



# 2023 NC CHARTER APPLICATION



NC Public Charters

## Organization Information

Organization Name \*

DUPLIN STEM ACADEMY

---

Telephone

9198416564

Fax

---

Address

PO BOX 12151

Unit/Suite

---

Zip Code

27605

City

Raleigh

---

State

North Carolina

---





Primary Contact Name \*

Howard Sowell

Opening Year \*

2025

Is Management Organization Used

Yes  No

Primary Contact Relation To Board \*

Third Party Consultant - Application Preparation Support

Management Organization Name

Board Members Roster \*

Management Organization Contact Name

Primary Contact Email \*

howard@legacyimpactgroup.org

Management Organization Phone

Primary Contact Phone \*

9198416564

Management Organization Email

Primary Contact Address \*

PO BOX 12151

Unit/Suite \*

Zip Code \*

27605

City \*

Raleigh

State \*

North Carolina





## 1. Application Contact Information

### Q1. Name of Proposed Charter School

DUPLIN STEM ACADEMY

### Q2. Primary Contact's Alternate Telephone Number (xxx-xxx-xxxx)

- The primary contact will serve as the contact for follow-up, interviews, and notices regarding this Application

Carrie Shields - (910) 200-1500

Scott Satterfield - (919) 440-2059

#### Applicant Comments :

Board Chair and Vice Chair contact information

### Q3. Geographic County in which charter school will reside

DUPLIN COUNTY

#### Applicant Comments :

Will rely on Duplin County for enrollment projections

### Q4. LEA/District Name

LEA 310 - DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

#### Applicant Comments :

Only relying on Duplin County for enrollment and revenue projections

### Q5. Zip code for the proposed school site, if known

28466

#### Applicant Comments :

Location of campus will be Wallace, NC

Q6. Was this application prepared with the assistance of a third party such as a consultant or [Charter Support Organization \(CSO\)](https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=10399&revid=hejlslsh9el7BC8rRkMVLthGg%3d%3d&ptid=amIgtZiB9plushNjl6WXhfiOQ%3d%3d&secid=lyc2NIZPsdzgEk6V6aj45g%3d%3d) (<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=10399&revid=hejlslsh9el7BC8rRkMVLthGg%3d%3d&ptid=amIgtZiB9plushNjl6WXhfiOQ%3d%3d&secid=lyc2NIZPsdzgEk6V6aj45g%3d%3d>)



**PG=6&IRP=0)?**

- Yes
- No

**Applicant Comments :**

Consultants supported the preparation of this application

**Q7. Give the name of the third-party consultant or CSO:**

Howard Sowell

Chretien Dumond

Tom Miller

**Q8. Describe any fees provided to the third-party person or CSO as reflected in the budget.**

Professional Development

Facilities Rent

**Q9. Provide a full detailed response of the assistance provided by the third-party consultant or group while preparing this application and when the assistance will end:**

Third party consultants supported the application by providing LEA performance data, development of calendars, budget development, board governance training, and curriculum review.

**Q10. Projected School Opening Month**

August 2025

**Q11. Will this school operate on a year-round schedule?**

- Yes (Year-Round)
- No

**Applicant Comments :**

The calendar will mirror a traditional calendar




Q12. Complete the Enrollment Summary table (see resources), providing grade levels and total projected student enrollment for Years 1-5.

Upload Required File Type: excel Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 1


**Applicant Comments :**

Enrollment Summary attached

**Resources**


Enrollment Summar...

**Applicant Evidence :**


DSA Enrollment Sum...

Uploaded on **4/14/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

Q13. At full capacity, what is your estimated student enrollment and grade spans?

490, K-5


Q14. Complete the Enrollment Demographics table (see resources), providing projected enrollment for each of the following demographic groups.

Upload Required File Type: excel Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 1

**Applicant Comments :**

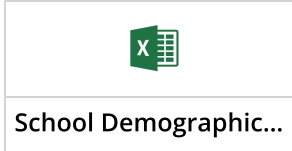
Enrollment Demographics attached

**Resources**


Enrollment Demogra...



**Applicant Evidence :**



Uploaded on **4/25/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

**Q15. Describe the rationale for the number of students and grade levels served in year one and the basis for the growth plan outlined above.**

Duplin STEM Academy will start year one with grades K-3 and projects to enroll four (4) classrooms in grades K-1 and three (3) classrooms for Grades 2-3. By starting the school as K-3 allows the school to address any educational deficiencies within the student body and develop the culture for learning and discipline within it. The smaller size for the upper grades allows more one-on-one approach to learning and developing educational models for the individual student. Growth will be through matriculation and filling classrooms at the kindergarten level and any newly available seats that open in the upper grades. The projected maximum enrollment of 490 students K-5 keeps the percentage of students, as compared to the larger Duplin County population, at a level to not detrimentally affect the Duplin County Public School System.

**Q16. This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.**

- I certify
- I do not certify

**Applicant Comments :**

Comments below

**Q17. Explanation (optional)**

The enrollment numbers and projections have been pulled, in part, from another approved application. Three of the board members for Duplin STEM have been or are currently founding board members for Wayne STEM Academy. This is not a replication of WSA, but past founding board members of WSA were asked to support this application and they have replied to the request. As part of that request, they solicited other WSA members to step up and help with the opening of another school in the neighboring county.



2023 NC CHARTER APPLICATION  
NC Public Charters





## 2. Non-Profit Corporation Information

Private Non-profit Corporation (NCGS 115C-218.1)

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

### Q18. Organization Type

- Non-Profit Corporation
- Municipality

#### Applicant Comments :

Duplin STEM Academy will be a Non-Profit Corporation

### Q19. Official name of the private, non-profit corporation as registered with the NC Secretary of State

- This is the entity that will hold the Charter if final approval is granted by the NC State Board of Education.

DUPLIN STEM ACADEMY

### Q20. Has the organization applied for 501(c)(3) non-profit status?

- Yes
- No

#### Applicant Comments :

The 501c3 application will be applied for upon approval

### Q21. The private non-profit listed as the responsible organization for the proposed charter school has 501(c)(3) status:

- 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.



- Yes
- No

**Applicant Comments :**

501c3 will be applied for upon approval of the charter application

**Q22. Attach as Appendix F Federal Documentation of Tax-Exempt Status**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30

Total Files Count: 10

**Applicant Comments :**

This has not yet been applied for. This will be applied for upon approval of the charter.

**Applicant Evidence :**


DUPLIN STEM Applic...

Uploaded on **4/24/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

**Q23. Name of Registered Agent and Address**

- **As listed with the NC Secretary of State**

Scott Satterfield

4810 Crestmore Road

Raleigh, NC 27612

**Q24. Federal Tax ID**

Federal EIN - 92-3671853

**Applicant Comments :**

Federal EIN has been received







### 3. Acceleration

Per NC Administrative Code 16 NCAC 06G .0509 (<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=10399&revid=84R1LVelxY9lvhpKdhHt1w==&ptid=muNUIKiR2jsXcslsh28JpBkiw==&secid=x9VPtMUo9twbb6Q1kKyM7A==&PG=6&IRP=0>), the State Board of Education, in its discretion, may accelerate the mandatory planning year to increase the number of high-quality charter schools.

#### Q25. Requirements

The State Board of Education may accelerate the mandatory planning year for a charter applicant that meets the following requirements:

- (1) agrees to participate in the planning year while the charter application is being reviewed without any guarantee of charter award; and
- (2) demonstrates that there is a facility identified by the applicant that is feasible for opening on an accelerated schedule. Do you want your application to be considered for acceleration?

- Yes
- No

#### Applicant Comments :

This application will not be an accelerated application



## 4. Conversion

Q39. Is this application a Conversion from a traditional public school or private school?

- Yes
- No

**Applicant Comments :**

This is not a conversion



## 5. Replication

Per NC Administrative Code 16 NCAC 06G .0512, 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.

***If applying for a replication, please review the following definitions and continue in this section.***

- (1) "Charter school model" or "model" mean the mission as defined in the charter application and function of a charter school, including its governance, its curriculum, its organizational structure, its targeted population, and other key characteristics of the school, such as small class size, thematic academics, and extended day.
- (2) "Successful model" means a charter school model that meets the eligibility requirements in Rule .0513 of this Section.
- (3) "Replication" means the act of copying, recreating, or repeating, a successful charter school model. A "replication" requires the utilization of one charter school "model" to form the creation of a new charter school.
- (4) "Fast-Track Replication" is a special form of replication in which the approved applicant foregoes the planning year required of new charter school applicants.

History Note: Authority G.S. 115C-218.3;

Emergency Adoption Eff. August 20, 2019;

Eff. March 17, 2021.

**Q56. Do you want this application to be considered for standard or fast-track replication?**

- Standard
- Fast-Track



- No, this is not a replication

**Applicant Comments :**

This is not a replication application



## 6. Alternative

\*A charter school meeting the eligibility criteria set forth in this policy and seeking designation as an “alternative school” must submit an application to the Office of Charter Schools describing in detail the school’s mission as it relates to the request for the designation; the criteria the school plans to use that will meet the eligibility requirements set forth below, including the documentation the school will use to support its admissions process; how the school intends to serve the select population, educationally and otherwise; and the goals the school is setting for academic achievement for this population. The application must also include an admission plan that is well-defined and specifically limited to serving at-risk students as described in the application. A plan that is not well-defined will not be approved.

\*The school must, in its application, designate which of the alternative accountability options it is requesting under ACCT-038 (<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/ePolicy/policy.aspx?PC=ACCT-038&Sch=10399&S=10399&C=ACCT&RevNo=1.02&T=A&Z=P&St=ADOPTED&PG=6&SN=true>). The option selected, if approved, cannot be changed except at the time of renewal (as outlined in CHTR-020.III (<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/ePolicy/policy.aspx?PC=CHTR-020&Sch=10399&S=10399&C=CHTR&RevNo=1.02&T=A&Z=P&St=ADOPTED&PG=6&SN=true>)).

### Q67. Do you want your application to be considered for an Alternative Charter School?

- Yes
- No

#### Applicant Comments :

This is not an Alternative School



## 7. EMO/CMO

Q69. Does the Charter School plan to contract for services with an “educational management organization” or “charter management organization?”

- Yes
- No

**Applicant Comments :**

This will not be an EMO of CMO managed school



## 8. Mission Purposes, and Goals

### 8.1. Mission and Vision

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.

**Q84. Please state the mission statement of the proposed charter school (35 words or less)**

- 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.

Duplin STEM Academy provides an academically challenging learning environment that develops its diverse student population into solution-focused, peace-building citizens who are equipped to solve the world's problems.

**Q85. Please state the vision statement of the proposed school.**

- What will the school look like when it is achieving the mission?
- The vision statement outlines how the school will operate and what it will achieve in the long term.

The vision of Duplin STEM Academy is to provide a challenging learning environment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math to a diverse student population that will enable them to become problem-solving, peace-building, solution-focused citizens through a curriculum designed to stimulate curiosity, discovery, critical thinking, and collaboration, ensuring students are well-equipped to meet the challenges in the world around them.

Duplin STEM Academy will continue to work with parents, community, both internally and within the larger global community, to meet the needs of a diverse student population, to encourage each student to push beyond their comfort level to realize their full potential, achieve their goals, and become a participating global citizen.



**Q86. Educational Need and Targeted Student Population of the Proposed Charter School** Provide a description of the 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) ([https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter\\_115C/GS\\_115C-218.45.pdf](https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_115C/GS_115C-218.45.pdf)).

Duplin STEM Academy's mission and vision address educational choice in Duplin County for all families in the county. Duplin STEM is targeting a diverse student population and is working to create a weighted lottery process and busing programs to ensure students who qualify for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, Students with Disabilities, and English Language Learners are fully considered in the final enrollment numbers of the school. The projected school demographic breakdown will be reflected in the following projections:

- 25%: African American
- 69%: White
- 2%: American Indian
- 1%: Asian
- 1%: Other
- 24%: Hispanic
- 14%: SWD population
- 14%: ELL population\*
- 100%+: F/RL population\*\*

\*A 2021 study provided by Duplin County stated

- 1) 94.4% of all foreign born residents are from Latin America
- 2) 33.7% of children between 5 and 17 speak Spanish at home

\*\*According to the Duplin County Public School site, as of 2021, all students in the county are provided Free and Reduced Lunch. With this, it is expected that Duplin STEM will provide the same program to not deviate from what is the expected norm in the county.

**Q87. 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?**





Duplin County has had an increase in their K-12 population as well as the larger population over the last 5 years. According to community leadership, the data since COVID and the last Census Report has not been consistent with respect to population growth, but in discussing growth with community leaders, it is clear that the growth in K-12 population continues. The surrounding housing developments in and around Wallace and Duplin County further project population growth that is greater than the county has historically experienced.

Enrollment trends since 2008 through 2023 have grown from 8,865 to 9,323, respectively. There has been a reduction in enrollment from 2016 through 2023 of 283 students. Since 2018, at the lowest, enrollment is growing again, year over year.

The schools in the Duplin County LEA have the following performance ratings are included below.

School Name	Grades Served	School Grade	Growth
B F Grady Elementary	K-8	D	Exceeded
Beulaville Elementary	K-8	D	Not met
Chinquapin Elementary	K-8	B	Exceeded
Duplin Early College High School	High School	B	Exceeded
East Duplin High	High School	C	Not met
James Kenan High	High School	D	Not met
Kenansville Elementary	K-8	D	Exceeded
North Duplin Elementary	Elementary	D	Exceeded
North Duplin Jr Sr High	6-12	D	Not met
Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary	K-8	F	Met
Wallace Elementary	K-8	D	Exceeded
Wallace-Rose Hill High	High School	D	Not met
Warsaw Elementary	K-8	F	Met

Duplin STEM Academy will provide the only charter school option in the county. Additionally, Duplin



STEM will be the only S.T.E.M. curriculum for K- 5 students in the county. Duplin STEM will provide a robust ELL Programing as part of the larger curriculum standards to that will support the nearly 25% of the population with English as a second language.

**Q88.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).**

Current enrollment in Duplin County LEA is 9323. At full enrollment, Duplin STEM is projected to be 490 students, which will be 5.3% of the total current enrollment in the county. In K-5 schools across the county there are 6,302 students enrolled. For the first year of enrollment, Duplin STEM is projected at 298 students, this will equate to 4.7% of the total 2023 K-5 population enrollment. At full capacity Duplin STEM will enroll 12.3% of the total 2023 K- 5 district school population.

**Q89.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?**

Duplin STEM Academy will utilize a curriculum that is STEM-focused. DSA will prepare students to accelerate in science and math-related focuses beyond their time with DSA and throughout high school, college, and professional careers beyond the walls of our campus.

Currently, Duplin County District Schools do not provide a STEM-focused curriculum for students.

Duplin STEM Academy will be the only charter school in the LEA at the time of approval.

**Q90.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**



Duplin STEM was launched through the efforts of Carrie Shields, the former Director of Economic Development for Duplin County and current Head of Development for Four Counties Electric Co-Op and Scott Satterfield, President of Wayne County Chamber of Commerce and former Board Chair for Wayne STEM Academy.

Mrs. Shields has been a strong advocate for school choice in Duplin County. Through her leadership as a board member, Duplin STEM leadership has met with prior and current town mayors and community leadership, business leaders throughout the county which include many of the large processing plants. Additionally the school's leadership has had meetings with several families in and around Wallace and Warsaw.

Further, the regional leadership of the Duplin County Rotary Club has been worked with the Duplin STEM Board to round out the board of directors and support the outreach of the school through the Rotary membership in Duplin and Sampson Counties.

**Q91. 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).

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30

Total Files Count: 5

**Applicant Comments :**

Community Survey Attached

**Applicant Evidence :**



Uploaded on **4/28/2023**

by **Howard Sowell**

**8.2. Purposes of the Proposed Charter School**

**Q92. Select one or more of the six legislative purposes the proposed charter will achieve,**



as specifically addressed in the NC charter school statute GS 115C-218, and the proposed school's operations. The Six Legislative Purposes of a Charter School are:

- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunities to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
- Hold schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public-school system.
- Improving student learning.
- Increasing learning opportunities for all students, with a special emphasis on at-risk or gifted students.
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.

Q93. Provide a brief narrative to coincide with each applicable legislative purpose(s).



**Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public-school system:** There are currently no STEM models for students grades K-8 in Duplin County.

**Improve student learning:** Duplin STEM Academy will provide a learning experience that will result in School Performance Grade of 60 or higher within the first three years of operation.

**Emphasis on At-Risk Students:** The STEM curriculum will reach higher, more meaningful standards through a rich base of building background knowledge that promotes increased comprehension and advanced problem solving and critical thinking skills. Student learning will also be improved through collaborative teaching and learning. Small class sizes and a focus on prevention and intervention will further result in improved school learning. These combined methods will provide an atmosphere in which teachers can gain a thorough knowledge of each student's strengths and weaknesses. Allowing teachers to tailor their teaching methods and challenge students on a daily basis.

**Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods:** Duplin STEM Academy will provide a longer school year model with 185 to 200 days worth of instructional classroom time. Duplin STEM Academy will provide longer school days to ensure students with limited availability of technology outside the classroom will be on an even playing field with students that have full access to technology outside of school.

**New Professional Opportunities for Teachers:** Teachers at Duplin STEM Academy will be responsible for guiding students to levels of meaningful achievement beyond the standards required by a typical LEA school. Teachers will also be responsible for establishing those higher standards through collaboration with their peers and the Academy's administration. The academic plan of Duplin STEM Academy challenges teachers to develop their skills as facilitators of learning and devote their efforts to creatively plan how to individualize instruction and best teach rigorous content to their students. This will be manageable based on the additional teacher workdays built into the calendar and the extra support that the teacher assistants will be able to provide.

**School Accountability:** As a public school, Duplin STEM Academy will be focused on student outcomes. As such, we will fully participate in the state's Accountability Model, including all state-mandated EOG and EOC exams. The results of these exams, as well as the results of our internal assessments, will provide measurable data on the Academy's contribution to overall student achievement.

### 8.3. Goals for the Proposed Charter School

Q94. 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.

Students will obtain, comprehend, analyze, communicate, apply, synthesize, and evaluate the knowledge and skills in all core disciplines, particularly in science and mathematics, to achieve success in school. Research has found that continuous progress monitoring significantly increases the performance of students. Progress monitoring is particularly beneficial if it's linked to the instructional decisions. Thus, academic progress in the core disciplines will be monitored throughout the year through various assessment tools. The data will be stored in an online progress monitoring system (PMS) and will be used to guide the instruction.

The students' performance levels will be targeted to meet or exceed the standards defined by NC Standard Course of Study and Common Core Standards. Overall goal is that when measured at the end of year or course (EOG or EOC), all students regardless of race, poverty, language or disability will be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in school, college and life. Specifically, Duplin STEM Academy targets at least 85% of its students to attain Level III or higher on state-mandated tests with 5% of growth rate for each year. It also aims that at least 85% of its students will matriculate through high school and ultimately graduate from high school while obtaining scores on SAT or ACT at or above mean of national norms.

DSA, with the help of our to be identified administrators, plans to develop a system to work with students, families and guidance counselors around Duplin County to track those students who are willing to work with DSA program to monitor the successes of DSA alumni and track the success of our curriculum as a foundation for future success.

**Q95. How will the governing board know that the proposed public charter school is working toward attaining their mission statement?**



Consistent with our mission statement, the governing board will utilize four metrics to ensure that Duplin STEM Academy is preparing students to become competent, responsible and peace-building individuals in our globalized and technology-based society. During its monthly board meeting, the administrative team will present data and insight to assist the board in understanding the day-to-day operations of the schools, any challenges it is facing, and steps they are taking to achieve the school's mission, and this data and insight will include the following:

1. Growing Enrollment: The board will review targeted enrollment numbers, actual enrollment, and related trends.
2. Academic Performance: The board will review EOG exam results annually and benchmark assessments regularly to ensure the school continues to aim to achieve higher than state and county averages in EOG exams.
3. Staff Retention: The board will review the staff turnover rate every quarter. Duplin STEM Academy aims to have a better staff retention rate than county and state averages.
4. Fiscal Performance: The board will review budget projections every month to ensure a balanced budget every year and when possible work toward maintaining strong capital reserves.

The governing board of Duplin STEM Academy will be integrally involved in assessing how the program being delivered is meeting the school's mission. The board will appoint an Academic Committee, which will make quarterly reports to the board on the progress being made toward achieving the school's academic goals. The Academic Committee, comprised of board members, staff and critical friends, members will discuss the school's performance and gather input from the staff on relevant issues.

All formative and summative scores resulting assessments will be reviewed by the Academic Committee as soon as available and by the full board during the first regularly scheduled meeting thereafter. The Academic Committee will present a report to the board, which will include an analysis of the scores in comparison to other relevant data.

In addition, the Academic Committee will keep the board apprised of other, less quantifiable indicators of the school's progress in meeting its mission as it becomes aware of them. These indicators would include student behavior and portfolio assessment, especially for those students referenced above.

Mission success will also be gauged by demand within the community for spaces in the Academy. The Academy's management team will keep the board apprised on a continuous basis of the number of spaces currently filled and the number of prospective students on the waiting list.







## 9. Educational Plan

### 9.1. Instructional Program

Q96. Provide a detailed description of the overall instructional program of the proposed charter school, including:

- major instructional methods
- assessment strategies, and
- explain how this instructional program and model meet the needs of the targeted student population



The educational theory and foundation of Duplin STEM Academy is built upon the following assumptions:

- All children can learn
- All students will have equal access to program and experience regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, disabling condition
- All students are entitled to respect and dignity for who they are

Founders of Duplin STEM Academy rely on a pedagogy taking its roots from educational philosophers and learning theorists such as Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, Gardner, and Bronfenbrenner, and relying on evidence-based approaches and curricula for its operations, believe that:

- Learning is a continuing and vital process and requires active participation. The purpose for learning does not lie only in the future. Skills, knowledge, and experiences must have meaning in the present as well.
- The student is the starting point, the center and the end. He or she needs to explore, manipulate, experiment, question, and search out answers for themselves. Activity is essential.
- Teaching refers to relating to students and relating the curriculum to their lives.
- Culture and the nature of interaction between the student and knowledgeable members of the culture are important and have primary roles in students' learning.
- A student's learning should be facilitated through scaffolding in his zone of proximal development by a more skilled adult or peer. The teacher is the activator, guide, mentor and mediator. Therefore, educational activity requires careful pedagogical guidance.

Students bring diverse skills, perceptions and experiences with them as they come to school. While some come with strong academic skills and with an enthusiasm to read and learn, educators may need to invest more time and energy in and develop different strategies for those who come with weaker academic skills or lower motivation. No doubt each student's need and source of motivation may be different. To meet the needs of students with diverse skills, Duplin STEM Academy believes that a strong evidence-based curriculum is critical. Nonetheless, implementation of the curriculum also has profound effects on students' learning and development. Assessments are focused on the measurement of student growth. With the belief that all students can learn and grow, measures such as NWEA MAP testing highlight students' growth throughout the year. Thus, a well designed curriculum implemented by a caring, competent and dedicated instructional team, embedded in sustained, high quality teacher-student relationships is fundamental to achieve the mission of Duplin STEM Academy.

Continuity between home and school is facilitated through parent volunteering, communication, and home visits. The connection with the community will be facilitated through collaboration with



local institutions and partnerships, continuing education programs implemented with community non-profits, involvement with the local community college, and other outreach programs identified as the school becomes ever more entrenched in the community. In addition to the continuity between home and school and connection between community and school, innovative instructional methods will be implemented by well trained teachers, administrators, and staff. As a result, students will reach their maximum potential to contribute to the globalized and changing society.

The historic low performance of the surrounding public schools and the systemic poverty that has impacted Duplin County and the greater eastern North Carolina area is the reasons for the holistic approach to connecting with students, and their families, not only in the classroom, but where they live and play. It is the families, not just the children, that need to be engaged and included in the school in order to allow the students to reach their maximum potential both in the classroom and the global community.

**Q97. Will the proposed charter school serve a single-sex student population?**

- Yes
- No

**Q101. Curriculum and Instructional Design Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure for each grade span (i.e. elementary, middle, high) the school would ultimately serve.**



The basic learning environment for Duplin STEM Academy is classroom-based, with a focus on high levels of teacher-student engagement and access to hands-on learning activities provided through the use of our curriculum and instructional tools. Teachers within grade levels will collaborate on lesson preparation and classroom set-up. Classrooms will be arranged so that students feel a sense of order and purpose; displays will be presented in such a way as to complement, not compete with, instruction being provided; materials will be ready at hand for student exploration and manipulation as called for by the lessons planned for the day. The ideal class size and structure for the grades that the school will ultimately serve are:

**Elementary School:**

- K-3rd Grade: Class size of 20 with grouping based on students' instructional levels; Students will have classroom teachers that deliver all aspects of the core curriculum math, science, english language arts, history.
- 4th-5th Grade: Class size of 25 with grouping based on students' instructional levels. Students will have core teachers that are subject-matter experts: math, science, english language arts.

Duplin STEM Academy will utilize curriculum-based assessments (formative) to monitor student mastery and use NWEA MAP assessments to measure student growth multiple times per year.

**Q102. 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.**



DSA's mission statement aligns with its curriculum. By providing an academically challenging, learning environment DSA will develop its diverse student population into solution-focused, peace-building citizens who are equipped to solve the world's problems.

DSA's curriculum represents a combination of two proven curriculum models' TMSA Public Charter Schools and Direct Instruction. TMSA Public Charter Schools currently has three site locations: Triad Math and Science Academy in Guilford County, Triangle Math and Science Academy in Wake County, and Queen City STEM School in Mecklenburg County. These three counties encompass a wide range of student populations including DSA's targeted student population. Direct Instruction curriculum is currently used across the Roger Bacon Academy charter schools.

Both TMSA and Direct Instruction based Charter Schools have successful track records in student achievement and growth. Triad Math and Science Academy went from a C school in 2014 with only 58% student proficiency to its highest rating yet of a B school in 2018 with 72% proficiency. Triangle Math and Science Academy has been an A school every year since 2014 and has met or exceeded growth each year. Queen City STEM school has consistently been ranked a B school and has met expected growth each year, with the exception of 2019. Roger Bacon Academy Charter Schools using the Direct Instruction Model have been recognized Nationally, and within the State consistently since their inception dating back to 2003 (School of Distinction) and has continued to be rated as Exceeding Growth through 2016/17 while achieving a B rating during the 2018/19 school year.

This model employs the combination of an evidence-based foundational skills curriculum steeped in the science of instruction and a STEM-based program mapping of project-based lessons which are research-based and have been proven through extensive education studies across the nation. Studies have shown that both aspects of the proposed curriculum have improved student learning and have been found appropriate for all student populations, including those who are at-risk of academic failure and academically-gifted students.

Using the Direct Instruction model with STEM-based program mapping, allows DSA to bring the support of a strong, proven educational model that will best ensure students make expected progress from where they enter our school and as they matriculate through our school to the 5th grade and ultimately towards successful high school graduation and college acceptance. The instructional approach and school environment will sharpen students' skills and prepare them to pursue a high profile career, preferably a STEM career through our Technology Integrated Education and Advanced Studies Programs.

To promote focus on the importance of science education, we will provide hands-on, collaborative STEM activities for students K-5, including providing students access to both the Core Knowledge Science Curriculum and the Project Lead The Way (PLTW) program.



Math curriculum, another focus of the DSA, is part of our Direct Instruction Model and through STEM-based program mapping, will provide investigative practice opportunities for students. Constantly researching best practices that align with current developmental research and our focus on the growth mindset, teacher-leaders will analyze and lesson plan accordingly to support student growth, 21st-century skills practice, and project-based lessons.

To improve student literacy, we will provide systematic and explicit instruction using Direct Instruction programs that provide for accelerated learning at all instructional levels. Reading instruction will be delivered using student instructional levels based on program placement tests. Continual curriculum-based assessments (formative) will be used to identify opportunity for acceleration or the need for remediation.

- The focus of instruction (phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension)
- The format of the lesson includes high levels of teacher-student engagement (teacher-directed that evolves to student-centered)
- Progress Monitoring is ongoing (every 5 -10 instructional lessons) and will be used for acceleration, remediation, and flexible regrouping.
- We will provide intensive interventions for students who are lagging behind in development of critical reading skills.

All curriculum will be aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Further, the curriculum will support and integrate the use of Multi Tiered Systems of Support and include students and parents/guardians in goal setting and progress monitoring.

**Q103. 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.**



DSA's teaching approach includes culturally responsive teaching by 1. acknowledging the cultural differences as they affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning; 2. incorporating cultural differences as content to be taught in the formal curriculum; and 3. using instructional strategies that meet the needs of students with different learning styles. Thus, the learning environment will be positive and encouraging, and based on mutual respect, responsibility, and caring.

Teachers meet the students where they are - at the students' instructional level. Learning activities will be built to meet students' existing needs and accelerate learning. High and reasonable expectations will be set in a cooperative manner and students will be held accountable. As students master core skills and knowledge they will be challenged to be innovative and creative in the application of those skills and knowledge across a variety of project-based lessons.

Active engagement of students is critical. Every student will be provided with opportunities to develop and learn. Students will be actively involved in their learning by participating, writing, making, debating, role playing, brainstorming, discussing, designing, problem solving, creating, demonstrating, and so on.

Project-based learning: As an extension of the application of skill mastery and knowledge will encourage students to apply knowledge in real life situations and solve problems through project-based learning. Using project-based learning prepares students to be effective communicators, effective collaborators, critical and creative thinkers and active learners.

**Q104. Explain how the proposed instructional plan and graduation requirements will ensure student readiness to transition from grade to grade and to the next grade span upon program completion.**

The proposed instructional plan closely follows the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, which naturally allows for vertical alignment as students transition from grade to grade.

NWEA MAP test scores and other assessments are used throughout the year to monitor student growth.

The MTSS process, including PLC meetings, supports identification of students who may not have made sufficient progress for the transition. To support those students, interventions will be implemented to ensure the student is ready to transition to the next grade level.

**Q105. Describe in a brief narrative how the yearly academic calendar coincides with the tenets of the proposed mission and education plan.**



Duplin STEM Academy's academic calendar closely resembles the neighboring districts' traditional calendars. The traditional calendar allows for Duplin STEM Academy to provide strong intervention opportunities, such as extended day activities, after school tutoring, or Summer school.

**Q106. 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.**

Students participate in core instruction for a minimum of 300 minutes per day. Electives rotate daily. Elementary offerings include art, STEM, music, PE, and technology. Elementary students are exposed to these rotating specials, promoting exploratory activities in a range of disciplines.

Learners in K-5 perform better when they have consistent and reliable daily routines; daily schedules promote consistency. All students start the day at 8 AM and are dismissed by 3:25 PM.

In alignment with our STEM focus, students will have the opportunity to receive further time for science once a week during their specials which will provide an additional 45 minutes to their science instruction. This schedule is optimal for student learning because it provides a well balanced day of having instruction throughout the day with natural breaks and transitions for lunch, recess, and specials.

We will ensure students have time to learn how to read, along with reading to learn through out the school day. Reading will be taught in whole and small groups, based on student instructional levels.

Extended before school, after school, weekend and summer programs: During the school year, the Duplin STEM Academy will provide before school, after school and weekend programs where various instructional support and extra-curricular activities will be implemented. Additional instructional support will be offered during the summer to prepare students who may be "on the academic edge" for the next year and to minimize the summer slide.

**Q107. Describe a typical day for a teacher and a student in the school's first year of operation.**





School culture will be a priority from day one for teachers and students in the school's first year of operation. The implementation of a consistent daily routine for teachers and students will help build this culture.

A typical day for teachers will consist of instructing students for approximately 300 minutes. Teachers will have one protected period per day for instructional design and collaboration with other faculty members. Some days, teachers may stay after school to offer tutoring or extracurricular activities. All teachers will have a protected lunch break of at least 25 minutes.

Students begin their day, greeted by faculty at the door. They will proceed to settle into their classroom as they prepare to listen to morning announcements and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Then, students follow their daily schedule which varies by grade level, but includes the core classes, specials/electives, lunch, and recess. All students, K-5, will be provided extended movement breaks. Throughout each day, students will participate in receiving direct instruction, actively participate in collaborative activities, and be encouraged to think outside of the box, think critically, and push themselves to their utmost potential.

**Q108. Will this proposed school include a high school?**


- Yes
- No

**Q114. 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.**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30

Total Files Count: 5

**Applicant Evidence :**


2023 DSA Curriculu...

Uploaded on **4/17/2023**  
by **Todd Forgette**

**Q115. Attach Appendix D: Yearly Academic Calendar (minimum of 185 instructional days or 1,025 hours)**



Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, word Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 3

**Applicant Evidence :**


DUPLIN STEM 2025-2...

Uploaded on **4/17/2023**  
by **Todd Forgette**

**Q116. 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.**


Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30

Total Files Count: 15

**Applicant Comments :**

The attached Bell Schedule includes a breakdown of Daily courses that are taught across the week. The "special classes" (Art, Music/Theater, PE, and Technology) would rotate on a daily basis.

**Applicant Evidence :**


DSA Bell Schedule K-...

Uploaded on **4/17/2023**  
by **Todd Forgette**

## 9.2. Special Populations and "At-Risk" Students

**Q117. 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.**



Research has shown that students of color, students with limited English proficiency, and students from economically disadvantaged families are at risk of academic failure. Our approach to students at risk of academic failure is to catch them before they fall. Thus, early identification of at-risk students through on-going observation and assessment is critical. These strategies are proven to be effective to improve the learning of students who are identified as at risk of academic failure.

Increasing students' self-efficacy and motivation to learn: Students who are at risk of academic failure usually need support to increase their self-efficacy and motivation to learn and to develop positive attitudes towards learning. Students will experience a caring, sustained relationship with faculty. They will be provided manageable and achievable tasks at their instructional level and the difficulty level of the task will be increased as they accomplish more. This will create a sense of accomplishment, prevent frustration, and will help to increase students' self-efficacy. As research indicates, it is the acquisition of skill that yields high self-esteem!

A three-tiered approach: In the three-tiered approach, Tier-1 refers to the instruction through a core program. Tier-2 is to provide supplemental and extended instruction. Tier-3, is an intense and individualized intervention. DSA will follow North Carolina's Multi-tiered System of Support to ensure both Academic and Behavioral growth is promised to all students.

Usually, students who are at risk of academic failure will need supplemental and extended instruction (Tier 2), in addition to receiving instruction through the core program (Tier 1). Applying Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development, which is the area that a student can accomplish a skill with a more skilled individual's help, the individual will be moved to the instructional level that the student can accomplish by themselves. A more skilled individual could be a peer, an adult, or a teacher. Therefore, at the tier 2 level, after identifying the areas of difficulty that put the students at risk, the following strategies will be followed:

1. Individualized student instruction will be provided. Some students may need additional time, additional practice, and one-on-one teaching to master the content. The student will be provided additional materials and the opportunity to apply/practice content at his instructional level. Instructional strategies may be varied as needed. Tutoring will be provided by the teachers and other peers.
2. Small group instruction
3. Family involvement will be increased. It will be done by sending materials and resources to home, educating parents to help their children complete additional practice at home, thereby increasing learning, and structured routines. We will invite parents to volunteer and visit in school, and inform parents about the progress of their children.

If the student does not respond to Tier 2, a Tier 3 intervention will be provided. At the Tier 3 level, along with the strategies used at Tier 2, an alternative corrective program(s), which is proven to be effective with students who do not respond to Tier 2, will be implemented. Collaboration within school staff will be needed. If the student's response to intervention (RTI) at Tier 3 is not at the



expected level, an alternative intervention will be used. The school personnel will work together closely as well as with the student's family. Interventions will be documented on a Personalized Education Plan for any students who are in need of intervention.

Extended before school, after school, weekend and summer programs: During the school year, the Duplin STEM Academy will provide before school, after school and weekend programs where various instructional support and extra-curricular activities will be implemented. Additional instructional support will be offered during the summer to prepare students who may be at the edge for the next year and to minimize the summer slide.

English Learners: Instructions designed to enhance language acquisition as well as content comprehension of EL students will be provided. The teacher will coordinate with a reading specialist or an ESL teacher.

**Q118. 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.**

DSA board member, Karina Pascht is a Licensed Teacher with focus in Special Education and Biology. For the last 15 years of her career, Mrs. Pascht focused on Special Education in New York Public Schools and Durham County Public School System. As a board member, her focus is ensuring the DSA education model identifies and addresses the needs of our special population early and provides a detailed plan to address their individual needs.

**Q119. Explain how the instructional plan and curriculum will meet the needs of English Learners (EL), including the following:**

- 1. Methods for identifying EL students (and avoiding misidentification).**
- 2. 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.**
- 3. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of EL students, including exiting students from EL services.**
- 4. Means for providing qualified staffing for EL students.**



English Language Learners: Instructions designed to enhance language acquisition as well as content comprehension of ELL students will be provided. Teacher will coordinate with a reading specialist or ESL teacher.

1. As part of the DSA process for bringing new students and families into the school, DSA administration and teachers will require every parent to complete a survey describing their native language and primary language(s) spoken in their home. This survey will be used to determine if there is a predominance of languages other than English spoken in the home. If the survey suggests and/or clearly indicates a language other than English, the student is a potential English learner (EL) student. As part of the identification process and implementation of potential education options, the school's administrative and education team will review the student's cumulative/historic folder to identify previous programming on proficiency or previous ESL services received. Potential EL students are to be screened with a trained Screener to determine if the students are eligible for services.

2. The ESL teacher uses content-based ESL instruction to teach ELs. The ESL teacher may combine grade-level content standards from the NC Standard Course of Study in English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies, with the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards to plan lessons. ESL services may be delivered in a pull-out, push-in, or scheduled class. Tutoring services may also be offered to ELs during or after school. Test scores, teachers' recommendations, and student achievement are considered for placement in a specific class. Placement in a class within the program is flexible and is re-evaluated annually or upon teacher request on the progress of the student. ELs receive appropriate accommodations in general education courses while they are being served in ESL. Mainstream teachers are required to differentiate instruction as needed for these students, using appropriate instructional strategies. The ESL teacher serves as a resource for the classroom teachers in providing strategies in instruction and assessment for the ELs in the classroom.

3. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of EL students, including exiting students from EL services. All ELs are assessed annually to measure their on-going progress in English using the ACCESS for ELLs test to determine continued eligibility for the program. Periodic interim and benchmark assessments are used to monitor ELs' progress and inform instruction. A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) provides additional support for ELs. This framework helps educators differentiate instruction as students need extra help. Students who exit the ESL program as fully proficient are monitored for two academic years. The ESL teacher monitors these exited students four times a year and maintains documentation that the student is performing successfully in content area classes.



4. Means for providing qualified staffing for EL students. The ESL teacher must be qualified and certified to be hired at Duplin STEM and to deliver instruction to ELs. The ESL program will be adequately staffed based on the number and needs of the students in the program. Teachers of ELs and administrators receive professional development opportunities, when necessary, to improve instructional outcomes for ELs.

**Q120. Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of gifted students, including the following:**

1. Specific research-based instructional programs, practices, strategies, and opportunities the school will employ or provide to enhance their abilities.
2. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of gifted students; and means for providing qualified staffing for gifted students.



In terms of identifying gifted students, Duplin STEM Academy will follow the state standards for defining and identifying gifted and talented students. DSA will initiate a three step process for identification of potential candidates for academically/intellectually gifted services in grades K-5. This process will include screening, identification, assessment, and appropriate service options.

Multiple Indicators of Gifted are used to determine the service delivery options.

- Observation - observable behavior such as highly expressive communication, motivation, humor, inquiry, and creativity.
- Student Performance - as seen through work samples, portfolios, grades, and other authentic assessments. Student Achievement – standardized achievement test scores at the 95th percentile or above.
- Student Aptitude - the capacity for learning involving problem-solving and memory; may include an IQ score and
  - aptitude indicator.
- Student Interest - as indicated by focus areas and/or curiosity.
- Student Motivation to Learn – the commitment to pursue learning experiences.

Further, DSA will consider teacher recommendations, student portfolio work and parental input. We recognize that additional experiences are necessary to ensure all students are met at their instructional level and attain growth. High-performing students will be able to experience content at their instructional level through the use of individualization and differentiation. Lessons will be differentiated based on students' needs and implemented accordingly.

DSA will be committed to identifying the appropriate faculty to ensure that those students who are academically gifted are fully served. In some cases, the gifted and talented teacher may work in conjunction with other classroom teachers to ensure that students are being instructed to their highest capabilities. As the population of the school grows, along with the gifted population, our gifted and talented teacher may work full time with those students who warrant it.

In short, we will meet the needs of our gifted and talented students in the same manner that we meet every other student's needs. We will take an individual approach, hire the necessary faculty and see that each student is able to reach his or her maximum potential. Progress of these students will be measured through data that comes as a result of testing, as well as through portfolio work and anecdotal evidence.

Identification of Gifted Students: Test of Cognitive Skills (TCS), which is also used by some North Carolina public schools, will be used to identify AIG students. In addition, on-going assessments and teachers' observation of classroom behaviors and performances will be used. Differentiated, advanced and challenging instruction: Gifted students will have individualized educational plans (IEP; based on the test results and on-going assessments) that will fit their needs and facilitate their growth in the area that they are gifted. Teachers will provide enriched, advanced and challenging



instruction for subject acceleration, follow a differentiated curriculum, and use research based supplemental resources.

Highly qualified personnel and professional Development: Duplin STEM Academy will recruit competent teachers and professionals and provide professional development to meet the needs of AIG students. Collaboration with Wayne County's AIG specialists will be facilitated.

School Year Programs and Summer Camps: Duplin STEM Academy will collaborate with local and statewide community organizations (higher education institutions, and other private and public institutions) to provide gifted students with experiences and programs that suit their needs best so that they develop their potential.

Academic competitions: Duplin STEM Academy students will participate in competitions organized within the school, district wide, statewide and nationwide.

Advanced Curriculum Opportunities: These curriculum opportunities will include on-campus or online honors classes.

### 9.3. 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.*

**Q121. Identification and Records 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.**





Duplin Stem Academy (DSA) will review all students' records upon enrollment by a school counselor or special education teacher for previously diagnosed disabilities, eligibility under Section 504 and/or Individual Education Plans. This will help ensure DSA identifies all students who have previously been found to be eligible for special education services or are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The IEP team at DSA will contact the previous school in writing and by telephone to request the current IEP, all historical IEP records, and pertinent student information. In the event of a delay with receiving the requested IEP records, the EC teacher and administrator will email/call making additional requests for these items. There will also be a time scheduled for the EC teacher and/or administrator to meet at school to pick these files up. If there are additional delays, DSA's school administration will email the district requesting these records.

DSA will have systems for prevention and intervention (i.e. informal assessment, check ins or placement assessment) at the beginning of the school year or when a student enrolls during the year to identify where a student is academically. DSA will speak and/or meet with the previous special education students regarding special accommodations and follow through with previously written plans until we are able to conduct our own evaluation, adopt the most current IEP or develop a new IEP, in accordance with the transfer provisions of NC 1504- 4.4(e) and (f).

DSA will provide special education and related services according to the federal mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the regulations of the North Carolina Public School Law, Article 9. To ensure record compliance, DSA will develop and implement a record compliance monitoring system. School administrators and the EC teacher(s) will complete a compliance checklist for all records of students with disabilities. Each record will be reviewed and if any noncompliance is found, a corrective action of noncompliance will take place immediately. Verification of correction will be the final action to ensure the noncompliance was corrected. The 504 Coordinator at DSA will monitor the 504 Accommodation plans compliance as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**Q122. 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.**



All stakeholders (teachers, parents and state will be provided with resources for identifying children with special needs in our school through brochures, posters and letters found on the Public Schools of North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Project Child Find website. Under the leadership of an Exceptional Children's Teacher, the IEP Team, consisting of an LEA representative, the parent(s) of a child with a disability, regular education teacher of the child, and an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation, will use a problem-solving approach and progress monitoring when addressing academic, behavioral, and/or developmental concerns regarding students. Team members will document the data collected, monitor the results of scientifically research-based interventions and make data-based decisions. If the IEP team determines that evaluations are the appropriate next step, the parent(s) will sign to give consent for initial evaluations. The EC teacher will oversee the evaluation process to include contacting each relevant related service provider, scheduling the time and location of the evaluations, receiving each report after the evaluations, and scheduling the eligibility determination meeting to ensure compliance within the 90-day timeline. The school will utilize the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction forms to document the evaluation and IEP. Additionally, parents can refer their child for testing at any time by providing a written request to the school. All proposed decisions accepted or refused will be reflected in detail within the Prior Written Notice for each meeting.

In compliance with confidentiality requirements, all confidential records shall be kept in a locked file cabinet in a room accessible only to pertinent school personnel. Written documentation will be required to remove any records from the records room. Only those staff members of the students will have access to the aforementioned les.

DSA will avoid misidentification by utilizing a three-tiered approach: In the three-tiered approach, Tier-1 refers to the instruction through a core program. Tier-2 is to provide supplemental and extended instruction. Tier-3, the final tier, is an intense and individualized intervention. DSA will follow North Carolina's Multi-tiered System of Support to ensure growth is promised to all students. Students who do not show progress may be considered, a team decision, for full evaluations and any specialized designed instruction.

**Q123. Provide a plan detailing how the records of students with disabilities and 504 Accommodation plans will be properly managed, including the following:**

- 1. Requesting Records from previous schools**
- 2. Record Confidentiality (on-site)**
- 3. Record Compliance (on-site)**



To ensure record compliance, SSA will develop and implement a record compliance monitoring system. The IEP team will complete a compliance checklist for all records of students with disabilities. Each record will be reviewed and if any noncompliance is found, a correction action of noncompliance will take place immediately. Verification of correction will be the final action to ensure the noncompliance was corrected. All EC records will be reviewed/audited at least once annually. This audit will ensure each folder includes:

- Signed informed consent for initial provision of services for special education and related services
- The most current prior written notice with a description of actions proposed and refused
- Documentation that initial consent to evaluate and parent response was documented
- Most recent parent invitation to the IEP meeting
- Most recent IEP/Re-evaluation document

There will be additional IEP audits conducted annually by contracted specialists to measure the appropriateness of present level of performance, IEP goals, student participation in statewide assessments, and IEP service time.

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

DSA will review annually what went well and what needs improvement with our record keeping processes. We will provide training to all staff in regards to confidentiality and effective record keeping. We will strive to be 100% compliant with all records and work with schools to ensure records are received in a complete and timely manner.

Records will be locked in a separate setting. Any confidential file will be marked and never leave the school building. We will maintain copies of records and create a policy and procedure around file-ling based on current laws.

**Q124. Exceptional Children's Programming Explain how you will meet the learning needs of students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible.**



DSA strives to provide all students with an appropriate inclusive education to include students with severe/multiple disabilities. The IEP team will utilize several different methods of data collection, teacher observations, and parent input to identify the appropriate accommodations and/or modifications that allows these students to gain access to the general education curriculum. The EC teacher and general education teacher will collaborate during weekly PLC meetings to identify appropriate methods of differentiated instruction to maximize the ability for all EC students to access the general education curriculum in the inclusive setting. Specific instructional methods will be built-in to lessons that accommodate the needs of all learners. Students will also be provided any/all resources and assistive technology supports as well as instructional accommodations and modifications to help support curricular accessibility. Lesson's will also be focused with aligning student's IEP goals with the instruction and curriculum for each lesson.

DSA will comply with Federal and State regulations for serving exceptional children. The following are some of the commitments that DSA makes:

- Enrollment to all children will be open, regardless of disability status, which is in compliance with the regulation states that —free appropriate public education is available for exceptional children”
- Assistive technology devices or assistive technology services, or both, will be made available to a child with a disability if required as a part of the child's--(1) Special education; (2) Related services; or (3) Supplementary aids and services
- Exceptional children will be placed in the least restrictive environment Each exceptional child will have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and IEP team.
- An initial evaluation and reevaluation activities will be conducted after parent consent is obtained. Annual notices to the parents of exceptional children will be given
- Children with special needs will be placed in the appropriate special program within 90 calendar days of receipt of a referral unless the parent refuses to give consent for evaluation or placement.

Curricula for exceptional children will follow the curricula adapted for non-exceptional students. However, focus will be given to instruction on various subjects, depending on the needs of the individual students. Exceptional students' cognitive, affective, motor and vocational development within the curricular areas will be emphasized.

Although learning outcomes for exceptional children is mostly the same with students in general education, some exceptional children may need some accommodations to meet learning outcomes. Therefore, exceptional children will be provided additional educational opportunities, depending on types of exceptionally, such as:

- Advanced and challenging instruction
- Highly qualified personnel and professional Development
- School Year Extended Programs and Summer Camps
- Advanced Curriculum Opportunities
- Individualized student instruction



- Extended time and one-one teaching
- Instructional strategies that meet their learning style (e.g., multiple intelligence)
- Tutoring
- Small group instruction
- Different curriculum for students with severe disabilities, who might not meet the learning outcomes in general education

DSA will ensure that all students, regardless of their —intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry are admitted to the school. Each child with special needs will have an Individual Educational Program (IEP). An IEP team for each child consisting of the parents of the child, a regular education teacher of the child, a special education teacher of the child, the child by himself or herself, if appropriate, a representative of the public agency and other individuals as needed. DSA will ensure to carry out the IEP plan and to accommodate the children with special needs at its highest possible potential in a least restrictive environment. Therefore, children with special needs will be mainstreamed with children who are not disabled. Children with special needs will be in special classes or removed from the regular educational environment if their education cannot be accomplished satisfactorily in regular educational environments due to the nature of the child's disability.

**Q125. 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?**



DSA will provide educational opportunities to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with the full continuum of alternative placements, as appropriate. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is the instructional setting (placement) in which special education must be provided for a student with a disability. What constitutes the LRE varies, depending on the student's needs. Therefore, once an IEP team has developed goals and objectives for an individual student, the IEP Team will then determine the best environment where that student will receive the needed services.

SSA will provide educational opportunities to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with the full continuum of alternative placements, as appropriate. We anticipate that 12% of our school population will require EC services and will plan accordingly. Knowing not ALL students with disabilities will require direct services, we anticipate a 15:1 student caseload to teacher ratio for our direct service students.

There will be at least one Exceptional Children's teacher on staff, depending on school enrollment. He or she will be responsible for implementing IEPs and monitoring students' progress. In the event more support staff is needed, DSA will advertise and hire highly qualified EC staff to support the needs of students. DSA will utilize IDEA funding as well as state and local funds to support these positions.

DSA will ensure that all students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). DSA will focus on their special education and related services needed in order to ensure that they acquire the best possible education and are being prepared for further education, employment and independent living . DSA will follow all federal and state laws and regulations relating to the education of students with disabilities. All staff will be educated as to the contents and implications of these laws through continuous professional learning opportunities. These professional learning opportunities will be identified and implemented by the school administration and EC staff utilizing feedback from staff surveys, teacher input, student assessment data, IEP goal data collection, and parent input.

The Exceptional Children's teacher will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of all IEPs. The EC teacher will work collaboratively with all teachers in weekly PLC meetings to ensure the appropriate collaborative learning strategies are utilized in each lesson. Students will receive quarterly IEP progress reports from the EC teacher and all related service providers relevant to each individual student. These progress reports will also be stored in each students IEP folder to ensure compliance and assist in future decision making. The IEP team will meet at least once a year for each EC student to conduct an annual review meeting to update each student's IEP based on specific data and input from all IEP team members. Additional meetings will be scheduled as a student's needs change. As a student is identified, a transition meeting will take place to ensure that all accommodations are communicated to the relevant teachers.



## Discipline of EC Students

Students with special needs have safeguards and rights by federal and state laws and cannot be excluded from their educational program without following federally mandated procedures. It is important to work with students early to prevent misbehavior and to provide appropriate behavioral intervention plans and goals through the IEP process.

Students with special needs cannot be suspended from school for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year without following specific procedures. Services must be provided starting with day 11 and the IEP team must meet to determine if a manifestation determination has occurred.

Schools should first try to intervene with student behavior in the school setting. Repeated problematic behavior should be addressed early through the IEP process; teams should analyze the behavior through a Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA) and then develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) and/or behavioral goals. Suspension should always be a last resort and used sparingly; it rarely improves behavior.

If a student's behavior is so severe that the student needs to be removed from the school setting:

- School personnel may suspend a special needs student up to 10 school days in a school year as any student. However, day 11 triggers need for service and decisions, so 10 days should be used very cautiously for students with special needs.
- Students who are considered for long term suspensions or for whom pattern is determined must have a Manifestation Determination.
- If the behavior is not related to the disability, the student may receive normal disciplinary action (suspension). However, the student will need a continuation of special education services.
- If the behavior is related to the disability, the student may NOT be suspended.
- At all stages the IEP team may meet to determine an alternative placement. The new placement would then not be considered as removal or suspension. The team will need to meet again to change placement back to the original school setting when or if a change is warranted.

All disciplinary removals are counted as suspensions unless the IEP team meets for that situation and changes the student's special education placement.

## Change of Placement

A Change in Placement for Disciplinary Reasons Occurs if:

- The removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days; or
- The student has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern (students sent home early) that totals more than 10 school days in a school year.

On the date of the decision to remove a student that is a change of placement for disciplinary reasons, the LEA must notify parents of that decision and provide due process (Parent Handbook). A



manifestation determination must be completed within 10 school days. An FBA and BIP must be completed or reviewed if already completed.

Changes in special education placements are **NOT** suspensions:

Any change in special education placement must be documented on:

- IEP (DEC 4): either by amendment or a new IEP (Re-evaluation)
- DEC 5 (Prior Written Notice)

When a special education placement changes through the IEP process (for example, to modified day or homebound), the new placement does not count as school removal and is not counted as suspension.

The student will need to have the same staffing process (DEC5 and IEP addendum) to return back to the original placement when or if that is appropriate.

Examples of changes that might be considered by the IEP team based on behavior:

- Separate to modified day
- Regular to homebound services
- Homebound services to regular
- Separate to regular (when students are placed from STAR Program back to general ed classroom)

### **Manifestation Determination**

The manifestation Determination is to be completed by the student's IEP Team and must occur within 10 school days of removal when there has been a change of placement.

After reviewing all relevant information in the student's file (IEP, observations, parent information) the team must decide if the behavior was a manifestation of the disability by determining:

- If the conduct was caused by the child's disability
- If the conduct was the result of the LEA's failure to implement the IEP, the LEA must take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies

### **Day 11 Requirements**

Starting with the 11th day of removal, the school must:

- Be provided exceptional services. Which services are provided and who determines appropriate services depends upon IEP contents, whether there has been a change of placement for disciplinary reasons, and the results of any manifestation determination.
- Determine if change of placement is for disciplinary reasons.

If the change in placement is due to disciplinary reasons:





1. On day of incident, send DEC5a, Parent Handbook, and Invitation
2. Conduct a Manifestation Determination

If the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability based on the Manifestation Determination:

1. The student may be suspended similar to a general education student.

If the behavior is a manifestation of the disability based on the Manifestation Determination:

1. The student must be returned to the placement from which the student was removed unless the parent and school agree to a change of placement.
2. Conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) unless it is already completed (current IEP and current school year). If completed, review as needed (DPI recommends after about each 5th day of removal).
3. Develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) designed to address the behavior violation. If the BIP has already been developed, review the BIP and modify as necessary to address the behavior (DPI recommends after about each 5th day of removal).

### **Weapons/Drugs/Serious Bodily Injury:**

If the offense involves weapons, drugs or serious bodily injury, proceed using 11 day requirements. These violations are clearly defined; the standard for serious bodily injury is very high. The only difference in procedure is that if the manifestation determination shows a relationship between the behavior and the disability, the principal may remove the student to an alternative setting for up to 45 school days. If the behavior is not related, the student may be removed similar to a regular student. In both cases MD, FBA, BIP, and services defined by IEP are required.

### **Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)**

Functional Behavior Assessments are to be completed on all students with special needs with behavior difficulties. Required if change of placement for disciplinary reasons. If a FBA has already been developed, review and modify it as necessary to address the behavior.

Schools should be proactive and perform an FBA before the student accumulates the 10th day of removal. If there is a disciplinary change of placement and an FBA has already been completed, a new FBA is not required for each removal; however, the FBA needs to be reviewed regularly.

### **Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIP)**

Behavior Intervention Plans are to be completed on all students with special needs with behavior difficulties. Required if change of placement for disciplinary reasons. If a BIP has already been developed, review and modify it as necessary to address the behavior.

The most practical way to deal with repetitive, inappropriate behavior is to develop a behavioral intervention plan as part of the IEP. Behavioral plans are recommended for any student with special



needs having problems with behavior even if the behavior is not judged to be related to the disability.

**Q126. Describe the methods and support systems that will be in place to ensure students with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).**

DSA will have a fully staffed Exceptional Children's program based on the level of services to fully meet the needs of all children on campus. DSA will ensure services are ready for all EC students on day one of instruction. All related service providers will be supplied a roster and scheduled prior to the first day of school. The EC and general education teachers will work on scheduling support times and inclusive teaching for all students prior to the first day of school. Any needed instructional resources and/or assistive technology devices will be identified and ready for student use prior to the first day of school.

All DSA staff will be trained in the Federal requirements of IDEA. DSA will follow IEP's and full process to ensure all teachers fully understand their responsibility to meet the needs of all children through the rules of ChildFind. DSA will contract with related services providers to ensure all students are fully served. DSA will ensure administrators and other key staff are fully trained through the process.

The IDEA laws require that students with disabilities are educated alongside their non-disabled peers, to the maximum extent appropriate. The students present levels will drive the goals which will drive the service delivery option (Team decision).

If any student qualifies for an IEP the first decision will be to ensure they spend as much time as possible with their non-disabled peers in a general education classroom, with the provision of supplementary aids and services. Supplementary aids and services may include accommodations and/or modifications to the curriculum, the manner in which the content is presented, or how a student's progress is measured. Supplementary aids can include direct services and support to the child as well as support and training for staff who work with that student.

**Q127. Describe how implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be monitored and reported to the student, parents, and relevant staff.**



DSA classrooms will be equipped with the necessary materials and assistive technology supports to ensure access to the curriculum. The EC staff will participate in weekly PLC meetings to discuss progress, support, accommodations, and determine if a parental meeting is necessary to review any portion of a student's support (IEP). At least once a year, parents, the EC teacher, one regular education teacher, a school administrator and an individual who can interpret any evaluation data (IEP Team) will meet to review the student's IEP and to make any necessary changes or recommendations. Parents may request an IEP meeting at any time.

There will be additional collaboration and training opportunities between EC and general education teachers to ensure accommodations are met as well as clear communication between all members of the EC Team. As an organization, DSA aims to have internal and external audits and compliance checks to strengthen our processes and programming.

**Q128. Describe the proposed plan for providing related services and to have qualified staffing adequate for the anticipated special needs population.**

DSA will contract all related service providers to include psychological, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. If additional related service supports are needed, DSA will identify the provider and contract with them to provide the support. Additional funding has been marked for assistive technology, transportation, and adapted physical education if necessary. DSA plans on building space in the school for services, but will also embrace new opportunities around teletherapy and home support to ensure students do not miss additional general education seat time being in other services. DSA aims to treat our related services contractors like members of our staff and invite them to school wide trainings and events to strengthen the connection and collaboration.

The EC teacher will work directly with all related service providers collaboratively to create a student support schedule, identify the appropriate location to provide pull-out support, establish lines of communication with parents, data collection and entry, the scheduling of IEP meetings, and oversight of the evaluation/re-evaluation process to ensure overall compliance. School administration will ensure all EC teachers are highly qualified and their teaching licensure meets state requirements.

#### **9.4. Student Performance Standards**

**Q129. Describe the student performance standards for the school as a whole.**



At Duplin STEM Academy (DSA), we believe that each student comes to us at different instructional levels of education and with different styles and processes for learning. The goal of DSA is to fully provide opportunities to all students to meet their highest and best potential. Additionally, DSA will implement differentiated instruction which is used to encourage complex thinking and hold students highly accountable for their learning. As part of DSA's focus on ensuring all students' needs are addressed, we will implement a whole child approach for student learning. The philosophy and concept is not just to improve students' academic performances, but also contribute to their overall development. This approach aims to provide students with the assistance and structure for attaining long-term success in all areas of their life.

DSA will follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) that defines the appropriate content standards for each grade and/or proficiency level school course to provide a uniform set of learning standards. These standards define what students are expected to know and are able to do by the end of each school year or course.

The goal is to focus on what students are expected to learn—the results of schooling are expected to achieve—rather than on the resources or effort put into the system. Moreover, standards-based systems are intended to set common learning expectations for all students, regardless of background.

At DSA, we firmly believe that:

- Content standards must be clear, and rigorous.
- The standards reflect a high level of clarity and rigor and an appropriate level of specificity.
- Content standards must provide clear direction to educators responsible for the design of assessments, professional development, and curriculum materials.
- Content standards must provide clear direction to teachers and administrators about what they need to teach to improve student learning.

**Q130. 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.**



Duplin STEM Academy (DSA) will adopt and implement the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) test, created by NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Assessment) for grades K-5. The results of these ongoing tests will direct DSA staff, specifically teachers, in how to structure and implement the personalized instruction necessary for our students to succeed. The continued utilization of the MAP test will be used to monitor the growth of individual students. Principals and administrators use the scores to see the performance and progress of a grade level, school, or the entire district. MAP Growth is administered periodically (beginning, middle and end-of-the-year) during the school year. Instead of asking all students the same questions, it adjusts to each child's performance—giving a more accurate measure of what they know. Teachers also receive results right away, which enables them to use the data to drive their instruction.

MAP Growth tracks student growth in math, reading, language usage, and science throughout the school year and over time. MAP Growth student reports also present realistic learning goals by subject areas and through a teacher's guidance, and students can individually see their progress and are inspired to take control of their own learning.

MAP Test data helps educators and school leaders become experts in using assessment results and data to personalize classroom instruction and improve outcomes for students. MAP Growth reports gauge student readiness, identify instructional resources to target diverse learning needs. It informs instruction, designs tiered, responsive instructional plans by integrating standards, MAP Growth data, and the prescribed curriculum.

**Q131. 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.**



A variety of factors, including classroom and assessment performance, will be utilized in making decisions regarding promotion or retention of students. These decisions are not to be taken lightly, and so a group effort is required. We will gather input from parents, teachers, and the lead administrator to determine if a student is to be retained.

In accordance with General Statute 115C-238.29F, students in third grade shall be retained if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency by reading at or above the third grade level as demonstrated on state-approved standardized tests. Exceptions will be made on an individual basis for students who are Limited English Proficient, students with disabilities, students who demonstrate reading comprehension on an alternative assessment, such as the MAP assessment, students who demonstrate comprehension through the use of a reading portfolio and those who have received reading intervention and/or have been previously retained more than once since kindergarten.

Promotion criteria will be communicated to parents at the start of the school year. If a student is in danger of being retained, that will be communicated to his/her parents or guardians at the spring conference as the fourth quarter begins. If significant evidence exists before the spring conference that a student may need to be retained, teachers will meet with parents as soon as possible to communicate this. Further, parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible if a student is not reading at grade level. Students with special needs will be promoted as long as the special education teacher can demonstrate that they are making adequate progress in regards to the goals and objectives laid out in their IEP. In the case of promoting students with special needs, parent input will also be considered.

Every effort will be made to work with the student and parents to remediate the student's difficulties before he/she is retained. Students must successfully complete a majority of the required academic subjects in order to be promoted.

Final decisions on student promotion or retention will be the decision of the Principal.

**Q132. 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.**



Duplin STEM Academy (DSA) will serve students in grades K-5. In order to successfully prepare all students for middle and high school and to become high school graduates who are college and career ready, DSA will focus on the vertical alignment of content areas and subject standards adopted by the DSA Board of Directors in alignment with the State curriculum.

Students who graduate from the fifth grade will be knowledgeable in all areas of the STEM curriculum. Students are also expected to be strong leaders and participate in community service activities. Finally, students will be able to solve complex problems and communicate effectively.

## 9.5. School Culture and Discipline

**Q133. 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.**

The culture of Duplin STEM Academy (DSA) is one of inclusion, that is culturally adaptive, and familial. Faculty, students, and families all work together to the benefit of students' educational, social, and psychological growth. Students are encouraged to believe in the growth mindset and in their personal ability to reach their fullest potential. They are encouraged and led to build personal confidence to ask questions, ask for help, dig deeper, and collaborate with one another to solve problems. With the whole child approach, DSA provides opportunities for students to accelerate and feel a strong sense of community, inside and outside of the classroom. To reinforce student intellectual and social development, students will be given a bountiful opportunity to actively participate in leadership teams, in extracurricular clubs, and on competition teams; they will participate in character development classes and activities to further support their social development and learn how to become responsible young citizens.

**Q134. 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.**



From the first day of school, and during the planning year, school culture will be a top priority for Duplin STEM Academy. Administrators will model best practices with staff and will ensure that during the hiring process, teachers and other faculty are aware of the cultural mission of the school. Administrators will seek to hire staff members who value school culture and fully understand the growth mindset and the potential for all students to learn and grow. Classroom teachers will integrate the growth mindset into classroom teaching, and they will provide SEL instruction and activities consistently throughout the year. When students and parents enter the school, they will be oriented to the school culture. Ample information will be provided to families regarding all opportunities that DSA provides, including academic and nonacademic. Through these opportunities, students will be encouraged to become believers in their own growth and the potential of their academic success. When students enter the school mid-year or at another time after the other students have already become acculturated and acclimated, they will be paired with another student or a small group of students who will support them.

**Q135. 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:**

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





All students at Duplin STEM Academy will comply with all discipline rules governing behavior and conduct. It is the School's Board of Directors' responsibility to establish a set of written rules and discipline in place. The Board will revisit, revise and update student conduct and discipline rules when necessary. For application of these rules within the school environment, it is the responsibility of the DSA principal: 1) to investigate fully the cases of students appropriately referred to principal's office for misbehavior, 2) to ensure fair treatment of such students and protection of their procedural and substantive rights, and to determine what, if any, disciplinary action is warranted. The teacher shall have the responsibility and authority to discipline students, except in those cases requiring the attention of the principal.

DSA discipline policy will support the attainment of the school's mission and reinforce its founding principles. DSA will implement a positive discipline model that leads to a nurturing school environment that sets the stage for engagement and academic excellence. School leadership and staff will uphold high expectations and be responsible for establishing a positive school climate that continuously identifies and praises students for respectful behavior. Staff will model and identify appropriate behaviors in varying environments throughout the course of the school day and academic setting. Learning behavior transitions amongst varying environments is a valuable part of the socialization process of a productive citizen. All school staff will be trained to support and implement a school-wide positive discipline model which will be outlined in the Student/Parent Handbook. Teachers and students will work together to make the DSA a fun and safe learning environment. To support the establishment, identity, and consistency of an effective learning community all students at DSA will wear uniforms.

### **Discipline**

The purpose of the discipline policy is to ensure a safe, positive, learning environment in the school while taking into consideration the behavioral development of the students. For this reason, the aim of disciplinary measures is to correct the students and help them learn from their mistakes except in cases where the behavior is so severe that it puts the safety or integrity of the school in jeopardy. In most cases, the appropriate faculty members within the classroom setting will handle situations requiring discipline immediately and effectively. In some circumstances, either due to the seriousness or repetitive nature of the offense, intervention by the principal or his or her designee is warranted. In any action requiring probation, suspension or expulsion, the principal will be included in the decision making process, and the parent or guardian will immediately be notified.

### **Less Serious Violations**

Less serious violations will be handled by the classroom teacher or a faculty member responsible for student supervision. Such violations consist of disruptive classroom behavior, discourtesy, defacing property, roughhousing, profanity, etc. The attending faculty member may bring these situations to the attention of the principal or homeroom teacher if disciplinary action is warranted, or if these



actions are repeated.

### **More Serious Violations**

More serious violations such as unauthorized absence or repeated lesser violations will be dealt with on a more formal basis. Detention is one of the penalties that may be assigned at this level.

### **Major Violations**

Major violations are those that are serious enough to require probation, suspension or expulsion. These violations will be immediately reported to the principal. They include: the use or possession of illegal or controlled substances, the use or possession of a weapon or any object being used as a weapon, academic dishonesty, theft or destruction of property and fighting which results in physical harm or injury. Any of these violations may result in probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Note: A detailed list of infractions and the range of resulting consequences is detailed herein. Additions, corrections, and deletions of these rules can ensue. Students and parents will be notified of changes or additions. These policies and others adopted by the DSA Board will be distributed to parents and students in a Parent/Student Handbook.

### **Student Expulsion and Exclusion Policy**

A pupil generally will not be suspended from school or recommended for expulsion unless the principal of DSA determines that the pupil has:

- Caused or attempted to cause or threatened to cause physical injury to another person;
- Possessed, sold or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object, unless in the case of possession of any such object, the pupil had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certified school employee, which is concurred by the principle or the designee of the principal;
- Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of any controlled substance or alcoholic beverage or an intoxicant of any kind;
- Unlawfully offered, arranged or negotiated to sell any controlled substance or an intoxicant of any kind, and then either sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or materials as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant;
- Committed robbery or extortion;
- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property; Stolen or attempted to steal school property or private property;
- Possessed or used tobacco, or any products containing tobacco or nicotine cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or chew packets or betel. This section does not prohibit use or possession by a pupil of his or her own prescription products;
- Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity; Unlawfully offered,



arranged or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia;

- Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defy the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials or other personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
- Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.

Disciplinary consequences for behavior violation of the Student Code of Conduct:

Students and parents will understand that the following disciplinary actions could be implemented for acts enumerated in this section and related to school activities which occur at any time, including (but not limited to) any of the following:

- While on school grounds;
- While going to or coming from school;
- During the lunch period whether on or off campus;
- During, or while going to or coming from, a school sponsored activity.

### **Act of Violence**

Fighting is not allowed at DSA. This action is considered one of the most severe infringements on the rights of others. It is also a direct attack on the educational process. Acts of violence, whether directed at another student, teacher or adult will carry a severe penalty. Possible disciplinary actions: On-campus suspension, home suspension or expulsion. Flagrant or repeat offenses may result in a maximum consequence of expulsion.

Threatening to cause physical harm detracts from the educational setting and places students in fear. Thus, depending on the severity of these actions, the following disciplinary actions may result:

On-campus suspension, work details, home suspension or recommendation to expel.

### **Weapons and Dangerous Objects**

- Possession of a defined weapon will not be tolerated. Possession of a weapon will result in disciplinary action -- home suspension or expulsion.
- Possession of fireworks and explosives or the use of these items will also result in home suspension or expulsion.

### **Tobacco, Drugs, and Alcohol**

- DSA is a tobacco, drug and alcohol-free campus. Any possession or use of these substances is strictly prohibited. Offenses of the rule may result in on campus suspension, home suspension or expulsion. This rule, as all school rules apply, for after school events and school trips.
- Possession of these substances with the intent to distribute or sell will result in expulsion. The sale of look-alike drugs will result in home suspension for the first offense and expulsion for any subsequent offense.
- Drug paraphernalia, whether possessed for use or with the intent to sell or distribute, will be seen



as an attempt to promote the distribution and use of illegal drugs and will result in suspension or expulsion.

### **Stealing, Robbery, or Extortion**

- These offenses will result in on-campus suspension, work detail, home suspension or expulsion. The severity of the crime and the number of offenses will dictate the punishment.

### **Damage to Property**

- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property will result in the replacement of the damaged property by the student. The parent or guardian will also be held responsible for the replacement of the damaged property.
- Severe cases of damaging, defacing or mutilating school property such as arson, damage to windows, playground equipment, computers, etc. may result in the suspension ( on campus or home) or expulsion.

### **Profanity, Obscene Acts, Demeaning Racial Statements and Vulgarity**

- These acts will be construed as an attack on the rights and privileges of other students who are attempting to receive an education and the rights of teachers to teach. Therefore, the attempt or act of projecting the above named actions whether on clothes, written, verbal or through gestures is in violation of school policy. The resulting disciplinary action will require: changing offensive clothing, work detail, on-campus suspension, home suspension, expulsion or a combination of any of these actions.

### **Willful Disobedience**

- Willful disobedience is the intentional defiance of teachers and/or staff. Such action may be exhibited while coming to and from school, on the bus, during the normal school day or on field trips. For the safety of the student and other students and the establishment of a nurturing learning environment, respect for faculty, staff, and parents is necessary. All students will come to understand this policy. It may take more time, patience and understanding to illuminate the younger children; however, student safety and a positive educational environment must be maintained. Therefore, timeout, work details, and on campus suspension may be employed. Repeated disobedience may result in a request to have a student evaluated by other Behavior professionals. Every attempt will be made to correct the inappropriate behavior before actions of home suspension and expulsion are considered.
- Students are expected to demonstrate good citizenship and act in a reasonable manner. Failure to do so will result in a reprimand, detention, Saturday work detail, after school work detail or suspension. Public displays of affection fall under this category.

### **Sexual Harassment**

- Prohibited sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature.



- Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic status or progress;
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting the individual;
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact on the individual's academic or work performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational or work environment; and Submission to or rejection of the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities at or through the school.

Other types of conduct that are prohibited and may constitute sexual harassment include:

- Unwelcome leering, sexual flirtations or propositions;
- Unwelcome sexual slurs, epithets, verbal abuse, derogatory comments or sexually degrading descriptions; Graphic verbal comments about an individual's body, or overly personal conversation;
- Sexual jokes, stories, drawings, pictures or gestures; Spreading sexual rumors;
- Teasing or sexual remarks about students enrolled in a predominantly single-sex class; Touching an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way;
- Purposefully limiting a student's access to educational tools; Cornering or blocking of normal movements; Displaying sexually suggestive objects in the educational environment; and
- Any act of retaliation against an individual who reports a violation of the school's sexual harassment policy or who participates in the investigation of a sexual harassment complaint.

#### Enforcement

The principal or designee will take appropriate actions to reinforce the board's sexual harassment policy. These actions may include:

- Removing vulgar or offending graffiti;
- Providing staff in-service training and student instruction or counseling; or
- Taking appropriate disciplinary action to include reprimand, detention, on-campus suspension or home suspension.
- Notifying law enforcement in necessary cases.

#### **Act of Hate Violence**

Causing, threatening, or attempting to cause or participate in an act of hate violence can be defined as willfully interfering with or threatening another person's personal or property rights because of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability or sexual orientation. Speech that threatens violence, when the perpetrator has the apparent ability to carry out the threat, may be considered an act of hate violence. These offenses may call for reprimand, suspension, community service and/or expulsion.



## **Other Harassment**

Intentionally engaging in harassment, threats or intimidation against a student or group of students when the harassment is severe and pervasive and disrupts classes or creates disorder or an intimidating or hostile educational environment will not be tolerated. These offenses may call for a reprimand, suspension, community service and/or expulsion.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is often a difficult concept to define. As a school, DSA's philosophy is to increase a student's ability to work independently and collaboratively, while realizing this only clouds the issue of academic dishonesty. We realize that valuable social skills and learning come through group projects, collaboration, and cooperation. Students should do as much of or all of their own homework, but students should be willing to give assistance to fellow students when the learning experience can be enhanced. In some situations, testing is required to be independent of any outside help. Students will be made aware of this and will be expected to act accordingly.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious issue in academics. Students should give credit to the appropriate individuals for their research and writing. It is often difficult to distinguish what should be duly noted and what is common knowledge. It is the job of the faculty to bring this issue into a clearer focus for the students so that students will learn proper citation processes. Through their own research and writing, the constitution of plagiarism will become better defined for the student. Students will begin learning the principles and process of research and writing in early elementary school. Over the course of the year, older students will be using the APA system for documenting paraphrased and quoted material.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities may be suspended, in accordance with Federal legislation and the State law, for inappropriate behavior. The Principal may suspend a student with disabilities for short-term suspension; suspension from school may not be for more than a total of ten days in a school year without a manifestation determination.

## **Grievance Procedure / Conflict Resolution**

During the academic year problems and misunderstandings between students, parents, and teachers may arise. The best way to resolve these problems is to keep an open, yet orderly channel of communication between all parties. The following is a strategy that will allow an open channel of communication between parents and the staff of DSA.

The following steps are critical in maintaining a sense of discipline:



**Step 1:** Make an appointment with the Teacher or team of your child to discuss issues and concerns. Remember that Teachers will not be able to have conferences and lengthy conversations in the classroom or in the hallway during class time. If you are not satisfied with the results from a Teacher conference go to Step 2.

**Step 2:** Contact the Principal and request a conference between yourself, the Teacher, and the Principal. The Principal will contact you with the conference time and location. Please allow 3-5 days for a written response from the Principal unless it is an issue that threatens immediate safety, physical, mental, or emotional health or constitutes a criminal act. If you are not satisfied with the results of this conference go to step 3.

**Step 3:** Fill out the conflict resolution form to request a meeting with the DSA Committee. Please include your concerns and the results from the previous meetings. Please allow 3-5 days for a written response from the school unless it is an issue that threatens immediate safety, physical, mental, or emotional health or constitutes a criminal act.

#### Appeal Procedures

The identity of the students other than the student appealing the suspension shall be protected to the extent required by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). There are three levels to the appeals process to the long-term suspensions and expulsions.

School-Level Disciplinary Hearings: held at the school and chaired by the Assistant Principal or appointed student due process officer.

Administrative-Level Appeals: written appeals and school-level hearing materials reviewed by the Principal. Board- Level Appeal Hearings: held at special board meetings.

### 9.6. Certify

Q136. **This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.**

- Yes
- No

Q137. **Explanation (optional):**



Duplin STEM Academy worked with the Executive Director of Wayne STEM Academy and the Wayne STEM Academy Leadership Team to support the curriculum and professional development structure of the school's application and ongoing educational support. Duplin STEM Academy also collaborated with DPA Board Member Kara Pascht and the Director of Exceptional Children & Federal Programs of Wayne STEM Academy and other specialists in the areas of Exceptional Children to ensure accuracy in following all laws when serving students with disabilities.





## 10. Governance and Capacity

### 10.1. School Governing Body

Q138. Organization Street Address (if you have one)

- On the Organization Information page, you already provided the mailing address.

N/A at this time.

### 10.2. 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.


Q139. Using the attached resource as a template, please complete the table depicting the initial members of the nonprofit organization.

Upload Required File Type: excel Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 3


#### Applicant Comments :

If file - Attached

#### Resources


Initial Members of t...

#### Applicant Evidence :


Initial Members of t...

Uploaded on **4/25/2023**

by **Howard Sowell**



Q140. Describe the governance structure of the proposed charter school, including the governing board's functions, primary duties, roles, and responsibilities as it relates to overseeing the charter school. Include how the board will recruit, hire, and supervise the lead administrator.



The board will consist of no fewer than five and no more than eleven members. The board will have a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The remaining members will be at-large voting positions. During the Ready to Open process, the board may add additional members to strengthen the board in any areas of skill set needed. Each founding member of the board brings a level of expertise and skill that will drive the school towards its ultimate goal, a fully enrolled, community-driven school on day one of operation.

Many board members are current and/or past charter school board members and fully understand that the Board of Directors does not carry out management responsibilities.

The main responsibilities of the board are:

1. To ensure the school's academic program is successful, measured by both internal and external assessments;
2. To ensure the school's operational programs functioning at the highest level, aligned to the school's charter and exceeding all compliance requirements; and,
3. To ensure the school is a viable organization, which includes, among other things, that it is financially solvent and employs a competent professional sta.

During the Ready to Open year, the board's primary responsibilities will be to work with their strategic partners to hire an effective school leader, recruit families, and secure a safe, accessible facility. The board will also begin recruiting potential staff, establish committees and partnerships that will embrace and enhance the mission of the school, and provide strict financial oversight, as called for by the board's fiduciary responsibility to the school.

In the months leading up to the school's opening day, the board will begin to shift from a founding board to a governing board. The board's overall roles are to set the overall student outcomes, establish policy that is fair to all constituents and creates the operational boundaries, evaluate the head of school, approve substantial third party agreements and staff contracts, set the organization's vision and goals, evaluate the effectiveness of the school's plan, develop a sustainable governance model that recruits effective leaders, oversee the school's finances, and grow as a team.

The individual board member's duties revolve around three words: Care, Loyalty, and Obedience. As stewards of the organization, board members must exercise reasonable care when making decisions, understand the finances, and participate in its governance; attend all board meetings, lead committee meetings, and participate in decision-making and policy-setting while actively participating in risk assessment and strategic planning.

Board members' duty of Loyalty means members will never use information obtained as a member for personal gain, and will always act in the best interest of the organization by being aware of the board's conflict of interest policy and avoiding transactions which may result in financial gain for



board members.

Finally, board members' duty of Obedience ensures that board members will not act in a way that is inconsistent with the central goals and values of the Duplin STEM Academy organization. This means that the board will ensure that the organization complies with all applicable laws (federal, state, and local) and regulations (DPI) and with its own internal documents and policies.

Through the support of the board's strategic partnerships, personal and professional networks, and relationships within the community, the board will recruit a leader who leads with great character and resilience. Before making the final decision, the board expects to spend ample time with each candidate in a school setting, at community events, and in interviews to ensure this leader knows and understands the challenges he/she will face as a new charter school principal. Supervision of the school leader will occur through a strong relationship between him or her and the governing board. The school leader and board will agree on specific measurable, channels of communication, and what items he/she will need to report to the board formally and informally. This will take intentional action and trust between both parties, and it is critical to the organization's long term success.

**Q141. Describe the size, current and desired composition, powers, and duties of the governing board.**



The board began through the collaboration between Carrie Shields and Scott Satterfield. Mrs. Shields contacted Mr. Satterfield after learning of his position and role in forming the board of Wayne STEM Academy. As Mr. Satterfield stepped off of the WSA board, he and Carrie began to work toward supporting a school of choice in neighboring Duplin County. Mrs. Shields is a resident of Wayne County, but has been head of economic development roles across Duplin County for years. Her experience and influence in the county is the reason for this board's formation. Mr. Satterfield, through his prior role with Wayne STEM, was able to bring other members with history in starting charter schools. Additionally, Mrs. Shields was a lifelong alumni of Duplin County Schools and her children currently attend Duplin County Schools. Her role in Duplin County and lifelong involvement in the area give her a unique vision and access to Duplin County community. Mrs. Shields helped round out the board with local members in Duplin County.

With a small group of six dedicated Founding Board members and an organizational support team. The board will continue to recruit, cultivate, and enhance the organization's governance talent. The maximum size of the permanent board could contain as many as eleven members.

**Board Skills, Expertise and Constituencies:** The board currently has one man and five women. Board membership includes business and government employees along with experts in community and economic development, education, marketing, and accounting. One board member is a former educator, Exceptional Children teacher. In addition, two members who work in the community and economic development and wellness field. Board members live throughout eastern and southeastern North Carolina.

**Powers:** The board exercises its power through vote and vote only. The board makes the ultimate decision around the school's goals, mission, long term vision, grade structure, overall education, hiring and evaluation of the head of school, financial budget and policies. The board is not the technician for or manage any part of the school's operations, academics or finances.

**Duties:** The individual board member's duties revolve around three words: Care, Loyalty, and Obedience. As stewards of the organization, board members must exercise reasonable care when making decisions, understand the finances, and participate in its governance; attend all board meetings, lead committee meetings, and participate in decision-making and policy-setting while actively participating in risk assessment and strategic planning.

Board members' duty of Loyalty means members will never use information obtained as a member for personal gain, and will always act in the best interest of the organization by being aware of the board's conflict of interest policy and avoiding transactions which may result in financial gain for board members.

Finally, board members' duty of Obedience ensures that board members will not act in a way that is inconsistent with the central goals and values of the Duplin STEM Academy organization. This means



that the board will ensure that the organization complies with all applicable laws (federal, state, and local) and regulations (DPI) and with its own internal documents and policies.

**Q142. 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.**



- Carrie Shields, is the founding board member for Duplin STEM Academy. Mrs. Shields is the product of Duplin County public schools has spent her career in community development with local radio around Wayne and Duplin Counties. Over the last five years, Mrs. Shields has worked in positions of Economic Development as the Director Duplin County Economic Development Commission and Community Development Director Four Counties Electrical Co-Op, which is based in Wallace, Duplin County. Her community involvement was instrumental in developing the school's board with local Duplin County members.

- Jimmy T. Tate, EdD, is a life long resident of Duplin County and has had a full career as an educator, education administrator. Dr. Tate has worked as the Chief of Staff for NC Central University and President of Roanoke-Chowan Community College. Additionally, he has served as Vice President of James Sprunt Community College in Duplin County. He has been appointed as an Advisory Committee Member on Education for both Mike McIntyre and David Rouzer. Dr. Tate has sat on numerous boards across eastern North Carolina supporting missions ranging from education, to homelessness, to health care initiatives in at risk communities and is currently a member of the Board of Trustees for University of North Carolina Wilmington.

- Ryan Cox, is a life long resident of Duplin County. Mr. Cox went to Duplin County public schools and his children currently attend schools in Duplin County. Mr Cox is a small business owner focused on affordable housing and VA healthcare projects across eastern North Carolina. Mr. Cox has served as a Town Commissioner for his home town of Calypso in Duplin County. Mr. Cox brings a strong network of business owners and families across Duplin County to help support the opening and oversight of Duplin STEM Academy.

- Christina Watts was a lifelong educator in public education in rural North Carolina with positions in schools around Wayne and Johnston Counties. Mrs. Watts was a prior candidate for County School Board in Wayne County and currently is Director of Community Outreach for W.A.G.E.S., a non-profit community corporation that operates all the Head Start Pre-K programming for Wayne County and surrounding counties, as well as the food programs for Wayne County District Schools, Meals On Wheels, and other high need food programs in the region. Mrs. Watts has also served and continues to serve for Wayne STEM Academy as a board member supporting the opening of the school through the Ready To Open process.

Mrs. Watts is a licensed ELA Instructor in grades 6-12 and a licensed English Instructor in grades 9-12. She has been an active instructor in Wayne and Johnston Counties since 2004. Mrs. Watts, has served in roles as teacher, mentor, athletic coach for girls soccer, basketball, and volleyball. She has been a strong advocate for school choice and bring good support to insuring the proper implementation of Duplin STEM curriculum.

- Scott Satterfield is the President of the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce, was Assistant Director of the Economic Development Corp in Goldsboro and was the founding Board Member of



Wayne STEM Academy. He was instrumental in the development of Wayne STEM board, charter application development, and ultimate approval. He stepped off of Wayne STEM board after its CSAB approval to support some family initiatives. Since that time, he has reengaged through his position with the Chamber of Commerce to promote Wayne STEM in its opening in providing a platform for the WSA board to continue its community outreach.

Mr. Satterfield has been pivotal in working to develop the board for Duplin STEM Academy. His efforts, along with Mrs. Shields', are the foundation for this application and community support development.

- Rhonda Coyne has had a long career in law enforcement from a patrol officer in Wake County to now a Crime Scene Investigator in Franklin County. Coyne has been a founding member to two charter schools and a strong advocate for school choice in rural areas of North Carolina. Mrs. Coyne has gone through the Ready To Open process for two schools (Emereau - Bladen Charter and Wayne STEM Academy) and is looking forward to supporting the opening of Duplin STEM Academy.

- Karina Pascht is not a board member for Duplin STEM, but she has agreed to participate as a Volunteer Committee Member for the school acting as the Exceptional Children Advisory Committee and the Ready To Open Committee. Mrs. Pascht is currently a founding board member for Wayne STEM Academy and wants to support DSA in working on EC Programs to help in the development of programs for early identification of educational needs for the students enrolling at DSA. Mrs. Pascht has almost 20 years of experience as an EC teacher in schools across, New York, Michigan, and North Carolina. Her passion for these programs is a great asset to the board.

- Q143. Explain how this governance structure and composition will help ensure that**
- 1. The school will be an educational and operational success;**
  - 2. The board will evaluate the success of the school and school leader; and**
  - 3. There will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders, including parents.**





Educational and Operational Success: Two of the Duplin STEM board members have participated as members of other successfully operating charter school in rural southeast NC. With their experience in opening and governing a public charter school, combined with the skill sets (academics, community services, fiscal auditing, legal, marketing, and business management, DSA board will work together in partnership with the professional services teams identified to open, operate and oversee an effective school. This will come from a robust recruiting process for board members, strategic partnerships, and high-quality school leaders and teachers. Our monthly meetings will be focused on strategic action and avoid getting in the day to day details of school business.

Evaluate the Success of the School: In alignment with the organizational goals, the board will adopt specific deliverables that demonstrate the progress toward each organizational goal. The school leader and each standing committee will collect and analyze specific data and report to the board based on the schedule according to the Outcomes Based Calendar. If the data demonstrates that progress is not currently being made, the lead administrator will create an improvement plan. Annually, the board will host a strategic retreat to gather to analyze yearlong data and program evaluations to determine if adequate progress is being made.

School Leader: The board believes the purpose of an evaluation is to promote personal and professional growth. The Duplin STEM Academy head of school will be evaluated based on the progress towards the organizational goals, management of the school's budget, development and navigation of the organization, progress towards a successful charter renewal, and good standing with both the authorizer and community as noted in the prior section. Ultimately, the school's success shall correlate to the success of the school leader's ability to effectively lead the school. This evaluation will occur formally every six months, and the Governance Committee will be assigned to perform this responsibility.

Active Representation by Key Stakeholders: By including parents along with business and community members, the board's composition will ensure active and effective representation of key stakeholders. The board will continue to strike a similar balance on future boards and build a succession plan for each member, specifically for the Officers of the Board. This will ensure that vital intellectual development and property are handed down to the members of the future. The board will also engage parents and other key stakeholders when developing the board's standing committees as well as hosting local events to support the community's needs and activities to raise funds for the school.

**Q144. 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?**



The economic development leaders for Wayne and Duplin Counties began a conversations as the Wayne STEM Academy was approved and moved to Ready to Open Status. They met discuss the project and to shape the vision for school choice in Duplin County. From those meetings, leaders who wanted to take further action emerged and were selected to be on the founding board members of this board and some are currently members of other charter schools. Wanting to expand their reach to other surrounding counties, Additional founding board members were recruited and selected for their varied backgrounds and a common concern for providing educational choices and quality education for the students of Duplin and the surrounding counties.

The board has been working diligently to secure strong standing and credibility in the community to establish this public school of choice. Board recruitment will be ongoing. The board anticipates having non-board members on the board's standing committees. The board will work closely with these partnering stakeholders and hope to recruit many of them to join the board full time.

We believe in succession planning. As a new board member comes on they are reminded that at all times they should be seeking talent to help grow the organization. This includes additional board or committee members. Board members should be looking for like-minded talented individuals that can step into their role when their term expires.

If a position becomes vacant, the board should have a pool of applicants who are serving on their standing committees so that any new members can be elected within a matter of months of the vacancy, at a regular or called meeting. Members will be recruited based on the strategic needs of the board at the time and chosen based on recommendations from the Nominating Committee.

**Q145. Describe the group's ties to and/or knowledge of the target community.**



Two board members have close ties with the community in the housing and public safety sectors. The founding board chair, Carrie Shields has served as the Economic Development Director in Duplin County securing more than 300 jobs and multimillion dollar investments to the community. She is also an innovator who brokers public and private partnerships to promote economic development in Eastern North Carolina. Mrs. Shields knows how to develop the necessary relationships for complex economic development issues that address challenges, such as providing both market-rate and affordable housing, job development, and municipal services to families with needs. Mrs. Shields attended school in Duplin County as a child and her children are students in Duplin County Schools.

Vice Chair board member, Scott Satterfield, has worked in Goldsboro the last decade in the Economic Development office for Downtown Goldsboro and is currently serving as the President of the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Satterfield was the founding board member and chair person for Wayne STEM Academy. He brings a passion for education and understands how strong schools and school choice can transform communities.

Jimmy Tate is a was born and raised in Duplin County. After many years of education support and development around eastern North Carolina, Dr. Tate has returned to Duplin County to develop a youth leadership development program for at risk youth in and around Duplin County. He has spent his career focused on education and now is spending his time working to bring education choice to Duplin County.

Ryan Cox is a engineer with lifelong ties to Duplin County. Former Town Commissioner for Calypso, NC in Duplin County. He is currently raising his two children in Duplin County where they both attend district schools in the area.

All members will bring knowledgeable and compassionate insight on this board and positively its ability to govern the school effectively.

**Q146. Outline the strategic board calendar detailing how often the board will meet according to the bylaws established.**

The board will hold regular meetings monthly and develop strategic outcomes based calendar for maximum oversight of the organization. Standing committees will meet between meetings for a deeper dive and analysis of the organization's progress. See the attached example of the strategic calendar created by our Governance Coach we plan to fully develop and adopt as common practice.

**Q147. 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.

The board has already started to receive training, and half of the board has previous charter school governance experience. Additionally, each year the board will receive training in the following areas but are not limited to: roles and responsibilities; fiscal responsibility and oversight; legal compliance; strategic development; and communication. Once the school is in operation, the management team will educate the board each month on its academic and operational planning.

Because the board aims for each member to build a personal succession plan, the board fully intends for each member to recruit his or her own replacement and mentor the new member during his or her first year on the board, thereby creating a constant cycle of successors. That mentor will pass down his or her copy of the school's resource binder that includes a copy of the charter application, the charter agreement with the state, the board's bylaws and policy manual, a copy of the Open Meetings Laws, a copy of all charter and public school laws, the expectations of a board member, and a calendar of monthly scheduled meetings. Most importantly, the new board member will receive an overview of the board's goals, successes, and current challenges. Ideally, this new member will have spent time on a committee and have a strong understanding of the organization.

### Specific Core Training Topics:

1. Financial: After completion of training, participants will be able to demonstrate knowledge of creating, presenting, monitoring, and implementing a sound financial plan and an approved budget. Participants will be able to identify overall financial strength and viability; return on investment and financial planning; and revenue growth and enrollment
2. Roles and Responsibilities: This annual training will ensure board members understand that their role is to govern "How Well" the plans of the operations team ("How Will") are meeting the needs of the students, staff, and stakeholders.
3. Legal Compliance: This session will review the organization's most critical documents and federal, statutory, and regulatory requirements (including open meetings laws).

Additional training scheduled could include: Feedback from experts (i.e. audits); state-provided training sessions; education on legal matters; strategic planning; nonprofit best practices; and personal time spent reading about how effective boards operate and then sharing insights gained as a result of that reading.

The Board will receive the core training annually during the board retreat but will also schedule 15 minutes during every board meeting to either review and improve their governance practices through governance strengthening exercises led by our governance coach (see attached) or be educated on the school's current operations by staff to keep them informed of the school improvement initiatives.



Q148. 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.



Pursuant to the Non-Profit Corporation Law NCGS 55A-8-31, the board shall comply with voting and disclosure provisions of the Director Conflict of Interest. The board has formally adopted bylaws to detail its procedure for identifying and addressing conflicts. Those bylaws are submitted as part of this application.

#### Steps the Board Will Take:

First, the board will ensure that the conflict of interest statements are read every meeting and each board member understands the board policy and expectations. The board will engage in intentional discussions around the vetting process and internal controls of any decision that may or may not be perceived as a conflict.

Persons Concerned: This policy is directed not only to Directors and officers, but to all employees who can influence the actions of the school or its Board, or make commitments on their behalf. This will include all who make purchasing decisions, all persons who might be described as "administrative personnel", and all who have proprietary information concerning the school.

Disclosure: Full disclosure of the identity of any relationships of the governing board, charter school employees, or potential contracts will be communicated and vetted openly. In compliance with the law, the following procedures will be implemented and will apply to board members and all school personnel operated by Duplin STEM Academy:

1. Disclosure will be made as soon as a potential conflict is discovered.
2. When a possible conflict has been disclosed, the Board will determine whether a conflict actually exists and whether it is material.
3. Where a material conflict exists, the Board will determine whether the recommended transaction or other conflicting involvement may be authorized as just, fair and reasonable as to the school.
4. The decisions of the Board will be guided by independent counsel as appropriate, and their guiding principle will be the integrity and best interests of the school and the advancement of its purposes.

The following describes the procedure that the Board will employ when dealing with a potential conflict of interest:

1. Any Board member having a possible conflict of interest on any matter will not vote or use his or her personal influence on the matter, and will be recused from final discussion and voting after answering all Board questions and fully informing the Board of all pertinent detail.
2. The Chair of the Board will appoint a neutral person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction.
3. After exercising due diligence, the Board will determine whether the school shall proceed with the



desired action.

4. The Minutes of the Board will reflect all conflicts of interest disclosures and abstentions from voting and the existence of a quorum.

**Q149. Explain the decision-making processes the board will use to develop school policies.**



The primary decision-making process the Board will use is deliberation as an authorized group (including the full Board and committees) based on the school's mission, vision, plans, research, analysis, counsel feedback, and experiences in monthly regular or special meetings to address the issues regarding the school's operation and compliance.

This will be the only way for the board to be truly effective when making important decisions. The meetings will be organized in a way that invites debate and discussion based on the multiple perspectives and experiences of the current board but also manages conflict and problems that arise as a result of healthy debate.

The board will work with key stakeholders (including parents, community members, lead administrator) to gain a well-rounded perspective with regard to school policies. Additionally, the board will reach out to other successful charter school boards to utilize their perspective and wisdom with regard to school policies. As with all the decisions made by the board, paramount is the fact that these policies support the mission and goals of Duplin STEM Academy.

The board's policies will be value-oriented and product-driven; are legal and will not deny constitutional rights; are communicated to ALL stakeholders; and are written within the scope of the full board's authority. The policies will be adopted with the full authority of the board.

In developing school policies, initial recommendations will most likely come from committees, the head of school, and potentially, parents, depending upon on whether the board's policies are meeting the board's desired purpose or the law.

The process will be as follows:

1. A need will be identified, data will be collected, and recommendations will be made.
2. Policy will be drafted.
3. Policy will be introduced for stakeholder input.
4. Policy will be presented to the board for discussion and later action.
5. Policy is embedded into the school's manual, disseminated, and communicated.
6. Policy is reviewed annually.

**Q150. Describe any advisory bodies, councils, or associations listed in the organization chart or to be formed, including the roles and duties of that body, and the reporting structure as it relates to the school's governing body and leadership.**





In the development of this application, the Duplin STEM Academy Board has worked through its board members that have worked on previous charter school boards. Additionally, the board has worked with Leaders Building Leaders to support the development of the governance, leadership, and education plan.

The schools board and committees are shown on the organization chart in the following ways:

The board will form standing committees to advise the board in four basic areas: governance, academics, finances, and development. Only the board has the authority to make decisions and take action in these four areas; however, the board will seriously consider input from the following advisory bodies:

**The Governance Committee:** The Governance Committee will consist of members of the board, an administrator, and a teacher representative. This committee will recruit and nominate new members to the board, oversee the school's critical documents (bylaws, policies), and manage the head of school evaluation.

**The Academic Committee:** The Academic Committee will consist of board members and the third-party academic experts. The Academic Committee will ensure that the mission of the school is being realized in the classroom by analyzing test data, completing site observations, and gathering input from the school community. The committee will report its findings and make recommendations to the board.

**The Finance Committee:** The Finance Committee will consist of board members and at least one parent representative. The members of this committee should possess a strong financial background. The committee will review and make recommendations on the budget, as well as on other major financial decisions impacting the school. The committee will report directly to the board.

**Parent Teacher Association:** The role of the PTA is to support the teachers and staff in their mission. They will be their own entity and report to the lead administrator and board on occasion.

#### Q151. Discuss the school's grievance process for parents and staff members.



Duplin STEM Academy is committed to a positive learning environment, and the board encourages open discussions among employees, administrators, board members, parents, and students. Occasionally, concerns or questions may arise among members of the school community. If a parent has a grievance in regard to a teacher or other employee following steps should be taken as needed:

1. Discuss this problem with the teacher immediately.
2. If there is no resolution to the issue, communicate to the head of school. This may result in an additional meeting with the teacher and Head of School.
3. If there is no resolution to the issue the parent may file a grievance by following the board's policy and grievance process.
4. The board or appointed committee will receive the grievance and determine the next steps.

If an employee has a concern or complaint, then the employee should follow the steps outlined below:

1. Complaints should first be taken to the administrator.
2. If the matter concerns an administrator, or if the matter cannot be adequately resolved with the assistant administrator, then the employee should contact the lead administrator. A meeting should be scheduled with the lead administrator to discuss the problem, concern, or question.
3. If the matter concerns the lead administrator, or if the matter remains unresolved, then the employee may contact the Chairman of the Personnel Committee or the Board Chair to seek help in resolving the issue.

#### Q152. **Attach as 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).

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30


Total Files Count: 5

**Applicant Comments :**

Attached



Applicant Evidence :


DSA Organization Ch...

Uploaded on **4/20/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

**Q153. Attach as 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

Upload Required File Type: pdf, excel, word Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 50


Applicant Comments :


Attached

Resources


Charter School Boar...

Applicant Evidence :


ALL Board Member ...


ALL DSA Board Resu...

Uploaded on **4/28/2023** by **Howard Sowell**      Uploaded on **4/28/2023** by **Howard Sowell**

**Q154. Attach Appendix I For Each Board Member**

1. Charter School Board Member Background Certification Statement and
2. Completed Background Check

PLEASE NOTE: A background check that does not meet the following requirements will be deemed incomplete and could jeopardize the submission status of your application.

- **Background check must include a Social Security Trace** (which scans his/her SSN and lists every county/state of residence where that SSN has been used).



- **Background check must include any additional aliases that have been used by the individual.**
- **Background check must include a completed county level check for any county returned in the Social Security Trace.**
- **Background check must include a completed nationwide check.**


Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30

Total Files Count: 50


**Applicant Comments :**


Attached


**Resources**


Charter School Boar...

**Applicant Evidence :**


ALL Board Member ...


Ryan Cox.pdf


ALL Criminal Backgr...

Uploaded on **4/28/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

Uploaded on **4/28/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

Uploaded on **4/28/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

**Q155. Attach as 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.**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30

Total Files Count: 3

**Applicant Comments :**

Attached



Applicant Evidence :


Duplin STEM Bylaws...

Uploaded on **4/25/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

Q156. **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.

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30

Total Files Count: 5

Applicant Comments :

Attached

Applicant Evidence :


Duplin STEM Articles...


Uploaded on **4/24/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

### 10.3. Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management

Q157. **Projected Staff** 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.

Upload Required File Type: excel Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

Resources


Staffing Chart Templ...



Applicant Evidence :



Staffing Chart Templ...

Uploaded on **4/20/2023**

by **Howard Sowell**

**Q158. Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management Explain the board's strategy for recruiting and retaining high-performing teachers.**

Recruitment: Throughout partnership with third party recruiting group and Leaders Building Leaders, Duplin STEM Academy will have an opportunity to recruit through a national network as well as locally. We will attend and potentially host job fairs in and around Duplin County. We will also work with regional colleges and universities to help identify qualified, interested candidates for our available positions. We additionally anticipate utilizing NC Teacher Match to be a strong resource for high quality employee recruitment.

Retention: Duplin STEM Academy will focus on people first and provide an atmosphere of respect for all faculty and staff members. Our decision-making processes will intentionally include staff to help guide the school's leadership in accomplishing the mission. We know that the key to our short and long term success will be to provide high quality professional development as well as put our professionals in an environment that fosters personal growth and provides opportunities for each employee to reach their personal and professional goals.

Teachers will also be offered a competitive benefits package and will be paid commensurate with their experience. The school will offer a 401(k) plan to all full-time employees. This type of plan, a defined contribution plan, versus the state's defined benefit plan, is flexible for more teachers and is portable. The plan will provide for an employer match of up to 3% employee annual contribution. Full-time employees will also receive health insurance with employee coverage paid in substantial part by the school as well as life insurance and disability benefits. The school is currently planning to forgo the state retirement plan and health plan but can make that decision final upon the charter approval. Of course mandatory unemployment and workers compensation insurance will be incurred by the school.

Our Assistant Teachers will serve as a built-in recruiting source for new teachers because they will have a bachelor's degree or equivalent education and experience. Many will be certified or working toward certification and will be candidates for open teaching positions.

**Q159. 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.

Not Applicable

**Q160. Attach in Appendix O the School Leader's Resume** If the school leader has been identified, include the school leader's one-page resume in Appendix O.

Upload Required File Type: pdf, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 5

**Applicant Comments :**

No School Leader has been identified yet. A director will be identified after charter approval.

**Q161. Provide a description of the relationship that will exist between the charter school employees and the school's board of directors.**



The Duplin STEM Academy board will have a strong lead administrator who will be responsible for leading staff and effectively managing finances and operational systems. We anticipate applying for grant support our employed during the Ready to Open year and spending time learning from our multiple leadership network. This would allow the school leader to spend time in other effective charter schools, learn the education plan and other operational better practices.

The relationship between the board and lead administrator will be one of trust, unity and accountability. Our lead administrator will lead through example and provide the board with information to help the board make critical decisions at every meeting. Our board chair or designee will be in communication with the lead administrator to support their decisions and to keep the board in the know about any anticipated barriers or news.

The employees will be led by the lead administrator and all communications shall be directed to them. The board will communicate to the employees through the lead administrator and occasionally host functions, celebrations or meetings to gather additional information of the organization's health. The board will also rely on third party information and surveys to determine whether they and the policies are creating a strong employee atmosphere.

There are no direct lines of communication from staff to board unless previously authorized by the full board.

If issues arise between employees the board will ensure proper procedures are carried through and each employee has an opportunity to be heard in hopes of a professional resolution. An employee grievance policy will be in place and followed if required in the mediation process.

**Q162. Outline the board's procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel, including conducting criminal background checks.**





Duplin STEM Academy will provide equal opportunities to all applicants, regardless of race, color, sex (gender), national origin, age, disability, religion, or veteran status. All applicants will be required to complete an application and submit a resume and two letters of recommendation. From that pool of applicants, the most qualified candidates will be interviewed by at least two individuals, including the lead administrator. The candidate will go through a lengthy process that will include school visits, mock lessons, feedback sessions and lesson plan development.

If an employee is recommended for termination, that is not a violation of school policy, the board will ensure that employee was provided an action plan, training and coaching from the lead administrator prior to termination. The board will approve all hiring decisions and will also make the firing decisions based on the recommendations from the head of school.

As will be stated in our employee handbook, prior to their initial employment, Duplin STEM Academy will perform a criminal background check on all new employees in accordance with the policies set by our local LEA. We reserve the right to perform a criminal background check on all individuals employed by Duplin STEM Academy at any given time for any reason.

**Q163. Outline the school's proposed salary range and employment benefits for all levels of employment.**

Salary Range

- \* Lead Administrator - \$70,000 - \$80,000
- \* Assistant Administrator - \$40,000 - \$50,000
- \* Full Time Core Teachers - \$35,000 - \$45,000
- \* Elective/Specialty Teachers - \$35,000 - \$45,000
- \* Guidance Counselor - \$40,000 - \$45,000
- \* Administrative Assistant - \$28,000 - \$32,000
- \* Teacher Assistant - \$25,000 - \$28,000
- \* ELL Teacher - \$35,000 - \$40,000
- \* Exceptional Children's Teacher - \$45,000-\$55,000

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

**Q164. Provide the procedures for handling employee grievances and/or termination.**



Duplin STEM Academy retains the discretion at all times to immediately terminate employment or to decide what level or type of discipline is warranted, if any. All employees of Duplin STEM are at-will employees whose employment can be terminated at any time, without first implementing any other type of disciplinary action. The Academy is not required to use any of the following steps of discipline, or to apply them in any particular order, but retains the discretion at all times to determine the nature and severity of discipline and/or termination.

In the event it becomes necessary to discipline an employee, Duplin STEM Academy will determine in its discretion given the circumstances of the situation the appropriate action amongst such options as:

- \*Verbal Warning
- \*Written Warning
- \*Counseling Document/Improvement Plan \*Suspension, with or without pay
- \*Final Warning and/or Probation
  
- \*Termination

Duplin STEM Academy retains the discretion to determine if the circumstances of a particular case warrant termination for the first offense, or whether one of the other four forms of discipline listed above is warranted. Further, if an employee's conduct, performance, work habits, attitude or demeanor becomes unsatisfactory or unacceptable in the judgement of the Academy, including based on violations of any school policies, rules, guidelines, regulations or rules of conduct, whether contained herein or in other documents, they will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Grievances shall follow this process:

The employee meets with the head of school to discuss the grievance first. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached between the employee and the head of school, then the employee will submit a formal grievance in writing to the chair of the board of directors or their designee. The chair or their designee will convene an ad subcommittee of the board to investigate the grievance. The board subcommittee will recommend a resolution within 30 days of receipt of the written grievance.

**Q165. Identify any positions that will have dual responsibilities and the funding source for each position.**



In our initial three years most of our employees will have dual positions and we anticipate our funding for 90% of our positions to be either:

State Funding, Local Funding, EC Funding

Positions with multiple roles and responsibilities will be:

Head of School

EC Teacher (could be EC Director)

Content Teacher (STEM Coach/Specialist)

Administrative Assistant (PowerSchool Manager)

Teacher Leaders (Interventionist/Mentor/PD Leader/Digital Learning Support)

**Q166. 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.**

Utilizing our best recruitment tools and partnerships, Duplin STEM Academy will ensure that the hired special needs teacher is experienced and holds at minimum a Master's Degree in Special Education. We anticipate having at least 14% of our initial population needing specially designed instruction. This will mean in year one we may have two EC teachers.

Duplin STEM will provide an experienced part time ELL teacher to assist with any child who is an English Language Learner. Duplin STEM Academy will also provide all full and part time teachers with the proper training and state development to prepare for both ELL and gifted students.

We anticipate leaning on our network of schools for support and guidance as meeting the needs of ALL of our children is critical to meeting our mission.

**Q167. 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).**



Duplin STEM Academy's staff will be held to high quality standards by carrying out the Academy's mission every day. All staff members are expected to communicate clear expectations and goals, uphold all legal, professional and ethical requirements of the profession, and create an environment conducive to learning. Further expectations are outlined below:

Core, ELL, EC, and specialty music, physical education and technology:

- Hold a bachelor's degree, EC teacher must hold a Master's degree.
- Teach the STEM Curriculum with fidelity and in alignment with the State Standards
- Foster a safe classroom climate conducive to learning.
- Create open lines of communication with parents.
- Offer tutoring and enrichment activities to students as needs arise.
- Communicate clear expectations, goals, and grading requirements to both parents and students.
- Differentiate lesson plans toward the needs of individual students. In accordance with NCLB, teachers in core subject areas will meet Highly Qualified standards. Maintain and keep current records on all students, including portfolio work and grades.

Lead Administrator

- Hold a Master's Degree in Administration and must have five years of administrative experience.
- Ensure that the STEM Curriculum is in alignment with the State Standards and being implemented with fidelity in the classroom on a daily basis.
- Supervise, lead and develop the Academy's staff and report on the school's overall operation to the Academy's board of directors every month.
- Responsible for handling student and staff conduct in accordance with Duplin STEM Academy's student and staff handbooks.
- Will be active in coordinating the Academy's professional development plan. Oversee the creation and implementation of the school's marketing plan. Ensure that the school operates within the budget and be responsible for all fiduciary requirements.

Administrative Assistant

- Hold an Associate's degree.
- Have at least two years experience as an administrative assistant.
- Coordinate and run the Academy's front office and adhere to all duties encompassed therein.
- Coordinate school volunteers.
- Assist the assistant administrator and the lead administrator as the need arises.

Assistant Administrator



Have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Coordinate and maintain the teacher licensure program.

Have two years or more of administrative experience.

Assist in coordinating the Academy's professional development plan.

The lead person to whom all contract positions report; this includes being the point of contact for the State Reporting.

- Report to the lead administrator regarding - Assist in marketing.

Custodian:

Ensure a clean and safe environment for all stakeholders.

Participate in training sessions based on the spread of germs and diseases. See to the daily maintenance and upkeep of Duplin STEM Academy's facilities.

Assistant Teacher:

Hold a Bachelor's degree.

Hold teacher licensure or be working towards it.

Work with "At-Risk" students both in small groups and one-on-one.

Support classroom teachers through tutoring, small group instruction and any other needs that may arise. Be trained in STEM.

#### 10.4. Staff Evaluations and Professional Development

**Q168. Identify the positions responsible for maintaining teacher license requirements and professional development.**

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

**Q169. 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. The 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.**



Duplin STEM Academy will work closely with NCDPI to ensure that our teachers meet the teacher licensure renewal criteria. Upon being hired, with the teacher's consent, Duplin STEM will obtain the teacher's license from DPI. Duplin STEM will assist teachers in keeping their licensure and certifications in line with the requirements from NCDPI and the SBE policies.

Duplin STEM anticipates a strong mentoring program will ensure that teachers feel supported and will promote teacher retention. All beginning staff and teachers will be assigned a mentor who will work closely to develop initiatives, plan lessons, and develop their classroom management strategies. The mentor teachers will also observe and provide feedback to their developing teachers at least four times a year.

The Head of School and the teaching staff will work together to develop a teacher evaluation instrument that will be used to evaluate each teacher's ability to implement the curriculum so that each objective is taught with fidelity. Including teachers in the development of the evaluation instrument will increase buy-in and the likelihood that teachers will meet or expectations consistently.

For beginning teachers who are probationary under NC licensure requirements, Duplin STEM may choose to follow the NCEES teacher evaluation system, which includes a teacher self- assessment, professional development plan, a pre-observation conference, three formal observations with post-conferences, a peer observation with post-conference, summative evaluation conference, and summary rating form.

For administrative and support staff, the Head of School will evaluate them twice a year using a rubric developed by the staff in conjunction with their job description.

**Q170. Describe the core components of the professional development plan and how these components will support the 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.**



Developing and enhancing Duplin STEM's innovative curriculum is a crucial part of the professional development plan for teachers. In order to full this portion of collegiality, all the DSA subject teachers will collaborate in their monthly departmental meetings. Teachers will be organized into three departments: English/Social Studies, Mathematics and Science. In these meetings, they will be developing, reviewing, revising, and aligning curriculum with NC Standard Course of Study. They will also apply multiple intelligences theory to the curriculum, integrating curriculum through thematic instruction, designing assessment tools that teach and evaluate. Last, but not least, they will be talking about pedagogy.

Peer evaluation is another principle which Duplin STEM will be taking into consideration in its professional development program. School administration will be asking every teacher to observe a peer at least once each year as a way of expanding his or her knowledge base in effective instructional design, strategy, and delivery. This will promote idea sharing and feedback that will encourage professional development among the teaching sta.

Mentorship and peer coaching are the last components of professional development which yields an incredible outcome in school improvement by using the resources and staff which a school has in-house. For a new-to-profession teacher, sharing expertise about curriculum, pedagogy, and child development with an experienced colleague is an incredible opportunity to grow very fast in a very small amount of time. Mentor teachers also share knowledge about curriculum, awareness, and knowledge from readings, insights about families, and what was learned from attending presentations and conferences. Duplin STEM will set up a mentorship program to accelerate the experience transfer from one teacher to another one.

New Duplin STEM Academy teachers will have one extra orientation before the other teachers show up for the school year. As a whole team, there will be three professional development days before the school starts and two days of —year-end evaluation meetings after the student dismissal day. The other five days will be spread out during the school year. Those days will be mandatory for all Duplin STEM teachers. Charter School Conferences, workshops, exchange teaching, as well as other teacher-related conference and professional opportunities are planned to be available to teachers and academic staff throughout the school year contingent upon the teacher/school needs and available resources.

There are a number of workdays set aside for various purposes, including professional development and grade preparation and reporting. DSA administration will identify consultants that will provide professional development and instructional coaching around all curriculum. As part of our support training DSA will work with contracted consultants, to provide an instructional coach, at minimal cost to the school, to work with the Head of School and teachers. Their consulting team will conduct the first set of professional development days. They will help the faculty and staff create a plan for the year that will give them an overview of what they will be teaching, as well as help them gain an understanding of how to begin teaching in a collaborative and cross-curricular manner. As the year



progresses, the teachers are allotted an adequate amount of time to plan together, grow together, and thoughtfully provide feedback to parents on their children's progress.

Teacher professional development will focus on techniques for delivering the curriculum structure in a way that elicits both excitement and a sense of ownership on the part of the students. This development plan calls for a three-year, in-depth professional development series that will take teachers from an understanding of the tenets of the STEM Curriculum to being true collaborators and creators of content-rich units. Teachers will also learn to act as facilitators of learning, guiding students to discover truths through kinesthetic, audio, and visual learning. In assembling the initial teaching staff, and in making subsequent hiring decisions,

Additionally, funds and resources will be provided for our faculty members to develop collaborative partnerships and mentoring programs with other schools, communities, businesses, and industries, and each faculty member will have an active membership in the relevant organization for their field of expertise.

To sum up, the school will consider the above outlined professional development activities as well as explore alternative ways in which teacher and academic staff can improve their professional expertise depending on the school's needs and resources. Faculty and Staff Development Days will be planned based on the outcomes of these meetings. Before the start of the school year, the staff development program will provide teachers with an opportunity to design their goals, objectives, and curricula using the assessment data collected from the previous year. A projected timeline for Duplin STEM's Professional Development activities during a school year is outlined below:

Activity Timeline:

Staff Orientation: 3 days before school starts

Departmental Meetings:

First Wednesday of each Month (after classes)

Grade Level: Meetings Third Wednesday of each Month (after classes)

Professional Development Days: One day every other month

Year End: Meetings 2 days after student dismissal.

Conferences/workshops: As needed

**Q171. Provide a schedule and explanation of professional development that will take place prior to the 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.**





New and returning teachers will come together for close to two weeks before school begins, to meet, collaborate, connect with mentors, and participate in a gamut of professional learning opportunities to prepare them for the upcoming school year. In addition to the beginning teacher training and mentoring sessions addressed previously, all faculty and staff will participate in the Opening of Schools presentations, as follows:

**School Mission & Vision:** All personnel will participate in a school-wide mission and vision discussion and learn the school's program and philosophy.

**Curriculum Implementation by Subject/Specialty:** Teachers will participate in individual department trainings related to curriculum implementation, NC Standards, and Statewide assessment implementation, with special emphasis on incorporating digital resources.

**STEM:** The tenets of an effective STEM program (what students will learn, how it is taught, how we know students are understanding what is taught).

**School Literacy Plan:** Teachers will be exposed to the Schools literacy plan with specific strategies on how to differentiate and individualize instruction in order to create effective targeted instructional lessons and tutoring to increase student achievement and maximize instructional time.

**Digital Learning:** Due to the pandemic, all teachers will be fully prepared to upfit their classrooms and provide a more blended learning approach and be proficient with the ability to engage online with their students.

**Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Administrators and staff will collaborate to analyze, extrapolate and disaggregate school data from a variety of sources and to use this data to create effective school improvement plans and increase student achievement. **Plan book:** Teachers will be guided through the creation of lesson plans and they will review what needs to be included such as the objective/topic, strategies, learner accommodations, etc.

**Safety and Security:** Safety and security training will instruct staff on daily safety procedures, and how to prevent and protect the school and students, to handle emergency situations, and to recognize potential threats in accordance with the school safety plan.

**Finance and Activities:** The activities director will review the procedures for the planning of activities and corresponding financial documentation required for the varied activities.

**School Discipline Plan:** Classroom-based discipline plans will be discussed and approved; school-wide discipline procedures also be outlined and clarified.

**Student Support:** The faculty and staff related to student support will provide guidance and step-by-step procedures on the following topics:



Exceptional Student Education: Teachers will be guided through the IEPs of their students and teachers will be made aware of the accommodations required to address the needs of each learner.

English Language Learners: Teachers will be provided with guidance and resources to help address the unique academic and social needs of English Language Learners.

Crisis: Teachers will be guided through the steps to take with students that are in crisis.

MTSSS Framework: Staff will learn to initiate and address the MTSS model to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all students.

Curriculum Pacing and Alignment: Four separate Professional Development that will be offered to all faculty members to provide effective strategies and interventions across the curriculum to address learners' needs.

Other Non-academic Training:

Bloodborne Pathogens and other Health Requirements Orientation and Benefits Technology

Systems Training

Procedures and policies

Communication with parents

PowerSchool

Emergency Plans

Teacher Development:

Mentoring

Teacher Feedback Protocol

Employee Expectations and Evaluation systems/processes

**Q172. 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.**



Beginning in late July or August, there will be high quality specifically designed professional development, for a total of 56 assigned hours. The first three of those professional development days will be entirely devoted to the STEM curriculum, core curriculum and instructional methods, and teaching practices. During the school year, there are workdays dedicated to the calendar for further PD on STEM, classroom management, school culture, and days dedicated to completing and submitting grades and parent/teacher conferences. These sessions will be based on the identified areas for growth based on teacher observations and feedback sessions.

The daily schedule is not affected by these days. There are multiple 1/2 days and teacher workdays strategically set up for professional development, data analysis, and parent conferences. The PD Plan will be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect staff learning and changes based on student data, as well as to gauge the overall effectiveness of the PD.

The standing structure with beginning and seasoned teachers creating an environment focused on professional growth and respect among all members of the faculty as different staff members will have opportunities to present based on their skill sets and classroom practices throughout the year. Below are quarterly Professional Development workshops:

School-wide Data Chats 4 Hours. They will consist of a review and analysis of current student progress, appropriate interventions, and a mutually agreed upon follow up plan.

Literacy Plan and School Initiatives 6 Hours. School literacy plan, reading focus calendars for content areas, best practices, and instructional strategies.

Student Support 3 Hours - ESE, LEP, Rtl, counseling, crisis intervention, and tolerance processes will be outlined and changes and/or updates provided, as needed.

Curriculum 6 Hours. Department meetings to discuss data, trends, strategies, instructional focus calendars, and pacing on standards instruction.

Note: Early release days will allow for team collaboration to discuss student progress, conduct team and school-level data chats, and provide an opportunity for common planning both vertically and horizontally.

In addition to the leadership training and participation in the in-house programs, professional development for Duplin STEM Academy administrators may also include:

Teacher Evaluation Training for Administrators: The School will utilize the NC Educator Evaluation System (NCEES), including all training with online management and procedures.

Classroom Walk-through Training: Will provide school leaders strategies and tools to effectively structure classroom visits and follow-up reflection to increase student achievement and learning; as well as a methodology for analyzing the classroom for feedback purposes through the use of



reflective conversation for providing feedback.

Budget Training for Administrators: This training addresses school budgeting as it pertains to both the schools operating budget and internal accounting policies and procedures in accordance with North Carolina Accounting System requirements.

Master Scheduling for Administrators: Administrators are trained to create an efficient (financially sound) and effective master schedule meeting national, state and district requirements.

Developing the Schools Improvement Plan (SIP): This training assists in developing a sound and effective SIP to include data analysis, goal-setting, budget planning, professional development planning and reflective practices.

Principals Meetings: Administrators meet by level (secondary/elementary) to go over pertinent topics and share best practices, including curriculum development, standards implementation, scheduling, educational changes, innovative programming, etc.

Office of Charter Schools Leadership Institute: Annually, Administrators will attend the Office of Charter Schools Leadership Institute.

Administrators may also participate in PD conducted through the National Association of Secondary School Principals; AdvancEd; and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, etc.

We anticipate having multiple members of the Duplin STEM Academy staff attend events hosted by schools in the LIG network organization and visit their high performing schools as often as the schedule will allow.

## 10.5. Marketing, Recruitment, and Enrollment

Reaching the full capacity for enrollment will be critical to obtaining 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.

**Q173. Marketing Plan** Marketing to potential students and parents is vital to the survival of a charter school. Provide a plan indicating how the school will market to potential students and parents in order to reasonably reflect the racial/ethnic and demographic composition of the district in which the charter school will be located or of the special



---

population the school seeks to serve: (G.S.115C-218.45(e)).



**Target Population:** The school will target families with children ranging from ages 5-13 residing in the communities within Duplin County. The school strongly believes that a diverse population of students is critical to building the community Duplin STEM Academy is known for and will target families of all demographics in a twenty-mile area of the school, to ensure the school population reflects all who live and work in the area.

**Outreach Plan:** Duplin STEM will use comprehensive outreach and marketing measures to ensure all prospective students and parents have equal access to apply and enroll. Initial advertising and recruitment plans will focus on community engagement. This campaign will use the community resources and leaders in and around the Wallace/ Duplin County area to determine parent interest and inform parents of the school and its educational plan. Duplin STEM will use social media and the school's website to share information about the school's scheduled opening and available enrollment.

**Community Focused Campaign:** Discussions with community leaders and stakeholders representing all racial and socio- economic groups, community boards, parents, etc. to assist in creating a strong network to give voice to the school. The school will intentionally reach out to church leaders, African American, and Latino community leaders in the area, to build connections and awareness of this new educational opportunity. It is hoped that those connections can then lead to meetings with their friends and family. The school will host informational meetings in places that are close to the school's location. Duplin STEM board leadership has already begun to hold meetings around the community and is working with community stakeholder in Duplin County to create awareness within their spheres of influence. During the informational meetings, which the school will highlight its program and how it will serve all students. Local elected officials and community leaders will be invited to visit the school. They will also be given an update on the program's growth and asked to share open enrollment information with their communities through their newsletter and upcoming area meetings.

School leadership and director will work within the community to participate in weekend fairs and festivals, attend holiday celebrations such as parades. Duplin STEM will sponsor community events and attend local youth sporting events to ensure our message is getting to the most diverse community within the 5-13 age group families.

**Public Awareness Campaigns:** Direct mail campaigns will target all households within our target population within a ten-mile radius of the school. Duplin STEM has already created a Facebook page and is already promoting the school and its curriculum to the community. Duplin STEM is in the process of finishing a website with school information, enrollment timelines, and registration processes. Digital and social media advertising will be used to reach a broad audience through ads, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, or Google, which direct parents to the school's website. Promotional flyers and/or postcards will be distributed via direct mail and/or directly to community groups to ensure that harder-to-reach families (e.g. single-parent families, low socio- economic households, etc.) are



aware of the school and their eligibility to apply for enrollment. Promotional materials and announcements will be made available in multiple languages and disseminated to local community organizations.

**Q174. Describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the school.**

Duplin STEM Academy will continue to engage parents and the residents through community meetings, the use of the news media, online social media, religious organizations, preschools, promotional videos, and building strong relationships with the local business community. There has already been an organized effort by parents and community leaders to notify the public about Duplin STEM Academy. Locally distributed surveys to the community and held a community meeting in the spring. Board meetings will be open to the public and will maintain a section of time built for public comments. We will also plan to schedule town hall meetings to allow the community to stress their larger concerns and ask questions.

Duplin STEM Academy will engage parents early and frequently in the school year, and highly encourage them to volunteer and play an active role in their child's education. Through the school's intense focus on character development, there will be an increased focus on bridging the gap between home life and school. Bridging this gap will include several interactive lessons that will build on parental involvement. These lessons will be presented at evening events, opened to the public, displaying student work, varying from the arts to core subjects, including science and technology. Duplin STEM Academy will also develop a strong Parent Teacher Association with parents and teachers working closely together to carry out the mission of the school.

The board will encourage open and transparent communication with parents and encourage all parents to become a part of Duplin STEM Academy. Leadership will write monthly newsletters to provide the state of the charter and new happenings. At the end of the year, the leadership team will write an end up year summary to share with all stakeholders.

**Q175. 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.**



From January 2024 to August 2025, the board will gather additional information regarding the educational need or interest for a public charter school from 200 families, recruit additional board members and add five potential partnerships. The board will commit to publicizing the school to the community so that all interested parties will be aware of the school's upcoming application submission process. The board will also strengthen the social media outreach and send a press release to local publications.

From September 2024-January 20225, the board will obtain 60% or more of the needed letters of intent balanced across all grade levels. The board will collect contact information, recruit prospective volunteers, board members. We will host community gatherings, town hall meetings, and attend employment fairs. Members of the board of directors will visit local preschools, daycares, churches, other child-related organizations to distribute information. We will also speak at local civic meetings such as the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, etc. Our lead administrator will perform this duty in conjunction with board members. The board and the lead administrator will conduct community meetings open to the public in Wallace and its surrounding communities at branches of the local public library or at local churches. One of our board members is bilingual and will assist in interpreting during the meeting and translating brochures and fliers.

From January 2025-July 2025, the board will obtain 150% of the targeted enrollment goal and will have started a waitlist. The board will achieve this by sending out mailers to local households with children aged 5-13. After the lottery, we will continue hosting events so that students and families start identifying themselves as Duplin STEM students and families. The board and the administrator will continue the hiring process by attending job fairs for teachers and posting jobs on Indeed, Teacher Match, and other places teachers search for jobs.

In August 2025, the board will get ready for opening the school doors and will work to build and sustain the waitlist that is 25% or higher above capacity. The board will continue to market the school and host events for families.

**Q176. 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.**





A well-articulated brand is a powerful tool to match the right “kind of” people to the right school setting. The truth is that there might not be a sector more reliant on a well-articulated brand than a public charter school. We understand this a risky choice for many families to take the school choice leap. Our unique attributes will be what will makes our school stand apart from all of the others.

The quality of education, the faculty, the culture, the alumni, and the activities – these are the tangibles that will create a connection that will bring students to Duplin STEM Academy. We desire to bring the child and family that has not felt successful or connected to their school community. We will intentionally recruit and host meetings in the communities that need a Duplin STEM to provide them a foundation for a stronger future. We will ensure we utilize paper and electronic applications. We will create ways for all families to apply through the use of their smart phone by adding QR codes and other easy to use technology to make it simple to apply. We will bring prospective parents into our planning process once the application is formally approved by the SBE to ensure a long and lasting relationship with the community.

The Duplin STEM team will have experts who best know the benefits of a STEM curriculum and those who understand better practices in serving at-risk children participating in the face to face and virtual events for parents to ask questions and be more comfortable with taking that risk.

**Q177. What established community organizations would you target for marketing and recruitment?**

Kenansville-Duplin County Chamber of Commerce, Wallace Chamber of Commerce, Warsaw Chamber of Commerce, Duplin Rotary Club.

## 10.6. Parent and Community Involvement

**Q178. Describe how you will communicate with and engage parents and community members from the time that the school is approved through opening.**



Duplin STEM will use its website to provide updates to parents and members of the community. The website will be included on all informational fliers, emails, social media outlets, and media blasts. The school website will inform the community at large about the school's mission, vision, the education plan, dates for the lottery, and application and enrollment information. The website will remain current and updated regularly by the board marketing committee. We will also communicate through our presence on social media platforms such as Facebook.

After our approval, Duplin STEM will continuously communicate with prospective parents and members of the community in a variety of ways. Through our existing relationship with local civic clubs, businesses, and community organizations, the board will schedule information sessions and will host tables during sporting events (when they resume regular play).

Starting with the open enrollment period through the first day of school, all enrolled families will be invited to follow Duplin STEM's social media accounts and will now receive regular email messages, inviting them to events and updating them on the progress of the facility and introducing them to teachers and staff as they are hired.

Once the facility is ready, the school will host a Ribbon Cutting event and invite all families and stakeholders in the community to attend. All students will be invited to tour the school, meet the Head of School, teachers, and other students and their families so that they can start identifying as Duplin STEM Academy students.

**Q179. 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.**



Parental and community involvement at Duplin STEM is a fundamental and required part of the schools philosophy and operation. Duplin STEM Academy encourages parents to be active participants in their child's education, which gives the community ownership in our high-quality educational program, and teaches children to be civic-minded and socially responsible. Parents and community members will have extensive opportunities for involvement in aspects of school operations. Parent and community engagement is possible through the parent/teacher group, Educational Excellence Advisory Council (EESAC), and other such committees.

The administration will also require the faculty and staff to uphold the strong belief in and understanding of the charter school concept through the inclusion of parents in the educational process. The administration will require teachers to be active members in the community and work to develop home visits for students to ensure parents are comfortable with their student's mentors and advisors. Through open lines of communications, the school will encourage through the following endeavors:

**Parental Participation Contracts:** parents agree to volunteer with their child's teacher and/or be involved in other ways in school activities.

**Parent, Student & Leader Advisory Committee:** This group will consist of school personnel, parents, students, local business, and community members. Members will encouraged to provide positive input related to school matters on a regular basis and assist in maintaining and carrying out the mission and vision of the school. PSLAC will coordinates extra-curricular events involving the community to continue to bring awareness to the school's goals, mission and vision.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences:** Duplin STEM will host quarterly parent/teacher conferences in the evenings at the school where parents can discuss topics that affect their children's educational progress.

**Open Houses, Career Fairs, and Family Day:** These events will be held to recruit new students, maintain communication and involvement between the school and the surrounding community.

**School Website, Newsletters, and Event Calendar:** These will be updated regularly to provide information to parents and the community to keep the lines of communication open to the school's stakeholders.

**Community Service Projects:** Students, faculty and parents will participate in activities to help give back to and connect with the community.

**Parent Workshops:** Workshops on education-related topics, such as decision-making regarding school performance and student assessment needs, will be offered.

**Volunteer Opportunities:** Parent participation hours, communicated through newsletters, the school



website, email and calls home, will be ongoing yearlong. Parent volunteers will be asked to support the school through opportunities like chaperoning field trips, assisting with class and community service projects, helping with landscaping and minor maintenance of the school, participating in Career Week and Family Day, and assisting with the school store. Duplin STEM will ask parents what have specific skills to support the school (e.g.: technology, printing and screen printing of school shirts, community service leader, etc.).

**Q180.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.**

Duplin STEM Academy will work to identify community support programs where the school, parent, and community leaders can partner to provide support services, after school and weekend programs that will allow students to remain involved in community projects. These programs may be volunteer, athletic, or other community support options. The goal of Duplin STEM is to create a well rounded student. These programs will grow as opportunities in the community are presented.

## 10.7. Admissions Policy

**Q181. Weighted Lottery** Does your school plan to use a weighted lottery? 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.



Yes

No

**Applicant Comments :**

Weighted lottery will be implemented

**Q182. 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**

Duplin STEM Academy aims to provide an academically challenging, learning environment that develops its diverse student population into solution-focused, peace-building citizens who are equipped to solve the world's problems. In an effort to increase access to Duplin STEM Academy and ensure the school represents the community demographics for Educationally Disadvantaged Students, Duplin STEM Academy will allocate at minimum 50% of its seats to Educationally Disadvantaged students for a weighted lottery and conduct the weighted lottery prior to the general lottery.

**Q183.2) A thorough description of the processes and procedures the applicant intends to use to effectuate the lottery.**

In each open enrollment period, school leadership will work to identify the number of Educationally Disadvantaged (ED) seats available in each program, class, grade level, or building in order to balance students admitted across total seats available and school resources with an overall school target ED enrollment of 50% of available seats per grade level.

Families will have the opportunity to complete an optional form, separate from their lottery application, where they can offer information in order to determine if a student is eligible for ED status. This supplemental form will ask applicants to consent to the verification of eligibility by Duplin STEM Academy staff and will request no information other than that required to establish eligibility status. The information provided will not be retained for any purpose other than to provide the audibility of lottery integrity.

Educationally Disadvantaged status is applied to any student who falls into one or more of the following classifications: Economically Disadvantaged – defined as any student who qualifies for Free and Reduced-Price lunch.

**Q184.3) The underlying research, pedagogical, educational, psychometric, and legal, that supports the request and the procedures the applicant is requesting.**



Duplin STEM Academy is requesting a weighted lottery because the Board of Directors believe in removing barriers for Educationally and Economically Disadvantaged Students, which include subgroups that might be under-resourced in comparison to community members who are not Economically or Educationally Disadvantaged. We believe, and research supports (Hawkins, 2016), that diversity makes a school community better for everyone, and Duplin STEM seeks this diversity because of the academic, social, and community benefits for all of our students. By ensuring that every neighbor has access according to his or her need ensures that our school community reflects the larger community, and, at the same time, Duplin STEM levels the school playing field by giving an advantage to groups who are more used to barriers than advantages.

**Q185. Provide the school's proposed policies and the procedures for admitting students to the proposed charter school, including:**

- 1. Tentative dates for the open enrollment application period, enrollment deadlines and procedures. \*Please be advised schools cannot accept applications until after final approval from the SBE.**
- 2. Clear policies and procedures detailing the open enrollment lottery plan, including policies regarding statutory permitted student enrollment preferences.**
- 3. Clear policies and procedures for student waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers.**
- 4. Explanation of the purpose of any pre-admission activities (if any) for students or parents.**
- 5. Clear policies and procedures for student withdrawals and transfers.**



Immediately following preliminary approval of our charter, DSA will conduct a highly publicized campaign, utilizing a variety of methods to inform the public of the dates for open enrollment. These methods may include, but are not limited to, publication in all local newspapers, using multiple sources of social media, distributing fliers at churches, daycares and other community-oriented locations and the holding of public meetings in various parts of the county.

The tentative enrollment period will begin January 1, 2023, following final approval of the charter, and will tentatively run through April 30, 2023, at 5:00 P.M. The application will be available to fill out both online and in print format. It will be available in both English and Spanish. Immediately following the closing of the enrollment period, Duplin STEM Academy will determine if a lottery is needed, in accordance with NCGS 115C-238.29F(g)(6). If a lottery is not needed, all applicants will be accepted, and parents and guardians will be contacted via telephone and via mail (both electronic and postal). If a lottery is needed, a date will be set for the lottery, which will take place no more than two weeks from the close of the enrollment period and will only include the names from the enrollment period noted above. Parents and guardians of applicants will be notified of the date and time of the lottery. The lottery will be open to the public and names will be decided by a computerized randomization system in accordance with the policies adopted in the North Carolina Charter Schools Act and by the State Board of Education. Once the names are chosen, the parent or guardian will have 10 official business days to accept enrollment. After June 30 of the school year, parents will be provided three business days through August 1. From August 1 through the start of school there will be a 24 hour window to accept.

As set in NCGS 115C-238.29F(g)(5a), Duplin STEM Academy will abide by the following:

For every year of operation, children of the active board members and full-time staff members will receive priority admission, up to 15% of the total enrollment.

Multiple birth siblings will be entered into the lottery as one surname, and should that surname be chosen in the lottery, all will receive admission.

After the first year of operation, siblings of current students will receive priority admission. Legacy preference will also be granted to students whose siblings have graduated from DSA within the previous four years.

We anticipate developing a waiting list of students. If a student withdraws, the next name on the waiting list will be offered a seat and that student's parent or guardian will be given one business day to respond. The HOS will develop a process to maintain effective student records and transfer documentation in a timely manner.

As stated above, we will utilize community meetings and open forums prior to the beginning of the admission process. The purpose of these is to inform the public of the enrollment period, as well as to share our vision and mission with interested parents and community members.



In the event a student from the school transfers, the parent or legal guardian should immediately notify the school. However, if the school receives a records request, it will send the necessary information in a timely manner.

### 10.8. Certify

Q186. **This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.**

- Yes
- No

**Applicant Comments :**

Comments below

Q187. **Explanation (optional):**

The governance section of the application was co-written with Dr. Tom Miller from Leaders Building Leaders who provides training and governance support to charter leaders. Some contents around roles and responsibilities and duties of a board member come directly from his training sessions and content.

Additionally, there has been extensive collaboration of board members between Wayne STEM and Duplin STEM, many of the points of this application around mission and purpose, governance, operations, and recruitment of staff and students have been replicated. This is not a replication of Wayne STEM, however, the Duplin STEM board consists of several members that were founding members of Wayne STEM. These members have been instrumental in the development of the WSA application and preparation for opening.





## 11. Operations

### 11.1. Transportation Plan

Q188. 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:

1. 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.
2. Describe how the school will transport students with special transportation needs and how that will impact your budget.
3. Describe how the school will ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations related to transportation services



Our plan will consist of a triangulation of services. Since there are currently no charter schools in Duplin County it is difficult to determine the number of families that will drive their children to the charters around Duplin County. However, based on other charter schools around rural North Carolina, and the proximity of families within fifteen miles of the projected location, we expect approximately 1/2 of our 292 or approximately 150 children will arrive by car.

We aim to purchase two to three used school buses and build a strategic cluster stop system to transport the remaining 1/2 of our children (roughly 150). Over the next year we will determine the method in which students will qualify for transportation. Factors may include living distance from the school, economic status, and special circumstances as we want to ensure we are meeting the needs of all of our children. As the school grows our goal is to purchase more school buses and potentially replace these original buses with a higher quality model to reduce maintenance.

Our budget includes:

\$9,000 for gas for cluster stops up to 25 miles

\$19,000 Oil, Tires and Maintenance

\$1,250 for Other Transportation Expenses

Education Development Initiative has agreed to support the Duplin STEM Academy by providing a minimum of two school buses the first year of operations and ultimately expanding the utilization of bus services as enrollment and demand requires.

As Duplin STEM Academy grows, the goal is to provide bus services to more than half of the school's population. We will investigate the possibility of contracting with the local bus systems or other appropriate bus or transportation services if the cost becomes substantial.

## 11.2. School Lunch Plan

**Q189. 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:**

- 1. How the school will comply with applicable local, state, and federal guidelines and regulations;**
- 2. Any plans to meet the needs of low-income students; and**
- 3. 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.**



Duplin STEM Academy is fully committed to ensuring that no child lacks a daily meal, whether this is due to financial need or simply because they forgot their lunch. It is our intention to offer all students the option of bringing their lunch or purchasing their lunch from a local food services company. The lunch schedule will be published monthly, and students will have the option of buying from the food services company or providing their own lunches.

Duplin STEM Academy will work with a local food provider to insure healthy food options for breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks. Duplin County District Schools recently implemented a program where all students across the county are provided lunch at no cost to the families. DSA plan to continue that program and off free lunch to all students.

It is the intention that DSA will work with to identify a community non-profit that provides community services and will support food programs for our breakfast, lunch and before and after school programs. Based on demographics of the surrounding community, Duplin STEM Academy expects to have 90%+ students will qualify for free and/or reduced lunches regardless of the program the school implements. For purposes of budgeting and given there is such a high anticipated percentage of students that would potentially qualify, Duplin STEM Academy is budgeting 100% of our children will require free and/or reduced lunches. There is a line item in the operations budget of \$150,000 for the first year to provide for this expense. We anticipate this line item growing annually. In addition, we have budgeted for part time staff to support the program. Ideally, for the first few years, this staff will be made up of teacher assistants or other staff that rotate to the position during the school lunch period.

As is known, students tend to forget their lunch and/or lunch money. Since it is expected that the school will have a very high FRL population, offering the free lunch program to all students will eliminate the need of carrying extra lunches or keeping an ongoing accounting of individual students for repayment of lunch fees.

### 11.3. 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:

1. Errors and Omissions: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence;
2. General Liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence;
3. Property Insurance: For owned building and contents, including boiler and machinery coverage, if owned;
4. Crime Coverage: no less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to cover employee theft and dishonesty;
5. Automobile Liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence; and
6. Workers' Compensation: as specified by Chapter 97 of NC General Statute, Workers' Compensation Law

**Q190. Complete the attached table, indicating the amount of each type of coverage as outlined in a quote obtained from an insurance provider.**

Upload Required   File Type: excel   Max File Size: 30   Total Files Count: 10

**Applicant Comments :**

Attached

**Resources**

Insurance Coverage ...

**Applicant Evidence :**

Insurance Coverage ...

Uploaded on **4/24/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

**Q191. 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.



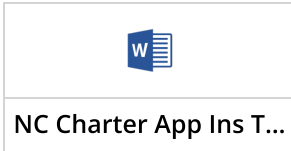
Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30

Total Files Count: 5

Applicant Comments :

Attached

Applicant Evidence :



Uploaded on **4/24/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

### 11.4. 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.

Q192. We, the Board members 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. **The Board Chair must sign this question.**

Signature

### 11.5. Start-Up Plan

Q193. Provide a detailed start-up plan for the proposed school, specifying tasks,



timelines, and responsible individuals (including compensation for those individuals, if applicable).



The Duplin STEM board complete the following tasks during the start-up process: acquire the facility and prepare it for school operations, fundraising and grant writing, hiring and development of the Head of School, board training and development, marketing to families/enrolling students, developing policies and handbooks, developing relationships in the community, and make all purchases for regular school operations.

To complete these tasks, the Duplin STEM Board will develop three committees for the application and planning years:

1. Marketing and Enrollment,
2. Facility, and
3. Personnel and Board Development.

Marketing/Admissions:

In fall 2023, the marketing committee will:

- update the Duplin STEM website and social media pages,
- begin regularly emailing interested families, host information sessions,
- develop partnerships with community partners and other nonprofits,
- plan and organize community events, and design and distribute flyers and brochures at events.

In Spring 2024, the committee will:

- begin outreach to daycares, churches, and other child-related centers,
- organize/host a formal information session, host tables at community events, visit neighborhoods
- with flyers and ask individuals to host information sessions in their homes, and
- upon charter approval, Duplin STEM will send out press releases to notify the community about

Duplin STEM.

Summer - Fall 2024, the marketing committee will:

- continue to communicate via social media outlets, the website, and email messages,
- continue to issue a press releases,
- distribute brochures with application timelines at local events and information sessions, and
- create a map that shows areas of high interest and develop plans for targeted areas that have shown weak interest.

Winter 2024 - Spring 2025, 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. And



- conduct the open application, lottery, and enrollment process.

Facility:

- The Facility Committee will manage all aspects of the facility acquisition and build-out of renovated property for Duplin STEM board.
- By Fall 2023, the Facility Committee will:
  - develop a detailed plan for facility acquisition and facility inspection, maintenance, and updates, lead safety inspections, including ensuring that the facility is in compliance with all real estate and safety codes, and be in possession of the required Certificate of Occupancy no later than June of 2025.

Personnel and Board Development:

Beginning in September 2024, the Development Committee will:

- develop a job description and advertising plan to recruit and hire the Duplin STEM Head of School,
- begin recruiting via websites and all other candidate search tools, such as Teacher Match and indeed,
- proceed through the interview process for the Head of School by inviting strong candidates to interview with the Duplin STEM board, and
- create a timeline for Head of School training, on-boarding, and responsibilities.

**Q194. 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.**





At Duplin STEM Academy, the board has discussed challenges on three specific issues. First, there is a group of parents in the community that will need to be educated on what a charter school is. Many families have no concept of the difference between charter and private schools. Historically, in the Hispanic community, the idea of school choice is a concept of failing students or a school for children with disabilities. To insure DSA represents all families, the board has to work through that educational process. Second, there will be a process to fully explain to the community at-large the concept of the curriculum and helping them understand the full dept of a STEM charter school. Third, and this has been a learning curve with opening Wayne STEM Academy, is educating families on the idea of having a school that is K-5 but only opening as a K-3. As has become clear, many families have not applied because they are not sure what to do with their children after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The marketing plan needs to clarify the full growth of the school through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. All of these issues will be part of the ongoing community outreach and marketing efforts.

With other charter schools in the region there has been significant struggles with getting the school open and board change-over from its initial founding leadership to a long-term governing board. The changes after the first year have not been managed well and the right board members who understand their roles will be pivotal to the long-term success of the school. DSA will need to be able to assure the community this is not going to be a problem. We will address this with strong board training and working as a group to keep a unified voice in the community. DSA has seasoned board members that have previously started a charter school and gone through many of the challenges that will be presented. Additionally, the third party collaborators will provide substantial support and guidance on how to handle specific challenges with opening and transitioning board members. Additional challenges will be finding a strong leader. Because of the experienced board members opening other schools and working with community leaders and third party consultants, it is expected that some of these challenges will be minimized prior to making any significant changes to the founding board.

Finally, the challenge of finances and facilities. The service providers DSA is working with have 30+ years combined experience starting and operating schools as well as identifying and developing facilities. The service providers have agreed to adjust fee structures in the first few years to ensure capital reserves are being built. With respect to facilities, LIC has already identified several potential locations and is in communication with the current owners to discuss the school's needs and timing for a purchase.

Capital sources are already identified and design plans will be started as soon as the school is given approval to move forward.

Overall, DSA is working to identify and address as many possible challenges to ensure a contingency plan is in place to address those issues as they arise.



Applicant Evidence :



Duplin Opening Year...

Uploaded on **4/26/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

## 11.6. 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.

**Q195.**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.



The DSA board, will obtain its facility through its development agreement with Legacy Impact Capital (LIC). LIC is a non-profit education facility developer. LIC has a history of supporting school choice across North Carolina. LIC founders and board members have developed 9 campuses across North Carolina over the last 8 years. In addition to supporting schools through facility development, LIC has previously supported schools it works with by providing start-up capital for Ready to Open year operations, equipment, and furnishings.

LIC has already identified properties for potential acquisition for the campus. A couple of properties currently have buildings that are adequate in size to support the first several years of growth before additional facilities space will need to be added. LIC has already discussed with the property owners working toward putting the properties under contract to provide adequate time for design and renovation/construction.

Generally, it takes the development team approximately 30 months to design, develop, and build a new building in today's market. If a new building is determined to be the best approach for opening the school, it is anticipated that the school will be required to be housed in a modular building for at least the first year. With an existing building and the amount of space needed for the first year, the construction time-frame should be 12 to 18 months. That timing gives the school a more realistic expectation to complete the project for their opening year. Once DSA receives approval (historically in March or April) that will be adequate time to complete the design, entitlement and construction. The developer begins their processes during 2023.

Because of the development partner's experience in the charter school industry, capital support is in place and design teams understand the significance of the specific timelines.

**Q196. 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.**



As a rule, the design of the school will be an average of 60 square feet per student. The average classroom size for K-3 will be 600sf - 650sf. With a projected 292 student year 1, the estimated square feet needed for year one will be 18,000sf with growth to 28,000sf in year 3. The 1st year DSA will need 14 main classrooms, 3 electives rooms (music and art), 4 to 5 administrative offices, a cafeteria, and a teacher's break room. By year three, DSA will need 22 classrooms, 4 elective rooms, 5 to 6 administrative offices, a cafeteria, and a teachers' break room. This will require 28,000sf. The campus will have playgrounds, small turf field and outdoor/covered ball courts to be used in most any weather. The primary location for the campus currently has a 28,500sf building and adequate land for expansion. The property, with proper design, will have capacity for stabilized enrollment of 512 students.

In today's market, we would expect costs of approximately \$275/sf to \$305/sf. This would require \$8.5MM in facility budget that will allow the school to grow for the first three years. This budget will keep the school's rent expense below 18% for the first three years of operations. For a typical school starting its first year, the facility rents are between 18%, to over 20%. LIC and its partners are expecting to keep rents on the lower end of the school's budget. Additionally, if the school's budget gets tight the first few years, DSA capital partners are willing to defer rents to allow capital reserves to be built.

**Q197. 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, workroom/copy room, supplies/storage, teacher workrooms, and other spaces.**



The first year few years of the school's operation will be K-3 growing one grade a year to K-5 in year 3. The projected campus needs will require homeroom classroom space and 2 to 4 electives rooms for music and art. The goal is to utilize technology in the classrooms and have tablets and computers for each student. With limited budget and space the first few years, the school will set up small libraries in each K-3 classroom, so a library/media center will be limited. The schools design will have an outdoor ball court (which is expected to be covered for use in all weather).

As the school grows, the facility expansion will provide more space for the more traditional computer and science labs. The focus of the school with a STEM curriculum will require the most up to date equipment and classroom space to accommodate and maximize the students' learning opportunities and potential. DSA realizes the advantages of having full athletic facilities, auditoriums and performance centers. As the school's enrollment grows and capital reserves are built, those amenities will be added to the campus. It is expected that by the time enrollment reaches maximum capacity, the cash flows and capital reserves of the school will be strong enough that DSA facility partner will provide the amenities the students, parents, and staff are asking for.

DSA is working with a non-profit developer that has designed and developed 9 charter schools in North Carolina in the last 8 years. Their architectural team has designed nearly 75 charter schools across the country. Their design work will provide the appropriate utilization of the facility to ensure effective teaching and comfort for the students and staff, while keeping the cost to a level that does not stress the school's budget.

**Q198. 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.**

DSA would expect the cost per square foot to be around \$275/sf to \$305/sf. This is typical for construction costs of charter school facilities. The sites DSA is currently considering in Wallace will ultimately cost the school approximately \$275/sf. At this price per square foot DSA is projecting a total facility budget of \$7.5MM. At \$7.5MM and 292 student in the the school's first year, the facility cost, per student, is approximately \$16,500 for a facility that can support 450 students.

DSA is first considering existing buildings to minimize construction time frame and typically an existing building costs less per square foot to purchase that it would be build the same quality new. Additionally, existing commercial properties has good visibility of marketing efforts, but if they are empty they may not be ideal for the current market trends, which helps with reducing the purchase price.

**Q199. Facility Contingency Plan: Describe the method of finding a facility if the one the board has identified will not be ready by the time the public charter school will be**



opening. Include information regarding the immediate spatial needs of the school and identify any programs that will not be immediately offered because a permanent facility has yet to open.

If DSA is running into facility issues with respect to timing, they will consider alternative facility options. The immediate and most flexible option will be to place modular units on the school's existing campus. The primary location(s) the school is considering already have parking and drop-off space sufficient for the 1st year enrollment of 292 students. With that, it would simply require bringing in modular units to provide the physical classroom space needed to accommodate student enrollment.

If for some reason, this did not provide adequate options, DSA's realtor is identifying empty retail space around Duplin County that would support the short-term needs of the school. Given the economic challenges in Wallace and Duplin County, there are a number of empty retail spaces that would be sufficient for any short-term needs DSA may have. LIC and its partners have identified and implemented such programs for other charter school partners.

**Q200. Describe the board's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.**

The board is working with Legacy Impact Capital and its partners to support the facility development needs. Separate from this agreement, the current board has three members that were on a previous start-up charter school boards and a fourth who has had executive experience in community colleges and public universities. The local members are the board heavily involved community development through the Economic Development Commission and the Four Counties Electrical Co-Op, which is a large land owner throughout the county. The second local board member owns an engineering firm with a long history in land development as well as holding a seat on his Town's Commission. Of the total board members, two have experience with site identification, design, budgeting, and development of facilities.

### 11.7. Certify

**Q201. I certify that this subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.**

Yes

No

**Applicant Comments :**

Comments below



**Q202.Explanation (optional):**

This section was largely reproduced from the prior approved Wayne STEM Academy application. As prior mentioned in this application, there are board members who have previously and currently served on the WSA board. They are not applying for Duplin STEM as a replication, but are using the structure of WSA application as the foundation for their new application. The active members of the board has previously been heavily involved with the identification and site selection for Wayne STEM and understand the necessity of quick action to have a school facility ready for day one.



## 12. Financial Plan

### 12.1. 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.

**Q203.If applicable, attach as Appendix M: Revenue Assurances. Assurances are needed to confirm the commitment of any additional sources of revenue.**

Legacy Impact Group, a North Carolina education development non-profit is supporting the school with operating capital loans as necessary during the ready to open year as well as providing capital for facilities development, furniture and fixtures, and technology needs to insure the school opens on time and with the infrastructure needed for a successful first year and beyond.

**Applicant Evidence :**



Uploaded on **4/26/2023**

by **Howard Sowell**

**Q204.Attach as Appendix N: Proposed Budget for Year 1 through Year 5 [Click here to access and download the Budget Template.](https://www.dpi.nc.gov/copy-charter-application-budget-template-012023xlsx/download?attachment) (https://www.dpi.nc.gov/copy-charter-application-budget-template-012023xlsx/download?attachment)**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30

Total Files Count: 5

**Applicant Comments :**

Attached





Applicant Evidence :



DUPLIN STEM Budge...

Uploaded on **4/24/2023**  
by **Howard Sowell**

## 12.2. Budget Narrative

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

### Q205. How was the student enrollment number projected?

In Year 1, Kindergarten and first grade will each have 4 classes for a total of 80 students. Second and third grades will each have 3 classes for a total of 66 students. There won't be any fourth- and fifth-grade students in the first year. The total number of students projected to enroll is 292.

In Year 2, Kindergarten, first, and second grade will have four classes of 80 students. Third and fourth grade will each have 3 classes for a total of 66 students. There won't be any fifth-grade students in the second year. The total number of students projected to enroll is 440.

These numbers are based on the number of students in Wayne County who could potentially enroll at Duplin STEM.

When Duplin STEM is fully enrolled at 512, the school will only be enrolling 12.5% of the total K-5 population, making the enrollment projections both reasonable and attainable.

### Q206. Provide an explanation as to why you believe there is a demand for the school that will meet this enrollment projection.



School Choice: Duplin STEM Academy is focusing its enrollment projections on the Duplin County community. There are currently no charter schools in the area. Duplin STEM will be the only school of choice for the general K-5 student population and will be the only school in Duplin County that provides K-5 students a true STEM curriculum.

Population: With over 6,300 K-5 students in the Duplin County LEA, this is only 4.7% of the total K-5 population of students, there would be 22 Duplin County students available for our school for each seat we offer in the school's first year.

Options are Limited: For budgeting purposes, the Duplin STEM board assumes no students from surrounding counties will attend our school. In practice, it is assumed there will be some students from surrounding counties that will attend Duplin STEM because there are no charters in southern Wayne, Sampson, and Pender Counties, which are less than 25 miles from the projected location for the campus. Within a 25 mile radius of the projected location, there are over 350,000 residents.

Governing Board: Duplin STEM has an experienced Governing Board, leadership team, and third party partnerships that will give us positional advantages to recruit and retain superior leadership to operate and sustain a successful charter school. Three of the current board members have previously served as board members for a start-up, rural NC charter school that has been very successful. One member is a licensed EC instructor. One board member has 20 years as an executive in education throughout the region.

Finally, Duplin STEM has two additional advisors that are supporting the school. One is a 15 year EC teacher. The second is an auditor with the UNC System as an auditor with 15 years of audit experience for the State of North Carolina. Both advisors are currently on a charter school board in its ready to open.

Additionally, Duplin STEM will utilize Leaders Building Leaders, a professional development, governance training, and charter support company in North Carolina and beyond.

Finally, the board is utilizing Legacy Impact Capital, a non-profit education real estate development and capital company that has helped start three charter schools over 10 years and has extensive charter school development experience across NC and the southeast.

Excellent Market Leadership: One of the most important characteristics in becoming and maintaining a quality school will be our market leadership which has a great history, reputation, and network throughout Duplin County.

Partnerships: Our branding as a STEM school with our third party support providers will be the foundation that helps the school build high standards at DSA and in the community. This standard will include leading the community in providing quality, innovation, customer service, and student learning.



**Q207. Provide the break-even point of student enrollment.**

The school's Year 1 projected break-even enrollment number is 284 students. This, however, does not take into account any adjustments for Free Lunch Program reductions, or grants provided by the NSLP. Additionally, there are services provided to the school on a per student basis that have not been adjusted or accounted for in this estimate. These include teachers and teachers assistants, insurance expenses, computers and technology programs, per student curriculum expenses, etc.

**Q208. Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.**



Duplin STEM Academy will establish a contingency plan to meet any unexpected shortfall. This plan will include:

Operating from a cash flow projection;

Understanding that year one charter schools do not typically meet enrollment and the school should budget with respect to that;

Reduce personnel and cut organizational expenditures;

Work with school's real estate developer to adjust/defer rent payments to allow for shortfall in enrollment;

Partner with credible sponsors and foundations understanding of initial charter cash flow and will adjust or defer expenses to allow proper operational cash ow to keep the school financially sustainable.

Our goal for start-up costs with the exception of permanent facility needs, instructional materials, supplies, and school furniture will be requested via grants for rural public charter schools. Additionally, DSA real estate development partner (Legacy Impact Capital) agrees to provide FF&E, as necessary, as part of their construction and facility budget. They will finance FF&E expenses over a minimum of five years so DSA can retain necessary capital reserves to offset possible overages in expenses.

Duplin STEM Academy has not accounted for USDA reimbursements for the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program.

The school's budget allocated \$140,000 for the lunch program in anticipation of 95% the student population qualifying for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch. With reimbursements from USDA, the school expects to see an increase of \$140,000 in lunch program revenues.

Additional revenue sources coming from Title I Program and Exceptional Children Education programs, which are not accounted for in our budget. DSA anticipates a 13% EC population but has not accounted for any revenues for programming support. None of these additional expenses are included in the operating budget.

**Q209. 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.**

According to the Legacy Impact Capital (LIC) letter of intent, Duplin STEM has the opportunity to apply for short-term funding to support the school with ready to open expenses, such as curriculum implementation, technology devices, and marketing funds. The specific amounts of these funds are not currently in the budget. Through this partnership, we anticipate receiving approximately \$150,000 in startup loans for these items in addition to human resources and professional development. This Development Services Contract can be found in Appendix M.

**Q210. Provide the student to teacher ratio that the budget is built on.**

The student to teacher ratio on which the budget is built is 17 : 1.

**Q211. Describe the board's individual and collective qualifications and capacity for implementing the financial plan successfully.**



The Duplin STEM Academy board members are: Carrie Shields, Jimmy T. Tate, Ryan Cox, Scott Satterfield, Rhonda Coyne, Christina Watts. Collectively, these board members provide a level of expertise in board governance, school budgeting, community development, education management, community leadership, and classroom management. Scott Satterfield, Rhonda Coyne, and Christina Watts all have experience with start-up charter schools budgeting and insuring the school's budget is adhered to.

Dr. Tate and Carrie Shields have been in leadership positions with public institutions, including education, as President of Community Colleges and President of County Economic Development, respectively. Dr. Tate has run the Roanoke-Chowan Community College as its president, and was Chief of Staff of the largest HBCU in North Carolina. His administrative experience and budget management experience will bring strong support to the board. Mrs. Shields has experience as the Executive Director of the Duplin Economic Development Office and was charged with successfully managing the staff and budget of the county-wide business development entity.

Scott Satterfield has been a small business owner and successfully built and sold several small businesses through the years. He currently sits as the President of Wayne County Chamber of Commerce where he manages a staff of 10 and a budget that is review and monitored by one of Wayne Counties largest and most influential boards. His tenure in economic development and non-profit management gives him a strong understanding of budget management as well as non-profit board governance.

Ryan Cox has sat as a Town Commissioner reviewing and managing the budget of Calypso, NC. His experience is working as an active board member and elected official brings a level of experience that will support the well-rounded DSA board.

Rhonda Coyne has acted as the Secretary, Treasurer, and interim Board Chair of two charter school boards. She understands the importance of strong financial oversight of a charter school to insure the success and sustainability of the school's operations.

Collectively, the members of the DSA board bring a financial background and non-profit experience that will bring the school to existence with a budget and oversight to realize a successful school for a community is need of education choice. Their oversight maintain a realistic, obtainable and balanced budget for Duplin STEM Academy.

**Q212. 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 1st year budget allocates a net positive income of \$59,970, or approximately 1 and a half teachers salaries or 3 teacher's assistants. These reserves, coupled with the unaccounted for revenues for Title I and Federal EC dollars will provide adequate revenues to offset any unexpected, high needs students with disabilities. Additionally, DSA Service Providers and Landlord are committed to ensuring the school remains financial viable. Within those multiple budgeted line items is approximately \$200,000 to support any unforeseen financial needs the school may have in its first few years.

**Q213.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.**

Duplin STEM Academy will utilize a third party auditing firm. The firm used will be reviewed by the total board with insight from Board Treasurer, Jimmy Tate, who has been the Vice President and President of two separate community colleges, Chief of Staff for a public state University, and is a current board member of UNC - Wilmington. His years in management level review of budgets and financial statements coupled with the third party auditing firm, allows the board confidence in reviewing all reports provided for financial stability.

Currently, the DSA board is will manage all financial responsibilities internally, with oversight from the Board's Finance Committee. As the school prepares to open, the board is expected to identify an outside finance company, the process for vendor selection will include the following:

The board will assign a committee to specifically seek vendors. The committee will consist of select board members. They will vet the pros and cons of each service subcontractor. The committee or team will make a recommendation to the board for a vote on all third party subcontracts. The contracts and performance of each contractor and subcontractor will be evaluated annually to ensure a strong return on investment.

**Q214.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.**



Duplin STEM intends to contract for financial services for student accounting through Acadia NorthStar. As part of their contract with Acadia, the board will look to have service payment oversight and monitoring of all EC and federally funded programs. Additionally, it is expected that the Director will have funds allocated and will hire a Finance Director, on at least a part-time basis in the first year. This Finance Officer will provide oversight into these programs to insure accurate accounting. Further, it will be part of the services provided by the auditor to insure expenditures for these services will be in line with the State and Federal requirements for expenses. Finally, the board will implement a procurement and large purchase policy that will require board approval for all expenditures above a board set spending limit. The board will work with outside third parties financial contractors to insure the policies are compliant with all laws and industry standards.

**Q215.Explain how the budget aligns with the school's mission, curricular offerings, transportation plans, and facility needs.**

The budget aligns with our mission since almost 75% of our funding is going directly to benefit the school's academic programming, personnel, academic resources, and teacher development.

We understand that since the school will be in a rural community, Duplin STEM will need to budget with the anticipated needs of our student population in mind. This includes transportation and lunch. Based on the county population and location of the school, we anticipate close to half of our population needing transportation to ensure their daily attendance. Outside of our first-year budget, the school's development partner is supporting investments over \$50,000 to cover the costs of purchasing used buses. The budget has allocated \$57,750 for part-time staffing, maintenance, and gas to cover this cost in year one. This number was based on consultation with two rural charter schools whose directors provided input into the real-time costs of operating transportation internally at their schools.

Based on the historical construction and development costs and rental rates on several first-year schools in rural markets completed by Legacy Impact Capital, Duplin STEM's developer, we projected paying approximately \$1,350 per student for facility costs. This would equate to 18% of our annual budget costs in the first year and will remain at or above 15% until the school is stabilized. At that point, the rents will taper back annually to be no more than 12% of the total revenues of the school. This model allows the school to capture an additional 5% of its revenues to support classrooms and the overall educational advancement of the school.

**Q216.What percentage of expenditures will be the school's goal for a general fund balance? Describe how the school will develop the fund balance.**





Duplin STEM Academy has a goal to utilize our partnerships and apply for grants and other rural charter school-focused funding opportunities. We set a goal to have a \$690,000 fund balance by year three. With this in mind, we will need to save an average of \$135,000 per year, or approximately 4% of the annual budget.

If we do not meet this goal, we will adjust the next year's budget to cover the funding gap. This will be the responsibility of the Head of School and the Finance Committee to continually analyze spending (quarterly deep dives) to be sure we are on track to build our projected reserves. Additionally, our real estate development partner and service providers partners agree to support the school by deferring payments in order that the school will attain their reserves goals.

**Q217. Provide a description of proposed financing structure. Include financing of facilities, other asset financing, and leases.**

The budget, constructed conservatively, reflects the purchase of most of the capital items needed by the school through the school's non-profit real estate development and capital support, Legacy Impact Capital, who will provide necessary FF&E, buses, computers, etc. through equipment lease agreements. In "Office Equipment & Lease," we include leasing a printer/copier/scanner/fax machine at \$4,000. In "Communications, Computers & Software" along with the earlier cost listed above at \$10,500 and "Classroom Technology, Computers, Software" we total \$61,250, which approximates 3% of revenue.

Much of these line-item expenses will be provided by Legacy Impact Capital. The remaining needs could be leased, which will be allocated in support dollars provided by LIC, as needed. Also, we have not shown any E-rate reimbursement as a reduction in these costs although we anticipate fully participating in E-rate.

Facility leasing is based upon the number of projected students in our enrollment calculations. Based on our projected 1st-year enrollment of 292 students, we are calculating 55 square feet/student or 16,000 square feet at \$24 per foot for a used, fully remodeled building. The building and campus will be expanded and remodeled year over year to support the enrollment growth of the school with rents remaining steady of \$22 to \$25 per square foot, or an average of 18% of revenues.



Q218. 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.

Duplin STEM doesn't have any substantial tangible resources at this time. We will solicit donations of goods and services upon receipt of acceptance of our application.

### 12.3. Financial Compliance

Q219. How will the school ensure adequate internal controls, including segregation of duties, safeguarding of assets, accurate and adequate record keeping?



The Finance Committee and school leadership will maintain a number of internal financial controls and bookkeeping practices that provide fiscal control and accounting procedures that are in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The board may contract bookkeeping duties and will ensure they monitor the effectiveness and the auditor.

The board will receive a monthly financial report that will consist of:

- Income statement (revenue and expenses) with a budget comparison.
- Balance Sheet showing the financial position at the previous month-end.
- Asset status report listing asset acquisitions, disposals, and needed repairs/maintenance
- Enrollment report.
- Fundraising status report.
- General ledger summary report with detail available.

Internal controls will be reviewed and evaluated annually by an independent auditor in accordance with generally accepted audit standards. We will develop an internal control checklist that includes:

- Records are up-to-date and balanced monthly.
- There is a standard chart of accounts.
- Adequate and timely reports are prepared to ensure the control of operators.
- Compare actual results with budget.
- Personal and business expenses are kept separated.
- Administration reviews monthly bank reconciliations.
- There is a separation of duties.
- Compliance with all reporting requirements.
- Insurance is maintained and coverage is reviewed periodically by a qualified individual.

In addition, our financial experts on the board will develop systems for payroll, accounts receivable, donations and fundraisers, petty cash, and credit card usage. Our vendors and all third party contracts will be evaluated annually to ensure the school is receiving the best return on its investment.

**Q220. Provide any known or possible related party transactions (relationship, description of transaction, and estimated dollars involved).**

There are no known possible related party transactions

**Q221. 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.**



Sharpe Patel PLLC

5510 Six Forks Road, Suite 140

Raleigh, NC 27609

919-961-7496

[jay@sharpepatelcpa.com](mailto:jay@sharpepatelcpa.com) (<http://jay@sharpepatelcpa.com/>)

## 12.4. Certify

Q222. I certify that this subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.

- Yes
- No

**Applicant Comments :**

Comments below

Q223. **Explanation (optional):**

This section was largely reproduced from the prior approved Wayne STEM Academy application. As prior mentioned in this application, there are board members who have previously and currently served on the WSA board. They are not applying for Duplin STEM as a replication, but are using the structure of WSA application as the foundation for their new application. The budget is based off of the WSA budget with modifications that reflect some real-time adjustments based on operations, and teacher and director salaries.



## 13. Other Forms

Q224. Sign the attached Charter School Required Signature Certification document and upload it as a PDF or image file.

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 1

### Applicant Comments :

Attached

### Resources



Charter School Requ...

### Applicant Evidence :



Board Signature For...

Uploaded on **4/28/2023**

by **Howard Sowell**



## 14. Third-party Application Preparation

Q225. Was this application prepared with the assistance of a third-party person or group?

- Yes
- No

**Applicant Comments :**

Contributors listed below

Q226. Give the name of the third-party person or group:

Howard Sowell

Chretien Dumond

Tom Miller

Q227. Fees provided to the third-party person or group:

Not Applicable - No Fees Paid.



## 15. Application Fee

Pursuant to G.S. 115C-218.1(c) the charter school applicant must submit a \$1000 application fee to the Office of Charter Schools. The applicant must submit their application fee by **April 28, 2023, at 5:00 pm EDT** for Fast Track and Accelerated applications, and **April 28, 2023, at 5:00 pm EDT** for traditional timeline applications. Payments will be accepted in the form of a certified check. Cash is not accepted.

**Q228.\*Application Note: The applicant must mail the certified check along with the Application Fee Payment Form (see the resources for this question) before or on the due date of April 28, 2023, at 5:00 pm EDT for Fast Track and Accelerated applicants, and April 28, 2023, at 5:00 pm EDT for traditional timeline applicants. Failure to submit payment by the stipulated timeline to the Office of Charter Schools will deem the application incomplete. Payments should be made payable to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Office of Charter Schools 6307 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-6307**

I understand

### Resources



2023 Payment Form ...



## 16. Signature page

Q229. Fill out the attached resource and get it signed and notarized. Then upload as a PDF or image file.

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 1


### Applicant Comments :

Signature page attached

### Resources


Signature Page.docx

### Applicant Evidence :


Board Chair Notariz...

Uploaded on **4/28/2023**

by **Howard Sowell**

Q230. Please digitally sign your application here

Signature







**Final Status**

Reject     Approve

**Approver Comments**