and will include:

- Formal training sessions.
- Mentors assigned to new teachers.
- Regular teacher feedback and coaching sessions.
- Creation of professional learning communities.
- Daily time for common grade-level planning.
- Weekly grade-level team meetings with deans to support a common approach to instruction.
- Grade-level team meetings with the principal to ensure a unified school-wide approach to instruction.
- Grade-level and cross-grade-level team meetings also will be scheduled for teachers to share ideas for increasing student achievement.

Our partnership with NHA provides teachers with access to a variety of

learning opportunities including conferences, video libraries, web-based resources, e-learning, and dedicated curriculum and instruction specialists.

**Effective Implementation:** Our school leaders will be responsible for determining professional development needs and will work with NHA to develop a customized plan to meet those needs. Each year, leadership will undertake a comprehensive assessment of the educational program and operations of the school and develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP) that analyzes student achievement, the school environment, the teacher community, the parent community, and the administration. The SIP will provide a strategic action plan to meet identified needs, and both school-wide and individualized professional development efforts will be included as necessary to meet identified needs.

Attribution: NHA

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

Prior to school opening: All new teachers hired prior to the start of school will participate in New Teacher Orientation (NTO), a multi-day immersion program designed to ensure buy-in to the school's mission and vision and to address specific curricular and instructional needs. This training will be actively supported with ongoing coaching and additional training throughout the year. NHA has developed a collection of effective, industry-leading practices (see the "Educational Need" section), which are being implemented throughout NHA-partner schools to build a common approach designed to generate outstanding academic results. During NTO, teachers and school leaders will learn why these practices are effective and see how they play out in daily activities such as classroom management and instructional planning. NTO participants will experience these principles both as they occur in a classroom environment and as they exist throughout the entire school. This will empower new teachers to begin applying these practices the moment they enter our school.

A sample NTO agenda is outlined below:

- Day 1: Classroom Culture; Purpose & Vision; and, Behave with Care.
- Day 2: Classroom Culture continued.
- Day 3: Curriculum and Curricular Tools; Grade-level Best Practices.

During NTO, new teachers and leaders will begin to build our school culture by learning the practices necessary to connect with students, establish expected behaviors and routines, and manage classrooms. The session focuses on establishing a positive and proactive culture and self-management of classrooms by training teachers how to:

- structure the classroom in ways that promote responsible student behavior;
- engage students in building school culture;
- intentionally develop strong positive relationships with students;
- explicitly teach students how to behave responsibly in every classroom situation;
- focus more time, attention, and energy to acknowledge responsible behavior than to respond to misbehavior;
- and, pre-plan responses to misbehavior to ensure they are brief, calm, and

delivered in a consistent manner.

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

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

Ongoing opportunities: To supplement NTO, new leaders and teachers will participate in additional school-based staff development days prior to the start of school. This professional development will communicate additional expectations to teachers and staff, including non-instructional processes and procedures, and will provide new teachers with the opportunity to conduct grade-level planning with their colleagues. These days also are designed to deepen knowledge around core concepts related to common assessments, classroom management, building student relationships, and school-wide behavior support systems. We believe that there should be no artificial limits to professional development opportunities and have structured our school's programming to reflect that view.

Attribution: NHA

*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.*

Our calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure will incorporate significant professional development opportunities for teachers and leaders. Our staff also will participate in numerous professional development opportunities during the summer months, including robust preparation prior to our first school year.

As outlined above, our staff will participate in NTO and NHA Leadership Summit, a collaborative summer leadership training week for school leaders and teachers across NHA's 83 partner schools. A total of nine days are allocated for professional development during the school year (many of which will be teacher and principal regional trainings), and will include focused time on EC students and ELLs. In addition, our daily schedule incorporates 45 minutes of planning time for each classroom teacher. At least one planning period each week will be dedicated to meeting in grade-level teams, and 30 minutes of a planning period each week will be dedicated for each teacher's one-on-one meeting with his or her assigned dean for feedback and to provide coaching for development. School leaders will schedule faculty meetings at appropriate times that do not impede teaching and learning, and teaching staff schedules will be established to permit cooperative and collaborative meetings with parents.

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

Hillside Academy will provide robust professional development opportunities specific to instruction and services for EC students. Our staff will participate in regional EC training in cooperation with other NHA-partner schools, which will include topics such as:

- The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and its components.
- Comprehensive Exceptional Children Accountability System (CECAS) training.
- Effective instructional practices for students with disabilities, including its application to Common Core.
- EC team member roles and responsibilities.
- Student evaluation reports.
- Positive behavior supports and building relationships with students.
- Review of NHA's detailed special education manual.
- Mission, vision, and purpose of NHA's Division of Special Education.

Our staff will also participate in regional trainings provided by NCDPI.

Finally, our staff will receive significant support from NHA's special education team to ensure that we replicate best practices. This includes the use of detailed handbooks and processes for overseeing EC programming. Specifically, the handbook will provide guidance on confidentiality of records, accountability, discipline procedures, maintenance of effort, and more.

Attribution: NHA

### **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 reflects the racial/ethnic and demographic composition of the district in which the charter school will be located or of the special population the school seeks to serve: (G.S.115C-218.45(e)).*

Our school will design marketing and outreach efforts to ensure full enrollment, achieve a broad awareness throughout the South Charlotte area,



and ensure that the school is a valuable part of the local community and an active contributor to its success. The school does not intend to serve a specific population of students; it will be marketed to all families, with the goal of attracting a student population that reflects the demographic composition of CMS and UCPS.

Board members' knowledge of the community and NHA's outreach expertise will form the basis of our school's marketing efforts. Together we will assess the interest of prospective parents through diverse community focus groups, public opinion polls, and more. This will provide important information about parents' perceptions of the area, assess education needs that are not being met, and measure the relative attractiveness of features of our new school. (See Appendix A1).

Once notified of the recommendation for approval of our application, our marketing efforts will intensify and a dedicated local student recruitment specialist (SRS) with strong community knowledge will be hired before the opening of the school. The SRS will leverage the Board's knowledge and under the direction of an admissions manager lead grassroots marketing. This will include building community relationships with organizations such as: area daycare providers; local chambers of commerce; community businesses; area churches, temples, and other houses of worship; HeadStart and other community educational programs; and, youth activity centers.

Formal advertising efforts may include outdoor ads (municipal buses and bus stops, billboards, etc.), radio spots, television announcements, local and community newspaper ads, and/or internet media advertisements launched several months before the school's opening as needed. Our dedicated SRS and pre-opening marketing efforts will be at NHA's expense.

School representatives will host monthly enrollment information meetings for parents. Meetings will be promoted by various means such as direct mail, digital marketing, and grassroots marketing to nearby neighborhoods. Parents will learn more about the school's mission, design, and overall academic program, and will have the opportunity to ask questions and engage the school's representatives. Feedback from parents and guardians will directly impact the type of before- and after-school programming hosted at our school, as an example.

As needed, multilingual representatives speaking the most prevalent home languages will be available at our parent information meetings to make sure we are able to converse with as many families as possible in their home language. Prior to these meetings, we will distribute school and meeting information in these prevalent home languages to area organizations that provide services to ELL families.

We will also host events specially designed for parents of students with special needs to provide a forum allowing these families to learn more about the school's services for EC students. These meetings will be an open dialogue, sharing information with parents about our school, but also hearing from parents about matters important to them.

Parents interested in enrolling their children will be invited to special parent information meetings to learn more detail about the curriculum, meet

the principal and teachers, obtain information about the school's moral focus program, and learn how they can take an active role in their child's education. These meetings will also have a social component to encourage parents to come together to help us develop a vibrant school community even before the start of school.

Our dedicated SRS will also participate in community events to engage with families interested in learning about the school and enrolling their children.

Attribution: Board and NHA

### **Parent and Community Involvement**

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

Communication with Parents before Opening: Strong parental involvement often is the result of effective and robust school-to-home communication. Our school is committed to maintaining an atmosphere of open dialogue between parents and school leaders and teachers, and we will begin these partnerships as early as possible in the life of the school. As soon as we are notified of the approval of our charter application, we will begin building relationships with parents and informing them of our mission. Families will be contacted through a variety of practical methods to inform them about our school, the enrollment process, and how they can become involved in the school.

Methods such as a monthly newsletter, website, and Facebook page will keep interested families aware of and connected to the latest happenings of the school as it prepares to open. Social media websites will be used to help form and maintain connections between school leaders and parents. While our school is being constructed, a temporary school office will be available on or very near the school site as a point of contact with staff for the school's prospective parents. This pre-opening rapport with prospective parents will peak with a family orientation held at the end of the summer to allow enrolled students and their families to meet the principal, the student's teacher and classmates, and other school staff.

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

To encourage parents' presence and active involvement, our school will include a dedicated parent room. This room will give parents a place to gather and build relationships with one another, discuss matters of mutual interest, and take ownership in the school. Parents will have access to

Parent Experience, an online student information platform developed by NHA. This platform can be accessed from any computer with internet access through a specially-designed parent portal. The Parent Experience will provide information related to assigned student homework, offer resources for homework assistance, present student scores on various assessments, provide growth information, and host newsletters and school calendars. The system is designed to synchronize with teachers' monitoring of student progress and to help remind teachers of previous and ongoing student needs.

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

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

## **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.*

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

Open Enrollment Period (OEP): If our charter is approved, an OEP for the first year of operation will be established prior to June 30 and will be included in a notice of open enrollment. The OEP will not be shorter than 30 calendar days. At a public meeting, we will confirm the notice of the OEP and the application process, a process designed to ensure that people most likely to be interested in the school are informed. On our behalf, NHA will

widely distribute the OEP notice.

**Applications:** Applications for the school year will be accepted beginning on the first day of the OEP. If applications received during the OEP exceed offered seats in any grade level, a random selection process will take place. If applications received are fewer than offered seats in every grade level, all eligible applicants will be accepted.

Applications received after the OEP will not be eligible to participate in the random selection process. If seats are available, late applications will be added to the end of the accepted list in the order received. If no seats are available, late applications will be added to the end of the waiting list or, if a late application is entitled to preference, inserted in the waiting list immediately before all applicants on the waiting list with a lower enrollment-preference category.

A list with the name of each student who submitted an application during the OEP will be created with the student's name, birth date, grade level, street address, and names and grade levels of any siblings who are also applying for admission and/or are currently enrolled siblings. From this list, an electronic card will be created for entry into the random selection process. If siblings apply for the same school year, one surname card will be entered into the random selection process to represent all of the siblings applying at the same time. If that surname card is selected, then all of the siblings shall be admitted, except that siblings who are not multiple birth siblings may be admitted only to the extent that space is available and does not exceed the grade-level capacity. If a card is drawn and there is no space available in the appropriate grade, applicants will be placed on the waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. After the random selection process is complete, late applications will be processed in accordance with the procedures above.

When a seat becomes available in a particular grade due to attrition, erosion, or other event, that available seat will be offered to the first student on the waiting list for that particular grade wishing to enroll.

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

**Preferences:** Once a student has attended the school, he or she will be given first preference to enroll for the subsequent school year. Children of members of our Board and children of the school's full-time employees also will be granted preference. After that, preference will be given to siblings of students reenrolling at the school.

**Withdrawals/Transfers:** When a student withdraws, that creates an open seat to be filled by another student through the waiting list process outlined above. Students wishing to legally transfer into the school mid-year may submit a late application, which will be processed as outlined above.

**Attribution:** NHA

## **Weighted Lottery**

*Does your school plan to use a weighted lottery?*

Yes:

No: **X**

*The State Board of Education may approve an applicant's request to utilize a special weighted, or otherwise limited lottery in certain circumstances. If the charter applicant wishes to deviate in any way from the open lottery normally utilized by charter schools, the following requirements must be met:*

- 1. In no event may a lottery process illegally discriminate against a student on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or disability.*
- 2. A lottery process may not be based upon geographic boundaries, such as zip code or current public school attendance zones.*
- 3. A lottery process that deviates from the standard lottery must be based upon the school's unique mission and must be based upon educationally, psychometrically and legally sound practices, protocol and research.*

*If the applicant is requesting to use a weighted, or otherwise limited, lottery, please provide the following:*

- 1. A thorough explanation of how the specific mission of the school, as set forth in the application, requires the utilization of the weighted or limited lottery.*
- 2. A thorough description of the processes and procedures the applicant intends to use to effectuate the lottery.*
- 3. The underlying research, pedagogical, educational, psychometric and legal, that supports the request and the procedures the applicant is requesting.*

**PROJECTED ENROLLMENT 2018-19 through 2022-2023**

IDENTIFY LEA FROM WHICH STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY COME

LEA #1 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools  
 LEA #2 Union County Public Schools  
 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.

	2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022			2022-2023		
	LEA 600	LEA 900	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 900	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 900	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 900	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 900	LEA 000
Kindergarten	80	20	0	80	20	0	80	20	0	80	20	0	80	20	0
Grade 01	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0
Grade 02	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0
Grade 03	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0
Grade 04	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0
Grade 05	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0
Grade 06	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0
Grade 07	0	0	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0
Grade 08	0	0	0	0	0	0	67	17	0	67	17	0	67	17	0
	482	122		549	139		616	156		616	156		616	156	

## 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.*

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

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

Asking parents to partner with us in transportation, paired with our dedication to having school staff greet students and parents during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, provides students a transition between school and home that is smooth, comforting, safe, and welcoming. This approach also will allow staff an additional point of contact with parents, and provide parents with an additional opportunity to become a part of the day-to-day life of the school. This is the exact program in place at other NHA-partner schools in North Carolina. It has worked well, allowing students to arrive at school more focused on the activities of the day and with lower levels of anxiety and distraction than often attributed to school bus rides.

We recognize that this transportation strategy may not be a viable option for every family. Before the first day of school, during an orientation program for families, we will work with parents to address and coordinate their transportation needs to ensure these needs are not a barrier to any child wishing to attend the school. In addition to the RideFinder program, school staff will work to identify and plan the use of public transportation options that are available, and if needed, make arrangements with private carriers. The school's budget also includes \$10,000 to cover the cost of such transportation needs, which also may include transportation for students who may be experiencing homelessness or exceptional children with transportation needs noted in their IEPs.

**Targeted Population:** Hillside Academy will not be targeting a specific student population for enrollment, instead marketing to and serving students from across Mecklenburg and Union Counties. As noted, with the assistance of the RideFinder program families living near other families will be able to access all information needed for arranging carpooling or other transportation options. We recognize that our population may include students who have transportation needs, however, including students from outside the local area, and have budgeted funds to address those needs.

**Aligned to Budget:** Our transportation plan aligns with the budget plan which as noted includes an allocation of \$10,000 to cover special transportation arrangements. NHA will incorporate the RideFinder online parent tool into the school's technology network.

Attribution: NHA

### **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.*

An appropriate school meals program will be established at Hillside Academy, and no student will lack a daily meal. As part of the daily attendance process, teachers will ask each child if he or she needs a lunch or if one was brought from home, entering the information into the student data system. If a student does not qualify for free meals or does not have enough money in his or her lunch account to purchase a meal, the teacher will notify the office so that a lunch still will be provided to that student; the school will maintain a discretionary account to be charged for this purpose if necessary to ensure that each student has lunch each day.

On behalf of our school, NHA will contract with a food-service provider to operate our program, following U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) procurement requirements and complying with Federal Regulation 7 CFR 210.16 and other applicable law. A hot meal for lunch will be offered daily, and a cold breakfast will be offered if needed. Students will pay a set price for school meals unless they qualify for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program. NHA has experience in handling all the required aspects of these programs, and the Board will hold NHA accountable to ensure the efficient management of our school's breakfast and lunch programs. As necessary, we will look to the North Carolina Department of School Nutrition Services for resources in overseeing the compliance of our food-service program.

All meals will meet the nutritional requirements set by the USDA in accordance with the National School Lunch Program. Our food-service provider will provide extensive support to the school with menu planning, nutritional analysis, food-handling safety, and sanitization.

We recognize the importance of providing healthy meals to our students, and our goal is to meet students' nutritional needs to ensure that they focus on



the work of learning and not on their physical hunger.

Attribution: NHA

**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	\$2,000,000		\$3,000.00
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$2,000,000		\$3,000.00
Property Insurance	\$25,000		\$500.00
Motor Vehicle Liability	\$1,000,000		\$250.00
Bonding Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$100.00
Other	\$2,000,000		\$1,400.00
Total Cost			\$8,250.00

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

**Health and Safety Requirements:**

All public charter schools are required to follow the regulations regarding health and safety as stated in § 115C218.75.

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

nmulder 09/14/2016

(Board Chair Signature)

(Date)

**Facility:**

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

What is your plan to obtain a building? Identify specific steps the board will take to acquire a facility and obtain the Educational Certificate of Occupancy.

In anticipation of approval of this application, NHA's real estate acquisition team and our Board have begun an exhaustive review of area opportunities to locate a facility for our school. Both constructing a new school building and renovating an existing facility to make it suitable for our programmatic needs are under consideration. The provision of an appropriately designed facility for our faculty and students is one of the most important aspects of our partnership with NHA. With Charlotte being the second fastest growing city in the state, areas in Union County such as Marvin and Weddington experiencing significant growth as well, and CMS projecting 3,200 more students for 2016-17 school year alone, the construction of a school facility for Hillside Academy - built at no upfront cost to taxpayers - will be a welcome, needed addition to our community.

**Acquiring a Facility:** Once our charter application is approved, we will work with NHA and the necessary municipalities to complete the land use approval process for the real estate we have identified. It is our goal to have a minimum of two land parcels identified so we may share details on our progress with the CSAB at a prospective interview in early 2017. NHA particularly understands the need to expedite land use approval and construction processes in Mecklenburg and Union Counties in order to successfully open in the fall of 2018.

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

Being able to occupy a facility specifically designed for our planned educational program is a huge plus for our students and our faculty. We will be able to avoid overcrowding or trying to fit our program into a facility designed for a different purpose. Our partnership with NHA will give us the exact facility we want and need for our program.

**Obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy:** The Board and NHA will ensure that we are in compliance with all building codes in the development of a facility for our school. NHA has experience and is familiar with requirements in both Mecklenburg and Union counties. We will work with our local building department to determine, in a timely manner, if modifications to an existing facility must be approved by the North Carolina Department of Insurance for building code compliance. Our Board and NHA will ensure that we receive an educational certificate of occupancy from the local building department prior to our school opening.

Over the past three years, NHA has successfully built and opened four new partner schools in North Carolina, and opened a fifth in temporary facilities, with the completion of the new facility scheduled for October

2016. NHA plans to open three more partner schools in new facilities in the fall of 2017, including a school that was delayed one year due to facility related challenges. We have discussed these challenges with NHA and have been adamant that more advanced work be done on our real estate and facilities efforts to ensure we do not experience similar delays.

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

*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.*

The projected lease cost is \$29.22/sq. ft. Given the facility's single-use nature, a lease that is contingent upon charter renewal, and NHA's full assumption of financial risk, we are comfortable with this cost.

Attribution: Board and NHA

**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.*

Members of our Board have met with NHA to discuss and define a target real estate search area. NHA's real estate team has begun to identify a list of suitable properties. NHA has recent experience with real estate searches in both Mecklenburg and Union counties through Matthews Charter Academy, as well as with working through the associated hurdles of development in this market. NHA has learned from these challenges and will prepare for a successful opening in the fall of 2018 should we receive a charter.

The total space needed for our facility is approximately eight acres, with a building square footage of approximately 48,500. This will include sufficient space for a play area, a play field, and adequate parking. The envisioned school building will include:

- approximately 28 classrooms;
- seven student support rooms;
- an art room;
- a music room;
- a media center;
- a gymnasium;
- a parent room;
- a front office;
- administrative spaces for our principal and deans;
- a teacher workroom;
- and, a conference room.

If constraints on space are needed for any reason, contingency options could include: combining the music and art rooms; consolidating administrative

offices; modifying the play area, play field, or parking; and/or waiting and scaling up the number of classrooms and student support rooms only as the school grows from its starting configuration as a K-6 school to a K-8 school in our third year.

Should we ever decide that the school management relationship we have with NHA is not providing the desired outcomes for our students and families, we will be prepared to terminate our Services Agreement with NHA. At that time we would begin looking for alternate school facility options, but, importantly, the school still will have continued use of its building. Under provisions in a separate Lease Agreement, our school is authorized to stay in the facility for the remainder of any current school year, and NHA is obliged to continue to manage and maintain the facility. Additionally, in our Lease Agreement we have the option to lease the facility for a subsequent school year at the current rental rate. After that, we are free to purchase the building, negotiate a new Lease Agreement (for which we would solicit advice from our independent legal counsel), or find another location for our school. In such an event, the original list of potential sites from our initial property search will serve as a ready-made starting point for locating an alternate facility.

Attribution: Board and NHA

## 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 2018-19**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**LEA #1 600 - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools**

Revenue	2016-2017 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2018-2019
State Funds	\$4,852.22	482	\$2,338,770.04
Local Funds	\$2,469.24	482	\$1,190,173.68
Federal EC Funds	\$3,579.70	58	\$207,622.60
<b>Totals</b>			\$3,736,566.32

**LEA #2 900 - Union County Public Schools**

Revenue	2016-2017 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2018-2019
State Funds	\$4,863.33	122	\$593,326.26
Local Funds	\$2,100.00	122	\$256,200.00
Federal EC Funds	\$3,579.70	15	\$53,695.50
<b>Totals</b>			\$903,221.76

**Total Budget: Revenue Projections 2018-19 through 2022-2023**

<b>INCOME: REVENUE PROJECTIONS</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
<b>-State ADM Funds</b>	\$2,932,096	\$3,440,511	\$3,898,407	\$3,936,619	\$3,975,213
<b>-Local Per Pupil Funds</b>	\$1,446,374	\$1,664,510	\$1,886,412	\$1,905,277	\$1,924,329
<b>-Exceptional Children &amp; Federal Funds</b>	\$261,318	\$404,049	\$449,249	\$453,091	\$456,972
<b>-Other Funds*</b>	\$1,432,064	\$513,688	\$254,900	\$258,200	\$261,600
<b>-Working Capital*</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Z - TOTAL REVENUE</b>	\$6,071,852	\$6,022,758	\$6,488,968	\$6,553,187	\$6,618,114

**\*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 J.**

**Personnel Budget: Expenditure Projections 2018-19 through 2022-2023**

*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	2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022			2022-2023		
	Num Staff	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary
Administrative & Support Personnel:															
Principal	1	\$95,000	\$95,000	1	\$96,900	\$96,900	1	\$98,800	\$98,800	1	\$100,800	\$100,800	1	\$102,800	\$102,800
Dean	3	\$55,400	\$166,200	3	\$56,500	\$169,500	3	\$57,600	\$172,800	3	\$58,800	\$176,400	3	\$60,000	\$180,000
Registrar	1	\$36,200	\$36,200	1	\$36,900	\$36,900	1	\$37,700	\$37,700	1	\$38,400	\$38,400	1	\$39,200	\$39,200
Office Administrator	1	\$28,200	\$28,200	1	\$28,700	\$28,700	1	\$29,300	\$29,300	1	\$29,900	\$29,900	1	\$30,500	\$30,500
Student Recruitment Specialist	.5	\$37,500	\$18,750	.5	\$38,300	\$19,150	.5	\$39,000	\$19,500	.5	\$39,800	\$19,900	.5	\$40,600	\$20,300
A - Total Admin and Support:	6.5		\$344,350	6.5		\$351,150	6.5		\$358,100	6.5		\$365,400	6.5		\$372,800
Instructional Personnel:															
Core Content Teacher(s)	22	\$43,400	\$954,800	25	\$44,270	\$1,106,750	28	\$45,160	\$1,264,480	28	\$46,060	\$1,289,680	28	\$46,980	\$1,315,440
Electives/Specialty Teacher(s)	4	\$41,300	\$165,200	4	\$42,100	\$168,400	4	\$42,900	\$171,600	4	\$43,800	\$175,200	4	\$44,700	\$178,800
English Learner Teacher	1	\$44,700	\$44,700	1.5	\$45,600	\$68,400	1.5	\$46,500	\$69,750	1.5	\$47,400	\$71,100	1.5	\$48,400	\$72,600
Intervention Paraprofessionals	3.4	\$19,400	\$65,960	3.9	\$19,800	\$77,220	4.4	\$20,200	\$88,880	4.4	\$20,600	\$90,640	4.4	\$21,000	\$92,400
Exceptional Children Teacher(s)	3	\$44,700	\$134,100	3.5	\$45,600	\$159,600	4	\$46,500	\$186,000	4	\$47,400	\$189,600	4	\$48,400	\$193,600
Exceptional Children Aides	1.8	\$19,400	\$34,920	2.6	\$19,800	\$51,480	3.5	\$20,200	\$70,700	3.5	\$20,600	\$72,100	3.5	\$21,000	\$73,500
Social Worker	.6	\$36,400	\$21,840	.6	\$37,100	\$22,260	.6	\$37,900	\$22,740	.6	\$38,600	\$23,160	.6	\$39,400	\$23,640
Recess Aides	.9	\$15,400	\$13,860	.9	\$15,700	\$14,130	1	\$16,000	\$16,000	1	\$16,300	\$16,300	1	\$16,600	\$16,600
Substitute Teachers	1.2	\$15,300	\$18,360	1.4	\$15,600	\$21,840	1.5	\$15,900	\$23,850	1.5	\$16,200	\$24,300	1.5	\$16,600	\$24,900

Hillside Academy

B - Total Instructional Personnel:	37.9		\$1,453,740	43.4		\$1,690,080	48.5		\$1,914,000	48.5		\$1,952,080	48.5		\$1,991,480
A+B = C - Total Admin, Support and Instructional Personnel:	44.4		\$1,798,090	49.9		\$2,041,230	55		\$2,272,100	55		\$2,317,480	55		\$2,364,280
Administrative & Support Benefits															
Health & Dental Insurance	6.5	\$10,320	\$67,080	6.5	\$10,520	\$68,380	6.5	\$10,730	\$69,745	6.5	\$10,950	\$71,175	6.5	\$11,170	\$72,605
Retirement Plan	6.5	\$1,370	\$8,905	6.5	\$1,400	\$9,100	6.5	\$1,420	\$9,230	6.5	\$1,450	\$9,425	6.5	\$1,480	\$9,620
Life & Disability Insurance	6.5	\$120	\$780	6.5	\$120	\$780	6.5	\$120	\$780	6.5	\$120	\$780	6.5	\$120	\$780
Workers Compensation	6.5	\$160	\$1,040	6.5	\$160	\$1,040	6.5	\$160	\$1,040	6.5	\$170	\$1,105	6.5	\$170	\$1,105
Fica/Medicare Tax	6.5	\$4,410	\$28,665	6.5	\$4,490	\$29,185	6.5	\$4,580	\$29,770	6.5	\$4,660	\$30,290	6.5	\$4,750	\$30,875
Futa & Suta	6.5	\$620	\$4,030	6.5	\$620	\$4,030	6.5	\$630	\$4,095	6.5	\$640	\$4,160	6.5	\$650	\$4,225
Tuition Reimbursement	6.5	\$430	\$2,795	6.5	\$440	\$2,860	6.5	\$450	\$2,925	6.5	\$460	\$2,990	6.5	\$460	\$2,990
Incentives/Stipends/Bonuses	6.5	\$4,670	\$30,355	6.5	\$4,710	\$30,615	6.5	\$4,740	\$30,810	6.5	\$4,760	\$30,940	6.5	\$4,800	\$31,200
D - Total Admin and Support Benefits:	52		\$143,650	52		\$145,990	52		\$148,395	52		\$150,865	52		\$153,400
Instructional Personnel Benefits:															
Health & Dental Insurance	35.7	\$10,320	\$368,424	41.3	\$10,520	\$434,476	46.3	\$10,730	\$496,799	46.3	\$10,950	\$506,985	46.3	\$11,170	\$517,171
Retirement Plan	36.7	\$780	\$28,626	42	\$800	\$33,600	47	\$810	\$38,070	47	\$820	\$38,540	47	\$840	\$39,480
Life & Disability Insurance	36.7	\$80	\$2,936	42	\$80	\$3,360	47	\$80	\$3,760	47	\$80	\$3,760	47	\$80	\$3,760
Workers Compensation	36.7	\$140	\$5,138	42	\$140	\$5,880	47	\$140	\$6,580	47	\$140	\$6,580	47	\$150	\$7,050
Fica/Medicare Tax	37.9	\$2,930	\$111,047	43.4	\$2,980	\$129,332	48.5	\$3,020	\$146,470	48.5	\$3,080	\$149,380	48.5	\$3,120	\$151,320
Futa & Suta	37.9	\$540	\$20,466	43.4	\$550	\$23,870	48.5	\$550	\$26,675	48.5	\$560	\$27,160	48.5	\$580	\$28,130
Tuition Reimbursement	36.7	\$250	\$9,175	42	\$260	\$10,920	47	\$260	\$12,220	47	\$260	\$12,220	47	\$270	\$12,690
Incentives/Stipends/Bonuses	4	\$500	\$2,000	6	\$500	\$3,000	8	\$500	\$4,000	8	\$500	\$4,000	8	\$500	\$4,000
E - Total Instructional Personnel Benefits:	262.3		\$547,812	302.1		\$644,438	339.3		\$734,574	339.3		\$748,625	339.3		\$763,601
D+E = F - Total	314.3		\$691,462	354.1		\$790,428	391.3		\$882,969	391.3		\$899,490	391.3		\$917,001



Hillside Academy

Personnel Benefits														
A+D = G - Total Admin and Support Personnel (Salary & Benefits)	58.5		\$488,000	58.5		\$497,140	58.5		\$506,495	58.5		\$516,265	58.5	\$526,200
B+E = H - Total Instructional Personnel (Salary & Benefits)	300.2		\$2,001,552	345.5		\$2,334,518	387.8		\$2,648,574	387.8		\$2,700,705	387.8	\$2,755,081
G+H = J - TOTAL PERSONNEL	358.7		\$2,489,552	404		\$2,831,658	446.3		\$3,155,069	446.3		\$3,216,970	446.3	\$3,281,281

**Operations Budget: Expenditure Projections 2018-19 through 2022-2023**

<b>BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS</b>		<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
	Administrative & Support:					
Office:	Office Supplies	\$35,800	\$24,700	\$27,600	\$28,200	\$28,800
	Office Equipment	\$12,200	\$9,900	\$10,400	\$10,500	\$10,700
Facilities	Facility Lease/Mortgage	\$1,417,900	\$1,417,900	\$1,417,900	\$1,417,900	\$1,417,900
	Rent Of Equipment	\$5,300	\$6,200	\$7,000	\$7,200	\$7,300
	Maintenance & Repair	\$191,700	\$226,800	\$76,900	\$78,300	\$79,300
	Custodial	\$124,300	\$127,900	\$131,800	\$135,700	\$139,700
Utilities	Telephone	\$6,100	\$6,000	\$6,800	\$7,400	\$7,600
	Gas	\$4,900	\$4,900	\$5,000	\$5,100	\$5,200
	Electric	\$46,100	\$47,000	\$47,900	\$48,900	\$49,900
	Water/Sewer	\$15,000	\$15,300	\$15,600	\$15,900	\$16,200
	Trash	\$6,600	\$7,700	\$8,800	\$9,000	\$9,100
Transportation	Transportation Plan	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Other	Administrative Support	\$67,900	\$65,300	\$96,299	\$96,217	\$91,133
	Contracted Services	\$9,700	\$2,600	\$2,700	\$2,700	\$2,800
	Facility Acquisition	\$225,900	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Food Plan	\$164,100	\$185,800	\$204,200	\$206,300	\$208,400
	Insurances	\$20,600	\$21,100	\$21,600	\$22,000	\$22,400
	Legal And Audit	\$80,300	\$80,600	\$108,100	\$108,200	\$104,400
	Marketing Plan	\$88,800	\$69,000	\$85,800	\$87,300	\$85,400
	Partner Relations	\$44,300	\$44,500	\$62,100	\$62,100	\$59,500
	Travel And Meals	\$11,500	\$12,400	\$13,100	\$13,400	\$13,700
	Other	\$42,700	\$42,800	\$43,000	\$43,100	\$43,300
	K - TOTAL Administrative & Support Operations	\$2,631,700	\$2,428,400	\$2,402,599	\$2,415,417	\$2,412,733
	Instructional:					
Classroom Technology	Technology Services	\$105,100	\$121,900	\$163,000	\$174,600	\$174,500
Instructional Contract	Staff Development	\$126,800	\$99,100	\$108,300	\$110,500	\$110,500
	Staff Recruitment And Retention	\$69,500	\$76,700	\$119,400	\$133,100	\$133,200
	Special Education Services	\$147,100	\$160,400	\$175,300	\$178,700	\$182,000
	Curriculum Development And Intervention Services	\$41,600	\$49,600	\$79,900	\$90,900	\$90,800
Books And Supplies	Instructional Materials &	\$44,200	\$39,600	\$45,100	\$45,300	\$45,300

	Supplies					
	Curriculum/Texts	\$311,200	\$100,800	\$103,900	\$49,700	\$49,700
	Printing & Copier Costs	\$16,800	\$19,500	\$22,000	\$22,500	\$23,000
	Student Assessment	\$41,400	\$41,800	\$54,700	\$54,700	\$53,200
Other	Instructional Equipment	\$43,600	\$49,500	\$55,400	\$56,400	\$57,400
	Field Trips	\$3,300	\$3,800	\$4,300	\$4,400	\$4,500
	L - TOTAL Instructional Operations	\$950,600	\$762,700	\$931,300	\$920,800	\$924,100
	K+L = M - TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$3,582,300	\$3,191,100	\$3,333,899	\$3,336,217	\$3,336,833

**Overall Budget:**

<b>BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
J - TOTAL PERSONNEL	\$2,489,552	\$2,831,658	\$3,155,069	\$3,216,970	\$3,281,281
M - TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$3,582,300	\$3,191,100	\$3,333,899	\$3,336,217	\$3,336,833
J+ M =N TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$6,071,852	\$6,022,758	\$6,488,968	\$6,553,187	\$6,618,114
Z - TOTAL REVENUE	\$6,071,852	\$6,022,758	\$6,488,968	\$6,553,187	\$6,618,114
Z - N = SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

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

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

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

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

In our opening year, Hillside Academy plans to serve 604 students in grades K-6. We will expand and add 7th and 8th grades to ultimately serve 772 students in grades K-8 at full-enrollment by 2020-21, our third year. Because of the established demand for more charter school seats in our community, including at both the K-5 and 6-8 grade levels, we are planning to start K-6. We believe this strategy is important, as parents with rising 6th graders are at a natural transition point, and middle school choices are limited. We are confident we can attract students and fill to our enrollment targets. As noted previously, Charlotte is the second largest city in the Southeast, and both Mecklenburg and Union are among the fastest-growing counties in the state. District schools in CMS - including those in our area - are already overcrowded - students are occupying approximately 1,220 modular classrooms and CMS expects that for every one that chooses a district school, they expect five to pick charter schools.

Our initial student enrollment outreach effort will be designed to saturate the area around the chosen school site. Matthews Charter Academy, the closest NHA-partner school to our proposed location, for example, opened this fall and generated more than 1,500 applications for approximately 600 available seats.

We did not establish a "break-even" point between student enrollment and our budget. The requested size and phased growth for the school is accommodated both by our planned annual student enrollment and a pledge from our management partner to support the establishment of our complete educational program from day one. NHA has committed to contributing (not loaning) any funds necessary to cover expenses that exceed revenues in any given year, providing the school with the safety net we need on student enrollment projections. While we are confident that we will meet our enrollment estimates included here, and thus revenue projections, the pledge of support by NHA assures our Board that we will never be in a position that requires cuts to our planned educational program.

Additionally, our partnership with NHA helps to ensure that we will always

have the necessary cash on hand to meet all short-term obligations - importantly, including payroll - even prior to receiving the state, local, and federal funds due to the school. This is a significant benefit in the early years of our school, easing and improving our financial planning process.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Services Agreement with NHA offers all funds necessary to cover expenditures that exceed revenues in the school's early years, allowing a phased growth for our school (see the letter of financial commitment in Appendix M). The budget is conservative overall, and includes an expected contribution from NHA of approximately \$1.2 million in the first year of operation and \$290,000 in Year 2. These are contributions to the school, not loans, and no repayment is required. These contributions allow us to provide the full school facility and academic program in year one, even though we will start with fewer students. In year three and beyond, revenue is estimated to be sufficient to cover the school's operating costs.

Our Services Agreement also affirms NHA's commitment to providing sufficient revenue to meet the school's budgeted expenses if ever public revenues do not cover our required needs.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

*As described above, the budget projections in the first two years of operation include contributions - not loans - from NHA, with no financial repayment obligations whatsoever on the school or the school's Board. NHA contributions are included in the line item "other funds," combined there with federal entitlement funds and a small amount of funds projected from food sales to students. NHA contributions are budgeted at approximately \$1.2 million in the first year of operation and \$290,000 in Year 2.*

Attribution: NHA

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

17:1 - \*See overflow section for further detail.

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

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

NHA uses a standardized human resource, purchasing, and payroll software system to internally manage all transactions related to the personnel,

purchasing, and payroll functions. This administrative infrastructure supports full compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. NHA effectively manages compensation, payroll, and compliance for approximately 5,000 school-based employees in nine states, and has the experience and efficiency to properly provide these services to our school. On behalf of our school, NHA will follow applicable state and federal law with respect to the selection of contractors and large purchases on behalf of the school, including competitive bidding or sole-source documentation as applicable.

Attribution: NHA

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

Hillside Academy will annually maintain a balanced budget. Our school's management partner, NHA, has an established record of opening and operating schools, and has ensured the establishment of each school's educational program by combining needed additional contribution with the amount of public revenue received. Not a single NHA-partner school has closed because of financial difficulties of any type.

No school has ever terminated its management arrangement with NHA. We believe that this is a testament to NHA's ability to develop budgets and structures that provide the proper level of financial commitment to the priorities of each partner school's educational program. At Hillside Academy, these priorities include: a robust professional development program; a distributed leadership model that allows greater coaching of classroom teachers; a full curricular program that emphasizes the core areas of math, ELA, science, and social studies while also allowing for art, music, physical education, and other "specials"; and a meaningful moral focus program. NHA-partner schools, already marked by a competitive salary and employee benefit structure, recently implemented a "Total Rewards" strategy to offer more competitive salaries and benefit package choices, making schools such as ours even more attractive to high-performing employees and helping to better create an atmosphere that allows excellent teachers to take advantage of opportunities to grow in responsibility and leadership.

We will work diligently to ensure that the school is accessible to all students, and that transportation needs are not a barrier to any child attending the school. The school's budget includes \$10,000 to cover the cost of such transportation needs, which may include transportation for students who are experiencing homelessness or exceptional children with transportation needs noted in their IEPs.

NHA's development of our school facility and our Lease Agreement for that facility supports that no funds from banks, other lending institutions, outside corporations, foundations, or other sources will be needed to cover our occupancy costs.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

The budget includes a set-aside of two percent of per pupil revenue, up to \$35,000 per year, for use at the school as directed by our Board. The Board may direct the expenditure of these funds for educational or extracurricular expenses outside of the model educational and operational program, or the Board may accumulate these funds into a reserve for later use. NHA is committed to providing the educational program we have proposed, according to the budget the Board approves, regardless of any fluctuations or shortfall in public revenue.

This support is detailed in our Services Agreement with NHA, which clarifies that NHA assumes the obligation for all expenses, and thus assumes all the financial risk. Because the obligation to cover planned costs is NHA's, the need for the school to maintain a sizable fund balance is negated. We have spoken with Board members at both long-standing and new NHA-partner schools and confirmed NHA's financial commitment to its partner schools.

Through both the Services Agreement and Board oversight, NHA will be obligated to manage and operate the school in accordance with the budget approved by the Board. Expenditures during the academic year are not to deviate materially from the approved budget. Of course, as necessary the Board will review and approve amended budgets based on student need, and this could require additional spending, which again NHA is obligated to cover.

Should our Board ever decide that it is best for our students if we separate from NHA, we will be able to continue leasing the facility and will have per-pupil revenue to fund our operations while we make decisions on how to replace management services or operate the school ourselves. And while there is no substantial surplus envisioned, there also will be no deficit because of NHA's funding commitment. Therefore our Board would not have any debt to cover should we ever terminate our partnership with NHA. In fact, as noted earlier in this application, the experience of other NHA-partner schools in North Carolina shows each of these schools consistently ending each year with a small budget surplus.

We recognize the guidance from the NCDPI that schools show additional indicators of financial viability beyond the proposed Services Agreement with NHA. NHA-partner schools in North Carolina (as well as in the other eight states where NHA partners with local boards to operate schools) consistently receive unqualified audits, meet total margin ratios, and do not carry long-term debt. No school partnering with NHA has ever been closed for financial reasons, and NHA has never walked away from a partnership with a school, even when enrollment or funding at the school has decreased.

In accordance with our Services Agreement, our Board will retain a discretionary expenditure fund to be used for Board-driven school purposes and programs. We are contemplating using these funds to create a fund balance and may set aside up to half of these funds each year to build an ongoing fund balance. We will revisit our fund balance needs after each year of operations as part of our annual evaluation of the performance of NHA. If, as we believe will occur, we are satisfied with the performance of NHA and with the strength the Board has under our Services Agreement, we will be comfortable choosing to reinvest these funds in the educational program at our school. Our budget with this application does not reflect this potential

surplus, as we chose to project satisfaction with our programming.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

This budget assumes that no funds from banks, other lending institutions, outside corporations, foundations, or other sources will be needed. We plan for our school to start as a K-6 school and to grow over the next two years to a K-8 school. Our educational program will be fully established and implemented from day one nonetheless, and we recognize the wisdom of initially occupying a facility that has been constructed to house our full K-8 model. Accordingly, NHA has pledged contributions sufficient to meet operating expenses above revenues received in the school's early years and provides as part of its partnership a school facility built to house our school at full capacity. Appendix M includes a letter of revenue assurances from NHA, which further demonstrates the organization's initial and ongoing commitment to our school, and Appendix I includes our executed Services Agreement with NHA, detailing the financing structure for our school.

Attribution: NHA

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.*

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

Attribution: NHA

\*Continued from "student to teacher ratio."

Our anticipated student-to-teacher ratio will be approximately 17:1. The budget is not built on a specific student-to-teacher ratio; however, the main drivers for budget expenditures are the number and anticipated characteristics of students to be served, the number of classrooms in use, and overall operational costs of the school. As the school grows by adding grade levels and classrooms in our first years, so too does the projected staffing. The planned staffing pattern allows for a concentration of core subject teachers while offering co-curricular classes (music, art, physical education, etc.), and provides for staffing for EC and ELL students. The staffing model and budget reflect this 17:1 pupil-to-instructional staff ratio in the school's charter term.

Core Content Teachers:

Y1-22.0; Y2-25.0; Y3-28.0; Y4-28.0; Y5-28.0

Electives/Specialty Teachers:

Y1-4.0; Y2-4.0; Y3-4.0; Y4-4.0; Y5-4.0

ELL Teachers:



Y1-1.0; Y2-1.5; Y3-1.5; Y4-1.5; Y5-1.5

Exceptional Children Teachers:

Y1-3.0; Y2-3.5; Y3-4.0; Y4-4.0; Y5-4.0

Exceptional Children Aides:

Y1-1.8; Y2-2.6; Y3-3.5; Y4-3.5; Y5-3.5

Intervention Paraprofessionals

Y1-3.4; Y2-3.9; Y3-4.4; Y4-4.4; Y5-4.4

Enrollment:

Y1-604; Y2-688; Y3-772; Y4-772; Y5-772

Teacher & Aides: Pupil Ratio:

Y1-17:1; Y2-17:1; Y3-17:1; Y4-17.1; Y5-17.1

Attribution: NHA

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

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

Our Board will establish a fiscal management policy requiring adequate internal controls, and our Board will ensure that these controls are followed consistently by the school and by our management partner, NHA. Examples of internal controls surrounding our financial processes include the following:

- Regular review of payroll information and reconciliation to employee master file.
- An established signatory authority for bank accounts and monthly account reconciliation.
- Requirement for review and approval of purchase order requests.
- Monthly review of budget-to-actual detailed financial statements.
- Use of an integrated computerized accounting system that manages all purchasing, general ledger, grant accounting, fixed assets accounting, payroll, personnel and cash receipt/disbursements activities, and provides for segregation of duties.

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

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

There are no known related-party transactions that will occur at our school, nor do we foresee any possible related-party transactions. Our Board bylaws require the avoidance of conflicts of interest and we will also adopt a conflict of interest policy.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Board is currently considering the following audit firms:

Name: BDO USA, LLP

Address: 5430 Wade Park Blvd Suite 208, Raleigh, NC 27607

Phone Number: 919-754-9370

Name: Deloitte & Touche, LLP

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

Phone Number: 704-887-1500

Name: Plante Moran

Address: 634 Front Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Phone Number: 616-774-8221

We also have included details on the overview of the audit process in Appendix O.

Attribution: Board

VII AGREEMENT PAGE

**Application Fee:**

*Pursuant to § 115C-218.1(c) the charter school applicant must submit a \$1000 application fee to the Office of Charter Schools. The applicant must submit their application fee by the September 19, 2016 5:00 pm EST deadline. Payments will be accepted in the form of a certified check. Cash is not accepted.*

*\*Application Note: The applicant must mail the certified check along with a letter indicating the name of the proposed charter school, contact information and the enclosed payment amount to be received before or on the due date of September 19, 2016 5:00 pm EST. Failure to submit payment by the stipulated timeline to the Office of Charter Schools will deem the application incomplete.*

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

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

*I understand the requirements pursuant to G.S. 115C-218.1(c).*

nmulder

Date: 09/15/2016

**Applicant Signature:**

The foregoing application is submitted on behalf of Hillside Academy (*name of non-profit corporation or individuals submitting application*). The undersigned has read the application and hereby declares that the information contained in it is true and accurate to the best of his/her information and belief. The undersigned further represents that the applicant has read the Charter School Law and agrees to be governed by it, other applicable laws, and SBE regulations. Additionally, we understand the final approval of the charter is contingent upon successful completion of a mandatory planning year. Per SBE policy TCS-U-013 All new nonprofit boards receiving a charter must participate in a year-long planning program prior to the charter school's opening for students. The planning year provides an applicant time to prepare for the implementation of the school's curricular, financial, marketing, and facility plans. During this planning year, regular meetings are held with the Board of Directors and 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.

Final approval of the charter will be contingent upon successfully completing all of the planning program requirements.

Print/Type Name: nmulder

Board Position: Board President, Nalan Karakaya Mulder

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 09/15/2016

Sworn to and subscribed before me this  
\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public Official Seal  
My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.