



**PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA**

State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

North Carolina Charter School Application

Clara Science Academy Charter School

Opening in the 2021-2022 School Year

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## Application Instructions

APPLICATION AND APPLICATION FEE DUE DATE/TIME	
Fast-Track and Acceleration Applicants (2020 Opening)	<b>5:00pm EST on July 29, 2019</b>
Traditional Timeline Applicants (2021 Opening)	<b>5:00pm EST on August 26, 2019</b>

### APPLICATION SPECIFICATIONS

Applicants can submit applications prior to the deadline. **All applications must be submitted using the online portal.** Applicants are to use the following specifications:

1. All applications must be submitted using the online platform. Applications submitted outside of this platform will not be accepted.
2. All submitted applications must be from a nonprofit group approved by the NC Secretary of State, unless being submitted by a municipality.
3. Each major section (Mission, Purposes and Goals, Education Plan, Governance and Capacity, Operations, and Financial Plan) must be located within the designated section, as indicated in the online document.
4. If a particular question does not apply to your team or proposal, respond "Not Applicable," AND state the reason this question is not applicable to your team or proposal.
5. Each required Appendix must include a title page with the title of the Appendix and the Proposed School Name.
6. Any answer given within the application that is not original to the applicant must include a citation to the source of the answer.
7. Review all elements of the application for completeness before submitting.
8. The full application (including the narrative and all appendices) must be submitted as one PDF document.
9. The budget spreadsheet must also be submitted separately as an excel file.
10. The application narrative, without appendices, may not exceed 100 pages. Applicants submitting special requests are given an additional 5-page allowance, per special request.
11. Each section of the application should be clearly labeled according to the table of contents.
12. Late submissions **will not** be accepted. **No exceptions.**
13. Applicants must turn in the application fee and fee payment form by the stipulated timeline.



## Application Contact Information

1. Name of Proposed Charter School: Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Organization Type:  Municipality  Nonprofit Corporation
3. Name of non-profit organization under which charter will be organized or operated: Clara Science Academy Charter School
4. Has the organization applied for 501(c)(3) non-profit status?  Yes  No  N/A (Municipal)

5. 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: Omar Muhammad

Title/Relationship to Non-Profit: Board Member

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 33204

City/State/Zip: Charlotte, NC 28233

Primary Telephone: 704-904-7180

Alternate Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Geographic County: Mecklenburg

LEA/District Name: Mecklenburg

7. Was this application prepared with the assistance of a third-party person or group?  
 Yes  
 No

Give the name of the third-party person or group: Acadia NorthStar, Adrian Sundiata & Company

Fees provided to the third-party person or group? \$0

8. 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 was supported in partnership by multiple organizations. The first two support organizations, Acadia NorthStar and Adrian Sundiata & Company provided application feedback, a writing coach, research, resources and experts in the areas of governance and instructional design, fiscal budgeting, facility selections, and legal requirements.

9. Is this application a conversion from a traditional public school or private school?

Yes. Complete the Conversion Special Request Section.

X No.

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

Yes. Complete the Replication Special Request Section.

X No.

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

Yes. Complete the Fast-Track Special Request Section.

X No

11. Do you want your application to be considered for acceleration?

Yes. Complete the Acceleration Special Request Section.

X No.

12. Do you want your application to be considered for an Alternative Charter School?

Yes. Complete the Alternative Charter School Special Request Section.

X No.

13. Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment

Projected School Opening Year: 2021 Month: 8

14. Will this school operate on a year-round schedule?  Yes  No

15. Enrollment Summary. Complete the following table, graying out (or leaving blank) any rows for grades the school will not serve.

Number of Students						
Grade Level	Year 1 2021-2022	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	At Capacity 2021_- 2022_
K	83	83	83	83	83	83
1	83	83	83	83	83	83
2	84	84	84	84	83	84
3		100	100	100	100	100
4			100	100	100	100

5				100	100	100
6					100	100
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
<b>Totals</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>650</b>

16. Complete the following table, providing projected enrollment for each of the following demographic groups.

<b>Anticipated Racial/Ethnic Demographics (%)</b>	<b>% of Economically Disadvantaged Students</b>	<b>% of Students with Disabilities</b>	<b>% of English Language Learners</b>
50% African American 25% Caucasian 20% Latino 4% Asian 1% other	<b>80%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>10%</b>

17. Describe the rationale for the number of students and grade levels served in year one and the basis for the growth plan outlined above.

A large percentage of scholars in North Carolina are trapped in a vicious circle of poor performance and de-motivation, often leading to bad marks and disengagement from schools. Poor performance at school (Mecklenburg school district not being immune) has long-term consequences for both the individual scholar, the communities in which scholars reside and society as whole. Additionally, scholars who perform poorly at the young age face a high risk of dropping out of school, and when a large share of the population lacks basic skills, the country's long-term economic growth gets severely compromised. The location of interest the majority ethnicity residing in the area is African American with 81% of its scholars receiving or are eligible to participate in free or reduced lunch programs. Education status, 5.57% has no High School, 23.62 % has some high School, 19.86 % has some College, 5.61% has an Associate Degree, 13.51 % Bachelor's Degree and 5.39% has a Graduate Degree. CSA believes that STEM education is a crucial component of a well-rounded education for all scholars no matter their socio-economic status. CSA would like to discover the many scholars and future scientist that have yet to be discovered in this region.



The total enrollment number was also projected and ascertained through various channels including petitions, surveys (Nextdoor App, [www.clarascienceacademy.com](http://www.clarascienceacademy.com) which are still ongoing), office of charter school data, informal conversations, and data from other studies done in Charlotte. The information from informal conversations, homeowners' associations, churches, other religious institutions and residential input from residence in the region. CSA board is positive and confident that the numbers are attainable (250 scholars) necessary for year 1 and subsequent additions in years following. With the positive response we received through survey data supplements, residents have expressed the need for Clara Science Academy a STEM school in the region.

### Certify

18. This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application. X I certify  I do not certify

Explanation (optional):

## Section 1 Mission, Purposes, and Goals

**1.1 Mission and Vision.** State the mission and vision of the proposed charter school. The mission statement defines the organization's purpose and primary objectives, describing why it exists. The mission statement should indicate in measurable terms what the school intends to do, for whom, and to what degree. The vision statement outlines how the school will operate and what it will achieve in the long term. The vision statement should describe what the school will look like when it is achieving its mission. The mission and vision statement provide the foundation for the entire proposal.

The mission and vision statements, taken together, should:

- Identify the students and community to be served;
- Illustrate what success will look like; and
- Align with the purposes of the NC Charter School Law.

1. The mission statement of the proposed charter school is as follows (35 words or less):

Clara Science Academy will increase scholars' access to a STEM learning environment and promote high academic achievement through scientific inquiry, reasoning, and investigative learning.

2. What is the vision of the proposed school? What will the school look like when it is achieving the mission?

Focusing on the delivery a high-quality STEM-based education to under- served communities in our area, the vision of CSA is that a STEM foundation will increase college and career readiness for our scholars and prepare them for success through rigorous standards of high academic achievement.

## Educational Need and Targeted Student Population of the Proposed Charter School

3. 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. Additionally, how it will reflect the socioeconomic status of the LEA, SWD population, and ELL population of the district?

[See G.S. 115C-218.45\(e\).](#)

### **Evidence of Educational Need**

A STEM education is a high national priority because of the rising concerns about the ability of the United States to compete in the global economy. This concern also has led to numerous calls for national efforts to increase the number and diversity of scholars pursuing degrees and careers in STEM fields. For the United States to remain innovative and continue to accelerate, the nation must commit to improving educational access and positive outcomes. Similarly, within the state of North Carolina, the Mecklenburg area has a high demand for STEM occupations, especially those in middle-skills jobs; therefore, a STEM education will provide great economic benefits for scholars within the communities while at the same time contributing to maintaining the attractiveness for the Charlotte metropolitan area.

Furthermore, STEM education is a crucial component in providing a well-rounded education to our scholar; an education that will provide access to science, social studies, literature, the arts, physical education and health, and the opportunity to learn an additional language. More importantly, it will help to develop the critical thinking skills, facilitates civic engagement and access to better healthy and successful lives for all scholars. CSA intentionally targets scholars of low socio-economic and diverse backgrounds living in and around the Eastern region of Charlotte because of the limited access to STEM choice and the high increase in low performing schools. CSA will increase the interest and the diversity of scholars within the STEM field.

### **Educational Disparities**

In relationship to the socioeconomic status of the LEA, SWD population, and ELL population of the district, the test scores within the area are way below average. The percentage of scholars eligible for free and reduced lunch is 81% and the percentage of public schools with Title 1 status is 88.9%. The data also shows a high percentage of schools within the corridor as failing schools servicing a large population of scholars from this geographic area of District 4, the Southwest State Board Region in Mecklenburg County. This area is comprising of mostly low and middle SES households. The EOG tests results for several of the elementary schools within the area such as Allenbrook Elementary, Bruns Academy, Briarwood Elementary, Renaissance West STEAM Academy and Sedgefield Middle received an overall failing performance (36, 29, 54, 35, and 40). Reading scores were 32, 16, 41, 26, and 30. Math scores were 40, 41, and 26. Burns and Sedgefield did not report a math score; however, the Science scores were also significantly low (42, 27, 62, 41, and 42). KIPP, one of the few charters in the

immediate area likewise has a low grade of a “D.” Reading was at 33% and the science was 60%. From this data, CSA board concluded there is a continuous need for rigorous educational reform. The opportunity of implementing CSA’s mission of increasing access to a quality-high performing STEM schools within this district is dire and imperative. The data continues to reflect that a robust STEM academy is much needed and can contribute significantly to our future scholars. Clara Science Academy is committed to fulfilling that need.

Likewise, the Mecklenburg county has seen an average growth rate of 2.6% between 2005 and 2015. It is the fastest growing county with a population growth of 16.3% which reflects a significant increase in scholars within the school district. While most of the growth has been evidenced within the northern and southern portions of the county, the school system has experienced growth throughout all segments of the county. Given these changing demographics of Mecklenburg County school-age population, CMS continues to face challenges in scholars’ assignments and meeting the needs of each scholar.

Moreover, UNC-Charlotte, Charlotte metros most significant research asset, ranks 246 in Research & Development expenditures, well below its peer cities and below other North Carolina institutions leaving a greater demand for supplementary STEM skills and a high demand for STEM occupations; therefore, the board of CSA concurs that the process of learning and practicing the STEM disciplines will create future scholars, instilling “a passion for inquiry and discovery, and fosters skills such as persistence, teamwork, and the application to gained knowledge to new situations” (Bailey et al., 2015; Betrus, 2015). CSA affirms, a strong STEM education can and will open the door for “lifelong learning beginning, culturally responsive, employs problem and inquiry-based approaches, and engages students in hands-on-activities that offers opportunities to interact with STEM professionals.” These types of STEM teaching and learning practices is not widespread and CSA would like the opportunity to close a percentage of the gaps which remains persistent throughout the education system. (STEM 2026: [https://innovation.ed.gov/files/2016/09/AIR-STEM2026\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](https://innovation.ed.gov/files/2016/09/AIR-STEM2026_Report_2016.pdf)).

### **Racial/Ethnic Composition**

North Carolina public schools have a diversity score of 0.46, which is higher than the national average of 0.32. East Charlotte has a population of 145,848; roughly, 69,088 are male residents and 76,761 female residents. The median age of the current population is 32 with 48,954 people being married and 67,419 being single. The employment numbers show that 75.71% are white collar employees and 24.29% as blue-collar employees with the median household income is \$59,122 with the average adjusted gross income as \$38,790 which is well below the state average. The current unemployment level 4.29% lower than the current county unemployment level of 4.7% however only 30 points difference. While it remains lower than the states of 5.0% it is higher than the current national unemployment rate at 3.6%.



The majority ethnicity residing in the area is African American with 81% of its scholars are receiving or are eligible to participate in free or reduced lunch programs. Education status, 5.57% has no High School, 23.62 % has some high School, 19.86 % has some College, 5.61% has an Associate Degree, 13.51 % Bachelor's Degree and 5.39% has a Graduate Degree. The race and ethnic makeup consist of 24.81% Caucasians, 49.41% African Americans, 19.59% Hispanics; 0.25% are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians make up 2.37%, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders account for 0.44% while other race or two or more races account for 3.14%. In comparison to the public-school race and ethnicity profile, Caucasians are at 7.6%, African Americans (55.9%), Hispanics (31.1%), Asian (2.9%), Hawaii/Pacific Islanders (0.1%), American India or Alaskan Native (0.5%), and two or more races (1.9%). CSA anticipates that its 'academic environment of scholars will be reflective of the data presented. This region is one of Charlotte's most diverse and overly populated areas, comprising of families from a myriad of different economic, racial and national backgrounds. While the area is made up of incredible families and communities, scholars in this area face many health and economic challenges. Therefore, the quality of education a scholar receives will directly impact a scholar's health and economic outcomes in life. Therefore, one of the most powerful enablers of economic mobility according to research is a high-quality education. The board of CSA can contribute to the health and vitality of the undiscovered scholars in this region by providing families additional access to a STEM educational choice. Data from the 2017 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality of Life Explorer ([http:// mcmap.org/qol/](http://mcmap.org/qol/)).

Even more so, the disparities in STEM learning we know exist along racial, socioeconomic, gender and geographic lines which are traced to the differences in access to resources and STEM opportunities across communities (Volmert, Baran, Kendall-Taylor, & O'Neil (2013). Using the STEM pedagogy, CSA scholars will be taught to develop critical-thinking skills that are valuable well beyond the four STEM subjects; a STEM curriculum that supports civic engagement and partnership that will result in a stronger promising work force with STEM training, and literacy proficient for a variety of jobs (Volmert, Baran, Kendall-Taylor, & O'Neil (2013).

#### References

Volmert, A., Baran, M., Kendall-Taylor, N., & O'Neil, M. (2013). "You have to have the basics down really well": Mapping the gaps between expert and public understanding of STEM learning.

Washington, DC: Frame Works Institute. Retrieved from

[http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/PDF\\_STEM/STEMMTG10-18-13\\_proofedandformatted.pdf](http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/PDF_STEM/STEMMTG10-18-13_proofedandformatted.pdf)

STEM 2026: [https://innovation.ed.gov/files/2016/09/AIR-STEM2026\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](https://innovation.ed.gov/files/2016/09/AIR-STEM2026_Report_2016.pdf)

4. What are the enrollment trends and academic performance outcomes of surrounding schools in the selected community? What elements of your educational model will meet the needs of your target student population?

#### **Enrollment Trends/Academic Performance**

Out of the forty schools in the State Board Southwest region of Charlotte, twenty-two schools did not meet their expected growth for the 2017-2018 school year and all schools have a performance grade of “D” or “F”. The low performance based on the data is impacting positive growth. Schools such as Allenbrook Elementary (PK-05) has a failing performance grade and has not met its growth while Briarwood Elementary (PK-05) has met growth status however its performance is also a grade of “D.” Similarly, Renaissance West STEAM Academy (Pk-05) received an “F” failing grade and has not met its’ growth. Coulwood STEM Academy (06-08) grade level also has a school performance of “D” grade and has not met its growth. Cochrance Collegiate Academy (6-12) performance grade is also an “F” and has not met its’ growth. And, KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) of Charlotte and Charlotte Learning Academy both charter schools are also reported as failing or performing as low-performing schools. Within the district (28215 zip code) elementary schools within the area are also reporting a low performing rate. Two of these schools are Briarwood Elementary “D” and Devonshire Elementary (K-05) grade of “D”. Neighborhood schools such as Newell South received a “D” grade and Eastway Middle also received a “D” grade.

#### **Meeting Needs**

The research surrounding academic outcomes of school choices remains unclear; however the evidence suggested that without equity-oriented safeguards, such as access to information, transportation, and equitable admissions criteria, and the expansion of school choice, the school will experience an increase in segregation by race, class, language and ability (Bifulco, Lass, & Ross, 2009; Lareau & Goyette, 2014; Mathis & Welner, 2016; Roda & Wells, 2013; Scott, 2005; Sikkink & Emerson, 2008; Wells, Holme, Lopez, & Cooper, 2000). In this region, the race and ethnic makeup consist of 24.81% Caucasians, 49.41% African Americans, 19.59% Hispanics; 0.25% are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians make up 2.37%, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders account for 0.44% while other race or two or more races account for 3.14%. In comparison to the public-school race and ethnicity profile, Caucasians are at 7.6%, African Americans (55.9%), Hispanics (31.1%), Asian (2.9%), Hawaii/Pacific Islanders (0.1%), American India or Alaskan Native (0.5%), and two or more races (1.9%). Along with this data, several of the neighboring schools are low performing school. Therefore, to change the trajectory of all scholars CSA’s board believes that providing access to a STEM school will be a greater investment in the scholars and the district. A STEM choice will give scholars exposure and an early foundation to the STEM field.

Beyond the STEM curriculum, CSA is dedicated to challenging and stimulating every scholar and the families it will serve. Thus, CSA will provide its scholars with a positive educational and social experience in a structured yet flexible environment; one that is



also challenging and nurturing. CSA will be a learning environment whereby all scholars, teachers, and parents are communally aware of and committed to the institution's mission and goals. CSA's educational model will also meet the needs of this target population by providing an alternative of a STEM choice education within a public-school system for parents, scholars, and educators amidst the high increase in the number of low performing schools in the area.

Additionally, CSA educational model is offering an early Introduction of the world of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineer, and Math). For example, in the early grades (K-2), science at CSA will be designed to make scholars explore and wonder about the world, exploring the physical sciences, life sciences, earth sciences, and astronomy. Teachers will utilize the mCLASS Assessment (Reading, Math, and Literacy Testing) to assess all scholars, and learning will be extended by connecting the disciplines of the STEM with extra circular activities.

A strong mathematics foundation is needed to succeed in STEM fields and that is why CSA will integrate the classroom with outside real-life experiences. Afterschool programs such as Lego, Robotics, Math, Science and Chess clubs will ensure that the scholars are receiving additional support on building a strong foundation in STEM education. CSA believes such exposure will also help them to make sense of STEM-related topics in their daily lives. NCTM affirms such best practices, "any STEM education program (including out-of-school activities) should support and enhance a school's mathematics program, ensuring that instructional time for mathematics is not compromised. Also, any STEM activity claiming to address mathematics should do so with integrity to the grade level's mathematics content and mathematical practices([www.nctm.org](http://www.nctm.org))

Early literacy – A STEM education is of little value if the scholars of CSA are lacking the core foundation of early literacy (reading and comprehension). Amplify Reading, a supplemental digital literacy instruction program provides struggling scholars with more practice along with explicit instruction in the underlying phonics, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension skills that are essential for fluent reading with good comprehension (e.g., Cartwright, 2010; NICHD, 2000; Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2015).

CSA understands and is fully committed to supporting and enhancing the academic growth, social competence, and emotional functioning of all its scholars, including ELL, special education, and students at risk. CSA will provide a rich learning environment that promotes a strong sense of self and community, fostering positive relationships among peers and staff by practicing effective communication and peaceful conflict resolutions.

5. 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 in grades 9-12).

The total projected enrollment of the charter school in the first year is 250 scholars, grades K-2. This represents less than 1/2 of 1% of the enrollment in the LEA (147,337 scholars enrolled in CMS).

The total projected enrollment of the Clara Science Academy is 650 scholars from K-6. According to the LEA 2017-2018 ADM enrollment data there were approximately 147,337 scholars. This represents 1% of the enrollment in the LEA.

6. Summarize what the proposed school will do differently than the schools that are now serving the targeted population. What will make this school unique and more effective than the currently available public-school options?

The LEA at CMS currently offers very little in terms of STEM choices in the area of the proposed Charter school. According to the LEA website ([cmschoice.org](http://cmschoice.org)), Winget Park, Paw Creek, and Walter Byers elementary schools currently offer the following STEM education plans according to their websites: Limited exposure to problem-solving curriculum; Little or no community science fairs that have been publicized in local news media; Limited access and low students participation in robotics clubs and/or STEM curriculum. These schools received an overall academic performance of 64, 58, and 45. Math scores respectively were 66, 59, and 40; reading scores were 68, 48, and 44. While the average percentage of disadvantaged elementary students in CMS LEA STEM programs remains at 61%. This data also shows a greater need for more viable STEM schools at the elementary level for the local population. It also reflects limited choices of LEA STEM options for scholars entering the next level of Middle and High.

For the Middle School LEA STEM choices there are four choices, with the fifth choice, Wilson Middle school. Kennedy, Coulwood, Whitewater (a partial STEM with Environmental Sustainability as the STEM option) and again Walter G. Byers (K-8). These schools also received 46, 61, 49, and 34 on math scores ([cmschoice.org](http://cmschoice.org)). All failing scores. The average percentage of disadvantaged Middle School students in CMS LEA STEM programs is 66.15%. The average percentage of below proficiency entering 6th grade in STEM Middle Schools in CMS LEA programs is 18.45%. Overall, there is only one (1) passing Middle School STEM program in District 2 of the LEA, that is Coulwood STEM Academy with a performance grade of a "D". The other available stem is Cochrance Collegiate Academy with school performance at failing "F." Once again, this data reflects a significant need and demand for both STEM Elementary and Middle Schools in the locale of the LEA with special emphasis on reading, math and science.

What CSA would do differently is to expose and equip scholars with the necessary skills and knowledge in STEM subjects which will enable and give scholars a head-start for both immediate and long-term academic success. CSA believes that each scholar must attain the skills, understanding, and exposure needed to be able to compete and work

productively in a multicultural, globally oriented environment. (CMS School Choice Website: [cmschoice.org](http://cmschoice.org); NC DPI: School Report Cards; [ncreportcard.com](http://ncreportcard.com)).

Second, CSA STEM curriculum will offer its future scholars an informal STEM learning environment giving the teachers the openness to engage groups of scholars in smaller groups with less-restrictive schedules. This style of teaching allows for greater opportunities for hands-on learning and interaction with specialists and mentors. An informal learning foster scholars' engagement and it provides support to learning allowing scholars to explore multiple aspects of a given topic and have more opportunities for hands-on experiences with concepts. These spaces are allocated for both teachers and scholars to experiment, explore, take risks, make mistakes and try again. A "Low-stake" environment also means that scholars of varying abilities can participate in informal STEM programs without the anxiety that comes from assessment. CSA also affirms that this type of learning will enable deeper scholar engagement and creativity with the learning materials (Volmert, Baran, Kendall-Taylor, & O'Neil (2013).

Finally, CSA is offering smaller class sizes. Research shows a strong correlation to small classroom size, small schools and scholar achievement. Research shows positive gains in Mathematics, English, Science, and History when scholars are positively engaged in smaller setting. In addition, attending a small school leads to a substantial increase in likelihood of college enrollment. Scholars are also less likely to require remediation in reading and writing when at college and scholars are more engaged (Abdulkadiroglu, A.; Hu, W.; Pathak, P. A. (2013) Small High Schools and Student Achievement: Lottery-Based Evidence from New York City. The National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper No. 19576. <http://economics.mit.edu/files/9158> accessed on 3/3/2015.

7. Describe the relationships that have been established to generate support for the school. How have you assessed demand for the school? Briefly describe these activities and summarize their results.

CSA has conducted an inquiry survey with families within the region as it pertains to their interest in sending their children to a STEM charter. Suggestions and recommendations for ways of improving the education within the district and the county were noted. In addition, we have visited local community organizations and received their feedback on the proposed charter school.

Inquiry was ascertained through various channels including petitions, surveys (Nextdoor App, [www.clarascienceacademy.com](http://www.clarascienceacademy.com) which are still ongoing), office of charter school data, informal conversations, and data from other studies done in Charlotte. The information from informal conversations, homeowners' associations, churches, other religious institutions and residential input from residence in the region

Finally, CSA has and will continue to use many instruments and media to reach



the families including, meetings with several community leaders face-to-face or by phone; web page; radio, and newspaper interviews; face-to-face and online public surveys; visits to faith base organizations and facilities such as churches, mosque, etc. CSA will schedule several ongoing meetings (morning and afternoon sessions) at the proposed site publicly announced on CSA's website. Support letters are being gathered (and are attached) from community and business leaders.

Attach Appendix A: Evidence of Community/Parent Support. Provide evidence that demonstrates parents and guardians have committed to enrolling their children in your school. 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).

## 1.2 Purposes of the Proposed Charter School

The Six Legislative Purposes of a Charter School are:

1. Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunities to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
  2. Hold schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.
  3. Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public-school system.
  4. Improving student learning.
  5. Increasing learning opportunities for all students, with a special emphasis on at-risk or gifted students.
  6. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
1. In one page or less, describe how the proposed charter school will achieve one or more of the six legislative purposes, as specifically addressed in the NC charter school statute GS 115C-218, and the proposed school's operations.

CSA will meet all six legislative purposes of a charter school per GS 115C- 238.29A. One of the legislative purpose CSA will achieve is creating opportunities for new professionals. To achieve this purpose Clara Science Academy plan on focusing intensely on professional development for teachers which will be aligned to the ISTE standards for educators.

Professional development decisions involve and not limited to the following: Targeting professional development resources toward gaps in STEM pedagogical knowledge; Providing continuous training on STEM and Literacy curricula and methods; Coaching and modelling on specific STEM instructional practices; Guiding individuals in building needed STEM knowledge and capacities; Establishing partnerships with agencies such Amplify and

Dulany Consulting, Inc., CSA will provide STEM-based professional development workshops and training for all teachers and administrators; Teacher Institute-comprehensive, collaborative and structured; Summer Institute; Extended learning through certificate and college programs.

CSA is committed to a personalized professional growth plan for its school personnel (teachers, administrators, and staff) providing time and opportunities for ongoing training and development. Teachers will focus heavily in core competencies in instructional strategies and lesson design in the areas of mathematics, science, and technology, classroom management, and data analysis. CSA will facilitate collaboration by adopting an extensive, structured, and continuous professional learning community promoting both individual and collaborative learning opportunities. The program will include continuous departmental and grade level meeting whereby teachers are actively reflecting and translating research into best practices and contributing to the overall success of CSA. Teachers will be required to integrate STEM into daily lesson planning and regular reviews of lesson plans will be completed to ensure STEM curriculum integration is taking place as intended.

### 1.3 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.

CSA will set specific measurable scholar achievement goals with the North Carolina State Testing (NC Accountability model), along with the ISTE benchmarks and Amplify mCLASS DIBELS (Reading, Math and Literacy) assessment. Monthly and/or quarterly data will be collected and tracked by teachers and annual progress towards these goals will be monitored by the school's leadership team, who will, in turn, keep parents and the board abreast of progress. Monthly and Quarterly assessments in ELA and Math will serve as ongoing barometers for teaching staff and board members.

In the initial year of CSA's charter, a baseline achievement level will be established in according to the district results. For each consecutive year, CSA will improve its results by an additional 5 percentile points compared to the district's results in that year and up to fifteen percentile points difference after four years and beyond. CSA will be in good standing under the NCDPI Accountability System after its third year.

**ACADEMIC GOAL:** To increase the percentage of student proficiency in reading, math and science. Academically all scholars at CSA will become proficient readers and will make strong yearly progress towards mastery of English-language reading skills.

Goal A: In year one 60% of scholars will be proficient. Proficiency for our K/1st/2nd Graders will be measured through the mClass Assessment in Reading, Math, and Literacy.



Goal B: In year two 65% of scholars will be proficient. Proficiency for K/1st/2nd/3rd Graders will be measured through mClass Assessment in Reading, Math, and Literacy.

Goal C: In year three 70% of scholars will be proficient. Proficiency for our K/1st/2nd Graders will be measured through mClass Assessment in Reading, Math, and Literacy Testing assessments. The proficiency for 3rd Graders will be measured by the NC State EOGs.

Goal D: Year four 70% of scholars will be proficient. Proficiency for K-2nd Graders will be measured on will be measured through the mClass Reading, Math, and Literacy Testing assessments; 3rd/4th Graders will be measured on NC State EOGs.

Goal E: Year five 80% of scholars will be proficient. K-2nd Graders will be measured will be measured through the mClass Reading, Math, and Literacy Testing assessments; 3rd-5th Graders will be measured on NC State EOGs.

Goal 6: Ultimately in (5 years) CSA will meet or exceed the state 5% higher than the local averages to eventually be at 90% proficiency and to remain at a 90% proficiency. Reading, math, and science will be 10% higher than the local average.

Measures: Scholars who attend CSA for a full year, not including scholars with special education needs, will read at emergent reader/writer or beginning reader/writer level by the end of kindergarten. Scholars will demonstrate their reading abilities to the satisfaction in the mClass Reading, Math and Literacy testing assessments include skills-based test items. All testing will be align with the state.

**FINANCE GOAL:** To establish and maintain a cash reserve program to help guard against temporary cash flow shortages in a safe, cost-effective way by reviewing the school surplus and reviewing our financial goals at the monthly board meetings.

**GOVERNANCE GOAL:** CSA board members will ensure representation at each PAC meeting and 50% of school events during the academic school year, with 100% board engagement. CSA board will receive monthly summaries which provide relevant and detailed sub-reports informing them of the percentage of scholars at proficiency. They will also receive monthly financial reports on the school operation.

**ENROLLMENT & RETENTION GOAL:** To meet and retain target enrollment and retention by 90%. This will be assessed monthly through the attendance report. Indicators will be free and reduced- price eligibility scholars, disability scholars, and scholars with limited English proficiency.

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

CSA governing board will know that the proposed public charter school is working through the following metrics:

#1 Communication of goals and data assessments:

- a. CSA staff will have weekly grade level meetings at a specific time and date in which scholars academic and social needs will be discuss and plan. Each scholar within the grade level will be discussed, issues will be addressed, and best practices among the staff members will be shared. Plans resulting from these meetings will include tutoring, classroom management, home visits, parent calls, and working in collaboration.
- b. Once a month and immediately following the DIBELS assessments, a data meeting will be held with grade level math/science and ELA teachers. Scholars at risk will be given special attention. In these data meetings, individual scholar progress will be monitored, and intervention plans will be reviewed and updated. In addition, the teachers will discuss the scholars who show no progress with referrals for RTI. Intervention student groups will be reorganized frequently based on the data and discussions.
- c. The school leader will hold weekly grade chair meetings with the administrative team. During these meetings, each grade level team will discuss plans, issues, and best practices.
- d. CSA will create a triad of scholar-teacher-parent through weekly teacher contacts to parents and home visits, both of which are mandated contractually and monitored weekly in grade chair meetings. Communications from these parent-teacher-student interactions will be communicated weekly to grade level teachers and administrators through grade level and grade chair meetings.
- e. The CSA board members along with Head of School and assistant will meet weekly to discuss academic, financial, and operational issues, and plan for future. These meetings on a monthly schedule. Throughout all these meetings, school leaders communicate with all staff effectively and receive feedback continuously. In addition, schools monthly mCLASS assessment results, quarterly benchmark assessment results, and annual EOGs results, and monthly financial dashboard and financial statement summaries will be shared at board meetings with board members and the public.
- f. School leaders will receive feedback on a weekly basis through their meetings with scholars, staff, and parents and through annual staff and parent surveys. All the feedback will be discussed and considered for further action, if needed, at the appropriate meetings.

#2 Performance Oversight:

- c. CSA board will practice active oversight of the charter school management, fiscal operations, and progress toward academic and other school goals. Every month

- key academic, cultural, operational, and financial data will be presented to the board and public.
- d. Academic reports will include the monthly DIBELS test data, quarterly benchmark data, and annually EOG assessments.
  - e. The administrative report will summarize the activities and events for the month to reflect on how the culture is emerging within the school buildings.
  - f. Enrollment report will include enrollment numbers, overall school demographics, free and reduced lunch rate, the total number of the scholars on the waiting list, the total number of scholars with disabilities and ELLs, and change in staffing.
  - g. The financial report will include reliance ratio, self-sufficiency ratio, a comparison of payroll and fringe benefit vs. program cost, cost per student, cost per sq. ft. for facilities, current ratio, quick ratio, debt ratio and months of cash, major revenue, expense, receivable and payable updates, budget vs. actual income statement, cash flow statement and a balance sheet.
  - h. Special reports will be provided to the board from different staff members, for example, the social worker, counselor, etc.

## Section 2 Education Plan

### 2.1 Instructional Program

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

The overall instructional program for a population under-represented in the STEM field and with a demographic heavily saturated with failing schools is a Project/Competency Based learning model. CSA's school model relies on a curriculum that particularly focuses on mathematics and science. CSA acknowledges that in giving future scholars access to a STEM curriculum CSA is playing an important role in developing literate scholars who would one day become successful productive citizens. The CSA's model program is specifically designed to give the undiscovered scholars access to a STEM curriculum which not only prepares scholars to graduate and complete a two or four-year college program, but that scholars would also embrace the STEM field.

CSA recognizes its teachers as learning facilitators whereby teachers must transition from a traditional delivery approach toward coaching, mentoring and facilitating student learning. As part of the STEM-based curriculum, CSA encourages its scholars to be modern 21st-century learners enabling them to be creative, collaborative, communicative, and critical thinkers. It is not enough for them to master the "Three Rs" (reading, writing, and arithmetic) if they are going to be successful competing in this global society. They must become proficient communicators, creators, critical thinkers,



and collaborators (the "Four Cs"). Scholars must also master additional subject areas, such as foreign languages, the arts, geography, science, and social studies. CSA professional (teachers) must compliment all of those subjects with the "Four Cs" in preparation of our scholars for citizenship and the global workforce ([www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)). Teaching critical thinking and problem solving effectively in the classroom is also vital for scholars and learning critical thinking which will lead young scholars into developing other skills, such as a higher level of concentration, more in-depth analytical abilities, and improved thought processing.

The overall curriculum models and proposals to be utilized by CSA is the Amplify Core Knowledge Curriculum which includes the Amplify CKLA, Amplify ELS and Amplify Science ([www.amplify.com](http://www.amplify.com)). The Amplify Curriculum has received all green ratings and near-perfect scores across K-5 literacy, 6-8 ELA and 6-8 Science. Amplify core curriculum programs are backed by proven foundational research, expert authorship, extensive field testing and has an all-green rating according to EdReports. Other supplementary curricula CSA will utilize is the Eureka curriculum which bases mathematics instructions in scientific inquiry and investigation (<https://greatminds.org/math>). PLTW Launch (PreK-5) PLTW Launch addresses Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core State Standards for Math and English Language Arts, and other national and state standards (<https://www.pltw.org/our-programs/pltw-launch-curriculum>).

Connecting the STEM curricula to literacy, CSA scholars will continue to be proficient in the "Four C's by becoming great communicators, excellent creators, critical thinkers and collaborators through the Amplify Reading (AR) program. The AR curriculum is an adaptive supplemental reading program that will put scholars at the center of their reading and on a path to become excellent readers. AS CSA scholars are introduced to a book, they are also assigned to a reading companion that grow alongside scholar as he or she learns to read. With this program, scholars get to practice segmenting words into the starting and ending sounds. It is our goal that our scholars will grow their reading accuracy and increase their fluency while they continue to practice and build on key skills. As scholars go through the program, they will also build on their comprehension skills needed to become confident readers. The program explores skills such as decoding, reading comprehension (engagement, instruction and practice) and close reading. Meanwhile teachers will receive all data to assess and follow their scholars on their individual growth and development.

The National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM) and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) recognize the importance of addressing STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) in PK12 education and affirm the essential role of a strong foundation in mathematics as the center of any STEM education program. To do so, CSA teachers must "connect and extend mathematics and science and incorporate engineering and technology to address relevant problems and

tasks arising from life in the 21st century. Teachers will do so integrating and exploring topics such as robotics, communication, urban transportation, health, space exploration, environmental issues, or disease spread and prevention which offer fertile ground for scholar explorations in STEM learning. Scholars will use mathematics or science to model problems from the list above as they develop creative approaches and solutions ([www.nctm.org/Standards-and-Positions](http://www.nctm.org/Standards-and-Positions)).

The teaching staff is evaluated according to the ISTE benchmarks for educators and the use of technology will not be haphazard; instead, guided by a specific purpose behind technology-based lessons. This will enable our scholars to succeed digitally according to the ISTE standards which are aligned with the 21st-century learning objectives set forth by the National Education Association ([www.iste.org/standards/for-educators](http://www.iste.org/standards/for-educators)).

### Curriculum and Instructional Design

2. 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.

Both teachers and scholars will be exposed to a learning environment consisting of small class sizes of 18-20 scholars per classroom; this allows teachers to provide maximum support within all facets of learning. CSA Scholars will be able to take advantage of the flexible (informal) learning space, all classrooms equipped with manipulatives and materials appropriate to the lessons. Within CSA's flex classrooms, teachers will be able to design a collaborative learning space flexible for both the teacher and the scholars. Flexibility includes classroom seating, flexible bookshelves, individual workspaces as well as large round and flexible tables, etc. Seating offerings such as couches, chairs, canoes, even the floor, whether it is lying on the floor, sitting or standing, etc., scholars will have a choice in selecting the kind of learning spaces that works best for them. These low-stakes, informal environments will enhance learning and, coupled with hands-on activities, enabling a deeper engagement with the material (Volmert, A., Baran, M., Kendall-Taylor, N., & O'Neil, M. (2013). It also enables students to work collectively, communicate, be creative, and engage in critical thinking - The 4C's (edutopia.org; nea.org).

Additionally, the areas will allow for both group settings and individualized settings with Teachers having the option of utilizing large group space (the rug) during times of whole-class instruction and reading, and in times when scholars are viewing the Smart-board and may not need to be at desks. Being a flexible classroom means every area of the classroom will be a learning space. As supported by Minero (2017), "a bookshelf becomes a standing workstation, a beanbag transforms into a reading corner, and whiteboard paint turns any surface into a writing opportunity. These classrooms allow scholars to choose, or to create the spaces they need to succeed and helping them understand themselves better as learners while building 21st-century skills like collaboration, communication, and creativity" (p. 1).



Scholars will have the option to participate in the after-care program or the choice of participating in one of the following proposed clubs, the Math Club, Robotics club, Lego club, Tutoring, etc. Those who do not wish to participate will be dismissed for departure. Regular classes will be from 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Parents also can take advantage of our early drop off at 7:30 a.m. and late pickup at 5:30 p.m.

Each grade level will be assigned a Grade Chairperson who will work closely with the principle. Scholars daily schedule include 100 minutes of daily reading instruction, 50 minutes to guided reading, and 50 minutes of writing block daily along with 100 minutes of daily math and science. Since the foundation of student achievement is reading, to increase the quality and the consistency, the teaching professionals will be provided classroom instruction with systematic and explicit initial instructions that will help in the delivery of differentiated instruction for individual and small groups. For example, in the reading classes, small groups would be differentiated by:

- A. Frequency of meeting in small groups (3x/week, 5x/week)
- B. Size of the instructional group (3, 6, 8, scholars)
- C. Focus of instruction (phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension)
- D. The format of the lesson (guided reading vs. skills-focused)

The overarching goal is to provide engaging individualized instruction and practice in the skills and strategies that will have the most impact on literacy, while making it explicit to scholars that the skills they are practicing are things that good readers do while they are reading. As repetition with variety is an essential part of effective literacy instruction (e.g., Schuele & Boudreau, 2008), after a brief introduction to each activity, scholars will be given repeated opportunities to practice these skills with varied stimuli. Scholars will receive immediate feedback for their responses and are given more explicit instruction in areas that are challenging.

3. Identify how this curriculum aligns with the proposed charter school's mission, targeted student population, and North Carolina Accountability Model. Provide evidence that the chosen curriculum has been successful with the target student population, how the plan will drive academic improvement for all students, and how it has been successful in closing achievement gaps.

### **Curriculum Alignment**

In preparation for STEM careers and college readiness, both the state and national standards are used to compare scholars' academic success, progress, and growth in understanding scholars' success. Thus, it is significantly important for CSA's to align its' curriculum with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSOS) to identify progressive skills and key concepts across all grade levels. For example, the end of grade assessments in English Language Arts and Math which are taken in grades 3rd-8th are all

aligned to the Common Core State Standards. To achieve this, CSA will utilize the Amplify curriculum evaluation tools.

The curriculum to be implemented at CSA will concentrate on delivering a high-quality STEM-based education (science, technology, engineering, and math) with strong emphasis on literacy to under-served communities which will increase college and career readiness for all the young scholars and prepare them for success. As mentioned, prior, many of the scholars are coming from a target population of low socio-economic and diverse backgrounds however the scholars have limited access to STEM choice schools. The average adjusted gross income is \$38, 790, well below the state average. Unemployment is 4.29% lower than the current state average of 5.0%. The race and ethnic makeup consist of 24.81% Caucasians, 49.41% African Americans, 19.59% Hispanics; 0.25% are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians make up 2.37%, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders account for 0.44% while other race of two or more races account for 3.14%.

The Amplify Core Knowledge Curriculum mClass Assessment is a gold standard assessment and instructional program that is suited for early literacy and will help every scholar learn to read. The Reading, Math, and Literacy Testing Assessments are also designed to help teachers assess scholars quickly, accurately, and efficiently. It provides teachers with reliable and valid data instantly so that they can target instruction, monitor progress, provide scholars with the most, materials, and intervene with at-risk students. CSA will be able to use real-time data to make decisions about curriculum, assessments, and instruction at the classroom, school and district levels. It will measure student achievement in the areas: Early Literacy Enterprise which assesses early literacy and early numeracy skills, Reading skills (grades k-12), Math skills.

Amplify Science, the Lawrence Hall pedagogy is based on the latest research on best practices for teaching and learning science. The approach to instruction focuses on four key components:

- A. ***The emphasis on coherence*** – that is a curriculum that is coherent will supports learners over time by building and linking ideas to develop an integrated understanding (Fortus & Krajcik, 2012; National Research Council, 2000). The units are designed around what is known as a “Progress Build” – the consideration of scholar knowledge. The knowledge scholars are likely to have at the beginning of a sequence instruction and how the learning experience in the unit will position students for success with future learning opportunities. It is a learning progression of all scholars. Amplify Science also supports consistent and coherent approach to instruction.
- B. ***Real-world problems and roles*** – The units introduce scholars to a realistic problem that they must solve by developing the ability to explain a surprising or mysterious phenomenon. The focus is on understanding the phenomena rather than on teaching a specific topic because in doing so it provides structure and

context to scholar investigations. Scholars also take on the role of a specific type of science or engineering professional, such as a food scientist or structural engineer, in order to solve problems facing the real world today. Such authentic learning experiences have been widely demonstrated to increase cognitive engagement in science learning (Blumenfeld, Kempler, & Krajcik, 2006; Potvin & Hasni, 2014).

- C. **Expanding investigation opportunities through digital enhancements.** Amplify Science is a digitally enhanced curriculum. Scholars interact with each other, with physical materials, and with text, and technology is used as a tool to strategically enhance learning in ways that take advantage of the unique affordances of technology. Each core unit in grades 4–8 includes a custom-designed digital simulation (“sim”). Grades 2–3 include use of webcams and videos, and simple apps (called practice tools) that help scholars analyze data, visualize phenomena, and share their thinking. Amplify Science sims are highly interactive microworlds that allow multiple levels of investigation and exploration that are carefully aligned with each unit’s Progress Build.
- D. **Do, Talk, Read, Write, visualize approach** is proven to be effective. Do - Learners engage with scientific phenomena by conducting scholar-centered investigations. Talk - Scholars engage in collaborative discussions and scientific argumentation. Read - Scholars engage in reading science text as an act of inquiry. Write - Having an authentic purpose for writing both motivates scholars’ interest in writing and drives their need for evidence to be convincing. In Amplify Science, students write to share what they have learned and also learn through writing (Yore, Bisanz, & Hand, 2003) as they apply new evidence to clarify and strengthen their written arguments. Amplify Science supports students in learning and using science academic language while they also learn to write like scientists, producing clear, logical, and evidence-based arguments and explanations. Visualize Approach - In addition to hands-on activities, reading, and writing, students study a given phenomenon through carefully illustrated science texts, vivid digital simulations where they can manipulate variables, hands-on activities, and videos, as well as through modeling tools that allow them to visually represent their thinking.

Mathematics, once a quarter, teachers will also use the Amplify Assessment System where they can create Math and Science quizzes and unit exams online that have questions similar to those in the EOGs. Since all students will eventually take their state exams on the computer, these Internet-based assessments will enable scholar to familiarize themselves with the computer tools and allow them to improve scholars’ technological skills.

Social Studies, CSA teachers will assess students on an ongoing basis using teacher observations and conference notes, rubrics from projects and assignments, and CSA-created performance tasks and benchmark assessments



Language Acquisition (Specials) - The Arabic, Chinese, or Spanish teachers will create assessments using the PALS rubrics for evaluating the success of the program using the National Standards for Learning Languages as a guide. Teachers will administer a variety of conversational evaluations, written tasks and presentation activities to measure all scholars oral, reading and written fluency in the second language.

### **Proven Evidence**

The Amplify Curriculum according to three third-party gold standard studies (Cervetti, Barber, Dorph, Pearson, & Goldschmidt, 2012; Duesbury, Werblow, & Twyman, 2011; Wang & Herman, 2005), the evidence shows that scholar who learn through the Do, Talk, Read, Write approach achieved more. Also, independent research groups, including The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing at UCLA, compared students learning science through the Do, Talk, Read, Write approach to whatever curriculum was currently being used. Students using our Do, Talk, Read, Write approach benefited in a variety of ways: 1. Scholars achieved more in both science and literacy. Students engaging with the Do, Talk, Read, Write approach to learning science outperformed their peers on measures of both science and literacy: measures of science conceptual knowledge and science vocabulary. (Cervetti et al, 2012; Duesbury, Werblow, & Twyman, 2011; Wang and Herman, 2005). 2 Scholar writing and reading comprehension improved. Scholars who used this approach also performed equivalently to or higher than control scholars on measures of science reading comprehension and science writing—even though teachers reported spending less time teaching their usual literacy program (Cervetti et al, 2012). Compared with that of their peers, scholars’ writing included more use of evidence, more science vocabulary, more accurate use of science concepts, and arguments with stronger introductions and conclusions. 3 English Language Learners excelled. English Language Learners (ELLs) significantly outperformed other ELLs in reading comprehension, science vocabulary, and science content knowledge (Duesbury, Werblow, & Twyman, 2011).

Amplify Science is a K–8 science curriculum designed to meet 100% of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). It a comprehensive curriculum complete with detailed lesson plans, hands-on activities and materials, scientific texts, robust digital simulations, physical and digital models; providing opportunities for engaging scholars discussions, media, embedded formative and summative assessments, and a variety of effective teacher supports and options for professional development. Through investigations of scientific phenomena and real-world problems, CSA scholars will learn to think, read, write, and argue like real scientists and engineers, thereby gaining a better understanding of the natural and designed worlds. This science curriculum is proven to be successful following a field-testing in 2013–2016 with more than 400 teachers and 34,000 students around the country in a variety of geographic and



demographic settings proven its effectiveness with significant student growth in first grade and middle school classrooms.

### **Drive for Improvement**

CSA knows that science and math skills are highly valued as well as the language skills when competing globally; therefore, the curriculum along with instructional practices will offer students personalized instruction with project-based learning, intensive foreign language exposure to Spanish, or Arabic during specials, and the approach to learning all content areas in the context of real-world applications. The individualized and engaging nature of these approaches includes hands-on, inquiry-driven, technology-enabled, real-world activities is appropriate and effective teaching strategies for students at every level. Additionally, several board members have numerous years of experiences teaching Spanish and Arabic which will be of great benefit to the scholars and giving them close-up encounters with adults within the profession.

CSA's selected curriculum and instructional methods have proven to be an effective education model that has resulted in positive outcomes. The STEM learning approach along with the use of the curriculum will supports critical thinking, civic engagement, and economic benefits for both individuals and society.

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.

CSA will align teaching expectation according to the state and the National Education Association in addition with several instructional strategies design for teaching STEM. For example, with the Project and Competency Based learning model, CSA recognizes it teachers as learning facilitators whereby teachers must transition from a traditional delivery approach toward coaching, mentoring and facilitating young scholars learning. CSA's teachers are active designers of the curriculum whereby they show and encourage scholars to assume responsibility for their knowledge and move from teacher-centered to scholar-centered-education. Therefore, CSA teachers are expected to utilize a variety of instructional strategies. The K-2 STEM curriculums focuses specifically on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math-based strategies or instructional methods. For example, the technique of the 5 E's, hands-on approach, growth mindset, flexible learning, etc. The Framework Institute and other organizations support and specify the idea that STEM education must begin early in a scholar's academic career to be genuinely successful (Vohlmer 15).

Additionally, CSA teachers will be guided in their mastery of the following strategies and methods: Project-Based Curriculum Planning - CSA teachers, must build their expertise in the development and facilitation of project-based learning modules. Project-based

learning is encouraged as a way that both teachers and scholars can access a wide array of learning styles and multiple-intelligence. Teachers will function as coaches with the confidence that scholars understand content not only through the lecture but also through inspiration, experimentation, and practice. Projects may cross content areas, allowing teachers to work together to design assignments that have relevance to real-world problems and to collaborate to revise and improve the curriculum. The learning that occurs outside the school walls is also valued through this assessment method, allowing scholars to link the relevance of school-based education with the rest of their lives.

Peer coaching groups are encouraged, as a way for scholars can get supportive feedback as they grow towards greater skill development. Teacher-scholar dialogue, either one-on-one or in small groups, has emerged as the aspect of the competency-based assessment method most valued by both teachers and scholars. The richness of an interactive discussion about the student's specific demonstrations of skill development work to guide the young scholar toward proficiency in all areas. These dialogues are also learning experiences in themselves, teaching scholars to reflect on their work and actions, to evaluate their performance, to use feedback constructively as an improvement tool, to value direction from caring adults, and to recognize that accomplishment is not a one-time test, but a journey, over time, of incremental steps supporting college and career readiness.

Thus, CSA Teacher training supports a strong background in the facilitation of content, differentiated learning and culturally responsive. Therefore, in preparation, the teaching professional development will focus on techniques for the delivery of the Amplify Core Curriculum (Amplify CKLA, Amplify ELA and Amplify Science) in a way that elicits both excitement and a sense of ownership on the part of CSAs scholars and their families. This development plan calls for a three-year, in-depth development series that will take teachers from an understanding of the tenets of the Core Knowledge Sequence to true collaborators and creators of content-rich units. Teachers will also learn to become facilitators of learning, guiding students to discover truths through kinesthetic, audio and visual learning.

CSA believes these strategies will result in increased academic achievement for the target population. The Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) is for Pre-K-5. It is a research base core curriculum that combines rich, diverse, content knowledge in history, science, literature and the arts in an intention sequence with explicit, systematic foundational skills instruction that will improve comprehension.

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.

#### **Scholars Readiness to Transition**

CSA board has a high standard and expectation for its scholars. With the board members experiences as educators, the quality of instructional program, and the wide range of learning experiences being offer, the scholars will succeed in meeting high criteria for success. The ongoing use of small group instruction and technology-enhanced instruction are designed to take scholars from wherever they are to the grade level expectation at a minimum. Therefore, CSA will adopt in its policy that the school's requirements for promotion to be evaluated by each grade level teacher along with the schools' director reflecting a culture of rigor and high achievement opportunities for all. These requirements will be communicated to parents and scholars throughout the academic year. Additionally, the performance standard for CSA is that 80% of all scholars will complete their assigned coursework each year, and 80% of all students will show at least one year's academic growth at the end of the 5th year of school opening. In addition to CSA's teachers, a major component to success is CSA's parental awareness and involvement; therefore, CSA will utilize formative and summative assessment data to engage parents in conversations with their scholars and their social network regarding their strengths and limitations, as well as opportunities and specific concepts needed to master for promotion.

The instructional program is also designed to ensure that scholars of all different learning capacities are accommodated. CSA primary purpose of the proposed school is to increase learning opportunities for all scholars. The educational program, instructional plan, and promotion requirements are specifically designed to transition each scholar to the next grade successfully. The comprehensive curriculum plan will not only prepare scholars academically through the use of a rigorous and relevant curriculum, but it will also ensure that scholars have appropriate personal and social skills.

CSA will follow the North Carolina Accountability Model and School Grading System to measure the outcome for academic performance based on the following indicators:

- End-of-Grade (EOG) exam performance
- End-of-Course (EOC) exam performance
- Educator Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) growth ratings
- ACT test performance
- Advanced Placement (AP) course enrollment
- AP exam performance
- Four-year cohort graduation rates
- Attainment of graduation endorsements.

6. Describe in a brief narrative below on how the yearly academic calendar coincides with the tenets of the proposed mission and education plan.



According to the research, effective use of instructional shows a correlation to great improvement in both school and scholars' performance. Therefore, CSA goal is to provide 100 hours more instruction than a traditional schedule. North Carolina requires a minimum for 185 days or 1,025 hours of instruction. With the additional 100 hours scholars will receive a total of 1,125 hours of instructions with the primarily focus of meeting the needs of high poverty scholars. Scholars from low-income families, CSA's board knows and is aware that they do not generally get the same kind of academic stimulation during school year and on breaks than their more affluent peers receive. Subsequently, when on breaks (summer) they often return to school with significant summer loss which can change the scholar educational trajectory. Hence CSA's board believes that there will be positive gains with the extra hours in class (Jensen (2009), *Teaching with Poverty in Mind*; Gunnar, Frenn, Wewerka, & Van Ryzin, 2009; Miller, Seifer, Stroud, Sheinkopf, & Dickstein, 2006).

CSA will operate on an eight-hour school day rather than the seven (7) hour school day with which most schools operate allowing CSA young scholars additional time for instructional practices, fieldwork, and meetings with our community partners, which will ultimately improve challenge-based coursework and academic success. This extra time also enables the time needed to adequately implement intervention programs which are critical components in the development of a positive school culture. By increasing the academic calendar year to 195 days, beginning early August, and ending late June, CSA can provide its teachers with additional time and resources needed to prepare for successful.

The teaching staff will be allocated one day on the last school day of each month for teacher development, and planning (10 days total), a half (1/2) day each quarter for parent-teacher-scholar conferences, and additional professional development and planning days before the school year begins and after it ends (11 workdays). The last day of each quarter will be designated as a showcase day where scholars can share their module work with their peers, parents and community partners. This will enable scholars to take ownership of their work and motivates them to increase their learning potential. The "public" nature of these presentations, with the inclusion of a "real world" audience creates a genuinely high stakes accountability model, for CSA scholars, teachers, and the school.

7. Describe the structure of the school day and week. Include the number of instructional hours/minutes in a day for core subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Note the length of the school day, including start and dismissal times. Explain why the school's daily and weekly schedule will be optimal for student learning.



Both teachers and scholars will be exposed to a learning environment consisting of small class sizes of 18-20 scholars per classroom; this allows teachers to provide maximum support within all facets of learning. CSA Scholars will be able to take advantage of the flexible (informal) learning space, all classrooms equipped with manipulatives and materials appropriate to the lessons. Within CSA's flex classrooms, teachers will be able to design a collaborative learning space flexible for both the teacher and the scholars. Flexibility includes classroom seating, flexible bookshelves, individual workspaces as well as large round and flexible tables, etc. Seating offerings such as couches, chairs, canoes, even the floor, whether it is lying on the floor, sitting or standing, etc., scholars will have a choice in selecting the kind of learning spaces that works best for them. These low-stakes, informal environments will enhance learning and, coupled with hands-on activities, enabling a deeper engagement with the material (Volmert, A., Baran, M., Kendall-Taylor, N., & O'Neil, M. (2013). It also enables students to work collectively, communicate, be creative, and engage in critical thinking - The 4C's (edutopia.org; nea.org).

Additionally, the areas will allow for both group settings and individualized settings with Teachers having the option of utilizing large group space (the rug) during times of whole-class instruction and reading, and in times when scholars are viewing the Smart-board and may not need to be at desks. Being a flexible classroom means every area of the classroom will be a learning space. As supported by Minero (2017), "a bookshelf becomes a standing workstation, a beanbag transforms into a reading corner, and whiteboard paint turns any surface into a writing opportunity. These classrooms allow students to choose, or to create the spaces they need to succeed and helping them understand themselves better as learners while building 21st-century skills like collaboration, communication, and creativity" (p. 1).

CSA instructional approach also focuses on a curriculum driven by benchmark and end of year assessments that align with the North Carolina Common Core Learning Standards, and the Competency-Based Learning Model; whereby, scholars are engaged in daily activities both inside and outside of the classroom. Along with a combination of hands-on activities, scholars will participate in field experience throughout the Mecklenburg County, meetings with field experts, and utilize one-to-one technology as tools for learning.

8. Describe a typical day for a teacher and a student in the school's first year of operation.

A typical day within the first year of operation for a CSA teacher and a scholar involves teachers utilizing a combination of instructional strategies in order to meet the challenging needs of all our scholars, educationally, emotionally, etc. Therefore, in providing access to a STEM education CSA must implement best practices in assessing

the needs of all scholars including learning style immediately. Best practices for teaching STEM based curriculum at CSA includes but not limited to extended learning time, hands-on learning, inquiry-based learning, as well as an early introduction to STEM concepts via project-based learning.

The day will begin at 7:30 AM with scholars arriving at CSA. Scholars upon arrival will have a choice breakfast or Mindful meditation including a one-on-one with the Teacher. Breakfast goes from 7:30 AM until 7:55 AM. After scholars have had the opportunity to eat breakfast, they will listen to the morning announcements. Following morning announcements, scholars will then start their academic day with English Language Arts (ELA).

The ELA block runs from 8:15 AM until 9:05 AM (50 minutes). Immediately following the ELA block, scholars will then shift to Writing. Writing and or social studies from 9:10 AM until 10:00 AM. Once scholars have finished, they will move onto Science (daily). Science takes place from 10:05 AM until 11:05 PM. At 11:05 - 12:15 PM, scholars will have Recess and lunch. Recess can either be indoors or outdoors, depending on the weather. Some of this time will also be allocated for teaching planning and Grade Chair meetings. Once scholars have cleaned up, it is then time for ELA Centers and Guided Reading from 12:20 PM until 1:10 PM. Math is held from 1:15 PM until 2:10 PM. The scholars then will have Specials (Physical Education, Music, Art, or Language Acquisition) from 2:15 PM to 3:10 PM. When scholars return from their special area class, they then begin their Math Centers. Math Centers run from 3:15 PM until 4:05 PM. Once scholars have completed cleaning up (Math Centers), they will then transition and prepare for brief mindful exercise followed up lots of TLC and departure preparation. Dismissal begins promptly at 4:05 p.m.

Scholars participating in the after-school program will have the choice of one of the following proposed clubs, the Math Club, Robotics club, Lego club, Tutoring, etc. Those who do not wish to participate will be dismissed at regular departure. The extended school day provides an additional one hour per day, which results in instructional time equal to about 23 school days in a year.

English instructions will be performed in a variety of ways primarily through the Amplify Core Knowledge Curriculum, as well as other instructional programs, reading and writing. Scholars, K-2 will be divided into small groups and rotated between guided reading, literacy lessons, and self-directed computer-based instructions. Scholars daily schedule include 100 minutes of daily reading instruction, 50 minutes to guided reading, and 50 minutes of writing block daily along with 100 minutes of daily math and science. Since the foundation of student achievement is reading, to increase the quality and the consistency, the teaching professionals will be provided classroom instruction with

systematic and explicit initial instructions that will help in the delivery of differentiated instruction for individual and small groups. For example, in the reading classes, small groups would be differentiated by:

- a. frequency of meeting in small groups (3x/week, 5x/week)
- b. size of the instructional group (3, 6, 8, scholars)
- c. focus of instruction (phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension)
- d. the format of the lesson (guided reading vs. skills-focused)

Teachers are expected to administer timely and valid assessments to identify scholars lagging behind and monitor progress. Additionally, Teachers must also provide intensive interventions for scholars who are lagging in development of critical reading skills. Yearly activities include but not limited to field trips, literacy night, STEM Night, STEM fairs, Cultural Day, etc.

#### High School Graduation and Postsecondary Readiness (High Schools Only)

9. Describe how the proposed charter school will meet the Future-Ready Core requirements. Provide details on how the students will earn credit hours, how grade-point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, and what elective courses will be offered.  
N/A
10. Explain how the graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college or other postsecondary opportunities (trade school, military service, or entering the workforce).  
N/A.
11. Explain what systems and structures the school will implement for students at risk of dropping out and/or not meeting the proposed graduation requirements.  
N/A

**Attach Appendix B: Curriculum Outline per Grade Span (for each grade span the school would ultimately serve).** One sample curriculum outline (in graph form) in the Appendices for one core subject (specific to the school's purpose) for each grade span the school would ultimately serve.

**Attach Appendix C: 9-12 Core Content Electives.** Provide a visual description of what courses (both 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.

**Attach Appendix D: Yearly Academic Calendar (minimum of 185 instructional days or 1,025 hours)**

**Attach Appendix E: Daily and Weekly Schedule** Provide a sample daily and weekly schedule for each grade band (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) the school ultimately plans to serve.

## 2.2 Special Populations and “At-Risk” Students

1. Explain how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students who are performing below grade level and monitor their progress. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports you will provide for these students.

CSA administrative staff will identify scholars who are at risk for academic failure and who are not successfully progressing toward grade promotion and or graduation immediately upon the completion of enrollment. Identification will occur as early as can reasonably be done and will be based on grades, observations, diagnostic and formative assessments, state assessments, and other factors, including reading on grade level, that impact scholar’s performance whereby teachers and administrators consider appropriate. Additionally, CSA board will implement policies that direct school improvement teams to develop plans to include successful transition between elementary and middle school years and between the middle school and high school years for scholars at risk, as defined by the State Board of Education (2001-424, s. 28.17(e); 2009-542, s. 1; 2010-162, s. 1; 2011-145, s. 7.13(ee); 2011-391, s. 14(a); 2012-77, s. 4; 2012-142, s. 7A.1(d); 2013-226, s. 2; 2015-46, s. 1.)

Likewise, keeping in line with the mission, and providing a positive, nurturing and learning environment for all scholars including a scholar who is "At-Risk," CSA will provide instructional support and opportunities for all its scholars utilizing the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). MTSS is a problem-solving school improvement framework of evidence-based practices in instruction, assessment, and curricula alignment that addresses all the needs of all scholars. With the MTSS CSA professionals will analyze the overall health of the educational system by examining the system, implementation, and outcome data sets. Also, CSA will utilize the MTSS for a rapid response in addressing group and individual scholar needs ensuring scholars are provided evidence based, appropriately targeted instruction for academic, behavior, and/or social emotional needs. CSA will implement solutions for problem solving a problem occurs within the school and district setting at various tiers. The intent of the problem-solving process is to resolve the problem, using the necessary resources, as early as possible for the school and individual scholar needs. Through the effective implementation of the MTSS framework, all economically disadvantaged and minority scholars will gain access to and learn content aligned with college-and career-ready standards.



A scholar is identified "at risk" when there is a lapse completing individual education based on factors such as poor school performance, poor attendance, behavioral difficulties, or economic or environmental disadvantages, and when the scholar has been referred to the school counselor. The counselor will work with the scholar and the family to revise the individualized Learning Plan that is specifically designed to provide appropriate interventions. These scholars will be scheduled for a Response to Intervention (RtI) period several times weekly where scholars receive individually targeted reading and math interventions. Scholars struggling with academics will also receive differentiated instruction, additional tutoring, and pull-out support. Scholars struggling with behavior or emotional issues will receive an adult mentor, small group peer support, and professional counseling. One of CSA board member is a certified school counselor and can provide additional support to scholars and families. Additional support may be provided during daily after-school "tutoring hours" and during the summer session.

The third level includes evidence-based intervention(s) of moderate intensity using asset-based instructional tools. To ensure sustained support, scholars will receive a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) based on locally determined assessments and teacher observation. Through collaborative efforts, multiple tiers of increasingly intense instruction/intervention services will be implemented to support scholar's academic proficiency. Scholars needing remediation or intensive instructional support will be matched to strategic and intensive instruction/interventions based on screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessments. To ensure scholars do not miss core subject instruction, interventions will occur during specific times of the academic day, possible extended school and if needed a Saturday Academy. Progress will be monitored through a consistent evaluation process (i.e., timed probes) at a minimum each month. If there is no progress after four weeks of intervention, intervention implementation will be evaluated for fidelity and intervention time will intensify.

All scholars will participate in multiple formal assessments to establish a baseline and personalized education plan. Performance, teaching and learning will be measured monthly and/or quarterly through data collected and tracked by multiple assessment instruments. Student performance will be documented and reviewed by teachers, and school administrators. Through the team partnerships with NCDPI (TMSS), teachers will master the processes of effectively collecting, analyzing and collaborating to make effective decisions for children. The school will develop a student support team comprised of our best classroom teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators to analyze brainstorm collectively.

2. Describe the extent to which one or more of the founding board members has experience working with special populations (students with disabilities, students with 504 Plans, ELs, students identified as gifted, and students at risk of dropping out). If no founding board members have experience working with special populations, describe the school's pre-opening plan to prepare for special populations.

Several members of CSA board have had experience or are currently working with special populations such as scholars with disabilities, scholars with 504 plans, ELs, scholars identified as gifted, and student at risk of dropping out. For example, Varsty Muhammad has served in the capacity of a counselor in all levels (elementary, middle, high and higher education). Duties not limited to working directly with the EC coordinator and has chaired many of the meetings with parents to ensure that scholars received the appropriate and right services based on need. Dr. Mohammad Alghorani, Dr. Leroy Wray, and Tariq Raheem all have taught in a classroom setting and served in administrative roles ranging from grades K-12 and higher education, working with disabilities scholars, 504 plans, ELs, etc., for many years.

3. Explain how the instructional plan and curriculum will meet the needs of English Learners (EL), including the following:
  - a. Methods for identifying EL students (and avoiding misidentification).
  - b. Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for EL students.
  - c. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of EL students, including exiting students from EL services.
  - d. Means for providing qualified staffing for EL students.

As stated above, Clara Science Academy will work to ensure that all young scholars demonstrate continued progress and growth by first:

- A. Identifying EL scholars in a timely manner through the utilization of the Home Language Survey (HLS) a questionnaire that will be given to parents or guardians at orientation, home visits, etc. This survey will help CSA to identify which scholars are potential ELs and who will require assessment of their English language proficiency (ELP) to help determine whether a scholar is eligible for language assistance services. Upon the acknowledgment by parents that English is an additional language in the home, or if they check yes to any of the determining questions on the Home Language Survey, then a referral of the scholar will be given to the EL liaison for testing. If a scholar has not been previously identified as EL, the WIDA Access Placement Test (WIDA-APT) will be administered. If a student's academic records show previous EL identification,

the EL liaison will proceed with preparing the adequate instructional plan based on proficiency level.

- B. After a scholar has been identified under The Individual's with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) CSA will employ specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for EL scholars as follows: CSA teachers will receive training in the EL Framework model which is an English language immersion program consisting of instruction through speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. EL students can be placed with fellow EL students or they can be placed with other EL students or within a mainstream classroom for which the instructional program has been outlined in an ILLP (Individualized Language Learning Plan).
  - C. CSA's plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of EL scholars, including exiting scholars from EL services involves establishing a success team to effectively implement EL programs. Such team include teachers who are qualified to provide EL services, core-content teachers who are highly qualified in their field as well as trained to support EL scholars, and trained administrators who will evaluate the teaching staff. EL Liaison will determine the appropriate means of instruction and modifications or accommodations for ELs based on previous academic records, EL placement test, parent input, scholar input, scholar observations, and other relevant data. We will ensure that EL scholars meet the same challenging English proficiency objectives and standards required of all other scholars. Teachers will individualize their lesson plans for the EL scholars. Teachers will also align their strategies with the available Core Knowledge EL lesson plans.
  - D. Means for providing qualified staffing for EL students.  
CSA will employ adequate teachers who are qualified to provide EL services at all grade levels. These teachers will have met state requirements and have mastered the skills necessary to effectively teach all EL scholars. Additionally, all other teachers without EL qualifications will obtain the requisite training, either through the SEA's training or other certification programs within the district.
4. Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of gifted students, including the following:
- a. Specific research-based 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 gifted students; and means for providing qualified staffing for gifted students.

All scholars within the jurisdiction of CSA are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and those that identified as Academically/Intellectually Gifted (AIG).



CSA gifted scholars will meet the NC AIG Program Standards under Article 9B (N. C. Gen. Stat. 115C 150.5 150.8) which defines AIG scholars are those who perform or show the potential to perform at substantially high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. In identifying and meeting AIG scholars needs CSA will ensure that scholar identification procedures for AIG are clear, equitable, and comprehensive and lead towards providing the appropriate educational services. CSA will ensure all identification, screening, parental involvement, and procedural safeguard requirements are followed in accordance with the North Carolina AIG Program Standards.

In addition to ensuring consistency implementation of screening, referral, and identification processes, CSAs screening procedure will employ best practices in equal opportunity for all scholars through the following guidelines:  
Multiple criteria for decision-making including informal assessment such as benchmark assessments, state assessments, end of course and end of grade assessments.  
\*Assessments that go beyond a narrowed conception of giftedness  
\*Reliable instruments/strategies for assessing giftedness  
\*Appropriate instruments to be used with underserved populations,  
\*Data which provide relevant information for instructional decision-making rather than labeling.

All data obtained will become part of the student's AIG differentiation program folder and will be used throughout the process to determine appropriate services. Screening procedures, and processes, as well as, a list of specific assessments used to determine aptitude and achievement will be included in the folder.

Scholars who have been identified and qualify for AIG will each have a differentiated educational plan written every educational phases which includes a statement of the present levels of educational performance of the child, a statement of goals, including measurable short-term instructional objectives, a statement of the specific services to be provided to the scholar, and appropriate objectives, criteria, and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining whether the objectives are being achieved.

CSA gifted curriculum objectives will focused on developing cognitive, learning, research and reference, and meta-cognitive skills at each grade level, using principles of differentiation, in one or more of the following content areas: mathematics, science, language arts, social studies, foreign language, fine arts and vocational/technical education which are aligned to the North Carolina AIG Program standards.

### 2.3 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 education teachers 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.

CSA is committed to providing scholars with disabilities (students with IEPs and 504 Plans) a Free and Appropriate Education in the least restrictive environment that will meet their emotional, social, physical, and academic needs. CSA will identify students who may be eligible for special education under the federal “Child Find”, the continuous process of public awareness, screening and assessment designed to locate, identify, and refer students with disabilities who are in need of special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Upon the enrollment process to CSA, CSA will utilize student application, Power School, CECAS and Every Child Accountability & Tracking System (ECATS) platform to search and identify students who may have previously been identified for special education under one of the 13 qualifying categories. ECATS is comprised of three integrated models which are Special Education (EC), Service Documentation (SD) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) modules. Scholars who have previously been found to be eligible for special education services or are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, upon enrollment at the charter school, all scholars' records will be reviewed by a school counselor and or EC Coordinator for previously diagnosed disabilities, eligibility under Section 504 and/or Individual Education Plans (<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/ecats/>).

In house the register will notify the EC Coordinator/504 Representative of scholars new to the building by email. EC Coordinator/504 Representative will be responsible for reviewing cum folders to identify EC records/504 Plans of each newly enrolled scholar. If suspected that a scholar has past or present EC services or 504 Plans, the EC Coordinator/504 Representative will contact all previous schools to request the scholar's EC/504 Records.

CSA Teachers, parents and staff will be provided with resources for identifying scholars with special needs at CSA through brochures, posters and letters found on the Public Schools of North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Project Child Find website. Under the leadership of an Exceptional Children's Coordinator, the education team, consisting of the parent of the scholar with a disability, teacher of the scholar, and the school counselor, the 504 coordinator or and an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation, will use a problem-solving approach and

progress monitoring when addressing academic, behavioral, and/or developmental concerns regarding scholar. Team members will document the data collected, monitor the results of scientifically research-based interventions and make data-based decisions. The school will utilize the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction forms to document the evaluation and IEP.

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. Include how the school will avoid misidentification of special education students.

Child Find is a continuous process to locate identify and evaluate scholars who may require early intervention, section 504 support or special education services. This is required by federal law. It is CSA responsibility comply with the federal Child Find requirements (34 CFR §300.125. Parents of scholars ages three to twenty-one years may suspect delays in the development of academic, speech-language, readiness, motor, social-behavior, and self-help skills.

Concern parents can provide a written request to be considered for EC evaluation. The IEP Team will convene to address parent concern and the initial “Dec.1” meeting. Team will review current data to determine if the scholar is struggling educationally at home and in the school settings. The team will discuss: (1) the reasons for the referral and include any test results, records, or reports upon which the referral is based; if any, (2) describe all attempts made to remediate the scholar’s performance prior to the referral, including any supplementary aids or support services provided for this purpose; if any, and (3) describe the extent of parental contact or involvement prior to the referral. If the data suggest that the scholar is struggling and not making progress, the IEP team will then determine that EC evaluation services are necessary. EC Coordinator will facilitate the evaluation process. Because it is a parental request the MTSS will run concurrently with the evaluation process. Upon completion of MTSS and EC evaluations the team within 90 days will reconvene to determine eligibility.

Regular education scholars who are struggling academically or showing persistent behavior deficits will be brought to the attention of the MTSS team. Based on the identified concerns strategies will be implemented to address problem areas. Should the problems persist, and a disability be suspected, the scholar will be referred to the CSA EC Department for an evaluation. EC Coordinator will facilitate the evaluation process. Upon completion of EC evaluation, the team within 90 days will reconvene to determine eligibility.

Referrals may be also made by any professional staff member of the charter school, by parent or guardian, by professional agency to whom parent has given permission, or by the scholar (if 18 years or older). Such referrals will be placed in writing stating the

following: (1) the reasons for the referral and include any test results, records, or reports upon which the referral is based; if any, (2) describe all attempts made to remediate the student's performance prior to the referral, including any supplementary aids or support services provided for this purpose; if any, and (3) describe the extent of parental contact or involvement prior to the referral. The request will be forwarded to the 504 Coordinator or the assigned Exceptional Children coordinator. When a scholar is identified, the next step will be to have a meeting with the parent to address the concern. CSA's Team will determine if an evaluation is needed. If an evaluation is conducted and the scholar is found to need services or is eligible then services will be provided based on the scholar's need.

3. Provide a plan detailing how the records of students with disabilities and 504 Accommodation plans will be properly managed, including the following:
  - a. Requesting Records from previous schools
  - b. Record Confidentiality (on site)
  - c. Record Compliance (on site)

**Proper Management of Records** - CSA will provide special education and related services according to the federal mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the regulations of the North Carolina Public School Law, Article 9. Therefore, in identifying scholars who have previously been found to be eligible for special services or are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, upon enrollment into CSA the register office will request all scholars' records from previous schools. Upon receipt of records, the EC Coordinator and 504 Coordinator will review all records utilizing CSA's in-house check list. In the event documents are missing from a scholar's folder such as a copy of scholar's most recent IEP, completed evaluations and "Dec #6, CSA's register will further contact individual school via the telephone, email along with a certify letter regarding missing documents. If records are not received with thirty calendar days, the DPI representative will be contacted for assistance.

#### **Record of Confidentiality**

In compliance with confidentiality requirements, all confidential records will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a room accessible only to pertinent school personnel. Written documentation will be required to remove any records from the records room and scholars file. Only those staff members working directly with scholars will have access to the afore-mentioned files.

#### **Record Compliance**

To ensure record compliance, CSA will develop and implement a record compliance monitoring system. The IEP team will complete a compliance checklist for all records of students with disabilities. Each record will be reviewed and if any noncompliance is found, a correction action of on compliance will take place immediately. Verification of correction will be the final action to ensure the noncompliance was corrected. The 504



Coordinator at CSA will monitor the 504 Accommodation plans compliance as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

#### Exceptional Children's Programming

4. Explain how you will meet the learning needs of students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible.

A "restrictive" environment is one that is separate from the regular student body. A scholar will be placed in the least restrictive environment when he or she is with scholars who are not disabled for as much of the school day as possible. If scholar is unable to learn and make reasonable progress in a regular classroom, despite special education support in that classroom, then CSA administration will separate the scholar from the regular classroom for some or all of the school day to receive more specialized services. A scholar can also be removed from the regular classroom when the behavior disrupts the classroom so much that other scholars can't learn. However, before CSA IEP team removes a scholar from the regular classroom, the team will consider whether the problems can be addressed with "supplemental aids and supports" in the regular classroom. CSA's team will first try supporting the scholar in the regular classroom before removal to a more restrictive environment. For scholars identified as having a disability is suspended at any time during the course of the school year for a total of ten days, the scholar will immediately be referred to the CSE of the scholar's district of residence for reconsideration of the scholar's educational placement. Such a scholar shall not be suspended for a total of more than 10 days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE of the scholar's district of residence prior to the 11th day of suspension, because such suspensions may be considered to be a change in placement.

5. Describe the specific educational programs, strategies, and additional supports the school will provide to ensure a full continuum of services for students with disabilities. How will the school ensure students' access to the general education curriculum?

#### **Scholars with disabilities Continuum of Services**

Keeping in line with the mission of providing access to a STEM learning environment and promoting high academic achievement for all scholars including scholars with disabilities a continuum of services base on each scholar individual need in the least restrictive environment including the ability to provide a positive, nurturing and learning environment for all which will be done through data driven instruction, flexible classroom spaces based on scholar's need, and the collection of data not limited to (student demographics, personal data, student performances, assessments, etc.), including the IEPs and 504 Plans. Additionally, to provide instructional support, challenges and opportunities for all its scholars, the planning of the master calendar will be inclusive of the EC coordinator and 504 Coordinator who can advocate for the proper usage of scholar's time. CSA will extend regular, extensive tutoring assistance during and after school, during vacations and on weekends to scholars in need of additional



instruction or desiring academic stimulation. The use of technology-driven instruction will enable the teachers to provide means of engagement and options for all type of learners and scholars at different level of cognitive development. Again, academically struggling scholars will be identified by using data collected by way of computer adaptive testing software and classroom and interim assessment data. Scholars struggling with academics will also receive differentiated instruction, additional tutoring, and pull-out support.

### **Access/ General Education Curriculum**

CSA will follow all applicable requirements of the IDEA and the Family Educational Rights and will be equipped with the necessary materials to ensure that all scholars have access to the curriculum. The EC Coordinator, 504 Coordinator, along with the IEP team will meet quarterly with to discuss scholars progress and keep parents up to date on scholars' progress by assessing each scholar beginning from baseline data following admittance into CSA to determine scholars' growth. Scholars with disabilities will have specially designed instruction based on their IEP or 504 Plan requirements. All classroom teachers, paraprofessionals and other related personnel employed by CSA will attend annual in-service professional workshops on assistive technology, how to read and implement accommodations and modifications in each scholars IEP, and differentiated instruction and assessment for gifted scholars and scholars with learning disabilities. The goal is to fuse education instruction with general education curriculum in the general education classroom. Examples of appropriate classroom adaptations, accommodations and modification that will enable a child to access the curriculum include but limited to, changing the manner in which material is presented; creating personalized study guides; adapting textbooks; creating teacher made podcast of study materials; creating flexible classroom spaces; altering tasks requirements; promoting social acceptance and making use of assistive technology devices.

Training in this stratagem will be important for the EC Coordinator and 504 Coordinator. All instruction will be data driven for all scholars and the special instructional strategies for scholars with disabilities will come directly from the instructions with in the IEP on what the best method of instruction for each scholar with disabilities is. CAS will provide educational opportunities to scholars with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with the full continuum of alternative placements, as appropriate. CSA administration anticipates that 12% of our school population may require EC services and will plan accordingly. There will be at least two Exceptional Children's teachers on staff who will be responsible for implementing IEPs and monitoring students' progress.

Classrooms will be equipped with the necessary materials to ensure access to the curriculum. Quarterly, the EC teacher will meet with scholars' classroom teacher(s) to discuss progress and determine if a parental meeting is necessary. Yearly, parents, the EC teacher, one regular education teacher, a school administrator and an individual who can interpret any evaluation data will meet to review the scholar's IEP and to make any

necessary changes or recommendations. Parents may request an IEP meeting at any time.

6. Describe the methods and support systems that will be in place to ensure students with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

According to NC 1501-1.1 Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), a free appropriate public education must be available to all children residing in the state between the ages of three through 21, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school, as provided for in NC 1504-2.1(d). Any child with a disability who requires special education and related services and who has not graduated from high school is eligible to continue to receive a free appropriate public education until the end of the school year in which that child reaches the age of 22.

CSA will ensure that all students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education that is a specially designed instruction and related services that will allow a scholar with a disability to make reasonable educational progress. First by implementing a Specially Designed Instruction plan that is tailored to meeting the needs of each scholar with a disability. According to state laws, a child's disability can impact learning in ways that the content of the material must be modified so the scholar can learn the important concepts. Other times, the content may be the same, but the method used by the teacher to deliver the lessons is different. This specially designed instruction plan will be provided by the EC Coordinator who will be trained as a special education teacher and is knowledgeable about how to structure and deliver lessons to help scholars learn despite their disabilities. Unless a child has been exempted from taking the required state tests (the End-of-Grade tests), the specialized instruction will still focus on the same educational standards that are in place for all scholars.

Other related services related to FAPE also includes "related services" if they are needed. They may include the following: Speech-Language Therapy, Audiology Services, Interpreting Services, Psychological Services, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Therapeutic Recreation, Counseling Services, Rehabilitation Counseling, Orientation and Mobility Services, School Health and Nurse Services, Social Work Services, Parent Counseling and Training, Transportation, Early Identification and Assessment of Disabilities in Children, Medical Services (for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only).

CSA goal is not to engage in practice of suspending its scholars; however, if a scholar is to be suspended CSA will grant all scholars due process rights, which includes the opportunity for a hearing before the Board and in accordance with NC state law. In the event a suspension or expulsion is being considered for more than 10 school days in a given school year, the IEP team will decide if a scholar's disability caused the misbehavior. The EC Coordinator/Specialist will work closing with the representative

from Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and other organizations that CSA will collaborate and partner with to ensure services are implemented for all scholars.

7. Describe how implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be monitored and reported to the student, parents and relevant staff.  
CSA team will utilize the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction forms to document the evaluation and IEP of all scholars. To ensure record compliance, CSA will develop and implement a record compliance monitoring system such as: The IEP team will consist of EC Coordinator, the 504 Coordinator and others such as the scholar's teacher and Grade Chair Representative. The team will establish a compliance checklist for all scholar's record. Each record will be reviewed and if any noncompliance is found, a correction action of non-compliance will take place immediately. Verification of correction will be the final action to ensure the noncompliance was corrected. The EC Coordinator at CSA will monitor all accommodation plans and compliance on a regular basis by checking the ECATS system. The EC Coordinator will ensure ongoing communications with parents and teacher via emails, progress reports and data tracking.
8. Describe the proposed plan for providing related services and to have qualified staffing adequate for the anticipated special needs population.  
CSA will employ the proper personnel to meet the needs of all special education scholars such as a certified Special Education Teacher, Special Education Coordinator and 504 Coordinator whose responsibilities will include but not limited to: 1) Providing direct and indirect instruction; 2) Long and short-term planning addressing individual needs of scholars; 3) Evaluating scholars' progress; 4) Establishing and maintaining classroom management procedures; Reporting to the Principal; 5) Preparing written reports accurately and submitting them in a timely manner; 6) Effectively communicating and consulting with teachers, parents, and administrators to facilitate the IEP process; 7) Effective professional liaising between school and home; 8) Maintaining open lines of communication via telephone or in writing between CSA and the Special Education Coordinator of scholars' residing school district; 9) Representing CSA at district CSE meetings, 10) Remaining current on rules set forth in special education law and regulations; 11) Maintaining privacy of scholars records and information.

The Special Education Coordinator is expected hold training during the teacher orientation week every August, and review sessions to address areas of special education services. All CSA staff members will attend the training and review session. The School Dean will be present during the meeting to address any other issues raised connected to the education of students with disabilities. During such training sessions, CSA staff will be given guidelines regarding the following: 1) The referral process to the CSE; 2) Development of a scholar's IEP; 3) Implementation of a scholar's IEP; 4) Evaluation of a scholar's progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives; 5) Meeting



reporting requirements to parents and CSEs; 6) Confidentiality and scholar records; 38 and, 7) Discipline of scholars with disabilities. As the need arises throughout the year, the special education specialist/coordinator will repeat the seminar on the special education services. During the professional days, there will be dedicated sessions on special education services. The board will invite professionals/experts for teacher workshops who will assist regular education teachers to incorporate various strategies with special needs students in their classroom. Through these speakers, teachers will learn or be refreshed with creative ideas for modifications and accommodations to their subject material, emphasizing empathy for students with disabilities.

CSA will collaborate and partner with local and appropriate related service providers, including occupational therapists, physical therapists and speech therapists by consulting with a minimum of three services providers examining service protocols, purpose, goals for operations, availability, pricing and track records. CSA will also conduct active research for additional funding through private foundations in addition to other available funding such as matching grants via both the state and federal government.

#### 2.4 Student Performance Standards

1. Describe the student performance standards for the school as a whole.

CSA has high standards and expectations for all the scholars serve. The board believes that with its' experiences as educators, the quality of instructional program, and the wide range of learning experiences offer, scholars will succeed in meeting high criteria for success. Therefore, the performance standard for the school as a whole is that 90% of all scholars will complete their assigned coursework each year, and 85% of all scholars will show at least one year's academic growth at the end of the school year by 2026, the 5th year of opening as a school.

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.

An alternative assessment CSA may utilize if needed is the SIOP assessment. The SIOP Model is a lesson design and delivery system of sheltered instruction that when implemented with fidelity can lead to improved student outcomes (Echevarría, Short, & Powers, 2006; Echevarría, Richards-Tutor, Canges, & Francis, 2011; Short, Fidelman, & Louguit, 2012). Sheltered instruction is an instructional approach that helps teachers of English learners make grade-level content concepts clear, while at the same time developing their students' academic English language proficiency (Echevarría, Short, & Vogt, 2014). The SIOP Model articulates all of the instructional features that English learners need in order to be successful in learning both content and academic language. English learners need access to grade-level content concepts scaffolded in a way that



makes instruction comprehensible and also maintains a focus on language development.

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.

### **Policies & Standards for promotion**

CSA believes that all scholars can and will succeed given the social and academic tools to access, analyze, synthesize and present new information learned. To support this notion, several variables would be considered in promotion decision and promoting of scholars to the next grade level. Each scholar should be on or approaching grade level in four out of five core subjects, be at the appropriate age level or within a year of it and is socially mature enough to handle the subsequent grade level. The factors that determine grade level performance includes scholars' grades based on classroom activities, teachers' recommendations, academic growth the scholar has made throughout the year, and when applicable, scholar's performance on state mandated assessments.

To ensure that these data are formally taken into account on behalf of each scholar, CSA will develop a process to handle promotion and retention.

- A. At the beginning of the last quarter of each school year, teachers will be responsible for providing the intervention teams with a list of scholars from each class that they believe are in question for promotion. CSA hopes that by establishing a strong intervention process from conception, names on the list would be of no surprise because of existing data and communication from grade level meetings throughout the school year. Ideally, no one should be on the list.
- B. While in the last quarter, teachers will work with scholars in create a portfolio of scholars work in the areas of deficiency and collect the documentation from the year that supports whether the student should be promoted or retained.
- C. Parents will have on going meeting prior to the end of the term and would be notified of and invited to a final review of the scholar performance.
- D. The parents, teachers and administration, will have the opportunity to present a portfolio and documentation to the review committee. This committee will include members of the intervention team including one teacher representative from each grade level. The members can also share whether they wish for the child to be promoted or retained and explain why.
- E. The committee will review the information, consider the scholar's prior history (i.e. age, size, past retention's, past grades), make a recommendation regarding promotion/retention, and the parents will be notified of the decision within 72 hours.

Although this process can be effective for all scholars, there are specific scholars that need to meet different criteria for promotion. CSA will review all EC scholars' IEPs to

determine if promotion should be granted to the next grade level. EC students who have sufficiently met IEP goals will be promoted regardless of their achievement on grade level assignments and standardized tests. Likewise, for EL scholar who is still below grade level due to language deficiencies will be promoted to the next grade level. Their PEP will be revised for next year to ensure that their language needs are continually being met.

Also, on state assessments, scholars will meet grade level expectations on the 3rd grade English, Math and Science EOG exams. Within the school, scholars will have met all attendance requirements as well as completed 85% of their assigned work for their courses.

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 students at risk of dropping out.

CSA will align all graduating standards with the NC standards including and limiting to the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests in English Language Arts/Reading and Mathematics, which are administered in grades 3-8 and the North Carolina End-of-Course Tests for English II and NC Math 1. CSA will use these assessments to measure scholars progress and to ensure that scholars remain on targets toward the long-term goal which is to increase achievement for scholars in all subgroups.

#### **Grading Scale**

Class rank is determined by the total number of quality points earned under the points system. Quality points are assigned by a grade earned in each phase. The followings are the sample quality point values of grades earned:

Sampling Grading Scale		
A+: 98–100	A: 93–97	A–: 90–92
B+: 87–89	B: 83–86	B–: 80–82
C+: 76–79	C: 73–75	C–: 71–72
D+: 69–70	D: 67–68	D–: 65–66
F:64 -0	F:64 -0	F:64 -0

## 2.5 School Culture and Discipline

1. Describe the culture or ethos of the proposed school. Explain how it will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development.

#### **CSA Culture**

A goal of CSA is to create a cultural environment rich with parental involvement and safe and disciplined. Following admission to the CSA, each scholar and parents or

guardian will take part in a one-on-one meeting with administrative personnel, during which time both the scholar and parent sign a commitment letter that includes CSA's behavior and academic expectations. In addition, scholars and their parents would be required to attend one of several information sessions conducted by the school administrators during each academic year.

During orientation, behavioral and academic expectations will be reviewed and reinforced. As part of the orientation training, parents will be made aware of academic progress and disciplinary notes that will be available online through the student information system (SIS) database. Parents who do not have Internet access at home will be able to access the database through public forums and can come to the school and use the public kiosk.

2. Explain how you will create and implement this culture for students, teachers, administrators, and parents starting from the first day of school. Describe the plan for acculturating students who enter the school mid-year.

The culture of CSA is one of high parental involvement, with a safe and disciplined school environment to be successful. These elements can and will produce positive change which can impact scholar's behavior.

#1 The first component of CSA positive school culture is establishing clear expectations from students. For example, CSA school-wide positive behavior expectations from scholars are as follows: 1. Be Safe 2. Be Responsible 3. Be Respectful 4. Try Your Best. Expectations will be reviewed with scholars and displayed in every classroom and throughout the building. Using positive behavior intervention and supports, students will be recognized for their positive efforts.

#2 The second component in promoting a positive school climate is safety; a well-established disciplinary structure. The scholars code of conduct is developed to establish and enrich healthy behavioral expectations, rules, and regulations. Rules centered on manners, etiquette and organization support discipline. In the mission statement, scholar will be in a "positive, inclusive" environment. PBIS is a reward system designed to motivate students and maintain a positive environment. scholars, parent discipline contracts support the implementation of discipline with the focus on student responsibilities.

CSA will approach disciplinary cases based on three areas. Level 1 - Non- negotiable rules such as dress code, electronic device, locker, food and drink, reinstatement meetings. Level 2 - Minor Infractions whereby students will have the ability to earn both merit and demerit points, Level 3 - Major Infractions which may lead to suspension and expulsion. Minor infractions ex.-instances where students have not injured or caused bodily harm to others, they have not stolen or committed an illegal violation.

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

#### **Promoting Effective Discipline**

To ensure that an environment is created where teaching and learning can prosper CSA will develop a series of rules that address scholar behavior, scholar dress code (uniform), maintenance of order within the school and during school activities, and a statement of scholar's rights and responsibilities. The Code of Conduct for elementary and the proposed middle scholars will be designed appropriately for each age groups. School staff will ensure that parents and scholars are well informed of these policies, both before enrollment and at the time a scholar sign up for entry into the charter school. The discipline and order policies will include components such as scholars disciplinary code, maintenance of public order on school property and scholars' rights and responsibilities. Parent partnerships and clear communication are critical to CSA success. CSA aims for parents to feel heard and be aware of multiple opportunities to communicate their concerns. This always begins with going to the source (teacher) and scheduling a conversation. The administration will develop processes and communication channels. Other communication channels may include Parent Advisory Council and Public Comment at Board Meetings.

CSA will utilize data to create a discipline plan based on a reward system which is fully documented in the CSA Scholars Handbook Code of Conduct. Teachers will be trained to implement components of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and the OLWEUS Bullying Prevention Program to highlight and encourage the positive behaviors displayed within the student body. The Olweus program was developed by Dr. Dan Olweus, a professor of psychology from Norway has been based on the greatest amount of research on bullying and happens to be the foremost bullying prevention program in the world. The program was designed to help the relationship amongst children and to make the learning atmosphere safer and a more positive one for children to study and learn. It was originally designed for school-aged children in elementary schools, middle schools and high schools, all between the ages of 5 and 15.



Goals of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program are as follows: To make peer relations in the school environment better. To stop bullying among students in the school environment. To prevent bullying in the future in the school environment.

### Certify

This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.  Yes  No

Explanation (optional): Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 3 Governance and Capacity

### 3.1 School Governing Body

#### 1. Private Non-profit Corporation (NCGS 115C-218.1)

The nonprofit corporation must be officially authorized by the NC Secretary of State upon application submission.

Name of Private Non-profit: Clara Science Academy Charter School

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 33204

Street Address: 13106 Autumn Trace Dr

City/State/Zip: Charlotte, NC 28233

Phone (xxx-xxx-xxxx): 704-904-7180

Fax: (xxx-xxx-xxxx):

Name of Registered Agent and Address: Omar Muhammad P. O. Box 33204 Charlotte, NC 28233

Federal Tax ID: 83-1972342

#### 2. Federal Tax-Exempt Status (NCGS 115C-218.15)

If the non-profit organization has yet to obtain 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.

The private non-profit listed as the responsible organization for the proposed charter school has 501(c)(3) status:

Yes. **Attach Appendix F Federal Documentation of Tax-Exempt Status**

X No.

N/A. The applicant is a tax-exempt municipality.

### 3.2 Governance

The private nonprofit corporation or municipality 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.

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

Board Member Name	Board Title	County of Residence	Current Occupation	Past or Present Professional Licenses Held	Any disciplinary action taken against any of these professional licenses?
Glenda Tate	Vice Chair	New Hanover	Business Owner		
Tariq Raheem		Out of State	Educator	K-12 License Principal	No
Jawwaad Rasheed	Member	Out of State	Family Court Judge	LAW	No
Omar Muhammad	Board Chair	Mecklenburg	Business Owner		
Varsty Muhammad	Secretary	Mecklenburg	Teacher / Counselor	K-12 License Counseling	No
James Cyrus	Member	Mecklenburg	Attorney	LAW	No
Dr. Leroy Wray	Treasurer	Mecklenburg	Educator	Elementary (K-6) Principal	No
Dr. Mohammad Alghorani	Member	Mecklenburg	Educator	K-12 License	No

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

**The function of the Board and primary duties:** Acting effectively, ethically and proactively, the Board duties include governing while utilizing the school mission as the standard for the organizational strategic intent and baseline measure of success. The

Board must also govern with knowledge of the laws and regulations to maintain fiscal integrity, sustain a high educational quality while recruiting, evaluating and supporting the lead administrator as they complete long-term and short-term goals.

**Primary responsibilities of the Board:** \*Adhere to the highest ethical standards. \*Establish, disseminate, and keep current the school's mission. \*Ensure that school policies and processes are legal, current and adequately implemented. \*Conduct the Boards business in an exemplary fashion and with appropriate transparency. \*Ensure the currency of Board governance policies and practices. \*Ensure the maintenance of the school's fiscal integrity by preserving and protecting the school's assets for posterity, engage directly in fundraising and philanthropy. \*Recruit, appoint, support, and evaluate the lead administrator in leading the school. \*Charge the lead administrator with the task of leading the approved strategic planning process, participate in that strategic planning process, and monitor its progress. \*Ensure the educational quality of the school including curriculum, policies and academic programs. \*Preserve and protect the school autonomy and academic freedom. \*Periodically and systematically assess the performance of the Board, its committees, and its members. \*Ensure the school financial success by establishing a sound financial budget

**Recruit, hire, and supervise the lead administrator:** The Board will identify a highly qualified lead administrator through a systemic application process. Through this application process, the Boards approach to the recruitment and retention must include methodologies or practices supporting the acquisition of experienced lead administration. Recruitment through the utilization of contacts in the local community, posts on the statewide university or college or other national higher education recruiting sites, and posts in major newspaper publications. Upon reviewing the applications, the Board will interview the top five candidates for the job. Utilization of an interview rubric ensures objective decision attainment. After choosing finalists, interviews will be conducted with the Board to select the best leader for Clara Science Academy. The Board will supervise the head of school through frequent and open communication, the use of various monthly and quarterly reports provided to the Board by the Head of School, through site visits to the school, through progress made toward the goals, through the interpretation of test data and through parent/student surveys.

3. Describe the size, current and desired composition, powers, and duties of the governing board. CSA Board currently consists of eight voting members and will expand to as many as 9, if the need arises. There will be three non-voting members of the Board including the Head of School, a parent representative, and a teacher representative. CSA recruited various members of the community for the Board with knowledgeable experience and diverse backgrounds. The Board consists of entrepreneurs with management, marketing, and non-profit accounting expertise as well as highly qualified educators, curriculum specialists, and real estate expertise. Two members of the Board have additional extensive experience as a small business owner. Much of the Board has lived and continue to in various parts of the Mecklenburg County.

4. Describe the founding board’s individual and collective qualifications for implementing the school design successfully, including capacity in such areas as school leadership, administration, and governance; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; performance management; and parent/community engagement.

Each board member brings over 20 plus year of experience in their own area of expertise.

Four board members (Dr. Mohammad Alghorani, Dr. Leroy Wray, Varsty Muhammad, and Tariq Raheem) have taught in a classroom setting which consist of grades K-12 and on a college level as well. Two board members (Dr. Mohammad Alghorani, Dr. Leroy Wray) have served as an assistant principal, principal and a dean of students. One board member (Varsty Muhammad) served as an Early childhood Manager/Training Facilitator which she has supervised 21 Early Childhood Teachers. Ms. Varsty also served as School Counselor for all levels, elementary, middle, and high school as well as higher education. Three boards members (Dr. Mohammad Alghorani, Tariq Raheem and Varsty Muhammad) worked for charters schools in the past. Four board members (Dr. Mohammad Alghorani, Dr. Leroy Wray, Varsty Muhammad, Tariq Raheem) have been a part of instructional, assessment and performance management. Four board members (Dr. Mohammad Alghorani, Dr. Leroy Wray, Varsty Muhammad, and Tariq Raheem) have written curriculum. One board member (Jawwaad Rasheed) sits on several charter school boards. Another board member (Glenda Tate) has over 30 years of experience working for the department of transportation in Washington DC. While in the department of transportation she worked in HR, management and grant management. One board member (Glenda Tate) has worked in real estate for several years. Two board members (Jawwaad Rasheed, James Cyrus) are attorneys and one is a judge. One board member (Omar Muhammad) has worked in non-profit for over 18 years. All board members are parents and all board members are engaged in their community. The board has the knowledge, expertise, and skill sets to implement the school design.

5. 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.

CSA governance structure and composition are design to ensure the school educational and operational success based upon the knowledge, expertise, and experience of each board member. The board will always have nothing less than 5 members. In addition to its annual meeting, CSA board will have ten meetings annually. Subcommittees will be assigned within the board structure to create a



system of check and balances. Such committees include but not limited to education, fiancé to evaluate certain information and presented to the board after they reviewed it thoroughly.

CSA board will evaluate the success of the school leader by evaluating the following but not limited to a) Accountability, b) Improving System Performance, and c) Professional Learning. The Board will also meet with the school's leader on a monthly basis during board meetings to discuss program progress. In evaluating the success of the school, the CSA board will also review school goals, monthly school reports, and state / national educational reports. By analyzing these reports, the CSA board can determine where the school is strong and weak in all areas.

All board members are active and effective key stakeholders, including parents. CSA board consist of educators, business owners, lawyers, and parents who live in the community. All board meetings are open to the public.

6. 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?

Each founding Board member was recruited through discussions at professional network sessions and other gatherings. An evaluation of skills, experience, and diverse thinking were sought for each responsible board member. All board members selected were based on their achievements and commitment to the mission of the Clara Science Academy. At the annual or special meeting of the Board, each board member must obtain a majority from all voting members to serve on the Board. The election of the board shall be a part of the order conscious of each annual meeting. Candidates for the board will be selected by the Board's Nominating Committee. Once elected, the name of each board member will be published in the school newsletter or other appropriate publication of general circulation to the school community. To help ensure continuity, the founding board members will serve for varying terms. Each board member will serve for three or more years to ensure success while recruiting other board members. Board member terms (the founding members notwithstanding) will be three years in length and will expire July 31st of every year so that new members will begin serving on August 1st of each year.

7. Describe the group's ties to and/or knowledge of the target community.

All of Clara Science Academy board members have ties and knowledge of the target community. Each board member has worked or have provided service to community. More than 90% of our board members live in North Carolina and in Mecklenburg County. Three board members worked and lived in the area. Four board members attend religious services in the target community. One board member provides legal service in the target community. Three board members have taught in the school system while in the target community. Clara Science Academy board has strong ties and knowledge of the target community.

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

The board will meet at least 10 times per year in addition to an annual meeting.

9. What kinds of orientation or training will new board members receive, and what kinds of ongoing professional development will be existing board members receive?

CSA orientation or training for all new board members include a timetable, specific topics to be addressed, and requirements for participation.

**Orientation or Training:** Clara Science Academy new Board member training will be delivered in a blended format. Half of the training will be provided online through a web- based application. The remainder will be provided in a classroom setting at a set location. A diverse group of presenters will deliver the content based on effective Board governance. Content areas to be address are as follows: Student Achievement, School Law, School Finance, Board Policy, Board Relations, Board Operations Goal Setting, Strategic Planning, Advocacy, and Communications

**Professional development:** Ongoing professional development for Clara Science Academy Board members will include the following activities and schedule.

Board members are required to participate in a minimum of three (3) professional development opportunities each year. These professional development sessions will address financial oversight, accountability, and fiduciary responsibilities of school Board members.

**Timetable:**

January 2021 - Board Member Orientation: Defining a charter school Board member, overview of responsibilities, and guest speaker from existing charter school Board member.

January 2021 - Workshops on how Clara Science Academy Board plans to work together and commit to the support and success of CSA and other sessions listed above.

February - March 2021 - Charter School Law 101: The Board will invite a guest speaker/expert to provide an overview and training to Board members on important legal issues associated with NC charter school governance

**During the professional development**

Each Board member will review progress of the school and review data to discuss and provide feedback to the Head of School. The Board will address the strategic plans and revise if needed to ensure that CSA is successful and on the right path to achieving its goals. CSA Board will also assess its own effectiveness as a collaborative team through the administration and review of feedback surveys. August 2021 - Board member orientation for new members and every year

**Requirements for participation:** While the founding Board develops their initial orientation program in January 2021, critical information will be reviewed. When new Board members join, they will have to obtain a federal background check and given a copy of the handbook.

10. 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.  
Clara Science Academy Board members will adhere to the Non-Profit Corporation Law NCGS 55A-8-31. The Board shall comply with the voting and disclosure provisions of the Board member Conflict of Interest status. CSA believes there are currently no existing conflicts of interest. If a conflict of interest should arise between one or more board members; those Board members must recuse themselves from all voting and discussion of the matter. Board members will also be required to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality document that states their understanding of this policy prior to taking office.
11. Explain the decision-making processes the board will use to develop school policies. The decision-making process that the board will utilize to develop school policies involves the participation and commitment of all members. Board members will participate in developing school policies regularly throughout the board meetings. This will allow each Board member to be truly effective when making important decisions. All meetings will be organized in a way that invite a healthy debate and discussion, but also manage conflict and problems that arise as a result of the debate. The Board will seek insight with key stakeholders (parents, community members, and Head of School) to gain a well-rounded perspective with regards to school policies. Also, the Board will reach out to other successful charter school Boards and experience educators to utilize their perspective and wisdom with regards to school policies. With all the decisions made by the Board, it is important that these policies support the mission and goals of Clara Science Academy. All policies will be adopted by a vote of the majority.
12. 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.  
The following advisory bodies and committees will be put in place at Clara Science Academy:
  - I . Parent Advisory Council-the role the (PAC)is to support the teachers and staff in the implementation of CSA’s mission and engaging all families at CSA. They will report to the Head of School.



- II . The Board Appointed Committee-the Board Appointed will consist of members of the board and a teacher representative and will recruit and nominate new members to the board.
- III . The Academic Committee-the Academic Committee will consist of board members and education experts from both the elementary and middle school. The Academic Committee will report to the board.
- IV . The Finance Committee-the Finance Committee will consist of board members, the Head of School, and a parent representative. The members of this committee should possess a strong financial background.
- V . The Hiring Committee-the Personnel Committee will consist of board members, a teacher representative and the Head of School. The members of this committee will make recommendations to the board about the hiring of new teachers and termination of current teachers.

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

**Grievance process for parents:** Parents who would like to file a complaint should first raise a complaint with their scholar teacher, then the Lead Administrator, and then if still not satisfied they may take their complaint to the Clara Science Academy Board. Complaints to the Clara Science Academy Board must be submitted in writing. Parents and other interested community members may attend Clara Science Academy public Board meetings per NC Open Meetings Law, Board meeting times and locations will be made available to the public. If the member cannot attend, minutes from the Board meeting will be publicly available upon any request.

**Grievance process for staff members:** Staff members are expected to first raise the complaint with their direct supervisor (Lead Administrator) who should attempt to resolve the issue quickly. If this person is unable to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complaint may be taken to the Clara Science Academy Board. If a complaint is specifically about the Lead Administrator, staff should take the complaint directly to the Clara Science Academy Board. The Board Chair will appoint a committee to investigate and provide a written response in a timely manner.

Clara Science Academy prohibits retaliation against anyone who has complained about a violation of school policy or who has cooperated in an investigation of such a complaint. Retaliation will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

**\*Attach Appendix G Organizational Chart**

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).

**\*Attach Appendix H Charter School Board Member Information Form and Resume**

A **one-page** resume from each founding board member and responses to the questions found on the Charter School Board Member Form

**\*Attach Appendix I Charter School Board Member Background Certification Statement and Completed Background Check for Each Board Member**

**\*Attach Appendix J Proposed By-Laws of the Nonprofit Organization or Municipality**

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.

**\*Attach Appendix K Articles of Incorporation or Municipal Charter**

If the applicant is a non-profit board of directors, attach a copy of the articles of incorporation from the NC Department of the Secretary of State.

If the applicant is a municipality, attach a copy of the municipal charter.

### 3.4 Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management

#### Projected Staff

1. Complete the staffing chart below outlining your staffing projections. Adjust or add functions and titles as needed to reflect variations in school models. Be mindful that your predicted administration and staff match the projected enrollment noted in Section I, course offerings, and align with the proposed budget.

Position	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Principal/School Leader		1	1	1	1	1
Assistant Principal		0	1	1	1	2
Clerk		1	1	2	2	2
Food Service Staff		1	1	2	2	3
Finance Officer		0	0	1	1	1
Custodians		0	1.5	2	2	3
Transportation Staff		2	2	3	5	6
Core Classroom Teachers		10	17	22	27	32
Nurse (Health)		.5	1	1	1	1
Specialized Classroom Teachers (e.g. special education, ELL, foreign language, etc.)		2	3	3	4	7

Exceptional Children		2	2	3	3	4
Instructional Support		2	4	5	5	6
Student Support Positions (e.g. social workers, psychologists, Counselor, etc.)			1	1	1	2
Teaching Aides or Assistants		6	6	7	7	7
School Operations Support Staff						

### Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management

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

The board's strategy for recruiting and retaining high-performing teachers is what will make the Clara Science Academy School highly effective. The academy will attract and retain creative, smart, passionate, innovative, and experienced faculty and staff who truly believe in our mission and who reflects the diversity of the scholars.

CSA will start by recruiting through Clara Science Academy website, Facebook, Twitter accounts, teachers-teachers.com, LinkedIn, university and state job fairs, and online job finder/recruitment sites. The academy will advertise through website ads, billboards, word of mouth, local newspapers and magazines written in English and Spanish.

#### **Retention of Employees**

Clara Science Academy will focus on retaining innovative teachers and staff members to provide an atmosphere of respect for all. Our decision-making processes will intentionally include staff to help guide the school's leadership in accomplishing the mission. All teachers will be supported professionally through professional development, learning communities, instructional coaches and internal mentoring system.

To retain our educators, we plan to offer a competitive benefits package which will be based on experience. Additionally, the school will offer a 401(k) plan to all of our full-time faculty and staff members. This is a contribution plan, versus the state's defined benefit plan, which is more flexible for most teachers and is portable. Full-time employees will also receive health insurance with employee coverage paid in substantial part by the school as well as life insurance and disability benefits. The school will evaluate the current state retirement plan and health plan to make the decision final upon the charter approval. A mandatory unemployment and workers compensation insurance will be incurred by the school.

3. If already identified, describe the principal/head of school candidate and explain why this individual is well-qualified to lead the proposed school in achieving its mission. Provide specific evidence that demonstrates the capacity to design, launch, and manage

a high-performing charter school. If the proposed leader has never run a school, describe any leadership training programs that (s)he has completed or is currently participating in. If no candidate has been identified, provide the job description or qualifications, and discuss the timeline, criteria, and recruiting/selection process for hiring the school leader.

CSA has identified Dr. Alghorani Mohammad who will serve as the principle. He holds Ph.D. in School Psychology from the University of Texas, a M.A. in Educational Psychology from the University of Texas, a M.A. in Counseling Psychology from Damascus University and a B.Ed. in Psychology from Damascus University. Mr. Mohammad has worked as a Principal for Intellicor International Academy and Principal of Peace Elementary School which he has implemented strategy, HR, curriculum, admissions, financial, and daily Operation of these K-12 schools. He was the Director of IDEA Consulting. Dr. Mohammad chaired the Department of Psychology & Counseling at UAE University and has taught undergraduate and graduate courses, research, training, and consultation and psychological services. Other held titles and positions included Associate Professor of Psychology, Adjunct Professor, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, and Assistant Professor of Psychology. CSA believes that Dr. Mohammad is the best candidate and he is well-qualified to lead the school in achieving its mission.

**Attach in Appendix O the School Leader's Resume. If school leader has been identified, include the school leader's one-page resume in Appendix O.**

4. Provide a description of the relationship that will exist between the charter school employees and the school's board of directors.

The CSA board has the responsibility of securing the Head of School. In doing so the board will be responsible for the ongoing employment needs of the school. These needs will cover managing the finances and the day by day operations. All Faculty and staff will report to the Head of School who will in turn report to the board. The board will provide a seat to the Head of School, who will also have a non-voting position. This will keep open the lines of communication between the Board and the faculty and staff.

Clara Science Academy board will focus on a trustful, united and accountable relationship between itself and its lead administrator. In every meeting, the lead administrator will provide the board with critical information to help the board make critical decisions. All employees will be led by the lead administrator and all communications shall be directed his/her way. The board will communicate to the employees through the lead administrator. From time to time the board may host an event or meetings to gather additional information about the organization's health. In addition, the board will also use third party information and surveys to determine how policies are impacting employee workspace.

The board will have no direct lines of communication to staff unless it is supported by the full board. The lead administrator will ensure proper procedures are carried out if issues arise between employees. If the lead administrator believes an issue must be handled by the board, each employee will have an opportunity to be heard in hopes of a professional resolution. Clara Science Academy board will have an employee grievance policy establish to follow if a mediation process is required.

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

**CSA Hiring & Personnel Application Process:**

1) A sealed college/university transcript indicating good standing; 2) Three letters of reference documenting leadership, community service, and/or exemplary service within a community; 3) Demonstration of superior writing skills through submission of writing samples; 4) Teaching portfolio with sample units; 5) A clean National Criminal Background Investigation Check.

**The hiring process consist of three-steps:** 1) Resumes and applicants are screened for a potential match of expectations and in line with the academy mission. All applicants will be asked to submit a cover letter that states their qualifications and their educational philosophy, as well as a resume and names of three references. 2) A committee is involved in observing the select applicant's session and posing questions and situations to the applicant to measure the applicant's responses. 3) Comprises final interview with select candidates, in which expectations are presented to the candidate. The administration recommends the candidates chosen for hire to the Clara Science Academy board for approval.

**Criminal Background Check:** Clara Science Academy will perform a criminal background check on all new employees from the State Bureau of Investigation ("SBI") and a national FBI check from other qualified source(s) prior to their initial employment. The academy reserves the right to perform a criminal background check on all employees at any given time for any reason.

**Dismissal School Personnel:** The board may need to dismiss staff members based on their actions. All teachers will work towards personal and professional growth. The lead administrator will be responsible for creating the evaluation tool, providing effective feedback, and utilizing experts to help educators to grow. An employee may be placed on an action plan prior to recommendation for dismissal.



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

Salary Range

Head of School: \$75,000-\$99,000

Director of Instruction \$40,000-\$55,000

Receptionist: \$20,000-\$45,000

Office Manager: \$30,000-\$50,000

Finance Officer \$50,000-\$65,000

Teacher: \$35,000-\$80,000

Teacher Assistant: \$20,000-\$40,000

PE Teacher: \$35,000-\$50,000

Head Custodian/Facilities Director \$35,000-\$50,000

Assistant Custodian: \$10,000-\$35,000

Cafeteria Manager: \$35,000-\$50,000

Cafeteria Staff: \$10,000-\$40,000

EC Coordinator: \$45,000-\$90,000

EC Teacher: \$40,000-\$80,000

Speech Teacher: \$40,000-\$80,000

School Social Worker: \$35,000-\$60,000

Technology Director: \$40,000-\$80,000

School Nurse: \$40,000-\$90,000

Bus Drivers: \$10,000-\$35,000

Foreign Language Teacher \$40,000-\$50,000

Guidance Counselor \$30,000-\$60,000

Benefits from the outset, CSA plan to offer a competitive retirement package, health insurance, and life insurance.

We will not participate in the state retirement plan but will offer a 401(k) program with matching contributions up to 3%, health care and life insurance to all full-time employees. We will not offer retirement, health insurance or life insurance to part-time employees.

7. Provide the procedures for handling employee grievances and/or termination.

CSA reserves the right at all times to immediately terminate an employee or to decide what level or type of discipline is warranted, if any. All employees of the CSA are at-will employees and can be terminated at any time, without first implementing any other type of disciplinary action. Staff members are expected to first raise the complaint with their direct supervisor, who should attempt to resolve the issue quickly.

CSA is not required to use any of the following steps of discipline, and, if CSA does choose to utilize any of the following steps, it is not required to apply or use them in any particular order, but retains the discretion at all times to determine the nature and severity of discipline and/or termination. If it becomes necessary to discipline an employee, the following steps of discipline may occur at the discretion of the School:

1) Verbal Warning; 2) Written Verbal Warning; 3) Written Warning; 4) Final Written Warning and/or Probation; 5) Termination. An employee may be requested to obtain professional counseling and/or attended a conflict resolution training in addition to the receiving any discipline reprimand within a contract year.

CSA reserves the right to determine if the situation of a particular case warrants termination for the first offense, or whether one of the other three forms of discipline listed above is warranted. Lastly, if an employee's conduct, performance, work habits attitude or demeanor becomes unsatisfactory or unacceptable in the judgment of CSA, including based on violations of any school policies, rules, guidelines, regulations, or rules of conduct, whether contained herein or in other documents, they will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

8. Identify any positions that will have dual responsibilities and the funding source for each position.

Clara Science Academy will utilize the talents of our team to assign them in a role they will be most successful. Some personnel staff may have two key roles.

9. Describe the plans to have qualified staffing adequate for the anticipated special needs population and means for providing qualified staffing for EL and gifted students.

Clara Science Academy will ensure that we provide adequate staff and instructional time to meet the needs of all students, including those who have special needs, are ELL, and gifted. The Academy will do this by hiring a special needs teacher that is experienced and holds a master's degree in Special Education. Clara Science Academy will provide an experienced part time ELL teacher to assist with any child that is an English Language Learner. We will also provide all full time and part time teachers with the proper training and staff development to prepare for both ELL and gifted students.

10. Provide a narrative detailing the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and appropriate licenses that each position must have to be hired by the school's board of directors and effectively perform the job function(s).

Faculty and staff will be required to hold the appropriate licenses, certifications, endorsements and experience necessary to faithfully and satisfactorily fulfill the roles and responsibilities for which they were hired and as required by their job description. Faculty and staff will conduct their work in a manner consistent with the mission of the School and the needs of every student.

**Full Time and Part Time Teachers:** At least 75% of Clara Science Academy teachers will be NC licensed in the subject areas in which they teach. They will teach the Project Base Curriculum in alignment with the NC Common Core and Essential Standards. All classrooms will be created for a climate conducive to learning. Each teacher will establish open lines of communications with parents. Tutoring and enrichment activities will be offered to students as needs arise. There will be different lessons plans to fit the needs of individual students. In addition, all communications will have clear

expectations, goals, and grading requirements. Clara Science Academy teachers will uphold all legal, professional, and ethical requirements of the profession.

**Lead Administrator:** The Lead Administrator will provide educational and operational leadership, contractual accountability and logistical direction as part of his/her responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school. Lead Administrator is accountable to the Board of Directors. Minimum qualifications include a master's degree in administration, educational leadership, curriculum and instruction or a related academic management field and at least 5 years of experience at the executive leadership level. Preference will be given to candidates who have classroom experience as a certified/licensed teacher and those who have earned administrative certification through a recognized or accredited training program.

**Assistant Administrator:** Assistant Administrator is responsible for interim management of the school in the absence of the Lead Administrator and reports to the Lead Administrator. The Assistant Administrator will also supervise the evaluation of instructional and non-instructional staff, will oversee and coordinate professional development programming and will serve as the chief disciplinarian in the event of student misconduct. Qualifications include possession of a valid state teaching certificate with preference given to those candidates with administrative certification through a recognized or accredited training program.

**School Counselor or School Psychologist:** The Counselor will provide a comprehensive competency-based counseling program focused on the learning, personal, social, vocational needs of all students. The Counselor will possess a master's degree in Guidance or School Counseling and hold a current license (Standard Professional 2 (SP2) Professional Educator's Licenses, valid in grades K-12) for position as required by the NCDPI. The Guidance Counselor will have a minimum of three years of teaching, counseling, or other experience working with children similar in age to the position hired.

**Finance Officer / Accounting Firm:** The Finance Officer / Accounting Firm is responsible for managing the requisition, purchasing, accounts payable, payroll, budget and financial reporting functions of the school. The Finance Officer will interact with the accounting staff, provide regular financial and budget reports to the board as requested, assist in drafting the annual budget and coordinate the annual audit. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree in finance or accounting.

**Other Faculty and Support Staff:** Other Faculty and Support Staff will be responsible for carrying out support functions as delegated to them by the Lead Administrator and will require applicable credentials and requisite experience based on the position's duties and responsibilities.

### 3.5 Staff Evaluations and Professional Development

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

The Head of School will be responsible for maintaining teacher license requirements and professional development

2. Provide a detailed plan noting how the school will mentor, retain and evaluate staff in a format that matches the school's mission and educational program. Plan should also describe how the school will meet the teacher certification and licensure requirements for teachers as prescribed by state and federal law. Be sure this overview matches with the projected staff and funding of the proposed budget section.

Clara Science Academy will model the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process which is intended to assess the teacher's performance in relation to the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and to design a plan for professional growth. Instructional staff will be evaluated based on the six aligned standards adopted by the NCSBE. They are 1) Leadership, 2) Establishing a Respectful Environment, 3) Content Knowledge, 4) Facilitation of Learning, 5) Critical Reflection, and 6) Contribute to Academic Success.

The evaluation process will include the following components:

**Component 1: TRAINING**

Before participating in the evaluation process, all teachers, administrators and peer evaluators must complete training on the evaluation process.

**Component 2: ORIENTATION**

Within two weeks of a teacher first day of work in any school year, the Lead Administrator will provide teachers with the evaluation rubric that will be used during the evaluation process and a schedule for completing each component of the evaluation process.

**Component 3: SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Using the evaluation rubric along with feedback, growth and improvement plans from previous evaluations, the teacher will conduct a performance self-assessment from the beginning of the year through to the date of the most recent evaluation period.

**Component 4: PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE**

Before the first formal observation, the Lead Administrator will meet with the teacher to review and discuss the self- assessment, the teachers most recent professional growth plan, and the lessons to be observed. The teacher will provide the Lead Administrator with a written lesson plan. The goal of this conference is to prepare the Lead Administrator for the observation. In the event that there are multiple observations, pre-observation conferences are not required for subsequent observations.

**Component 5: OBSERVATIONS**

Formal observations by the Lead Administrator will be made for a minimum of 45 minutes or the entire class period. If a class period is less than 45 minutes, then the



evaluation will be made over two class periods to fulfill the minimum time requirement. Those teachers who are designated as Probationary will undergo no fewer than three formal classroom observations, one of which must be conducted by a peer designated by the Lead Administrator. Seasonal teachers will be evaluated no fewer than two times per year. During observations, the Lead Administrator and the peer will note, in writing, the teacher's performance in relation to the standards contained in the evaluation rubric.

#### **Component 6: POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE**

The Lead Administrator will conduct a post-observation conference with the teacher being evaluated no later than ten days after each formal observation. During the post-observation conference, the Lead Administrator and teacher will discuss and document on the evaluation rubric the performance strengths and weaknesses during the observed lesson.

#### **Component 7: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Based on the teacher's performance, a professional development plan will be crafted that outlines specific areas for improvement, strategies for improvement, benchmarks to be met and a timeline for re-evaluation.

CSA's plan for mentoring is to directly support all teachers, to ensure the development of a positive culture among students and staff. Although the staff and teachers will be small in size in the beginning, experienced seasonal teachers will mentor new novice teachers each year. The Lead Administrator will have an open-door policy. Each professional development and evaluation process at Clara Science Academy will be individualized; therefore, direct mentoring/coaching of teachers will be an ongoing part of their experience. Retaining all staff and teachers require a complete competitive compensation, a positive culture, and a hands-on approach to faculty evaluation.

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.

As a mission-driven charter school, the Clara Science Academy professional development plan will consist of high-quality instruction and constant improvement of scholars learning. Through the use of qualified contractors, trained in-house staff, professional conferences, guest speakers and online learning, the professional development program will include topics of current interest and contemporary relevance such as effective classroom management and evidence-based instructional strategies.

These programs will also include engaging parents and families in the educational process, technology in the classroom and other applicable topics. In addition to self-study or a strict group lecture format, professional development programs will emphasize small group instruction and discussion, peer collaboration and teamwork.

Workplace issues will also be incorporated into the professional development program covering topics such as maintaining a safe workplace, First Aid/CPR/AED training, effective communication, preventing sexual harassment and cultivating a culture of diversity in the workplace.

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.

The Academy professional development will begin 2 weeks prior to the first day of school for students. All faculty and staff will report to school at 9am and remain until 3pm. Every day will include approximately 60- 90 minutes for classroom setup and prepared for activities with a 30 minutes lunch. The remaining 35-40 hours will be used for professional development. About 10-15 hours will be used to train the staff on all operating policies and procedures including school safety plans, code of ethics, employment policy review, student referrals for discipline, student referrals for special education, reporting workplace violence, reporting sexual harassment and other procedural topics.

Five to ten hours will be designed to build a culture of collaboration among the staff through icebreakers, team building exercises, simulations and small-group problem solving. All remaining time will be used to orient the staff toward school-wide instructional objectives during which the instructional goals and measurement criteria for student performance will be discussed in detail as a group.

There will be a breakout time incorporated into the instructional objectives program for instructional/grade teams, led by grade leaders, to meet and define specific objectives within their grades, develop team-wide instructional strategies, create action-plans for anticipated obstacles and challenges, coordinate lesson plans and synthesize curriculum components within the grade.

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.

Clara Science Academy will provide 18 teacher workdays, in which 14 will be considered mandatory professional development days throughout the school year. There will be 11 professional development days prior to the beginning of school, where teachers will receive intensive training in curriculum and classroom management and 3 full days throughout the year providing continuous support and training for the faculty and staff.

Approximately 20-25 hours of additional designated staff development time will be in the form of 4 half-days, which will be incorporated into the calendar. School will not be in session for students during these days, but faculty and staff will be required to report to work at normal business hours. The programming for each day will be determined based on trending hot-topics and needs identified by the board, administration or faculty and staff.

Teachers Schedule: Teachers are expected to be in school between 7:30 am and 4:30 pm on regular school days. Teachers are expected to make home visits between 4:30 and 5:30 pm on an irregular schedule to reach their target home visits. Prior to the start

of school, all staff members will participate in 60 hours within 10 days of professional development (calendar), which is detailed under the professional development section below.

During the school year, staff members will also receive a minimum of two full professional development days, not including any special seminars and training opportunities which may be approved for individual staff members.

Teachers will have weekly common departmental planning time in which they will come together to ensure horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment and share best practices with one another. CSA will also promote staff and student opportunities for interdisciplinary instruction, not only through Common Core Learning Standards alignment, but also through field trips, internal fairs, competitions and assemblies such as the Science Fair, Liberal Arts Tunnel Fair, International Day, and Black History Month celebration, etc. To promote staff cohesion and interdisciplinary teaching, teachers will be encouraged to conduct four peer observations throughout the school year.

### 3.6 Marketing, Recruitment, and Enrollment

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 115C-218.45 carefully.

#### Marketing Plan

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

The racial/ethnic and demographic composition of the district in which CSA will be located is majority African American with 81% of its scholars receiving or are eligible to participate in free or reduced lunch programs. Education status, 5.57% has no High School, 23.62 % has some high School, 19.86 % has some College, 5.61% has an Associate Degree, 13.51 % Bachelor's Degree and 5.39% has a Graduate Degree. The race and ethnic makeup consist of 24.81% Caucasians, 49.41% African Americans, 19.59% Hispanics; 0.25% are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians make up 2.37%, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders account for 0.44% while other race or two or more races account for 3.14%. In comparison to the public-school race and ethnicity profile, Caucasians are at 7.6%, African Americans (55.9%), Hispanics (31.1%), Asian (2.9%), Hawaii/Pacific Islanders (0.1%), American India or Alaskan Native (0.5%), and two or more races (1.9%). CSA's marketing plan for potential scholars and parents will be reflective of this demographic and consisting of the following strategies:

**CSA's Brand:** First is to establish what makes CSA unique from other charter schools. CSA's marketing will emphasis strongly on STEM, project-based learning methods, and promoting high academic achievement through scientific inquiry, reasoning, and investigative learning.



**CSA's Communication:** Communicating through activities that will expand CSA's presence, developing relationships with the community, and encouraging referrals.

**CSA's Events:** Sponsoring and participate in events to connect with the community and forge lasting relationships. Such events will include but not limited to Back2school sessions in the surrounding areas, School Choice Week, book drives, fundraisers, teacher of the year awards, student concerts, and graduation ceremonies. Other community events, such as town fairs, farmers markets, marathons, conferences or symposiums, and pledge drives.

CSA involvement will capture the names of prospective parents so we can follow up later. This will be done through:

***In-person Interactions*** - CSA will interact and communicate with parent face-to-face which will build trust, rapport, and loyalty among parents, staff members, and the community as a whole.

**Digital Marketing:** CSA has already established an online presence and will connect with others digitally. A comprehensive digital charter school marketing plan includes:

***Search Engine Optimization (SEO)*** - SEO is the process of optimizing your website and web presence in such a way that it achieves greater visibility in search engines. Having good SEO means someone Googling "charter schools" in your area is more likely to find yours. Having great SEO means they're more likely to find yours first.

***Social Media Presence*** - CSA Social media will offer us a place to establish a positive digital presence in a visual environment. It helps keep parents, students, teachers, and the community informed of news and events. It's also a great tool to celebrate student accomplishments and memorialize small moments from the school day. These might include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Youtube or Youtube tv.

***Google AdWords*** - While organic traffic is hugely important, a healthy balance between organic and paid traffic can maximize our marketing potential. And because SEO and other organic traffic strategies tend to take time, the topmost benefit of Google AdWords is that it works fast. Both SEO and Google AdWords are search engine marketing strategies that generate more traffic and leads, but, a well optimized AdWords campaign can quickly put our school at the top of Google.

***Email Marketing*** - Because it is so versatile, email marketing is an essential element of a successful digital strategy for CSA. We can use it to organize events, promote services, or simply say hi. Email newsletters, for example, help to keep prospective parents informed of your upcoming events as well as what is happening at CSA. A polite but steady stream of relevant and useful information can also build trust, loyalty, and happiness within the community.

***Organizational Alignment*** - To amplify CSA brand and maintain consistency in our messaging, it's helpful to educate our staff and board on our school's key messages. CSA will ensure that everyone will understand the school's mission, vision, and values, and knows which ideas to emphasize and repeat when interacting with the public. CSA will engage friends and family of current students to share and evangelize their experience, engage our community, partners, and organizations to help spread your message, embrace canvassing, flyers, and direct mailing to help build awareness, build a credible website, school finder, and online presence to communicate our brand and test digital marketing practices such as online ads, social media and email to amplify our message to build a great school.



2. Describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the school.

Clara Science Academy has and will continue to engage parents and the residents through community meetings, the use of the news media, online social media, religious organizations, preschools, promotional videos, and building strong relationships with the local business community. There has already been an organized effort by parents and community leaders to notify the public about Clara Science Academy. Locally we have been distributing surveys to the community and will hold community meeting up until opening day. Board meetings will be transparent and maintain a section of time built for public comments. We will also schedule town hall meetings to allow the community to stress their larger concerns.

3. Describe your plan to recruit students during the planning year, including the strategies, activities, events, and responsible parties. Include a timeline and plan for student recruitment/engagement and enrollment, with benchmarks that will indicate and demonstrate suitable recruitment and enrollment practices over time.

Clara Science Academy understands that to be successful as a charter school, we must maintain full enrollment of students in our first year. The academy will also provide web site ([www.clarascienceacademy.com](http://www.clarascienceacademy.com)) to communicate with potential students and parents. We also will utilize social media such as Facebook to advertise to and educate the general public. To reach and maintain full enrollment we plan to implement an ongoing marketing plan that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Charter Application Phase: June 2020 -June 2021

Goal: Gather addition information regarding the educational need or interest for a public charter school from 250 families, recruit additional board members.

Action: Conduct a series of public relations endeavors to publicize the school to the community at large so that all interested parties will be aware of the schools upcoming application submission. Strengthen the social media outlet. Send a press release to four publications. Email blasts, social media binge and local representatives regarding application submission.

Ready to Open Period (July 2020 - January 2021)

Goal: Obtain 60% Letters of Intent (LOI) and Educate parents that Letters of Intent cannot be utilized as applications for enrollment.

Action: Collect contact information utilizing LOI format, recruit prospective volunteers, and recruit board members. We will utilize our best marketing tool, our enrolled families, and utilize them to host community gatherings, public charter school town hall meetings and potential employment fairs.

Members of the board of directors will visit local preschools, daycares, churches, masjids, and other child related and organizations and community organizations such as

the YMCA to distribute information. Once the lead administrator is in place, he or she will perform this duty in conjunction with board members.

A representative of Clara Science Academy will attend community events to promote the school, such as the annual Taste of Charlotte which is held in June of each year. All marketing information will be in both English and Spanish, so as to attract those members of the community.

Open Enrollment Period (January 2021-July 2021) Goal: 120% Capacity enrollment and wait-list

Action: Send direct mailing to households in specific zip codes. After the lottery, we will utilize our best marketing tool, our enrolled families. We will utilize them to host community gatherings, public charter school town hall meetings and potential city events.

First 30 Days of School (Approximately August 2021)

Goal: Build and sustain waitlist 25% above capacity per grade.

Action: After testing marketing strategies that worked best over the past 18 months, we will focus our attention on the top three strategies and continue to promote in the community.

4. Describe how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the school. Specifically, describe any plans for outreach to: families in poverty, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, English learners, and other students at-risk of academic failure. If your school has a specific area of focus, describe the plan to market that focus.

All scholars who are qualified under the laws of the state of NC for admission to public school is qualified to attend CSA. Clara Science Academy Charter School will reach out to all scholars and follow all rules and regulations regarding enrollment priority as specified in North Carolina Charter School Law 115C-218.45. "Except as otherwise provided by law or the mission of the school as set out in the charter, the school shall not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, or disability. A charter school shall not limit admission to students on the basis of race, creed, national origin, religion, or ancestry. A charter school whose mission is single-sex education may limit admission on the basis of sex. Within one year after the charter school begins operation, the charter school shall make efforts for the population of the school to reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the general population residing within the local school administrative unit in which the school is located or the racial and ethnic composition of the special population that the school seeks to serve residing within the local school administrative unit in which the school is located."

5. What established community organizations would you target for marketing and recruitment?

CSA will target many of the Mecklenburg County Community Support Services agencies such as A Child's Place, Catholic Social Services, United Family Services, Crisis Assistance Ministry, Child Care Resources, Department of Social Services, Charlotte Family Housing, Charlotte Housing Authority, YWCA Women in Transition/Families together; Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation. CSA goal is to reach families who often visit the agencies; religious organizations (Churches, Masjids, etc.), Head Start programs, Day care Centers and Pre-school agencies; Grocery Stores, Colleges and Universities, Elder Care/Living, 100 Blackmen Organization, Other non-profit and profit organizations, etc.

### 3.7 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.

Clara Science Academy has and will continue to engage parents and the residents through community meetings, the use of the news media, online social media, religious organizations, preschools, promotional videos, and building strong relationships with the local business community. There has already been an organized effort by parents and community leaders to notify the public about Clara Science Academy. Locally we have been distributing surveys to the community and will hold community meeting up until opening day. Board meetings will be transparent and maintain a section of time built for public comments. We will also schedule town hall meetings to allow the community to stress their larger concerns.

2. Describe how you will engage parents in the life of the public charter school. Explain the plan for building engaging partnerships between the family and school that strengthen support for student learning.

The Academy will engage parents early and frequently in the school year and highly encourage them to volunteer and play an active role in their child's education. Through the school's intense focus on character development, there will be an increased focus on bridging the gap between home life and school. Bridging this gap will include several interactive lessons that will build on parental involvement. These lessons will be presented at evening events, opened to the public, displaying student work, varying from the arts to core subjects, including science and technology. Additionally, CSA ideal goal is to engage parents through "Real Clara Science" a YouTube bi-weekly video presentation whereby parents can use as a guide linking the home to the classroom. Presentation will consist of homework study guide and tips both in English and the world language that students are being taught.

Clara Science Academy will also develop a strong Parent Advisory Council with parents and teachers working closely together to carry out the mission of the school. The board will encourage open and transparent communication with parents and encourage all parents to become a part of the culture of Clara Science Academy. Leadership will write monthly newsletters to provide the state of the charter and new

happenings. At the end of the year the leadership team will collaborate with PAC to write the "State of the Charter" address.

In addition, a suggestion box will be created to get feedback, ideas, and volunteers. This box will be housed with volunteer opportunities and allow suggestion to be expressed. Teachers will weekly write out specific step by step instructions for potential volunteer hours for parents who want to participate. We anticipate having a heavy carpool line in the afternoon. This box will provide parents an opportunity to utilize their time more effectively by coming into the school, grabbing information and helping complete needed tasks. Suggestions will also help teachers know what parents want to see more in the classroom.

3. If already identified, describe any programs you will offer to parents and/or the community and how they may benefit students and support the school mission and vision.

To reduce the barriers of parent and community engagement CSA will offer a series of programs with the theme "Changing the Game in STEM Through Family Engagement." Such as:

**Clara Etymology Sessions** - Session will be offered quarterly.

**AI (Artificial Intelligence) Monday** – Scholars, parents, and community will listen to an AI prestation

**UI (Ultra Intelligence) Tuesday** - Scholars, parents, and community will listen to an UI prestation

**The Science of Summit Wednesday** --- Scholars will be allowed to present their stem projects to the school parents and community

**Tech Thursday** ---- Scholars, parents, and community will listen to a prestation on how technology has advanced the world

**Science Friday** --- CSA will choose an individual from the tech industry to come a speak on how important STEM is for the future.

Clara Science Academy mission is to increase scholars' access to a STEM learning environment and promote high academic achievement through scientific inquiry, reasoning, and investigative learning. These programs will benefit parents, scholars, and the community in promoting high academic achievement through scientific inquiry, reasoning, and investigative learning.

### 3.8 Admissions Policy

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



- b. Clear policies and procedures detailing the open enrollment lottery plan, including policies regarding statutory permitted student enrollment preferences.
- c. Clear policies and procedures for student waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers.
- d. Explanation of the purpose of any pre-admission activities (if any) for students or parents.
- e. Clear policies and procedures for student withdrawals and transfers.

Once the preliminary approval of our charter is completed, CSA will conduct a highly publicized campaign, utilizing a variety of methods to inform the public of the dates for open enrollment. These methods may include, but are not limited to, publication in all local newspapers, using multiple sources of social media, distributing flyers at churches, daycares and other community-oriented locations and the holding of public meetings in various parts of the county. The tentative enrollment period will begin February 1, 2021, following final approval of the charter, and will tentatively run through March 31, 2022 at 5:00 P.M. The application will be available to fill out both online and in print format. It will be available in both English and Spanish. Immediately following the closing of the enrollment period, Clara Science Academy will determine if a lottery is needed, in accordance with NCGS 115C-238.29F(g)(6). If a lottery is not needed, all applicants will be accepted, and parents and guardians will be contacted via telephone and via mail (both electronic and postal). Parents and guardians need to respond about their scholar's attendance at Clara Science Academy within five business days by 5:00 P.M.

If a lottery is needed, a date will be set for the lottery, which will take place no more than two weeks from the close of the enrollment period and will only include the names from the enrollment period noted above. Parents and guardians of applicants will be notified of the date and time of the lottery. The lottery will be open to the public and names will be decided by a computerized randomization system in accordance with the policies adopted in the North Carolina Charter Schools Act and by the State Board of Education. Once the names are chosen, the parent or guardian will have five business days until 5:00 P.M. to respond about their student's attendance.

2. As set in NCGS 115C-238.29F(g)(5a), Clara Science Academy will abide by the following:
  - For every year of operation, children of the active board members and full-time staff members will receive priority admission, up to 15% of the total enrollment.
  - Multiple birth siblings will be entered into the lottery as one surname, and should that surname be chosen in the lottery, all will receive admission.
  - After the first year of operation, siblings of current students will receive priority admission. Legacy preference will also be granted to students whose siblings have graduated from CSA within the previous four years.
3. We anticipate developing a waiting list of students. If a student withdraws, the next name on the waiting list will be offered a seat and that student's parent or guardian will be given one business day to respond. The Lead Administrator will develop a process to maintain effective student records and transfer documentation in a timely manner.

4. As stated above, we will utilize community meetings and open forums prior to the beginning of the admission's process. The purpose of these is to inform the public of the enrollment period, as well as to share our vision and mission with interested parents and community members.
  - a. In the event that a student from the school transfers, the parent or legal guardian should immediately notify the school. Clara Science Academy will verify the withdrawal of the student by letter. Once the letter is submitted, that seat will be open and if needed, the waiting list will be utilized.

#### Weighted Lottery

\*Does your school plan to use a weighted lottery? X Yes. Complete the following section.   
No.

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 anyway 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, unless the charter school is operated by a municipality OR the charter school was converted from a traditional public school. Municipal charter schools may give enrollment priority to domiciliary of the municipality in which the school is located (G.S. 115C-218.45(f)(7)), and charter schools that were converted from traditional public schools shall give admission preference to students who reside within the former attendance area of the school (G.S. 115C-218.45(c)).
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.

Through our application process we will comply with the Department of Education. In January 2014, the U.S. Department of Education issued updated guidance that expanded the circumstances under which public charter schools receiving Charter Schools Program (CSP) funds may elect to use a weighted lottery in admissions.

- When necessary to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title II of the

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as applicable; the equal protection clause of the Constitution; or applicable state law;

- To give a slightly better chance for admission to students seeking to change schools under the public-school choice provisions of Title I, Part A of the ESEA for the limited purpose of providing greater choice to students covered by those provisions; and
- To give slightly better chances for admission to all or a subset of educationally disadvantaged students if state law permits the use of such weighted lotteries.

(Sited: [www.publiccharters.org](http://www.publiccharters.org) National Alliance for Public Charter Schools)

Clara Science Academy mission is to increase scholars' access to a STEM learning environment and promote high academic achievement through scientific inquiry, reasoning, and investigative learning. With this mission Clara Science Academy will accept all scholars' applications and use the weighted lottery process to help expand school choice and give educationally disadvantaged scholars a better opportunity to succeed.

2. A thorough description of the processes and procedures the applicant intends to use to effectuate the lottery.

### **Overview of the Enrollment Process**

Generally, the enrollment process follows five basic steps:

1. Determining the number of spots available in each grade;
2. Publishing an admissions application to be completed by interested families and establishing an application deadline;
3. Evaluating the number of applications submitted after the deadline to determine which grade(s) will require a lottery;
4. Carrying out a lottery when required; and
5. Completing the enrollment/registration process for each student.

### **Lottery Procedure**

CSA will conduct a lottery if we receive more applications for enrollment than there are available spaces. The procedure of the lottery will be fair to all. As such, the method of the lottery will be transparent, random, and conducted in accordance with the policy adopted by North Carolina charter school law. Each lottery will be conducted in public and at a time and location that allows for the public to attend. This location will be conducted in a sufficient room and seating for public attendance. Further, we will not require a student or his or her representative to attend the lottery to receive an enrollment offer.

According to State Statute – North Carolina General Statutes N.C.G.S. § 115C-238.29F

(g) Admission Requirements. -

(1) Any child who is qualified under the laws of this State for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to a charter school.

Law states that except as otherwise provided by law or the mission of the school as set out in the charter, the school shall not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry.



North Carolina office of charter Schools “enrollment and Lottery guidance”, Instructs charter schools not to include questions about a student’s IEP, race, gender, GPA, religion or other nonessential information on the initial enrollment application.

CSA will follow these laws while admitting scholars.

3. The underlying research, pedagogical, educational, psychometric and legal, that supports the request and the procedures the applicant is requesting.

The underlying research, pedagogical, educational, psychometric and legal that supports CSA request is based data provided by the US Department of Education. According to USDOE the term “educationally disadvantaged students” includes students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, migrant students, limited-English-proficient students neglected or delinquent students, and homeless students. Hence weighted lotteries should prohibit schools such as CSA from creating an environment that may appear to be exclusively serving a particular subset of scholars. The DOE strongly encourages public charter schools utilizing the weighted lottery system to do so as part of a broader strategy that includes fulfillment of CSA’s responsibilities relating to outreach, recruitment, and retention for all scholars, including educationally disadvantaged scholars. Therefore, CSA will follow the state law N.C.G.S. § 115C-238.29F which states “A charter school shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability. Except as otherwise provided by law or the mission of the school as set out in the charter, the school shall not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry”. This research, pedagogical, educational, psychometric and legal finding is also supported and have been reported by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

### Certify

This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application. Yes No

Explanation (optional): Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 4 Operations

### 4.1 Transportation Plan

1. Describe in detail the transportation plan that will ensure that no child is denied access to the school due to lack of transportation. Include budgetary assumptions and the impact of transportation on the overall budget. The details of this plan should align with the mission, identified need for the charter school, targeted student population, and the budget proposal.



If you plan to provide transportation, include the following:

- a. Describe the plan for oversight of transportation options (e.g., whether the school will provide its own transportation, contract out for transportation, attempt to contract with a district, or a combination thereof) and who on the staff will provide this daily oversight.
- b. Describe how the school will transport students with special transportation needs and how that will impact your budget.
- c. Describe how the school will ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations related to transportation services.

In accordance with the statute 115C-218.40 Clara Science Academy will ensure that transportation is not a barrier to attendance or a deterrent to children who wish to enroll at Clara Science Academy. The Academy realize that for some of our target demographics it will be a challenging time in getting transportation. A transportation questionnaire will be provided in the enrollment packet for new scholars, and after analyzing the results, the leader of the school will create available options for every family to ensure no child is denied access to Clara Science Academy on the bases of transportation.

When the transportation questionnaire data has been analyzed, the academy will develop a plan with multiple pick-ups and drop-off locations in parts of Charlotte to ensure transportation availability for all scholars. The routes will be concentrated through a high density and easily accessible areas.

In addition, Clara Science Academy will explore available school bus chartering companies (such as Eagle Bus Company and A-1 Wheelchair Patient Transport, Inc) that would be willing to work directly with parents to establish drop-off and pick-up locations for children and will encourage the parents to work directly with the charter company to provide service. A-1 Wheelchair Patient Transport will transport scholars with special transportation needs. Also, the academy will reach out to MacAllister Transportation and American Bus to open a dialogue regarding the options available for buying a new or used bus for the transport of students to Clara Science Academy.

As Clara Science Academy review all transportation options, the Academy will create free transportation options to all students in order to best serve our target communities. Partnering with Clara's Foundation, CSA has assurances that the first 2 buses will be purchased on our behalf as evidenced in the accompanying letter from Clara's Foundation and the third bus will be purchase by CSA during the first year.

In the preliminary budget, the costs for a used bus, maintenance, fuel, and special transportation needs have already been accounted for and we believe this is a viable and sustainable line item for the future based on our projections.

#### 4.2 School Lunch Plan

1. 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.

If the school intends to participate in the National School Lunch Program, include the following components in the response:

- a. How the school will comply with applicable local, state, and federal guidelines and regulations;
- b. Any plans to meet the needs of low-income students; and
- c. Include how the school intends to collect free- and reduced-price lunch information from qualified families. If a school intends to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision, describe the methodology the school will use to determine eligibility.

CSA will participate in the USDA National School Lunch Program (also known as the free and reduced lunch program) by providing breakfast & lunch to all scholars based on need. CSA will consult and accept the three require bids from vendors who have expressed an interest. All scholars will be required to submit a Free and Reduced Priced Meals Application if interest for approval. Pending parental approval, CSA will ensure that all scholars receive meal as they wait. If a scholar who is not qualify for the free and reduced lunch program and does not have a bag lunch on any given day the school will provide a lunch for that scholar. By offering all scholar's a superior education, CSA will offer a quality breakfast & lunch program.

Under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs—Pursuant to sections 11 and 17A of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, (42U.S.C. 1759a and 1766a), all meals will meet the high standards of nutrition, taste, attractiveness, and delivered on time. If scholar do not qualify for USDA National School Lunch Program, parents will be asked to make payments for lunch (or breakfast) by check or money order and made payable to the School and delivered to the School office. Parents and scholars can also pay in cash by sending a sealed envelope with the scholar's name printed on the outside. All envelopes should be delivered to the teacher at the beginning of the school day to reduce the risk of loss or theft.

If a scholar is repeatedly arriving without a lunch and ask for breakfast, a conference with the parents of the scholar will be held during which CSA will determine the affordability of lunch & breakfast for the scholar. If a scholar's parents do not qualify for free and reduced lunch but, due to extenuating circumstances, cannot afford to provide lunch & breakfast, long-term plans will be made on a case-by-case basis to furnish the scholar with a nutritional meal.

All scholars are advised to refrain from sharing food with other scholars to minimize the spread of viruses and the risk of allergic reaction.

### 4.3 Civil Liability and Insurance

The Nonprofit shall name the SBE as an Additional Named Insured to their liability coverage for operation of a charter school while obtaining and maintaining insurance at a minimum in the following amounts:

- a. Errors and Omissions: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence;
  - b. General Liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence;
  - c. Property Insurance: For owned building and contents, including boiler and machinery coverage, if owned;
  - d. Crime Coverage: no less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to cover employee theft and dishonesty;
  - e. Automobile Liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence; and
  - f. Workers' Compensation: as specified by Chapter 97 of NC General Statute, Workers' Compensation Law.
1. Complete the table below, indicating the amount of each type of coverage as outlined in a quote obtained from an insurance provider.

Area of Proposed Coverage	Proposed Amount of Coverage	Cost (Quote)
Comprehensive General Liability	\$1,000,000.00/occurrence	1,461
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$1,000,000.00/occurrence	4,277
Property Insurance		450
Automobile Liability	\$1,000,000.00/occurrence	181
Crime Coverage Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$250,000.00   \$250,000.00	2,387
Worker's Compensation	\$500,000	6,710
Other Coverage		414
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>\$15,880</b>

#### **\*Attach Appendix L: Insurance Quotes**

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.

### 4.4 Health and Safety Requirements

All public charter schools are required to follow the regulations regarding health and safety as stated in G.S. 115C 218.75.

We, the Board members at **[Clara Science Academy]** 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.

\_\_\_\_\_ Omar Muhammad \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 8/24/19 \_\_\_\_\_

Board Chair Signature

Date

### Start-Up Plan

1. Provide a detailed start-up plan for the proposed school, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals (including compensation for those individuals, if applicable). Upon the approval of the charter scholars will be recruited from the target area. Recruitment activities will include open house, presentation in preschools, churches, and community centers. A public random drawing shall be used when admission requests exceed the available space, as expressly described in Education Code N.C.G.S. § 115C-238.29F. All scholars who do not gain admission to the school shall be placed on a waiting list. If vacancy occurs during the academic year the parent of the scholars at the top of the list will be notified immediately and offered the first chance to enroll. Before being eligible to commence school, all scholars and their parents or guardians shall meet with a school employee to review the scholar's handbook so that they are informed about the school policies. After reviewing the handbook, the scholars and parents shall sign a parent and scholars compact with each accepting to meet the school's expectations. Other implementation strategies include the following:

Date	Plan
January – March 2021	Board begins search the facility
8/2021	Develop school-wide goals based on base-line data
8/2021	Administrators communicate the Charter vision
9/2021	Teachers and staff set goals and should align to the school-wide goals
9/2021	Administrators develop and roll out the accountability plan
9/2021	Each class develops its own mission statement and set of core values and should align to the school mission, visions and values
9/2021	Each employee writes their own personal mission statement an Aligned to school mission
9/2021	Parent workshops about STEM will be offered by the school.
9/2021	Classroom teachers send home first scholars created newsletter and monthly Improve communication with parents
9/2021	Teachers will meet and review goals and achievement data weekly an ongoing. They will make necessary adjustments to monthly goals based on data
102021	Leadership team will review and analyze the benchmark data three times during the year Scholars led parent conferences
10/2021	Using their data portfolios, the scholars lead their parent conferences under the teacher's direction



April 2022	Scholars identified as at risk will receive additional support as recommended by the teachers of the cohorts
May 2022	Parent satisfaction survey and use data to set operational action plans for 2022-23 school year
May 2022	Employee satisfaction survey and use data to set operational action plans for 2022-23 school year
June 2022	Develop school-wide goals for 2022-23 by using school-wide end of year data, determine new targets for 2022-23

All tasks, timelines, and responsibilities are subject to change based on unforeseeable events.

- Describe what the board anticipates will be the challenges of starting a new school and how it expects to address these challenges. Submit a Start-up (Year 0) Budget as Appendix O, if applicable.

No board wants challenges however they exist. The greatest challenge for all start-up new schools is finding the building where the school will be held. These challenges will be address through meetings, consulting with experts and reviewing what other organizations have done in the past.

#### 4.5 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. Present a timeline with reasonable assumptions for facility selection, requisition, state fire marshal and health inspections, and occupation.

Clara Science Academy has been in contact with local churches in Charlotte, NC who is interested in leasing a building to the school and at below-market rent. In-addition the Academy has also identified multiple properties in the target area of central -southwest Charlotte that we have been exploring. Upon preliminary approval of the Clara Science Academy Charter School, the board will execute the following plan to obtain a facility:

- Work with a local commercial real estate firm to identify the 3 best possible options out of the identified properties considering traffic patterns, population density and demographics, scope of renovation work, and cost.
- Assess options with building committee and begin negotiations with most appropriate facility.
- Place property under contract before January 1, 2020.
- Apply for appropriate permitting for renovation work no later than February 1, 2020.
- Renovate property during ready-to-open period in order to meet all regulations set forth in Certificate of Occupancy for

Educational Use. F). Obtain Certificate of Occupancy for Educational Use prior to May 1, 2020. Submit to the Office of Charter Schools prior to beginning the first day of school.

- Describe the school’s facility needs based on the educational program and projected enrollment, including number of classrooms, square footage per classroom, classroom types, common areas, overall square footage, and amenities. Discuss both short-term and long-term facility plans. Demonstrate that the estimate included in your budget is reasonable.

Clara Science Academy Minimal Initial Size Calculation

pre assessment calculation - confirm program needs

space name	number required	size	units	subtotal	notes
Classrooms	10	720	sf	7200	25 x 10= 250
group toilets	2	875		1750	
staff toilets	2	150		300	
cafeteria	1	1000		1000	minimal
library	1	250		250	
Offices	4	150		600	
Storage	1	150		150	
subtotal				11250	
circulation				2250	net to gross ration 1.2
Total				13500	square feet needed min.

short-term facility plans.

CSA short-term facility plan will include a lease agreement for one to four years. While in a leasing agreement, CSA will look for a larger facility.

long-term facility plans.

CSA long-term facility plan is search for a property that will accommodate all the school scholars. The board will review all property listings and plans to build a facility. CSA will seek information from companies like SchoolDev East, LLC who has develop over 60 charter schools across the nation.

- Describe school facility needs, including science labs, art room, computer labs, library/media center, performance/dance room, gymnasium and athletic facilities, auditorium, main office and satellite offices, work room/copy room, supplies/storage, teacher work rooms, and other spaces.

CSA school facility needs and 10 classrooms, 1 cafeteria, 1 library, 4 Offices, 1 Storage, a science lab, a computer lab, a main office, a work room, and teacher work rooms to begin with.

- 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. Location and price depend on the space that will be chosen. \$100-150

psf if it is design/build on a vacant lot, and closer to \$85-110 if renovating existing building plus cost of land and existing building. The pricing is comparable to other areas.

5. 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. Clara Science Academy will meet with our contractor to review the timeline towards the finish date for proposed facility after two weeks of assessments. In December 2020 the board will assess progress, and if behind schedule the following plan will be implemented: Engage the local commercial real estate firm who helped with the search of the proposed facility. They are already familiar with our needs and with other properties in the area that could be suitable. (Contingency property search will be conducted simultaneously with search for proposed facility in order to not delay if proposed facility is not ready in time. The contingency property search will only include "turn-key" buildings that would require minimal up-fit for move-in.) 2. Identify 3 properties and conduct feasibility assessments to determine most suitable option for CSA by January 15, 2020. Enter into negotiations with contingency property no later than February 1, 2020. Determine costs of renovation to comply with Certificate of Occupancy for Educational Use. Apply for permitting no later than March 1, 2020. Perform all necessary work and receive Certificate of Occupancy for Educational Use no later than June 1, 2020. Execute a 1 (one) year lease with the contingency property along with 2 (two) renewable terms by June 15, 2020. Submit to the Office of Charter Schools prior to beginning the first day of school.
6. Describe the board's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable. CSA board has the capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations. Glenda Tate has over five years in real estate. Dr. Mohammad Alghorani, Dr. Leroy Wray, and Varsty Muhammad has experience in managing renovations in a school setting. Tariq Raheem has work for a construction company for over seven years. Omar Muhammad has developed, renovated, and managed property while working for non-profits in the northeast. CSA will also seek advice from our Commercial real estate consultant.

### Certify

This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.  Yes  No

Explanation (optional): Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 5 Financial Plan

### 1.1 Charter School Budget

All budgets should balance indicating strong budgetary skills. Any negative fund balances will, more than likely, generate additional questions by those evaluating the application. 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.

#### **\*Attach Appendix M: Revenue Assurances**

Assurances are needed to confirm the commitment of any additional sources of revenue.

#### **\*Attach Appendix N: Proposed Budget for Year 1 through Year 5**

Budget template can be located on the Office of Charter Schools Application website.

### 5.2 Budget Narrative

Please include additional information that explains the assumptions used in the 5-year budget.

1. How was the student enrollment number projected? The total enrollment number that was projected and ascertained through various channels including petitions, surveys (Nextdoor App, [www.clarascienceacademy.com](http://www.clarascienceacademy.com) which are still ongoing), office of charter school data, informal conversations, and data from other studies done in Charlotte. The information from informal conversations, homeowners' associations, churches, other religious institutions and residential input from residence in the region. CSA board is positive and confident that the numbers are attainable (250 scholars) necessary for year 1 and subsequent additions in years following. With the positive response we received through survey data supplements, residents have expressed the need for Clara Science Academy a STEM school in the region. Moreover, the U.S. Census Bureau American Fact Finder School Enrollment (2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates) has projected Charlotte school's enrollment to be at a 20% increase in grades K-12.
2. Provide an explanation as to why you believe there is a demand for the school that will meet this enrollment projection. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools continues to have challenges in achievement and is facing an expanding student population, which has led to overcrowding in certain areas. The 2017 Mecklenburg County Pulse Report included statistics indicating that Mecklenburg County's population grew by "approximately 200,000 people from 2010 to 2020." On average, the school district has grown about 1.3% annually since the 2007-08 school year. This equates to about 1,900 students per year. Most of the growth has been evidenced within the northern and southern portions of the county; however, the school system has experienced growth throughout all segments of the county. It is anticipated that this growth trend will continue for at least



the next ten years. Given the changing demographics of Mecklenburg County school-age population and the amount of growth that is anticipated, CMS will continue to face challenges as they plan for student assignment and how they can best meet the needs of each child they serve. Clara Science Academy believes that such growth in areas creates underperformance students that will drive demand for a school of choice. The board of Clara Science Academy School is seeking to maintain a small overall school size in order to maintain a successful student.

3. Provide the break-even point of student enrollment. Given all the assumptions in both revenue and expenditure projections, we estimate a break-even number of students to be 208. This break-even is the lowest number of students that we must enroll to cover our anticipated expenses, however, when we achieve our target enrollment goal of 250 students, Clara Science Academy will be operating with a surplus.
4. Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated. If any unforeseen circumstances occur that negatively affect revenues, two strategies will be employed depending upon the cause. Assuming a shortage arising from under-enrollment, Clara Science Academy will increase marketing efforts and use every available resource to improve enrollment including expanded outreach to the community, seeking referral partners, and increased exposure and visibility through advertising. Assuming changes in student funding, Clara Science Academy will take a budgetary approach by reducing costs in the following order: 1st - Reduction or elimination of any non-essential fixed costs and an attempt to renegotiate lease terms 2nd - Reduction or elimination of any non-essential, non-instructional variable costs (including non-instructional and administrative salaries and benefits) 3rd - Analysis and strategic reduction, consolidation or combination of expendable, non-essential instructional costs
5. 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. Also, describe any committed contributions and in-kind donations of goods or services to be received by the charter school that will assist in evaluating the financial viability of the school. Clearly indicate between those grants or in-kind donations which have already been firmly committed and those the board is planning to pursue. Be sure that the appropriate assurances documentation is provided in the appendices.  
CSA will rely on sources of funds other than state, county, and federal. Charter School Capital has committed \$285,000 and Clara's Foundation has committed \$20,000. Charter School Capital has expressed that they will provide more funding if it is needed. Volunteers have also donated their in-kind services to obtain surveys and petitions.
6. Provide the student to teacher ratio that the budget is built on. CSA's student to teacher ratio is 1:20 to 1:25 depending on grade.

7. Describe the board's individual and collective qualifications and capacity for implementing the financial plan successfully.

Glenda Tate – Has over 25 years working with the federal government which she managed over million-dollar grant proposals.

Jawwaad Rasheed – Is currently a board member for a charter school. He has reviewed and implemented financial plans as a board member

Omar Muhammad – Has over 15 years working with non-profits. He has worked as a director, vice president, and manager for several organizations. He has reviewed and implemented financial decision in all positions.

James Cyrus – Has experience in contract law.

Dr. Mohammad Alghorani – Has serve as a principal, director, and department chair of several organizations. He has reviewed and implemented financial decision in all positions.

Dr. Leroy Wrap – Has worked as an assistant principal, district coordinator, and school administrator. He has reviewed and implemented financial decision in all positions.

Varsty Muhammad – Has worked as an assistant director of housing and a site manager. She has reviewed and implemented financial decision in both positions

Tariq Raheem – Has worked as a dean, teacher, and director of several non-profits. In each position he has reviewed and implemented financial decisions that benefited all organizations.

8. Describe how one or more high needs students with disabilities might affect the budget and your plan to meet student needs that might be more than anticipated.  
One or more high needs students with disabilities might affect the budget through transportation cost. CSA will meet the scholar needs by adjusting the budget and by collaborating with agencies and organization who are providing services within the same geographical region.
9. If there is a plan to outsource any or all financial management areas such as payroll, benefits, audits, fundraising, accounting, etc., provide a statement on how the vendors will be selected and how the board will oversee their activities to ensure fidelity and compliance.  
CSA board will select a vendor by allowing the finance committee to review all information first. Once the finance committee has completed their review, they will present their recommendations to the board. The board will then vote on the vendor while in compliance with statue 115C-218.15. The board will oversee their activities to ensure fidelity and compliance by reviewing monthly, quarterly, and yearly reports.
10. 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. Clara Science

Academy intends to contract with qualified vendors for several administrative, accountability and staff development services. Contractors will be selected based on multiple factors including the contractor's experience and track record in the given field, the level of value added to the school through such service contracts, the ability to realize cost savings by outsourcing versus hiring, the integrity and reputation of the contractor, the feedback from references, the cost feasibility of the contract, and the favorability and fair nature of contract terms. The board will maintain strict oversight of any vendor/contractor and will regularly evaluate contractor performance.

11. Explain how the budget aligns with the school's mission, curricular offerings, transportation plans, and facility needs. Clara Science Academy is committed to delivering a high-quality instructional program in a public-school environment and to preparing students to succeed in a rigorous, global, and inclusive learning environmental program. In order to honor our commitment, Clara Science Academy must offer attractive compensation packages to instructional, support and administrative personnel. In addition, the board knows that the facility must be economically feasible, safe, in good repair; and functional and that instructional supplies, books, and equipment must be up to date and useful. With that being said, the budget aligns with the school's mission, goals, transportation, instructional and facility needs in the following ways: --The average teacher salary in Year 1 is the equivalent of the state scale salary for a teacher with 15 years of experience or an NBPTS certified teacher with 10 years of experience. Instructional salaries grow by 2% each year, thereby staying ahead of the average in North Carolina. --Clara Science Academy is devoted to keeping administrative salaries in check and to investing as much as possible into the personnel who deliver direct and indirect instructional or support services. We will seek the most talented teachers in order to give scholars the very best there is to offer. As stated above we have a competitive benefits package and a competitive starting salary for all staff positions. This is reflected by the fact that in year 1, the personnel budget represents over 80% of school's total expenditures. --To ensure low student to faculty ratio, multiple teacher assistant positions is important when the goal is to develop authentic relationships and provide more individualized instructions. --While working with low-income families it is important that every child have access to the school. Although our budget reflects a bus for the second year, Clara Science Academy will accommodate parents with options once they are enrolled at the school. During the second year our buses will accommodate the transportation need of our students and as the school grows, so does the budgeted number of buses and drivers. --The budget also contains a significant investment in instructional materials, software and other (technology hardware) throughout all five years. Clara Science Academy recognizes the need for scholars to have the appropriate tools to facilitate greater learning, and understanding children in the target demographic may not have access to a home computer, Clara Science Academy is purchasing tablets, chrome books, or laptops that



every student will have access to at school. Cost control, commitment, and mission-focused is the way that Clara Science Academy plans to manage its budget and key to ensuring that the mission of the school is advanced and that instructional, transportation and facility needs are met in an environment that rewards teachers for achievement and contribute to the benefit of each students.

12. What percentage of expenditures will be the school's goal for a general fund balance? Describe how the school will develop the fund balance. Fiscal best practices for a charter school include enacting policy that compels the board to operate on a zero-based, balanced budget from year-to-year while maintaining a low debt-to-income ratio. Cost controls and revenue enhancement will be employed to maximize the potential of every dollar and to build any possible savings reserves/fund balance. Any operating budget surplus will be committed to savings and/or invested in instructional programming as circumstances require. Although the school has not specified an arbitrary percentage of expenditures as a savings goal, it has specified that it will operate within its means and, using fiscal best practices, strive to build a fund balance sufficient to cover unforeseen expenses and minimize debt financing should the school eventually elect to expand its enrollment. Ideally, Clara Science Academy goal is to have a general fund balance of 10 to 15% of Total Expenditures by year 3. This will be accomplished through our surpluses at the end of each year. Due to unforeseen expenses, the goal may be obtained or not.
13. Provide a description of proposed financing structure. Include financing of facilities, other asset financing and leases. Clara Science Academy intends to enter into an operating lease for its facilities. The board will seek a commitment from potential building owners as to the monthly cost of the lease, which will be funded from operating revenues. The goal is to keep financing costs and debt to an absolute minimum. Those items that the school cannot afford and are not considered critical to instruction will be purchased through accumulated reserves as an alternative to long or short-term financing/leasing. Debt financing will remain a last resort.
14. Will the school have assets from other sources (e.g. building, furniture, chairs, computers, etc.)? If yes, please provide a list. Note which are secured and which are anticipated and include evidence of commitment for any assets on which the school's core operation depends. No assets are expected to be transferred to Clara Science Academy from other sources. It is expected that the furniture, chairs, and computers will be purchased using operating funds and that the facility lease will also be funded from operating revenues.



### 5.3 Financial Compliance

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

Clara Science Academy will implement both organizational level and functional level internal controls and will evaluate those controls annually to determine with approach and the necessary modifications that should take place. Organizational and functional level internal control documents will be written, and the independent auditor will be asked each year to review the organizational and functional level internal control documents, compare them to actual practices and to make recommendations to the board for improvements. Organizational level controls will document the organizational structure and operational environment of the school and include statements on integrity, management philosophy and operating styles, training and commitment to competence, risk assessment, and internal and external communication. The school's functional level internal controls will consist of a comprehensive set of written, functional level control documents for information systems, general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, cash disbursements, cash receipts, payroll (including E-verify), journal entries, financial reporting, and fixed assets and depreciation. All functional level control document will identify and define source documents, enumerate segregated duties and functions, specify output reports and summaries, appoint an appropriate authorizer, and levels of authorization, and provide procedures for error detection and correction. Our implementation for organizational level control documents will be reviewed with the entire staff (including applicable vendors, consultants and contractors) annually and referenced throughout the year during staff development and other workshops. The functional level control documents will be reviewed with each employee, vendor, consultant or contractor to which the controls will apply to the financial officer, financial management contractor, IT personnel, independent auditor, the board of directors and finance committee and the school's administrative leadership.

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

Clara Science Academy does not have any known or anticipated related party transactions. Financial integrity is a high importance for Clara Science Academy, and we have established a standard of excellence in financial management through our policies and procedures as established with our board of directors, head of school, independent auditor/financial services firm, and school financial officer.

3. Provide the name of the firm approved by the NC Local Government Commission (LGC) that will conduct the audit. Include the complete mailing address, telephone number

and fax number. If a firm has yet to be identified, please list the firms the board has investigated.

The following firms are being explored to perform the annual, independent financial audit:

- 1). Pettway, Mills and Pearson, CPA Zebulon Office 806 N. Arendell Avenue Zebulon, NC 27597 919.269.7405
- 2). Earney & Company, L.L.P. 710 Military Cutoff Rd., Ste 250 Wilmington, NC 28405 Phone: 910-256-9995 Fax: 910-256-2829 Email: info@earney.net.com
- 3). Bernard Robinson & Company, LLP 1501 Highwoods Blvd., Ste. 300 (27410) P.O. Box 19608 Greensboro, NC 27419-9608 Front Desk: 336.294.4494

#### Certify

This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.  Yes  No

Explanation (optional): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

## Application Fee

Pursuant to G.S. 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 **July 29, 2019 at 5:00 pm EST** for Fast Track and Accelerated applications, and **August 26, 2019 at 5:00 pm EST** for traditional timeline applications. 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 the Application Fee Payment Form before or on the due date of July 29, 2019 at 5:00 pm EST for Fast Track and Accelerated applicants, and August 26, 2019 at 5:00 pm EST for traditional timeline applicants.** 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

6307 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-6307

## Signature Page

The foregoing application is submitted on behalf of [Omar Muhammad for Clara Science Academy]. 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 "Planning Year for New and Preliminary Charter Schools – CHTR 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Omar Muhammad \_\_\_\_\_

Board Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 8/24/2019 \_\_\_\_\_

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

Notary Public: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Seal:

My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.



## Appendices

The appendices are designed to complement the overall application and charter school plan. Make sure you follow all directions for appendices attached to the application. Some appendices within the application have specific directions and page limits. The required appendices have a single asterisk (\*). Without these appendices the application shall be deemed incomplete. Appendices with two asterisks (\*\*) are required only if the board contracts with a management group (Appendix A4.1) or is utilizing additional revenue resources to meet their budgetary needs (Appendix M). Appendix O should only be used to provide additional information that you believe will assist the State Board of Education in the consideration of your application. No more than 10 pages are permitted for Appendix O. The cover page template to be used for each appendix is available on the next page.

Appendix \_\_\_\_\_: [Insert Title of Appendix]

Clara Science Academy

- Appendix A1 – Acceleration Evidences
- Appendix A2.1 – Public Conversion Evidences
- Appendix A2.2 – Private Conversion Evidences
- Appendix A3.1 – Replication Educational Outcomes
- Appendix A3.2 – Replication Financial Records (IRS 990)
- Appendix A4.1 – Executed CMO/EMO Contract (if contracting with an EMO or CMO)\*\*
- Appendix A4.2 – EMO/CMO Facility Buyout Agreement\*\*
- Appendix A4.3 – EMO/CMO Financial History (Bank Statements)\*\*
- Appendix A4.4 – IRS Form 990\*\*
- Appendix A – Evidence of Parent/Community Support\*
- Appendix B – Curriculum Outline for Each Grade Band the School Will Ultimately Serve\*
- Appendix C – 9-12 Core Content Electives
- Appendix D – Yearly Academic Calendar\*
- Appendix E – Daily and Weekly Schedule for Each Grade Band the School Will Ultimately Serve\*
- Appendix F – Federal Documentation of Tax-Exempt Status
- Appendix G – Organizational Chart\*
- Appendix H – Charter School Board Member Response and Resume\*

## Charter School Board Member Information Form

*Note: To be completed individually by each proposed founding charter school board member. All forms must be signed by hand.*

Serving on a public charter school board is a position of public trust and as a board member of a North Carolina public charter school; you are responsible for ensuring the quality of the school's entire program, competent stewardship of public funds, and the school's fulfillment of its public obligations and all terms of its charter.

As part of the application for a new charter school, the State Board of Education requests that each prospective board member respond individually to this questionnaire. Where narrative responses are required, brief responses are sufficient.

The purpose of this questionnaire is twofold: 1) to give application reviewers a clearer introduction to the applicant team behind each school proposal in advance of the applicant interview, in order to be better prepared for the interview; and 2) to encourage board members to reflect individually as well as collectively on their common mission, purposes, and obligations at the earliest stage of school development.

### Background

1. Name of charter school on whose Board of Directors you intend to serve:

2. Full name:

Home Address:

Business Name and Address:

Telephone No.:

E-mail address:

3. Brief educational and employment history.

4. Have you previously served on a board of a school district, another charter school, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation?

No:

Yes:

5. How were you recruited to join this Board of Directors? Why do you wish to serve on the board of the proposed charter school?

6. What is your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member?



7. Describe any previous experience you have that is relevant to serving on the charter school's board (e.g., other board service). If you have not had previous experience of this nature, explain why you have the capability to be an effective board member.
8. Describe the specific knowledge and experience that you would bring to the board.

### **School Mission and Program**

1. What is your understanding of the school's mission and guiding beliefs?
2. What is your understanding of the school's proposed educational program?
3. What do you believe to be the characteristics of a successful school?
4. How will you know that the school is succeeding (or not) in its mission?

### **Governance**

1. Describe the role that the board will play in the school's operation.
2. How will you know if the school is successful at the end of the first year of operation?
3. How will you know at the end of five years of the schools is successful?
4. What specific steps do you think the charter school board will need to take to ensure that the school is successful?
5. How would you handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the school's board were acting unethically or not in the best interests of the school?

\*Please include the following with your Information Form

- a **one page** resume

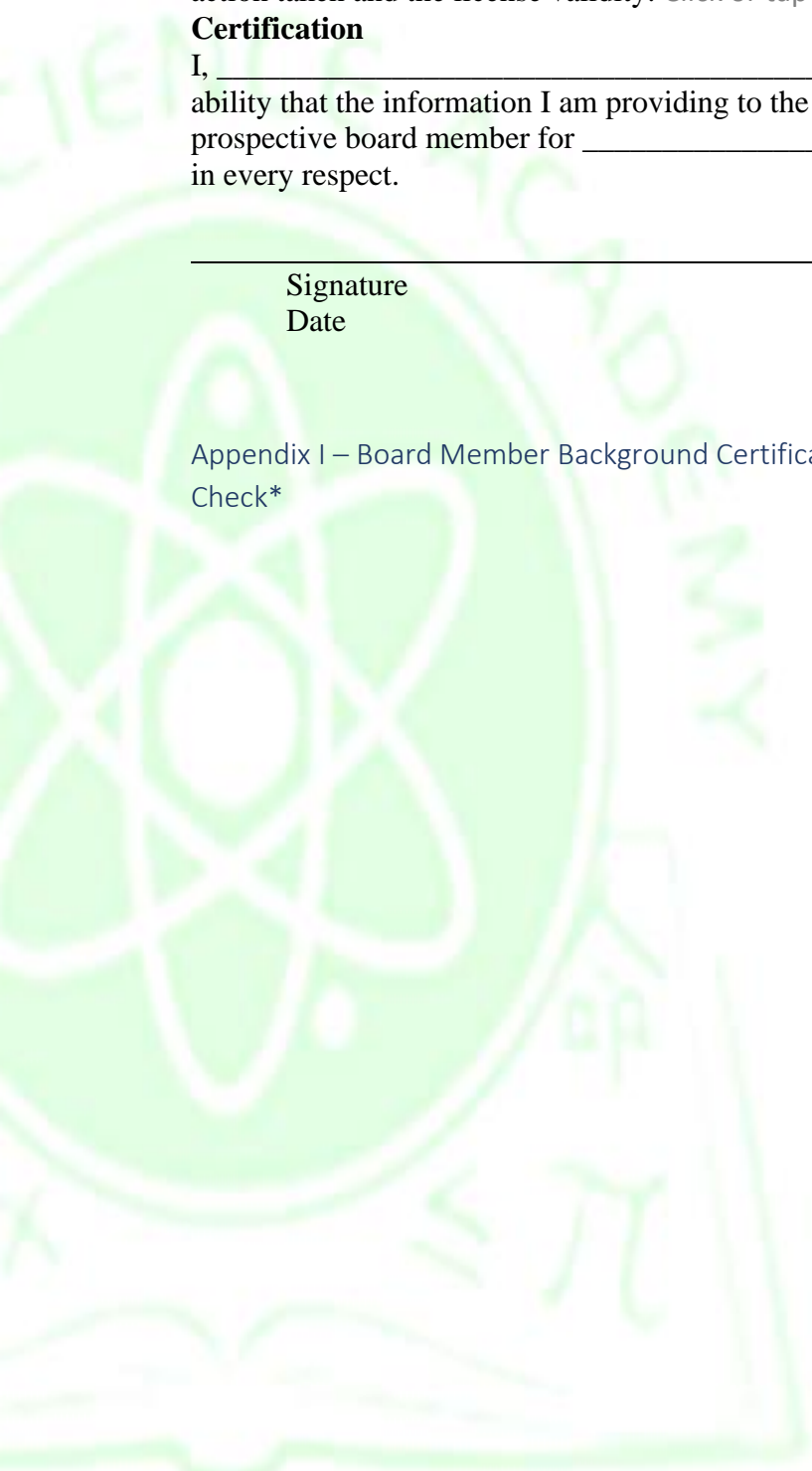
\*If you responded within the application that disciplinary action has been taken against any past or present professional licenses, provide a detailed response below outlining the disciplinary action taken and the license validity. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

**Certification**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify to the best of my knowledge and ability that the information I am providing to the North Carolina State Board of Education as a prospective board member for \_\_\_\_\_ Charter School is true and correct in every respect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
Date

Appendix I – Board Member Background Certification Statement and Completed Background Check\*



## Charter School Board Member Background Check Form

### Certification Statement:

*Note: To be completed individually by each proposed founding charter school board member. Form must be signed by hand.*

*If a board member has been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony other than a minor traffic violation, attach a separate sheet listing the year of the charge, the charge, the verdict, and the final disposition.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ Omar Muhammad \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I ***have not*** been convicted of any misdemeanor or felony other than a minor traffic violation.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ 8-26-19 \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I ***have*** been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony other than a minor traffic violation.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Board Member Background Check

**Each member of the founding board must submit a completed background check that meets the following parameters:**

- 1) Background check must include a Social Security Trace** (which scans his/her SSN and lists every county/state of residence where that SSN has been used).
- 2) Background check must include any additional aliases that have been used by the individual.**
- 3) Background check must include a completed county level check for any county returned in the Social Security Trace.**
- 4) Background check must include a completed nationwide check.**

Appendix J – Proposed By-Laws of the School’s Board of Directors\*

Appendix K – Articles of Incorporation or Municipal Charter\*

Appendix L – Insurance Quotes\*

Appendix M – Revenue Assurances and/or Working Capital Report\*\*

Appendix N – Proposed School Budget for Year 1 through Year 5\*

Appendix O – Additional Appendices Provided by Applicant

Appendix P – Required Signed and Notarized Documents\*





### Charter School Required Signature Certification

*Note: Outlined below is a list of areas that must be certified by the proposed Board of Directors. Any forms Not Applicable to the proposed charter school indicate below with N/A and provide a brief explanation for providing such response.*

Serving on a public charter school board is a position of public trust and board members of a North Carolina public charter school; you are responsible for ensuring the quality of the school’s entire program, competent stewardship of public funds, the school’s fulfillment of its public obligations, all terms of its charter, and understanding/overseeing all third party contracts with individuals or companies.

- ❖ The selected Board Attorney that he/she has reviewed with the full Board of Directors, listed within the application, all the governance documents and liabilities associated with being on the Board of a Non Profit Corporation.

- Name of the Selected Board Attorney:  
\_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

- Date of Review:  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Signature of Board Members Present (Add Signature Lines as Needed):

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- ❖ The selected Board Auditor that he/she has reviewed with the full Board of Directors, listed within the application, all the items required for the annual audit and 990 preparations.

- Name of the Selected Board Auditor:  
\_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

- Date of Review:  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Signature of Board Members Present (Add Signature Lines as Needed):

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❖ If contracting with a CMO/EMO, that the selected management company has reviewed with the full Board of Directors, listed within the application, all the items required and the associated management contract and operations.

○ Name of the Contact for Selected EMO/CMO:  
\_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

○ Date of Review:  
\_\_\_\_\_

○ Signature of Board Members Present (Add Signature Lines as Needed):

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❖ If contracting with a financial management service provider that the selected financial service provider has reviewed with the full Board of Directors, listed within the application, all the financial processes and services provided.

○ Name of the Contact:  
\_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

○ Name of the Selected Financial Service Provider:  
\_\_\_\_\_

○ Date of Review:  
\_\_\_\_\_

○ Signature of Board Members Present (Add Signature Lines as Needed):

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❖ If the proposed Board of Directors, listed within the application, is contracting with a service provider to operate PowerSchool that the service provider has reviewed all of the financial processes and services provided.

○ Name of the Contact:  
\_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

○ Name of the Selected PowerSchool Service Provider:  
\_\_\_\_\_

○ Date of Review:  
\_\_\_\_\_

○ Signature of Board Members Present (Add Signature Lines as Needed):

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**Certification**

I, Omar Muhammad, as Board Chair, certify that each Board Member has reviewed and participated in the selection of the individuals and vendors attached to this document as evidenced by the full Board of Director signatures outlined above. The information I am providing to the North Carolina State Board of Education as Clara Science Academy Charter School is true and correct in every respect.

---

Signature

Date

