



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

North Carolina Charter School Application

P.E.A.K Academy

(Prepare and Empower to Achieve through Knowledge)

Opening in the 2021-2022 school year

Table of Contents

Application Contact Information.....	4
Certify.....	6
Charter Application Special Requests	7
Acceleration	7
Conversion	7
Replication	7
Proposed Management Organization (EMO or CMO)	8
Section 1 Mission, Purposes, and Goals.....	9
1.1 Mission and Vision.	9
1.2 Purposes of the Proposed Charter School.....	17
1.3 Goals for the Proposed Charter School	19
Section 2 Education Plan	21
2.1 Instructional Program.....	21
Curriculum and Instructional Design.....	24
2.2 Special Populations and “At-Risk” Students.....	29
2.3 Exceptional Children.....	32
Identification and Records	32
Exceptional Children’s Programming	33
2.4 Student Performance Standards	36
2.5 School Culture and Discipline.....	39
Certify.....	43
Section 3 Governance and Capacity.....	43
3.1 School Governing Body	43
3.2 Governance	43
3.4 Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management.....	54
Projected Staff.....	54
Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management.....	54
3.5 Staff Evaluations and Professional Development.....	61
3.6 Marketing, Recruitment, and Enrollment	66
Marketing Plan	67
3.7 Parent and Community Involvement	70
	2

If you have questions regarding the application process, please contact the Office of Charter Schools via email at danielle.allen@dpi.nc.gov.

3.8 Admissions Policy 73

 Weighted Lottery 76

 Certify..... 78

Section 4 Operations 78

 4.1 Transportation Plan..... 78

 4.2 School Lunch Plan..... 79

 4.3 Civil Liability and Insurance 80

 4.4 Health and Safety Requirements 82

 Start-Up Plan 83

 4.5 Facility 86

 Certify..... 89

Section 5 Financial Plan 90

 5.1 Charter School Budget 90

 5.2 Budget Narrative 90

 5.3 Financial Compliance..... 95

 Certify..... 96

Signature Page 97

Application Contact Information

Name of Proposed Charter School: P.E.A.K. Academy Charter School

Organization Type: Municipality Nonprofit Corporation

Name of non-profit organization under which charter will be organized or operated: PEAK Academy Charter School

Has the organization applied for 501(c)(3) non-profit status? Yes No N/A (Municipal)

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: Catherine Lordi

Title/Relationship to Non-Profit: Board Secretary

Mailing Address: 42 Elk Mountain Scenic Hwy

City/State/Zip: Asheville, NC 28804

Primary Telephone: 828-230-4377

Alternate Telephone: 828-712-2752

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

Geographic County: Buncombe

LEA/District Name: Asheville City Schools

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: Leaders Building Leaders

Fees provided to the third-party person or group? \$1500

1. 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: Leaders Building Leaders provided advice, feedback on the written portions of this application, and contact information for outside service providers. The assistance provided by Leaders Building Leaders will end once this application has been submitted.
2. Is this application a conversion from a traditional public school or private school?

Yes. Complete the Conversion Special Request Section.

No. Stop. Do not complete this section.

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

Yes. Complete the Replication Special Request Section.

No. Stop. Do not complete this section.

Do you want your application to be considered for acceleration?

Yes. Complete the Acceleration Special Request Section.

No. Stop. Do not complete this section.

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

Yes. Complete the Alternative Charter School Special Request Section.

No. Stop. Do not complete this section.

5. Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment

Projected School Opening Year: 2021 Month: August

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

7. 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 2027-2028
K	40	40	40	40	40	40
1	44	44	44	44	44	44
2	44	44	44	44	44	44
3		44	44	44	44	44
4			44	44	44	44
5				46	46	46
6					46	46
7						46
8						46
9						
10						
11						
12						
Totals	128	172	216	262	308	400

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

Anticipated Racial/Ethnic Demographics (%)	% of Economically Disadvantaged Students	% of Students with Disabilities	% of English Language Learners
Black 45% Hispanic 20% White 30% Native American/Asian/Pacific Islander 5%	60%	12%	15%

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

PEAK Academy will open in 2021 with 128 students in grades Kindergarten through 2nd grade, and increase one grade level per year (adding 40-44 students) until it reaches full capacity as a K-8 school with 400 total students in 2027-2028 (Year 7). Our mission to empower our students with academic excellence and love of learning drove our decision to start our school with the lower elementary grades. We recognize that a foundation in literacy is crucial to academic achievement in the upper grades and life-long scholarship. While we do believe that PEAK Academy can also serve students who don't enroll until the upper grades through high quality, differentiated instruction with a tremendous amount of support, we also recognize a foundation in literacy provides students with the strongest likelihood to meet their full potential as students. Our board also believes the most successful organizations start small and focused and grow incrementally to control the quality of outcomes.

PEAK Academy will have 2 classes per grade, with 20-23 students in each class. We based our enrollment numbers on the Asheville City and Buncombe County populations and other area charter school's extensive waiting lists. At maximum capacity, PEAK Academy will enroll less than 5% of each grade level for the combined student populations of Buncombe County and Asheville City School District's.

Certify

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

Charter Application Special Requests

Acceleration

Do you want your application to be considered for acceleration?

- Yes. Answer questions A1-5.
 No. Stop. Do not complete this section.

Conversion

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

- Yes. Go to Question #2.
 No. Stop. Do not complete this section.

Replication

Per SBE policy [CHTR-016](#), the State Board of Education (SBE) may, in certain well-defined instances, grant permission for a non-profit corporation board of directors (board) to replicate either its own successful model, or to employ an educational management company (EMO) or a charter management organization (CMO) to replicate a successful model currently being operated under the management of the EMO or CMO. The SBE may also, in certain well-defined instances, grant permission for a non-profit corporation board to “fast track” such a replication by foregoing the planning year normally required for newly-approved charter applicants.

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

- Yes. Go to Question #2. **No. Do not complete this section.**

Fast Track Replication

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

- Yes. Complete the Fast Track Eligibility Criteria below.
 No. You have completed the Replication Special Request section. Please attach the required appendices **3.1 Education Outcomes** for the replicated school(s) for the last three academic years, and **3.2 Replication Financial Evidences IRS Form 990**, bank statements for the replicated school(s) for the prior three years.

Alternative

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

Yes. Continue to the next section.

No. Stop. Do not complete this section.

Proposed Management Organization (EMO or CMO)

1. Does the Charter School plan to contract for services with an “educational management organization” or “charter management organization”?

Yes

No. Stop do not complete this section.

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):

Through dynamic, culturally relevant instruction and limitless expectations, students at PEAK Academy will be empowered with the academic excellence, character traits, and love of learning necessary to become life-long scholars, leaders, and community stewards.

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

PEAK Academy believes all children can achieve at high levels, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, when provided a rigorous, culturally relevant curriculum and held to high academic and behavioral standards. PEAK Academy will **Prepare** students to become confident leaders, critical thinkers, avid readers, and life-long learners. PEAK will **Empower** students to view themselves as community stewards and world-changing problem solvers, with opportunities to make real change in their community. PEAK will ensure all students **Achieve** academic excellence and obtain the **Knowledge**, skill set, and character traits to reach their unlimited potential in high school, college, career, and life.

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\(e\).](#)

The city of Asheville (population of 91,902) covers roughly 40 square miles and is located within Buncombe County (population 257,600). According to the 2017 Census, the demographics of

the city are as follows: 79% White, 12% African American, 6 % Hispanic, and 5% Other. Asheville City and Buncombe County are two separate school districts. Based on the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2018, Asheville City Schools served 4,343 total students. 62% of Asheville City School students are White, 22% African American and 15% Hispanic. Buncombe County served 24,369 students: 75% White, 6% African American, and 12% Hispanic. While PEAK Academy plans to market and admit students from both districts, Asheville City Schools will be considered our LEA because of our projected location, a higher projected enrollment from Asheville City Schools, and its overwhelming disparity in achievement levels between African American and white students.

PEAK Academy differs from other charter schools in Asheville because of our intentional efforts to provide an exciting educational alternative to our population that is at-risk of academic failure because of a gap in opportunity currently available to lower-income, African American families residing in the City of Asheville. These students are not being provided with an education that affords them academic excellence or empowers them with the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their limitless potential in life. PEAK Academy will close the gap for students in Asheville who *need* another choice. We will market to and recruit students from predominantly lower-income, minority neighborhoods and will recruit and retain staff and board members that are reflective of the student population. While we anticipate PEAK Academy's demographic composition will differ from that of Asheville City and Buncombe County School's majority white population, it is essential that we enroll higher numbers of lower-income and students of color, because those are the students that need PEAK Academy the most. PEAK Academy will not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, language spoken, disability, or readiness level. All students are welcome to apply for our lottery. However, we anticipate being a most attractive option primarily for those families of students who are not being provided an equitable education in the public schools, including African American students, English Language Learners, and Economically Disadvantaged Students.

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?

The gap between test scores of white and African American students in Asheville City Schools roughly mirrors the same trends across the state until the 2009-2010 school year. Since then, Asheville City School's achievement gap has widened dramatically each year. While achievement scores for White students have remained steady, African American achievement scores have dramatically declined in the last decade. By the 2015-2016 school year, Asheville had the largest achievement gap between white students and African American students in the state of North Carolina, and it has continued to widen since then. Despite having the second highest local funding in the state (\$16,092 per student), small class sizes (on average 2 fewer students than the state average per class), and a mission statement that claims that it provides, "excellence with equity for all students," in 2017-2018, only 15% of 3rd-8th grade African

American students showed sufficient, solid, or superior command on their End of Grade (EOG) math assessment, compared to 76% of white students. Only 17% of African American students were sufficient or higher in reading/language arts, compared to 83% of white students. Not only is it the largest achievement gap in the state, it is also the fifth largest achievement gap in the nation (Reardon, 2017).

Because they are not being prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in high school, the achievement level of African American students at Asheville High School is equally as troubling. In 2018, 89.4% of White students were sufficient or higher on their English II exam, compared to only 18% of African American students (a gap of 71.4 %). In Math I, 73% of White students showed sufficient command or higher, compared to only 9.8% of African American students (a gap of 63.4%). Only 27% of Asheville High African American students scored a 17 or higher on their ACT, compared to 85% of White students. Furthermore, only 4% of African American students enrolled in any AP classes at Asheville High School in 2017-2018, compared to 35% of White students.

Asheville City School's one other high school, School of Inquiry and Life Sciences at Asheville (SILSA), located within Asheville High, provides a more rigorous, challenging experience where all students participate in a college preparatory curriculum, taking solely Honors and AP level courses. There are 100 students in each cohort at SILSA, roughly 17% of which are African American. While narrower, the achievement gap at SILSA still exists. In 2017-2018, 57% of African American students at SILSA displayed sufficient or solid command of material, compared to 92% of White students. 40% of African American students scored a 17 or above on the ACT, compared with 93% of White students. And only 18% of African American students take AP courses at SILSA compared to 65% of White students.

Asheville's Youth Justice Report Card (youthjusticenc.org) also made it clear that Asheville City Schools has, in addition to their academic gap, an incredibly unequal discipline gap. Though African Americans only make up only 22% of the student population, they received over 64% of disciplinary referrals in the 2017-2018 school year. African American students were 10.8 times more likely than White students to receive a short-term suspension. Of students with more than 1 out of school suspension, 71% were African American and only 15% were white. African American students were five (5) times more likely than White students to be referred to juvenile delinquency court. This gap is justly perceived as a bias among African American families. 74% of parents surveyed feel racial biases exist in discipline tactics in Asheville City Schools.

Recent research conducted by economists at Johns Hopkins demonstrates that having one elementary teacher that is African American has a lasting, positive impact upon academic outcomes for low-income, African American students. The study shows that not only are there short-term benefits of higher test scores, stronger self-efficacy, and motivation, but there are long-term benefits to having an African American teachers as well; these students are

significantly less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to consider college (Papageorge, 2017). This “role-model effect” is real, and mostly absent in the Asheville City Schools. In the 2018-2019 school year, only 5% of teachers in the Asheville City Schools were African American while 92% of teachers were White. While addressing this issue at a May 7 Buncombe County Board of Commissioners Special Meeting on school budgets, the Asheville City School superintendent was asked whether hiring teachers of color would be a priority. She replied that there was no intention to create incentives or programs to help recruit teachers of color to the district.

In 2017, Asheville City Schools adopted the Integrated Comprehensive System for Equity Initiative to address disparities, but actual goals and strategies for addressing the gap continue to remain elusive. In fact, the gap has widened even with this expensive initiative (over \$105,000 spent to date). In 2018-2019, each school within the Asheville City Schools had to develop a student achievement plan. Of the 8 of 10 schools that made their achievement plan available online, only one mentions any qualitative goals for improving African American student achievement. Claxton Elementary includes the goal for roughly 61% of 3rd grade students to be proficient in reading at the end of the 2018 school year, but just 14.3% met that target. A recent article in local newspaper cited the Asheville Middle School Principal stating in a public meeting, “The reality is, there are children who are coming to me in the sixth grade, and they do not know their multiplication tables, and they are not reading at grade level. And I am sending them to [high school] not having a tremendous impact on them for three years.” (Daffron, 2019).

Time and time again, Asheville City School board members, officials, and staff have made public statements that blame everything but instruction and disparity in expectations for the low achievement levels of African American students: from poverty to parents to violence in neighborhoods. In the same article mentioned above, Asheville City Board Member and retired ACS teacher Martha Geitner states, “...if they’re not getting fed, if they’re not getting what they need – just basics – they can’t learn.” Sarah Cain, principal of Jones Elementary states, “Our friends who are coming into Kindergarten have already experienced significant trauma in their lives. They’re screaming, they’re crying, they’re tantruming. They can’t access instruction because of what they’re walking in the door with every morning.” (In 2018, of Jones’ African American students, only 14.3% scored a 3 or higher in math and only 9.5% in reading.) What is clear is that there is a toxic mindset permeating the City Schools that students of color cannot learn. Our most vulnerable students are not even being given a chance.

The Asheville City Schools are failing to adequately educate African American students and the district does not have any direct plan to address the inequity. Families deserve another option for their children. There are currently 5 charter school options located in Buncombe County: Evergreen, Invest Collegiate Imagine, Francine Delaney, ArtSpace, and the Franklin School of Innovation. 4 of the 5 charter schools have a student population over 85% white and less than

5% African American. Without a weighted lottery and with extensive waiting lists, these schools are simply not an option for Asheville's African American and/or lower-income families.

Francine Delaney, a K-8 charter school serving roughly 170 students, is the one charter school with an African American population similar or greater to the LEA at 26%. The achievement levels of African American students at Francine Delaney far outscore Asheville City's magnet elementary schools and middle school, with 43% of African Americans scoring sufficient or higher in reading and 53% in math. However, it is a small school, with only 4-5 African American students in each grade level, leaving most of Asheville's African American, lower income families without any other option other than the one that is failing them.

PEAK Academy will be committed to providing a school that offers dynamic, rigorous instruction with high academic expectations for Asheville's families negatively impacted by Asheville's opportunity gap. PEAK will utilize the culturally relevant pedagogy developed by Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, in which all students a) experience academic success, b) develop or maintain cultural competence, and c) develop a critical consciousness. PEAK teachers will be trained with the highly effective, research-based Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program, which has proven successful in helping students traditionally underrepresented in higher education become college and career ready. It provides practical training in providing culturally relevant, inquiry-based, student-centered instruction. An AVID elective is already available for students at Asheville High School and SILSA and has a strong reputation in the community, having proven effective at helping lower-income students in high school reach college and make positive life and career choices.

PEAK Academy will be data-driven, setting clear, ambitious, individualized goals for student achievement and behavior, celebrating successes and recalibrating instructional strategies when experiencing failures. Within an environment that is both challenging and supportive the pervasive sense that it is "cool to be smart" will permeate every aspect of the school. Hard work and perseverance will constantly be praised and celebrated, and with patience and encouragement, teachers will instill a growth mindset in both academics and character. Students at PEAK Academy will develop confidence, a powerful work ethic, positive character traits, and a commitment to inquiry that will transcend any barrier to success.

A vital component of our success will be the partnerships we develop with families of our students. Parents are partners in each child's education. It is vital for parents and stakeholders to feel empowered to help change the narrative for their community, and communication between the parents and teachers will be consistent, clear, and empowering. We recognize that it is more difficult for lower-income families to get to school events and meetings; therefore, we have focused our location search in areas in and around our targeted neighborhoods.

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 at PEAK Academy will be 400 students in grades Kindergarten through eighth grade. We plan to open the school with 128 students in grades Kindergarten through Second Grade with two classes of 20 in Kindergarten, and 22 students in 1st-2nd grade. While Asheville City Schools is our LEA, the Buncombe County School district also has an achievement gap that mirrors the state average, and we will not exclude families in the BCS district looking for a more rigorous, culturally relevant education for their children. Therefore, we plan to market, recruit, and admit students from both Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools. Based on our target neighborhoods, we expect to recruit roughly 60% of our students from Asheville City and 40% from Buncombe County. This will reflect 1.7% of the enrollment of K-8 in the Asheville City School District and .21% of Buncombe County School District in our first year. We will add a grade level each year through the eighth grade until there are 40 total students in Kindergarten, and 44-48 total students in First through Eighth grade in our seventh year. The total projected enrollment of 400 students in year eight reflects 7.9% of the enrollment in K-8 at Asheville City Schools and .80% enrollment in K-8 in the Buncombe County Schools.

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?

What will differentiate PEAK Academy from Asheville City Schools will be the intentional methods we utilize to create opportunities of learning that will drive student achievement for students that come from diverse and economically disadvantaged homes. We will create a learning environment that will prove with quantitative and anecdotal evidence that all students can achieve and succeed at high levels. Five guiding principles, drawn from the US Department of Education report on Successful Charter Schools, will enable us to attain our goal:

1. **Mastery, goal-driven Instruction:** Instruction at PEAK Academy will be rigorous and student-centered, driven by students' capacity to master material as opposed to simply following a scripted curriculum. Teachers will create their instructional plan based on student readiness and needs and will use a backwards-planning model, beginning with setting ambitious, clear, measurable goals and investing students in reaching them. Teachers will consistently and frequently assess and reassess student progress using formative and benchmark assessments and use this information to inform their planning and instruction. Each core subject will have built in time to provide additional support, remediation, and opportunities of enriched learning.
2. **Inquiry-based Learning:** The learning process at PEAK Academy will be dynamic. Teachers will utilize an inquiry-based model that recognizes students best construct knowledge by doing. AVID will provide teachers with a plethora of methods to facilitate higher order thinking

through inquiry across subjects. Teachers at PEAK will constantly trigger students' curiosity and create a deep thirst for knowledge by exposing them to new ideas and students will be actively engaged in their learning process: asking questions, exploring ideas, making discoveries, collaboratively problem solving, and reflecting on their own learning.

3. Culturally Relevant Instruction: Research has proven that culturally relevant instruction works when it includes Gloria Ladson-Billings' three primary approaches: high expectations for student engagement and learning, promoting cultural competence and self-identity, and promoting critical consciousness (Byrd, 2016). Staff at PEAK Academy will all have a deep understanding and respect for students' backgrounds which will be reflected in the ways they interact with their students, the resources they use, and the emphasis on students' own culture and community, allowing students to master content in a more personal way. What a teacher learns about his or her students will be woven into the classroom, emphasizing their interests, passions, and talents to drive out any fears or insecurities that can be a hindrance to learning. Students at PEAK Academy will feel safe being who they are, belong to a positive school culture where they know they are valued and will feel secure taking risks.

4. Dedication to Developing Character: PEAK Academy will promote excellence in living as well as learning. The goal at PEAK will not be for students to just exemplify good behavior, but to develop excellent character and a desire to make the world a better place. AVID will provide teachers will systematic and authentic strategies for integrating character education into the context of regular instruction, extending into project and service-based learning where students will have opportunities to apply their learning in their homes and communities. Teachers will model strong character, use persons of character as models, and praise and reward students for exemplifying the school-wide Core Values.

5. Parents as Partners: Research proves that effective home-school collaboration leads to improved student achievement, better behavior, higher self-concept and positive attitudes towards school and learning (Wood & Bauman, 2017). Families of students at PEAK Academy will not only be welcome, but will be treated as valued partners in their child's education. At PEAK Academy, we will strive to build strong, positive, healthy relationships with parents and motivate them to be equally invested in their child's goals. We will provide resources and information on how to support their child's progress at home, be open and honest when changes need to be made, and model and encourage parents to provide positive praise for their child's hard work and achievement. There will be multiple levels of communication, but it will always be consistent, clear, and motivated by a collective effort for each child to actualize their goals.

In addition, as a public charter school, PEAK Academy will have the flexibility to create schedules, hiring practices, systems, and policies that reflect the needs, realities, and challenges of our targeted population. Instead of 6.5 hours in Asheville City Schools, the school day at PEAK Academy will be 8 hours long from 8:00-4:00. This extended day will allow for differentiated, small-group remediation or acceleration during both literacy and math blocks

and more time for imaginative play and movement for PEAK Academy's youngest learners. For the middle school students, the extended day allows for longer periods and an AVID block that teaches organization, note taking, character development, and college and career exploration. PEAK Academy will recruit nationally from teachers who have proven the ability to effectively close the opportunity gap with his/her students and will pay its teachers more than the LEA because we are asking them to work longer and harder.

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.

PEAK Academy Board members attended two Black Town Hall meetings on March 24 (78 community members in attendance) and May 5 (56 in attendance). The meeting agendas were focused on education in the community, and PEAK Academy board members garnered support for the school by providing information including our mission, vision, and how PEAK plans to be different than Asheville City Schools. We also used this forum as an opportunity to respond to questions and concerns and hear community member ideas regarding their priorities for a new school.

PEAK Academy Board members are well connected community members and have been establishing relationships with prominent community leaders to increase awareness and garner support. All board members initiated meetings and distributed a PEAK Academy Overview (see Appendix O) to influential community leaders. City Councilman Keith Young attended a board meeting on July 3 and posed critical questions about PEAK Academy to help drive our thinking process and expressed support of our mission and vision. The board met with the CEO of the Housing Authority, David Nash, and he expressed definitive intent in partnering with PEAK Academy to help provide an equitable education for the children in the HA's housing units.

On August 18th, PEAK Academy board members hosted a booth at the Back to School Fresh Start event held at Asheville High School. PEAK Academy board members handed out informational fliers (see Appendix O) and 42 parents signed their names to receive important email updates about PEAK Academy's progress and development.

At the Asheville Black Town Hall meetings, the Fresh Start event, and through email and social media, board members circulated a parent survey to assess interest in a new charter school option for students being failed by the public school options. We accumulated 102 completed surveys from parents of students in these school districts. Of those 102 respondents, 87 said they would consider sending their child to PEAK Academy if their grade was offered (85%).

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.

- 1) *Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunities to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.*

Partnering with AVID, teachers will receive training, resources, and support in providing an education that is driven by student growth and mastery, is culturally relevant and inquiry-based, and is based upon high expectations for all students. All teachers at PEAK will utilize a backwards planning model with diagnostic assessment, reassessment at regular intervals, tracking of student progress towards goals, and planning in a way that reflects the needs within the data. Within this framework, teachers will have the autonomy to create an instructional program that meets the needs of all his/her students. Teachers will have access to highly effective, culturally relevant curriculum Eureka Math, Reading Streets, Lee and Low Guided Reading, and PhD Science. Teachers will also be encouraged to create their own resources, use resources from the AVID resource library, and have access to a PEAK Resource Library, created with the help of Henderson Collegiate, with sample scope and sequences, diagnostic and benchmark assessments, tracking tools, unit plans, lesson plans, and aligned student practice. This creates an atmosphere where teachers are supported as innovators, asked to think critically and creatively about how to ensure the success of each student.

Teachers will have frequent opportunities to take on leadership roles, give workshops on teaching methods where they have demonstrated success, help shape the curriculum, and inform policy decisions and program implementation. They will be observed and provided critical feedback by the School Director every week and will have opportunities to observe other master teachers regularly. Professional development for teachers will be based on weaknesses in student outcomes and identified needs, and it will provide practical ideas and best practices that can immediately be implemented. In a small school, there will constantly be

ways for teachers to expand their knowledge, continuously improve their effectiveness, take on new challenges and roles, and will be given the support and guidance necessary to ensure success.

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

Currently, the Asheville City School District is very nearly the *only* choice for Asheville's students that come from homes with lower socioeconomic status. There are five magnet elementary schools and two middle schools within the Asheville City Schools, each one with an achievement gap between African American students and white students greater than 67.4%. Four of the five charter schools in the Asheville area do not have a weighted lottery and lower than 5% African American populations. These limited options leaves so many students that are negatively affected by the achievement gap without any other choice than the one that is failing them. PEAK Academy will provide families an option that will provide the learning environment that prepares their children to meet their full potential in life. With high expectations, rigorous instruction driven by student mastery, a positive environment that builds character and leadership skills, a curriculum that is connected and relevant to students' lives, and a staff that takes full responsibility for every outcome, PEAK Academy will provide parents and students with an exciting option much different from the one available to them now.

4) *Improve student learning:*

At PEAK Academy, our concern will not just be on test scores. By scaffolding instruction, providing authentic learning opportunities, inquiry-based learning, and character education, teachers will ensure our students meet their full potential in life. PEAK will hold the highest of expectations for student outputs and operate with an urgency that communicates to students that they believe in their potential. Grades K-2 at PEAK Academy will prioritize accelerating students' literacy skills with a 2 ½ hour literacy block and all teachers during all subjects at PEAK will bear responsibility for accelerating our students' acquisition of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Both literacy and math will have built in time for remediation and acceleration groups that are differentiated based on students' needs. Through AVID and our own Core Values curriculum, students will also develop excellent self-advocacy, confidence, and life skills with time for project and service-based learning that will enable them to lead more productive, compassionate, and successful lives. While Asheville City School's 5 elementary schools provide students only 30 minutes of recess a day (and no recess on days when students have PE class), PEAK Academy will provide more frequent breaks for 60 minutes of daily movement, PE every other day, outdoor recess, and free-choice, imaginative play for our youngest students, which improves brain development, ability to focus, and language skills (Singh, 2012). PEAK Academy will develop confident leaders, scholars, and stewards who have the persistence, stamina, and work ethic to keep striving to set and reach their goals beyond our walls.

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.

PEAK Academy has outlined expectations for academic performance, operations, finance, and governance that will remain constant for the first 5 years of operation and will be measured at regular intervals. The School Director will provide an annual report to the governing board and stakeholders that provides performance against the following goals:

Academics: Progress towards PEAK Academy's academic goals will be measured and updated at regular intervals as outlined in our education plan. On our reading growth and core subject mastery goals, the School Director will provide monthly progress reports to the governing board. We will ensure we are actualizing our mission by consistently measuring our success towards the following clear, ambitious, and measurable academic goals:

1. 85% of students in grades K-2 will grow 1.5 grade levels in reading each calendar year based on NWEA Map Growth Assessment. 100% of students will grow at least 1.0 grade levels.
2. 85% of students in grades K-8 will master all grade level language and math standards with at least 80% mastery on quarterly benchmark assessments.
3. 85% of students will score a 4 or higher on each of the 6+1 Traits Writing Rubric across text types.
4. In 2022-2023, 65% of students in grades tested will score Level 3, 4, or 5 on reading and math NC EOG, 70% in 2023-2024, and 75% in 2024-2025 and beyond. No students will receive Level 1.
5. Annually, PEAK Academy will meet or exceed academic growth and never receive lower than a B school rating according to the NC Report Card.

Operations

- 1) Meet 100% of safety requirements and 100% of health and sanitation requirements for PEAK Academy's School Nutrition Program.
- 2) PEAK Academy will serve at 100% capacity each year.
- 3) Each year, 90% of families will be satisfied to be a part of the PEAK Academy community based on survey data, and 90% of K-7 families will remain at PEAK Academy the following year.
- 4) PEAK Academy will have an average daily attendance of over 90% each year.
- 5) 90% of teachers report they are professionally satisfied at PEAK Academy and 90% of teachers will remain at PEAK Academy each year.
- 6) Meet 100% of state teacher licensure requirements.
- 6) PEAK Academy will have an average daily attendance of over 90% each year.

Financial:

The financial report, including budget, funds received, and funds expended shall be reviewed monthly by the governing board with the School Director and our hired financial management firm. Performance towards the following financial goals will be considered:

- 1) Our annual audit will show no deficit and no adverse compliance findings.
- 2) 100% of bills will be paid on time and the school will maintain a high credit rating.
- 3) PEAK Academy will have at least 5% of our base budget carry over each year.

Governance:

Governance goals will be reviewed by the board at our annual retreat or at monthly board meetings when the Board Chair feels they need to be revisited:

- 1) The board shall conduct a minimum of (11) regular board meetings and (1) board retreat and will meet quorum at each meeting.
- 2) Each governing board member will complete a formal evaluation of the lead administrator and board self-evaluation by June 15th each year.
- 3) The board will maintain engaged membership with no fewer than 5 members but will work to have 7-11 members who are invested in the community and dedicated to the mission of PEAK Academy.
 2. How will the governing board know that the proposed public charter school is working toward attaining their mission statement?

Each month, the PEAK Academy School Director will attend the Board of Directors meetings and provide the board with a school progress report. This report will outline the school's progress towards each of the goals listed above in detail. It will highlight areas of growth and weaknesses through data collection on NWEA Map Suite, running records, benchmark assessments, writing rubric samples, and sample EOGs (quarterly in grades 3-8). This school progress report will also provide the board with a behavior and attendance report and a plan will be put in place to assist in any attendance issues. Annually, the board will attend a retreat that will analyze the data from the yearly school academic progress report, average daily attendance, teacher and parent surveys, and retention. All of this information will give the board and very comprehensive understanding of how well PEAK Academy is working towards attaining its mission and will help the board set goals for continuous improvement each subsequent year.

1. Reardon, Sean et al. "The Geography of Racial/Ethnic Test Score Gaps." Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis Working Paper No. 16-10 (2017) page 51. www.cepa.stanford.edu

2. Papageorge, Nicholas. "With Just One Black Teacher, Black Students More Likely to Graduate." Johns Hopkins University (2017). [Releases.jhu.edu/2017/04/05](https://releases.jhu.edu/2017/04/05)

3. Daffron, Virginia. "Goals, timeline lacking in program to narrow racial achievement gap." MountainXpress (May 25, 2019). [Mountainx.com/news/still-no-plan-for-addressing-worst-in-state-disparities-for-asheville-black-students](http://mountainx.com/news/still-no-plan-for-addressing-worst-in-state-disparities-for-asheville-black-students)

4. Byrd, Christy. "Does Culturally Relevant Teaching Work?" University California, Santa Cruz (2016). [Journals.sagepub.com](http://journals.sagepub.com)

5. Wood, Lacy and Emily Bauman. "How Family, School, and Community Engagement Can Improve Student Achievement and Influence School Reform." Nellie Mae Education Foundation (Feb. 2017).

6. Singh, Amika et al. "Physical Activity and Performance at School: A Systematic Review of the Literature Including a Methodological Quality Assessment." *Jama Pediatrics* (Jan 2012).

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.

Preparing students to meet their full potential, develop a love for learning, and empowering them with the knowledge and skills needed to lead successful lives will drive every decision regarding instruction and learning at PEAK Academy. Instruction will be rigorous and will hold students to the highest of expectations. There will be a strong emphasis on creating a culturally relevant education that holds each student to high academic and behavioral standards, affirms each student in their identity and experiences, and positions them with the character and social consciousness to be change agents of their communities. Teachers will use a clear, consistent accountability model based on ambitious, measurable goals that are student-centered and motivating, assess and track student progress in regular intervals, and invest students in their learning and goals through individual, student-centered tracking systems.

At PEAK Academy, students will be taught using a variety of methods within each lesson to ensure each child reaches their ambitious learning goals. Teachers will use research-based, standards-aligned, scaffolded programs for the direct instruction and independent practice portion of instruction in core subjects. The programs chosen are differentiated, spiraled, and have been proven successful in schools with high percentages of students from low-income homes. Teachers will not use the packaged curriculums as pacing guides, but will use them as resources and materials that enhance their planning and instruction. The scope and sequence and pacing will be dependent on students' capacity to master material and teachers will supplement these programs with their own teacher-created materials in order to make instruction relevant to their students' lives and specific to their interests and community. A core component of PEAK Academy's Instructional Program will be built in time during each Core Subject for remediation or acceleration of skills that is based on student achievement data. According to research, students learn best from being able to share, collaborate, interact, and help one another, and at PEAK Academy, each subject will incorporate group learning and inquiry in addition to teacher-directed instruction (Brame 2015).

Foreseeing that we will enroll high numbers of students who are negatively affected by the achievement gap, we know many of our students will enter PEAK Academy already behind in literacy skills. Literacy is the foundation for all other learning, so all PEAK Academy educators will have a shared responsibility to advance students to the highest level in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Elementary students will spend the majority of the morning in a balanced literacy block which begins with instruction on each of the 5 components of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary) and writing using the

research-based Reading Street Program and teacher created plans. This will be followed by differentiated literacy centers which will always include Guided Reading in small, homogenous groups using Lee and Low's multicultural leveled library. The teacher will use this time to target student needs based on achievement data and observations in oral reading. Each student will also engage in independent reading during this time with self-selected books on their level from a robust classroom library and a writing center with the teacher assistant. Based on student readiness and needs, students may also engage in word work, poetry fluency practice, comprehension through graphic organizers, vocabulary development, book study, and with technology that targets a specific deficiency. Middle School literacy will include direct instruction in vocabulary and comprehension using culturally-relevant literature and text, but students will spend the majority of the block in small group literature circles, Paideia Seminars, or remediation groups on targeted skills based on weaknesses in achievement data.

Math instruction at PEAK Academy will focus on the processing of math conceptually using Eureka Math and will include a combination of math strategy, hands-on manipulation, problem solving, and automaticity with increasing opportunities to create, analyze, use mathematical models, and craft mathematical arguments. Following direct instruction in all grades, students will break into differentiated, flexible learning groups based on a student's readiness and needs. Some groups will meet with the teacher, assistant, or volunteers for remediation of skills they have proven weaknesses on assessments. Other students may gather in groups to work collaboratively on real-world problems and applications. This differentiated, enriched instruction will create equipped students time to engage in open-ended activities that promote critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, and meta-cognitive skills.

The purpose of the Social Studies block at PEAK Academy will be to enable students to understand, participate in, and make informed decisions about their world. Social Studies will provide students with inquiry-based, culturally relevant learning experiences that challenge their thinking and prepare them to be active citizens, leaders, and community activists in a global society. The contributions of multicultural activists, politicians, and historical figure will be studied throughout the year, not just during "black history month." Teachers will plan aligned instruction with the NC Essential Standards and will provide hands-on application through outreach, guest speakers, service learning, and field trips. Social studies will include research, debates, projects, and simulations that require application of critical thinking skills.

The science block will ignite a passion for learning about the world around them while developing a student's ability to listen, speak, read, and write about scientific concepts. In the early grades, students will learn to approach the world with curiosity and inquiry, asking questions and making predictions based on prior knowledge. Students will listen attentively to high-quality nonfiction text rich in informational vocabulary and teachers will engage them in conversations, collaboration, and written reflection. As older students develop the background knowledge and reading ability to comprehend complex nonfiction text, students will read widely and deeply about science topics. Students will learn to research purposefully, outline

and synthesize information from various sources, conduct experiments, make observations, and share their knowledge and discoveries in visual representations and reports.

Technology will not be taught in isolation, but will enhance instruction by integrating it into each subject in purposeful, authentic ways. Teachers will utilize technology in their classroom, but only when it is directly aligned to mastery of the common core standards and never for extended periods of time. Videos, demonstrations, research tools, digital organization of information, reporting, and presentation will be incorporated into each subject to enhance learning and bring it to life in developmentally appropriate ways. All teachers will take responsibility for teaching students appropriate, safe, responsible use of social media and apps, and will teach students to think critically about the news/information they consume online.

The enrichment block will be aligned to the NC Standard Course of Study in dance, music, theatre arts, and visual arts. Students will have opportunities during this block to design, create, collaborate, evaluate, perform. Enrichment modules will be taught in 2-week in-depth units and will be scaffolded to build upon background knowledge and student's own interests and experiences. The part-time enrichment teacher will work closely with the classroom teacher to tie units to what is being studied in the regular classroom.

Students will have a block that alternates between Spanish and PE instruction with contracted instructors. Instruction in Spanish will be immersion and based around speaking, listening (and understanding), reading, and writing goals with a fluent Spanish-speaking teacher. These goals will be incremental to build conversational Spanish skills (speaking and listening) and then reading and writing fluency and proficiency. PE instruction will be active, incremental, and based on the NC Standards for Physical Education and Health. The goal behind PE at PEAK Academy is for students to be active, to enjoy the challenge of pushing yourself physically, and to develop the knowledge and mindset to prioritize a healthy, active lifestyle.

Assessment in all subjects at PEAK Academy will be continuous and ongoing. Teachers will closely monitor student performance, using observation, daily essential question exit tickets and spot checks, benchmark assessments, and NWEA Map Suite tests to identify whether future lessons or learning goals need be modified. Teachers will create weekly benchmark assessments aligned to Common Core and NC Essential Standards that reflect high levels of thinking. At the end of each unit, teachers will use formative assessments aligned to EOG question stems, Eureka Module Assessments, and NWEA Map Fluency tests. Quarterly, students will be reassessed using the NWEA MAP Growth to determine whether students are on track towards meeting their ambitious 1.5 years of growth goal. All this assessment data will be entered into a school-wide progress monitoring system and will be utilized for teachers to determine students who are in need of remediation and additional support. Assessment data will also be communicated to students in real-time and students will track their progress towards their goals in individual, motivating student tracking systems.

7. Brame, Cynthia and Rachel Biel. "Group Work: Using Cooperative Learning Groups Effectively." Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching (2015). cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/setting-up-and-facilitating-group-work-using-cooperative-learning.

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.

Students will be grouped by grade heterogeneously. There will be 2 classes per grade and small class sizes (20 in Kindergarten, 22 in 1st-4th and 23 in 5th-8th). Instruction will be classroom-based with built in time for differentiated, small group remediation, acceleration, and collaboration in each subject. Each classroom in grades K-3 will be heterogeneously grouped, self-contained, and have one classroom teacher (with an assistant in K-2). Classes in grades 4 and 5 will switch classrooms midday, so one teacher teaches literacy and social studies and the other teaches math and science. In grades K-5, all students will take a 40-minute daily enrichment class, aligned to the NC Standard Course of Study Arts Education Standard in addition to 40-minutes of PE or Spanish instruction every other day. In 6-8 teachers will be departmentalized, as groups rotate between 58-minute blocks: literacy, math, science, history, alternating PE/Spanish, an enrichment elective, and the highly successful Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) elective. The AVID elective provides students who are historically least likely to attend college the tools they need to succeed, including character development, conflict resolution, study skills, college and career exploration, organization, and other life skills students can apply across subjects.

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.

PEAK Academy's curriculum is designed to meet students exactly where they are, with consistent use of student performance and assessment data to determine what standards students spend their time working on during the remediation and acceleration groups. PEAK Academy will use Common Core and NC Essential Standards as the backbone of planning and instruction. They will be at the heart of each student's individual goal for mastery of grade-level content and growth. Teachers at PEAK Academy will use Common Core and Essential standards to unpack each lesson plan's objective and the READY End of Grade (EOG) assessments will help us ensure we are actualizing our mission. To ensure students are being taught with the rigor required to excel on these assessments and beyond, teachers will align their weekly and unit assessments with question stems on sample EOG assessments. Students testing below grade-level will receive documented interventions using the North Carolina Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) model with research-based intervention programs Eureka Math Succeed and Response to Intervention or My Sidewalks Intervention Kit. As mentioned above, all curriculum

has been specifically selected due to its success in closing achievement gaps with our targeted population. Many external studies have proven the effectiveness of AVID in increasing achievement of low-income and minority populations. One district found students with AVID trained teachers performed significantly higher (17.3 points) on the STAAR Reading exam than non-AVID students. According to data on Eurkea Math's website, schools show on average between 5 and 10 percent gains in achievement scores in the first year of implementing the program. Reading Street curriculum has also been proven to be highly effective; not only do Reading Street students significantly outperform the comparison group, they also had more positive attitudes towards reading and reading instruction when compared to their peers. We have chosen to supplement reading instruction with Lee and Low books and lesson plans for guided reading. This decision was made in alignment with our mission of providing instruction that is culturally relevant and therefore more motivating and personal to our students.

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.

In order for PEAK Academy to actualize our mission, teachers will have to be exemplary at utilizing the variety of teaching tools and strategies previously outlined. First and foremost, PEAK Academy will recruit teachers with demonstrated commitment and success at closing the opportunity gap for students of low-income. During the written application and interview process, the School Director will probe for evidence that the candidate has the mindset that any child can succeed at high levels, regardless of socioeconomic status or race and fully believes in the importance of culturally relevant instruction. Teachers hired at PEAK Academy will have to have a willingness to put in the extra time and energy required to create an instructional program that meets the needs of *all* of their students.

In addition, PEAK Academy will provide teachers with the training and tools to implement the following instructional strategies to support the highest levels of student learning:

1. Direct-Instruction: Teachers will master the ability to capture students' attention and present information in a meaningful, tangible way that is accessible to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. Teachers will learn to model deep levels of thinking and processing, and guide student through the same processes in a gradual release model. Independent practice will be clearly aligned to the learning goals and will be purposeful, hands-on, and meaningful in nature. During direct-instruction and independent practice, teachers will master the ability to monitor students' learning, correct student misunderstandings through questioning, and assess whether an objective has been successfully taught.
2. Differentiated, Student-Centered Instruction: Because students will enter the classroom with varying degrees of readiness, teachers will have to develop instructional strategies to remediate and also accelerate learning so that all students experience success, are challenged, and make gains. Students will all be working towards mastery of the same Common Core standards, but teachers will have to meet students where they are to ensure success. With some standards, it

may be as simple as differentiating the text students work with or the depth at which students are expected to present information to demonstrate mastery of the same learning goal. With others, it will require remediation with some students before tackling the grade-level task or planning for enrichment activities that challenge students to go deeper with application.

3. Inquiry-Based, Collaborative Learning: Teachers will be trained to effectively lead students to ask questions, make discoveries, and reflect on their learning while developing a real thirst for knowledge. Teachers at PEAK Academy will master the ability to group students and effectively plan, organize, instruct, monitor, and assess these groups to maximize time on task.

4. Culturally Relevant Instruction: Teachers will have to understand and believe in the importance of presenting students with curriculum and instruction that is relevant to their lives. Teachers will read heavily from authors that mirror students' own backgrounds and present students with countless examples of people from various cultures that defied odds and rose above expectation to achieve their goals. Mastering this important pedagogical strategy will make learning more intimate and interesting for students and will provide students with a strong sense of self-awareness necessary to truly believe their goals are worthy of pursuing.

While developing this expertise will be demanding on teachers, PEAK Academy will remain committed to recruiting, hiring, and training teachers with dedication to the mindset that they are the change agents. Above all, teachers will have to be humble: open to critical feedback, eager to hone their own teaching practice, able and willing to learn from their peers, all to improve the outcome of their students' lives.

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

Teachers will not transition students to the subsequent grade until they have demonstrated a firm grasp of the learning goals laid out in each of the core subject areas Common Core standards. Teachers will ensure all assessments are aligned to these standards in rigor and depth, which will be consistent in each grade level and approved by the School Director, and all teachers will track student progress towards mastery across all standards in a school-wide data system. In addition to the data tracking system, teachers will keep a student portfolio of assessments, work samples, and anecdotal observations that provide evidence of mastery and growth.

Students who have not demonstrated mastery on standards that have been taught will be given ample opportunity to practice and access the knowledge and skill in different ways. Teachers will use the data that they have gathered from student assessment and observation to group and instruct students based on their individual needs during small grouping in literacy and math blocks.

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

Our school calendar will roughly align to the Asheville City Schools calendar to accommodate families who have students in both systems. To maximize learning time, PEAK Academy will operate on an 8-hour day instead of Asheville City School's 6.5-hour day to allow time for the instructional program outlined above. Teachers will have more professional development days prior to the first day of school (6 days total) which will include training in AVID methodologies, curriculum mapping, and using assessment data to inform instruction. Following every six-week assessment cycle, teachers will have a professional work day to analyze student progress and adjust their planning accordingly (6 days total). Each quarter following progress reports, teachers will have a day of scheduled conferences with parents and students to update families on their child's progress towards their goal, communicate major accomplishments and growth, and discuss priority areas for improvement. This allows for 1,398 hours of instruction in 180 school days.

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.

The school day at PEAK Academy is 8 hours long, from 8:00 to 4:00. The time spent in each subject in the elementary school as are follows: Literacy- 150 minutes (K-2) and 130 minutes (3-5); Math- 90 minutes; Science and Social Studies- 40 minutes (alternating biweekly in K-2); Arts Enrichment- 40 minutes; and Spanish/PE (alternating days)- 40 minutes. Each class in Grades 6-8 is an equal 58 minutes long. As mentioned before, our daily schedule prioritizes extended literacy and math blocks, time for remediation/acceleration in Core Subjects, and enriching instruction in the arts, Spanish, and PE.

Every few weeks students will have an early dismissal day at 1:00. On those days, schedules shift slightly to ensure all the Core subjects are taught and students have lunch before dismissal. To provide after school care and prevent the "summer slide," during summer months, PEAK Academy plans to partner with local organizations Youth Transformed for Life (YTL), the YMCA, and YWCA, to feed our students into their programming. All of the following has been thoughtfully planned to maximize student learning time and create an environment that is optimal for a balanced educational model and maximal student growth and achievement.

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

The school day at PEAK Academy will be highly structured and organized to maximize learning time. Learning is an active process at PEAK Academy, and the day is full of learning opportunities for students to build self-awareness, collaborate, inquire, and create. Teachers arrived at school by 7:25 and students will arrive at between 7:30 and 7:55. Students will be provided a healthy, balanced breakfast, get materials prepared for the day, and quietly work on

their morning work, which will include a few problems that review the weeks learning. At 8:00, the students will participate in daily morning meeting with the purpose of building community. During this time, the teacher will guide students through a recitation of the class pledge, the Core Values, the classroom rules, read aloud, role play, highlight positive student behaviors and class wide behaviors to work on, and review daily schedule and announcements. Students will have opportunities to share their ideas, practice active listening skills, and discuss any issues on their minds that might infringe upon their learning.

Students will then begin the reading block, during which they will receive instruction and practice in all 5 components of literacy and writing. Students will break into flexible groups based on needs and readiness for remediation and acceleration in guided reading with the teacher and small group literacy centers with support from the assistant.

Following the reading block, each grade will get a snack and movement break, during which the teacher will engage students in movement and mindfulness practice in order to help students increase focus and concentration.

Each grade levels' day will vary slightly at this point to accommodate the schedule of our part-time Spanish, PE, and arts enrichment specialist, but will always include the same amount of time engaged in each subject. A 40-minute Science Block may follow that provides in-depth study, inquiry-based learning and application to build an understanding of the world around them.

All classes will have a 50-minute combined lunch and outdoor recess break between 11:00 and 1:00 depending on their schedule. This recess will be considered more "free play" and not structured by the teacher to provide students time to socialize while the teacher and assistant monitor student behavior. Following lunch, students will settle back into learning with a 1 hour and 30-minute math block. Led by the teacher, this block begins with a math meeting, which is an engaging time for students to practice their math skills with real-world application in counting, data collection, measuring, comparing, ordering, and sorting. Then the teacher leads the class in a math lesson based on student mastery with the Eureka Math curriculum framework, which is hands-on, scaffolded, and differentiated to meet the needs of all students. Students spend the majority of the lesson practicing skills with guidance, as she/he circulates, asks questions, helps students make discoveries, and collects data on student understanding. The last 30-minutes of the math block will be reserved for homogenous grouping for remediation or acceleration of math skills based on student needs.

The teacher now provides another movement/mindfulness break and then the class moves into a 40-minute Enrichment Class which gives students time to apply what they are learning in their core instruction classes in creative art, music, dance, or theatre. During this time, the teachers lesson plan, grade, analyze assessment data, input data into their tracking systems, organize materials, and do the many other tasks teachers have to implement effective instruction. Students then alternate between 40-minutes of engaging, responsive Spanish instruction and active, exciting PE instruction. Students whose first language is Spanish are leaders during this time, and use their knowledge to teach their peers while also improving their English vocabulary acquisition. PE is spent moving, playing, and challenging students' abilities. Teachers are also planning during this time, providing 80 minutes of daily planning time.

At the end of the day, teachers will organize and provide time for our youngest students to explore, build, create, move, and socialize in Choice Stations. These are teacher created and determined by teacher preference and what materials are available, but may include imaginary play, yoga/dance, modeling clay, puzzles, arts and crafts, or building blocks. This time is a privilege, and students who have not demonstrated the Core Values or worked hard to complete their assignments, will have to sit out this time to complete a reflection or work that was not completed during the day. Teachers will circulate and allow students share what they are creating and will also use this time to get homework folders, notes home, and materials ready for the next day. At 4:00, it is time to go home.

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 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.

PEAK Academy will hold each student to the highest of expectations for demonstrating mastery and growth academically and developing the character and behavioral traits of scholars. All staff will take a collective responsibility for ensuring each child experiences success. PEAK Academy will utilize the NC Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) Model, providing support to all students. Educators at PEAK Academy will screen all students early in the school year, provide multi-tiered support to all students, increase levels of support for students that are struggling, collaborate in teams to assess students and plan interventions, frequently monitor students’ progress and use this data to decide if more intervention is needed, and keep families informed and involved so they can understand the intervention process and provide support at home.

All students will receive “Tier I support” every day with rigorous classroom instruction. Following progress monitoring every six weeks, the teacher will meet in grade level teams with the School Director to discuss their students’ strengths, areas of weakness, and seek suggestions for intervention and strategies to support the entire class. Using diagnostic data, students are broken into small groups that address different strengths and areas of need. Teachers will also work with their team to determine individual students that are “at risk” for not meeting grade level standards or those with behavioral or emotional problems that may interfere with their academic growth.

For these students, teachers begin the intervention process at Tier II. Intervention will include additional small-group or individual support using a variety of resources similar to those used during core instruction but providing more time to practice, review knowledge, and develop skills needed to master material. Interventions will occur 4-5 times per week for 20-30 minutes and will include more frequent progress monitoring. For students at Tier II, the intervention team (grade level teachers, School Director, and School Counselor) will meet every month to assess the effectiveness of the intervention and whether or not to continue support at Tier II. Students who do not make expected progress with Tier I and Tier II will receive more systematic, intensive intervention at Tier III. At this level, the student will receive additional one-on-one intervention with the classroom teacher, EC teacher, or a qualified interventionist 5 days a week using research-based programs Eureka Math Success and My Sidewalks Reading Street Intervention Kit. Progress monitoring will occur weekly and the intervention team, which will now involve the child's parent, will continue to meet each month. For students with behavioral concerns that are interfering with the child's learning, a behavior contract will be established between the student, teacher, and parent, to establish specific behavioral goals with linked incentives. If adequate progress towards their student achievement goals is still not made with intensive, documented Tier III intervention support within 2 months, the intervention team will refer the student for Special Education testing.

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.

Many of PEAK Academy board members have experience working with students with special needs or at-risk students. Catherine and Joe Lordi are former Teach for America teachers. They both taught elementary school at Title I Schools that served over 95% students that received free lunch. After teaching for three years and working for Teach for America, Joe went on to become a middle school principal in a 100% Title I School, turning it from a low-performing to high-performing school in 2 years. Catherine taught Kindergarten up through 4th grade for 6 years. In addition to teaching large percentages of students who were homeless or being raised in abject poverty, both Catherine and Joe also successfully taught students using with autism, dyslexia, ADHD, and ODD in an inclusive environment with significant results. After moving to Asheville, Catherine continued to successfully implement Tier III reading interventions with Asheville City students in grades 3-5 who were significantly below grade level. As an administrator of Community Alternatives Program for persons with developmental disabilities, Tiffany Iheanacho provided programmatic oversight of Paraprofessional services in addition to developing personal plans. Libby Kyles taught for the Asheville City Schools for 15 years, with experience implementing IEPs for students in her 5th grade classroom. She successfully instructed students that were ELL, students with 504 plans, and gifted students. David Robinson worked as a Behavioral Assistant to at risk students and students with special needs in Guilford

County Schools from 2008-2014, learning that motivation and consistency were key to helping each child meet their individualized goals.

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.

PEAK Academy will follow all guidelines set forth by the NC State Board of Education to identify students needing ELL services in the Home Language Survey (HLS) completed before the school year begins. In case English is not identified as a second language in the survey, teachers may also bring it to the administration's attention based on a teacher's observed lack of familiarity with the English language. PEAK Academy will then use the English Language Proficiency in the 21st century (ELP21) Screener Assessment to determine the degree to which ELL services are needed in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Teachers will use this information to adapt their instructional strategies to support the student's specific literacy needs inclusive in the classroom. Students needing ELL services will not be pulled out of the classroom or put into a more restrictive environment, because the inclusive environment of the regular classroom will benefit the child's literacy development through peer interaction, and will also benefit other students, who will build an appreciation for a second language and culture. The School Director and counselor will work closely with the classroom teacher to determine the kind of in-class support that the ELL student needs and to monitor the student's progress in English acquisition based on the English Language Proficiency Standards (elpa21.org). This may include (but is not limited to) a support person proficient in both languages to help translate and acquire vocabulary, modified assignments, assessment accommodations, a tutor in English phonics, or a peer buddy to help with spelling and grammar during writing. If the parent does not speak English, PEAK Academy will ensure all written communication sent home is translated and that a bilingual staff member or volunteer is always present during parent/teacher conferences to create an inclusive environment for that family. Students will take the ELP21 Summative Assessment biannually to monitor and measure their progress, and students will not be exited from ELL support at PEAK Academy until they can participate meaningfully in the classroom and score a 4 or 5 on the ELP21 Summative Assessment.

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.

PEAK Academy will take into account each child's readiness level, interests, and learning styles to provide an engaging, rigorous, differentiated learning environment within each classroom. PEAK Academy will assess all students for academic strengths and weaknesses, but will not teach high performing students in an exclusive setting. All students who demonstrate mastery on classroom content material, are curious and motivated, and possess higher level thinking skills, will be given opportunities during small groups to stretch their thinking beyond mastery of common core standards. With training and support materials from AVID, teachers will engage students in inquiry-based learning with critical thinking, higher-order questioning including Paideia Seminars, Collaborative Study Groups, and Philosophical Chairs, and problem-solving applications. Instruction will be asset-based in methodology, drawing on students' strengths and interests to build confidence, affirm each child's worth, and help every student actualize their potential. Along with the rest of the class, they will be regularly assessed on their reading ability and since reading goals will be based on growth, even the highest readers will be pushed to stretch and grow. Students will be provided ample reading material on their independent reading level and may move classes during reading groups or literature circles in order to work with peers that can challenge their thinking. In addition, several school-wide events and clubs will push and stretch students' thinking, though all students may participate. These may include (but will not be limited to) a school-wide science fair, spelling bee, poetry slam, band, student council, and Battle of the Books. Because all classroom teachers will be charged with accelerating learning and providing a challenging, inquiry-based learning environment for all students, PEAK Academy will heavily weigh teaching candidates with gifted teaching certification.

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.

PEAK Academy will be committed to providing students of all abilities access to a high-quality, student-centered education in the least restrictive environment possible. For all newly enrolled students, PEAK Academy will review cumulative records from previous schools to determine if an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan exists. If the cumulative records are not immediately provided, calls will be made to the prior school and district office daily until they become available. If one does exist, a thorough examination of needs and services required will begin by the administrator, counselor, classroom teacher, and EC-certified teacher.

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.

If there is a student at PEAK Academy who is believed to have special needs that could not be met using Tier III intervention of the MTSS process, he/she will be referred to the EC Team to be evaluated for a disability. The student will be tested by a contracted School Psychologist, and testing will occur at PEAK Academy during regular school hours.

Based on the full report, if the student qualifies for EC services, an IEP will be drafted and the student will receive modifications and additional support and instruction from the EC-certified teacher in an inclusion setting. The School Director, classroom teacher, EC teacher, counselor, and parent will hold IEP/504 meetings every 6-weeks or as dictated by the child's IEP. If the student did not qualify for EC services, the student will continue to receive Tier III intervention and the intervention team will modify support and intervention based on the psychologist's findings.

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)

All records and documents will be kept confidential and locked in a secure filing cabinet in the School Director's office. The office will have a lock on it, and the filing cabinet with student records will be locked whenever not in use. The classroom teacher and EC teacher will regularly monitor the plans by request to ensure appropriateness and compliance. There will be a sign-out process for all records and these records may not be signed-out for more than a day. They may not leave the school grounds.

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.

Utilizing the inclusion model, student-centered, differentiated instruction, and support from an EC-certified teacher, students with disabilities at PEAK Academy will receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The EC-certified teacher and regular classroom teacher will collaborate once a week on creating plans that challenge and meet the needs of each EC student in order to co-serve all students well. The EC-teacher will push-in to the regular classroom whenever appropriate, so as not to exclude the student from the rigorous, engaging instruction with his/her teacher and peers whenever possible. In an inclusive setting, the student will have the benefit of learning to collaborate with peers and be held to high standards with accommodations.

The EC teacher will provide supplemental assistance with one-to-one or small group support while being cognizant of the IEP/504 and modifying instruction, independent practice, and assessment when applicable. Like all students, their reading goal will be individualized and based on growth, and the classroom teacher and EC teacher will work with them during homogenous groups and literacy centers with text on their instructional level. During writer's workshop, the student will work with a modified rubric with clear, measurable goals that still expects hard work and dedicated learning. EC students will work at their own pace on the goals laid out in their IEP during math and will receive considerable support from the classroom teacher, assistant, and EC-teacher when needed.

If EC support in an inclusive environment is not meeting the needs of the student, the administrator, EC teacher, classroom teacher, and parent will meet to review all documentation and discuss options that are available at the school. If the services necessary are not available, PEAK Academy will partner with Asheville City Schools or an outside service provider to obtain the appropriate services for the student. We have allocated \$10,000 in our budget for additional EC related services contingent upon student needs to ensure all students receive a FAPE. All EC students will be challenged to reach ambitious goals and held to high expectations in character development and work ethic.

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?

In compliance with IDEA, PEAK Academy will always provide EC students with an education in the least-restrictive environment (LRE) that meets their individual needs and enables them to thrive. Each learning disability manifests itself differently, thus warrants different supports. Like all students at PEAK Academy, the goal is for EC students to make measurable gains and reach their academic goals as outlined in their IEP. The EC-teacher will work closely with the classroom teacher to create an individualized plan which will include co-teaching, related services and their frequency, accommodations, and any exemptions for which they may qualify. These instructional accommodations may include assistive technology tools, preferential seating, reduction of distractions, and diverse response types. Assessment accommodations

may include extended time, having questions read orally, necessitating typed responses, requiring minimally distracting or small group environments. It may also include time for the child to be pulled-out of the classroom, though never for extended periods of time, if the classroom teacher and EC teacher determine it is beneficial to the child's growth towards his/her academic goals. As mentioned above, if services such as Speech or Occupational Therapy are not available at PEAK Academy, we will find related services through Asheville City Schools or an outside service provider and obtain those services for the student during regular school hours.

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).

To ensure students with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Education, the implementation of services will be a collaborative effort between the classroom teacher, EC teacher, School Director, and parent. Regular meetings will be held every 6-weeks or as dictated by the IEP to monitor growth and progress towards individualized goals and to ensure that accommodations and services mentioned above are being provided to help the child meet his/her highest potential. The team will work together to determine the times, places, and activities in which the IEP goals are best addressed in the regular classroom. Classroom teachers will be supported and equipped to make accommodations and adjustments based on the student's IEP with support from the EC teacher. The EC teacher will assist the regular education teacher through co-teaching, working with small groups, and ensuring that the materials the EC students use are appropriately leveled. When the EC teacher proposes amendments to the goals, progress monitoring, or accommodations/services provided in the child's IEP, (s)he will include a description of the proposal in the written meeting notice to all parties invited. The EC teacher and classroom teacher will provide documented evidence in data, work samples, rubrics, and observations in order to modify any IEP services.

7. Describe how implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be monitored and reported to the student, parents and relevant staff.

Measuring progress towards the student's IEP measurable goals is essential in assuring effective implementation of the IEP services and accommodations. It gives the IEP team concrete evidence as to whether the IEP as designed is effective or whether adjustments to services or instruction need to be made. Every IEP will include a description of how the child's progress towards their goals will be measured and when that information will be provided to the IEP team, including the parent. As mentioned before, the child's progress towards goals will be measured every 6-weeks or as stated in his or her IEP. The evaluative criteria and assessments used will be as similar to his/her peers as possible, utilizing growth measures such as NWEA Map Suite, rubrics, and assessments with appropriate modifications. Teacher observation and anecdotal notes, classwork, homework, and assessment data will all be used to monitor progress towards goals and effective implementation and will be reported during quarterly IEP

meetings. The School Director will be responsible for ensuring appropriate implementation through observation of the EC teacher and the classroom teacher.

8. Describe the proposed plan for providing related services and to have qualified staffing adequate for the anticipated special needs population.

If related services need to be provided and are not available at PEAK Academy, we will partner with Asheville City Schools and other contracted service providers to ensure the students with an IEP receive their full services during school hours. PEAK Academy will ensure that the EC teacher is qualified with a minimum of a bachelor's degree in special education and at least 2-years of teaching experience with children with special needs.

2.4 Student Performance Standards

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

With high expectations and rigorous, individualized instruction, the students at PEAK Academy can achieve the highest possible performance standards. These measurable, ambitious goals will be based on growth and mastery of Common Core standards and clearly communicated with students and families at the beginning of each quarter. Students and parents will regularly be given goal reports that highlight progress towards their goals, areas of strength, and in what areas the student still needs improvement along with ideas to help see continued progress at home. PEAK Academy will adhere to the following performance standards:

*85% of students in grades K-2 will grow 1.5 grade levels in reading each year. 100% of students will grow over 1.0 grade levels.

*85% of students in grades K-8 will master all grade level reading, language, and math standards with at least 80% mastery on quarterly benchmark assessments aligned to the EOG.

*85% of students will score a 4 (proficient) or higher on each of the 6+1 Traits Writing Rubric types at each grade level.

*In 2023-2024, 65% of students in grade 3 will score proficient or advanced on math and reading NC EOG, 70% in 2024-2025, and 75% in 2025-2026 and beyond. No students will receive a Level 1.

*Annually, PEAK Academy will meet or exceed academic growth and never receive lower than a B school rating according to the NC Report Card.

LONG TERM GOAL: In 2029-2030 and beyond, 60% of former PEAK Academy students enrolled at Asheville High or SILSA will be enrolled in AP courses.

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.

To measure achievement towards these ambitious goals, PEAK Academy will utilize the following evaluative tools in addition to the NC EOG assessment:

Reading: We will utilize several different formative assessments to measure reading growth throughout the year. Teachers will use the NWEA MAP Suite program which will provide a complete picture of each student's reading readiness and ability, informing teacher planning and allowing teachers to determine when students have advanced reading levels, how to group students for guided reading, literacy centers, and interventions. NWEA MAP Growth is given 4 times a year to analyze progress towards the growth goal. Teachers in grades K-3 will also utilize the online NWEA Map Fluency assessment to quickly progress monitor students on oral reading fluency, literal comprehension and foundational skills between the MAP Growth assessments. The MAP Skills assessment will be given as frequently as needed between the Growth Assessment in grades 4-8 to drill down specific skills each student needs to learn. It will tell teachers what struggling students are missing and what the advanced students are ready to take on.

Writing: Teachers will use the 6+1 Traits writing rubrics aligned to the Common Core Standards at each grade level for each unit of study in writing. Teachers will evaluate one published piece of writing in addition to the students' ability to utilize the writing progress. The teachers will utilize the 6+1 Traits Writing rubrics to determine strengths and areas for improvement, determining what to focus on during conferences with students and homogenous grouping. Teachers will also create language benchmark assessments based on the Common Core strands and track mastery of each writing and language standard in our school wide tracking system.

Math: Teachers will use Eureka Math Module Assessments that tie together the standards that have been taught to that point. Teachers will track student progress on each Common Core standard and create formative quarterly assessments based off of the EOG and rigorous Eureka Math question stems.

In all subjects, teachers will assess students on an ongoing basis using exit tickets and spot checks, conferences, rubrics, and teacher-created benchmark assessments that are aligned to the Common Core and Essential Standards and are aligned to EOG question stems. Student assessment data will be inputted into a tracking system that clearly displays student mastery, deficiencies, and will help teachers group students for targeted reteaching, remediation, and support. Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery as they are given more practice and are introduced to the material in various ways. If it is clear that there are collective gaps in student knowledge and skills, teachers will collaborate to assess our curriculum and instruction and identify what changes need to be made to better serve our students.

3. Explain the policies and standards for promoting students, including students with special needs, from one grade level to the next. Discuss how and when promotion criteria will be communicated to parents and students.

In order to be promoted, the student should meet grade level standards in major content areas (reading, writing, and math) in elementary and at or above grade level in at least 4 of the 5 core subject areas in grades 6-8 based on assessment data. Students should not accrue more than 10 unexcused absences and should also have the social skills, maturity, and work ethic to succeed in the subsequent grade based on teacher observation and consultation of the grade level team and School Director. PEAK Academy will utilize a detailed rubric to evaluate each student in the areas of academic achievement, being at or above grade level, attendance, and maturity/character. PEAK Academy will adhere to the following formal process to determine promotion and retention:

- At the end of the 3rd quarter, teachers will present a list of students they feel are at risk for retention to the Intervention Team (teacher, EC teacher (when applicable), School Director, Counselor, and the PEAK Academy Mentor Teacher). Each name on the list must have been engaged in our intervention process throughout the year, so no names will come as a surprise.
- Teachers will finalize a portfolio of student work, sample assessments, anecdotal notes, and the Promotion Rubric that demonstrates areas of strength and weakness.
- Though the parents will have been in consistent communication regarding their child's intervention throughout the year, the parents will now be invited to a meeting with the Intervention Team. All intervention documentation and the student portfolio is presented and reviewed, taking into account the student's history, past retentions, IEPs (if applicable), EOG results, grades, academic performance and growth, social skills and maturity, and attendance.
- Based upon the evidence and teacher recommendation, the School Director will make a decision regarding retention or promotion. The parents will be immediately notified with written explanation of the decision.

*PEAK Academy will abide by the state mandates for Read to Achieve legislation and will retain any 3rd graders who do not meet the criteria for promotion.

*ELL students below grade level due to language deficiencies with less than 2 years of ESL instruction will be promoted unless a strong case can be made for the benefits of retention.

*EC students who have sufficiently met their goals will be promoted regardless of their achievement on grade level assignments and standardized tests.

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.

Our goal at PEAK Academy is to prepare our students for the rigor and academic demands of Honors and AP level courses in High School. For 8th grade students to graduate, they must have demonstrated mastery of at least 85% of the 8th grade standards in 4 of the 5 core subjects in order to graduate.

8th grade students will also work throughout the year to complete their Cultural Area of Focus Presentation. Students will determine their area of focus during their 8th grade year, which will reflect an interest in their culture and community and will be approved by their homeroom teacher. Students will have to demonstrate satisfactory research, note taking, organization,

time management, use of technology, and written and oral communication skills. They will present their project to their fellow students, staff, and families during the last week of school.

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.

Aligned with our mission that ALL students can succeed at high levels, PEAK Academy also firmly believes that all students can and will behave appropriately and exceed expectations when given access to an engaging, rigorous, meaningful curriculum and when provided the necessary support and encouragement to thrive. Knowing that students coming from low-income homes are more likely to experience chronic stress and trauma, teachers at PEAK Academy will be trained using highly effective UCSF HEARTS (Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools) resources to bring a trauma-informed lens to their classroom management plan. Approaching classroom management and engagement in this manner will proactively reduce problem behaviors and emotional difficulties. Within this framework, teachers will create a safe, supportive climate that fosters resilience and wellness for each child.

At the core of student's motivation and behavior in the classroom is the relationship built on mutual respect and trust that the teacher builds with the student. All teachers at PEAK Academy will also receive training with Teaching With Love and Logic which will provide teachers the mindset and skills necessary to encourage their students to be responsible, respectful, and resourceful members of the classroom community. Our goal in regards to student behavior is not simply willful compliance, but to choose to do the right thing at all times, whether an adult is present and watching or not. Teachers will use mistakes and problems as opportunities to learn and grow, and teachers will empower students with concrete conflict resolution and self-regulation skills so that they can gradually build responsibility for solving their own problems. With this in mind, discipline at PEAK Academy will be considered a learning process that builds character, not solely a system of punishments and rewards.

Furthermore, teachers will create an environment in which students are motivated by and invested in their ambitious goals, know where they are in relation to their goal, and know what work yet needs to be done in order to accomplish their goal. Students will come to believe in one of PEAK Academy's mottos, that they are "too smart to waste time." Clearly defined expectations, quick transitions, and efficient procedures and systems create an environment that is conducive to hard work and learning. Teachers will take time to teach, model, and practice these behavioral expectations, systems, and procedures at the beginning of the year so that little time is wasted during the school year.

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.

All teachers will bear the responsibility of teaching PEAK Academy's Core Values both intentionally and authentically. PEAK Academy's core values are: Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Kindness, Resilience, and Self Discipline. These values will be woven into the culture and community at PEAK Academy. The teachers, parents, and students will sign a Code of Conduct that outlines each party's responsibilities in upholding the Values and are reflected in the whole school rules: Follow directions the first time; Give your attention; Use class time for learning; Respect your environment, classmates, and teachers; Always do your best. Signage for these values and school-wide rules will be visible in the hallways and classrooms.

Before the year begins, teachers will have to create an Investment and Management Plan that outlines how they will ensure positive discipline, their systems and procedures, rules and consequences, whole group and individual incentives, Class Pledge, and more. The Plan must comply with school-wide policies laid out in this application and the Student Handbook and will be approved by the School Director. Each teacher will spend the first few weeks of school developing in students a deep understanding of the Core Values, Classroom Rules, systems and procedures, and why these are all important to the collective community. Students will have opportunities to practice, make mistakes, work together, and try again. The Morning Meeting, described in detail above, will provide daily time to reinforce the Core Values, and classroom rules, goals. On Fridays, the entire school will gather for an Assembly led by the School Director where he/she leads the entire school in Community Building and recognize and reward students and groups of students for positive behaviors as identified by the classroom teachers.

Students who enter mid-year will be swiftly acculturated into the PEAK Academy community through school norms that are practiced by all staff members. The teacher will hold an Orientation meeting with the student and parent during which the Code of Conduct, Core Values, classroom procedures and expectations will be discussed. The teacher will use the Morning Meeting time to help the student acclimate by reviewing the Core Values, rules, and discuss how the class works together so we can each accomplish our goals. The new student will be provided a Student Mentor, one who demonstrates excellent leadership skills and exemplifies the Core Values, to help model expected behaviors and answer any questions the new student might have.

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.

When a child misbehaves or commits off task behavior, the teacher will bring the student's attention back to the Core Values by conducting a quick and private conference with the student. The teacher will question which value was breached and ask the student what they need to do to mend the situation. It may be that the student needs a few moments to practice mindful breathing, a change in seating, or a quick moment to resolve a conflict. It may also be the result of a student not feeling motivated or clear about the directions. The teacher will quickly and quietly attempt to get to the root cause of the distraction or misbehavior and then redirect and reengage students in their learning. The teacher will remind the student of his/her goals, help the student feel invested in working hard through positive incentive that is individual to what motivates the child. For example, the teacher might know how important the relationship with his/her grandparents is to the student, and might say, "Let's do your very best on this assignment, and I'll send a picture to your grandparents to show them how hard you are working."

If the student continues to violate the Core Values and related classroom rules, the teacher will follow the protocol outlined in the Student Handbook Code of Conduct. The following hierarchal consequences will accrue: (1) Formal Warning and Reflection Station, (2) Loss of a Privilege (such as Choice Stations), (3) Loss of a Second Privilege and Note/Call Home, and (4) Referral to the Office, in which case the parent will be called in for a conference. Consequences will never intentionally shame a student and will always be logical. The teacher will always help a student see the direct link between the choices they make and their achievement outcomes.

When a student demonstrates a consistent and repeated inability to adhere to the school's Core Values and becomes a detriment to the classroom's culture of learning, he/she may be put on an Individualized Behavior Plan (IBP) that addresses the specific misbehavior, providing incentives that are valued by the student, consequences that are most logical and appropriate given the misbehavior, and daily communication with the parent/guardian. The teacher, School Director, parent, Counselor, and student will all meet to address the specific misbehavior and develop the plan that will have the most impact. Treated in the same manner as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the student's progress and behavioral support will be closely documented and monitored, and the team will meet to reevaluate the Behavioral Plan's effectiveness every 6-weeks. The goal will be that with time, consistent implementation, and support from all parties, the clear system of individualized rewards and consequences will eventually lead to more intrinsic motivation and self-regulatory behaviors on the student's part.

For severe, willful infractions, the student will be immediately referred to the School Director who will determine whether a parent conference, a short or long-term suspension, expulsion, or any other disciplinary measures under NC Law will be necessary. These violations include: assault of any student or staff member; possession of any dangerous object of no reasonable use to the child (firearm, knife, explosive, etc.); committing or attempting to commit any type of arson or major vandalization of school property; possession selling, or use of any alcoholic beverage; controlled substance or marijuana on school property or at school sponsored events; any form of sexual harassment, whether verbal or physical in nature; engaging in any inappropriate online activity including cyber bullying or the sharing of inappropriate images; stealing personal property or money from another student or staff member. Long-term suspensions or expulsions are only applicable to 6th-8th graders and will only be used in the case that a violation threatens the safety of students and staff or substantially disrupts the educational environment. PEAK Academy will follow the procedures contained in the NC General Statutes for all disciplinary suspensions and expulsions.

However, if the offense of a child with an IEP could result in a suspension or expulsion, the Intervention Team will conduct a Manifestation Determination Review within 10 days to determine whether or not the child's behavior that led to the disciplinary infraction is linked to his/her disability or whether the infraction was a result of PEAK Academy staff not following any element of the child's IEP. The parent and Intervention Team, including the School Director, EC teacher, classroom teacher, School Counselor, and Mentor Teacher will review all relevant information in the student's file to make a determination. This information will include the IEP, teacher observations, placement appropriateness, supplementary services, and any relevant information provided by the parent. If the Manifestation Determination is "yes" because the behavior was a direct result of the student's disability or because the behavior was a result of the school not implementing any element of the IEP, the student will not be suspended or expelled. The Intervention Team will ensure the student is returned to the placement from which (s)he was removed. If the misconduct was directly related to the disability, the Intervention Team will conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) if it hasn't been done already and will review, modify, or create a Behavioral Intervention Plan. If PEAK Academy staff had failed to implement any component of the child's IEP, immediate steps will be taken to remedy those deficiencies. If, however, the Manifestation Determination is a "no", the infraction was not a result of the child's disability or the school's failure to follow the child's IEP, then the child will be subject to the same consequences as all students.

Every parent will be given immediate, written notification in the event of a long-term suspension or expulsion with clear description and documentation of the incident and reference to the Code of Conduct the student violated. The notification will include the information that they may request a hearing to contest the decision with representation from an attorney or advocate, and the parent will follow the PEAK Academy grievance process

outlined in the Governance Section of this application in compliance with procedures described in GS 115C-390.8.

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: P.E.A.K. Academy Charter School

Mailing Address: 42 Elk Mountain Scenic Hwy

Street Address: 42 Elk Mountain Scenic Hwy

City/State/Zip: Asheville, NC 28804

Phone (xxx-xxx-xxxx): 828-230-4377

Fax: (xxx-xxx-xxxx):

Name of Registered Agent and Address: Tiffany Iheanacho 42 Elk Mountain Scenic Hwy, Asheville, NC 28804

Federal Tax ID:

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**

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 professional licenses?
Tiffany Iheanacho	Board Chair	Buncombe	Buncombe County Government, Justice Resource Coordinator	Professional Counselor Clinical Addiction Specialist	No
Libby Kyles	Vice Chair	Buncombe	CEO, Asheville YWCA	NC Teacher License	No
Catherine Lordi	Secretary	Buncombe	Former Teacher, Writer	Elementary Teacher License	No
Mychal Bacote	Treasurer	Buncombe	Loss Mitigation Officer, Hometrust Bank	No	No
David Robinson	Director	Buncombe	ATS Team Leader, EATON Corp.	No	No
Joe Lordi	Director	Buncombe	President and CEO, Hedrick Industries	Elementary Teacher License School Administrator License	No
Gene Bell	Director	Buncombe	Retired (6/2021) CEO Asheville Housing Authority	General Contractor 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.

PEAK Academy's board of directors are a team of people with complementary skills and experiences that share an unwavering belief in the school's mission and vision. We will act as the governing body of the school and all decisions that we make will be directly tied to furthering the school's mission, bearing full responsibility for the overall successes and student achievement results. All board members can effectively communicate the school's mission, vision, and education plan to community members and stakeholders and will actively advocate for the school within the community. One of

the PEAK Academy board's primary functions will be to recruit, hire, oversee, and evaluate the School Director. While the board will act as the governing body of the school, it will provide the School Director autonomy to oversee all day to day operations, developing and implementing programs and policies that will drive success towards the PEAK Academy mission. The Board of Directors will support the School Director by ensuring compliance with all written policies, reviewing and assessing strategic plans and progress towards measurable goals, and reviewing/approving all hiring/firing decisions, financial reports, and business transactions.

The Board of Directors will be charged with assisting the School Director in developing academic goals based on PEAK Academy's mission and vision and approving these goals each year. The Board will also develop other goals that will help the Board gauge the level of success the school is having at meeting its mission, including academic achievement, student and teacher retention, student attendance, and parent satisfaction and participation. The PEAK Academy Board will receive monthly reports from the School Director that will keep the Board informed on the School's progress towards these goals, and it will hold the School Director accountable for developing strategic plans to meet these goals annually.

Other PEAK Academy Board functions include assisting in efforts to ensure its growth and sustainability in both fundraising and student recruitment; securing a facility; determining the governing structure of the school building; maintaining community partnerships; ensuring adequate resources; ensuring the school remains in compliance with the charter application and by-laws; remaining up to date on charter school law and policies; conducting all meetings in accordance with these policies; posting meeting agendas and minutes in a timely manner to the PEAK Academy website; managing the grievance policy to ensure each grievance receives a swift response that addresses the concern in a fair manner; approving all school policies and amendments to the school's by-laws; and ensuring fiscal responsibility and solvency. The Board of Directors most imperative task is to recruit and hire the School Director who will be charged with carrying out the school's mission and vision. The Board will establish a search committee which will be comprised of 2 board members and 2 invested community members that will create a job description and identify non-negotiables for our school leader which will include prior leadership experience and proven success in closing the achievement gap at his/her former school. The Board will utilize many different avenues to advertise the position and recruit the very best Founding Director, using connections to education communities such as Teach for America Alumni, New Leaders, the KIPP network, and also posting the position on national higher education recruiting websites and LinkedIn. Candidates will engage in a thorough, rigorous application process which will include submission of a resume and writing samples, a phone interview, role-play scenarios, and a thorough interview with the board using many questions from the Quality School Leadership (QSL) Question Bank. The Board will evaluate each candidate using the search committee's detailed rubric and discuss each candidate in-depth before voting to fill the position. Once hired, the board will determine effectiveness of the school leader through observation, school results, and biannual evaluation using New Leader's Principal Evaluation Rubric in October and April of each year, which provides a complete, cohesive feedback across the following critical domains: Shared Vision/School Culture, Family Engagement, Learning & Teaching,

Talent Management, Strategic Planning & Systems, Personal Leadership/Growth, and Strategic Planning & Systems. The School Director will also self-reflect and rate his/herself on the rubric and the group will compare and identify strengths and areas for strategic improvements to further PEAK Academy's mission. The evaluation will be used in conjunction with feedback and input from parents, teachers, and students about the school's performance through a survey process, and the PEAK Academy Board will utilize these measures to determine the support and professional development appropriate for the School Director.

3. Describe the size, current and desired composition, powers, and duties of the governing board.

The PEAK Academy board will strive to maintain a board that consists of 7-11 members; at a minimum, the board will meet the historic minimum of 5 board members. Currently, the board is comprised of 7 members. Positions within the board of directors include a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. These positions were voted on by the current board members and all received unanimous election. These board positions will rotate every two (2) years. Board members will also participate in or be the head of at least one (1) committee that will meet at least once between each board meeting. These committees are currently Finance, Development/Governance, Facilities, and Marketing/Community Engagement. The current members will be responsible for recruiting, interviewing, and voting to add new board members upon vacancies. The Board will seek to always represent a wide array of experiences, perspectives, networks and skills in areas such as finance, education, leadership, fundraising, governance, and public relations. Composing the board of members with a balance of these skills will help ensure the PEAK Academy Board can actualize our mission.

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.

The current board include members with experience in school leadership, business ownership, instruction and curriculum development, nonprofit design and development, community engagement, fundraising, and budget development and fiscal oversight. Current board member, Libby Kyles, is a well-respected, long standing former teacher in Asheville City Schools and now the CEO of the Asheville YWCA. She also founded a highly successful local nonprofit, Youth Transformed for Life (YTL), which provides and connects educational and extracurricular programs with disenfranchised youth in the Asheville area. In Tiffany Iheanacho's current role with the Buncombe County Justice Department, she manages the community engagement staff, designs surveys, performs qualitative and quantitative research, analyzes data, drafts and monitors contracts, and plans/escalates human services programs. Joe Lordi, a Teach for America alum, is a former principal of a Title I middle school, and is now a local business owner with over 200 employees. Catherine Lordi, also a Teach for America alum, taught in a Title I school for 7 years, served as a part-time Tier III reading tutor for Asheville City Schools for 4

years, and has recently been a writer for Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Instruction (LLI). Gene Bell, retired CEO of the Asheville Housing Authority, was elected to the Asheville City School board for 8 years, was the Board Chair for 6 years, and researched and helped bring KIPP Academy to Asheville in the early 2000s. As a loss mitigation officer, Mychal Bacoate has extensive knowledge and experience with finance and budgeting. He was also recently elected to the Human Relation Commission for the City of Asheville and serves on the Buncombe County Board of Adjustment. David Robinson has extensive experience with at-risk youth as a Behavioral Support Specialist and is well-respected and connected as coach in the Buncombe County School system. The PEAK Academy board intentionally represents the demographic that the school will serve; 5 of the 7 current board members are African American and are well-respected voices within the community. Board members are well-connected with local government leaders, businesses, foundations, nonprofits, Asheville City Schools staff, Asheville City Board officials, and the targeted community. With a balance of business, education, finance, and management expertise, the current board members have complementary skills and perspectives that ensure our ability to collectively implement the mission and vision of PEAK Academy successfully.

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.

PEAK Academy Board of Directors will provide governance and support with the sole purpose of ensuring that the mission and vision of the school are fulfilled. The Board of Directors will guarantee the success of PEAK by: a) developing clear, ambitious, measurable short and long-term goals with related strategic plans and benchmarks, b) recruiting, hiring, establishing compensation, and supervising the School Director through monthly board meetings, evaluation, and analysis of reports, c) performing all duties imposed by law, articles of incorporation, and bylaws, d) facilitating academic success by ensuring adequate resources, facilities, and financial management, e) building and maintaining partnerships with community stakeholders, f) assuming a leading role in fundraising, and g) creating ongoing opportunities for professional development of the School Director and board members.

The School Director will manage the day-to-day operations at PEAK Academy, implementing the mission and vision to ensure the school's success. The School Director is the only employee of directly supervised and evaluated by the board. The School Director supervises all other PEAK Academy employees, and will attend all board meetings, providing a monthly report including data on academic progress, financial and operational data, and any other items requested by the board or deemed appropriate by the School Director. The Board Chair and the School Director will work together to establish the agenda for the board meetings, and the Treasurer will work closely with the School Director to develop and monitor the school's finances.

In addition to the School Director evaluation process described above, each board member and the School Director will also evaluate the PEAK Academy School Board's effectiveness across critical domains using the Board Effectiveness Self-Assessment rubric. The governance committee will compile these results and, at the annual retreat, the board will use these results to review its roles and responsibilities, self-assess its effectiveness, and set short and long-term development goals. In an effort to have complete transparency with the entire PEAK Academy and Asheville community, all opportunities, meeting dates, agendas, and minutes will be posted on the PEAK Academy website within 48 hours of their board approval in compliance with NC's Open Meetings Laws.

The organizational structure at PEAK Academy will allow for parent and community involvement at several levels. Parents may participate in the PEAK Academy Parent Organization and may be invited to be a part of the School Advisory Committee organized and led by the School Director. Parents may also be asked to participate in the search committee for subsequent School Directors upon vacancy, and other committees established by the School Director and board. Community members will be able to get involved in several ways as well. Doors will be open at various times throughout the year for community tours to increase community support and funding, recruit new families, and develop and maintain business and nonprofit partners. Community members will be asked to share particular talents and resources with PEAK Academy to deepen student learning and provide a vast array of perspectives. Community members may be asked to mentor students, volunteer regularly, donate supplies and other resources, attend fundraising events, and advocate for PEAK Academy throughout the Asheville area.

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

For several years, the founding board members have been building an understanding of charter schools, exploring the opening of a charter school as an option for Asheville's population of families that are being underserved by the Asheville City Schools. In January of 2019, with the release of a local article revealing that Asheville's achievement gap had become the very widest in the state (Daffron, 2019), several board members including one parent/educator within Asheville City Schools and two Teach for America alumni, gathered and determined that Asheville's underserved population needs another option. From this initial meeting, these founding board members began recruiting other like-minded, experienced, well-connected individuals via church, the community, and town hall meetings, particularly focusing on recruiting African American community members to ensure they have a voice in the design, intent, and outcome of the charter school. Board members were provided an initial board membership packet, and once it was established that individuals shared a common mission and vision and fully understood the application process and board responsibilities, the Founding Board members began meeting biweekly beginning in March 2019. These founding board

members have already proven their commitment to the vision of PEAK Academy through attendance at 8 meetings, completion of research and task items, sharing the mission and vision with community members at large, and participation in a Saturday working board retreat. All board members share a common belief that all children can achieve at high levels, and that lower income families in Asheville deserve an educational option that can provide a promising future for their children. Founding board members have committed to serving a staggered 2-year term with opportunity for reappointment, which will ensure consistency through PEAK Academy's planning phase, and will allow the board to elect new members one at a time. Officers may serve no more than three consecutive two-year terms. After a break of a minimum of 1-year, officers may be elected to another term.

New board member recruitment will directly align with the school's strategic plan. The Board's Governance Committee will keep a thorough board inventory to track current members' strengths and skill sets, and identify expertise that is needed for future members to maintain an effective and complementary board composition. Once the Governance Committee identifies the perspectives and skills the board needs, that information will be shared with the entire board in writing, and will begin a search for candidates via contacts at local businesses and firms, and through networking with current and former board members. The Governance Board committee will initiate contact with serious candidates and be provided a resume and writing sample. The board will vote upon candidates to pursue at the next meeting, and a strategic and effective interview process will follow which will include the candidate meeting with the school leader and school tour, observation of a board meeting with reflection, and an interview with the board members. The board will discuss each candidate and formally vote to elect the candidates separately within 3 months of each vacancy. Board membership will always stay between 7 and 11 members, and board seats will always be filled within 3 months of each vacancy.

Daffron, Virginia. "Asheville City Schools' worst-in-NC achievement, discipline gaps widen" MountainXPress (Jan 2019). www.mountainx.com/news/asheville-city-schools-worst-in-nc-achievement-discipline-gaps-widen

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

The target population is reflective of the majority of board member's family, neighbors, church associates, and friends. The board knows firsthand the negative effects that the opportunity gap in the schools is having on Asheville's black population. Board members also work and volunteer with the target community. Tiffany Iheanacho works in a government setting to provide services to disenfranchised youth, with an emphasis on community engagement with low wealth communities and communities of color. For the last 25 years, Gene Bell's responsibility with the Housing Authority was to improve the quality of life for Asheville's low-income population and enhance the connectivity of low-income people to the rest of the community. Libby Kyles is a well-respected former Asheville City Schools teacher of 15 years and is now the CEO of the YWCA and founder of the nonprofit, Youth Transformed for Life

(YTL). Mychal Bacoate is an Asheville native, Asheville High School graduate, and the only African American ad litem in Buncombe County.

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

The PEAK Academy Board of Directors will meet at a regularly, scheduled time each month (with the exception of our retreat month) for a total of 11 times each year. One board retreat and training will take place in June, during which the board will review all policies and procedures, complete a self-assessment to measure the boards performance against high standards outlined in the Charter School Center’s Standards for Effective Charter School Governance (charterschoolcenter.ed.gov), and review progress towards all annual goals. Committee work sessions and communications will be held intermittently between Board meetings. Goals and outcomes to be addressed at each monthly meeting are outlined in calendar “Outcomes Based Board Meeting Calendar” in Appendix O.

9. What kinds of orientation or training will new board members receive, and what kinds of ongoing professional development will existing board members receive? The plan for training and development should include a timetable, specific topics to be addressed, and requirements for participation.

Once new board members are elected and accept their position, the governance committee and school leader will engage the member in a strategic onboarding process. New board members will immediately be provided a Board of Directors Manual that gives new board members a complete picture of the school and board policies and will include all critical documents outlined in the National Charter School Resource Center Governing Board Toolkit (p 14-16). This includes an overview of the boards conflict of interest policy, grievance procedure, board by-laws, and the NC Charter School Act. The new board member will engage in a 2-hour Orientation Session, which will include time for building relationships between the new and existing board members, overview of the mission, history, successes, and challenges of the charter school, knowledge and questions regarding the boards norms, policies, committee participation, and time to discuss specific ways the new board member can have a positive impact on the board and school. Then the new board member will be assigned a board mentor who will be the first point of contact to answer questions or navigate any issues that may arise.

Board members are expected to attend monthly meetings. Board members are also required to attend an annual retreat each June during which the board will analyze and discuss PEAK Academy’s annual report against all PEAK Academy goals and review PEAK Academy bylaws, mission and vision, board policies, and analyze the board’s effectiveness. Furthermore, board meetings will often involve training by our contracted partners. All Board members will participate in governance training provided by Leaders Building Leaders regarding effective board governance, fiduciary duty, legal aspects of running a charter school, and goal setting.

Acadia NorthStar will provide the board with training on effective budgets and fiduciary responsibilities. Lisa Stella-Gordon, PEAK Academy's attorney, has proactively provided board training on charter school law and provide training in areas as needs/questions arise. Board members will be required to participate in at least (2) additional professional development opportunities a year and report findings to the board at monthly meetings. These opportunities may be directly related to the board member's committee responsibilities and may also be scheduled by the Board Chair. They will include site visit to other area charter schools, site visits to effective charter schools across the state with similar demographics, technical training, workshops, the NC School Leadership Institute, and guest speakers.

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.

There are no existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts of interest among board members at this time. The PEAK Academy by-laws and the Board Manual specifically address expectations for board members' ethical behavior including a Conflict of Interest Policy. Board members all sign a statement before appointment agreeing they have read the PEAK Academy Conflict of Interest Policy and are required to disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest at that time. Board members remain committed to avoiding any conflicts of interest in order to fully serve PEAK Academy by putting the interest of the entire school community before personal needs, and each member will be required to resign the agreement at the board's annual retreat each year.

Potential areas of conflict include preferential treatment of children of board members, offers of gifts or complimentary services to a board member, confidential information about staff and students, financial benefit to their represented organization, and any other interest from which they might benefit. If a real or perceived conflict of interest does arise, it is the board members responsibility to bring awareness to the board and will be noted in monthly board meeting minutes. The interested person may make a presentation, and afterward will leave the meeting during the discussion of and vote on the transaction involving the possible conflict of interest. The Board Chair will, if appropriate, appoint a non-interested Board member to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement. If the Board determines a more advantageous transaction is not possible, the Board (excluding the interested person) will determine by majority vote whether the transaction is in the best interest of PEAK Academy. If a board member neglects to disclose their interest in a matter, the Board will provide the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose and it is up to the non-interested members of the board to determine if the infraction should be cause for removal from the board.

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

The PEAK Academy Board will remain knowledgeable of NC State Laws for Charter Schools and will ensure that the school abides by all laws. The Board will oversee the development of policies related to academics, handbooks, enrollment, board governance, finance, school operations, building requirements, communications, teacher licensure, student admissions, charter renewal, and employee and relevant Board member screening.

The Board of Directors will operate as the governing body for PEAK Academy, and leave the day-to-day, operational decision making to the School Director. The board will focus on developing and voting on school-wide policies that support the mission, vision, and academic goals of the entire school. The board may recognize a need for a new or amended school-wide policy that is brought to the board's attention by the School Director, parent, attorney, staff, or board members themselves. The matter will be brought to the appropriate committee for research, data collection, consultation with various stakeholders, deliberation, and discussion. After this collection and review, Board members will share opinions, brainstorm solutions, and draft/amend the policy with compromise when necessary. The policy will be written within a uniform policy framework and presented at the next board meeting for a first reading and discussion. Revisions may be made to the draft per board member suggestions. If revisions are made, the policy will be presented at the next board meeting for adoption. While a majority vote is required for the adoption or amendment of a policy, the board will make every effort to reach consensus in the best interest of the school's mission and needs of students. When a policy is approved, the policy manual will be updated and made available for review by all interested parties at all times. Any concerns that have been shared with the board regarding policies will be reviewed and considered at the annual meeting in an effort to update policies in a manner that reflects not only legal compliance but best practices and the needs of the school community.

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.

PEAK Academy will establish a School Advisory Council that will report directly to the School Director. The Advisory Council will be composed of 3 staff members, 3 parents, and eventually 3 students after the completion of 5th grade. The council will be responsible for making the School Director aware of any interests/concerns of the greater school population and recommending possible solutions. The School Advisory Council has no formal authority, but may, when necessary, bring issues to the attention of the PEAK Academy School Board.

Parents may also choose to join the PEAK Academy Parent Association in order to play a more active role in supporting the school. The Parent Association at PEAK Academy will assist efforts in fundraising events and coordinate volunteers. The School Director may also delegate responsibilities to the Parent Association regards to planning and running school-wide events, special programs, or parent workshops; however, the Parent Association has no formal authority and reports to the School Director, not to the PEAK Academy School Board.

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

Any parent who feels they have been treated in a manner that is unfair has the right to be heard. Parents (and students), first and foremost, should try to address concerns promptly, directly, and expressly, with their teacher. If such attempts are unsuccessful and the parent is not satisfied with the teacher's response, the parent should then request a meeting with the School Director. At this meeting, the teacher, student, parent, and School Director must be present and the issue will be fully discussed. If a parent feels that the issue is unresolved following this meeting and an action has violated a School policy or law (not applicable to complaints under Title IX), the parent may issue a formal grievance using the following procedure:

1. The parent will submit a letter in writing stating the policy or law that was violated including all details of the violation that would be helpful in decision making. This letter should be submitted to the School Director and the Board of Directors within 15 days of the initial meeting with the School Director. If the Director is implicated in the grievance, the grievance should only be submitted to a Board member with whom the parent feels comfortable disclosing the information.
2. The Governance Committee has 5 business days from the time they receive the grievance to respond in writing to the individual identifying their solution and determination if further action is necessary. If the Board decides the issue should be heard, the Board will call all parties to meet with the Board.
3. After the meeting, any decision of the Board will be communicated to the Director and the parent within 5 school days. The Board's decision is final.

*The grievance policy for employees of PEAK Academy is outlined in the following section.

***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	2
Assistant Principal					1	1
Administrative Assistant		1	1	1	1	2
Core Classroom Teachers		6	8	10	12	14
EC Teacher		1	1	1	2	2
Specialized Classroom Teachers (e.g. foreign language, arts enrichment)		3 (.5)	3 (.5)	3	3	3
School Counselor		1 (.5)	1 (.5)	1	1	1
Food Service Staff		1 (.5)	1 (.5)	2 (.5)	2 (.5)	2 (.5)
Teaching Assistants		6 (.5)	6 (.5)	6 (.5)	6 (.5)	6 (.5)

Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management

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

PEAK Academy believes that a highly motivated, passionate, dedicated staff will be the most significant factor in student recruitment and achievement. It is our goal to attract smart, organized, driven, experienced teachers who truly believe in PEAK Academy's mission and vision and reflect the diversity of PEAK Academy students. PEAK Academy will post the job opening on the PEAK Academy website, social media forums, LinkedIn, teachers-teachers.com, and other online job recruiter websites. PEAK Academy will also advertise the position through the local media, Teach for America Alumni magazine, Teach for America's group TFA Alumni of Color, and New Leaders. PEAK Academy will also utilize connections with Teach for America Charlotte, the UNCA Education Department, and other highly successful charter schools such as Henderson Collegiate and KIPP to recruit highly effective, dedicated teachers.

Teacher retention at PEAK Academy is a priority, and one of our top goals is to retain 90% of our teachers each year. In order to retain teachers, PEAK Academy will create a supportive, collaborative climate based in continual improvement and enable teachers to feel personally

invested. PEAK Academy will form a dynamic, professional community where teachers want to work. Teachers will receive personalized observation and feedback weekly, quarterly evaluation, opportunities for professional development that targets their specific needs. PEAK Academy will respect and honor each teachers' expertise and provide opportunities to be mentors, share their best practices with other staff, and lead professional development. Teachers at PEAK Academy will have more time for planning and collaboration with peers than typically provided in the LEA. Teachers at PEAK Academy will be leaders and decision-makers, and will be provided autonomy regards to instruction and classroom management within the PEAK Academy framework. Therefore, teachers will have greater ownership and pride in the teaching and learning processes.

In addition, in order to recruit and retain highly effective, dedicated teachers, PEAK Academy will prioritize allocating funding for higher annual compensation for teachers than the LEA in addition to the LEA supplement. Funding provided, teachers will also have opportunities to earn annual bonuses based on student growth and achievement data, an annual stipend for serving as a mentor teacher, and yearly salary increases for commitment to the PEAK Academy community.

PEAK Academy will hire part-time teacher assistants and pay them more than the LEA in order to recruit professional, dedicated educators to provide positive, generous support to teachers and students. The teacher assistants will undergo training provided by the Mentor Teacher and School Director and will also be treated as professionals with weekly observation and feedback and salary increases. We plan to recruit teacher assistants from local universities and job fairs, and this system will help the School Director with identification and preparation of future PEAK Academy lead teachers.

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.

Hiring a dynamic, effective, dedicated PEAK Academy School Director will be the Board of Director's most monumental task in ensuring that we actualize our mission and vision. The PEAK Academy Board will develop a search committee during the ready to open year, comprised of 2-3 board members and 1-2 invested community members that will create a job description and specific marketing plan. In the fall of 2019, the Board will engage in an aggressive fundraising campaign, with a priority to allocate a portion of the funds raised towards hiring the School Director for employment during the Planning Year. If funding

becomes available, the Search Committee will begin posting the job description and qualifications upon application acceptance to hire the School Director on payroll in September 2020.

At a minimum, the School Director will have an advanced degree (Masters or higher) in education or a relevant field, previous leadership experience, teaching experience, and possess or work to possess NC Principal Certification. The School Director must demonstrate an understanding of culturally relevant instruction, have proven, measurable results in closing the achievement gap, and the unwavering belief that (s)he is fully responsible for the student's academic results at PEAK Academy. No excuses.

The job description will include implementation of the mission and vision of PEAK Academy; recruiting and leading a staff that are invested in closing the achievement gap and effective at getting results; supporting student recruitment and admissions; developing long and short term strategic goals; providing instructional leadership to the teachers at PEAK Academy through observation, feedback, and professional development; overseeing effective implementation of curriculum and programming; cultivating media and community relations; effectively managing and monitoring the school's finances; serving as the public face of the school; optimizing relationships with parents and all stakeholders; and initiating and retaining relationships with the community to garner support for the school.

The Search Committee will utilize many different avenues to advertise the position and recruit the very best Founding Director, using connections to education communities such as Teach for America Alumni, Teach for America Alumni of Color, New Leaders, and also posting the position on national higher education recruiting websites and LinkedIn. Candidates will engage in a thorough, rigorous application process which will include submission of a resume and writing samples and a phone interview with a board member on the Search Committee. Using a rubric, the Search Committee will narrow the field and invite the top candidates to Board Interviews, during which they will be asked to role-play difficult scenarios, provide plans for a professional development, and engage in a thorough interview with the board using many questions from the Quality School Leadership (QSL) question bank (gtlcenter.org). The Board will discuss and evaluate each candidate using the Search Committee's rubric before voting to fill the position.

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 School Director hired by the PEAK Academy Board of Directors is responsible for recruiting, hiring, training, evaluating, and when necessary recommending termination of all other staff at PEAK Academy. The School Director is the only employee the board, and all other employees

are employees of the School Director. The PEAK Academy Board will create the policies and oversight to ensure the school is operational, safe, and has what it needs to fulfill its mission. Provided the School Director's rationale, the Board will provide final approval in accordance with the bylaws of all final decisions regarding hiring and dismissals. Employees of PEAK Academy may attend open board meetings and may sign up to speak during the public comment section for 2-3 minutes, which is the allotted time for all public comments. Employees may also participate in the PEAK Academy Advisory Council. Board members may conduct an annual, scheduled walk-through at PEAK Academy in a manner that does not interfere with instruction in order to have the opportunity to see the successes at PEAK Academy firsthand, but this will in no way be evaluative in nature.

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

PEAK Academy believes that recruiting and hiring is one of the most important tasks to creating a successful school. The hiring and dismissal of all PEAK Academy employees is ultimately the responsibility of the School Director, with the Board providing final approval on all decisions. The School Director, as the only employee of the board, will follow a sequential process to ensure that each potential staff member is a great fit for the school and community. Each candidate will: submit a writing sample, resume, and an original, standards-aligned lesson plan (if applicable). Based on this information, the School Director will utilize a detailed rubric to evaluate these candidates on their leadership experience, achievement, respect for low income communities, organization, and writing ability. Those that pass the initial screening will make it to a 45-minute phone interview, during which the School Director will probe for more specifics regarding crucial domains: leadership, persistence, innovation, collaboration, data-driven decision making, and achievement. Following the phone interview, all serious candidates will be invited to an onsite interview with the School Director, and may be asked to facilitate a model lesson, bring a strategic plan based on analyzation of data, and/or role play a conversation with a concerned parent.

Once a candidate has progressed through these steps, at least two professional references will be reviewed and he/she will undergo a criminal background check and review of citizenship. Pending the results, the School Director will seek Board approval for hiring.

There are several reasons that a PEAK Academy employee could be considered for dismissal. A violation of any employee policy in the PEAK Academy Employee Handbook could be interpreted as grounds for immediate dismissal pending School Board approval. Staff may also be dismissed for unsatisfactory job performance, given that the School Director has documented efforts to remediate the issues for three (3) months. In the event that the job performance does not improve, the School Director can immediately dismiss an employee when necessary or can opt to issue two (2) weeks-notice of dismissal. The board votes to approve all termination decisions of the School Director.

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

PEAK Academy's Board of Directors believes that recruiting and retaining high performing employees will be the defining factor in actualizing our mission. We will be asking our School Director and teachers to work longer and harder than the LEA. In addition, Asheville City has one of the highest costs of living in North Carolina. Therefore, we strongly believe our employees are our top investment and intend to pay the School Director and teachers high, competitive, professional salaries. Starting salary for the School Director will be \$80,000 and starting salary for teachers will be \$50,000 or 3% higher than their salary at the LEA (whichever is greater). Annually, PEAK Academy will budget for salary increases of \$1,000 for the School Director and teachers. Teacher assistants, who will be in each classroom in grades K-2 from roughly 7:45-12:45 will make a starting salary of \$16,000, which will increase \$500 each year. In addition, teachers will receive annual bonuses depending on performance as measured through student growth performance metrics, peer reviews, and teacher assessment growth metrics. All full-time PEAK Academy staff will also receive access to a health insurance package and retirement savings plan upon their hire. An explanation of all benefits will be provided in the Employee Handbook during the on-boarding process.

School Director \$80,000 increases \$1,000 each year
Assistant School Director (Year 4) \$60,000 increases \$1,000 each year
Administrative Assistant: \$30,000 increases \$500 each year
Teacher: \$50,000 increases \$1,000 each year
Part-time teacher assistants: \$16,000 increases \$500 each year
EC Teacher: \$50,000 increases \$1,000 each year
Part-time counselor: \$24,000 increases \$500 each year (while part-time)

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

Any employee who feels they have been treated in a manner that is in violation of School policy, board policy, or law, has the right to be heard. Staff members, first and foremost, should try to address concerns promptly, directly, and expressly, with those involved in the issue. If such attempts are unsuccessful, the employee should follow the following conflict resolution procedure:

1. The staff member will email or write the School Director with an explanation of the grievance within 15 days of the act being reported, citing all details of the actions that would be helpful in decision-making. If the Director is implicated in the grievance, the grievance should be submitted to the Board Chair or the Board member with whom the individual feels comfortable disclosing the information.
2. The School Director has 5 business days from the time they receive the grievance to respond in writing to the individual or request a meeting to be scheduled. If the

employee is satisfied with the solution proposed in writing or at the scheduled meeting, the individual will express their satisfaction in writing to the Director and the issue is considered resolved. If the employee is not satisfied, the aggrieved party has a choice to file a formal written grievance form, filed within 7 days of the previously documented meetings, to a member of the Board of Directors. The aggrieved should include details about the event and the school policy or board policy that was violated.

3. The letter shall be delivered to the Board Governance Committee, who will review the grievance in a Committee Meeting. If the Committee is unable to reach consensus, the Board Chair (who always serves on the Governance Committee) may call a special meeting of the Board to consider the issue in accordance with the School's Bylaws or determine the issue needs to be discussed with the Board at the next board meeting. The Board may conduct an investigation into the accusations if deemed necessary before the meeting and the Board will consider and discuss the grievance at the meeting in accordance with Open Meeting Laws. The individual filing the grievance will attend the meeting.
4. The Board will come to a consensus around next steps to resolve the conflict and will advise the School Director and the individual who filed the grievance of the Board's decision within five school days. The Board's decision is final.

In order to terminate an employee of PEAK Academy due to poor job performance, the School Director must make documented attempts to remediate the issue before recommending termination. The School Director may immediately terminate any employee who has breached contract or willfully broken policy in the employee handbook or may opt to provide two-weeks notice if deemed appropriate. The board will vote to approve all termination decisions.

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

In order to support students of all ability levels, PEAK Academy will seek candidates who can fulfill dual responsibilities to teach elementary children and EC, gifted, or ELL children.

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.

PEAK Academy is committed to hiring exceptional staff to provide the best opportunity for all students to reach ambitious achievement goals, including those with special needs, ELL students, and those students who are gifted. PEAK Academy is a small school, but it has allocated funds to have an EC Teacher for each group of grades (one for K-5, one for 6-8). PEAK Academy plans to have a part-time teacher assistant in each grade in Kindergarten through 2nd grade to provide more individualized support and differentiated instruction to all students. A school counselor will be employed part time (25 hours a week) years 1 and 2 and then full-time in years 3 and beyond. This will provide additional behavioral support for any student. ELL

students and gifted students will be supported within their classrooms, but PEAK Academy will give preference to teachers holding certification in more than one of the certification areas of ELL, EC, or gifted teaching.

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).

School Director: PEAK Academy will require that the School Director possess an advanced degree (Masters or higher) in education or a relevant field, previous school leadership experience, teaching experience, and possess or work to possess NC Principal Certification. The responsibilities of School Director will include: implement the mission and vision of PEAK Academy, recruit and retain staff who are effective and invested in the school's mission and vision, support student recruitment and admissions, develop long and short term strategic goals to present to the Board annually, establish and maintain a positive image for the school with local or national media engagements, creating and tracking professional development, preparing records for annual financial audit and quarterly board reports, ensure staff and student safety, oversee all curriculum and school programming, monitor growth towards student performance goals, supervise, evaluate, and provide feedback to teachers of instruction, track teacher licensure, directly report to the Board of Directors, manage staff and the day-to-day operations of the school, monitor the school's financial position, monitor staff satisfaction, and cultivate relationships in support of school growth, partnerships, and fundraising.

Teachers: In order to be hired at PEAK Academy, teachers must possess a Bachelor's degree from a four-year institution. A strong preference for our founding teachers will be those with a least 2 years of teaching experience and candidates must have the firm belief that all students can achieve at high levels regardless of race and income to be considered. No fewer than 50% of teachers employed will be certified with the state of North Carolina. Teacher responsibilities will include: create a positive learning environment for students, meet school-wide and state mandated student performance goals, attend regular professional development opportunities, regularly assess students and analyze outcomes, track student performance towards goals, plan with a backwards design model, creating end assessments before planning units and lessons, develop curriculum collaboratively with grade-level team, facilitate instruction for the class as a whole and facilitate remediation and acceleration groups in core subjects, communicate regularly with parents/guardians regarding student behavior and academic progress.

Teacher Assistants: Teacher assistants must have a high school diploma with preference for those candidate who have had experience in instructional settings with children. Responsibilities will include: assist with the instruction of individual or groups of students as advised by teacher, participate in training and professional development when appropriate, manage daily record-keeping procedures, participate in transitions, lunch, and student

supervision duties as advised by the teacher, create a positive, clean, orderly, safe, and encouraging learning environment for students, assist with all tasks as directed by the teacher, assume teaching responsibilities when the lead teacher is engaged in professional development opportunities.

Exceptional Children (EC) Teacher: The EC teacher must possess the same qualities as the regular classroom teachers, a bachelors or Master's degree in Special Education, EC certification, the knowledge of the needs of children who require additional strategies and resources, and knowledge of the IEP process and documentation, and preferably at least 2-years' experience in teaching. The EC teacher responsibilities are the same as a regular classroom teacher in addition to developing and implementing the Individual Education Program (IEP) in the classroom compatible with the student's age and developmental level. The EC teacher will work closely with the classroom teacher to make accommodations for his/her students within the classroom, monitor student's progress, maintains EC records in compliance with NC and federal guidelines, and communicates with parents regarding their children's educational progress through written updates regularly.

Administrative Assistant: Must possess a high school diploma (though a college diploma is preferred), secretarial experience, and customer service experience. Must be proficient in Microsoft Office, have knowledge of office practices, have excellent verbal and written communication skills, and strong interpersonal skills. The Administrative Assistant must be comfortable working in a fast-paced environment with diverse community members, can meet deadlines, and maintain flexibility in response to schedules and tasks. Responsibilities include answering phones, taking messages, using voicemail, making copies, filing, and organizing the front office, adhering to systems designed by School Director for keeping the office organized and the school running smoothly, support the School Director with scheduling and maintaining the school calendar, greet parents, students, visitors, and community partners, ensure all student forms are complete, organized, and up to date, maintain student and teacher attendance, assist with the purchase of supplies and requests of teachers for instructional materials, and assist the School Director and Financial Management Firm with invoices and Payroll.

Counselor: Must possess a master's degree in school counseling. The counselor will work with individual and small groups of students to help them excel in school and collaboratively address a variety of topics with the classroom teachers ranging from behavioral issues to bullying prevention to college preparedness. The counselor will implement a comprehensive school counseling program based on creating a trauma-informed school and will provide teacher support and training in strategies to implement in their classrooms.

3.5 Staff Evaluations and Professional Development

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

We have voted to enter into contract with Acadia NorthStar for Information Services. They will work closely with the School Director to ensure PEAK Academy meets all teaching licensure requirements, though it is ultimately the responsibility of individual certified staff to ensure that their renewal requirements are met. The School Director will also be responsible for scheduling professional development opportunities that reflect the collaborative needs of teachers and staff based on evaluation, student achievement data, and teacher input.

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.

During the early years of PEAK Academy, the School Director will directly support all teachers through curriculum development, observation, feedback, and weekly collaborative conversations in grade level teams around culturally relevant teaching, student achievement goals and data, instructional strategies, and targeted outcomes. As capacity is built among teaching staff, one teacher in each cohort (K-2, 3-5, and 6-8) will become the mentor teacher for any new teaching staff. The School Director will ask an exceptional PEAK Teacher to be the Mentor Teacher based on effective teaching practices and high student achievement results. The Mentor Teachers will be appointed annually and will be offered a stipend at the end of the year for fulfilling his/her role dutifully as Mentor Teacher. Mentor Teachers will be provided professional development from the School Director and all mentoring practices will be aligned to the NC Mentoring Standards (dpi.state.nc.us). The Mentor Teacher will provide new teachers coaching in the classroom, observation, feedback, assistance in navigating PEAK Academy Resource Library, help integrating into the PEAK Academy family, opportunities to observe and collaborate, and advice and support in all matters regarding instruction.

PEAK Academy will incorporate professional learning opportunities for teachers regularly. All teachers will participate in Professional Development as planned in the school calendar that will be based on deficiencies in student achievement data, teacher request, and tailored to improve student learning across subjects. On and off-site professional development will also assist teachers in acquiring the necessary credits to maintain licensure prescribed by NC State law and the requirements defined in NCLB. By design, leadership and development at PEAK Academy is delegated to the teaching staff. Teachers at PEAK Academy are leaders, and the School Director will capitalize upon teachers' strengths to help improve student learning across the entire school. Teachers at PEAK Academy will be asked to lead professional development, share their knowledge and expertise, and help each other develop and grow to further their impact on student achievement.

PEAK Academy teacher evaluation will be a model for the way in which students are evaluated, building an atmosphere of continual improvement. Our approach will be based on evaluation using rubric assessment, goal setting, individualized professional development, and reevaluation. Teachers will participate in the NC Teacher Evaluation Process to assess the teacher's performance in relation to the NC Professional Teaching Standards and serve as a basis for instructional improvement. The School Director will conduct the formal evaluation process annually through an evaluation cycle that is based on years of teaching experience (Abbreviated, Comprehensive, or Standard) as outlined in the NC Teacher Evaluation Process. In addition, all teachers will complete a self-assessment to rate his or her performance using Teach for America's Teaching As Leadership (TAL) Rubric, and use this information to help develop an individual teacher's Professional Development Plan (PDP), which will identify the performance standards and indicators to target professional growth areas. In addition to being evaluated on the "comprehensive" observation cycle, teachers with less than 3 years of teaching experience will participate in a Beginning Teacher Support Program. During this induction period, beginning teachers will have a formal orientation, AVID training, the mentor support described above, and formative and summative evaluations. Beginning teachers may also participate in additional observation of master teachers and professional development that targets their individual needs, which may include (but is not limited to) positive discipline and behavior management, the use of effective instructional strategies, culturally relevant teaching, inquiry-based instruction, creating a trauma-sensitive classroom, differentiation, and the use of data to improve instruction.

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.

Aligned with our belief that learning should be authentic, differentiated, and relevant, PEAK Academy feels the most effective professional development for teachers is that which is conducted in the context of their work, based on deficits in student achievement data, or a need identified by the School Director in observation and evaluation or in based on self-evaluation by the teacher. Therefore, while some professional development, particularly that provided at the beginning of the year, will be uniform in nature, the majority of professional learning opportunities will be individualized. This independent professional development may include workshops offered outside of school, one-on-one professional development with the mentor teacher or another faculty member, or independent or small group study.

In its first year of operation, PEAK Academy teachers will participate in 6 professional development days before the school year begins. The School Director will lead training around school policies and schedules, investment and management plans using trauma-informed and Teaching with Love and Logic frameworks, the school's adopted curriculum, assessment, using data to drive instruction, the intervention model, and differentiation during the

remediation/acceleration groups. An AVID representative will provide a day of professional development on cultural relevance, high expectations, and inquiry-based instruction.

Additionally, AVID offers exciting and intensive off-site summer training for both the School Director and teachers in various locations across the country. It will be a priority to take advantage of this comprehensive training if funding becomes available through the NC Access Grant or other fundraising efforts. If we are unable to participate, as it is not currently included in our baseline budget, the training regarding AVID resources and methodology will occur in-house by local AVID program manager. If funding is available, new teachers Year 2 and beyond will attend the summer AVID institute each summer with a Mentor teacher or other veteran teacher at PEAK Academy. New teachers each year will also collaboratively plan an investment and management plan, long term plan, and lesson plan the first few weeks of school with a Mentor Teacher during the summer. Year 2 and beyond, only 4 days of whole-school professional development will be required and will include team building, any changes to schedules, curriculum, and policies, and any other professional development topics the School Director feels the need to provide.

Other whole-school professional development will be facilitated by the School Director, Mentor teacher, EC teacher, or a team of teachers and will be based on identified collective needs. PEAK Academy will also invite outside experts to come to PEAK Academy as needs arise to provide insight and expertise in areas in which PEAK Academy staff have little knowledge. PEAK Academy will hold 6 teachers work days (approximately every 6-weeks), giving teachers time to analyze data, plan, learn and collaborate with faculty and external partners, and reflect upon and modify their own instructional practices. There will be 12 early release days (one every few weeks) when students are released at 1:00 and teachers will engage in professional learning opportunities and provided time to collaborate and plan. The AVID Regional Program Manager will deliver professional development modules during early release days (4) times during the year.

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.

PEAK Academy intends to secure a School Director during our planning year (Year 0), dependent on funds raised from local, state, and national foundations and grants. If this becomes the case, the School Director will spend the months leading up to PEAK Academy opening its doors marketing, reviewing applications, ensuring 100% enrollment, recruiting, interviewing, and hiring teachers, assisting with the preparation of the facility, meeting with/securing community partnerships, hosting open house events, securing contractable services, and engaging in his/her own professional development as outlined by the board. This professional development may include visiting charter schools effective at closing the

achievement gap (Henderson Collegiate, Sugar Creek, The Movement School, KIPP) and building relationships with their leaders, attending national conferences, visiting local schools and establishing relationships, and engaging in book study. Upon hire, the School Director will assign professional development tasks and timelines to teachers, such as reading Teaching with Love and Logic and resources from HEARTS (Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools) and preparing an investment and management plan.

As mentioned earlier, if funding through grants and foundations allow, teachers and the School Director will attend the comprehensive, highly individualized AVID Institute during the summer. Prior to the first day of school with students, PEAK Academy teachers will meet for 6 professional development days on site. These professional development days will be internally developed and led by the School Director. Day (1) will include an overview of employee handbook, policies, and schedules, and collaboration/planning investment and management plans using Teaching With Love and Logic and HEARTS trauma-informed resources. Day (2), a program manager from AVID will provide training in the culturally relevant pedagogy, inquiry-based instruction, and the AVID resource library. This will include video analysis of culturally responsive teaching, a study of best practices, local guest speakers, and how to include cultural relevance and inquiry across subjects. Days (3) the School Director will provide training and set expectations around setting student goals, tracking student progress towards these goals, unpacking standards, and assessing student mastery towards goals. Teachers will also receive training on utilizing NWEA Assessments and aligning teacher-created assessments to standards utilizing EOG stems. Day (4) and the School Director will train teachers on the chosen literacy curriculums and how to utilize it as a resource, not a pacing guide. Teachers will get to know their curriculum as they long term plan and practice creating aligned units and lesson plans. The School Director will also provide training, planning templates, and resources to help teachers begin organizing and planning their literacy instruction, independent practice time, and their guided reading and literacy centers block. Day (5) the School Director will utilize the comprehensive online webinars to train teachers on the Eureka Math curriculum, Eureka assessments, math mastery tracking system, and resources for organizing/planning the remediation/acceleration block. Day (6) the School Director will train teachers on expectations for other periods of the day, including time to unpack the Science and Social Studies standards, long-term plan, and outline unit plans and assessments for the first few units of study. The School Director will also provide professional development, research behind the purpose, and opportunities to collaborate on how to maximize impact during the movement breaks and choice stations. Following the professional development, teachers will have (2) days to set up classrooms, prepare parent materials, organize student materials, and finalize plans for the first few days of school.

5. Describe the expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year, and explain how the school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate this plan.

In addition to professional development that takes place before the school year begins, teaching staff will have 6 days of professional development built into the school year, one every 6-weeks. These professional development days will be on-site and will include reviewing data, instructional planning, whole group sessions, one-on-one tutorials and collaborative groups. The training during these professional development days will be based on School Director observation, teacher request, and will often be individualized to provide the support that teachers need to continuously improve.

There will also be an early release day every few weeks during the year when students leave campus at 1:00 so that teachers can engage in professional learning opportunities from 1:15-3:15. The School Director will often begin this professional development with a sharing of best practices and recognition of the hard work teachers are demonstrating. Teachers will share successes and problem-solve collaboratively. Often, the Mentor Teacher or other teachers demonstrating effective teaching practices will share their practices with the group. Other times, the School Director will bring in outside sources or PEAK Academy's AVID regional manager to deliver professional development.

Individualized professional development will be embedded into PEAK Academy. The School Director will observe and provide feedback to teachers on a weekly basis in addition to the feedback provided in the more formal evaluation process. Based on individual goals and needs, the School Director may encourage teachers to observe other teachers at PEAK Academy and seek resources and advice from his/her colleagues. The School Director will also encourage teachers to take up to (3) professional development days to seek off-site professional development at conferences, local or state workshops, or visit other successful teachers for observation and collaboration in other schools. To off-set these costs, PEAK Academy will apply for grants and foundation money to support teacher's growth and development professionally.

The PEAK Academy calendar accounts for these days while still ensuring that PEAK Academy well surpasses the minimum instructional time requirements. Because the day at PEAK Academy is 8 hours, as opposed to the 6.5-hour day at Asheville City Schools, our school year will be 180 days (a total of 1,389 hours) so as to approximately start and end the school year at the same time as Asheville City Schools.

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)).

Asheville has a multitude of educational options for those that can afford them. In addition to the 2 public school systems, Buncombe County has a total of 36 private schools and 5 charter school options, 4 of which are over 95% White. It is the desire of PEAK Academy to offer a rigorous, culturally relevant option for Asheville's low income and African American populations that have no option except for the system that is failing them. We will market and enroll students from both the Asheville City School and Buncombe County School districts, from neighborhoods within a 10-mile radius of the central city area. Given our desired population, we will focus our marketing efforts in the following neighborhoods: Deaverview, Hillcrest, Klondyke, Pisgah View, Livingston Heights, Shiloh, East-West Asheville, and Lee Walker Heights (when it reopens in 2021). We have already begun our marketing efforts by developing a logo, designing a website, developing a Facebook and Twitter account, presenting at a Black Town Hall meeting, and discussing PEAK Academy through our network of colleagues and friends. The PEAK Academy Board of Directors hosted an informational session August 18th at the "Start Fresh" Free Haircut event hosted at Asheville High School. At this event, PEAK Academy Board members met potential families, distributed over 100 fliers, and gathered 42 email addresses of parents interested in keeping up to date on PEAK Academy's progress. PEAK Academy Board members and other supporters will be a visible presence at events hosted throughout the community, distributing fliers and collecting emails to add to our listserve. These events will include those hosted by the Housing Authority, at preschools and daycares in the areas listed above, at Asheville City Parks and Rec events, Youth Football Camp, and at other community-wide events. We intend to create a promotional video, brochures, pamphlets, and release a press release upon approval on news outlets that are commonly used in the neighborhoods we intend to serve. PEAK Academy Board members and other supporters will wear PEAK Academy t-shirts as they canvas communities with brochures, invite members of the community to informational sessions throughout the planning year, set up booths and speak at churches in the targeted area, and ask families to host events in their homes.

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

As listed above, PEAK Academy will keep parents and the community at large informed about the school and its progress through social media, word of mouth, the local media, community-wide events, preschools, churches, and other nonprofit organizations that serve youth in the

area. At these events, PEAK Academy board members will collect emails from individuals interested in PEAK Academy send out regular emails with PEAK Academy updates and progress. Our website, PEAKAcademyAVL.org, will also be a primary source of information and will be maintained and updated regularly by the marketing committee. This website will be made known on all marketing materials, social media pages, email blasts, and media outlets.

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.

Our marketing efforts will continue through the application process with a marketing timeline including:

Fall-Winter 2019: Complete the PEAK Academy website, which has been in operation since June. The website will provide community members with detailed information about PEAK Academy and allow them to request additional information via email or a phone call. Board members on the marketing committee will respond to each inquiry and will finalize the PEAK Academy social media pages. All board members will spread the word about PEAK Academy through social media, community forums, churches, neighborhoods, and social circles. The marketing committee will also design and print PEAK Academy fliers and brochures to be distributed at one community event in each targeted neighborhood. PEAK Academy will continue to send out a monthly email blast utilizing the email addresses gathered at the Fresh Start event in August and others gathered at community events. PEAK Academy board members will continue to establish and nurture relationships with important community partners such as YTL, the YWCA, Housing Authority, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club, and Open Doors. The marketing board will outline and define the partnerships with each organization and how they may assist in marketing efforts.

Winter-Spring 2020: PEAK Academy Marketing committee will begin initial outreach to daycare centers, churches, HeadStart, Verner, and other popular early childhood centers serving the neighborhoods mentioned above. This outreach will involve meeting with the school and church leaders to determine which sites are likely to encourage application to PEAK Academy and develop relationships with those leaders. The marketing committee will continue to distribute fliers and set dates for a formal information session. Once granted approval, PEAK Academy will pursue media opportunities in local radio, TV, and newspaper and online journal outlets (Citizen-Times, Mountain Xpress, and The Urban News). The committee will also identify local education conferences and events to attend.

Summer-Fall 2020: The Marketing Committee will continue to keep website and social media accounts updated and continue to spread information via word of mouth and networking. PEAK Academy will issue a press release to relevant media outlets and run ads on popular local radio

stations, in local newspapers and magazines, distribute fliers and brochures that include application guidelines at high-traffic family areas, at local fall events, open houses, information sessions, and all relevant events attended by Board members. Informational booths will increase visibility at local festivals and events and will distribute fliers at Asheville's Christmas Parade. The marketing committee will identify neighborhoods that have demonstrated weaker interest and develop plans for a second round of media coverage, distribute fliers at neighborhood parks, grocery stores, community centers and door to door.

Winter-Spring 2021: The marketing committee will continue to keep the website and social media accounts updated. The Board and School Director (if hired) will now host monthly information sessions for specific preschools and day care centers that have expressed interest in encouraging enrollment and at public libraries, county offices, and community centers. When possible, PEAK Academy will host an open house and PEAK Academy will conduct additional media blitzes and secure interviews with the School Director with 2-3 media outlets and order PEAK Academy stickers, apparel, and other marketing items.

Summer 2021: PEAK Academy will provide each child enrolled a PEAK Academy Founding Class t-shirt and each family a car magnet and advertise, promote, and hold a "ribbon-cutting" event when the space/building opens. Families will engage in a "Day at PEAK Academy" Orientation that includes meeting teachers and getting their child signed up for their diagnostic assessment and meet the teacher day.

Late Summer 2021: Students and families attend meet the teacher day with diagnostic assessment and an informational session for parents. Doors open in August 2021.

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.

PEAK Academy will not discriminate against any child based on race, religion, income, achievement level, disability, or English as a second language. In fact, PEAK Academy's mission and vision is built on the belief that students from poverty, students of color, and students who may not be considered successful in the LEA can and will achieve given rigorous, culturally relevant instruction that holds them to high expectations. PEAK Academy's marketing plan outlined above is focused on recruiting and admitting students from families living in poverty. Most of the neighborhoods from which we hope to recruit large numbers of students are a part of Asheville Housing Authority's low-income housing projects (Hillcrest, Deaverview, Klondyke, Pisgah View, Livingston Heights, and Lee Walker Heights). We will market in these areas by holding informational sessions in each community, spreading the word door to door, using

media outlets that these communities primarily utilize, social media, and getting support and opportunities to market directly to potential families from area preschools and daycares.

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

There are several very successful organizations that are already serving families in the areas in which we plan to market heavily. The Housing Authority provides a plethora of information to families in the neighborhoods we plan to serve. Board member Gene Bell, as retired CEO of the Asheville Housing Authority, knows these families well and is a respected community figure. When he speaks, people listen. David Nash, current CEO of the Housing Authority, wholeheartedly supports PEAK Academy's mission and is also highly respected in the communities. Through our relationship with the Housing Authority, we will be able to easily market to families, invite them to information sessions, direct them to the PEAK Academy website, and help distribute brochures. Board member Libby Kyles is CEO of the YWCA. Libby is an influential community leader and motivator. The YWCA has been an integral part of the African American community in Asheville for generations. It empowers and connects people through free child care services for low-income parents returning to work or school, social justice and equity workshops, exercise programs, and mentoring and support for pregnant and parenting teens. A partnership with the YWCA will help us ensure we reach our targeted population. She is also the founder of the nonprofit, Youth Transformed for Life (YTL), which provides after school and summer programming to disenfranchised youth. YTL will be an excellent marketing network as well. Other community organizations that we will target for marketing and recruitment include Open Doors of Asheville, YMCA, and the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club.

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.

PEAK Academy's website, PEAKAcademyAVL.org, will be the primary source of information for parents and community members through the school's opening. The website will be included on all informational fliers, emails, social media outlets, and media blasts. Our website will inform the community at large about the school's mission, vision, basic tenets of our education plan, all necessary application and enrollment information, a list of all of the board members and staff when hired, "Announcements" filled with board meeting dates and minutes, and school calendar updates. The website will remain current and updated regularly by the board marketing committee. We will also communicate by having a strong presence on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and all board members LinkedIn and social media pages so that the community stays up to date on the current school status and knows how to get involved.

After our approval, PEAK Academy will engage with the community and prospective families in numerous personal ways as well. We will maintain partnerships with local organizations and nonprofits such as Open Doors, the YMCA, Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club, the Housing Authority, and YWCA. We will schedule presentations with local preschool and day care programs near and around the neighborhoods we hope to serve, such as Head Start, Verner Learning Center, and the YWCA. We will hold public informational meetings at each one of the community centers or parks in each of the neighborhoods in which we plan to enroll high numbers of students. Lastly, each board member has unique connections and relationships with local community leaders, city council persons, church and parish leaders, businesses and nonprofits, and will utilize these connections to network and spread news of PEAK Academy through word of mouth. PEAK Academy board members will begin making personal calls and visits to prospective families to provide information and develop interest. PEAK Academy board members will, with permission, gather personal information of all those that express interest in keeping up to date on the school, and send out a regular email blast that includes all relevant updates on the school's progress and important upcoming events and dates.

Each family that enrolls their child in PEAK Academy will receive a personal phone call from the School Director to thank them for enrolling, express excitement to have their child, and find out what questions can be answered personally. From the enrollment period through the opening of the school, all enrolled families will be invited to follow PEAK Academy's social media accounts and will now receive an email blast update on school progress and important dates bimonthly. Within a few weeks of enrollment, parents and community members will be invited to attend an Orientation Night. This event will set the tone for the school year, let the families get to know the board and hired staff, and help families know what to expect ahead of time. It will also give parents and students a chance to meet each other and begin establishing relationships with one another.

Once the location is secure and staff have begun moving into the school space, all families will be invited to attend an optional "Ribbon Cutting" event. All students will be given a PEAK Academy Founding Student t-shirt and invited to tour the space, have pizza and drinks, and get to know the School Director, teachers, board members, and each other in an informal, welcoming setting. Prior to the first day of school, all parents will bring their child to Meet the Teacher day at a scheduled time.

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.

At PEAK Academy, we see the relationship between the family and staff as crucial to the students' success. There will be open and consistent modes of communication between the staff at PEAK Academy and the child's parents or guardians. Enrollment packets will include an

outline of our goals and expectations for them as contributing members of our school community. Some of these expectations will include: checking and signing their child's progress report and homework folder nightly; reading with their child every day and providing the time and quiet space for them to do their homework; communicating with the teacher if ever there is a problem or question; exchanging positive and constructive feedback with their child's teacher, attending three formal parent-teacher conferences; updating the school with contact information changes; responding to unanswered calls from their child's teacher within 24 hours; and emphasizing and reinforcing the PEAK Academy Core Values at home. Parents, teachers, and students will have to sign a contract that outlines the responsibilities of each party that will enable the child to meet their ambitious goals.

The teacher will call to introduce him/herself to the parents of students before the school year begins and invite the parents to attend a Meet the Teacher day. The teacher will make a concerted effort to get to know the parents, help them feel at ease and welcome in their child's school, and help them understand their shared responsibility in their child's education. The teacher will provide detailed information about his/herself and how to reach him/her when the need arises. The teacher will call each child's parents in the first week of school to reinforce how thankful we are to have their child at PEAK Academy and acknowledge some of their child's positive attributes. The teacher will provide a steady flow of information so the parents consistently know what their child is studying, what they need to be reinforcing at home, and what Core Values their child is exhibiting and need to work on. The child's teacher will communicate daily with each family through a nightly progress report, which notes homework, daily behavior, and weekly learning goals. The teacher will also send home student work samples each week that highlights the child's strengths and what needs improvement, which will have to be signed and returned to the teacher.

Report cards and Mid-term reports will not just provide a grade for each subject, but will provide detailed information to show parents where students on which learning goals students still need improvement. Formal parent-teacher conferences will take place three times a year. The teacher will call each parent to set up a time and ensure they have transportation to get to the conference. The school will assist in any way possible to help parents that need assistance an avenue to meet with the teacher. At the conference, the teacher will provide more detail about the child's progress towards his/her learning goals, observations about the child's behavior, and information regarding how they can help their child at home.

In addition, PEAK Academy will provide ample ways for parents to get involved through volunteer opportunities, field trips, serving on the School Advisory Council, on the Parent Association, and/or as a class parent. Parents will often be invited to PEAK Academy classroom and school-wide events that showcase their child's work and progress and special project presentations. Parents will also be invited to PEAK Academy for an Open House in the fall and spring and to special events around holidays and at the end of the year.

PEAK Academy views parental involvement and support as crucial to each student accomplishing their goals and ensuring each child takes charge of their own destiny, therefore we welcome and encourage parents and community members to get involved in as many ways as they possibly can.

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.

It is vital to the success of PEAK Academy to build strong relationships with our students' families and empower them to become partners in their child's education. PEAK Academy will hold monthly Family Night, during which families will be invited to come together as a part of the PEAK Academy community. Parents are motivated to come when their children are involved, and so during this event, students will be celebrated for their hard work and a few students will be chosen to showcase their work, whether it be a piece of writing, a science report, a piece of art, or musical performance. The School Director will provide updates and information on real school policies, procedures, and events, and a teacher, counselors, or community leader will present tangible strategies that parents can do to help their children perform better at school from home. A timeline of topics addressed will be posted on the PEAK Academy website at the beginning of each year, and will range from simple strategies to help your child increase their reading fluency or comprehension, to serving healthy foods on a budget, to keeping your child safe on the internet. The Parent Organization will help during this event to provide snacks and drinks.

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.

A series of informational sessions for potential parents, students, and community members will be conducted prior to and during open enrollment to provide all the following relevant

information about PEAK Academy's admission process. Applications for enrollment at PEAK Academy will begin October 1, 2020. Applications will be available online, by mail by request, and in the office (if available at the time). The open enrollment period will close at 11:59 pm on March 1, 2021.

The applications will be reviewed for completeness, checked for a valid NC address, and will be entered into a database. If the number of applications exceeds the maximum number of student spots on March 1, a lottery process will be used to determine enrollment. Because PEAK Academy will utilize a weighted lottery, we will ensure parents have provided all the necessary information from each applicant required for us to determine weighted lottery qualification before the open lottery ticket assignment. Every family is given the opportunity to provide the information on the application to seek eligibility for our Economic Diversity priority. If a family chooses not to provide this optional information, they are unable to be considered for the priority enrollment and will be in the general lottery. PEAK Academy will notify all applicants and the public of the date, time, and location of the lottery through email, the PEAK Academy website, and social media.

The names of students with a completed application on file will be drawn by grade level during the public lottery. Siblings will be entered as one surname with all siblings accepted if one is drawn.

1. Applicants that get first priority admission include children of current employees or board members (limited to 15% of the total school enrollment), current students' siblings, and siblings of students who have graduated from PEAK Academy (within 4 years). Priority will also be given to a former student who was enrolled at PEAK Academy within the last two years but left due to academic study abroad, competitive admission residential program, or vocational opportunities of the parents. These applicants will be automatically placed on the acceptance list. All other completed applications will be assigned a unique number and a ticket will be published for each applicant. A public lottery will be held March 15 and will be held in accordance with all NC charter school laws.

2. Economic Diversity: Because it is our mission to close the opportunity gap that exists in the Asheville City Schools, PEAK Academy will utilize a weighted lottery based on socioeconomic status. PEAK Academy will reserve 50% of lottery enrollment each year to students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. This will ensure that those students who are negatively affected by Asheville City's deplorable achievement gap are reserved the opportunity to receive an equitable education. Parents have the option of being considered for this lottery by confirming that they receive benefits through SNAP, TANF, WIC, FDPIR, are homeless, enrolled in HeadStart, a migrant, or in foster care. They may also receive an application for free/reduced lunch status from the PEAK Academy website or office and return it by the end of the lottery enrollment period.

3. The remaining applications, including those eligible but not called for the Economic Diversity lottery, will enter a general lottery and chosen at random to fill the remaining seats at PEAK Academy.

The public will not be aware which students are called due free/reduced lunch status, and general lottery. It will be a continuous calling of numbers until all of the spots are filled. The remaining tickets will be drawn and placed on the waitlist for each grade in the order in which they were pulled. Consistent with North Carolina and federal law, PEAK Academy will also take any additional steps necessary to ensure our lottery and enrollment process fully in compliance with Asheville City's federal desegregation order. We have obtained Asheville City and Francine Delaney's orders dating from 1991 and 1977 respectively and are working to identify and obtain any additional applicable orders. Similar to Francine Delaney, PEAK Academy will utilize a dual wait list system should the enrollment of minority populations get at or near the enrollment demographic of Asheville City Schools, PEAK Academy can select a student off the wait list that will keep PEAK Academy in compliance with Asheville's federal desegregation order.

Applications admitted after March 1, 2021 will be added to the end of the wait list in the order in which they are received. Students will not have to re-enroll each year, but they will have to complete an "Intent to Return" form before February 15 each year. PEAK Academy will not discriminate against any student based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, national origin, creed, intellectual or physical ability, measures of achievement, or athletic performance in the lottery. Unless new legislation dictates otherwise, PEAK Academy can refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from the public school until the period of suspension and expulsion has expired (G.S. 115C390.5 through G.S. 115C390.11).

Students accepted will receive notification via mail and text message and will be prompted to respond within 48 hours to accept or decline the position. When positions are declined, PEAK Academy will move to the next student on the wait list. Once accepting the position, they will receive a registration packet in the mail and will be required to attend an Orientation Session to ensure all paperwork is complete, to meet the staff at PEAK Academy, and for the student to take a diagnostic assessment to provide placement information. Multiple sessions will be held at various times and at various locations to accommodate all families' schedules and special arrangements may be made for parents with extenuating circumstances.

Once the family attends the session and the registration packet is deemed complete, the student has completed the enrollment process. If a family does not complete the registration process prior to June 1, their seat may be forfeited and the next applicant on the waitlist will be accepted. If a student does not attend the first day of school and does not notify the school of the reason for the absence, the family will forfeit their enrollment and must complete another application to be considered in the future.

If a family wishes to withdraw a student from PEAK Academy for any reason, they are asked to provide at least three (3) days notice in order for PEAK Academy to gather all relevant and required records and offer enrollment to the next child on the waitlist as is explained in our Student Handbook. Families who withdraw a student will be asked to complete a withdrawal survey for the school to collect and analyze data regarding withdrawals. PEAK Academy will provide all relevant and required documents to the student's new school within 2 business days of receiving a transfer form from the child's new school. If a family chooses to later re-apply to PEAK Academy after a withdrawal, they must complete a new application and participate in the lottery process again.

Weighted Lottery

*Does your school plan to use a weighted lottery? 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 any way from the open lottery normally utilized by charter schools, the following requirements must be met:

1. In no event may a lottery process illegally discriminate against a student on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or disability.
2. A lottery process may not be based upon geographic boundaries, such as zip code or current public school attendance zones, 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 domiciliaries 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.

The mission of PEAK Academy is to provide a rigorous, culturally relevant education so that ALL of Asheville's students can attain academic excellence and go on to elect the college or career of their choice. We want for Asheville's population that is being negatively affected by the district's opportunity gap to be able to take charge of their own destinies. Whether it be to become an electrician, a writer, a doctor, or an engineer, we want their own life goals to drive their decisions, and not be limited by their inequitable education. For this reason, PEAK Academy needs to utilize a weighted lottery to ensure that spaces are reserved for the students who need them the most. While we plan to market and recruit from areas of Asheville that are predominantly lower-income and African American, we also value diversity and recognize that an education that PEAK Academy intends to offer will appeal to any parent wanting a rigorous education for their child. Therefore, we recognize a need to ensure that spots are reserved for the population that needs PEAK Academy the most through a weighted lottery.

As previously mentioned, Asheville is under a federal desegregation order dating to the 1960s that ensures any public school operating within Asheville City limits does not discriminate against any student based on race. PEAK Academy will be available to all students regardless of race. PEAK Academy's weighted lottery will be based on socio economic status to ensure that those students that are most vulnerable and underserved by the Asheville City Schools are given an equitable opportunity to receive excellent education. Following the 50% weighted lottery for socioeconomic status, PEAK Academy will then have a general lottery, giving all students a chance to enroll at PEAK Academy.

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

PEAK Academy will contract with Lotterease (lotterease.com) to effectuate our lottery.

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

The achievement gap in Asheville City Schools is widening every year across grade levels and subjects. Research shows that the achievement, or opportunity, gap between white students and African American students negatively and persistently impacts the future of African Americans. It leads to higher dropout rates, lower rates of college enrollment, lower economic attainment, a greater likelihood of unemployment later in life, poorer health, and higher rates of incarceration (McKinsey, 2009). But excellent charter schools across the nation and right here in North Carolina are *proving* that the achievement gap is a result of the system and schools, not the students. Henderson Collegiate, over 95% African American or Hispanic, has willingly agreed to provide support and resources to help PEAK Academy through the Ready to Open phase and critical first few years. It is one of the top performing charter schools in the state with a school performance composite score of 90%, one of the few to earn a School Performance Grade A. Henderson Collegiate is closing the gap, and Carice and Eric Sanchez

have offered their wholehearted support to PEAK Academy as a model of excellence, and we hope to replicate many of their best practices for the students in Asheville who need it the most. We strive to have diversity at PEAK Academy with representation from all races and backgrounds. However, to truly change the trajectory of the lives that are being negatively affected by Asheville’s tremendous achievement gap, we must guarantee that a large portion of spots at PEAK Academy remain reserved for children that are not provided fair opportunity in the options currently available.

McKinsey & Co. Social Sector Office. “The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America’s Schools (2009) dropoutprevention.org.

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.

We recognize that for most of our targeted population, transportation is an obstacle to getting an equitable education. For this reason, we have concentrated our location search in close proximity to the Asheville City and Buncombe County neighborhoods in which we plan to serve: the central south and east-west areas of Asheville, Deaverview, Hillcrest, Shiloh, Pisgah View, Klondyke, Emma, and Livingston. PEAK Academy will ensure that free bus transportation is available to all students with several community bus stops within each targeted neighborhood.

In our first year of operation, PEAK Academy will contract with local company Emma Busline to provide transportation for students from the neighborhoods listed above. Families will complete a transportation survey in the enrollment packet in order to research their transportation needs, and PEAK Academy will compile and analyze this information to create a viable bus stop for every student needing bus transportation with routes concentrated in high density areas. The School Director (Year 1) and Administrative Assistant (Year 2 and beyond) will be responsible for compiling and mapping all information and will create the most time efficient, safe, and manageable bus route possible. The school will comply with all regulations and provide transportation for any student with an IEP that specifically states the child requires transportation in order to access education. .

For families more than 10 miles from PEAK Academy, outside of our high-density areas, PEAK Academy will coordinate a carpooling program for families who live near each other. We will use the physical addresses of all families who wish to take advantage of this program to make introductions and organize central pick-up and drop-off locations.

Recognizing that transportation is an obstacle for students from low-income homes, PEAK Academy will remain committed to ensuring that no child is denied access to PEAK because of transportation issues. We will conduct a survey after the first 20 days of school to ensure that transportation is not a barrier to attendance for any student, and will adjust the transportation zones based on the results from this survey.

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.

PEAK Academy's commitment to offering our students with the very best educational experience will extend to the meals that we provide our students. We recognize that in order for our students to focus and fully participate in the learning process, they need to be fueled with highly nutritious, healthy, balanced meals and snacks. Utilizing a weighted lottery, PEAK Academy plans to participate in the Community Eligibility Program, providing a free meal to all

students, regardless of income, at no cost. We will utilize the Direct Certification process to establish eligibility, meaning households are automatically eligible for free lunch status if the family receives benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition for Women and Children (WIC), or FDPIR. Students who are homeless, enrolled in Head Start, migrant, or in foster care also automatically qualify. Parents will have the option to provide this information in order to be considered a part of the weighted lottery, but PEAK Academy will collect this information from all students once a student has secured a seat and is enrolled at PEAK Academy. The application for free/reduced lunch available on PEAK Academy’s website and in the office. The Administrative Assistant will be available to families to help them complete this application before enrolling in the lottery.

PEAK Academy will employ a part-time child nutrition coordinator who will develop School Wellness Policy that complies with all regulations under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, and will ensure students are provided the fuel and nutrition that they need for optimal health and wellness. PEAK Academy plans to partner with Verner Learning Center in Asheville to adopt their Rainbow in My Tummy program. Our policy, menus, and all relevant nutrition information will be available to the public on PEAK Academy’s website. Families will report any food allergies or religious food restrictions in their enrollment paperwork and PEAK Academy will be diligent in providing alternative options to meet those needs. PEAK Academy is in the process of exploring several different options to contract out our food services and will analyze different options based on their cost, experience, knowledge of and ability to deliver meals in compliance with the Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and Breakfast program and our adoption of the Rainbow In My Tummy program.

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. deborah@protectingwnc.com

Area of Proposed Coverage	Proposed Amount of Coverage	Cost (Quote)
Comprehensive General Liability	\$1,000,000.00/occurrence	\$1,237.00
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$1,000,000.00/occurrence	\$3073.00
Property Insurance		\$450.00
Automobile Liability	\$1,000,000.00/occurrence	\$181.00
Crime Coverage Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$250,000.00 \$250,000.00	\$332.00
Worker's Compensation	\$500,000	\$3710.00
Other Coverage		\$2469.00
Total Cost		\$11,452.00

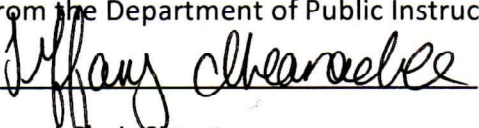
***Attach Appendix L: Insurance Quotes**

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.

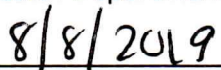
4.4 Health and Safety Requirements

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 **PEAK 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.



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).

The main tasks that PEAK Academy board members will undergo during the start-up process involve: facility acquisition and preparation, fundraising and grant writing, hiring and development of a School Director, board training and development, securing contractable services, curriculum, and other instructional materials, marketing to families/enrolling students, policy development, handbook development, process and procedures development, and community relations. In order for the PEAK Academy board to organize and carry through with all necessary tasks, the PEAK Academy Founding Board will develop four committees for the application and planning years with 3-5 people with at least 2 board members on each committee in addition to 1-3 invested, knowledgeable, community members: (1) Finance (Fundraising/Budget), (2) Personnel and Board Development (School Director hiring and onboarding), (3) Facility, and (4) Marketing (Admissions/Community Relations). Each committee will utilize the following task/timeline:

Marketing/Admissions:

*Please see the marketing section of this application for a detailed timeline of marketing plans.

(1) In the fall of 2019, the marketing committee will: update/complete the PEAK Academy website and social media pages, begin an email blast to interested families, host information sessions for interested families, outline partnerships with community partners and other nonprofits, plan and organize community events at each targeted neighborhood community center, design and distribute flyers and brochures at events.

(2) In the Spring of 2020, the committee will: begin outreach to daycares, churches, and organize/host a formal information sessions, host tables at community events, visit housing developments with flyers, and ask individuals to host information sessions in their homes. Upon acceptance, PEAK Academy will pursue media opportunities and identify local education conferences and events to attend.

(3) In the summer into fall of 2020, the marketing committee will: Continue to keep social media outlets, the website, and email blasts current, issue a press release and run ads on popular radio stations and papers, distribute the brochures with application guidelines at events and information sessions, create a map that shows areas of high interest and develop plans for targeted areas that have shown weak interest.

(4) In the winter-spring 2021, the marketing committee and School Director will host monthly information sessions, speak at daycares and churches, set up booths and distribute informational fliers at libraries and community centers, host an open house, utilize media outlets, canvas neighborhoods. The Board and School Director will conduct the open application, lottery, and enrollment process as outlined in the enrollment section of this application.

Facility:

(1) The Facility Committee and the entire board will tour Housing Authority facilities in the fall of 2019. At this time, the Facility Committee will provide David Nash, CEO of the Housing Authority detailed space and size requirements with a timeline for acquisition and growth.

(2) The Facility Committee will deliver the lease proposal to the PEAK Academy board when received from the Housing Authority. The Facility Committee will develop a detailed plan for facility acquisition and facility inspection, maintenance, and updates upon lease agreement. They will identify a contractor to visit the site and create a detailed needs assessment to determine priority areas for improvements and updates, developing a timeline for all updates to be completed by April 2021.

*The goal is to have a lease agreement that will begin in October-November of 2020 to provide time to ensure the facility is up to code so the school can have the required Certificate of Occupancy for Educational Use.

(3) The Facility Committee will go through the process of having the facility approved with the Educational Occupancy Certification, including assuring the facility is in compliance with all fire and safety codes.

Personnel and Board Development:

Beginning in September 2019, the Development Committee will:

(1) Develop a job description and advertising plan to recruit and hire the PEAK Academy School Director as outlined in the Staff Projections section of this application.

(2) Upon assurances of fundraising to hire a School Director Year 0, the Development Committee will begin posting the job description, requirements, and timeline to recruiting websites and all other advertisement avenues listed in the Staff Projections section.

(3) Proceed through the interview process outlined in the Staff Projections section. Invite strong candidates to interview with the PEAK Academy board upon application acceptance in April 2020.

(4) Create an outline/timeline of School Director training, onboarding, and responsibilities for Year 0 beginning in September.

*If funding does not become available to hire a School Director Year 0, the Development committee will engage in the hiring process in 2021 to hire a SD to begin July 2021. The timeline of tasks the Development Committee creates will be delegated to all established committees.

(5) Simultaneously, beginning in September 2019, the Development Committee will create a Board Member Calendar that will give each board member dates of the years board meetings,

retreat, interview dates, Office of Charter Schools board training. The Development Committee will contact Leaders Building Leaders, our attorney, and financial firm to schedule trainings during upcoming board meetings, and will plan board strengthening exercises to include on the calendar.

Finance:

Beginning in September 2019, the Finance Committee will:

- (1) Develop a detailed list of potential grants and foundations in which to ask for financial support and create a timeline for each request. These will include local foundations (Dogwood Trust, Maybin Mission, Glass Foundation), national nonprofits prioritizing charter school start-ups (NewSchools Venture Fund, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Laura Bush Library Foundation, Charter School Growth Fund and Walton Family Foundation), and grants, such as the NC ACCESS Grant.
 - (2) Draft letter of intent for each foundation/grant and begin the application process per each individual foundation's timeline (i.e. NC ACCESS Grant letter of intent is due Feb. 15).
 - (3) Work with PEAK Academy attorney to get all required paperwork established to be prepared to file for a 501c3 as soon as possible in order to begin accepting donations and grant/foundation funding.
 - (4) The committee will continue to fundraise, write grants, meet with local foundations, and write letters until all potential donations have been exhausted.
 - (5) As funds are secured, the committee will add the amounts to our budget and will work our contracted financial management firm to adjust operational costs to allocate for additional funding.
2. 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.

The board for PEAK Academy knows that there will be challenges during the planning and implementation phase of this school. Some of these challenges will include assuring the parents that this school will deliver on its mission for their children. This challenge will manifest through struggles in terms of enrolling students, especially for the first-year academic year. The board will be proactive with its marketing efforts by marketing the school broadly within the community but also targeting families in one on one settings to share the vision of the school and answer questions and concerns that parents might have.

The board will also face the challenge of finding a school leader that shares the vision of the school and has the skillset to execute on the critical objectives that PEAK Academy has put into place. The task of finding the proper school leader will be one of the most important functions

of the board prior to the school's opening. Fortunately, there are board members who are part of local and national educational networks. These networks should allow the board to have a competitive group of candidates for the school leader position. Many board members have extensive experience and professional training in rigorous job searches and interviewing. This hiring process must be successful for PEAK Academy to deliver on its promises to the community. This school leader will be responsible for the hiring and training of his or her staff, for the creation of a consistent and excellent school culture, and for the implementation of excellent instruction in every classroom every single day.

The board will also have the challenge of keeping PEAK Academy on budget. There will be competing budgetary priorities. The board must clearly define our hierarchy of priorities when making budgetary decisions for the school. This will mean focusing on budget items that will create the foundation for the school's success: proficient teachers, a strong curriculum, literate-rich classrooms. To reach our ultimate vision (K-8), PEAK Academy will likely need the support of local Foundations. The board is going to be proactive and aggressive in meeting with local nonprofits so that PEAK Academy has additional funds at its disposal.

The board will face resistance from some members (and friends) within our community. Some will argue that PEAK Academy will siphon valuable funds away from City of Asheville public schools. Each board member is prepared to address this concern by speaking to the critical mission of PEAK Academy. The board is uniformly unapologetic about our urgency to address one of the most significant achievement gaps in the nation. The board is also sensitive to the fact that many people resist change and there is lots of misinformation about charter schools. One of PEAK Academy's unstated goals over time will be to educate the broader community (through the results of the school) as to how charter schools and school choice can be transformative to the lives of children.

The board is aware of the many logistical, organizational and human resource challenges that will face PEAK Academy. The board will lend our collective expertise as proven business leaders, community leaders, and former educators to address every challenge that we will face in the most thoughtful, thorough and aligned way possible. There is much work ahead of us. The board is mission-driven towards realizing the vision of this school. We are driven by our collective belief that all children can achieve at high levels regardless of race or socioeconomic status when held to high expectations and provided rigorous, culturally relevant, dynamic instruction. We know that it will be transformative for many children and families in our community.

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.

1. 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.

We have also established a partnership with the Asheville Housing Authority and have met with current CEO David Nash. Through this meeting and further discussion, we have identified three different facility options that PEAK Academy could occupy. These spaces are owned by the Housing Authority, two of which are former schools that were shut down during integration and deemed “community centers.” All three facilities are in or near our targeted neighborhoods. They are currently being underutilized as much of the space sits vacant or is only used during the evenings. One facility is partially utilized by a nonprofit that provides job training, and the two other facilities house a few Head Start classes but are mostly unoccupied storage space. Both organizations are viable community partners with whom we could share the space. In the fall of 2019, PEAK Academy Board members will accompany David Nash on a tour of these Housing Authority facilities. We will analyze the space, discuss the options, and determine what our mutually agreeable preference would be. We would need at least 6 core content classrooms, 1 EC classroom, 1 office space, storage/copier space, a receptionist area, and a space large enough for recreation and assemblies. Upon application acceptance, the PEAK Academy Board of Directors will again meet with David Nash to discuss terms and solidify our plan for entering a lease agreement in late 2020. Once the facility is determined, we will immediately have an inspector examine the space and identify any safety or health issues. We have secured state certified general contractor Collin Dennehey with Greenleaf Builders to work in conjunction with the city to provide contractor services to upfit and update the space to ensure compliance with all regulatory codes and upgrade the space to make it optimal for student learning. These updates will occur in the Fall of 2020 and Winter of 2021. Once all updates and repairs have been made, the PEAK Academy board will follow the procedure to obtain the Educational Certificate of Occupancy by May 2021.

2. 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.

In Year 1, with 128 students, PEAK Academy will need seven (7) classrooms. Six (6) classrooms are for regular K-2 classrooms, and one (1) classroom will be for the EC teacher. Our goal is for each classroom K-2 to have at least 600 square footage and the EC classroom to have at least 300 square feet. In Year 1, PEAK Academy will also need at least two (2) pairs of bathrooms. PEAK Academy will also need to have additional recreational/gym space for PE class, schoolwide assemblies, recess when the weather is not conducive to being outside, Family Nights, and performances. The estimated total square footage required for this space in year 1

is 10,000-12,000. While increasing our classroom needs to nine (9) classrooms in year 2, eleven (11) classrooms in year 3, and thirteen (13) classrooms in year 4, our necessary square footage will increase to roughly 25,000 square feet.

3. 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.

In Year 1, in addition to the (7) classrooms and larger recreation space, PEAK Academy will need a facility that has space for one (1) office for the School Director with one (1) reception space for the Administrative Assistant, and (1) copy room/supply storage space. Our goal is to acquire space that can allow us to grow through at least Year 4 of operation (K-5), which would add (6) additional classrooms, (1) additional office, and at least (1) additional pairs of bathrooms. Ideally, we would also have space to have a room for Arts Enrichment and Spanish, but it is not a requirement. Those teachers can continue to push into the classrooms during their instruction if need be.

4. 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.

With the promising potential of PEAK Academy occupying a school site owned by the Housing Authority, our cost would be \$0/square foot. The Housing Authority does not charge to lease their space, they only require that those leasing space only pay for maintenance, updates, and utilities.

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.

In the event the Housing Authority sites do not materialize into a facility for PEAK Academy, we have contacted and established a relationship with local commercial real estate broker Jonathan Hunter to explore other options. He understands PEAK Academy's facility needs, budget, and targeted area and will be providing us with consistent updates on the Asheville commercial real estate market. We will also be in communication with local churches, such as Hill Street Baptist Church and Mt. Olive, as they have the space and the potential to lease classroom space through our first few years. If all these plans fall through, we will rent 8 used modular units (7 classrooms and 1 for office space) for \$10,000 each and use Housing Authority vacant land to get PEAK Academy in full operation.

6. Describe the board’s capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.

Board member, Gene Bell, has extensive experience and knowledge with facility acquisition and management. He is a former general contractor with the responsibility of conducting physical needs assessments on commercial properties to evaluate the appraisal value and determine costs to upfit the property. In his time with the Housing Authority of Charlotte, Gene was involved in acquiring a 34-million dollar grant and the development of the first Hope VI in Southeast Charlotte as the first model of mixed income housing. In his work for the Housing Authority of Asheville for 25 years, Gene managed 2,000 units, which included renovations and build-out projects. He also oversaw the purchase of land and construction of 9 scattered site units in Asheville. Gene Bell is recently retired and fully committed to heading the Facility Committee and overseeing all aspects of the facility acquisition and management.

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

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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?

While determining our student enrollment number projection, we considered a variety of factors. One factor is the overwhelmingly positive response on our needs-assessment survey and from Asheville community members on social media posts and during town hall meetings. We also factored in the extensive waiting lists (1,200+ students) of area charter schools. Francine Delaney alone, as the only other charter school within Asheville City limits, has a waiting list of over 300 students each year. Our final consideration was the student enrollment numbers from Buncombe County and Asheville City districts. In order to ensure that we would not dramatically affect the enrollment percentages of both Asheville City and Buncombe County and in an effort to ensure we create and retain a strong sense of culture and community at PEAK Academy, we decided that the size of our school would need to remain relatively small. Our number is also based off of not wanting to disrupt the enrollment of the LEA. At full enrollment, our numbers represent 7.9% of Asheville City and .8% of Buncombe County Schools. We decided we would not want to exceed 2 classes per grade and to keep a relatively low student to teacher ratio would not exceed 20 students in Kindergarten, 22 students in 1st-4th grades, and 23 students in 5th-8th grades.

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

It is evident from the enormous achievement gap, our survey results, the communicated interest at our Fresh Start marketing event, and from community interest expressed during Town Hall meetings that it is essential for a school like PEAK Academy to provide an opportunity

to receive an excellent education to Asheville's most at-risk students. There are 28,712 students in Asheville City and Buncombe County combined. Roughly 48% of Asheville City Schools students and 55% of Buncombe County students are considered economically disadvantaged, receiving free-reduced price lunch. The majority of both district's African American and Hispanic populations are economically disadvantaged and these populations are not being provided an equitable opportunity to receive an excellent education. Our focus will be on academic preparedness. Our students will be develop the knowledge, skills, character, confidence, and work ethic that will allow them to meet their full potential in life. Of the five charter schools in the area, only one, Francine Delaney, has a minority population larger than 5%. Their minority population is 26% , but at a small school it amounts to only 4-5 children per grade. There is an overwhelming need in Asheville for PEAK Academy to provide Asheville's lower income population with an equitable educational opportunity. As evidenced in our survey results, 86% of the 102 parents surveyed responded that they would send their child to an educational alternative.

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

Our break-even point of enrollment Year 1 would be 119 students. As of now we are projecting enrolling 128 students with a projected total surplus of \$74,523.12 after expenses.

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

PEAK Academy will establish a contingency plan to meet any unexpected shortfall in revenue. PEAK Academy plans to make all purchases based on cash flow projections provided by Acadia NorthStar. In order to offset any revenues that are lower than estimated, PEAK Academy plans to pursue grants available to charter schools and foundations that are known for an interest in equitable education. There are also several areas for expense reduction, determined based on our priorities and what can be cut or substituted without impacting student outcomes. PEAK Academy will reduce allocated costs for technology, classroom instructional materials, furniture, and office equipment from government surplus auctions. PEAK Academy may also decrease the number of personnel and reduce operational costs if enrollment doesn't meet projections.

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.

The budget does not rely on sources other than the state, county, and federal funds, although we plan to create a surplus of funding for additional programs such as after school programs and teacher bonuses from fundraising.

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

The budget is built on the student to teacher ratio of 1:20 for students in Kindergarten, 1:22 for students in 1st-4th grades, and 1:23 for 5th-8th grades. This ratio does not include contracted enrichment teachers, the EC teacher, or teacher assistants.

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

The PEAK Academy board recognizes that the majority of the children we intend to serve are lower income. For this reason, we intend to operate with a conservative approach to our finances. We will work with the School Director and obtain advice and oversight from financial professionals that can aid us in meeting our budget goals and provide best practices in raising funds. That said, our board of directors is fully qualified to implement the financial plan with success. Collectively, the board has business and nonprofit experience setting short and long-term budgets, allocating funds, and ensuring conservative fiduciary responsibility. Tiffany Iheanacho, the board chair, manages Buncombe County's operational budget for criminal justice and behavioral initiatives amounting to over 2 million in revenue (grants), 2 million in county general funds, and 4 million in expenditures. Gene Bell, as the former CEO of the Housing Authority, has extensive experience planning and executing financial plans successfully with a conservative nature. Mychal Bacoate helps bank customers dealing with financial difficulties to manages collections, troubled asset restructures, loan loss reserves, and reviews tax returns of personal and business borrowers. Mychal is also the treasurer of his church, Brown Temple C.M.E., so directly handles payroll, salary planning, accounts payable, budget, and fundraising. Libby Kyles, as the founder of a nonprofit, has extensive experience with setting short and long-term budgets, aligning priorities to an organizations mission/vision, and issuing appropriate financial controls to ensure long-term fiduciary responsibility.

Joe Lordi has served as the President for a company with over \$60 million in annual revenues. Joe has full P&L responsibility for each of the nine independently operated facilities. A large part of Joe's responsibility is working directly with the executive team (including the Chief Financial Officer) and on-site managers to develop short-term and long-term budgets and implementing financial controls. Joe works closely with key employees to monitor progress towards individual site budgetary goals on a monthly basis. Joe also works closely with his team to develop long-term capital expenditure planning - including plant, property and building upgrades and improvements. Joe has participated in multiple site improvement plans that have exceeded \$1 million. Through careful planning and ongoing review, Joe has been able to grow the company's cash reserves each year that he has

worked for his current company. Joe has served on multiple board of directors for for-profit and non-profit organizations and is fluent in reviewing balance sheets, earnings statements, and cash flow statements. The board has also contracted with Acadia NorthStar, which will provide financial oversight and will provide collective board training in financial planning and budgetary oversight.

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.

The PEAK Academy board recognizes that one or more high needs students enrolled at PEAK Academy could have a significant impact on our budget and is prepared to meet the needs of all students. Our budget accounts for the transportation of all students and also allots for an EC teacher in Year 1, increasing to 2 EC teachers in Year 4. However, the board fully understands that there are some students in which an EC teacher will not be enough in providing full support for the needs of a child as directed in his/her IEP. We have built in dollars for contracted EC contingency services in our budget for \$10,000 each year. The board will also be prepared to apply for PRC 029 funds and Special State Reserve Funds. In addition, PEAK Academy will seek reimbursements from Medicare and/or Private Insurance for services that can be reimbursed for high needs students.

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.

The PEAK Academy board will conduct all fundraising internally, but we do intend to outsource financial management of benefits, payroll, accounting, and audits. The board researched financial firms with experience in charter school financial management and identified and voted on Acadia NorthStar as the financial management firm to provide services to PEAK Academy which includes assistance through the planning years contingent upon using them Year 1. The board will develop a vendor assessment form for the School Director to complete on a yearly basis. Acadia NorthStar will have a representative at board meetings monthly or as needed. The School Director will report any issues or concerns with regards to the vendor performance to the School Board. Termination of any vendor must be subject to a vote of the board.

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.

To minimize costs in Year 1 and 2, PEAK Academy intends to contract out the following services: custodial, food service, transportation, student accounting, financial services, and enrichment instruction. The board has already selected Acadia NorthStar to provide student accounting services, and for other services the board will identify a list of 3-5 potential vendors

and send out a Request for Proposal for any services that amount over \$10,000/year. Upon receipt of at least 3 proposals, the board will analyze the differences in services, contracts, and costs, and vote to determine the vendor to accept services. Any purchases, including contract over \$15,000 must be approved by the entire board. Emergency provisions that would infringe upon PEAK Academy's operation, such as repairs to the facility that could potentially disrupt learning, will be subject to the board chair's notification and approval.

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

PEAK Academy's mission of providing a dynamic, rigorous, culturally relevant education focused on academic excellence and the development of strong character is at the forefront of our budgetary decisions. The priority at PEAK Academy is recruiting and retaining high quality, proven leaders as our School Director and teachers, which is reflected in a salary well above the salary of the LEA. Another priority is recruiting effective, professional teacher assistants for each classroom in grades K-2. We anticipate these may be UNCA students working towards their degree in education, retired teachers who are interested in part-time work, or recent college graduates considering going back to school for a degree in education. They will be compensated significantly more than assistants in the LEA. Building a strong foundation in reading, math, and developing a love for learning is our focus in grades K-2, and we recognize that it is the educators that influence student gains, not necessarily the newest technology, fanciest curriculum resources, or a state-of-the-art facility. In order to support these teachers and create a culture of learning that will help retain them, a large percentage of our budget goes to personnel and benefits costs. In addition, in order to serve our targeted demographic, PEAK Academy has also allotted a large amount of funds for transportation and nutrition. We want to provide transportation to each student from low income within Asheville City limits. We also feel strongly that it is critical to provide healthy, nourishing breakfast and lunch to each student that would like to take advantage of our nutrition program free of charge, to lessen the stigma that comes with getting free lunch and to simplify the process. In order to balance these increases in allocation and still balance our budget with solely state and local funds, PEAK Academy is not hiring other full-time staff year 1 and 2 other than our teachers, School Director, and Administrative Assistant. We will contract out services such as accounting, custodial, and enrichment teachers. Instead of hiring a full-time enrichment teacher, PEAK Academy will utilize area organizations such as the YWCA, YMCA, LEAF in the Streets, and Moog Foundation, to provide enriching instruction in the arts, language, and PE. PEAK Academy also intends to utilize the local nonprofit POP Project for books and anticipate hosting several local book and supply drives.

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.

Our goal is to have at least 5% of our base budget carry over each year. Right now we have projected carrying over 6.1% at full enrollment. PEAK Academy will be diligent about creating a balanced budget and operating with financial efficiency and solvency. PEAK Academy board also plans to embark on an aggressive fundraising campaign through writing grants and soliciting local and national foundations to increase our start up and annual budget.

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

PEAK Academy will operate with \$0 leasing through the Housing Authority and will maintain a \$50,000 line of revolving credit.

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.

Asheville Catholic School is about to embark on an extensive renovation and they have offered to provide PEAK Academy with technology, furniture, teaching supplies, and instructional materials that are in good condition. We have secured 6 Smart boards and 3 lunch tables from Asheville Catholic and anticipate more resources throughout the next year (see Letter of Support in Appendix A). Tiffany Iheanacho, as an employee with Buncombe County, anticipates using the county surplus to secure filing cabinets, office supplies, desks, and possibly a copier.

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?

The PEAK Academy governing board will work with our financial provider, auditor, and attorney to develop clear and enforceable internal control policies and procedures necessary to safeguard assets and keep accurate and adequate records. These internal controls will include key components listed in the National Resource Center's Finance and Governance Toolkit. These areas include policies that provide clear procedures for approving large purchases, monitoring facilities and equipment for upkeep and repairs, implementing property management controls, proper segregation of duties, safeguarding school data from theft/destruction, following record retention requirements, and adhering to all state mandates regarding accounting procedures.

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

No known or possible related party transactions exist at this time.

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.

PEAK Academy board researched and identified our auditor based on her extensive experience providing auditing services for charter schools (18 years):
Rebekah Barr, CPA PC. 5442 Boswellville Rd, Wilson, NC 27893. Phone: 252-230-6294. FAX: 252-237-2426

Certify

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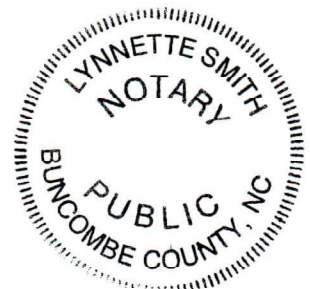
The foregoing application is submitted on behalf of P.E.A.K. Academy Charter School Board of Directors. The undersigned has read the application and hereby declares that the information contained in it is true and accurate to the best of his/her information and belief. The undersigned further represents 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: Tiffany McEachon
Board Position: Board Chair
Signature: Tiffany McEachon
Date: 8/5/2019

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 8th day of August, 2019.

Notary Public: Lynette Smith
Lynette Smith

Official Seal:



My commission expires: 5/18, 2024.