



## **NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION**

# **United Community School**

**Public charter schools opening the fall of 2014**

**See Resource Manual for Assistance  
(Available late November 2012)**

**Due by 12:00 noon, March 1, 2013**

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
NCDPI/Office of Charter Schools  
301 N. Wilmington Street  
Raleigh NC 27601-2825  
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6303 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-6303

## CHARTER SCHOOL

### 2013 Application Process

To open a charter school in the 2014-2015 school year

#### APPLICATION DUE DATE/TIME

**January 4, 2013**

A letter of intent to apply for the 2014-2015 school year **must** be received in the Office of Charter Schools **no later than 12:00 noon**. If the Letter of Intent is not submitted, an application from this group will not be accepted. You can find the Letter of Intent requirements on the NC Office of Charter School web site.

**March 1, 2013**

A complete application package, one (1) single-sided, signed, and notarized original hard copy, one (1) PDF electronic version of the narrative, and one (1) PDF electronic version of the appendices (i.e. labeled flash drive) must be received in the Office of Charter Schools **by 12:00 noon**.

**March 8, 2013**

A copy of the application due to the Local Education Agency in which the proposed charter school will reside in. Applicant must provide evidence to the Office of Charter Schools (i.e. signed letter).

#### APPLICATION SPECIFICATIONS

Applicants **MUST** submit applications prior to the deadline March 1, 2013 at 12:00 noon; applicants are to use the following specifications:

1. All elements of the proposal must be typed with 1-inch page margins and 12-point font, single-spaced, in Times New Roman font.
2. Each major section (Mission, Purposes and Goals, Education Plan, Governance, Operations and Capacity, and Financial Plan) must begin on a separate page, as indicated in the template document. Do not exceed 50 pages for the proposal narrative. (Title Page, Table of Contents, and Appendices are not included in the narrative page limit.)
3. If a particular question does not apply to your team or proposal, **keep the section heading**, respond "Not Applicable," AND state the reason this question is not applicable to your team or proposal. The questions may be deleted.
4. All narrative content pages should be numbered and the name of school should appear at the top of ALL pages
5. All required Appendices should be clearly titled and include page numbers (i.e. Appendix A and page numbers as- A1, A2, B1...).
6. Review all elements of your application for completeness before submitting. An incomplete application may result in the elimination of the application.
7. Late submissions will not be accepted. No exceptions.
8. Provide confirmation to the Office of Charter Schools that within seven (7) days the applicant has provided one full copy of the application to the LEA in which the proposed charter school will be located.

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**I. APPLICATION CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name of proposed charter school: United Community School

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

Name of non-profit organization under which charter will be organized or operated: *United Community School, INC*

Provide the name of the person who will serve as the primary contact for this Application. The primary contact should serve as the contact for follow-up, interviews, and notices regarding this Application.

Name of contact person: *Erika Hedgepeth*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *School Director*

Mailing address: 7612 Metroliner Ct  
Charlotte NC 28213

Primary telephone: 704-780-5830 Alternative telephone: 980-333-3312

E-Mail address: *Erika@ucsnc.org*

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

County: MECKLENBURG

LEA: 600-Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

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

No: X

Yes:

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

No: X

Yes:

What is the name of the nonprofit organization that governs this charter school? United Community School, INC

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

Projected School Opening: Year 2014 Month August

Will this school operate on a year round schedule?

No:

Yes: X

*Proposed Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment (10 Years)*

<b>Academic School Year</b>	<b>Grade Levels</b>	<b>Total Projected Student Enrollment</b>
First Year	K,01,02	216
Second Year	K,01,02,03	288
Third Year	K,01,02,03,04	360

Fourth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05	432
Fifth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06	504
Sixth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07	576
Seventh Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	648
Eight Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	648
Ninth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	648
Tenth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	648

*The State Board of Education provides funds to charter schools, approves the original members of the boards of directors of the charter schools, has the authority to grant, supervise, and revoke charters, and demands full accountability from charter schools for school finances and student performance.*

*I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that the founding board members and I were regularly involved in the development of this application. All information contained herein is complete and accurate. I realize that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications may not be considered. The person named as the contact person for the application is so authorized to serve as the primary contact for this application on behalf of the applicant.*

mindsengaged

*Signature*

mindsengaged

*Printed Name*

Vernie White, Board Chair

*Title*

02/25/2013

*Date*

## II. MISSION and PURPOSES

(No more than three total pages in this section)

### **Mission:**

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

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

Our mission is to fulfill the vision of The Basic School by Dr. Ernest L. Boyer. The Basic School approach following a year-round calendar with our emphasis on piano theory will result in high student growth and achievement. At UCS, everyone UNITES to promote learning; teachers are empowered to meet the individual needs of students; and parents are partners.

### **Educational need and Targeted Student Population of the Proposed Charter School:**

- 1. Provide a description of Targeted Population in terms of demographics. In your description, include how this population will reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the school system in which it is located. Describe the rationale for selecting the location and student body.*

After our first school year, every effort will be made to ensure that our student population reasonably reflects the diverse racial and ethnic composition of students residing in Mecklenburg County.

In early 2012, Community School of Davidson had a waiting list of over 3,400 students. Only 25 students were able to be accepted for the 2012-13 school year. Corvian Community School, also modeled after CSD, had over 150 applications for the 88 student vacancies within 3 days of opening their enrollment period. About a month later, Corvian boasted a waiting list of over 500 students. Corvian recently received over 1,000 applications for the 2013-2014 school year. In 2012 it was estimated that over 30,000 North Carolina students were on public charter school waiting lists (Carolina Journal News Reports, 2012).

#### Location Rationale:

UCS will be located in the university area of Mecklenburg County to make The Basic School (TBS) Approach more accessible to inner-city students. Within 8 miles of our school, more than 37% of students are not reading at their grade level (Table 1, Appendix A-1). Given the high growth and achievement that CSD has had across every demographic (Students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, minority, etc.), UCS is convinced that the Basic School is simply what's best for children ([www.NCReportCards.org](http://www.NCReportCards.org)).

#### Student Body Rationale:

UCS knows that every student can learn when in an optimum learning environment, surrounded by people who support them. It is our desire to offer Mecklenburg County students a nurturing and supportive environment. Many Mecklenburg County families are forced to choose between sending their children to low-performing traditional public schools, expensive, but high-

quality private schools, or hopelessly waiting with thousands of other families to see if they have the winning lottery ticket for one seat in a charter school. Numerous families end up being denied a quality educational path for their children. UCS wants to be the tuition-free and high-quality option for these families. For thousands of students, learning regression occurs during the long summer; UCS wants to be the year-round alternative. Tens of thousands of NC students wait hopelessly on charter school waiting lists. Almost 4,000 of these students wait on "Basic School" charter waiting lists and are located in/near Mecklenburg County. UCS wants to provide these students with the Basic School education that they seek.

*2. What will be the projected enrollment at the charter school and what percentage of the Average Daily Membership (ADM) does that reflect for the local LEA(s) that may be impacted?*

The total projected enrollment at UCS will be 216 students in the opening year, adding one grade level per year (72 students) until reaching eighth grade with 648 students by the ninth year. The total enrollment in year 9 reflects 0.5% of CMS' ADM.

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

Our education plan is comparable to CMS since The Basic School curriculum meets the newly adopted NC Standard Course Of Study.

UCS differs from CMS in that our focus is to implement the principles of The Basic School by Dr. Ernest L. Boyer. This includes allocating a large portion of our budget to be used to hire a sufficient number of classroom teachers and assistants so that students receive multiple opportunities for individual and small group instruction. Our education plan emphasizes piano theory. Research proves that music participation has a positive effect on academic achievement; however, not all children participate in music equally, and certain groups are disadvantaged in access to music education. UCS has taken a bold and innovative step to emphasize piano theory as part of the Basic School curriculum. Emerging research on piano theory in connection to student achievement can not be ignored. See the "Research Briefs: Did You Know?" in Table 3, Appendix A-4, for some remarkable scientific data that shows how piano theory has a significant impact on learning and achievement.

A second difference is that UCS will open serving students in grades K-2, and will add just one grade level per school year until we serve students in grades K-8. Our decision to start small and grow slowly, demonstrates a commitment to the 4 C's of The Basic School model:

Building COMMUNITY  
Creating a CLIMATE for learning  
CURRICULUM with coherence  
Commitment to CHARACTER

The 4 C's must be nurtured and developed and not rushed. By adding one grade level per year, the school has the opportunity to fully develop the curriculum, build relationships with the parents, and establish a positive and healthy climate that will be passed on to the entering students each year. All of our decisions must be based on what is best for students.

4. *In the appendices (Appendix A), you must provide evidence through a narrative or visual of this educational need through survey data, or times and locations of public meetings discussing this proposed charter school. (Please do not provide more than one sample survey form).*

**Purposes of the Proposed Charter School:** *In one page or less, describe how the proposed charter school will achieve one or more of the six legislated purposes, as specifically addressed in the NC charter school statute GS 115C-238.29A, and the proposed school's operations.*

*The Six Legislative Purposes of a Charter School are:*

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

Purpose 1:

The Basic School (TBS) empowers teachers as leaders in the school and community (grade level chair, educational consultants, School Leadership Team, etc.). Teachers will help develop an instructional program designed to meet the needs of our student population. Our teachers will be accountable for knowing and implementing current research and best practices to maximize student achievement. Teachers who have demonstrated successful implementation of these practices will lead ongoing training and professional development. Teachers, alongside parents and community members, will serve on the School Improvement Team and come up with ways to improve UCS. Teachers who are valued and empowered will have a positive impact on student outcomes.

Purpose 3:

UCS provides parents with the choice of a year-round school devoted to meeting individual student needs using innovative methods. Only 4 of the 175 Mecklenburg County (MC) schools will be year round in 2013, and all will be located in West Charlotte, an area known for its low performing schools. There are currently no year-round charter schools in MC. Research shows that achievement test scores decrease and students lose reading, math, and spelling skills over summer break, especially in disadvantaged students (Cooper, Appendix A-3). UCS will have an abbreviated summer to help eliminate summer learning regression (Figure 2, Appendix A-3). Year-round schools provide unique opportunities for remediation and enrichment throughout the year (Ballinger, Appendix A-3). Throughout the year, UCS will have regular breaks, during part of which teachers will offer remediation and enrichment sessions. Modeled after the Community School of Davidson (CSD), UCS will provide parents with the choice of a basic school. The

combined waiting lists for the two basic (charter) schools in this area contain nearly 5,000 students. Approximately 9,000 MC students are on charter waiting lists; over 4,000 of these students are waiting for a Basic School(www.MeckEd.org). According to research, students who studied music had significantly higher achievement test scores and higher IQ scores (Table 3, Appendix A-4, A-5). UCS offers parents a choice to attend a school with a heavy emphasis on piano theory and performance.

Purpose 4:

Studying music has been proven to raise verbal and non-verbal IQ scores, improve vocabulary, spelling and reasoning abilities, heighten mathematics skills, and help with language learning abilities (Hille et al., Appendix A-4). Piano theory will be heavily emphasized at UCS. UCS will implement best practices throughout the school (differentiation, low teacher/student ratios, etc.). The year-round calendar along with TBS Approach will also improve student learning (see Purpose 3).

Purpose 5:

According to research, not all adolescents participate in music equally, and certain groups are disadvantaged in access to music education. Families with high socioeconomic status participate more in music than do families with lower socioeconomic status (Southgate et al., AppendixA-4). UCS students will have equal access to piano theory and performance education. Additionally, TBS approach ensures we expose our students to places and experiences that may be unattainable. UCS will partner with Reedy Creek Nature Center to provide students with multiple hands-on learning experiences each month (See Appendix R-7, R-8). Community service learning projects, such as Nursing Home partnerships, will connect students to the community and help instill purpose and the seven Core Virtues of TBS (Living With Purpose, Appendix B-1). Our students will expand their perspectives and make meaningful connections between the classroom and the world. We developed a budget to provide the services necessary to meet the needs of our students (transportation, nutrition, wellness, etc.).

**Goals for the Proposed Charter School:**

- 1. How will the governing board know that the proposed public charter school has attained their mission statement? What metrics will be used to gauge that success, and how often will the metrics be reviewed in your analysis?*

The governing board will know that UCS has attained the mission statement based on reports given by the school director. This report will contain documents of evidence including the professional development speaker's log of hours invested in staff training, staff professional development sign-in sheet, survey responses/questionnaire completed by staff regarding teacher and student morale to reflect the effectiveness of the character education program, field trip approval forms, classroom rosters, professional staff evaluation reports, grade level planning meeting sign-in sheets, and copies of grade level curriculum maps.

To gauge UCS' success, the governing board will use BoardOnTrack software to monitor the school's progress in fulfilling the school mission and all business and academic goals and objectives. This online software allows us to easily monitor our school, individual board members, board committees, and school director's progress on goals and tasks. The board will also

access the school director's report, student assessment data, and financial reports to measure the level of attainment of the mission and goals. The board's review will be done at least twice per school year.

Our educational consultants from CSD will provide bi-annual reports to the board on the school's implementation of The Basic School (TBS) model. Our most important goal is to successfully implement TBS Model. Doing so will ultimately ensure students make high growth and achievement.

2. *Provide specific and measurable student achievement performance goals for the school's educational program and the method of demonstrating that students have attained the skills and knowledge specified for those goals. These goals should include specific and measurable performance objectives over the first five years of the schools existence.*

UCS board of directors have developed the following SMART goals:

Goal 1:

All students will achieve at least 1.5 years of academic growth.

Objective 1.1:

UCS will implement low teacher to student ratios, differentiated lessons, hands-on learning, and a challenging curriculum, all in a brain-friendly environment. A large portion of our budget will be for classroom staff, lowering the ratio and giving students more individual attention, allowing teachers to keep up with and ensure student growth. During reader's workshop, the teacher will hold individual reading conferences with students, providing the most insight into fluency and comprehension. Teachers document each conference and use this as the most authentic measure of reading proficiency. To demonstrate students have attained 1.5 years of growth, teachers will use progress monitoring benchmark assessments as one measuring tool (such as DRA - Developmental Reading Assessment). Most assessments will be ongoing and authentic. Students will be retested using state standardized tests at the end of each school year. This will help teachers track academic growth. All student achievement data will be kept in the student's portfolio.

Objective 1.2

UCS will utilize literacy assistants (trained volunteers, teacher assistants) to tutor students daily in pull-out sessions of small groups and individuals. Students who are pulled out will demonstrate a need based on academic performance.

Objective 1.3

UCS will use the Response-To-Intervention model to ensure that staff collaborate to determine what's best for students and that we have matched the most effective interventions to student needs.

Goal 2

90% of students will meet/exceed grade level expectations and IEP goals by their 3rd year of enrollment at UCS.

Objective 2.1

UCS will monitor performance on all assessments and maintain records to track student achievement. Students with IEPs will have individual achievement goals set and monitored by special education and classroom teachers. All students will be challenged and held to high standards and

expectations. All students will have portfolios containing personal goals, and will be able to monitor their progress towards meeting those goals. Students will demonstrate proficiency through assessment data and evaluations, by the end of their third year at UCS.

#### Objective 2.2

UCS will follow a year-round calendar. The year-round model can have significant impact on student achievement, especially in disadvantaged students. Students will have the opportunity for remediation and enrichment during the off-weeks of the year-round calendar. Classroom teachers will identify students who did not meet grade level expectations based on assessment data. This list of students will be submitted to the Administrators for record-keeping and follow-up purposes. Classroom teachers will communicate with parents regarding their child's academic performance for the quarter. The parents will be strongly advised to have their children attend scheduled remediation sessions at no cost to the parent during the off-weeks. We expect that the individual attention given to students during the off-weeks of our year-round calendar will help them make the gains necessary to be successful. UCS will also have an abbreviated summer, which will help eliminate summer learning regression.

#### Objective 2.3

Studying music has been proven to raise verbal and nonverbal IQ scores, improve vocabulary, spelling and reasoning abilities, heighten mathematical skills, and help with language learning abilities (Hille, et al., Appendix A-4). The primary goal is for UCS students to achieve their highest potential on the piano. UCS students will be challenged with an intensive course of study, weekly lessons, and recitals.

### III. EDUCATION PLAN

(No more than ten total pages in this section)

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

#### **Instructional Program:**

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

UCS will focus on the 4 priorities of The Basic School (TBS):

(1) School as community: TBS is a place where everyone UNITES to promote learning and all classrooms are connected by a clear and vital mission. Teachers are leaders, with the school director as lead teacher. Parents are partners and are the child's first teachers.

(2) Curriculum with coherence: Literacy is the most important goal. All children are expected to become proficient in the written and spoken word, as well as in math and the arts. Students become well informed as they study various fields of knowledge which are organized thematically within a framework called "The Core Commonalities" (Appendix B-1). Assessments will be authentic and on-going and could include teacher observations, anecdotal records, performance-based assessments, and standardized testing. UCS teachers will develop the curriculum based on best practices in education and current research.

(3) Climate for learning: TBS is accountable to students, parents, and the community. TBS provides appropriate resources, student support services, and small class sizes to promote learning. TBS framework ensures students are taught by teachers who challenge and engage students, and differentiate instruction to meet the individual and diverse learning needs of every student.

Most classrooms accommodate a wide spectrum of learners, ranging from severely below to significantly above grade level. Differentiated instruction means teachers identifying each student's diverse learning styles and needs, then adjusting instruction to meet those diverse needs by implementing a small-group or individual approach. Students will continue to be challenged and engaged in learning that is appropriate and meets their needs. Some students will receive interventions to support them as they strive to meet the grade-level benchmarks. Every student will work to meet their personal academic goals, and will be held to high standards and expectations.

UCS classrooms will be brain-friendly, safe, nurturing, and inviting for students. UCS will integrate health and wellness education throughout the school day. Students will be taught to make smart choices regarding their physical, social, and mental health.

(4) Commitment to character: TBS is concerned with the whole child. 7 core virtues will be taught through staff modeling, service projects, and curriculum integration. The 7 virtues are honesty, respect, responsibility,

compassion, self-discipline, perseverance, and giving.

Our targeted student population will thrive in a school where learning is fun and exciting. TBS is an approach that basically sets out to educate in a way that is best for children. All children will be challenged and engaged, through hands-on learning, technology integration, Paideia seminars, collaboration, individual tutoring, learning to play the piano, attending frequent field trips, and more. UCS' dedication to providing the resources necessary to meet every diverse student need is why our students will be successful and reach their full potential.

Dr. Ernest L. Boyer (TBS, 1995) wrote: "TBS is committed to serving the whole child, acknowledging that a student's physical, social and emotional well-being also relates to learning" (p. 153). Dr. Boyer's research focused on best practices in the highest-performing schools around the world. He compiled these practices into the model known as The Basic School. UCS is committed to TBS philosophy to meet every student's need. The success of students in all demographics at our model school (CSD) has been well documented: over 95% of economically disadvantaged and 70% of disabled CSD students meet/exceed grade level expectations, compared to state averages of 54.2% and 33.8%, respectively ([www.NCSchoolReportCard.org](http://www.NCSchoolReportCard.org)). Details on TBS are found in Appendices B and R-1-5.

\*Courses of study in Appendix R-1-3

\*Major instructional methods found below, in description of instructional strategies

### **K-8 Curriculum and Instructional Design:**

Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure.

The 3rd priority of TBS is to promote a climate for learning. UCS is committed to a maximum teacher-to-student ratio of 1:12 in core classes. Every class will have 1 teacher and 1 assistant. Kindergarten and 1st grade are when the foundations of learning are being laid; these grade levels will each have 1 extra floating assistant, resulting in a Teacher to Student ratio of 1:10 in these grades. Students will thrive as they receive so many opportunities for individualized instruction focused on teaching to their specific learning needs. Small groups will occur following the whole-group lessons in literacy, math, and piano theory and will be facilitated by teachers, assistants, and classroom volunteers. Teachers will also loop with students for 3 school years. Looping is a practice that TBS strongly encourages because it promotes relationships between families and teachers, maximizes instructional time as teachers do not have to get acquainted with students at the beginning of the year, and provides a stable environment for students who experience instability in their lives.

Classrooms will be arranged to encourage student collaboration and contain space for project and lab work, learning stations for students during independent learning time, cozy reading spaces, an inviting whole group meeting area, and a student spotlight area to celebrate and share learning and growth that is taking place. Student work and interactive bulletin boards will be displayed in classrooms and hallways.

UCS will be a K-8 School (by 2020), opening as a K-2 school and adding one grade level per year. The decision to become a K-8 school is based on research that supports this type of school. TBS philosophy will be implemented throughout all grade levels; however, as our students transition

to middle school (MS), UCS will adhere to the philosophies presented in "This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents" as written in the position paper by The Association for Middle Level Education (2010). From ages 10-15, children experience many developmental changes; altering their environment could drastically enhance the symptoms that stem from those changes. MS students have one less distraction from learning because their school environment will not suddenly change. They can focus on school work in addition to reaping the benefits of individualized instruction, integrated curriculum, and an environment that encourages them to live life with purpose. The curriculum will be aligned with the new NC SCOS. We will work closely with our educational consultants from CSD, currently operating as a K-11 school, to effectively transition students from the elementary to MS program and implement the MS curriculum. We intend to continue the culture and community of the MS environment as one that is inviting, safe, inclusive, and supportive of all.

UCS is committed to providing our students with a high quality education. Teachers will plan numerous off-campus trips to correlate with classroom instruction. Our goal is for students to participate in field trips at least monthly. When studying community workers and living/nonliving things, classes will conveniently be able to walk across the street to the fire station and Reedy Creek Nature Center (Appendix R-7-8). Within a mile of UCS, there are farms, orchards, gardens, and centers that UCS plans to form partnerships with in order to give students constant first-hand experiences in learning.

Health and Wellness is a huge part of TBS philosophy, particularly emphasized in the 3rd priority (A Climate for Learning), and will be taught in K-8. UCS will stay true to our mission to implement TBS approach. The purpose of a focus on health and wellness education is to instill in students healthy habits regarding their well being. UCS students will be able to make responsible choices that affect their bodies and minds, enabling them to grow into healthy and responsible adults.

\*Courses of study in Appendix R-1-3

Provide a synopsis of the planned curriculum, including:

1. One sample course scope and sequence (preferably in graph form) in the Appendices (Appendix B) for one core subject (specific to the school's purpose) for each division (elementary, middle) the school would ultimately serve.
2. Identify how this curriculum aligns with the proposed charter school's mission, targeted student population, and North Carolina Accountability Model.

In the Basic School, all students become well informed. They study the various fields of knowledge, which are organized, thematically, within a framework called "the Core Commonalities." These eight commonalities, based on shared human experiences, integrate the traditional subjects, helping students see connections across the disciplines and relate what they learn to life. (The Basic School, Ernest L. Boyer, 1995)

The sample scope and sequence provided in Appendix B-2 through B-8 shows math Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for each grade level and how the Core Commonalities of The Basic School are aligned to these standards. The scope and sequence table demonstrates that teachers will identify the required standards for their grade levels, and plan to meet/exceed those standards through the thematic units they teach within the Core

Commonalities framework. Because the curriculum will meet or exceed CCSS, students will be challenged and engaged as they demonstrate mastery of concepts and skills, and will receive interventions as needed through the intervention methods and strategies in place for the duration of the curriculum. Meeting individual student needs in this way will ensure students make high growth and achievement. This scope and sequence follows TBS philosophy, aligns with the school mission and the targeted student population that will include at-risk students and gifted students. The goals of this curriculum are to meet and exceed required standards and offer teachers ownership and creativity with how they meet/exceed those standards, thus aligning with the goals of North Carolina's Accountability Model.

3. 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. UCS expects teachers to master the following instructional strategies:

1) Differentiated Instruction - Teachers identify each student's diverse learning styles and needs, then adjust instruction to meet those diverse needs by implementing a small-group or individual approach. Students will continue to be challenged and engaged in learning that is appropriate and meets their specific learning needs. Some students will receive interventions to support them as they strive to meet the grade-level benchmarks. Some students will receive advanced level instruction to extend what they are learning during the whole group instruction. Every student will work to meet their personal academic goals, and will be held to high standards and expectations.

2) Looping - Teachers will loop with students for 3 years so students will ideally have just 3 new homeroom teachers in their 9 years at UCS (K-2, 3-5, 6-8). Looping will especially benefit our targeted student population because teachers will be able to form meaningful relationships with families, increasing the impact they have on their students, and eliminating social anxieties that distract students from the learning process. The stability these deeper relationships will provide for UCS students will be invaluable and will be a large factor in students reaching their full potential as learners. Looping also maximizes instructional time, especially at the beginning of the school year, adding possibly 1-2 months of instructional time that would typically (in a non-looping school) be used for assessments, establishing routines, and building classroom relationships. During the summer, teachers can stay connected with families, provide extended units, and minimize the learning regression that occurs over summer.

3) Active Learning - Many studies show that learning is enhanced when students become actively involved in the learning process (Meyers and Jones, 1993). It is very beneficial for students who are kinesthetic and tactile learners to physically involve themselves in the learning process. Our curricular materials will be based on current research and appeal to the various types of learners.

4) Health & Wellness Teaching Strategies - Since health and wellness will not be taught just as an isolated subject, and instead integrated throughout the curriculum in K-8, UCS teachers will be trained how to implement brain-based learning and health and wellness strategies in the classroom as part of the professional development. Some examples of strategies include frequent energizers to maintain student alertness, lessons and activities that

integrate movement, and teaching memorable chants/songs to help students remember important healthy decisions they should make.

5) Integrating Technology - Computer literacy is essential because it makes learning relevant for students in the 21st century. Technology increases engagement, thus maximizing learning. UCS will equip its classrooms with various types of devices, including iPads, Nabis (student tablets), and projectors. Teachers will be expected to utilize these devices during independent student centers and whole-group activities.

6) Interactive Instruction - Working with others increases engagement which maximizes learning, and provides opportunities to learn from and alongside peers. Students will gain feedback from peers and be able to discuss and exchange ideas.

7) Activate Prior Knowledge - Since many students enter school with limited experiences, it is essential that teachers tap into what they already know before teaching. Students are then able to make connections to the lesson and will better engage in instruction.

4. Provide a school academic calendar (minimum of 185 instructional days or 1,025 hours) and a brief narrative on how the calendar coincides with the tenets of the proposed mission and education plan.

The year-round school calendar (Appendix R-6) coincides with the tenets of our mission at UCS.

Our mission is to be a Basic School with an emphasis on piano theory, following a year-round calendar to increase student growth and achievement. Research shows that a year-round calendar is especially beneficial for disadvantaged students whose needs include an abbreviated summer break to prevent regression of learning between school years. These disadvantaged students, according to research, have been shown to make academic advances in comparison to disadvantaged students who attend schools following traditional calendars.

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

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

Teachers will utilize various assessment tools to determine student levels. Teachers will collaborate with students to help them set goals. Through individualized instruction, teachers will help students meet their goals. Students at risk of failing (ARS) will undergo frequent progress monitoring once they are identified as ARS early in the school year. During teacher-led small groups in the classroom, students will receive instruction in the identified struggling area(s). The teacher's assistant will help tutor the ARS and will assist the teacher with progress monitoring and intervention strategies. UCS will have a literacy lab run by teacher's assistants and volunteers who are trained in intensive intervention programs such as Orton-Gillingham and Reading Rockets. These literacy assistants will pull ARS from the classroom during the literacy block to implement intervention strategies. In the Basic School we believe that mathematics is a language, so while we call the tutors "literacy" assistants, there is math intervention offered to help create math literacy.

UCS will use the Response-to-Intervention model to ensure that staff collaborate to determine what's best for students and that we have matched

the most effective interventions to student needs.

Teachers will communicate frequently with parents to ensure both parties are working together towards the same goal to bring the student to academic proficiency. UCS is committed to meeting our student needs. We will provide the services necessary to ensure every student can be successful. Our budget includes contracting student support services (i.e. counselor, nurse, etc.). We will also meet student transportation and nutritional needs.

Looping will be a school-wide practice that will help ensure the needs of our at-risk population are especially met. Looping allows teachers to connect and reinforce what students learn across grade levels. This practice also boosts student achievement as it eliminates the instructional time that is normally used to get acquainted with students at the beginning of the school year. ARS often come from unstable backgrounds which often negatively impacts student learning and achievement. When students loop with their teachers and classmates, distractions are minimized, improving student achievement.

2. Explain how the instructional plan and curriculum will meet the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students, including the following:

- a) Methods for identifying ELL students.
- b) Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for these students.
- c) Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of ELL students, including exiting students from ELL services.

1. English language learners will be identified using the Home Language Survey <http://dpi.wi.gov/ell/pdf/homelang.pdf> and from thoroughly assessing student academic history to determine if lack of progress is a direct correlation to inability to comprehend English.

2. UCS will meet state and federal requirements regarding the education of English language learners. Upon identification, teachers will support English language learners by incorporating Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) strategies in the classroom. Some examples of the SIOP strategies include: promoting comprehension with supplementary materials (charts, illustrations, multimedia), providing access to hands-on materials and manipulatives for student practice, and allowing frequent opportunities for peer collaboration.

3. ELL students will be served by the EC teachers. We will write goals and set benchmark objectives and then monitor through formal and informal assessments, teacher observations, anecdotal records, and student work samples. Many of the strategies that are implemented to help students who are struggling with comprehension and vocabulary development are the same strategies that are utilized for ELL students.

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

- a) Specific instructional programs, practices, strategies, and opportunities the school will employ or provide to enhance their abilities.
- b) Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of intellectually gifted students.

1. UCS believes that the needs of identified gifted students can be met in the regular classroom by implementing best practices which include

opportunities for critical thinking and problem-solving. If a student is enrolled at UCS and comes with a gifted identification, we will service the student in the regular classroom. We believe that the instruction typically reserved for academically gifted students is best for all students (project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, literature circles, critical thinking, problem-solving, etc.) Gifted students may take these experiences to a different level within the classroom, and research suggests that they benefit from modeling for and teaching peers.

UCS believes that every child can and will succeed in ways that reflect his or her own aptitudes and interests, especially in an inclusive model classroom. This model works for gifted children and all other children under the following conditions:

- >Students are appropriately grouped in clusters
- >Teachers match their instructional strategies to the specific learning needs of the students
- >Students receive an appropriately individualized curriculum to meet their needs

The goal of this program is to meet the instructional needs of gifted students in a regular classroom while creating a learning environment in which these students can fully develop their abilities and interests without losing their sense of membership as part of the class. At UCS, we are concerned with the development of the total child including the cognitive, social, emotional and physical areas. We believe that a balanced educational program will assist children in becoming happy, well balanced and successful individuals. Although a child might excel in one of these areas, we are committed to a well rounded plan for each child that includes goals in all areas.

2. UCS will utilize [www.nccecas.org](http://www.nccecas.org) as a monitoring system for special education students (see Compliance in the Exceptional Children section). UCS will thoroughly review all records received from previous schools and will request that all records be sent as soon as possible to avoid any delay in services. In addition, UCS will use parent information to help determine if a newly enrolled student has been previously found to be eligible for special education services or are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

### **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)* Amendments of 2004 (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), IDEA regulations, and Article 9 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes, North Carolina Policies *Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*. All public schools are responsible for hiring licensed and 'highly qualified' special educators pursuant to law. Public schools are required to provide a full continuum of services to meet the unique needs of ALL students with disabilities.

### **Identification and Records**

1. Explain how you will identify students who are enrolled within the charter school that have previously been found to be eligible for special education services or are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Provide the process for identifying students who may be eligible for special education services as identified in the federal 'Child Find' mandate. Be sure to include how student evaluations and assessments will be completed.

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

1. UCS will utilize [www.nccecas.org](http://www.nccecas.org) as a monitoring system for special education (SE) students (see below under Compliance). UCS will thoroughly review all records received from previous schools and will request that all records be sent as soon as possible to avoid any delay in services.

In addition, UCS will use parent information to help determine if a newly enrolled student has been previously found to be eligible for SE services or are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. An assistance team will be created consisting of a multi-disciplinary team including, but not limited to, the classroom teacher, administrator, SE teacher, support personnel, and parent(s). This team will use a non-judgmental, confidential approach to review and evaluate the needs of specific students who are not demonstrating success in their current educational program. The assistance team will recommend interventions and these proposed interventions will be implemented for a specified period of time. When documented interventions prove insufficient to enable a student to progress academically and/or behaviorally in the general education classroom and a disability is suspected, the assistance team will have the right and responsibility to refer that student for a SE evaluation. An official referral form will be used for this. After obtaining parent permission for testing, evaluation will be conducted to determine 1) if the child has a disability that requires the provision of SE and related services, 2) what are the child's specific educational needs, and 3) what SE and related services are then appropriate for addressing the specific needs. The initial evaluation of the child will be "full and individual." The evaluation will access the child in all areas related to the child's suspected disability.

### 3a) Requesting Records from previous schools

As a new charter school, UCS will be enrolling students with disabilities from a variety of other LEAs, both school districts and charter schools, as well as possibly some from other states. UCS recognizes the importance of obtaining the SE records from the previous LEA as soon as possible to ensure that UCS does not find itself out of compliance with implementing a current IEP for each eligible student by the time the school year begins. The IDEA requires that a receiving LEA within the State provide comparable services to the current IEP until such time as the IEP Team may meet to make revisions. If a student comes from out of state, comparable services will be provided until eligibility is determined based on the State and LEA requirements and, if the student is eligible, the IEP Team can meet to develop a new IEP.

Efforts to obtain records in a timely way may need to include: phone calls to the sending school or district, mailed or faxed requests for records, or even a visit to the local school holding the records.

### 3b) Record Confidentiality (on site)

UCS will create a two-tier process for maintaining SE and/or Section 504 records. The primary file will be kept with the main service provider or

case manager and will contain the essential compliance documents and current IEP.

Contents of Primary File: access log, early intervention documentation, referral form, initial consent to evaluate/consent for reevaluation, multidisciplinary team report (eligibility determination), current Individualized Education Program, Initial permission for placement, and current written notices and meeting notices.

The primary file will be bound in chronological order. At the end of the school year, the old IEP and written notices will be sent to the school director's office or secure office to be filed in the secondary file.

Contents of the Secondary File: parent correspondence, written notices over one year old, outdated IEPs, test protocols, annual review minutes, student work samples, written correspondence, discipline notices, three-year evaluation documentation(continued in additional space)

### Exceptional Children's Education Programming

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

1. UCS believes in providing differentiated instruction in the regular classroom setting. UCS believes in a low teacher to student ratio in an effort to individualize instruction and meet the needs of all students. Students with disabilities will be provided with SE services to ensure a full continuum of services. UCS believes in the Inclusion Model for SE services whenever appropriate according to the provisions of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). When deemed necessary, SE services will be provided at UCS on the following continuum: the general education classroom, with supplementary aids and services (such as SE teacher support); a self-contained special class, for part of the day, with the student spending the remainder of the day in the general education classroom or in activities with students who do not have disabilities; a self-contained special class full-time.

The following key indicators are the determining factors in placement:

- \* Is the placement based on the student's identified strengths and needs?
- \* Does the decision reflect consideration of whether the student could achieve any of his/her IEP goals in a general education class, including specials, with the use of supplementary aids and services?
- \* Does the decision reflect consideration of whether modifications to the curriculum could enable the student to meet any of his/her goals in general education classes?
- \* Does the decision reflect flexible consideration of all options of the continuum?
- \* Does the recommendation consider opportunities for the student to participate with students without disabilities in nonacademic and extracurricular activities?
- \* Does the recommendation consider potential harmful effects of removal from the general education setting or on the quality of services?

2. UCS will implement a zero reject policy. All students regardless of the

nature or severity of the disability will be provided with a free and appropriate education at UCS. UCS will use a non-biased, multi-factored method of evaluation to determine whether or not the child has a disability and, if so, whether SE services are needed. Testing and evaluation procedures will not discriminate on the basis of race, culture, or native language. UCS will follow these provisions of IDEA known as protection in evaluation procedures. An IEP will be developed and implemented to meet the individual needs of the student with a disability. The IEP will specify the child's unique educational needs, states present levels of performance, identifies measurable annual goals and short-term objectives, and describes the specific SE and related services that will be provided to help the child attain those goals and benefit from education. UCS will provide due process safeguards to protect the rights of children with disabilities and their parents. Parental consent must be obtained for initial and all subsequent evaluations and placement decisions regarding SE. UCS will maintain the confidentiality of all records pertaining to a child with disabilities and make those records available to the parents. UCS will collaborate with parents and students with disabilities in the design and implementation of SE services. The parent's (and, whenever appropriate, the students) input and wishes will be considered in IEP goals and objectives, related-service needs, and placement decisions.

3. The IEP team will gather to discuss the child's needs and write the student's IEP. Parents and the student (when appropriate) are fully participating members of the team. Upon parent consent, the child will begin to receive services as soon as possible after the IEP is written and this consent is given. UCS will make sure that the child's IEP is implemented and maintained as it is written. Parents will be provided a copy of the IEP(continued under additional space)

Identification and Records (cont.):

3b) A case manager will be assigned to each student eligible for SE services and/or Section 504. The case manager will be responsible for storing and maintaining the student record. Within each file a log for access to records will be included. The document will state that the records are confidential and may only be accessed by individuals who have a right to know, including parents, classroom teacher, SE teacher, related education service staff, SE para-educator, and administrator. The record will include the name of the person, date of access, and the purpose for which the person is authorized to use the records. Access and use of student records will follow guidelines outlined by the Family Education Records Privacy Act.

3c) Record Compliance (on site)

To ensure record compliance, UCS will utilize CECAS as a tool for monitoring students with Individual Education Programs. CECAS is described below as found on the website: [www.nccecas.org](http://www.nccecas.org).

The Comprehensive Exceptional Children Accountability System (CECAS) is a case management and data analysis system that will be offered to Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Charter Schools, and State-Operated Programs (SOPs) as a means to manage and analyze exceptional children data. This project customizes a commercial product to provide efficient tracking of services for exceptional children. The application is a completely outsourced, web-based system.

The following are the objectives for the CECAS project:

\*Provide a case management/workflow-oriented application for Exceptional

Children professionals around the state to automate the various processes involved in providing services to exceptional children.

\*Provide schools, LEAs, and the Division of Exceptional Children with a system that eliminates redundant data collection and allows the efficient capture of statewide EC data.

\*Provide for the automatic generation, routing and approval of reports required by the State and Federal Government.

EC Education Programming (cont.):

3. Each of the child's teachers and service providers will have access to the IEP and know his or her specific responsibilities for implementing the IEP. This includes the accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided to the child in keeping with the IEP. The child's progress toward the annual goals will be measured, as stated in the IEP. His or her parents will be regularly informed of their child's progress and whether that progress is enough for the child to achieve the goals by the end of the year. These progress reports will be given to parents at least three times per year. The child's IEP will be reviewed by the IEP team at least once a year, or more often if the parents or school ask for a review. If necessary, the IEP will be revised. Parents, as team members, will be invited to participate in these meetings. Parents can make suggestions for changes, can agree or disagree with the IEP, and agree or disagree with the placement. At least every three years the child will be reevaluated. The purpose of the reevaluation is to determine the child's continued educational need for special services, and what those needs are as defined by IDEA. However, UCS will reevaluate more often if conditions warrant or if the child's parent or teacher asks for a new evaluation.

4. UCS is committed to providing related services as deemed necessary according to a student's IEP or 504 Plan. These related services will be provided either directly- hands on, face to face with a qualified service provider in individual or small group sessions or indirectly-teaching, on-going training, and/or consulting with school staff/parents to carry out and monitor therapeutic activities.

### **Student Performance Standards**

1. Describe the student performance standards for the school as a whole.
  2. Explain the use of any evaluation tool or assessment that the proposed charter school will use in addition to any state or federally mandated tests. Describe how this data will be used to drive instruction and improve the curriculum over time for the benefit of students.
  3. Explain the policies and standards for promoting students, including students with special needs, from one grade level to the next. Discuss how and when promotion criteria will be communicated to parents and students.
  4. Provide the public charter school's exit standards for graduating students. These standards should set forth what students in the last grade served will know and be able to do.
1. All UCS students will achieve at least 1.5 years of academic growth. At least 90% of students will meet/exceed grade level expectations and IEP goals by their 3rd year of enrollment at UCS.
  2. The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is an individualized standardized assessment used to identify student reading level, accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. The DRA will be administered at the beginning and end of the school year, and possibly once at mid-year, to track student progress. Once reading levels are identified, teachers can use the data to

plan instruction. This includes instruction at the individual, small group, and whole group level.

Running records (RR) are a quick oral reading assessment tool in which students read passages aloud as the teacher takes anecdotal notes. RR serve as an ongoing progress monitoring assessment tool to be given to individuals a few weeks after a baseline assessment (such as DRA). RR will then be administered as often as needed, varying from student to student. RR help teachers identify areas of strength and weakness in student reading skills and help inform instruction. RR also help teachers identify patterns in student reading behaviors.

In addition to standardized tests administered at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year, most of the assessments at UCS will be authentic, ongoing, and teacher-created. Teachers will create pretests centered around the instruction, that will occur at the beginning of each new unit. These pretests will be administered prior to instruction. At the conclusion of each unit, post-tests will be administered to measure student growth. These post-tests will be replicas of the pretests, to effectively determine student gains in learning. The structure of a pretest/post-test may be a KWL chart, which tracks what students Know, Want to know, and (finally) Learned. Students would complete the L(earned) section of the KWL chart at the end of the unit. Pre/post-tests could also take the form of a 3-4 question survey, etc. The results of pre/post-tests help teachers measure their own effectiveness. They can reflect on the instructional strategies used, revise those strategies, and reteach or enrich effectively. Pre/post-tests will be kept in student portfolios and referred to during parent and student conferences.

UCS curriculum may be embedded with assessment, such as our Math Investigations curriculum. This curriculum provides teachers with traditional paper-pencil assessments as well as with individualized assessments and rubrics.

Student portfolios (SP) will be an evaluation tool to determine student growth and achievement. They may contain samples of student work, writing samples, pre/post-tests, audio presentations, project rubrics, running records, anecdotal notes, and formal assessments. SP will remain at UCS and parents will be able to view the contents of their child's portfolio at any time, including at parent conferences. Students and teachers will refer to SP frequently each week, as they view the SP together during individual conferences. During these student/teacher conferences, students will be able to set personal goals, track their own data, and self-reflect on their progress and growth.

All data collected from our various assessment tools will be used to inform instruction. Instruction will be constantly changing as the needs of students change, as evidenced by the data. As teachers reflect on instructional effectiveness, the curriculum will be revised and improved.

3. UCS policies and standards for promoting students will adhere to SECTION 7A.1.(f) of Session Bill 2012-142 and General Statute 115C-238.29F which states:

"(1) Students in the third grade shall be retained if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency by reading at or above the third grade level

as demonstrated by the results of the State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third grade students. The charter school shall provide reading interventions to retained students to remediate reading deficiency, which may include 90 minutes of daily, uninterrupted, evidence-based reading instruction, accelerated reading classes, transition classes containing third and fourth grade students, and summer reading camps.

(2) Students may be exempt from mandatory retention in third grade for good cause but shall continue to receive instructional supports and services and reading interventions appropriate for their age and reading level. Good cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:

- a. Limited English Proficient students with less than two years of instruction in an English as a Second Language program.
- b. Students with disabilities, as defined in G.S. 115C-106.3(1), whose individualized education program indicates the use of alternative assessments and reading interventions.
- c. Students who demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third grade students on an alternative assessment of reading comprehension. The charter school shall notify the State Board of Education of the alternative assessment used to demonstrate reading proficiency.
- d. Students who demonstrate, through a student reading portfolio, reading proficiency appropriate for third grade students.
- e. Students who have (i) received reading intervention and (ii) previously been retained more than once in kindergarten, first, second, or third grades."

#### State Proficiency Guidelines

Students scoring below state proficiency guidelines during gateway years receive remedial interventions and/or are retained in the same grade. If a student with a disability is being considered for retention, the School Director makes the decision in consultation with the Student Services Team. If the student is making satisfactory progress toward the achievement of the educational goals in the IEP, the student can be promoted. If the student is retained, the student's IEP will include a notation indicating the reason for retention and changes in the IEP.

#### UCS Promotion Criteria

Students in each grade level that meet grade level expectations in reading and math will be recommended for promotion to the next grade level. Students who do not meet math and/or reading grade level expectations and have made insufficient progress during the school year will be considered for retention. Retention may be protested by parents but the School Director holds the right to retain a student.

4. UCS will serve students in grades K-8. Grade 8 students will:

- Demonstrate proficiency on state end-of-grade tests
- Demonstrate proficiency on the grade 7 writing assessment
- Demonstrate proficiency on the school's graduation project in which they demonstrate competencies in research, oral, written, and technical communication skills
- Meet attendance requirements
- Complete 95% of assigned projects and classwork

### **Student Conduct:**

Provide a brief narrative that disseminates how student conduct will be governed at the proposed charter school and how this plan **aligns** with the overall mission and proposed Education Plan of the charter school.

Provide a draft copy of the student handbook within the appendices (Appendix C).

Be sure to include:

1. Practices the school will use to promote effective discipline.
  2. A preliminary list and definitions of the offenses which may result in suspension or expulsion of students.
  3. An explanation of how the school will take into account the rights of students with disabilities in regards to these actions that may or must lead to suspension and expulsion.
  4. Policies and procedures disseminating due process rights, including grievance procedures, for when a student is suspended or expelled.
1. The Basic School philosophy is the foundation on which United Community School is built. UCS believes that establishing a positive school climate and school culture, focused on promoting student learning and built on core virtues, will prevent most negative behaviors from forming. Students are taught the seven core virtues of the basic school through staff modeling, participation in service projects, and curriculum integration. Students are held to high ethical and moral standards and are responsible for upholding these standards.

2. The following are offenses which may result in student suspension or expulsion: significant incidents of bullying or inappropriate behavior (gun possession, physical/sexual bullying, repeated verbal/emotional bullying). Upon recommendation of the school director, the UCS Board of Directors may expel any student whose continued presence in school constitutes a clear threat to the safety of other students or school staff.

### 3. Suspension of Exceptional Child

In the event that a child with special needs exhibits behavior which, if the child were not a child with special needs, could result in the suspension or expulsion of the child from school for a period of more than ten school days or for consecutive periods that total more than ten school days, the school shall promptly convene a multidisciplinary team to review the evaluation already completed for the child and conduct any additional evaluations necessary to determine if the behavior is related to the child's disability including:

- A) Whether the child is presently receiving appropriate education, and
- B) Whether medication is needed or present medication is appropriate.

If the review establishes no such relationship, the school may initiate its normal disciplinary procedures, but must continue to provide those services that the school-based committee finds are necessary to prevent the student from regressing educationally during the suspension. If the review does establish such a relationship, the school may not initiate its normal disciplinary procedures. The findings should be used to determine an appropriate program. Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 115C-391, the policies and procedures for the discipline of students with disabilities shall be consistent with federal laws and regulations (G.S. 115C-391(g)). UCS will comply with the specific discipline provisions of exceptional

children as stated in IDEA 2004.

#### 4. Right to Request a Hearing

Every student is entitled to a hearing. If the student or parent/guardian desires a formal hearing to contest a disciplinary decision, the student or the parent/guardian must notify the school director in writing within three school days following receipt of notice of suspension. The notice of appeal shall state the issue(s) for the appeal, including concerns regarding the level of suspension, if any.

The student shall not return to school unless and until the appeal is resolved in his/her favor. In appropriate cases, the school director is authorized to waive this rule and allow a student to return to school while an appeal is pending.

#### No Hearing Requested

If a hearing is not requested within the allotted time, the school director shall provide the student/parent/guardian written notice of her decision whether to allow the student to remain in school. The decision of the school director shall be final.

Staff and board members will ensure that those whose actions and behaviors fail to align with our expectations will be subject to disciplinary action. Our policy includes levels of discipline for students involved in inappropriate behavior and actions. Discipline will be determined on a case-by-case basis, subject to certain parameters. UCS policies and procedures for discipline of students shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.

**IV. GOVERNANCE, OPERATIONS and CAPACITY**

(No more than ten total pages in this section)

**NOTE:** Please answer all sections completely. Do not use "same as LEA" or "whatever the law states". Lack of proper documentation could deem the application incomplete.

**Governance:**

**Private Nonprofit Corporation:**

\*The nonprofit corporation must be officially authorized by the NC Secretary of State by the final approval interview date.

*Name of Private Nonprofit:* United Community School, INC

*Mailing Address:* United Community School

*City/State/Zip:* Charlotte NC 28213

*Street Address:* 7612 Metroliner Ct

*Phone:* 704-780-5830

*Fax:*

*Name of registered agent and address:* Erika Hedgepeth  
7612 Metroliner Ct  
Charlotte, NC 28213

*FEDERAL TAX ID:* 80-0889376

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

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

Yes (copy of letter from federal government attached: Appendix D)  
 No

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

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

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

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

<b>Board Member Name</b>	<b>Board Title</b>	<b>County/State of Residence</b>	<b>Current Occupation</b>
Antonio Wilder	Treasurer	CABARRUS	Operations Team Manager\

			Corporate Trainer
Amy Tomalis		IREDELL	CSD Lead Teacher
Amy L. Hawn Nelson		MECKLENBURG	Director, Institute for Social Capital
Carmen S. Thomas		MECKLENBURG	Director of Operations   Human Resources Manager
Vernie Johnson White	President	MECKLENBURG	Retired CMS Middle and High School Administrator
Antonia S. Mead		MECKLENBURG	Professor of Health Education at JCSU
Kimberly Phifer	Secretary	MECKLENBURG	CMS Elementary Teacher

**Please provide the following in this location of the APPLICATION: (Do not include as an appendices.)**

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

The UCS Board of Directors shall govern the corporation.

- The board will ensure that UCS abides by the North Carolina state law for Charter Schools (GS115C-238.29). The board shall establish school policies in accordance to all state and federal laws.

- The board is responsible for all transactions of the charter school. They shall manage the business, property and affairs of the corporation in accordance to state and federal regulations. These affairs include, but are not limited to, personnel decisions, long-term planning, curriculum, school policies and procedures, business decisions, and ensuring the school is financially stable and fiscally sound. The board must fulfill all of its legal responsibilities in a careful and responsible manner.

- The board will acknowledge and observe the NC Open Meetings Law by giving proper public notices of all meetings and keeping accurate minutes of those meetings, which will be available to the public at all times on our website.

The board directly hires, supervises, and evaluates UCS's school director. The board has chosen Erika Hedgepeth to serve as the school director. She will be required to obtain a graduate degree or graduate certificate in school administration within 5 years of the opening of the school. When she no longer serves as school director, the board will recruit a replacement who will promote the school's mission with a passion. The board will publicly advertise the vacant position, interview the top applicants, and hire by majority vote the applicant deemed to be the best fit for UCS. This individual must be devoted to the Basic School (TBS) philosophy and possess a graduate degree or certification in school administration. However, if the board determines that a particular candidate will effectively serve as the school director, the board may allot this individual a reasonable amount of time to obtain the required licenses and/or degrees.

The board will create a committee, including at least one board member, to evaluate/supervise the school director. The evaluations will be based on school performance data (i.e. student achievement, teacher effectiveness, etc.) and on the progress of goals set for the school leader using the BoardOnTrack online dashboard. This online system will be provided through our subscription to The High Bar. Part of the evaluation will include survey data from the faculty, staff, and parents to help determine the effectiveness of the school director. The findings of this committee will be presented to the entire board.

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

According to section 3.3 of our bylaws, the Board shall consist of at least five (5) and no more than nine (9) Directors. Currently, there are 7 members on the UCS Board with each bringing diverse and essential skills and experience.

1. Amy Tomalis offers skills and experience in special education, TBS philosophy, and teaching in a basic elementary, middle, and high school. She is our connection to the Community School of Davidson (CSD), our model school.

2. Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson offers skills and experience in teaching, school administration, research, charter school grant writing, creating processes for data-based decision making, curriculum and instruction, strong background in music and music education as well as an interest in environmental education with an emphasis on inquiry-based learning. She serves as our connection to UNCC.

3. Antonio Wilder offers skills and experience in business management, marketing, finance, mortgage loans and underwriting, business/staff professional development, piano theory and hiring/termination of staff.

4. Dr. Antonia Mead offers skills and experience in health education and promoting student involvement in school. She also serves as our connection to Johnson C. Smith University.

5. Vernie White offers skills and experience in middle and high school administration (19 years), observing/supervising/training of teachers and administrators, student discipline, and the development and implementation of student performance improvement plans.

6. Carmen Thomas offers skills and experience in business administration, human resources, staff training, hiring/recruitment of staff, marketing, and policy development.

7. Kimberly Phifer offers skills and experience in public elementary education with a focus in reading/language arts, working with students at-risk of failure, mentoring teachers, suburban and inner-city school experience, and coaching sports.

UCS believes that an effective board is a diverse board. UCS is set up for educational and operational success, mainly because we are governed by a board that is composed of individuals with a diverse set of skills and experiences. Most essential aspects necessary for effective school operation are represented on our board. Our board desires to gain even more diversity in skills and experience. We intend to add one more board member with expertise in the areas of law or accounting.

The composition of our board allows for successful evaluation of UCS'

progress from both an educational and operational standpoint. We have a Health & Wellness professor, an Urban Education professor, a school administrator and a successful teacher on our board who can effectively monitor our school's success from an educational standpoint. We also have Amy Tomalis from CSD on our board to make sure we align closely to CSD from both an educational and operational standpoint. CSD's success has been well documented. There are also two board members who are well versed in business and finance that will lead our school successfully from the operational side. These board members in addition to the consulting and financial services of Acadia Northstar will ensure responsible fiscal management. The Board will monitor the progress of both school and school director goals throughout the year using the BoardOnTrack online system provided through our subscription to The High Bar.

Our locally-based board will work with the school improvement team, which consists of parents, faculty, staff, and other key stakeholders. This relationship will allow effective communication with and representation of key stakeholders (See question below for more detail). Additionally, the community may voice their questions and concerns directly to the board at each board meeting because the agenda will include time for public comments.

3. *Explain the procedure by which the founding board members have been recruited and selected.*

*If a position is vacant, how and on what timeline will new members be recruited and added to the board?*

We believe that UCS benefits from having local board members with varied age, expertise, perspective, ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic background. We have recruited our current board based on this philosophy. This philosophy will also drive our recruitment and selection of future board members. Below is a general procedure of how we select our board members:

1. We evaluate which skills/expertise needs representation on our board.
2. We come up with a list of individuals that we know or that have been referred.
3. We gauge their skills, experience, interest, and commitment level.
4. We select the individual who we believe will have the greatest positive impact on our school.
5. This individual becomes a board member if, and only if, the majority of the board votes to install them as a UCS director.

UCS will make every effort to fill a vacant seat by the same day it becomes vacant. Therefore, each board member will be encouraged to give a proper notice before they vacate their seat so that we can go through the process to have someone take their seat. We will follow the procedure above to fill a vacant seat no later than the next board meeting, if possible. If a proper notice is not given, we will take our time and go through the process until we select a quality/capable individual.

4. *How often will the board meet?*

At least once a month (Currently on 3rd Mondays at 7:00pm)

5. *What kinds of orientation or training will new board members receive, and what kinds of ongoing professional development will existing board members receive? The plan for training and development should include a timetable, specific topics to be addressed, and requirements for participation (Board Policies Draft: Appendix H).*

UCS will subscribe to The High Bar (THB) BoardOnTrack service for our board professional development and training. Our BoardOnTrack membership includes:

- 24/7 Access to an online charter school specific "encyclopedia" that houses hundreds of samples, templates, articles and answers to the most frequently asked questions about charter school governance.
- 24/7 Access to an on-demand video library with training videos on a wide

variety of charter school governance topics.

- Access to online assessments to help you evaluate the strengths and governance areas that need improvement.
- Self-paced orientation for new trustees
- Quarterly customized coaching calls with charter school governance experts. In addition, THB will send a free copy for each trustee and senior staff member of their book, *Board Meetings: A Guide for Charter Schools*.

The High Bar training for our initial board members will begin when we receive preliminary approval from the State Board of Education. We spoke with Marci Cornell-Feist, the founder and CEO of The High Bar, and she stated that they are willing to work with us. They support what we are doing and they are willing to provide a monthly payment option or a deferred payment option during our planning year. The High Bar will train the UCS board regularly using the on-demand training videos and resources, and quarterly through the customized coaching calls.

Additionally, we will contract with Acadia Northstar from time to time to provide training for our board members. Some of the training lessons are: Curtailing risk & lawsuit exposure, managing parent issues, fiduciary roles & responsibilities, governance vs. management, effective 1-hour board meetings, dealing with the media.

UCS will join the NC Alliance for Public Charter Schools and attend its conferences, meetings, trainings, and workshops. UCS is also committed to attending all State-provided professional development.

All UCS board members are expected to participate fully; however, extenuating circumstances may cause board members to miss meetings from time to time. Chronic absenteeism is grounds for removal from the board (by majority vote).

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

According to our bylaws, if any member of the Board faces a conflict of interest in a matter pending before the Board, that member shall make full and candid disclosure to the Board of the nature of the conflict. A conflict of interest would occur if any matter before the Board is favorable or potentially favorable to the personal, family, or business interests of the Board member. The body to which such disclosure is made shall thereupon determine, by majority vote, whether the disclosure shows that a conflict of interest exists or can reasonably be construed to exist. It is unethical for a board member to vote on or discuss a matter before the board if there is a conflict of interest. Any board member violating this duty to report a conflict of interest may be removed from the Board by majority vote. Each member of the Board shall fill out, sign, and submit a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form at the annual meeting and whenever an undisclosed conflict arises.

If one or more directors present at a meeting abstain from discussing and voting on a pending matter due to a personal conflict of interest with the subject of the motion or due to restrictions contained in our bylaws, then the remainder of the directors shall still constitute a quorum for that particular vote and a majority of those voting directors shall be required

to approve the motion.

Since Amy Tomalis is our education consultant, there may be some potential conflict of interests.

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

A policy can be implemented only after it has been presented, thoroughly researched, thoroughly discussed, and voted upon by the Board at publicly announced Board meetings. Each policy shall be made with our school mission, vision, and goals in mind. Unless otherwise required by law, the vote of a majority of the Directors present at the time of the vote, if a quorum is present at such time, shall be the act of the Board (Article 3.8 of UCS Bylaws). Each Director present shall have one vote. Each Board member will vote in favor of a policy if, and only if, it promotes our school's mission and vision, it aims to meet or exceed each UCS performance-based goal and objective, it is fiscally responsible, and there is no conflict of interest. No policy shall be adopted that does not align with the school's mission or that violates any state or federal regulation(s).

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

The board operates with full authority and autonomy. As stated in article 3.14, the Board, by resolution adopted by a majority of the entire Board, may designate advisory committees, each consisting of one or more Directors. Each committee shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. Example committees would be a Building Committee, School Audit Committee, and such other committees to perform any functions determined by the Board and to advise the Board. These committees will present information and/or recommendations to the entire board. The entire board will carefully examine, discuss, and vote on all school policies.

The School Improvement Team (SIT) is an advisory body comprised of school staff, parents, and community members who will work together towards the common goal of improving UCS. The SIT will give a voice to families and community members concerning school-wide decisions. The SIT's primary role is to create a School Improvement Plan. This plan will be put in place to improve the promotion of student learning, meeting individual and diverse student needs, meeting/exceeding state standards, and engaging with the community. The School Improvement Plan will be submitted to, viewed by, discussed by, and/or voted on by the Board of Directors.

Acadia NorthStar will provide UCS with accounting services, budget management, and student information management. They will work closely with the school director, assistant director, and secretary. Their monthly reports will be reviewed by the school director and our board.

Our community is involved in our organization via the SIT. Additionally, our community is invited to voice their questions and/or concerns directly to the board at each board meeting.

**Governance and Organizational Structure of Private Non-Profit Organization (continued)**

**Include in the Appendices:**

9. 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).
10. A one-page resume from each founding board member and responses to the questions found on the Charter School Board Member Form (Appendix E).

11. *The proposed by-laws, which must include a Conflict of Interest Policy for board members and a stated commitment to the NC Open Meetings Law (Appendix F).*
12. *A copy of the articles of incorporation, if available. If not available, this document must be available prior to interview by SBE, the applicant must demonstrate that it has been applied for prior to submission of the proposed application. (Appendix G)*
13. *Copy of any board policies if adopted already (Appendix H).*
14. *Copies of meeting minutes (if available), relevant to the development of the charter school plan, during the application process (Appendix I).*

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

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

**X Not Applicable**

**Private School Conversions: complete ONLY if the proposed charter is a private school conversion. Otherwise, mark "Not Applicable" and follow the direction #3 in the Application Specifications.**

**X Not Applicable**

*Applicable" and follow the direction #3 in the Application Specifications. Understand that the replication means that a new charter school will be governed separately from the charter school the application is modeled after.*

**X Not Applicable**

**Projected Staff:**

Provide, as Appendix K, a list of positions anticipated for the charter school; (e.g., principal or director; finance officer, administrative support staff; teachers (part-time and full-time); paraprofessionals/teaching assistants, clerical, and maintenance.). Be mindful that your predicted administration and staff match the projected enrollment noted in Section I and align with the proposed budget.

**Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management**

Include the following information for the proposed charter school:

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

**Recruitment**

The board has charged the administrative team (AT) with recruiting teachers. UCS will advertise vacant positions via job fairs, local advertising, vacancies/application for employment on the UCS website, and flyers posted in university placement offices, tutoring companies, and social network sites.

**Retention**

Operating as a Basic School will help retain staff. A priority of TBS is to empower teachers to meet the needs of students. UCS is committed to low teacher-to-student ratios and providing each class with a full-time assistant. Currently, teachers are known to endure high stress levels in environments where students surpass the maximum capacity per classroom and teacher assistants are shared among countless classrooms. Children of staff will be offered priority admission. We will support our less experienced teachers by pairing them with mentors. Instructional material funds will be distributed to teachers to help eliminate out-of-pocket expenses for supplies. Staff members will form a Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) consisting of classroom teachers and support staff. FAC will receive

anonymous concerns from staff and forward them to the administrative staff (AS), who will then issue responses to the staff body. We will offer medical benefits and eventually a 401k retirement plan. All staff will receive performance bonuses earned upon achieving our school goals. UCS believes in promoting high-performing staff who believe in our school's mission and instructional focus. Having these individuals serve in key areas (facilitators, administrators, etc.) will move the school closer to sustained school improvement.

- 2. Provide a description of the relationship that will exist between the charter school employees and the nonprofit board. Provide as Appendix L, a draft of the employment policies to be implemented by the proposed charter school.*

The hiring and dismissal of school employees will be recommended by the School Director based on recommendations from the administrative team; however, the hiring and dismissal is only made official by the board of directors. Dismissed employees may request to discuss the reason for termination with the School Director through a written request. If the dismissed employee feels the issue has not been adequately addressed by the School Director, s/he may appeal to the board of directors. Employees can also communicate questions and concerns with the school board via the school improvement team. Employees can directly communicate with the board via email. School employees may contact the board about a grievance. This grievance must be submitted in writing. A representative of the board will make contact with the employee. The board may or may not address the grievance based on the recommendation it receives from the contacting representative. The board will occasionally perform observations at UCS to ensure the mission and goals of the school are being upheld.

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

Hiring and dismissing of school personnel will be recommended by the administrative team but is only made official by the board of directors. The board of directors believes it is essential to hire individuals who exemplify good character and will be committed to carrying out UCS' vision and mission. Instructional strategies can be developed, but character cannot be taught. The administrative team will work with a team of teachers, parents, administrators, and, in some cases, students to hire a person. The administrative team will review the candidates and conduct personal interviews as needed. Each staff member will go through a multiple-step hiring process that includes levels of stakeholder interviews and leading classes to current students. Once qualified candidates are chosen, a criminal background check will be conducted, proof of citizenship or eligible alien status will be obtained, and the appropriate names will be submitted to the board.

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

School Director: \$50,000 - \$55,000  
Assistant Director: \$43,000 - \$52,030  
Secretary: \$24,000 - \$26,400  
Teacher: \$35,000 - \$39,930  
Teacher Assistant: \$15,000 - \$18,000  
Connect Teacher (Arts): \$15,000 - \$35,000  
Speech Teacher: \$40,000 - \$46,000  
EC Teacher: \$40,000 - \$46,000  
Custodian: \$13,000

All full-time staff will receive health insurance and we will offer a 401k retirement plan.

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

Grievance Procedures:

Step 1: Employee must first request, in writing, a meeting to resolve the grievance with the school director or appropriate administrator. A settlement may be reached during the meeting.

Step 2: Written Grievance:

If a grievance cannot be resolved at Step 1 level the employee can file a written grievance (within 15 working days of the action) requesting a hearing with the board of directors to resolve the grievance. The board of directors has 30 working days from the date the grievance was filed to schedule a hearing with the employee.

Step 3: Hearing:

The board of directors will review the request for a hearing and may grant or deny a request for a board hearing. Any hearing granted by the board of directors will be held within 30 days after the hearing request is received. The board of directors will give written notice of the time and place of the hearing to the grievant, School Director, and all administrators involved. The board of director's decision will be communicated in writing to all parties, no later than 30 days after conclusion of the hearing. The board of director's decision will serve as the final step for all grievances.

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

UCS will aggressively seek individuals to fill positions with the following dual responsibilities:

- Teacher assistant / Bus driver (Provide additional pay to teacher assistant from transportation budget)
- Art Teacher / Teacher Assistant
- Dance Instructor / Teacher Assistant
- Drama Teacher / Teacher Assistant
- Custodian / Bus driver

We will actively seek partnerships with other schools to share professionals such as psychologists, counselors, nutritionists, etc.

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

UCS will provide the certified staff needed for our special needs population. An important goal of our recruiting process will be to seek individuals who are dual-certified, especially in the areas of ESL/ELL, gifted education, and special education. We desire to provide financial assistance for teachers to become dual certified in these areas, but only if this is feasible. We have not included this in our budget at this time.

In our first 5 years, it is a budgetary priority for our staff to have 1 full-time (FT) speech pathologist and 1 FT exceptional children's teacher. We will include an Occupational Therapist (OT) if needed. An OT is not currently in our budget; however, their services could fall under the contracted services line of our budget. At UCS, the regular education

classroom will offer higher level critical thinking opportunities, thus meeting/exceeding the needs of all learners, including gifted children. The EC teacher will also serve identified ESL students.

8. *Provide a narrative detailing the roles and responsibilities, qualifications and appropriate licenses that each position must have to be hired by the non-profit organization and effectively perform the job function(s).*

United Community School will employ members based on whether they possess the qualifications, skills, and abilities to perform the job requirements. Above all, all staff must be fully committed to our school mission. We will not discriminate against applicants on the basis of race, gender, age, ancestry, disability, or sexual orientation. All positions require a background check prior to official hiring, to ensure the safety of our school community. Our staff will serve as role models for our students and are required to model the core virtues of basic school philosophy at all times (honesty, respect, responsibility, self-discipline, compassion, perseverance, and giving).

School Director (SD)- Erika Hedgepeth will serve as the SD. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with a focus in Children's Literature. She holds a NC Teaching License and has several years of experience as a second grade teacher in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. She has four years of experience in grades 2-5 in several schools, including a humanities magnet school, in Durham, NC. She earned National Board Certification in Reading/Language Arts in 2010. She was selected Teacher of the Year for 2010-2011 at Stoney Creek Elementary. She is the founder and SD of Minds Engaged Academy since it opened as a private school in 2012. She is in the process of obtaining her Administrative License in the state of NC. The School Director reports to the board of directors. Mrs. Hedgepeth will be required to obtain a graduate degree or graduate certificate in school administration within 5 years of the opening of the school.

Assistant Director (AD) - As with all UCS staff, the AD must have an unshakable belief in TBS philosophy. We prefer for the AD to have a Principal License and teaching experience. However, if we feel confident that a certain candidate will successfully promote our mission, the board of directors may allow this candidate reasonable time to obtain the appropriate licensure. Communication, motivational, and managerial skills are important. The AD is supervised by the SD. The AD assists in the development and implementation of the total school program, assists in implementing student orientation and registration activities, meets with staff to assist in their development, handles disciplinary procedures, communicates and carries out established policies, and assists in record keeping/processing.

Administrative Assistant/Secretary - Administrative assistants need clerical experience that includes answering phones, office duties such as faxing and copying documents, organizing and filing student records, and providing administrative support. They must be cordial, patient, and have good communication skills as they will greet parents, students, and visitors as they enter the school building.

Teacher - UCS will seek highly qualified teachers. By definition, highly qualified is one who is fully certified and/or licensed by the state; holds at least a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution; and demonstrates

competence in each core academic subject area in which the teacher teaches. Teachers should have good communication skills and experience working with children in a child care facility or school. Grade level preference will be given to teachers with experience in the applied-for grade level. Teachers with exceptional qualifications such as national board certification, master's degree(s) in areas relevant to education, outstanding recommendations from supervisors and/or former employers, and/or experience in a Basic School or familiarity and deep understanding of TBS philosophy, may be shown preference. UCS's school minimum teacher certification policy is as follows:

1. At least 75% of teachers in grades K-5 are certified.
2. At least 50% of teachers in grades 6-8 are certified.
3. All teachers in grades 6-8 who are teaching in the core subject areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts shall be college graduates.

Teacher's Assistant - Teacher assistants must hold a high school diploma or its equivalent and an associate's degree from an accredited community college, technical school or other institution of higher education or several other options including apprenticeships and other programs, according to state law and under No Child Left Behind. S/he should have experience working with children in a child care or school facility. In addition, they need clerical experience such as creating electronic newsletters, designing bulletin boards, and filing student documents. Assistants will be required to work well with teachers and with students in small group and whole group settings. They must have good classroom management skills.

Custodian - Custodians must be able to read and follow instructions, communicate effectively, and perform manual labor.

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

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

The following positions (part-time and full-time) are responsible for maintaining teacher licensure requirements and professional development (PD):

- Teacher
- EC teacher
- Speech teacher

\*Teacher assistants are required to undergo PD.

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

### **Mentorship**

UCS will implement a mentor program. Instructional staff with significant classroom experience will serve as mentors to less experienced teachers. The duties of a mentor are to:

- Convene with mentee at least once per quarter to discuss topics of concern
- Perform at least one peer observation of mentee per semester
- Provide helpful advice and feedback to mentee following peer observation
- Allow mentees to observe a full or half day of instruction in mentor's class

## Retention

With our commitment to TBS practices, such as maintaining low class ratios and empowering teachers, we are confident our teachers will feel appreciated and supported in the enormous effort to promote student learning and achievement. UCS is devoted to establishing a healthy, positive school climate where employees feel respected and valued. UCS will form a Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) consisting of teachers and support staff. FAC will be responsible for collecting anonymous concerns from staff and submitting them to the administrative team (AT) each month. AT will issue a reply to the staff body.

UCS will practice an open-door policy for employees to individually voice concerns and seek solutions with AT. We expect these procedures to help build a climate of trust and respect between staff members.

Our budget includes funds to be disbursed to instructional staff towards the purchase of instructional materials. These funds will help eliminate out-of-pocket expenses for teachers' classrooms. Additionally, our budget includes Pay-For-"School" Performance bonuses, that will be evenly disbursed to ALL staff if all school goals are met. This is not to promote competition between staff but to promote a sense of community, where every teacher is responsible for every student. These bonuses will be an annual reminder to staff that they are appreciated for their hard work and efforts to ensure all of our students reach their full potential. In TBS everyone UNITES to promote learning, from custodial staff to the school director.

Evaluation (\*Additional criteria for evaluations may be determined by the school board)

-The school director will be evaluated by the board of directors at least once per school year based on the NC Standards for School Executives and the required elements of the principal evaluation process, school performance data, progress of goals, and parent/staff survey data.

-The assistant director(s) will be evaluated by the school director based on the NC Standards for School Executives and the required elements of the principal evaluation process.

-Using the NC Evaluation System, teachers will be evaluated by the AT based on the NC Professional Teaching Standards.

-Teacher assistants will be evaluated by the AT based on teacher surveys, adherence to employee policies and regulations, and scheduled and unscheduled administrative observations.

Employees who frequently demonstrate inadequate performance may be put on a performance plan (PP). The PP will state area(s) needing improvement, specific actions that will be activated to improve the area(s), a timeline for the activation of the actions, and a deadline for the review of the employee's cooperation with the details of the PP. Employees, who react positively to the implementation of the PP and improve to at least a proficient evaluation by the AT, will be recommended for continued employment. Employees who react negatively to the implementation of the PP, or fail to follow the steps required by the PP, will not be recommended for continued employment, which can include immediate discharge.

UCS will retain at least 75% of elementary teachers, and 50% of middle school teachers, who possess the appropriate licensure requirements for the state of NC. All teachers will be highly-qualified, including a bachelor's degree and will demonstrate subject-matter competence.

3. *Discuss the core components of professional development plan and how these components will*

*support effective implementation of the educational program. Discuss the extent to which professional development will be conducted internally or externally and will be individualized or uniform.*

Our PD plan will prepare teachers to effectively implement TBS Approach and the newly adopted NC SCOS. The training will be embedded and ongoing, utilizing the off-weeks in our year-round calendar, as well as voluntary weekly planning sessions during the summer.

PD will be conducted internally and externally and will be individualized and uniform:

Instructional staff will be required to attend CSD's Fresh Take Conference to get familiar with TBS approach and learn best practices in education. Staff may choose from several different workshops over the course of 2 days. As part of our goal to empower teachers, staff meetings will be led by professionals, including UCS teachers, to offer training and workshops to the staff body. Staff will complete surveys about personal PD needs. The school director will review surveys and offer multiple workshop sessions in-house and staff will conveniently choose from the workshop session(s) that best meet their PD needs.

UCS will implement a mentor/mentee partnership between more/less experienced teachers as part of the PD plan. Staff members have differing needs which will be handled at the individual level (individualized PD may include classroom management strategies, instructional strategies, etc.). Throughout the year, staff will participate in book studies as part of PD. The reading will begin with required summer reading so that staff members return to school knowledgeable in school philosophy and best practices (ex. *The Basic School* by Dr. Ernest L. Boyer). Around May, UCS staff will attend an overnight retreat to revisit the school mission, connect newly hired staff, reflect on the previous year, set goals for the upcoming year, and rejuvenate staff to end the year on a high note. Newly hired staff must attend a new staff orientation at the beginning of the school year.

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

Our school board member, Amy Tomalis, is employed at Community School of Davidson, a successful and highly-ranked Basic School. Ms. Tomalis is an experienced new staff trainer/mentor, teacher consultant, early childhood through middle grades teacher, Exceptional Children's teacher, and two-time NC Charter School presenter. UCS will utilize Ms. Tomalis to conduct staff training and workshops for TBS model, best practices in inclusion classrooms, and current educational research and trends. Ms. Tomalis provides a strong connection between UCS and CSD. UCS will contract additional consultants to fulfill PD needs in the areas of TBS philosophy and implementation, as well as support with the transition from operating as an elementary school to a middle school. Near the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, CSD will host the annual Fresh Take conference. All UCS staff will be required to attend this conference each year. The purpose of attending the Fresh Take Conference is to gain greater knowledge of best practices in education and inspire and empower UCS staff.

Below is a schedule of our PD plan that will take place prior to school

opening:

June-August 2014: Teachers may volunteer to attend weekly planning sessions during the summer months

June-July 2014 : Teachers will be assigned summer reading relevant to TBS philosophy and practices, to be completed before UCS opening

July 2014 : New Staff Orientation

July 2014 : CSD teachers will help guide UCS teachers as they develop curriculum maps for the new school year, based on the Core Commonalities of TBS framework and the newly adopted NC SCOS

August 4, 2014 : SIOP Workshop (Trainers will provide strategies to use in classrooms with students with language barriers)

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

A significant portion of our budget goes toward PD. UCS is devoted to fulfilling all priorities of TBS philosophy, one of which is to build the school community.

UCS expects to offer embedded and ongoing professional development workshops a minimum of:

- Twice prior to school opening for a total of 14 hours;
- Once per month at staff meetings for a total of 2 hours;
- Once per quarter during the off-weeks for a total of 5 hours (PD will be conducted during the off-weeks for approximately 1 hour per workday. The remainder of each of the 5 workdays will be utilized for student remediation and enrichment, vertical and horizontal grade level planning, etc.)
- Once a year for a staff retreat

Informal PD will occur a minimum of:

- Once per month for 1 hour between mentees/mentors at times convenient for both parties

The year-round school calendar is divided into four quarters. Two of the quarters (Fall and Spring Break) conclude with a two-week recession. The first week of the recession is reserved for remediation and enrichment of students. PD will also occur during the first week outside of the hours reserved for remediation and enrichment. No staff or students will report to school during the second week of the recession. This break will give students time with their families and will give teachers time to rejuvenate for the upcoming quarter.

Each day the school hours for students are 8:00 am - 2:30 pm. Staff hours are 7:30 am - 3:00 pm. The staff hours total 37.5 hours which leaves 2.5 hours per week open for staff meetings. These 2.5 hours will ensure that UCS is able to meet PD needs including, but not limited to, mentoring of staff and vertical/horizontal grade level planning.

UCS' school director has the role of choosing PD opportunities aligned with the school's mission and targeted student population. The school director schedules the PD for an appropriate day/time. Staff members will be notified of who is required to attend the PD and must complete written or electronic registration for the PD. The school director or designated employee (facilitator, assistant director) will use an attendance sheet for PD accountability. The attendance sheet will be submitted to the school director. Only staff members with absences deemed excusable by the school

director will be exempt from attending the PD. Staff members with absences deemed inexcusable by the school director may be penalized or required to make up the PD at a later time.

### **Enrollment and Marketing:**

Reaching the full capacity for enrollment will be critical to obtain the necessary financial resources to keep your school viable and operating efficiently. In addition, it is required by law that charter schools provide equal access to all students. Read the charter school state statute regarding admissions GS 115C.238.29F(g) (1-7) carefully.

### **Marketing Plan**

*Marketing to potential students and parents is vital to the survival of a charter school. Provide a plan indicating how the school will market to potential students and parents in order to reasonably reflect the racial/ethnic and demographic composition of the district in which the charter school will be located or of the special population the school seeks to serve: (G.S.115C-238.29F(g)(5)).*

Below is our Marketing Timeline:

February 2013 - Campaign to raise community awareness about UCS' mission. We will hold a Community Connect meeting on Saturday March 9th. The event is being promoted in the Charlotte Observer (Figure 2, Appendix R-9).

July 2013 - Our primary marketing goal will be to increase visibility, spread the news about our preliminary approval, how the process went, and upcoming steps through the CharlotteObserver.com and the Charlotte Observer Newspaper. We will also display our preliminary achievement on a banner on Rocky River Road and on our website.

October-November 2013 - Increase our visibility using the CharlotteObserver.com and the Charlotte Observer Newspaper. Determine the feasibility of getting on a local news channel.

December 2013 - March 2014: Market at local businesses and churches. Attend and speak at local bible studies/church services, hold interest meetings, leave brochures and flyers, etc.

January 2014 - Get listed on CharlotteParent.org and in their magazine. Get listed on MeckEd.org and get included in their Charter School Newsletter. Get listed on Google business listings.

February 2014 - Distribute 10,000 - 20,000 flyers using the USPS Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) to a 3+ mile radius of our school advertising our open-enrollment. Increase our visibility using the CharlotteObserver.com and the Charlotte Observer Newspaper.

March 2014 - June 2014: Do community walk-throughs. This step will depend on how many applications we have received. If we haven't received enough applications, we will continue community walk throughs.

May-August 2014: Back-up plan if we haven't reached our anticipated ADM - Public broadcast on radio. Free Community Ice-Cream social. Increase our visibility using the CharlotteObserver.com and the Charlotte Observer

Newspaper. Distribute 10,000 - 20,000 more flyers using the USPS Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) to a 3+ mile radius of our school advertising our open-enrollment.

September 2014 - Assess our school racial/ethnic and demographic composition. Compare our school composition to that of CMS. If UCS' demographics are not reasonably comparable to CMS, we will develop a plan to target the certain populations that are not well represented in our school.

November 2014 - Adopt a strategic demographic marketing plan for 2015.

December 2014 - February 2015: Implement our marketing plan.

We will constantly subscribe to the Charlotte Observer's Community News package. It is a deeply discounted 13 ads in 13 weeks package that will reach over 100,000 people. We will promote our school in the University News Section (reaches appx. 52,200 people) and the Cabarrus News section (reaches appx. 53,600 people).

UCS will use several other marketing strategies to increase school visibility in our community including, but not limited to: broadcasts, flyers, Social media (Facebook and Twitter), Community service learning projects that will takeplace in the community (i.e. local nursing home partnerships, etc.), community ice cream socials, parent and community workshops, and community outreach events.

UCS will compare the school demographics to the University City area demographics annually. If there are any major discrepancies, a strategic marketing plan will be implemented to ensure demographic diversity at UCS. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Marketing more heavily to targeted demographic groups. Increase marketing strategies (flyers, ads/broadcasts, brochures) in neighborhoods, businesses, and churches where there is a high number of the targeted demographic group
- Passing out, in person, invitations and information about our school in select neighborhoods

### **Parent and Community Involvement**

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

In the Basic School, the circle of community extends outward to embrace parents, who are viewed as the child's first and most important teachers. A vital partnership is created between the home and school, one that begins during the preschool years, is strengthened when the child formally enrolls, and continues from kindergarten through grade five. (The Basic School, Boyer, 1995)

1. UCS will communicate with and engage parents and community members from the time of school approval through opening in the following ways:

-Public ads/broadcasts run in July 2013 and Dec 2013 - March 2014; flyers in Feb 2014 and July 2014

-Share information and flyers on social media pages(Facebook and Twitter)

-Host community ice cream socials, parent and community workshops, school open houses, and other community outreach events

- Set up tables with brochures and flyers at charter fairs and churches
- Pass out invitations and information about our school in select neighborhoods

2. Our mission is to UNITE with parents as partners in the promotion of learning. Parents will be required to complete 36 volunteer hours per school year. \*UCS knows by law we cannot penalize families for not meeting the volunteer obligation. A great way for parents to earn hours is to join a committee such as Fundraising, Book Fair, Field Day, etc. Parents can also earn hours by leading exploratory elective classes, athletic programs, service learning projects, after school education programs, chaperoning field trips, and tutoring students in our literacy lab. We plan to use the Junior Achievement program which solicits community volunteers to teach hands-on and engaging social studies courses. Parents will serve in classrooms by facilitating small groups and managing learning stations. They may regularly pair with students, serving as reading buddies, especially for students who need the extra attention to improve chances of meeting grade level expectations. Parents will be invited into classrooms on a regular basis for events like Donuts with Dad, to share career information, and to attend school assemblies. Grade levels will put on performances, recitals, and assemblies several times per year. UCS will hold parent workshops and curriculum nights at a minimum of once per semester. One purpose of the parent workshops will be to inform parents of strategies and/or study skills that can be used to assist their children with homework. Another purpose for parent workshops is to help them understand the Basic School principles and how they are implemented at UCS. Our school will have a designated area that contains a bulletin board with resources including homework tips, helpful websites and contact information for tutors.

Parent feedback is vital and encouraged at UCS. All parents are invited to voice their concerns at each public board meeting. A time for public questions/comments are included in every open meeting agenda. Additionally, parents make up a portion of the School Improvement Team, which also works with the board and ensures parental representation. The board of directors will seek feedback from the School Improvement Team regarding such topics as the School Improvement Plan, assessment data, and student performance.

At "High Growth" charter schools, such as CSD, it is evident that parental participation was more than simply staying informed about their child's education. The parents at these charter schools are proud of their school choice and make sacrifices daily. ("The Characteristics That Sustain "High Growth" Public Charter Schools" [ncpublicschools.org](http://ncpublicschools.org)) This is why it is our mission to partner with parents in the promotion of learning.

### **Admissions Policy**

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

1. *Tentative dates for application period; enrollment deadlines and procedures.*
2. *Clear policies and procedures detailing the open enrollment lottery plan including policies regarding statutory permitted student enrollment preferences.*
3. *Policies and procedures for student waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers.*
4. *Explanation of the purpose of any pre-admission activities (if any) for students or parents.*

*5. Clear policies and procedures for student withdraws and transfers.*

The application period will begin July 1st, the first day of the school year, and end the last business day in February. All applications must be submitted to the school office by the close of the last business day in February. A qualified student information management company (SIMC) will enter the applicants into a database for further tracking during the enrollment process. Accepted applicants must confirm their intent to enroll at UCS within four weeks of acceptance by returning the registration packet. Students who do not attend the first day of school or call in to request an excused absence by a date and time given by UCS, will forfeit their registered status, will not be enrolled, and will have to resubmit another application in order to receive future consideration. All applications received after the application period will not be considered for the lottery process. These applications will be date and time stamped upon submission and added to the end of the waiting list in the order in which they were received. If there is no waiting list, these applications will be accepted in the order in which they were received.

If the total number of applications exceeds the number of available spots, a public lottery shall be held. This videotaped random selection process will go as follows:

1. UCS will notify all applicants and the general public of the time and place of the public lottery.
2. UCS will create a database that includes each student.
3. This database will be imported into a charter school lottery software.
4. The software will randomly select names until all available spots have been filled, then it will construct a randomly selected waiting list.
5. UCS will make every effort, including audits, to ensure the integrity and validity of every public lottery held.

If multiple birth siblings apply, one surname will be entered, and if selected, all birth siblings will be admitted to UCS. The finalized acceptance list and waiting list will be made available to the public. Applicants on the waiting list will be contacted in order as openings become available. Any parent or guardian wishing to contest the lottery process can do so by contacting the Board of Directors in writing. A final decision regarding the contest will be made by a vote of the Board in an open meeting.

UCS will give enrollment preference to:

1. Students who are children of current employees (school director, school administrators, teachers, and teacher assistants)
  2. Siblings of students who are currently enrolled at UCS.
- If the applicants in the above preference groups exceed available vacancies, a priority group lottery will be held.

Once students are enrolled, they will be eligible to re-enroll each successive year until they graduate. Each student will be required to submit an annual intent-to-return form. All applicants on the waiting list will have to resubmit an application during the following school year's application period. Families who wish to withdraw or transfer should report their intentions in person a minimum of 3 days prior to leaving UCS. The student will have to turn in a completed withdrawal or transfer-request form. This form will be sent to a SIMC. The SIMC will handle all of the data processing, the transferring of student records to the appropriate school, and complete all of the required state reporting. A SIMC will handle our Student Management System, including student entries/withdrawals/transfers, student profiles, transcripts, attendance, etc. In essence, the SIMC will

serve as an outsourced Registrar Office. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a charter school may refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from a public school under G.S. 115C390.5 through G.S. 115C390.11 until the period of suspension or expulsion has expired.

Acadia Northstar will serve as our SIMC for the first 3 years of our charter.

**PROJECTED ENROLLMENT 2014-15 through 2018-2019**

IDENTIFY LEA FROM WHICH STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY COME

LEA #1 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools  
 LEA #2  
 LEA #3

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

	2014-2015			2015-2016			2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019		
	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 000	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 000
Kindergarten	72	0		72	0		72	0		72	0		72	0	
Grade 01	72	0		72	0		72	0		72	0		72	0	
Grade 02	72	0		72	0		72	0		72	0		72	0	
Grade 03	0	0		72	0		72	0		72	0		72	0	
Grade 04	0	0		0	0		72	0		72	0		72	0	
Grade 05	0	0		0	0		0	0		72	0		72	0	
Grade 06	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		72	0	
	216			288			360			432			504		

### **Transportation Plan:**

*Describe in detail the transportation plan that will ensure that no child is denied access to the school due to lack of transportation. The details of this plan should align with the Mission, identified need for the charter school, targeted student population, and the budget proposal.*

UCS will arrange carpool pick-up and drop-off locations. Carpool will be the main option for students within 5 miles of our school. For students more than 3 miles away, UCS will provide them with Charlotte Area Transit System monthly passes if they can provide proof of need. These passes will allow these students to ride the area bus and train an unlimited number of times. There is a bus stop right in front of our school location. The board will also consider busing to certain neighborhoods to ensure no child is denied due to transportation, to ensure that our school is diverse, and to alleviate concentrated carpool pick-up locations. This will be determined by the board once we know our student population.

We will also establish partnerships with other organizations, such as child care facilities, that offer drop-off and pick-up transportation services from the facility to our school in the mornings and afternoons. With these partnerships, we hope to negotiate a discounted rate for services to UCS families.

In November 2014, UCS will make contact with CMS to explore the possibility/cost of contracting with them to provide busing service. If we can come to a viable agreement with CMS that is financially better than the carpool and public transportation system, we will contract with them.

### **School Lunch Plan:**

*Describe in detail the school lunch plan that will ensure that no child is lacking a daily meal. The details of this plan should align with the targeted student population and school budget proposal.*

UCS plans to participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. This is a federally assisted meal program that provides schools with nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children who qualify each school day. Students who do not qualify for free or reduced lunch will have to pay a fee. We have contacted the Charlotte regional Child Nutrition consultants (Elizabeth Moore and Florestine Smith) for more details on the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. They have expressed the importance of attending the orientation for school meal programs on March 26-27 at the McKimmon Center at NC State University. Elizabeth Moore indicated that the school meal programs will be undergoing huge changes this year due to new USDA regulations. At the orientation, they will explain all the federal & state program requirements/state statutes including the free & reduced meal application process, financial expectations, reporting, procurement of food, food safety, wellness policies, meal accountability, planning and certifying menus and the application process. The UCS board will attend this orientation and use this information to make sure UCS is prepared to adhere to all USDA regulations.

If for some reason we cannot qualify for the National School Lunch Program,

students will be required to bring their own bag lunches from home. We will make every effort to provide students who exhibit financial need with free or reduced bag lunches or meals from local restaurants/caterers. We have included this in our budget. UCS plans to use MyHotLunchbox.com to order food for students.

**Civil Liability and Insurance (GS 115C-238.29F(c)):**

The Charter School shall obtain and maintain insurance at a minimum in the following amounts:

1. Errors and omissions: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per claim;
2. General liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence;
3. Boiler and machinery: the replacement cost of the building;
4. Real and personal property: the appraised value of the building and contents;
5. Fidelity bonds: no less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to cover employee dishonesty;
6. Automobile liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence; and
7. Workers' compensation: as specified by Chapter 97 of the General Statutes.

Area of proposed coverage	Proposed amount of coverage		Cost (Quote)
Comprehensive General Liability	\$1,000,000		\$3,779.00
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$1,000,000		\$ .00
Property Insurance	\$200,000		\$500.00
Motor Vehicle Liability	\$1,000,000		\$181.00
Bonding Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$332.00
Other	\$0		\$6,313.00
<b>Total Cost</b>			<b>\$11,105.00</b>

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

**Health and Safety Requirements:**

All public charter schools are required to follow the regulations regarding health and safety as stated in § 115C238.29F (a).

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

mindsengaged 01/07/2013

(Board Chair Signature)

(Date)

**Facility:**

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

*What is your plan to obtain a building? Identify the steps that the board will take to acquire a facility and obtain the Educational Certificate of Occupancy. If a facility has been identified please fill out the Facility Form (Appendix N).*

UCS will lease space from United Wesleyan Church (UWC) (Appendix N-2). UWC is located on approximately 18 acres of land in the University Area. Their board of trustees has unanimously approved UCS to lease out space for as long as we need. We will use their 11 classrooms and their land to place leased trailers. This plan allows us to raise funds and establish ourselves in the business community before we build and seek loans in years 3-5.

We will contract with a mobile rental company, such as Mobile Modular, the first few years to provide us an additional 11 classrooms on the campus (Appendix N-3). When we receive our first payment in July 2014, we will add trailers to the campus to provide our students with additional space.

During the first few years we will contract with a reputable architect firm, such as Insight Architects. We have been in contact with Vincent Ciccarelli of Insight Architects throughout this application process. He has been extremely helpful and has provided our board with a wealth of knowledge. Insight Architects will continue to aid our board in the planning and building process in years 3-5. As of right now, our board is leaning towards a phasing approach.

Currently, UWC is not in possession of their most recent certificate of occupancy issued in 1993 and the city's records do not date back that far. However, once UWC concludes its renovations, they will obtain a new certificate of occupancy. UWC is in compliance with all applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In Appendix N-2, we have provided a Letter of Support from UWC confirming that they are prepared and eager to house our school.

**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.*

UCS will follow these steps to locate a facility:

- 1) Our building subcommittee will utilize various search tools and resources (such as realtors, etc.) to find an available and suitable building.
- 2) UCS will partner with a reputable architect firm, such as Insight Architects, to help us find a facility that can meet our needs in a timely manner.
- 3) After viewing all of the available options, the board will hear the recommendations from the architect firm and building subcommittee.
- 4) The board will then place an offer (or sign a lease agreement) if the potential facility meets all building codes, meets the needs of our school, and is within our budget.

The facility must be able to accommodate 15 classes, at minimum. The building will also have to allow us to expand either by a phasing approach (buying a large building and completing the up-fitting in phases as we grow) or the site must be large enough to add trailers (or build) in succeeding years.

Prior to moving forward with any building purchase or lease, UCS will get Matt Cook from Mecklenburg County Environmental Health Services and Kurt Atkins from Mecklenburg County Building Code Enforcement involved in any potential buildings. Mr. Cook will complete a field plan review. Mr. Atkins will complete a building plan review. They will assign us a to-do list before we buy a property or before we try for an inspection. This will help to determine if the building is a good fit for our needs and the needs of our students.

**V. FINANCIAL PLAN**

In the following sections present a detailed description of assumptions and revenue estimates, including but not limited to the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and costs. The narrative should specifically address the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income.

**Budget: Revenue Projections from each LEA 2014-15**

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

*The formula for figuring these allotments can be found in the Resource Manual Finance Section.*

See **Charter School Dollars per ADM** on the following link for per pupil allotments by county.

<http://dpi.state.nc.us/fbs/allotments/support/>

- All per pupil amounts are from the 2012-2013 year and would be approximations for 2014-2015.
- Federal funding is based upon the number of students enrolled who qualify. The applicant should use caution when relying on federal funding in year one to meet budgetary goals.
- These revenue projection figures do NOT guarantee the charter school would receive this amount of funding in 2014-2015. For local funding amounts, applicants will need to contact their local offices or LEA.

LEA #1600 - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Revenue	2012-2013 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2014-2015
State Funds	\$4,438.40	216	\$958,694.40
Local Funds	\$2,262.96	216	\$488,799.36
Federal EC Funds	\$3,743.48	32	\$119,791.36
<b>Totals</b>			\$1,567,285.12

**Total Budget: Revenue Projections 2014-15 through 2018-2019**

<b>INCOME: REVENUE PROJECTIONS</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>
<b>-Exceptional Children Federal Funds</b>	\$119,791	\$161,718	\$202,148	\$242,578	\$283,007
<b>-Local Per Pupil Funds</b>	\$488,799	\$651,733	\$814,666	\$977,599	\$1,140,532
<b>-Other Funds*</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>-State ADM Funds</b>	\$958,694	\$1,278,259	\$1,597,824	\$1,917,389	\$2,236,953
<b>-Working Capital*</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	\$1,567,284	\$2,091,710	\$2,614,638	\$3,137,566	\$3,660,492

**\*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 statements, etc., on the availability of these funds.**

**Assurances are needed to guarantee these additional sources of revenue are available. Please include these as Appendix P.**

**Personnel Budget: Expenditure Projections 2014-15 through 2018-2019**

This Personnel list may be amended to meet the needs of the charter school: This list should align with the projected staff located in the Operations Plan (Appendix K).

BUDGET EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS Personnel	2014-2015			2015-2016			2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019		
	# Staff	Salary per	Total salary	# Staff	Salary per	Total salary	# Staff	Salary per	Total salary	# Staff	Salary per	Total salary	# Staff	Salary per	Total salary
<b>Personnel:</b>															
School Director	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	1	\$55,000	\$55,000	1	\$55,000	\$55,000
Assistant Director	1	\$43,000	\$43,000	1	\$43,000	\$43,000	1	\$47,300	\$47,300	2	\$47,300	\$94,600	2	\$52,030	\$104,060
Administrative Assistant	1	\$24,000	\$24,000	1	\$24,000	\$24,000	2	\$26,400	\$52,800	2	\$26,400	\$52,800	2	\$26,400	\$52,800
Teacher	9	\$35,000	\$315,000	12	\$35,000	\$420,000	15	\$36,300	\$544,500	18	\$36,300	\$653,400	21	\$39,930	\$838,530
Teacher Assistant	11	\$15,000	\$165,000	14	\$15,000	\$210,000	17	\$16,500	\$280,500	20	\$16,500	\$330,000	23	\$18,000	\$414,000
Connect Teacher (Arts)	0	\$0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	1	\$35,000	\$35,000	2	\$35,000	\$70,000	2	\$35,000	\$70,000
Part Time Connect Teacher	2	\$15,000	\$30,000	4	\$15,000	\$60,000	3	\$15,000	\$45,000	4	\$15,000	\$60,000	5	\$15,000	\$75,000
Speech Teacher	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$46,000	\$46,000
Exceptional Children Teacher(s)	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$44,000	\$44,000	1	\$46,000	\$46,000
Custodian	1	\$13,000	\$13,000	1	\$13,000	\$13,000	1	\$13,000	\$13,000	1	\$13,000	\$13,000	1	\$13,000	\$13,000
Bonuses (Pay For School Performance, Meeting Ayp)	0	\$0	\$0	1	\$30,000	\$30,000	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	1	\$50,000	\$50,000
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>\$275,000</b>	<b>\$720,000</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>\$305,000</b>	<b>\$930,000</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>\$367,500</b>	<b>\$1,196,100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>\$382,500</b>	<b>\$1,466,800</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>\$396,360</b>	<b>\$1,764,390</b>
<b>Benefits:</b>															
Disability	23	\$0	\$0	30	\$0	\$0	37	\$0	\$0	44	\$0	\$0	50	\$0	\$0
Health Insurance	25	\$5,200	\$130,000	32	\$5,460	\$174,720	39	\$5,733	\$223,587	46	\$6,020	\$276,920	52	\$6,321	\$328,692
Life Insurance	23	\$0	\$0	30	\$0	\$0	37	\$0	\$0	44	\$0	\$0	50	\$0	\$0
Medicare	1	\$10,440	\$10,440	1	\$13,485	\$13,485	1	\$17,344	\$17,344	1	\$21,269	\$21,269	1	\$25,584	\$25,584
Retirement Plan	23	\$0	\$0	30	\$0	\$0	37	\$0	\$0	44	\$0	\$0	1	\$105,864	\$105,864

United Community School

Social Security	1	\$44,640	\$44,640	1	\$57,660	\$57,660	1	\$74,158	\$74,158	1	\$90,942	\$90,942	1	\$109,392	\$109,392
Total Benefits	97	\$66,280	\$191,080	125	\$84,805	\$254,065	153	\$107,235	\$325,089	181	\$130,231	\$401,131	156	\$260,161	\$582,532
Unemployment	1	\$6,000	\$6,000	1	\$8,200	\$8,200	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	1	\$12,000	\$12,000	1	\$13,000	\$13,000
<b>Total Personnel Budget</b>	125	\$341,280	\$911,080	162	\$389,805	\$1,184,065	197	\$474,735	\$1,521,189	234	\$512,731	\$1,867,931	216	\$656,521	\$2,346,922

**\*Applicants may amend this table and the position titles to fit their Education and Operations Plans.**

**Operations Budget: Expenditure Projections 2014-15 through 2018-2019**

<b>BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS</b>		<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>
Books And Supplies	Office Supplies	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$6,000
Books and Supplies	Curriculum/Texts	\$31,000	\$10,333	\$10,333	\$10,333	\$10,333
	Instructional Materials	\$18,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
	School Supplies	\$13,500	\$18,000	\$37,000	\$41,500	\$35,000
	Testing Supplies	\$5,400	\$7,200	\$9,000	\$10,800	\$12,600
	Human Resources Costs	Audit Fees	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
	Board Member Expenditure Costs	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
	Board Member Training - High Bar	\$4,995	\$4,995	\$4,995	\$4,995	\$4,995
	Financial Services	\$25,920	\$34,560	\$43,200	\$51,840	\$60,480
	Legal Counsel	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
	NC Wise	\$8,640	\$11,520	\$14,400	\$17,280	\$20,160
	Professional Development	\$13,100	\$25,000	\$16,300	\$18,700	\$30,500
Other	Advertising	\$20,000	\$12,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
	Bus Purchase	\$15,000	\$8,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Contract Services	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$15,000
	Field Trips	\$15,000	\$35,000	\$32,000	\$45,000	\$60,000
	Food Plan	\$65,329	\$85,000	\$98,000	\$125,000	\$138,400
	Furniture/Instructional Equipment	\$14,200	\$27,900	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$12,000
	Gas/Fuel	\$5,500	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$14,500	\$20,000
	Insurances	\$12,617	\$14,450	\$16,106	\$27,262	\$28,918
	Office Furniture/Equipment	\$5,200	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
	Transportation Services	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
	Vehicle Repair	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Rents and Debt Services	Custodial Supplies	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$4,400	\$4,400	\$4,400
	Facility Lease/Mortgage	\$151,562	\$128,264	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$450,000
	Maintenance	\$13,000	\$16,000	\$23,000	\$33,000	\$34,000
	Security/Alarm	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Technology Hardware	Instructional Software	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
	Network/Internet	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
	Office Software	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
	Tech Equipment	\$16,850	\$26,800	\$6,800	\$3,800	\$3,800
	Tech Hardware	\$16,750	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250
	Tech Repair	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500

Utilities	Electric	\$25,000	\$28,750	\$33,063	\$38,022	\$43,725
	Phone	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
	Water/Sewer/Trash	\$8,000	\$9,200	\$10,580	\$12,167	\$13,992
	Total Operations	\$579,263	\$618,422	\$962,427	\$1,066,849	\$1,130,553

**\*Applicants may amend this table and the position titles to fit their Education and Operations Plans.**

**Overall Budget:**

<b>BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES (PERSONNEL)	\$911,080	\$1,184,065	\$1,521,189	\$1,867,931	\$2,346,922
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (OPERATIONS)	\$579,263	\$618,422	\$962,427	\$1,066,849	\$1,130,553
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,490,343	\$1,802,487	\$2,483,616	\$2,934,780	\$3,477,475
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,567,284	\$2,091,710	\$2,614,638	\$3,137,566	\$3,660,492
ANNUAL NET PROJECTIONS	\$76,941	\$289,223	\$131,022	\$202,786	\$183,017

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

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

- Describe the budgetary projections and explain the analysis utilized to project these specific enrollment figures. If your budget projections are lower than anticipated, how will the school adjust this budget and what is the determined break-even point for student enrollment?*

As a Basic School, UCS is committed to creating a healthy school culture where students are seen as individuals; therefore, our plan is to maintain a low teacher:student (1:12) ratio on each grade level. This low ratio allows UCS to better meet the individual needs of our student population. Grades K-1 will have an additional teacher assistant floating between classes of each grade level. We will add 1 grade level per year (3 classes per grade level), until we reach eighth grade. UCS is utilizing the number of students on local charter school waiting lists to predict enrollment figures. Currently, Community School of Davidson (CSD) and Corvian Community School (CCS), both nearby Basic Schools, have over 4,000 students on their waiting lists.

Based on the overwhelming response that CCS and CSD have received, we are extremely confident that we will fill each available slot that we offer. However, if budget projections are lower than anticipated, there are several items in our budget that we can modify:

- Eliminate staff bonuses for meeting AYP and School Performance Goals (Budgeted \$30,000 or more years 2-5).
- Although technology is important, we believe that the teacher is ultimately the most important resource for students. If needed, we can modify the amount of technology we invest in.
- Instead of purchasing 3 buses, we would consider purchasing only one since we would have a smaller student population.
- With fewer students, we would need less staff (teachers, teacher assistants). That would result in less money towards payroll, payroll taxes, staff development, and employee benefits.
- Since both our nutritional and transportation budgets are based on the amount of students enrolled, we would automatically save on the cost for these services if we have fewer students.
- We would consider freezing staff raises.
- Acadia's service (financial and NC Wise) fees will be lowered as their fees are determined by the number of students.
- We would cut supplies/equipment accordingly to the reduction in students.
- Regardless of a budget deficit or surplus, we will always encourage teachers to attend Classroom Central every month to obtain free instructional supplies. If we can have most of our teachers utilizing Classroom Central, our instructional supplies expenditures will

significantly decrease.

Based on the projections, we have derived that our break even headcount for UCS will be approximately 170.

- 2. Describe the systems and processes by which the school will manage accounting, purchasing, payroll, and audits. Specify any administrative services expected to be contracted for the school, and describe the criteria and procedures for the selection of contractors*

UCS will contract with Acadia NorthStar (AN) to provide financial and student management services to our school. As they are experts in this field and handle over 65% of NC Charter schools, the board felt this was a good choice to keep our school in compliance with the state.

In regards to our selection of a financial auditor, our board will choose a reputable auditing firm that is approved by the NC Local Government Commission.

- 3. Explain how the spending priorities align with the school's mission, curricular offerings, transportation plans, and professional development needs. Be able to depict in chart format and discuss in a narrative how the school will maintain a small, contingency reserve and operate using sound fiscal practices. As you construct the budget, include any and all documentation about cash on hand, bonds, real estate, or grants as part of this application package.*

Included in our budget:

Support Staff to meet individual student needs:

Full-time (FT) EC Teacher, FT Speech Teacher, Shared Contracted professionals (nurse, psychologist, etc.). Teacher assistants will help differentiate in classrooms.

Connect Teachers to offer piano and arts education:

UCS emphasizes piano theory because it improves student learning. We will staff two part-time (PT) music teachers in year one. In year 2, we will staff 3 PT music teachers and 1 PT arts teacher. In year 3, we will staff 1 FT music teacher, 2 PT music teachers, and 1 PT arts teacher. In year 4, we will staff 1 FT music teacher, 1 FT arts teacher, and 2 PT music teachers. In year 5, we will staff 1 FT music teacher, 1 FT arts teacher, and 3 PT music teachers. The purchase of 60 keyboards are also included in our budget (Instructional Equipment).

Professional Development (PD):

UCS invests heavily in PD during our initial years to build relationships and community and to ensure our staff understand and embrace our mission. Our PD budget includes, but is not limited to: Attending the annual Fresh Take conference at CSD; Hiring consultants to train/mentor staff in TBS approach, effective classroom practices, and the newly adopted NC SCOS; Attending annual charter school conferences; Attending our annual staff retreat; Providing money for summer planning.

Transportation:

Our budget includes transportation costs (purchase used buses, drivers, public transit passes) to ensure students are able to attend UCS and our field trips. Our transportation plan and budget ensure students will have equal access to UCS.

Food services:

We will make every effort to offer free or reduced lunch using the National

School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. However, we have included substantial lunch cost figures in our budget if we cannot qualify for the national programs. Taking care of each child's nutritional needs is very important to us, as reflected in our budget and as part of our holistic approach to education.

Field Trips:

UCS has budgeted money to cover student admissions to off-campus sites (Discovery Place, The Zoo, etc.) to ensure every child is afforded meaningful and diverse learning opportunities. We will partner with the Reedy Creek Nature Museum and Park (See Appendix R-7 and R-8). They are located directly across the street and will provide students with multiple hands-on learning experiences each month.

UCS will hire AN as our fiscal management provider. Some of their services include accounts payable processing, budget planning & management, federal, state & local compliance, payroll & payroll tax administration, and monthly financial statements. Their services will ensure that we will use sound fiscal practices.

Every annual budget will include the maintenance of at least a 5% (of total revenue) contingency reserve. The reserves are as follows: Year 1: \$76,941, Year 2: \$289,223, Year 3: \$131,022, Year 4: \$202,786, Year 5: \$183,017.

- 4. Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected to be available through banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc. Note which are secured and which are anticipated, and include evidence of commitment for any funds on which the school's core operation depends.*

N/A - UCS currently has no other sources of funds.

- 5. Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated. What is the school's break-even student enrollment figure for each of the first five years?*

Based on the success and waiting list numbers of current local Basic Schools, UCS feels very confident in the goal of achieving the planned student headcount. However, should that not happen, UCS will put every effort into fundraising, marketing, and grant writing to acquire the funds needed to continue our school mission. The school will also consider adjusting the budget (Shown above in question 1 of the budget narrative). The school's break-even student enrollment figure will be approximately 170 students. Based on the budget, all years would have the same break-even student enrollment figure of approximately 170. We will not engage in additional expenses and items if we are not meeting our anticipated enrollment (i.e. Our lease would remain at the original figure and not go to 450K).

- 6. Year one cash flow contingency, in the event that revenue projections are not met in advance of opening.*

UCS will try several options including, but not limited to: Securing a loan; Back pay for staff (staff must vote in favor of this); Seek to have facility lease payments deferred. We look to acquire our 501c3 by March 2014. Having 501c3 status will improve our chances of obtaining grants and funding via a capital campaign. The School Director is committed to the success of UCS and will go to great lengths to provide upstart costs. The School Director is already providing funds towards the costs of marketing, 501c3 application, consultation, and professional development expenses (NC Charter School

Conference, Child Nutrition Orientation, etc.).

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

*Describe the procedure and method for conducting an independent financial audit for the proposed charter school.*

An independent audit of UCS finances will be conducted annually by an independent auditor and in accordance with the statutory regulations and requirements of the state of North Carolina for non-profit organizations.

Our independent audit procedure is as follows:

- 1: We will send out a Request for Proposal to several independent auditor firms approved by the NC LGC.
- 2: Once we have received all proposals, the board will select a reputable firm with a feasible proposal.

*Provide the name and contact information of the firm approved by the NC Local Government Commission (LGC) that will conduct the audit. If a firm has yet to be identified please list the firms the board has investigated.*

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