



# NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

# Montcross Charter Academy (MCA)

**Public charter schools opening the fall of 2017**

**Due 5:00 pm EST, September 25, 2015**

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
NCDPI/Office of Charter Schools  
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Raleigh NC 27601-2825  
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Raleigh, NC 27699-6303

## CHARTER SCHOOL

### 2016 Application Process

To open a charter school in the 2017-2018 school year

#### APPLICATION DUE DATE/TIME

**September 25, 2015** A complete **online** application package, in the Office of Charter Schools **by 5:00 pm EST.**

**\*Non-Refundable \$1000 Application fee due to the Office of Charter Schools\***

*Application Fee Payment Details can be found on the Office of Charter Schools Website*

#### APPLICATION SPECIFICATIONS

Applicants can submit applications prior to the deadline September 25, 2015 at 5:00 pm EST. **All applications must be submitted using the online portal** and applicants are to use the following specifications:

1. All required Appendices should be clearly titled, include page numbers (i.e. Appendix A and page numbers as- A1, A2, B1...), and submitted in the appropriate places within the application.
2. **Any** answer given within the application which is not original to the applicant, the applicant must provide a citation to the source of the answer.
3. Review all elements of your application for completeness before submitting. **An incomplete application will result in the elimination of the application.**
4. **Any** document attached to the application or within the online system **must be** in PDF format.
5. Late submissions **will not** be accepted. No exceptions.

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## I. APPLICATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of proposed charter school: Montcross Charter Academy (MCA)

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

Name of non-profit organization under which charter will be organized or operated: *Montcross Charter Education Foundation*

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

Name of contact person: *Rebecca Friend*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *Board Chair*

Mailing address: 133 Sunshine Lane  
Cherryville NC 28021

Primary telephone: 704-418-0889 Alternative telephone: 770-500-9037

E-Mail address: *rebeccafriend1@gmail.com*

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

County: GASTON

LEA: 360-Gaston County Schools

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

No:

Yes:

If so, provide the name of the third party person or group. Charter Schools USA

List the fee provided to the third party person or group. \$0

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

Our EMO, Charter Schools USA (CSUSA), assisted us in the development of this charter application. Charter Schools USA will assist us throughout the entire application process and if we are awarded a charter, they will assist us throughout school start up and operation.

The information we have provided in this application may be similar or identical to information that you will find in the application of other applicants who have also partnered with CSUSA. This similarity is intentional. Our board wants to use the same successful EMO model and has based our application upon the use of that model in the community we seek to serve. CSUSA has assisted us with the preparation of our application in order to preserve fidelity to the CSUSA school model that we studied and desire. The model has been adjusted as necessary to align with our mission, community and targeted student population. Throughout our application we are using "AOC" as shorthand to denote the attribution of content to the CSUSA model.

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

No:

Yes:

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

No:

Yes:

If replication, please provide the name of the charter school and the state that charter school has been authorized to operate in. Cabarrus Charter Academy NC

What is the name of the nonprofit organization that governs this charter school? Montcross Charter Education Foundation

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

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

Projected School Opening: Year 2017 Month August

Will this school operate on a year round schedule?

No:

Yes:

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

Academic School Year	Grade Levels	Total Projected Student Enrollment
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The State Board of Education provides funds to charter schools, approves the original members of the boards of directors of the charter schools, has the authority to grant, supervise, and revoke charters, and demands full accountability from charter schools for school governance, operations, finances and student performance.

I certify that I have the authority to submit this application, that the initial board members and I were regularly involved in the development of this application, and that no part of this application is plagiarized. All information contained herein is complete and accurate. I realize that any misrepresentation will result in disqualification from the application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered. The person named as the contact person for the application is so authorized to serve as the primary contact for this application on behalf of the non-profit organization.

rebeccafriend1  
Signature

Board President  
Title

rebeccafriend1  
Printed Name

09/25/2015  
Date

## II. MISSION and PURPOSES

(No more than three total pages in this section)

### **Mission:**

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

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

Montcross Charter Academy's (MCA or Academy) commitment is to offer a rigorous college preparatory education that empowers all students through individualized learning plans which promote strong character, independence, and leadership.

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

MCA will utilize CSUSA's proven Education Model to create a personalized learning plan to help each student realize his/her academic potential. Planning and evaluation tools will effectively gauge progress. Teachers will be consistent in their lessons. Students will set their goals and know the goals they are working towards. Parents will play a vital role in their child's academic enrichment. These opportunities will prepare students to become leaders in their communities and professions.

### **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.*

We plan to target the student population of the greater Belmont area, specifically the I-85 and Wilkinson Boulevard corridor leading into Charlotte. MCA will be open to all North Carolina families desiring a school of choice, but our intended location on major commuter routes has led us to believe that most of our students will come from the 16 miles of Gaston County to the west and the Mt. Holly area to the north. MCA's proximity to Mecklenburg County means we can also expect students from across the Catawba River.

In order to determine the type of student body we will serve that reflects the diversity of the surrounding community, we measured local public and/or charter schools in the areas referenced above and deduced the following estimates:

Proposed Academy Size: 1,145  
Minority Population: 40%  
Free Lunch Population: 60%  
Reduced Lunch Population: 6%  
Limited English Proficiency: 5%  
Exceptional Student Population: 13%

Academically/Intellectually Gifted: 10%

We chose this area of Gaston County for two reasons. First, the area is growing and will need more schools as the Charlotte-metro area continues to expand. With annualized population and household growth rates in the Belmont area exceeding 1.5%, and home ownership increasing just as rapidly, the area is easily outpacing state and national growth averages. The growth in western Charlotte-metro has been so acute that lane expansions are taking place on I-85 in the area we are proposing for the school. Despite this growth and the number of aging facilities in Gaston County, the school district has chosen west Gastonia and Stanley as locations for the next schools to be built.

Our second reason for targeting this part of Gaston County is the relatively poor performance of public schools in the area. Of the schools we sampled for the projected demographics above, only two had school grades of "B" in 2013-14. Three schools were D-rated, and the average School Performance Grade (SPG) Score for all schools sampled was 58 (a low C-rating). We sampled schools from both Gaston and Mecklenburg, and two of the D-rated schools were in Gaston County. We believe MCA can provide a high-performing alternative to the local public schools.

<http://www.gastongazette.com/article/20150831/NEWS/150839885>

[http://www.gaston.k12.nc.us/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=66&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-](http://www.gaston.k12.nc.us/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=66&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=6537&PageID=1)

[8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=6537&PageID=1](http://www.gaston.k12.nc.us/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=66&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=6537&PageID=1)

- 2. What will be the total projected enrollment at the charter school and what percentage of the Average Daily Membership (ADM) does that reflect when compared to the Local Education Agency (LEA) of the same offered grade levels? (i.e. If the proposed school will be grades 9-12, only compare the total enrollment to the total enrollment of the LEA is grades 9-12).*

As of the 2014-15 school year, Gaston County Schools had 21,520 students in grades K-8. While we will likely enroll a majority of our students from Gaston County, our proximity to the Mecklenburg line will expose MCA to parents willing to "backtrack" into Gaston County for school drop-offs. We estimate that 20% of our student body will come from across the county line.

At full capacity, MCA plans to receive 80% of its students (916 total) from Gaston County and 20% (229 total) from Mecklenburg County. This means that, at full enrollment, MCA will enroll 4% of Gaston County's K-8 student population, but less than a quarter of a percent of Mecklenburg's K-8 student population.

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

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

MCA's education plan differs from Gaston County's education plan in that it provides individualized, data-driven instruction within a culture of high expectations and achievement; not just for students, but also for staff. By analyzing baseline assessments along with the previous year's data, we will

create school-level, classroom-level, and individual student goals to set the current year's purpose for learning. Tracking progress towards goals will be a keystone for MCA. The consistent monitoring process will provide continual student progress reminders and show us how close we are to achieving our mission of promoting student independence and leadership.

Individualized attention sets MCA apart because it will provide an opportunity for consistently under-served students to be able to reach their potential and receive needed differentiated instruction. As our mission is to provide a rigorous college preparatory program, we believe each instructional minute counts. As a result, our school day will be longer than other local schools.

Every child will have a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), which not only includes goals, but also the action steps needed in order to reach those goals. The plan's development is a collaborative effort between the teacher, parent, student, and other staff involved with the student's academic achievement. Teachers will act as facilitators and coaches for the plans, aiding in creating, monitoring, and challenging the students to push themselves. The parent's role is to be a mentor, motivating and guiding the students in their endeavors. Most importantly, students are the producers of their plan and are faced with the responsibility of understanding their data, making good decisions as learners, and following through with expectations.

Another unparalleled aspect is the amount of support MCA will receive to monitor progress, enhance teacher effectiveness, and maximize its overall operation. Described in more detail in the Governance and Capacity section, both Academy leaders and teachers will receive extensive, rigorous training prior to the start of the school year through professional development sessions tailored to the unique student population needs. CSUSA will provide up to four school site visits, called Quality Education for Students and Teachers (QUEST), to monitor implementation of the Education Model. Additionally, Academy leaders and staff will conduct weekly classroom walk-throughs, lesson plan reviews, data chats, and other activities to ensure teachers have the support and resources necessary to provide effective instruction.

To promote student engagement and the use of real-world application skills, a technology-rich environment will be provided for all students. The goal of technology usage is to create an interactive classroom, taking technology out of the hands of the teachers and placing it in the hands of the students for an optimal experiential learning environment. The technology resources will be used for a variety of instructional methods, including interactive direct and guided instruction, blended learning for supplemental instruction, research projects, and many more. As society is more reliant on the use of technology, it is imperative that students learn basic skills such as word processing, presentation tools, and internet research skills.

In order to further challenge students, MCA will apply to implement the Cambridge program after its first year. This program provides a rigorous, international pre-university curriculum and examination. Cambridge courses are demanding courses, emphasizing higher order thinking; oral, writing, and investigative skills; problem solving; and teamwork. Highly motivated

students who excel academically and are well rounded in their extracurricular activities are attracted to this program.

4. *In the appendices (Appendix A1), you must provide evidence through a narrative or visual of this educational need through survey data, or times and locations of public meetings discussing this proposed charter school. (Please do not provide more than one sample survey form).*

**Purposes of the Proposed Charter School:** *In one page or less, describe how the proposed charter school will achieve one or more of the six legislated purposes, as specifically addressed in the NC charter school statute GS 115C-218, and the proposed school's operations.*

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

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

AOC

Hold Schools Accountable

As a charter school, MCA will be held to high standards of achievement in order to continue serving the community. Consistent, regularly monitored measures will ensure we are meeting the expectations and goals described in this application. We will also set monitored school-level, class-level, and individual student-level goals. Montcross Charter Education Foundation, Inc. (the Board) will monitor progress toward Academy goals, the principal will monitor class-level goals, and the teachers will monitor individual student goals; monitoring will be conducted through monthly board meetings, weekly data chats, and PLP meetings, respectively. If it is found that we are not reaching our goals at any level, programs and instruction will be adjusted accordingly. Further support will be provided by the EMO, such as increased help from regional directors and curriculum specialists (CS), strategic intervention plans to focus efforts, and any other methods needed.

MCA will develop a strategic action plan focused on its mission, vision, and values. Through analysis of assessment results, observations, surveys, and other feedback items, the Academy will create key intended outcomes in each of the following five priority areas: 1) academic excellence, 2) financial health, 3) growth, 4) operational performance, and 5) culture of excellence. MCA will then create initiatives and monitor their implementation throughout the year. This plan will be continuously reviewed and monitored at the

school level, along with the Board, the EMO's Regional Education Director, Curriculum and Instruction Team, and Department of Strategy.

Accountability will be an integral part of MCA's culture. Weekly classroom walk-throughs, QUEST visits, and teacher performance evaluations will hold teachers accountable for providing students with rigorous, quality instruction. The purpose of the QUEST visit is to support MCA with the implementation and monitoring of the Education Model, and provide enhanced stakeholder awareness of what is happening in classrooms. The process examines three critical factors: classroom management, student motivation, and instructional strategies. It also adds the benefit of teachers and students becoming accustomed to having visitors within the classroom, as Academy leaders and support staff are constantly monitoring progress. Lesson plans, grade books, and other preparedness and organizational pieces are also checked regularly. To support the focus on technology, the leadership team will also monitor utilization of resources to ensure teachers are implementing a technology-rich environment to enhance students' learning opportunities.

#### Improve Student Learning

The following supports will be used to improve student learning:

##### Push-in/Pull-out Support

Certified teachers will be trained in the intervention program and will be available to push-in with, or pull-out students who are below grade level. Customized schedules are followed each week to guarantee students are receiving additional instruction as needed. Classroom teachers will communicate with the support staff in order to increase awareness of students' current skill levels and abilities.

##### Tutoring/Extended Day

For students needing support beyond what is provided in the school day, tutoring will be available for one hour per day, three days a week. The amount and frequency may be adjusted based on the students' needs. Instruction will be targeted toward specific fundamental skills and concepts to help students catch up to grade level. While this is typically an opportunity for students to receive extra practice targeted to improve reading skills, it can also be utilized for enrichment for high achieving students. Additionally, based on student needs, this program can be adjusted to include other subject areas such as math and science.

##### Differentiated RtI Block

Our students will start their day with targeted instruction in homogeneous groups based on their various levels of mastery. For example, students performing below grade level will receive an intervention focused on comprehension and word attack skills, while novel studies that foster comprehension, vocabulary building, literary analysis, and other reading application skills will be provided for students who are on grade level in reading. Those students who are on grade level in reading, but still need support in math, will receive instruction geared towards mastery of mathematic concepts and skill practice. Students above proficient in areas of both reading and math will participate in enrichment activities that involve applying their reading and math knowledge to real-world critical-thinking tasks and projects. The groups will be adjusted quarterly based on

benchmark and classroom data to ensure students are continuously receiving optimally targeted support.

MCA will provide a variety of extracurricular activities in addition to the tutoring program. We will foster the academic, social, and physical growth of students by offering a wide range of after-school activities in which students may participate depending on demand and availability. Clubs that may be offered include Student Council, Newspaper, Science Club, Basketball, Cheerleading, Service Club, and others related to MCA's mission.

For high-achieving students in need of academic enrichment, MCA will implement a Cambridge International Examinations Program to support academic rigor throughout the Academy. Cambridge, which will be applied for after one year of school operation, will provide an international, pre-university curriculum and examination for students who benefit from a rigorous academic program. Cambridge students are expected to have high academic expectations, be self-motivated, possess good study habits, and demonstrate a commitment to succeed. The program is offered in various subjects, but there is also a Global Perspectives component available in which students have the opportunity to place their personal perspectives in a global context to research and explore a range of issues that challenge people across the world. Students also have the option to study interdisciplinary and skills-based subjects. Students will develop 21st century skills by collaborating with others, communicating in multiple forms, evaluating arguments, and thinking independently and reflectively.

In addition to the Cambridge curriculum, MCA will offer other differentiated opportunities to increase and extend learning. One such opportunity is blended learning, in which students will have the ability to utilize software programs to learn content at their own pace or take courses that are not offered in the traditional brick-and-mortar setting. Some online programs to be used at the Academy, such as Think Through Math, will offer live tutors and video tutorials to help support students at home, while others, such as Mathletics, allow students to interact and compete with other students globally. Other examples of adaptive online programs to be used are Reading Plus, Reading Eggs, and Plato. Project-based learning, which is described more in Appendix U, will also be emphasized, allowing students to question, create, research, analyze, evaluate, and use other critical-thinking skills to demonstrate standards mastery. These projects are best used across subject areas to provide a deeper understanding and more meaningful connections. Community partnerships will take the impact of the projects to a higher level. Students will also have the opportunity to foster their entrepreneurship and leadership skills via a curricular path that provides opportunities for students through electives, clubs, extracurricular activities, and community partnerships.

### **Goals for the Proposed Charter School:**

1. *Provide specific and measurable goals for the proposed school for the first 5 years of operation outlining expectations for the proposed school's operations, academics, finance, and governance. Address how often, who, and when the information will be communicated to the governing board and other stakeholders.*

AOC

The principal and CSUSA will provide monthly status reports at board meetings, which includes educational, enrollment, personnel, technology, facility, and other reports and goals.

#### Operations

##### Specific:

- Market to and enroll the targeted number of students yearly
- Ensure adequate food, transportation, security, and custodial services
- Ensure building standards are met
- Procure furniture, fixtures, equipment, and supplies as needed
- Develop and update the Academy website and student information system on a regular basis

Measurable: These goals will be measured in the case of operational shortfalls.

Attainable: These goals are critical to the successful operation of the Academy and are expected to be attained.

Relevant: Operational effectiveness is crucial to the Academy's success in fulfilling its mission.

Time Bound: These goals are expected to be met before each school year and to be maintained throughout the year.

#### Academic

Specific: Each year on the math, reading, and science End-of-Grade (EOG)/End-of-Course (EOC) assessments, MCA will significantly increase student proficiency (level 3 or higher). If proficiency is at or above 90% in any prior year, MCA will increase proficiency by 1% or meet or exceed the performance of demographically similar area schools. In Year 1, without a baseline, MCA will meet or exceed the proficiency of demographically similar area schools.

Measurable: A significant increase is defined as a 10% reduction in the percent of students not proficient (level 1 or 2) relative to the previous year. EOG/EOC scores in Year 1 establish a baseline. Scores in Year 2 will provide the initial baseline comparison.

Attainable: These goals are attainable, given that our students will have the appropriate resources and access to high-quality teachers.

Relevant: This goal is relevant to MCA's mission, highlighting the importance of a rigorous college preparatory education.

Time Bound: The establishment of a baseline will occur at the completion of the first full year of the charter. At the end of each year, MCA will document goal attainment and revise multi-year goals in an annual Strategic Plan.

#### Finance

##### Specific:

Develop accounting systems and internal control policies that allow for safeguarding of assets and financial viability.

Submit financial reports to external entities as required.

Prepare applications for grants and loans.

Adopt, maintain, and (if necessary) amend the annual operating budget.

Review and approve financial statements.

Ensure MCA has contracted with a certified public accountant for the annual financial audit.

Review and approve audit reports, including audit findings and recommendations.

Measurable: These goals will be measured by the financial standing and compliance of the Academy.

Attainable: Given the financial efficiency of other CSUSA schools, these goals are attainable.

Relevant: As stewards of public funds, the board must ensure that it maintains fiscally responsible practices. The Academy's financial standing and reporting compliance is relevant to its overall sustainability.

Time Bound: Reports will be submitted on-time as needed and an annual audit will be conducted which will not show any sign of financial distress or emergency.

#### Governance

##### Specific:

Set and implement policies, including:

Operational policies

Academic and financial accountability

Annual progress reporting to the DOE

Policies consistent with MCA's mission

Required reporting policies for the EMO. Review performance reports from the EMO.

Comply with terms of the charter contract

Measurable: Reporting policies and review by the Board will be measured by school-wide improvement.

Attainable: The Board has practices in place to set policies for MCA.

Relevant: The Board's involvement in the Academy's foundation and performance is vital to its overall success.

Time Bound: Policies will be set prior to the start of school opening and updated as necessary.

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

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

As the Board is the initial and leading driver of the mission, it is crucial that we stay informed of the progress of the achievement of MCA. Student assessment and performance data are vital to our mission to offer a rigorous college preparatory learning environment. With the continuous improvement

Education Model, we will regularly evaluate student performance to personalize and target instruction to each student's needs, helping them reach their academic potential. This data-driven cycle of assessment, analysis, and action is critical for increasing student achievement and is the top priority for Academy-wide improvement. Regular assessments verify that students have successfully acquired crucial skills, mastered grade-level content, and are challenged to think critically.

We will monitor and evaluate specific, measurable goals regarding academic performance and growth. As detailed in Section II, academic performance and growth will be tracked on three dimensions:

- \* Proficiency: The percentage of students who are proficient in math, reading, and science on the EOG and EOC assessments.
- \* Growth: At each grade level, the percentage of student Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) growth targets met in English language arts, math, and science will surpass 100%.
- \* State Accountability: The Academy's Performance Component of the North Carolina SPG.

In addition to state assessments, all students will take the computer-based, adaptive NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment three times per year. The NWEA assessment also gives students the opportunity to practice with the newest technologically enhanced item types.

At the conclusion of each testing season, and throughout the year as data becomes available, MCA will report state and interim assessments to the Board at monthly board meetings. In MCA's first year, these initial results will act as a baseline for future goals. A baseline year will also be utilized when the state introduces new state-wide assessments or SPG calculations. In lieu of a baseline comparison in Year 1, we will monitor MCA's performance relative to demographically similar area schools.

We will also approve the Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plan (if applicable) in order to ensure that measures are put into place to achieve our mission of offering a rigorous college preparatory education that empowers students through individualized learning plans. QUEST visit data from the EMO will deliver evidence that the teachers are adhering to the Education Model and implementing highly effective teaching strategies to the students.

To monitor MCA's culture, we will view results from parent and staff surveys, which can provide insight on pertinent issues such as satisfaction and safety. Financial reports, enrollment and attendance figures, and other information needed to further monitor progress toward the mission will also be evaluated.

### III. EDUCATION PLAN

(No more than ten total pages in this section)

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

#### **Instructional Program:**

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

AOC

The Education Model, developed by the EMO, is based on 35 years of research by Robert J. Marzano, and has proven effectiveness in the EMO's managed schools. It is implemented within a framework of continuous improvement to ensure validity, and it develops supporting tools to meet students' needs. The structure enables administrators and teachers to better understand, explain, and predict elements needed to facilitate each student's mastery of the standards. Educational best practices, technology, communication, and documentation tools are created and revised to help implement the Education Model. At the Model's core is the Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC), which ensures academic excellence in every classroom and encourages steady academic progress as students build their knowledge and skills. The GVC is primarily a combination of two factors with strong academic achievement correlations: 1) opportunity to learn, and 2) time. Fundamental components are briefly described below, with detailed elaboration in Appendix U.

#### Component 1: Baseline Assessment and Data

In order to effectively address each student's needs, it is essential to first understand his or her current level. This is accomplished through collection of student performance data from the previous school year, the administration of baseline or diagnostic assessments, and standards-based pre-tests prior to the start of each unit.

#### Component 2: Data Driven Instruction

In addition to students' individual learning styles and unique needs, the data identifying current levels is analyzed to determine the appropriate instructional course of action. Teachers are provided guidance and become well-versed in their understanding of the curriculum and its pacing. Differentiated instruction is provided utilizing the knowledge base of various teaching strategies to ensure each child has the opportunity to gain mastery.

#### Component 3: Assessment

The way to measure the effectiveness of instruction is to assess. Standards-based assessments will be provided in a variety of ways. Formative and summative assessments may be in the form of projects, essays, presentations, or other differentiated methods to provide multiple opportunities for understanding.

#### Component 4: Grading

Each assignment will be graded based on the grade-level standard taught in order to facilitate appropriate data collection and tracking of student progress of mastery of each standard. Grades are entered into the electronic grade book for ease of collection and use.

#### Component 5: Reporting

To support MCA's mission, timely and effective feedback is critical. Once material is graded, it must be presented with effective feedback providing specific guidance to students as to what was correct, how mistakes can be corrected, and then it is communicated to all other stakeholders in a timely manner. Teachers, parents, students, and administrators all have online access to students' grades to track achievement.

#### Component 6: Decision

In the decision phase, based on data, teachers will either move on to the next standard, starting with a baseline assessment, or re-teach the previous standard in a new way. Regardless of the class-level decision, students needing remediation or enrichment will receive appropriate differentiated instruction in a small-group or blended learning environment.

The process continues throughout the year to ensure students are provided ample opportunity to master all the required standards. The Education Model, along with its supplemental features, tailors learning for each class and student, and will help close the achievement gap. Major features of MCA, described further in the application, include PLPs, Instructional Focus Plans (IFP), meaningful parental involvement, character development, technology to support student engagement, and academic intervention and enrichment.

### **Curriculum and Instructional Design:**

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

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

MCA will have a highly structured, classroom-based learning environment aligned to the student population. Along with clear behavior expectations, each class will post a detailed, minute-by-minute agenda to protect instructional time. The agenda will include essential questions and objectives, focusing learning within the room. Student work, student-generated word walls, and visual student goal progress trackers toward mastery of standards will be displayed to promote student-classroom ownership. To further deepen learning, classrooms will also post anchor charts reflecting step-by-step processes for taught material to serve as a consistent reminder for students.

At capacity, kindergarten classrooms are designed to accommodate 20 students. First through fifth grade classrooms are designed to accommodate 23 students, while classrooms for sixth through eighth grades will accommodate 25 students at capacity. As we anticipate that students will

perform at various levels, the class will be organized to accommodate differentiated instruction. The classroom will support whole-group instruction and targeted support from teachers in small-group and one-on-one arrangements. Students will participate in blended learning within the classroom and complete coursework at their individualized level on various software programs. Visitors will be able to walk in the room and see various simultaneous learning experiences, such as teachers working with a small group of students on a targeted skill, students on laptops receiving remedial or enrichment practice, groups of students working cooperatively on a project, or students working independently on leveled tasks. Structured procedures will be in place to minimize distractions and ensure all students stay on task.

Most elementary grades will be self-contained, in which all subjects (except for specials) will be taught by the same teacher within the classroom. Middle school classes will be departmentalized by subject, easing the transition from middle to high school. In middle grades, departmentalization is important since the content students are expected to learn increases in each grade level, requiring subject-focused teachers to be able to instruct to the rigorous levels required for standards mastery. The principal will have the opportunity to departmentalize other grade levels depending on students' needs. As an Academy with an entrepreneurship and leadership curricular path, there will be evidence of these skills through electives, clubs, after-school enrichments, and community partnerships.

The classroom will be the hub of student learning, thus resources will be maximized within each room. Students will have access to a variety of texts from a classroom library to supplement learning. Both fiction and nonfiction resources will be leveled and available, allowing students to read appropriate books based on their abilities. To support student engagement, technology resources will be placed in the hands of the students to provide an interactive learning environment. The following technology will be available in each classroom:

- \* Interactive displays/panels with tablets
- \* Student laptops
- \* Document camera
- \* Headphones and microphones

MCA will also include a production room for filming, processing, and streaming morning announcements; mobile and stationary computer labs; and multi-purpose rooms outfitted with audio/video equipment. Wireless networking will be employed throughout MCA to allow students instant access to digital content provided by Safari Montage. This innovative program provides schools with access to preloaded educational videos tied to the curriculum, which enables MCA to upload its own digital content and disseminate it to all classrooms, providing a new mode of communication and education for its 21st century learners.

Provide a synopsis of the planned curriculum, including:

1. *One sample curriculum outline (in graph form) in the Appendices (Appendix B) for one core subject (specific to the school's purpose) for each grade span (i.e. elementary, middle, high) the school would ultimately serve.*

2. *If you are proposing a high school, as Appendix B2, provide a visual disseminating what courses (core content and electives) will be offered at the charter high school to ensure students meet the proposed charter school's graduation requirements. Please ensure the projected staff and budget aligns with the course offerings.*
3. *Identify how this curriculum aligns with the proposed charter school's mission, targeted student population, and North Carolina Accountability Model.*

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

MCA will use CSUSA's GVC, which is aligned to the NC Accountability Model and focuses on mastery of the Common Core State Standards and NC Essential Standards through the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCS), to support the mission of providing a rigorous college preparatory academic program that promotes strong character, independence and leadership. MCA will also implement the requirements outlined in the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program. The research behind the GVC comes from the work of Robert J. Marzano, who articulates that the GVC is primarily a combination of the factors "opportunity to learn" and "time." Both have strong correlations with academic achievement. See Appendix U for additional information on the GVC.

The GVC was created through the process outlined in Understanding by Design, by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. As affirmed by Wiggins and McTighe, curriculum should lay out the most effective ways of achieving specific results. The GVC outlines the specific learning outcomes within the Common Core and NC Standards and was created in three stages: 1) identifying desired results, 2) determining acceptable evidence, and 3) planning learning experiences and instruction. Use of the GVC is shown in the Education Model map in Appendix U. The GVC enables educators to provide the targeted student population with optimal learning opportunities based on their individual needs. The standards are ordered and grouped in a particular way, and there are essential questions and objectives provided to target instruction. Sample resources, lesson ideas, and item specifications are included on the curriculum map to provide further guidance.

When planning for the year, teachers will study the curriculum map and the test specifications in order to have an understanding of what students are expected to learn. For each unit, pacing guides are provided; however, teachers have the flexibility to adjust pacing according to their knowledge of the students' current levels. From there, cross-curricular plans will be created on a quarterly basis by grade level teams. Using the cross-curricular plan as a guide, teachers will write week-by-week lesson plans to ensure coverage of each unit's standards and instructional rigor. Additionally, essential questions and objectives will provide guidance for the focus and purpose of student learning during the lesson planning process. Furthermore, teachers will be required to map their plans minute-by-minute to maximize instructional time throughout the day.

Teachers will be expected to incorporate technology into all lessons. They can use interactive displays and tablets with students to incorporate online resources from Wonders, Envision, or any other reliable Common Core Standards resource. The targeted students will own the environment, sharing

work on their tablets for their class to see and allowing other students to compare and evaluate their own work. Students will supplement teacher instruction by utilizing blended learning techniques through online software programs, such as Reading Plus and Think Through Math, to work at their own pace and target deficient skills or enrich learning. With monitoring from the classroom teacher, students can take courses online through Plato for enrichment or course recovery. Laptop carts and computer labs will be available for research projects, essay writing, PowerPoint presentations, and other activities for students to demonstrate their 21st century skills.

4. *Describe the primary instructional strategies that the school will expect teachers to master and explain why these strategies will result in increased academic achievement for the targeted student population for each grade span (i.e. elementary, middle, high) the school would ultimately serve.*

AOC

Teachers will use multiple engaging, research-based instructional strategies to reach every child in the classroom, as it is our mission to provide an individualized learning environment. Teachers will implement Marzano's 13 high-probability instructional strategies, which research shows yield the most academic gains across all grade levels when employed consistently. These strategies will be used in all grade levels, but instruction will vary by increasing expectations and complexity as the grade levels progress. The strategies are described briefly below and detailed in Appendix U:

#### Tracking Student Progress

Determine the current level of performance; identify achievement goals and establish a rate of progress; track progress visually; adjust instruction to improve learning to reach goals.

#### Setting Goals/Objectives

Set a core goal and let students personalize it; make sure goals are achievable; help with strategies to achieve goals; monitor progress with students and celebrate success.

#### Building Vocabulary

Implement a comprehensive program for understanding complex texts; engage deeply with content area concepts; and participate in academic discussions.

#### Identifying Similarities and Differences

Include activities involving comparing and classifying; analogies and metaphors; graphic organizers, etc.

#### Interactive Educational Games

Used in addition to effective teaching; define the objectives of the game to set a purpose; should be challenging, but not frustrating; can foster teamwork and social interaction.

#### Summarizing

Requires analysis of text to determine what's important; students use key words and phrases while summarizing content.

#### Note Taking

Use teacher-prepared models/templates to teach basic principles and expectations; give time to practice note-taking and provide feedback on the skill; students jot down main ideas and write questions.

#### Nonlinguistic Representations

Incorporate words and images to represent relationships; use physical models, dramatization, and movement to represent information; have students explain the rationale and meaning behind the nonlinguistic representation.

#### Student Discussion/Chunking

Set expectations for classroom discussions; have students take notes throughout the discussion, and segment the discussion to check for understanding; organize content into small, related segments that are more manageable for understanding in daily lessons.

#### Homework

Establish and communicate a homework policy; provide specific feedback on all assigned homework; vary the way the feedback is delivered.

#### Practice

Ask questions that require students to process and rehearse the material; give feedback on the practice while circulating and monitoring work; provide additional explanations and several examples; utilize cooperative learning.

#### Effort and Recognition

Personalize recognition and praise for specific accomplishments; provide suggestions to help students improve if they are struggling, then praise the improvements.

#### Graphic Organizers

Use various types to expose students to information before they learn it, such as maps, diagrams, timelines, clusters, flowcharts, and structures.

Instructional methods are dependent on the needs of the individual student. To align with our mission and empower all students through individualized learning plans, teachers will adapt lessons to meet the needs of all learners through differentiating the content, process taught, and assessment type. Instruction will include leveled texts and resources for students on, above, and below grade level. Higher order activities such as project-based learning, critiques and evaluations, and evidence-based activities will be utilized to challenge students. Innovative learning methods will range from any or all of the following strategies detailed in Appendix U:

- \* Student-centered Learning
- \* Blended Learning
- \* Cross-Curricular Instruction and Learning
- \* Multiple Intelligences
- \* Project-based Learning
- \* Cooperative Learning

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

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content

previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

CSUSA's GVC is aligned to the Common Core and North Carolina Essential Standards, and it is mapped to ensure teachers have adequate time to teach all standards and the students have the time to master them. MCA's Common Assessments will be administered monthly and provide a uniform formative assessment to track the Academy's overall mastery of the standards for each grade level. Teachers will receive extensive training on the use of the GVC to guide instruction, create effective lesson plans, and track mastery to ensure readiness to transition to the next grade level. To further ensure students are on pace for mastery, teachers will plan and schedule learning objectives aligned to the Instructional Focus Plan (IFP) described in Appendix U. The IFP is a data-driven calendar used to determine which standards need to be re-taught or taught more in-depth than previously expected in order to keep each class on track for promotion to the next grade level.

MCA will utilize a proprietary report card to keep parents informed of their child's academic growth. The report card contains both a practice grade and a mastery grade, and it will give parents a comprehensive overview of their child's current skill level and a measure of his/her progress toward attaining mastery of the standards. It also includes a component regarding citizenship aligned with integrated character development, which measures student performance based on conduct, participation, and effort. The report card will be sent to students and parents quarterly and will also be available via the parent portal. Interim progress reports will be distributed to parents at the midpoint of each quarter. Since each assignment and assessment is directly aligned to the Common Core and NC standards and graded accordingly, a passing grade in the content area denotes that a student has attained an acceptable level of mastery. The report card, in conjunction with the child's PLP, will keep families more than adequately informed of each child's progress and readiness for promotion to the next grade level. Interventions and remediation described further in this application provide additional assurance that MCA is taking appropriate actions to support all students in their academic success.

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

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

Research informs us that there is an instructional difference between annual growth for students who are on grade level, and catch-up growth for students that are below or significantly below grade level (Fielding, Kerr and Rosier 2007). Addressing literacy and reading for those who are multiple years behind grade level is not a single year process. In fact, it is only after

2-3 years of comprehensive reading instruction of more than 200 minutes per day that students begin to cross the threshold of grade-level performance (50th percentile). With this in mind, we intend to provide additional instructional minutes with a longer school day than the LEA to accommodate the interventions and enrichment opportunities. We plan to meet the needs of all of our students, to not only close the achievement gap, but to also accelerate learning in innovative ways in order to support MCA's mission of creating future entrepreneurial leaders. We will have the required 185 days of instruction with extra days for professional development for teachers. The professional development days coincide with the proposed purpose of increasing opportunities for teachers to develop their craft and enhance their skills in the field. Professional development opportunities will be focused on topics that align with our mission of offering a strong college preparatory education, such as data-driven instruction, setting goals and tracking progress, critical thinking skills, and using technology to support learning within the classroom.

### **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.*

AOC

Teachers will be expected to differentiate instruction to reach all learners in all subject areas, but there will be times when students need additional support to ensure they do not fall further behind. Diagnostic and benchmark assessments will be used to identify skill deficiencies and monitor progress, such as Wonders diagnostic assessment, Skills Based Checklist, Running Reading Records, and NWEA assessments.

When students are not performing at expected levels, procedures are in place to ensure students are properly identified and placed into appropriate intervention programs to get them back on track for success. MCA will follow the Response to Intervention tiers listed below.

#### Tier 1: Standards-Based Classroom Learning

All students participate in general education learning that includes universal screenings to target groups in need of specific instructional and/or behavioral support; implementation of the Common Core and North Carolina Essential Standards through a standards-based classroom structure; differentiation of instruction, including flexible grouping, multiple means of learning, and demonstration of learning; progress monitoring of learning through multiple formative assessments; and positive behavior supports.

#### Tier 2: Needs-Based Learning

In addition to Tier 1, targeted students participate in learning that is different by including a standard intervention protocol process for identifying and providing research-based interventions based on student need, and on-going progress monitoring to measure student response to intervention and guided decision-making. Instruction occurs in small-groups in addition to the time allotted for core instruction.

### Tier 3: SST-Driven Learning

In addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2, targeted students participate in learning that is different by including intensive, formalized problem solving to identify individual student needs; targeted research-based interventions tailored to individual needs; different curriculum resources; frequent progress monitoring; and analysis of student response to intervention(s). The time spent on instruction for Tier 3 students is in addition to the combined Tier 1 and Tier 2 amounts.

Depending on which tier the child falls under, MCA will implement various interventions and increase the amount of instructional minutes provided. The following interventions are available:

- \* Differentiated RtI Block: Students are placed in various classes for a block of time to receive targeted instruction in either reading, math, or science depending on their levels and skill deficiencies.
- \* Push-in/Pull-out Instruction: Outside of their core classes, students receive intensive instruction based on their skill level.
- \* Tutoring/Extended Day: After-school small-group instruction utilizing a separate curriculum to reach the needs of the below-grade-level students.

The RtI block is provided to students for a set amount of time each day, but other interventions may be increased or decreased depending on the amount of support the child needs. For example, students can attend Saturday tutoring sessions or have multiple push-in/pull-out sessions during the week to catch up to grade level.

Teachers will create a Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP), which describes the current level of the students based on data from their assessments, the targeted interventions they need, the frequency in which the interventions will be administered, and the expected outcome or goal of the intervention. Parents, teachers, and administrators sign the PMP and the team reconvenes at least quarterly to monitor progress and review the plan. Teachers will provide more frequent updates through parent conferences, informal conversations, and graded assignments.

Various programs are utilized within the interventions described above, including:

- \* Reading Plus
- \* Reading Eggs
- \* Triumph Learning
- \* Wonderworks
- \* Voyager Learning
- \* Reading Mastery

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

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

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

MCA's program for English Language Learner (ELL) students prepares and successfully equips ELL students to fully participate, engage, and lead in their global community without a language barrier, and instead being multilingual. To support our mission of empowering all students through individualized learning plans, we will equip them with targeted instructional supports necessary to achieve mastery of the NC English Language Proficiency Standards as measured by the W-APT and ACCESS for ELLs. A structured English immersion methodology will be used at MCA to fulfill this goal. This strategy has been shown to demonstrate the best results with ELL students, and our extended school day will provide needed additional learning time for these students.

ELL students will be identified in the initial assessments administered upon enrollment and through a Home Language Survey. Students will be selected to take the assessment if they are foreign-born or do not speak English in the home.

If students are language-minority students, they will be scheduled to be administered the W-APT within 30 calendar days of enrollment and the parent will be notified. If a student is tested and determined to be limited English proficient, the student will be tested annually.

Once the assessment results are collected, an instructional plan for students who qualify will be created, including the integration of scaffolding methods to address the ELL student and setting goals for achieving mastery of the NC English Language Proficiency Standards.

As prescribed by law, intervention that facilitates growth in English mastery while promoting content knowledge will be administered. To support literacy and proficiency, the ELL program will provide English language development instruction that is age and grade appropriate, and tailored to the student's English proficiency level. The ELL program will be conducted in a climate that not only stimulates listening, speaking, and reading, but also writing. ELL students will be offered instructional services through an English Immersion program mainstream/inclusion instructional delivery model. Instruction will be supported through the use of ELL instructional strategies. In addition, the curriculum, textbooks, and other instructional materials used by ELL students will be comparable to those used by their non-ELL counterparts. Supplemental text and materials will also be provided.

Mainstream/inclusion instruction will be provided to ELL students equal in amount, sequence, and scope to the instruction provided to non-ELL students at the same grade levels, while also including specific accommodations and modifications to the curriculum. The PLP will be used to show the areas of success and growth that the student maintains. The ELL strategies will be documented in the teachers lesson plan and the student's PLP and ELL folder. ELL students will have the added benefit of the Academy's use of differentiated, individualized instruction as described in Appendix U.

The ACCESS will be administered yearly to assess ELL students' language proficiency. Once a student reaches proficiency in all four language domains of the assessment, as determined by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), he or she will exit the program. The student's academic progress will be regularly monitored after exiting from the ELL program. Documentation, including the monitoring form and tool, will be placed in the

student's ELL file. The language arts teacher will indicate if the student is making appropriate progress or if an ELL committee meeting needs to be held. During the ELL committee meeting, recommendations regarding the student's progress, including placing the student back into the ELL program, can be made.

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.*

AOC

MCA will provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to those that are identified as Academically/Intellectually Gifted (AIG). The program will meet the NC AIG Program Standards in accordance with Article 9B. In partnership with CSUSA, we will ensure that student identification procedures for AIG are clear, equitable, and comprehensive, and lead to appropriate educational services through careful monitoring. All identification, screening, parental involvement, and procedural safeguard requirements will be followed in accordance with NC AIG Program Standards.

We will ensure consistency in the implementation of screening, referral, and identification processes. Screening will provide an equal opportunity for all students using the following:

- \* Multiple criteria for decision-making, including informal assessment such as benchmark, state, EOC, and EOG assessments.
- \* Assessments that go beyond a narrowed conception of giftedness.
- \* Reliable instruments/strategies for assessing giftedness.
- \* Appropriate instruments to be used with under-served populations.
- \* Data that provides relevant information for instructional decision-making rather than labeling.

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

Students who are identified and qualify for AIG will each have a Differentiated Educational Plan written at least once during each educational phase (K-3, 4-5, 6-8), with no plan remaining in effect for more than three years. This plan will include:

- \* A statement of the present levels of educational performance of the child.
- \* A statement of goals, including measurable, short-term instructional objectives.
- \* A statement of the specific services to be provided to the child.
- \* Appropriate objectives, criteria, and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining whether the objectives are being achieved.

The AIG students will receive regularly scheduled enrichment provided by teachers meeting the following requirements: AIG add-on licensure; possession of an AIG Local Professional Achievement Certificate; or working

toward obtaining an AIG Local Professional Achievement Certificate. These teachers will also collaborate with the student's general education teacher to support the extension of the student's learning. All AIG students will be responsible for mastering the Common Core and NC Essential Standards; however, differentiated instruction will be provided to the student to allow for more enrichment and curriculum-compacting opportunities in areas of particular strength. This is in alignment with MCA's mission of offering a rigorous college preparatory education and providing an environment tailored to the needs of the individual student. The goal of the program is to further develop the student's cognitive learning, research and reference, and metacognitive skills at each grade level in one or more content areas, which are aligned to the NC AIG Program.

Each quarter, teachers will analyze benchmark assessment results. For high-ability students, teachers will use this to help identify enrichment areas. Within the framework of MCA's GVC Education Model, teachers will determine the instructional focus, strategies, and curriculum resources to be used for enrichment during the 6 weeks between benchmark assessments. The AIG Program is built upon an academic foundation and centered on interdisciplinary enrichment activities. Students' studies, for example, may include holistic projects that incorporate the development of advanced research skills, complex creative thinking and problem-solving, communication skills for a variety of audiences, and use of technology to promote the desire for learning on self-selected and/or teacher-selected topics.

### **Exceptional Children**

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

### **Identification and Records**

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

AOC

MCA will identify students who have previously been found eligible for Exceptional Children (EC) services/protected under Section 504 by:

\* Utilizing the Comprehensive Exceptional Children Accountability System (CECAS), or a comparable state system that tracks student information across

school and district boundaries within NC.

\* Enrollment packet documentation requesting copies of IEP/504 and asking families to self-identify.

\* Registrar requesting complete academic records from prior school to review for indicators of EC/504 designation.

A team will be formed to collaboratively address the needs of students who have learning and/or behavior problems. The team will systematically monitor student progress and performance data and identify interventions to improve student performance. A student may be referred to the team by a teacher or at the request of the parent/guardian. This serves to ensure that all students suspected of having a disability and are in need of instructional accommodations and/or special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated. All students will participate in evidence-based instruction. A tiered system of interventions will be provided to help struggling students make progress (see RTI).

Periodic assessments will be conducted during the intervention period to evaluate whether the student is responding to the interventions and to determine if the strategies are successful. If successful, the team will continue to monitor. If not, and evidence exists that shows a disability may be the primary cause of the students difficulties, the student will be referred for an evaluation in accordance with state policy NC 1503.

After obtaining parental consent, a comprehensive evaluation will be conducted by certified/licensed professionals who may be contracted for services. Testing will include all areas related to the suspected disability, such as cognitive functioning, academic achievement, psychological processing, speech/language skills, medical information, social/emotional functioning, and results from vision and hearing screenings. Once testing is complete, an eligibility meeting will be held.

If special education/related services are necessary, an IEP will be written. If the child needs accommodations, but not EC services, a 504 Plan will be written. It is the responsibility of the IEP Team (parent, general education teacher, special education provider, evaluation specialist, and LEA representative) to make placement decisions and ensure that the student's individual instructional needs are reflected in the IEP based on FAPE and provisions of least restrictive environment.

In addition to cumulative files, separate files will be maintained for EC records and 504 Plans. These files will be accessible only by authorized individuals in accordance with state and federal policy. EC files will be organized with the most current IEP forms on top. The previous years' forms will be arranged chronologically in descending order, with initial placement documentation at the bottom of the file.

Record request forms will be used to request records from previous schools. Once the registrar receives this signed form from the parent, it is faxed to the previous school. If the records are not received in a timely manner, a follow-up process will be followed with documentation of contact attempts. Student records will be maintained in locked cabinets in a secure area of the Academy. We will comply with FERPA and state policies related to reading, inspecting, and copying a student's educational records. All

employees at the Academy will receive training, at least annually, related to the confidential nature of student records. MCA's EC contact will receive training on the use of the Compliance Checklist published by NCDPI. This will be used as a self-evaluation tool. Should areas of non-compliance be noted, the Academy will take necessary steps to correct them.

### 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.*

For students who are performing below grade level, provisions of reasonable supplementary supports and services and/or modifications and accommodations will be provided to ensure that they achieve the Common Core and NC Essential Standards.

Teachers will use scaffolding and provide students with direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, and independent practice. Small groups will be used for more individualized instruction when necessary with additional support provided by EC staff or instructional coaches when needed.

Based on benchmark assessment data, students may receive additional instruction and practice on identified skills. Teachers will provide additional instruction outside of the standard instructional block through content area integration, during enrichment activities or lunch, and any other opportunity to support student achievement of individual learning goals.

We will meet the individual needs of students who, based on diagnostic data, have been identified to have significant skill deficiencies and/or read two or more years below grade level through additional instructional minutes using a research-based intervention program. Students will receive additional instruction in a small-group setting with more frequent progress monitoring to ensure accelerated progress toward grade-level expectations.

Teachers with a NC Exceptional Children certification will serve students meeting the eligibility criteria for EC as specified in the student's IEP. Based on the enrollment of students with disabilities, we will hire and train the appropriate number of teachers/paraprofessionals to ensure adherence to federal and state guidelines for class size and caseload and ensure all necessary IEP services are being implemented.

Licensed/certified vendors will be contracted to provide special education and related services. The students' IEPs will determine the specific services that will be contracted for.

Students with disabilities whose IEPs demonstrate the need for special education or related services will be served in the regular classroom or EC setting, as determined by the IEP Team through consideration of the least restrictive environment based on the individual student's need. The Lead EC

Teacher will ensure that students are scheduled in a manner that allows for implementation of the services identified on each student's IEP.

EC services will be provided through a model of inclusion for all students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment as determined by the IEP Team. A full continuum of special education and related services will be offered to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Students will be educated in an EC setting only if the nature and severity of the student's disability is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aides and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

The EC teachers and the general education teachers will collaborate with regard to lesson planning and implementation and student progress. Related service providers will also collaborate with the student's EC and general education teachers. This will ensure that all teachers working with EC students will be focused on meeting student needs as well as student growth and goal attainment.

We will comply with state policy NC 1501 to ensure that students with disabilities receive a FAPE. A full continuum of services will be provided to meet the needs of enrolled students. When decisions are made related to addressing the needs of students with disabilities, these will be made through the collaboration of a team. For students with an IEP, this team will consist of the student's parents, the student if appropriate, EC provider(s), general education teacher, and the LEA representative. For students protected under Section 504, a team of no less than three individuals who know the student, have knowledge about the student's disability, and are knowledgeable about instructional aids/accommodations will form that collaborative decision-making team. Families of students with disabilities will be provided with written procedural safeguards in the native language of the parent(s), unless it is not feasible to do so, in order to notify and make parents aware of their rights and responsibilities as parents of a student with a disability. If a written document in the native language of the parent(s) is not available, the explanation of the notice will be given orally or in a manner of communication the parent(s) will understand. Personnel at the Academy will ensure that the parent(s) has understood the information.

To ensure the provision of FAPE, personnel at the Academy will consider if the student requires assistive technology devices in order to access education. The need for an extended school year will also be reviewed and will be provided to students if determined necessary by the student's IEP Team. Steps will also be taken to provide nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities to students with disabilities by providing supplementary aids as appropriate and necessary. Additionally, staff members responsible for student discipline will receive training on FAPE requirements to ensure that state policies are followed related to the discipline of students of disabilities.

Teachers and EC service providers will be responsible for implementing each student's IEP. Providers will maintain service logs to reflect the delivery of services indicated on each student's IEP. The teachers and service providers will be involved in progress monitoring to assess the progress each student is making toward his/her IEP goals. This information will be

communicated quarterly to the student's parent/guardian or more frequently if feedback is requested.

In addition, classroom teachers will remain in contact with relevant stakeholders by updating the student's PLP, using data derived from ongoing progress monitoring, narrative report card, and benchmark testing results.

Vendors will be contracted to provide EC and related services including, but not limited to speech and language services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and school psychology evaluation services. The students' IEPs will determine the specific services that will be contracted. All contracted providers will need to be appropriately certified/licensed based on State Board of Education requirements. In addition, contracted providers will be required to maintain professional liability insurance. During the summer prior to MCA's opening, IEPs of enrolled students will be reviewed to determine which of these EC clinical services will be needed and to finalize contracts to allow services to be in place at the start of the school year. The Lead EC Teacher will ensure that students are scheduled in a manner that allows for implementation of the services identified on each student's IEP.

All clinicians will comply with FERPA and will provide a range of services including evaluation, participation in team meetings, development and generation of the IEP/Section 504 plan, treatment and remediation, and collaboration with Academy staff.

### **Student Performance Standards**

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

AOC

MCA will administer the NWEA MAP three times per year to track student growth in grades K-8. The nationally normed MAP provides RIT (scale) score growth targets in math, ELA, and science. Each fall, NWEA provides students with a nationally normed spring RIT target representing the average fall to spring growth of students nationwide at their grade and RIT level, thus ensuring that each student has a growth target unique to his/her academic needs. Each grade-level will meet or exceed 100% of spring RIT growth targets in math, ELA, and science annually. All students with fall and spring scores will be included in NWEA's grade-level calculations of "Overall Percent of Projected RIT Met or Exceeded."

In NC's SPG calculation, 80% or more of an elementary and middle school's

final grade is determined by student proficiency on the EOGs/EOCs. The remaining 20% is determined by a value-added growth model. MCA's dual focus on proficiency and growth aligns to the state's accountability expectations. Based on the September 2, 2015 release of SPG data, MCA-area schools combined scored an estimated 63 on the SPG performance component for 2014-15, the average of their EOG reading (58%), EOG math (58%), EOG science (70%) and Math 1 proficiencies (67%). This approximates the performance of MCA's expected student population as of 2014-15. For example, applying the Academy's goal of reducing the percentage of non-proficient students by 10% annually would produce a Year 5 performance component goal of 76.

For a list of the MCA-area schools included in the above calculation and a table of SPG goals by year, please see page 1 of Appendix U.

MCA will adhere to all state accountability and testing requirements, including administration of state math, reading, and science assessments, currently the READY EOG and EOC Assessments. MCA will also administer any alternative assessments as appropriate. Third grade students who do not pass the 3rd grade reading EOG, and do not meet any of the good cause exemptions outlined by the state will take the Read to Achieve test. The Academy will administer assessments that mirror the state-mandated assessments in order to ensure adequate progress and preparation for every student.

#### Interim Assessments

These include three administrations in the areas of English/language arts, mathematics, and science. NWEA currently provides the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and the MAP for Primary Grades (MPG).

#### NWEA MAP

Tests students with engaging, ability-appropriate content aligned to Common Core. NWEA is an adaptive assessment; therefore as a student responds to questions, the test difficulty adjusts to the level of the student performance.

#### NWEA MAP for Science

Aligned with science state standards, test items assess students up to and including 10th grade, and measure the following critical areas: 1) General Science, which covers specific science concepts within the three major domains of science (life sciences, earth and space sciences, and physical sciences). 2) Concepts and Processes, measuring a student's performance in both the processes used in science, and the major themes underlying the science disciplines. Administration of the science MAP is required in grades 5 and 8, but MCA will have the option of offering this assessment to other grade levels as necessary.

#### Common Assessments

The EMO will provide monthly "common assessments" which are created from a data bank, and disseminated to schools to gauge students' progress towards mastery of the GVC. The assessments are aligned to state standards, and include short-term review as well as spiral review. This provides a frequent, uniform tool to monitor progress towards the mastery of standards between NWEA interim assessments.

#### Weekly Standards Assessments/IFP Assessments

Objective-based questions used for quick checks of content material and essay questions that require critical thinking and writing skills. These assessments are aligned to the curriculum maps and measure mastery of standards included in the unit.

In addition to summative assessments described above, formative assessments used in the classroom may include:

- \* Achievement of goals and objectives in the student's PLP
- \* Quarterly progress summaries
- \* K-2 Skills Checklists
- \* EasyCBM
- \* DIBELS
- \* Running Records
- \* Oral Reading Fluency Checks
- \* Journals
- \* Teacher observations
- \* Anecdotal records of the students performance
- \* Attitude inventories
- \* Tools within software programs

MCA's use of a research-based, data-driven Education Model provides the structure and accountability for the continuous monitoring and analysis of the academic program. The data is used to develop PLPs and PMPs to ensure students are on track to master the required standards. This data is analyzed during weekly or bi-weekly data chats (described in Appendix U) to determine action steps to help students improve, or make adjustments in school-wide initiatives.

Students are expected to meet adequate levels of performance in reading, writing, mathematics, and science for each grade level. These levels of performance will be used to identify students who must receive remediation, and may be retained. No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age, or other factors that constitute social promotion. Various indicators will be used to determine performance levels, including but not limited to; multiple measures using appropriate grade level assessments, and teacher judgment. Teacher judgment factors may include, but are not limited to the following:

- \* Previous retentions
- \* Observations
- \* Checklists
- \* Student portfolios
- \* Classroom assessments
- \* Current grades

The teacher, parent, and principal will work together to ensure a plan is in place to prevent retention during the school year. Students in grades 3-8 will also take end-of-year state assessments in reading, math, and science in order to provide more evidence for evaluating student performance. Third grade students who do not pass the EOG assessment for reading are subject to additional requirements under the state's Read to Achieve law. The ultimate decision for promotion or retention is made by the principal.

Middle school students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are required to achieve a grade of "D" or higher in English language arts, math, science, and social studies

in order to be promoted to high school. Students in grades 6 and 7 who fail a subject will have the opportunity to participate in course recovery. Middle school students will also take an elective and physical education course at each grade level, but those participating in course recovery or intensive reading or math will waive their elective course. Additional details are provided in Appendix D.

Unless a special education student is on an alternative curriculum per the student's IEP, that student would be held to the same policies in effect for general education.

Promotion criteria will be communicated to parents through the distribution of the Pupil Progression Plan at the start of the school year. Parents will be kept informed of the child's progress formally in writing twice quarterly: once via a progress report at mid-quarter, and secondly via a report card distributed at the end of each quarter. Parents will also be notified of the child's assessment scores after each administration. They will have constant online access to their child's grades through PowerSchool, and may schedule conferences and contact the teacher as necessary. After the first indication that a student is below grade level and may be "at-risk" for retention, the teacher will develop a PMP, which will be signed by the student's parents or guardians. The PMP is updated in writing at least quarterly, with progress communicated more frequently in an informal manner.

### **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 specific to the proposed charter school within the appendices (Appendix D).*

*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.*

We believe that to be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. Knowing the children we teach is as important as knowing the content we teach. To align with our mission of building a positive, rigorous college preparatory learning environment that develops characteristics of future leaders, we will implement Responsive Classroom for grades K-5, and Developmental Designs for grades 6-8. All faculty and staff will adhere to the guiding principles outlined in these programs to develop a culture that includes the implementation of morning meetings and the use of effective, positive teacher language to redirect behavior.

Developmental Designs target the unique needs of adolescents to help them build a love for school and feel like a part of a community. The Developmental Designs program targets three main areas: self-management and other social-emotional skill building; relationship and community-building; and academic skill building. The use of this program is supportive of the mission as it promotes the development of students into responsible citizens as they grow through adolescence, which leads to conscientious, successful academic decision-making.

MCA will not only optimize every instructional minute to meet the academic needs of students, but also their behavioral needs. To prevent misbehavior and keep students focused, in addition to the use of highly engaging teaching strategies and minute-by-minute instruction, teachers will include highly structured procedures with step-by-step routines for any task ranging from lining up for lunch to gathering materials for the start of a lesson. These procedures will be implemented throughout the school year with fidelity in order to keep students focused on academics and instruction, not distracted by poor behavior.

The Code of Conduct will be provided to parents and students prior to the start of the school year to ensure all families are aware of the possible consequences faced if a student chooses to misbehave in school. Found in Appendix D, it outlines and defines the infractions that may lead to in-school consequences, and/or to suspension and expulsion. Depending on the severity and situation of each case, the following offenses may lead to a consequence ranging from in-school disciplinary action to suspension:

- \* Infractions of class/Academy rules
- \* Contraband items (i.e. lighters, matches)
- \* Integrity (i.e. cheating, forgery)
- \* Trespassing
- \* Inappropriate interpersonal/sexual behavior (including harassment)
- \* Disrespect and noncompliance
- \* Use of electronic devices
- \* Gambling
- \* Harassment, abusive, offensive language
- \* Bullying
- \* Hazing
- \* Physical, written, or verbal aggression, or threat of
- \* Unjustified activation of a fire alarm or other system
- \* Theft or destruction
- \* Possession of weapon, tobacco, narcotics, alcohol, or controlled substance

We may, upon recommendation of the principal, permanently expel from the Academy any student older than 14 years of age whose behavior indicates that the student's continued presence in the Academy constitutes a clear threat to the safety of other students or employees. Students will be granted due process rights, including the opportunity for a hearing before the Board, in accordance with the state law for suspensions and expulsions.

While it may be necessary for students with disabilities to be suspended or expelled from the Academy, before those students can be suspended for more than 10 school days in a given school year, a manifestation determination meeting will be held by the IEP team to decide if the student's disability caused the misbehavior. The outcome may impact any further disciplinary

action taken related to the student, as to ensure the student will not be denied FAPE per federal law. Further details can be found in the Student Handbook in Appendix D.

**IV. GOVERNANCE and CAPACITY**

(No more than ten total pages in this section)

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

**Governance:**

**Private Nonprofit Corporation:**

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

*Name of Private Nonprofit:* Montcross Charter Education Foundation

*Mailing Address:* 133 Sunshine Lane

*City/State/Zip:* Cherryville NC 28021

*Street Address:* 133 Sunshine Lane

*Phone:* 704-418-0889

*Fax:*

*Name of registered agent and address:*

CT Corporation System  
150 Fayetteville Street  
Box 1011  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

*FEDERAL TAX ID:* 47-5081364

**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 E)  
 No

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

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

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

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

Board	Board	County/State	Current	Past or Present	Has any disciplinary
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Member Name	Title	of Residence	Occupation	Professional Licenses(s) Held	action been taken against any of these professional licenses?

**Please provide the following in this location of the APPLICATION:**

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

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

The Montcross Charter Education Foundation, Inc. is a North Carolina not-for-profit entity organized exclusively for educational purposes and will hold the charter for MCA. The Board shall be responsible for ensuring that the mission is the guiding focus of the Academy. The Board will ensure that MCA's programs and operations are faithful to the terms of the charter, including compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The Board shall develop and uphold policies, be accountable for the public funds, and ensure that students are learning and meeting the academic performance goals of the charter. The Board shall be responsible for the legal and financial obligations of the Academy. The Board will continue to uphold the vision of MCA through visible leadership and stewardship of the Academy, including communicating MCA's mission and vision to the community; holding CSUSA accountable for achieving MCA's mission and vision; participating in fundraising and other community events on behalf of the Academy; setting, approving, and monitoring the Academy budget; reviewing and approving the monthly financials and making adjustments as needed; reviewing Academy performance; monitoring the overall health and viability of the Academy; communicating with the community and state Board of Education; monitoring progress toward goals; operational oversight of CSUSA; hiring of teachers; strategic planning; and ensuring compliance with all local, state, and federal reporting requirements.

As per the management agreement, CSUSA shall consult with the Board with respect to the hiring of the principal. MCA will use a robust recruiting process called the Leadership Assessment Center. This process is used to determine if a candidate would be a good building leader and is an important component of the interview process. Qualified candidates participate in this 1-day event, which includes a technology activity, essay writing sample, personality quiz, self-assessment, and an interview. The Board is included in the final decision-making process in an effort to support a positive working relationship between the principal and the Board. The principal will be employed by and report directly to CSUSA. While the principal will not report directly to the Board, a strong relationship will exist. The Board will ultimately hold the principal accountable through the performance expectations defined by the Board and through the management agreement between the Board and CSUSA. The principal will provide a monthly status report to the Board at monthly board meetings, which will include educational, enrollment, personnel, technology, facility, and various other operational reports. The principal will attend all board meetings and field any questions of the Board members and conduct follow-up action items as necessary. Board members will be given the opportunity to provide input on

the principal's performance, and CSUSA will remove the principal if the Board is reasonably dissatisfied with his/her performance.

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.*

The Montcross Charter Education Foundation, Inc. is currently a 5-member board comprised of area leaders who are committed to providing quality educational options in our community. Our Bylaws give us the ability to expand to up to nine members. Board members shall not have the authority or ability to formulate or implement policy on an individual basis, and all decisions shall be made collectively in accordance with board procedure.

Highlights of the Board's demonstrated capacity include charter school governance and operations encompassing finance, facilities, federal and private grant work, marketing, and community involvement. These experiences and skill sets are advantageous in marketing MCA and engaging the media; securing available and affordable land for facilities; understanding the Education Model and curriculum, including various assessments that are used through the year; and reviewing and questioning the authenticity of the monthly budget.

Monthly board meetings will be publicized on MCA websites, as well as on the doors of the Academy. Parents will be welcome and acknowledged and public comment will be welcome at every meeting. The Board will follow up with the principal and CSUSA when needed to ensure complaints and suggestions are handled properly and timely. Monthly board meetings will include a detailed principal's report and financial reports to be evaluated by the Board in partnership with CSUSA.

The Board will evaluate the success of MCA and the principal by continuous monitoring, which includes quarterly, semi-annual, and annual surveys and active and effective representation of all stakeholders to ensure that the Academy will be an educational and operational success.

MCA will have a Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) that will meet on a regular basis. The PTC will work closely with Academy administration and the Board to identify opportunities for Academy programming, fundraising, and special events to meet the needs of the Academy and its students. Given the areas of expertise represented by the Board members, the active parental participation through the PTC, and the day-to-day oversight of CSUSA, there will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders.

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?*

Board members Rebecca Friend and Audene Scarlett initiated the formation of the Montcross Charter Education Foundation as they explored the educational needs and opportunities for a charter school in Gaston County. As they continued in this effort, they were put in contact with Edward Dunlap and Robert Pope, who were also interested in the charter school movement in Gaston County. We then came in contact with CSUSA and felt this organization

would foster a good partnership, enabling the vision of the Board to come to fruition. Rebecca and Audene then approached a mutual acquaintance to work with us on the Board, making Cindy Odom the fifth board member. We continue to talk with acquaintances throughout the community in an effort to grow our board to seven members within the next year. This is being done with great consideration as the Board wants to ensure additional members are committed to the mission of MCA.

Vacancies on the Board will be filled at the annual or special meeting of the Board by a vote of a majority of the directors in office. The annual meeting is scheduled to take place in May of each year. However, if a vacancy results in the Board having less than five members or it is otherwise determined that it is desirable and in the best interest of MCA to fill a vacancy before the next annual meeting, then a board recruitment/selection committee may be formed by at least two board members to search for qualified candidates to present to the entire Board for consideration. Any two members of the Board may call a special meeting for the purpose of filling the vacancy. The vacancy may then be filled at a special meeting by a vote of the majority of the directors in office.

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

The Board plans to meet monthly with an annual meeting in May and Strategic Planning workshop in October of each year.

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 J).*

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

Training is one of the most critical responsibilities of the Board. Proper orientation will ensure desired continuity of MCA's mission and goals attainment. New board members will receive an orientation and be given a thorough review of the Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, and other applicable governing documents.

To ensure board members are effective in their role, board members will receive training on a variety of topics. Training will be provided by the Board's legal counsel. Board members will also participate in the Board training workshops provided by the Office of Charter Schools. Professional development shall also include attendance at annual charter school conferences and regional workshops offered by the Alliance for Public Charter Schools and the NC Public Charter Schools Association. Below is a timetable covering training and professional development to be provided by the Board's legal counsel:

\* April through June: Roles of the Board, Parliamentary Procedure, and Drafting Board Policies.

\* July through September: Review of Open Meetings Law, and Reading a Financial Statement.

\* October through December: Charter School Law, and Guided Questions for Mission Statement and Strategic Planning.

\* January through March: Models of Governance and Leadership, and Review of Bylaws.

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.*

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

The Montcross Charter Education Foundation has adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy (see Appendix J). This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations. A board member shall inform the Board of any direct or indirect conflict of interest which the member has with regard to any transaction contemplated by the Board. A conflict of interest shall exist in board actions if, including, but not be limited to, actions concerning a transaction in which the member: (a) has a material financial interest; or (b) is presently serving as a director, trustee, officer, or general partner of another party. Pursuant to the provisions of N.C.G.S., 55A-8-31, the board member with a conflict of interest may participate in the discussion, but may not vote on the transaction. The transaction is authorized, approved, or ratified by the vote of a majority of the members in office who have no conflict of interest (which must be more than one member) and when a majority of members who have no conflict of interest so vote, a quorum is deemed to be present at the meeting for purposes of that vote. There are no existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts of interest if the application is approved. Board members will have no financial or personal interest in the Academy. In addition, board members are independent of CSUSA and no members of CSUSA will sit on the Board.

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

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

Academy policies shall be developed by a combination of stakeholders, including the principal, Academy staff, and when necessary, legal counsel. Policies will be created after researching best practices and using proven systems to guide our work. Policies will be presented to the full board to allow for open discussion and collaboration at a public meeting and then brought to a vote for approval. Policies shall be made available to parents via the Student Handbook (see Appendix D). Please see Appendix J for policies that have been adopted and approved by the Board. Academy policies are reviewed annually to ensure compliance with federal and state law as well as local regulations and policies.

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.*

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

A Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) will be established each year to provide a voice for parents and community input. The PTC shall be comprised of parents of enrolled students, administrators, and teachers. The PTC will report directly to the principal. The Board believes that active parental participation is essential to operating high-quality charter schools. Parent

participation is the key to the success of the overall program and will be solicited for the development of Academy goals and objectives.

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

AOC - The information provided in this section is similar to content previously submitted by other applicants who have partnered with CSUSA.

Parents may bring complaints to the leadership team of MCA at any time. It is the responsibility of the leadership team to work to understand the concern. The Board's policy dictates that parent concerns are first discussed with the teacher. If the parent determines that the concern has not been adequately addressed, then the parent must make an appointment with a member of administration. Requests for appointments must be made in writing within 21 calendar days of the event giving rise to the grievance. If the parent has determined that the concern has not been addressed after a discussion with administration and ample time has been given, the parent may contact CSUSA as well as the Board. The Board will review the written documentation, along with decisions from the administration and CSUSA, and will issue a final written decision within 30 calendar days of receiving the appeal. It is our desire, in partnership with CSUSA, to create the best learning environment for each student, including working to resolve concerns parents have regarding their child's academic environment.

When an employee believes a work condition or treatment is unjust, inequitable, a hindrance to effective operation, or creates a problem; he or she is encouraged to discuss the condition or treatment with Academy administration. Academy policy provides for alternative lines of communication when the employee has such issues with his or her direct supervisor. If the teacher or staff member feels he or she has been treated unfairly as a result of actions from the Academy's administration, the employee can present a formal grievance with CSUSA's Corporate Human Resources Department and further investigation will be conducted. CSUSA will report violations of ethics or misconduct as required or deemed necessary.

Misunderstandings or conflicts can arise in any organization and should be resolved before serious problems develop. Most incidents resolve themselves without formal intervention. However, should a situation persist that the employee believes is detrimental to himself/herself, the Board, or CSUSA; the employee should follow the procedure described here for bringing the complaint to Academy administration and/or the CSUSA Human Resources Department's attention. If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the outcome, the employee may request a review of the matter by the Board. The Board will review the written documentation and decisions, and in consultation with the administration and CSUSA, will issue a final written decision.

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

Include in the Appendices:

1. *A well-defined organizational chart showing the relationship of the Board of Directors to the parents and staff of the proposed charter school. This chart should also include lines of authority to and from any outside entity that will play a role in managing or supporting the charter school (such as educational service providers, advisory bodies or parent/teacher councils). (Appendix F)*

2. A one-page resume from each founding board member and responses to the questions found on the Charter School Board Member Form (Appendix G).
3. The proposed by-laws, which must include a Conflict of Interest Policy for board members and a stated commitment to the NC Open Meetings Law (Appendix H).
4. A copy of the articles of incorporation from the NC Department of the Secretary of State. (Appendix I)
5. Copy of any board policies if adopted already (Appendix J).
6. Copies of meeting minutes (if available), relevant to the development of the charter school plan, during the application process (Appendix K).

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

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

**Not Applicable**

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

Name of the Company: Charter Schools USA  
Address: 800 CORPORATE DRIVE #124  
FORT LAUDERDALE FL 33334  
Website: [charterschoolsusa.com](http://charterschoolsusa.com)  
Phone Number: 954-202-3500  
Contact Person: Sandy Castro  
Fax: 954-416-4027  
Email: [scaastro@charterschoolsusa.com](mailto:scaastro@charterschoolsusa.com)

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

We initially selected CSUSA due to their experience, success, capacity, AdvancedEd accreditation, and Education Model that aligns with our mission to provide a rigorous college preparatory education that empowers all students through individualized learning plans. In addition, their ability to deliver a fully equipped, state-of-the-art facility by carrying the start-up costs and underwriting the Academy as necessary was a key factor in our decision, and its why we feel that CSUSA will be the best educational and financial management team for the Academy.

Our relationship with CSUSA is governed by a performance-based Management Agreement. We have engaged the law firm of Nelson, Mullins, Riley, & Scarborough as independent legal counsel. We have worked closely with legal counsel to review and negotiate the terms of the Management Agreement prior to execution (see Appendix L).

The Board will provide oversight of CSUSA on compliance requirements through routine monitoring of Academy operations. We will evaluate CSUSA's effectiveness based on MCA's performance relative to annual goals that we set.

- 2. What other EMO/CMOs were pursued and why did the applicant select this particular one? Please include information regarding other management organization's fees and financial/academic records that led to the selection of the proposed EMO/CMO as the best fit for this proposed school.*

We have not researched or pursued any other vendor. CSUSA's Education Model and other services fulfill the needs that were important to us in our decision to start a charter school in our community.

CSUSA has a large support staff that provides services to its schools across all areas needed to successfully operate a charter school. This includes a team of Regional Directors and Managers who excel professionally in the areas of finance, education, facilities, operations, marketing, enrollment, and human resources. CSUSA will work closely with the Board to support the infrastructure needed to ensure adequate Academy resources are provided to MCA.

- 3. Provide and discuss student performance, governance performance and financial data from other schools managed by the management company to demonstrate how this organization is a good fit for the targeted student population. Nationally, what is the highest and lowest performing school of the EMO/CMO? Why are these two schools so different in overall achievement?*

The Board has selected Charter Schools USA, Inc. to manage MCA. CSUSA currently operates 73 traditional charter schools and 3 turnaround schools in 7 states nationwide, serving nearly 70,000 students. All of CSUSA's schools are AdvancED accredited. More than half of CSUSA's students receive free or reduced lunch, and over 70% of students are classified as minorities. Of CSUSA's schools that receive traditional A-F grades, 100% of schools open 3 or more years earned "passing grades" (A, B or C) in 2014. Currently, North Carolina is the only state to have released 2014-15 results for non-high schools, and all three of CSUSA's schools earned a B.

In 2013-14, two CSUSA-managed charter schools opened in NC: Langtree and Cabarrus Charter Academies. In their first year, both Langtree and Cabarrus exceeded the performance school-wide of NC and their respective school districts in all EOG subjects. In reading proficiency, Langtree and Cabarrus outperformed the state by more than 18% and their districts by 17% and 12%, respectively. Math performance was similarly high, with both schools exceeding the state average by more than 18% and their districts by approximately 15%. The trend continues when the sample of schools is limited to those in a 5-mile radius. Cardinal Charter Academy opened in Wake County in 2014-15. As of the September 2, 2015 release of school grades, all three schools again outperformed the state and their respective school districts in reading, math, and science. CSUSA NC schools held a 21% advantage over the state as a whole in reading, a 17% advantage in math, and a 15% in science.

CSUSA's three turnaround schools in Indiana are their lowest performing. Only managed since 2012-13, more than 90% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch, and the student body is 53% minority. Collectively, the Indianapolis schools have made outstanding progress, far exceeding one year's annual growth on NWEA MAP assessments. In 2014, 172% of growth targets were met in math, the equivalent of over one-and-a-half years worth of growth. In reading, students made over two-and-a-half years worth of growth with 275% of growth targets met. As of the most recent school

accountability results (2014), at the middle school level, both schools maintained or exceeded prior year performance in reading and math. Algebra performance increased by over 10% in middle school, and by over 20% in high school. ELA EOC results show that for the first time, an Indianapolis turnaround school has crossed the critical 60% proficiency threshold. Emmerich Manual HS is also the first turnaround school in Indiana to raise its grade from an F in over 6 years.

Some of CSUSA's highest performing schools are in Florida, their most established state, with 54 schools in 12 school districts. The schools range from FRL populations of 15% to 87% and minority rates of 41% to 98%. The diversity of CSUSA's Florida schools and their success with all student populations illustrates that, regardless of student demographics, the CSUSA Education Model works. The key factor is time. When students come to school two or more years below grade level, they can make significant progress and growth without tipping the proficiency scale. Thus, student performance and grade-level mastery increase the longer students and schools are part of the CSUSA family. While proficiency increases with school tenure, annual growth is elevated in developing schools. Second-year Florida schools did especially well in 2014, with an average increase of 7% in math proficiency, 3% in reading, and 23% in writing. As a district, CSUSA's Florida schools exceeded state reading, math, science, and writing proficiency. Additionally, their net proficiency growth was almost 10 times higher than the state in 2014.

4. *Describe how the governance structure will be affected; if at all, by the EMO/CMO and particularly discuss how the board of directors of the charter school will govern the school independently of the EMO/CMO.*

Our relationship with the EMO is codified with a performance-based contract. The executed Management Agreement in Appendix L outlines the duties and responsibilities of each party and the specific performance requirements of the EMO.

We will independently adopt a comprehensive budget on an annual basis, which shall include all forms of revenue and all expenditures. Any and all budget amendments will require our approval. On a monthly basis, the EMO will provide us a detailed accounting of all Academy revenues and expenditures. In addition, the EMO will report, on a monthly basis, the current student enrollment of the Academy and the number of students on the waiting list (if any). The EMO will provide monthly financials, which will include a statement of revenues and expenditures prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

The EMO will be responsible for the daily financial management of the Academy, subject to the budget and oversight of the Board. The Board will be responsible for overall policies regarding MCA's governance, academic, personnel, discipline, and grievance policies. It is our responsibility to hold the EMO responsible for the successful operation of the Academy and its ability to deliver academic results. This system of accountability ensures that MCA will be devoted to its mission of providing a rigorous college preparatory education.

The lead administrator will be responsible for implementing and enforcing all policies set forth by the Board. Academy employees will be responsible

for, above all else, the delivery of MCA's rigorous academic program. Academy teachers are jointly employed by both the Board and CSUSA, although the Board retains ultimate authority over the hiring and firing of Academy teachers. This relationship is described further below.

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

Teachers will be jointly employed by the Board and CSUSA, and administrators and staff will be solely employed by CSUSA. This arrangement is necessary for the administration of employee benefits and pay and does not reduce the Board's authority to hire and fire teachers, and complies with N.C.G.S., Article 14, 115C.

6. *Explain how the contract includes measurable objectives whereby the charter school board can evaluate annually the performance of the EMO/CMO; and if necessary, terminate the contract without significant obstacles.*

The Management Agreement outlines the EMO's responsibilities to the Board for the operation and performance of the Academy in accordance with the charter contract and the performance criteria outlined in this application. The EMO's responsibilities to the Board include, but are not limited to:

- \* Timely submission of required reports as set forth in the Management Agreement and in the charter contract.
- \* Strict adherence to the approved annual budget for the operation and management of MCA.
- \* Performance goals stated in the charter application and the charter contract.

The Management Agreement contains an article that outlines the reasons for which the Board may terminate the Management Agreement. Please refer to the Management Agreement attached as Appendix L.

7. *Is the facility provided by the EMO/CMO? N*

- If yes, include as Appendix M a detail of the buyout formula for the nonprofit board of directors to purchase the facility if a buyout formula or process exists.

8. *List the fund balance and surpluses for each school managed by the EMO/CMO over the last three years in North Carolina.*

Currently, the EMO manages three charter schools in North Carolina. One of these schools, Cardinal Charter Academy, opened in August 2014. The other two schools, Cabarrus Charter Academy and Langtree Charter Academy, opened in 2013. 2015 audited fund balances will not be available until late October 2015. Below is a list of estimated 2015 fund balances and 2014 audited fund balances:

2015

- \* Cardinal Charter Academy FY15 audit fund balance: Approximately \$80,000.
- \* Cabarrus Charter Academy FY15 audit fund balance: Approximately \$59,000.
- \* Langtree Charter Academy FY15 audit fund balance: Approximately \$50,000.

2014

- \* Cardinal Charter Academy Not open in 2013.
- \* Cabarrus Charter Academy FY14 audit fund balance: \$101,867.
- \* Langtree Charter Academy FY14 audit fund balance: \$116,816.

CSUSA is a profitable, financially viable, privately held company as evidenced by the bank letter that confirms that CSUSA is in good financial standing. CSUSA has informed the Board that it is prepared to share

financial information for inspection to appropriate designated financial representatives for NC DPI as may be requested. Appendix N contains the 3-year audited fund balance report for all schools in the CSUSA network; this information helps illustrate the financial viability of each individual school.

9. *Provide as Appendix N the financial history and statements of the EMO/CMO over the last three years. Specifically, if contracting with an EMO provides confirmation that the EMO is in good financial standing with either financial statements, bank letter, D & B report or credit rating.*

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

**X Not Applicable**

**Charter School Replication: complete ONLY if the proposed charter is a replication of an existing charter school. Otherwise, mark "Not Applicable" and follow the direction #3 in the Application Specifications. Understand that the replication means that a new charter school will be governed separately from the charter school the application is modeled after.**

**Not Applicable**

1. The proposed charter school will be governed by a new governing board
2. Describe the rationale for replicating the application based upon the success of another charter school. Include documentation and evidence that the existing charter school model is successful in student achievement, charter school governance, and fiscal responsibility. Base this explanation upon academic data available through state and national summative assessments, financial audits, and state compliance reports.

We have chosen to replicate the CSUSA Education Model after researching the success of the three schools they operate in NC. It was clear that this model was what we wanted for the students of MCA. It is our desire to partner with CSUSA to provide our students with a state-of-the-art facility. CSUSA will also provide continual professional development for teachers and staff. We participated in the CSUSA Annual Summit held in Charlotte this summer and met with CSUSA executive team members and other boards who have partnered with CSUSA. We are excited about our partnership and look forward to replicating this high-quality charter school model.

In partnership with the boards, CSUSA has successfully developed three NC charter schools: Langtree, Cabarrus, and Cardinal Charter Academies. Langtree and Cabarrus opened in 2013 and Cardinal in 2014. Students at these schools have exceeded county and state proficiency averages in many grades and subjects. Cabarrus, the school we wish to replicate, exceeded growth expectations two years in a row, outperformed the state in reading by 23%, in math by 16%, and in science by 14%. Cabarrus also surpassed its home district, Cabarrus County Schools, by 13% in reading, 5% in math, and 6% in science. Page 10 of Appendix U includes detailed comparative academic results. Success at these schools is due to the strength of the CSUSA model and the fidelity of its application. In addition, the charter school governance and fiscal responsibility relationships make this a successful model to replicate. These boards exercise fiduciary responsibility, ensure accountability, and use best practices to ensure the budget and policies are aligned to the school's mission. The boards ensure that programs and operations are faithful to the terms of the charter, including compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. Each of the school's financial

affairs are in good standing and have clean audits with unqualified opinions.

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

The Board has chosen to work with this particular EMO due to its ability to establish a replication model in North Carolina for a high performing charter school. For this purpose, Cabarrus Charter Academy has been selected to demonstrate CSUSA's ability to enroll a charter school. Cabarrus Charter Academy has just begun its third year of operation. It currently has 1,118 students enrolled in grades K-8. The current demographic data is as follows:

- \* American Indian/Native Alaskan: 0.45%
- \* Asian/Pacific Islander: 7.96%
- \* African American: 22.09%
- \* Hispanic: 6.89%
- \* Multi: 4.92%
- \* Other: 0.63%
- \* Caucasian: 57.07%

As shown by Cabarrus Charter Academy, MCA will comply with N.C.G.S. 115C-218.45(e). MCA's student body will represent the area/community directly surrounding it. The trend of steadily increasing student membership at Cabarrus Charter Academy can be seen from the data listed below. The academic year 2013-2014 was Cabarrus first year of operation, and therefore it will serve as the benchmark year.

2013-2014

- \* Enrollment: 661
- \* Wait Lists: 834
- \* New Applications Received (over the entire academic year): 2,114
- \* Recommitment Rate (students returning for 2014-2015): 92%

2014-2015

- \* Enrollment: 912
- \* Wait Lists: 621
- \* New Applications Received (over the entire academic year): 2,153
- \* Recommitment Rate (students returning for 2015-2016): 97%

2015-2016

- \* Enrollment: 1,118
- \* Wait Lists: 533
- \* New Applications Received (to date): 1,176
- \* Recommitment Rate (students returning for 2016-2017): data not yet available

4. Explain why the governing board of the proposed charter school is a good fit for the proposed student population as noted in Section II Mission and Purposes.

Our Board is comprised of community leaders that are very active in Gaston County. Collectively, we possess the business skills, education expertise, financial management, oversight, project management, grant writing, community relations, as well as specific financial and operational experiences needed to successfully operate a charter school. Board members have a vested interest in the success of the Academy, as we are active members of the community through business and volunteer efforts. We have a thorough understanding of the demographics and population, and especially the desire of parents who want a quality education for their children. MCA's

focus on entrepreneurship and leadership is a unique offering not currently found in Gaston County. Most offerings at local public schools are career driven, such as medical, technology, or fine arts electives. The entrepreneur and leadership model will empower students to excel in any given career path or within their own business through the skills and experiences provided at MCA.

5. Provide a copy of the organization's IRS Form 990 for the last three years as Appendix T

### **Projected Staff:**

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

#### School Administration/Operational Staff

- \* Principal (Lead Administrator)
- \* Assistant Principal (Assistant Administrator)
- \* Dean of Students (Assistant Administrator)
- \* School Operations Administrator (Finance Officer)
- \* Administrative Assistant (Clerical)
- \* Receptionist (Clerical)
- \* Enrollment Manager (Clerical)
- \* Student Services Coordinator (Clerical)
- \* Food Service Director (Food Service Staff)
- \* Food Service Employees (Food Service Staff)
- \* Before/Aftercare Director (Clerical)
- \* Before/Aftercare Employees (Clerical)

#### Instructional Staff

- \* K-5 Teachers (Core Content Teachers)
- \* 6-8 Teachers (Math, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Reading) (Core Content Teachers)
- \* General Music/Chorus Teacher (Electives/Specialty Teachers)
- \* Art Teacher (Electives/Specialty Teachers)
- \* PE Teacher (Electives/Specialty Teachers)
- \* Foreign Language Teacher (Electives/Specialty Teachers)
- \* Technology Teacher (Electives/Specialty Teachers)
- \* Instructional Aide PE (Teacher Assistants)
- \* ESE/Special Education (Exceptional Children Teachers)
- \* ESE/Special Education Aide (Teacher Assistants)
- \* Reading Specialist (Core Content Teachers)
- \* Co-Teacher (Core Content Teachers)
- \* Curriculum Resource Teacher (Instructional Support)

### **Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management**

Include the following information for the proposed charter school:

The Board and CSUSA will be an equal opportunity employer and will recruit quality staff throughout the year for job openings using a progressive and

innovative recruiting plan. Recruitment will occur locally, state-wide, and nationally through various resources that include:

- \* MCA's website.
- \* Charter Schools USA's website.
- \* Education job fairs to seek teaching professionals.
- \* College recruiting by identifying colleges and universities, both locally (e.g. UNC Charlotte, Belmont Abbey College) and nationally in order to attract and hire newly graduated teachers.
- \* Select educational, professional, and job recruitment websites to advertise and communicate teaching openings.
- \* Minority referring organizations to help ensure that the workforce is reflective of the diverse community served.

CSUSA will manage job advertising, conduct applicant screening, and refer qualified applicants to the Academy administration and Board (for teaching positions) to ensure MCA's staffing needs are met. A consistent process of screening, interviewing, and selecting employees is essential to our ability to recruit qualified staff. A consistent process will ensure that candidates are provided an equal opportunity to demonstrate and/or articulate their skills and abilities. Retention of highly-qualified and effective teachers will be part of the principal's annual evaluation system. The principal will be encouraged to set goals and the annual evaluation will be based upon achieving those goals.

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

A.O.C.

Teachers will be jointly employed by the Board and CSUSA. Administrators and staff will be solely employed by CSUSA. This arrangement is necessary for the administration of employee benefits and does not impact the Board's ultimate authority to hire and fire teachers, and complies with N.C.G.S., 115C-218.90.

We have contracted with CSUSA for the provision of certain management services, including personnel services. As part of those services, CSUSA has provided the attached Employment Handbook (Appendix O) to the Board for its review and consideration. The Board is currently reviewing the Employment Handbook to ensure compliance with applicable law, including N.C.G.S., 115C-218.90. The Board expressly acknowledges that the Employment Handbook may need to be revised before it is adopted. However, it is being submitted with this application as evidence that we are working diligently to prepare for final charter approval.

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

The Board and CSUSA will follow the protocol established for screening Academy employees, vendors, and board members. The Academy-based School Operations Administrator will be responsible for complying with and arranging the criminal background check and fingerprinting policy of services, which will follow all state and district LEA requirements.

A comprehensive criminal history background check will be conducted on each

applicant. The Board and CSUSA will also ask legal questions on its employment application in relation to felony convictions, probation, pleadings, and pending disciplinary actions. If a candidate misrepresents information, the Board and CSUSA reserve the right to end the hiring process or employment relationship.

The selection process is informed by factors identified in applied psychology, such as interview structure and phrasing of questions, and draws on effective teacher research. Interview protocol focuses on job-related questions and is within the legal bounds of interviewing guidelines. Every hired non-instructional employee will sign an offer of employment with CSUSA. Every teacher will sign an offer letter from CSUSA and a separate letter from the Board due to the joint employment structure. Staff will be hired "at will" on a year-to-year basis. Extensions of employment offers are recommended on an annual basis. All instructional personnel will be considered 10-month employees paid over a 12-month period.

The first 90 days of employment are an Introductory Period. During this period, the employee may resign without reason and/or notice and the Board and CSUSA may terminate employment without cause and without notice. After this period, all employee resignations will be accepted as long as they are submitted in writing with proper notice.

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

MCA's salaries are competitive with the surrounding area schools but structured differently, with a greater emphasis on performance-based pay. For base salaries, pay bands have been established to a minimum, midpoint, and maximum scale by which job families can grow with merit increases. The Board will work with CSUSA to establish budget criteria, incentives, and other motivating factors that will attract, reward, and retain the best employees. A salary worksheet will be used to calculate starting salaries in a fair and consistent manner. Below is an example of how starting salaries are determined:

- \* \$37,000 Base Salary for Teachers (190 days)
- \* Up to \$2,000 Positive Adjustments to base for Experience
- \* \$1,000 Positive Adjustments to base for Education Credentials (Masters or PhD)
- \* \$2,000 Positive Adjustments to base for Critical Shortage Areas if applicable
- \* \$-3,000 Negative Adjustments to base if all requirements met and waiting for Certification documentation.

Employees will be offered mandated benefits as follows: Workers Compensation; Unemployment Insurance; and Social Security Insurance. Employees will also be provided benefits with various levels of coverage and premiums. Full time employees are able to participate in the benefits plan the first of the month following their first 60 days of employment. If an employee has a qualifying life event during the year, they can enroll, drop coverage, and add dependents (i.e. birth of child, marriage, divorce, etc.). Qualifying events are mandated by the IRS. If benefits are not selected during the employee's eligibility period, or within 30 days of a qualifying event, enrollment changes may only be made during "open enrollment" sessions, which become effective January 1st. Benefits available include

medical, dental, vision, life insurance, supplemental life insurance, dependent life insurance, short- and long-term disability, 401k (if eligible), Paid Personal Time Off, and Employee Assistance Program.

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

If an employee feels he or she has been treated unfairly as a result of actions from MCA's administration, the employee can present a formal grievance to CSUSA's Education Team Senior HR Generalist.

Instructions for Staff Submitting a Grievance

1. Discussion of the problem with the immediate supervisor is encouraged. Requests for an initial meeting to discuss a grievance must be made within 30 calendar days of the event giving rise to the grievance. The supervisor will schedule a meeting within 5 days of any such request by an employee and provide a written response within 5 days of the meeting. If the employee does not believe a discussion with the supervisor is appropriate, the employee should proceed directly to Step 2.

2. If the matter is not resolved, the employee should request to meet with the CSUSA Regional Director, who will provide the employee with a written response within 5 days of the meeting.

3. If the matter is not resolved, the employee may submit a formal grievance in writing to CSUSA's Education Team Senior HR Generalist within 10 days of receiving the Regional Directors written response. The employee is encouraged to request a meeting with the Senior HR Generalist, who will conduct an investigation and consider the facts and may review the matter with the aggrieved employee's supervisor.

Terminations

The first 90 days of employment are an Introductory Period, and the employee may resign without reason and/or notice and the Board and CSUSA may terminate employment without cause and without notice. After this period, progressive discipline policies will be followed for minor performance situations and investigations will be conducted by CSUSA and MCA for any violations of a serious nature. The employee will be put on paid leave pending determination of the investigation. In the case of both progressive discipline and severe violations, the Board will vote on the determination at either an emergency board meeting or the next scheduled meeting.

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

In the proposed staffing model, there are no positions with dual responsibilities. The Board and CSUSA strategically put together a 5-year staffing plan to cover all needs of the Academy so no position will have dual responsibilities. There will be employees that may have additional duties if they choose, such as mentoring, professional development, etc. These employees will be paid a stipend (which is included in the budget calculations) in addition to the salary for any additional duties as needed.

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

Staffing is flexible and subject to change based on the needs of the students as identified by the principal and the Board. Staffing needs will be constantly monitored, particularly at the beginning of year to enable MCA to meet the needs of students and ensure their success.

We plan to hire 3 EC teachers, one of whom will serve as Lead EC teacher to

oversee EC compliance, and 1 EC aide. This will be based on student needs as indicated in their IEPs and taking into account guidelines for class size (state policy NC 1508-3) and caseload (state policy NC 1508-4). When hiring general education teachers, we will seek to employ teachers who are also certified in ELL, EC, or AIG to allow them to serve a wider variety of students.

We will contract with licensed related service providers including, but not limited to a speech/language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, school psychologist, and other professionals as needed to address the students' needs per their IEPs.

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

The Board and CSUSA will ensure during the hiring process that 100% of instructional staff hired at the Academy have a North Carolina Professional Educator License of either Standard Professional 1 (SP1) or Standard Professional 2 (SP2).

Before employing any teacher and with the teacher's prior written consent, we will obtain from DPI and review a copy of the teacher's professional license. The Board and CSUSA will assist our teachers in meeting the licensure requirements established by DPI and the Board of Education. We will develop, maintain, and promote a development program for all teachers and instructional staff to progress from a SP1 to a SP2 License. Assistance will be provided to instructional staff as well as the required information and documents needed to make this progression. The employee will be responsible for all fees for license progression and renewals. CSUSA Employee Services and the Academy's School Operations Administrator will maintain each employee's file with updated licenses and alert all employees of the need to renew their current license with this program.

North Carolina's requirements for teachers from outside the state must be completed for clear, renewable certification. These requirements are incorporated into North Carolina's approved teacher preparation programs and must be completed within five years.

All teachers will be jointly employed by the Board and CSUSA. The termination of employment of a teacher is subject to review and approval by the Board, which retains the ultimate decision to terminate. It is the responsibility of the Board and CSUSA to ensure teachers meet the requirements prior to employment and to ensure any conditional requirements are met by the educator within the required timeline.

The Board and CSUSA may employ or contract with skilled, selected, non-certified personnel to provide non-instructional services or to assist faculty members as teacher's aides. Teachers will demonstrate content mastery in the subject area they are teaching through a state exam, as well as demonstrate successful completion of graduate work, an undergraduate academic major or advanced certification/credentialing. The MCA's Student Service Coordinators and consultants hired for occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech language, and other services will meet licensure or certification requirements for the services that they provide.

## **Staff Evaluation and Professional Development**

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

The Teacher Support Team is responsible for maintaining teacher licensure requirements and professional development. The team will consist of the principal, assistant principal, and designated mentors. Each will assist teachers to grow as educators.

- 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.*

To ensure teachers provide a rigorous college preparatory education, MCA will mentor, retain, and evaluate staff in accordance with N.C.G.S., 115C-333.1. All teachers who have not been employed for at least three consecutive years shall be observed at least three times annually by the principal or the principal's designee, and at least once annually by a teacher and evaluated at least once annually by a principal. All teachers with career status shall be evaluated annually, unless a local board adopts rules that allow teachers with career status to be evaluated more or less frequently.

All teachers will be evaluated in accordance with NC Educator Evaluation System as well as CSUSA's Teacher Feedback Evaluation Tool (TFET).

The NC Educator Evaluation System also includes a Professional Development Plan (PDP) for beginning teachers, which is described further below. Before participating, every teacher must complete training on the evaluation process.

### The Beginning Teacher Support Program

This program provides a number of required activities and additional tools to assess the performance of teachers and to facilitate the refinement of essential practices and skills. Additional support tools will include a beginning teacher website, notification of professional development opportunities, online training modules, and additional instructional materials that will support teacher retention.

Beginning teachers shall be assigned a mentor to assist with their growth in the first three years of the Beginning Teacher Support Program. Mentors will:

- \* Conduct observations of beginning teachers.
- \* Meet and/or communicate with beginning teachers on minimally a bimonthly schedule.
- \* Provide feedback to beginning teachers from observations and formative assessments.
- \* Assist beginning teachers with developing lesson plans; classroom management; behavior management; analyzing and collecting data; organization; positive communication with peers and parents; the curriculum; and instruction.
- \* Assist beginning teachers with collecting and analyzing data to improve instructional strategies.
- \* Share information regarding professional development.
- \* Assist in the preparation and implementation of the PDP.

As the leader of MCA, the principal helps facilitate the development of beginning teachers by:

- \* Providing orientation.
- \* Conducting informal/formal observations.
- \* Meeting and conferencing with beginning teachers to offer feedback from observations and formative assessments.
- \* Providing an environment conducive for the support of beginning teachers.
- \* Ensuring completion and providing assistance in the development of PDPs.
- \* Monitoring beginning teachers throughout the year and notifying the Director of Human Resources of any concerns with beginning teacher performance.
- \* Evaluating the Beginning Teacher Support Program to identify areas requiring improvement.

MCA will document compliance of the Beginning Teacher Support Program through informal/formal observations, PDPs, Summative Evaluations, and other documentation regarding the evaluation of beginning teachers pursuant to the NCEES on the State-maintained Home Base website. Participation in the Beginning Teacher Orientation and other professional development completed by teachers will be maintained in the Human Resource Management System (HRMS) and/or electronically maintained in the beginning teachers file in the Human Resources Department.

#### Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs)

MCA will implement TLCs to provide support to teachers in their first year. TLCs support teachers throughout the year by focusing on research-based instructional strategies, classroom management, lesson planning, time management, state and district requirements, and professional communication. A master teacher will lead MCA's TLC program. This highly organized program receives support from the EMO network through quarterly training sessions, monthly web-based video training sessions, and training materials.

3. *Describe the core components of professional development plan and how these components will support effective implementation of the educational program. Describe the extent to which professional development will be conducted internally or externally and will be individualized or uniform.*

Beginning teachers are required to develop an annual PDP based on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and must include individualized goals, strategies, and an assessment of the beginning teacher's progress in improving professional skills. The plan shall be created within 10 days of the beginning of the school year. The plan will be kept on the State-maintained Home Base website.

#### Individual Growth Plan

Teachers who are rated at least "Proficient" on all the Standards on the Teacher Summary Rating Form (TSRF) shall develop a PDP designed to improve performance on specifically identified Standards and Elements.

#### Monitored Growth Plan

A teacher shall be placed on a Monitored Growth Plan whenever he/ she:

- A. Is rated "Developing" on one or more Standards on the TSRF; and
- B. Is not recommended for dismissal, demotion, or nonrenewal.

A Monitored Growth Plan shall identify the Standards and Elements to be

improved, the goals to be accomplished, activities the teacher should undertake to achieve Proficiency, and a timeline which allows the teacher one school year to achieve Proficiency. A Monitored Growth Plan that meets these criteria shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of N.C.G.S., 115C-333.1(b).

#### Directed Growth Plan

A teacher shall be placed on a Directed Growth Plan whenever he/she:

A. Is rated:

- 1) "Not Demonstrated" on any Standard on the TSRF; or
- 2) "Developing" on any Standard on the TSRF for two sequential years; and

B. Is not recommended for dismissal, demotion or nonrenewal.

The Directed Growth Plan shall identify the Standards and Elements to be improved, goals to be accomplished, the activities the teacher shall complete to achieve Proficiency, and a timeline for achieving Proficiency within one school year.

PD will be conducted by various parties, including but not limited to school leaders, EMO representatives, and curricular and/or software vendors. The scope of PD will also vary according to the needs of the Academy and staff.

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.*

#### New Teacher Induction (NTI)/Returning Teacher Orientation (RTO)

MCA will be responsible for conducting a formal orientation in the summer prior to school beginning. During the first five days of NTI/RTO, all new teachers (including those who are new to CSUSA's network, not just the field of teaching) will receive comprehensive training that ensures their understanding of the GVC and Education Model. In subsequent days, all teachers will receive training that includes reviewing the works Art and Science of Teaching and What Works in Schools, Classroom Management, Curriculum Mapping, Lesson Planning, Targeted Instruction, Differentiated Instruction, Formative and Summative Assessments, Grading Philosophy, Tracking Progress, the code of ethics, and much more. NTI/RTO will be modified annually based upon the needs of the Academy and to reflect new strategies and innovations in effective teacher preparation. This induction will also include information about working with special needs students. The Board acts as the monitor for this program, which is provided by the EMO.

The NTI portion of the program shall consist of the following:

- \* A tour of the Academy.
- \* A copy (bound or electronic version) of MCA's faculty hand book.
- \* A copy (bound or electronic version) of the Beginning Teachers Handbook, which shall include pertinent Academy policies and procedures as well as CSUSA's vision and mission statement.
- \* Information regarding the available services and training opportunities for beginning teachers.
- \* Information about the Beginning Teacher Support Program and a detailed review of licensure procedures, requirements, and information regarding the conversion process from the initial (SP 1) license to the continuing (SP 2) license.

- \* Training on the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process, including expectations for the required performances of beginning teachers during the 3-year Beginning Teacher Program.
- \* Training on the NCSCS and the GVC.
- \* Information regarding the safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint of students.
- \* Information regarding the State's Ready Accountability Model.
- \* Information regarding the State Board of Educations Mission and Goals.

#### Principals Institute

CSUSA will provide principals with their own professional development institutes each summer to best prepare for the upcoming year. These institutes will include information regarding best practices, new regulations, and any other expectations within their role. Principals and assistant principals will then attend monthly meetings throughout the school year to receive support within their positions. This support is increased for administrators needing extra assistance in improving the performance of their schools.

#### Curriculum Resource Teacher (CRT) Bootcamp

In preparation for their highly supportive roles, CRTs attend boot camp prior to the start of each school year to provide training on how to best support the Academy.

At least one CRT will be on staff and a regional Curriculum Specialist (CS) will provide support throughout the school year. Professional development will be provided at least monthly (in addition to weekly grade-level meetings) and on designated teacher professional development days.

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.

Teachers meet with administrators, CRTs, CS's, or peers to receive professional development based on QUEST data, survey results, teacher demand, or other areas needed for school improvement. Conducted after school, on professional development days, or during planning. One meeting per month will be devoted to topics associated with Professional Standards.

#### Sample Professional Development Schedule

##### August/September

NTI/RTO: Formal orientation in the summer prior to school beginning. Teachers will be provided with information on staff development opportunities, mentoring services, curriculum and instruction resources, testing data, new school initiatives, safety and procedural protocols, and policies and procedures.

Beginning Teacher Support Program Orientation: Expectations and overview of program in addition to PD pertaining to licensure.

FOCUS: Available Services/Training Opportunities/Teacher Evaluations/Technology/Process for Continuing Licenses.

##### October

Standard 1: Leadership: Utilizing effective communication skills to

establish professional and confidential relationships to impart knowledge of ethical standards, instructional best practices, and leadership opportunities.

FOCUS: Trusting Relationships and Coaching/Leadership/Communication and Collaboration/ Best Practices/Ethical Standards/Advocacy for Teachers and Students.

November/December

Standard 2: Establish a Respectful Environment for a Diverse Population of Students: Teachers will develop a strong relationship with all learners, their parents or guardians, and the community through reflective practices on issues of equity and diversity.

FOCUS: Relationships with Students, Families, School, and Community/Honor and Respect Diversity/Classroom Environments that Optimize Learning/Re-teaching Students of all Learning Needs.

January/February

Standard 3: Know the Content They Teach: Teachers will learn the NCSCS and the 21st century goals to promote student achievement.

FOCUS: NCSCS and 21st Century Goals/Content and Curriculum.

March

Standard 4: Facilitate Learning for all Students: Teachers will have an understanding and use of assessment tools to drive student achievement.

FOCUS: Instructional Practice/Professional Practice/Student Assessment.

April/May

Standard 5: Reflection: Teachers will continually work on self-growth, not limited to observation skills to improve effectiveness.

FOCUS: Allocation of Use of Time/Reflective Practices/Data Collection.

Ongoing Professional Development

18-Week Plan

A schedule of targeted professional development segments rolled out to all schools by the EMO. Trainings are facilitated in the first year by the individual school's CS, and in subsequent years by the CS and/or the CRTs and administrative team.

Curriculum Cadres/Webinars

Throughout the school year, training sessions will be provided on various PD topics such as Differentiated Instruction, Observation and Feedback, Common Assessments and NWEA training, Cross-Curricular Instruction, Data Analysis, and Data Chats. CRTs will attend monthly sessions and then disseminate the information to faculty. Each year, the focus of the Curriculum Cadre will change to meet MCA's current educational needs.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

PLCs provide all teachers with research-based PD based on school improvement goals. Teachers will meet regularly by grade-level teams to analyze student

data, design units, and create accompanying lessons. Based on administrative walk-throughs, QUEST visit feedback, and student performance, teachers will be provided with specific, differentiated PD from mentor teachers, administration, CS's, or CRTs.

#### Leading Edge

An opportunity to pursue advancement within the CSUSA network. Employees participate in PD and training sessions to prepare for future roles such as CRT, CS, dean, assistant principal, or principal.

### **Enrollment and Marketing:**

Reaching the full capacity for enrollment will be critical to obtain the necessary financial resources to keep your school viable and operating efficiently. In addition, it is required by law that charter schools provide equal access to all students. Read the charter school state statute regarding admissions GS 115C.218.45(a-i) carefully.

### **Marketing Plan**

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

#### Primary Target Demographics

Families with children ages 5-14 residing in Belmont, Mount Holly, Cramerton, Stanley, Lowell, McAdenville, East Gastonia, and West Charlotte.

#### Marketing Strategy

The communication strategy will include an integrated marketing approach; which may include direct mail, television, print, online, social media, community outreach, and events. Each medium will be evaluated based on its reach (how many potential targets will see or use this medium) and frequency (how often potential targets will see/read/hear our message), as well as its likelihood to drive traffic.

A television campaign will be run on cable and/or broadcast television. Cable television provides a more targeted reach with a very high frequency. Broadcast provides a very large reach, but low frequency. We will consider WRAL and the Time Warner Cable network.

Print back-to-school sections and age-appropriate advertising sections will be considered. Newspapers that will be considered include: Gaston Alive, Life on Mountain, Gaston Lifestyles, Charlotte Parent, Gaston Gazette, Lake Gaston Gazette-ObsERVER, Charlotte Observer, and Mt. Holly Talk.

Limited online advertising campaigns will be utilized that reach our target demographic. Targeted email blasts and campaigns that piggy-back on community web sites/events will be utilized whenever possible. Online advertising will primarily include Facebook/Google/AdWords, focused on geographic and psychographic data and targeted searches. The online ad will direct the potential parent/guardian to the MCA website at [www.MontcrossCharter.org](http://www.MontcrossCharter.org).

Paid advertising on social media outlets will be utilized to reach our demographic and geographic targets. Facebook and Twitter will be utilized.

Community outreach and events will be offered. MCA will align with community partners such as the Montcross Chamber of Commerce and Char-Meck Chamber of Commerce as well as area rotary clubs and other civic organizations. MCA will work with area civic/community centers, such as the Stowe YMCA, Regional Library, and Park and Recreation Centers to post information and hold community outreach events. We will also distribute flyers to local preschools, daycare centers, and churches such as Belmont Preschool, Mt. Holly Daycare, and Cramerton Preschool.

#### Implementation

Sept. 2015 - Jan. 2016

- \* Update Web site.
- \* Participate in Community Events.
- \* Join community organizations.
- \* Build relationships with local media.

Jan. 2016 - June 2016

- \* Research and tentatively secure paid advertising media.
- \* Plan community information sessions.
- \* Prepare all advertisements, brochures/flyers, direct mail pieces, and press releases.
- \* Update web site with MCA information, building process photos, application process, enrollment policy, lottery process, community information session dates, venues, and times.
- \* Host community information sessions.
- \* Send out first of a series of direct mail pieces introducing the Academy.

Feb. 2016- March 2016

- \* Community information sessions.
- \* Open local enrollment office - distribute promotional materials.
- \* Set advertising campaign to run through the end of open enrollment.
- \* Distribute direct mail pieces encouraging applications once per month for three months; evaluate application generation at the end of campaign and decide if additional mailings are necessary.
- \* Evaluate results on a monthly basis to determine if advertisements are working.

March 2016 - Aug. 2016

- \* Schedule lottery.
- \* Continue advertising and distribute additional two direct mail pieces mailed monthly.
- \* Attend events at community centers, libraries, and the YMCA.
- \* Develop sponsorship opportunities and attend school expos.

Sept. 2016 - Dec. 2016

- \* Ribbon-cutting event.

Jan. 2017 - March 2017

- \* Continue advertising available and direct mail based on need/number of seats.
- \* Parent information sessions.

\* Academy tours.

## **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.*

AOC

We plan to communicate and engage parents and community members through enrollment information sessions, speaking opportunities at local churches and civic organizations, distribution of informational materials to preschools, churches, and local business and service organizations in the community, all of which provide a forum to share our vision and mission for MCA. A number of public information sessions will be hosted to introduce the Board and its vision for MCA, to inform the community of the mission and educational focus, and to communicate the enrollment process to parents. These sessions will allow for a Q&A and open forum to provide parents an opportunity to ask questions and further engage with the Board. Parents will be able to learn more about MCA, its educational model, and how to apply. Public information meetings will be advertised through direct mail, email, newspaper ads, and flyers. We will continue to look for community events where we can distribute marketing collateral to inform the community about the proposed charter school and how to apply. Once parents submit an application, we are then able to continually update them via email through the student information system. MCA's website will serve to communicate general information, provide updates regarding the Academy's opening, offer an enrollment tool, provide updates on the progress of the Academy, and provide updated FAQs. The website will also include an informational video for those who are unable to attend a parent information meeting that will cover much of the content delivered at the parent information meetings.

We will continue to engage parents in the life of MCA by following the CSUSA Education Model which includes a comprehensive parental involvement program and family-school-community partnership model. Parental involvement includes attending Academy functions; attending conferences; helping children improve their school work through encouragement, providing study time and place, model behavior, and tutoring; serving as advocates for their children and the Academy; volunteering in the Academy and community; and assuming an active decision-making role in their child's education (Maynard 1997).

MCA will utilize the framework of Joyce Epstein, whose model includes six types of cooperation between families, schools, and other community organizations: 1) Parenting; 2) Communicating; 3) Volunteering; 4) Learning at home; 5) Collaborating with the community; and 6) Decision-making (Epstein, 1995; Epstein, 1997). The framework of six types of involvement helps educators develop more comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships. Although MCA will use the framework as a guide, the Board, parents, and Academy staff will choose practices that will help achieve important goals and meet the needs of students and families.

Parent participation is integral to the success of MCA and will continue to

be solicited for the development of Academy goals and objectives. All parents agree to volunteer a minimum of 20 hours per school year. When two or more children from the same family are enrolled, parents shall be strongly encouraged to volunteer a total of 30 hours per school year. Parents can track their volunteer hours via the student information system. To ensure that all parents and stakeholders understand the unique programming of the CSUSA model, parents and students are given thorough explanations of the curriculum, expectations, and requirements of MCA prior to enrollment. This information is delivered through a variety of ways: open houses, published information, brochures, online applications, and website question/answer modules. After enrollment and the start of school, parents continue to have flexibility to monitor their child's progress online and/or through parent conferences. Since MCA will follow a continuous improvement model, parents have real time access to their child's progress.

### **Admissions Policy**

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

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

MCA will follow the admission requirements stated in N.C.G.S., 115C-218.45. For the first year, open enrollment will (tentatively) begin February 17th and close on March 31st. In subsequent years, open enrollment will open on January 1st and close on February 28th.

The process and policies for open enrollment and the lottery are outlined below.

\* Applications are primarily collected via the student information system. Paper applications will also be accepted and then manually entered into the student information system.

\* Applications submitted within the open enrollment period will be processed in the lottery, if a lottery is needed.

\* At the close of open enrollment, MCA will determine if a lottery is needed at any grade level. A lottery will be completed if there are more applications (received within open enrollment) than seats available in any grade level.

\* If needed, a public lottery will be held two to four weeks after the open enrollment period closes.

\* MCA will verify preferences and number of seats available prior to the public lottery.

\* MCA will prepare lottery ID cards which will include lottery ID, applicant name, grade level, and sibling indication.

\* MCA will give enrollment preference to the applicant children of board members and full-time Academy employees. The number of students receiving

this preference may not exceed 15% of the Academy's enrollment.

\* After MCA's first year, the Academy will extend sibling preferences to eligible applicants.

\* Parents will receive lottery ID letters approximately one week prior to the public lottery.

\* Parents will be able to use the issued ID to identify their child at the public lottery and/or in the posted results.

Applicants selected to receive an open seat will receive an offer. An applicant whose name is drawn after all open seats are filled will be placed on the waitlist. If a card denoting siblings is pulled, each child will be placed in the next available slot in his/her grade level. As seats become available, MCA will offer the open seat to the next child on the waitlist. MCA will exhaust the waitlist prior to moving to the list of applicants who applied after the close of open enrollment. Applications received after the close of open enrollment are ordered on the waitlist according to the date/time received.

If a family wishes to withdraw from MCA, they will need to complete a withdrawal form at the Academy. Once MCA receives a records request from the child's new school, the Academy will send the records as requested. Upon withdrawal, the Academy will then offer the open seat to the next child on the waitlist.

Parents may withdraw or transfer students at any time and records will be forwarded.

If a family leaves MCA and wishes to re-enroll at the Academy, the family must submit a new application, be placed on the waiting list, and then wait until a seat becomes available for their child. A student who was enrolled in the charter school within the two previous school years, but left the Academy (i) to participate in an academic study abroad program or a competitive admission residential program or (ii) because of the vocational opportunities of the student's parent, may re-enroll without submitting a new application or being placed on the waitlist.

There are no mandatory pre-admission activities. The following events are optional:

\* Open House: Allows parents and their children to become acquainted with their child's classroom and teacher(s).

\* Orientation: Typically takes place right before the start of school. This event is primarily a medium through which MCA communicates operational practices and procedures to families.

\* Family Information Session: This event is for interested families who want to learn more about MCA.

\* Academy Tour: The purpose of this event is to show the school building to families, and field any questions families may have.

**PROJECTED ENROLLMENT 2017-18 through 2021-2022**

IDENTIFY LEA FROM WHICH STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY COME

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

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

	2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022		
	LEA 360	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 360	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 360	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 360	LEA 600	LEA 000	LEA 360	LEA 600	LEA 000
	529	132		724	179		862	214		880	219		916	229	

## V. OPERATIONS

### Transportation Plan:

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

Recognizing that transportation cannot be a barrier to any child attending MCA, the administration and CSUSA will assist parents with the identification and coordination of transportation options to ensure that MCA is accessible to all students. This will include facilitating car pools and informing parents as early as Open House of their transportation options. All parents will be provided with a link to an electronic survey through which they are able to express their interest in ride sharing and gain access to a pool of parents residing within the same region.

Car pool and drop-off/pick-up procedures will be in place to ensure that all children can get to and from school. A parent orientation session will be held prior to the beginning of the school year whereupon the administration will communicate the procedures outlined for drop-off/pick-up and additional processes to connect across the school community for ride sharing.

In the event where ride sharing may not be available, MCA may provide transportation through an agreement or contract with a private provider. If necessary, MCA will contract with a licensed school bus company to provide transportation. Any provider shall furnish proof that it meets or exceeds all applicable district, state, and federal rules and regulations governing student transportation.

If transportation is offered, MCA will restrict transportation of students to those who live within a reasonable distance from the Academy, generally considered to be within a 2- to 4-mile walkout radius of the Academy, and those students subject to a hazardous walking condition. MCA may provide transportation to students outside of the reasonable distance when transportation is necessary to provide adequate educational facilities and opportunities which otherwise would not be available. Transportation will be provided for students with disabilities enrolled in MCA as required by the students IEP.

MCA, along with CSUSA, shall disseminate the transportation plan prior to the lottery process through publicized information sessions, during open houses, and through the main Academy office. All transportation related information will be provided to parents via the student information system and will also be made available in the Live Binder of Frequently Asked Questions, which will be published online for all applicants and enrollees.

At the request of the parent, MCA shall provide transportation pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Action (42 U.S.C. Section 11431, et. seq.) for each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth.

Our budget includes annual funding (see below) to support possible

transportation needs where ride sharing may not be achievable. These funds are included as a conservative measure and shall be used to provide transportation to those students requiring such transportation by applicable law.

One bus has been included in the budget for transportation at an average rate of \$300 per day for Year 1. A 2% increase has been budgeted each year thereafter.

Year 1: \$54,000  
Year 2: \$55,080  
Year 3: \$56,182  
Year 4: \$57,305  
Year 5: \$58,451

### **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.*

The facility plan will include a multipurpose room used as a spacious cafeteria. All students will eat meals in the cafeteria. MCA will contract with a national food service vendor to provide breakfast and lunch. The food vendor will provide a quality unitized meal program including all components of a full-service operation. The component meal system will consist of: individually packaged entrees, side dishes, fresh fruits, vegetables, fresh bread, milk, condiments, plastic wear, trays, and liners. Prior to the beginning of the school year, the food vendor and the Board will send training personnel to MCA to train the food service staff on how to properly run the food service program, including: ordering, inventory, food prep, serving procedures, and clean-up.

The serving lines are set up with the point-of-service station at the end. This set-up ensures the cafeteria personnel can verify that students are receiving the required components to make up a reimbursable meal.

MCA will utilize a computerized point-of-sale system that will track meals and provide a reporting function for accountability and claiming. All students are assigned a unique account number at the beginning of the school year and can add funds to their account in the cafeteria office and online. Regardless of account balance, no child is ever denied a meal.

The Board will complete all necessary National School Lunch Program (NSLP) applications in advance of the school year. At the end of each month, the cafeteria staff will be responsible for sending the monthly historical edit to the NSLP Director, which will be used in the submission of the reimbursement claim. If, for any reason, MCA's application for participation in this program is not accepted, the Academy will continue to serve free and reduced meals to students who would have otherwise qualified under NSLP regulations. MCA will amend its operating budget to reflect the reduction in revenues associated with reimbursement from the NSLP.

### **Civil Liability and Insurance (GS 115C-218.20):**

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

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

Area of proposed coverage	Proposed amount of coverage		Cost (Quote)
Comprehensive General Liability	\$1,000,000		\$9,000.00
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$1,000,000		\$ .00
Property Insurance	\$11,000,000		\$31,000.00
Motor Vehicle Liability	\$1,000,000		\$10.00
Bonding Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$675.00
Other	\$1,373,451		\$24,000.00
Total Cost			\$64,685.00

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

**Health and Safety Requirements:**

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

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

rebeccafriend1                      09/22/2015

(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 Q).

CSUSA will not provide the facility. However, CSUSA will ensure that the Board has access to the third-party partners and developers who can successfully execute the facility strategy under the guidance of the Board and CSUSA. CSUSA will undertake the necessary arrangements to ensure that the Board gets a facility.

It is anticipated that the facility will be owned, constructed or renovated, and financed by a private developer, who will then lease the facility to the Board which will make rent payments for the facility. The budget proposed in this application includes projected lease payments for the facility to demonstrate the viability of the Academy. The facility lease will be developed and executed as a component of the development project plan.

The Board will review all options and approve a facilities solution that is competitive, encompasses the needs of the Academy, and fits within the budget. The Board intends for MCA to be a newly constructed facility that meets the needs of the student population. The facility will meet all applicable commercial and life safety codes. The facility layout will be based upon previous plans that have been successfully deployed for charter schools serving similarly sized populations. The two story facility is expected to be 65,000 - 70,000 square feet in size. The facility layout will accommodate a logical separation of the elementary (K-5) and middle (6-8) school grades. In addition, the layout will include adequate resource rooms for enrichment programs, common areas for gathering (lunch, assemblies, etc.), and space for Academy administration. The school site plan will also include appropriate outdoor recreational areas, designated pick-up and drop-off zones, and parking for staff and guests.

CSUSA has assisted boards with opening charter schools ranging in size from +/-45,000 to 155,000 square feet. CSUSA will work with us to design a superior learning environment to achieve thematic and specialty programs inclusive of school technology, academic communities, and arts and sciences. A third-party developer will build and deliver a facility that reflects our plans and design. CSUSA works with and has access to a variety of architectural firms experienced in building schools that provide a safe learning environment and operate efficiently and effectively. The process is accomplished by a team of experts, whose disciplines include: education, licensed general contracting, and project management.

Detailed project plans will be implemented for each phase of the project. All construction and renovation projects undertaken prior to the opening of the Academy or during the term of the charter will be carried out by experienced and appropriately licensed and insured construction professionals who will perform all work in accordance with the construction specifications, drawings, and other documents, as directed by the design professional.

Schedule of the key milestones for the development of the Academy:

9/15 - 8/16

- \* Approval of Charter Application
- \* Construction Drawings/Plans Approval
- \* Finalize Architectural Design

- \* Site Selected and contract executed
- \* Site Review
- \* Construction Financing
- \* Site Plan Approval
- \* Land Development Permit

8/16 - 4/17

- \* Apply for General Building Permit
- \* Land Development
- \* Facility Construction
- \* Technology Planning

4/17 - 7/17

- \* RFPs for Vendors
- \* Community Activities
- \* Facility Lease Executed
- \* Construction (Ongoing)
- \* Direct Marketing for Student Enrollment
- \* Complete Construction

6/17 - 8/17

- \* Certificate of Occupancy
- \* Installation of FF&E
- \* Technology Installation
- \* First Day of School

Please attach copies of Facilities Inspections as Appendix R.

*What is the breakdown of cost per square foot for the proposed facility? Outline how this cost is comparable to the commercial and educational spaces for the proposed school location.*

The cost per square foot is \$8.61. Lease rates are derived in consideration of acreage, location, and design. The Board will review all options and approve a package that is competitive and encompasses the needs of MCA.

**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.*

The Academy is evaluating several potential locations. Once a primary site has been selected, the remaining options will be considered a backup if the development of the primary location becomes unavailable. In the unfortunate event that an adequate, permanent school facility cannot be secured, the Board and CSUSA will work diligently to secure an appropriate alternative short-term facility, as part of the facility contingency plan. The temporary facility would fully meet the programmatic and educational needs of students and staff.

**VI. FINANCIAL PLAN**

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

**Budget: Revenue Projections from each LEA 2017-18**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**LEA #1 360 - Gaston County Schools**

Revenue	2015-2016 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2017-2018
State Funds	\$4,549.62	529	\$2,406,748.98
Local Funds	\$1,344.60	529	\$711,293.40
Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	69	\$259,999.59
<b>Totals</b>			\$3,378,041.97

**LEA #2 600 - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools**

Revenue	2015-2016 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2017-2018
State Funds	\$4,505.20	132	\$594,686.40
Local Funds	\$2,457.30	132	\$324,363.60
Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	17	\$64,057.87
<b>Totals</b>			\$983,107.87

**Total Budget: Revenue Projections 2017-18 through 2021-2022**

INCOME: REVENUE PROJECTIONS	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022

**\*If the applicant is depending on other funding sources or working capital to balance the operating budget, please provide documentation such as signed statements from donors, foundations, bank documents, etc., on the commitment of these funds. If these figures are loans, the repayment needs to be explained in the narrative and found within the budget projections.**

**Assurances are needed to confirm the commitment of these additional sources of revenue. Please include these as Appendix S.**

**Personnel Budget: Expenditure Projections 2017-18 through 2021-2022**

*The personnel list below may be amended to meet the staffing of individual charter schools: This list should align with the projected staff located in the Operations Plan.*

<b>BUDGET EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS Personnel</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>			<b>2018-2019</b>			<b>2019-2020</b>			<b>2020-2021</b>			<b>2021-2022</b>		
	<i>Num Staff</i>	<i>Avg Salary</i>	<i>Total salary</i>	<i>FTE</i>	<i>Avg Salary</i>	<i>Total salary</i>									

**Operations Budget: Expenditure Projections 2017-18 through 2021-2022**

BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	

**Overall Budget:**

<b>BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>

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

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

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

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

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

We determined MCA's total enrollment after considering various school models developed by our EMO. CSUSA's 18 years of management experience have allowed them to create specific school sizes for each model, which have been developed to ensure that each grade level has a consistent size to allow students to matriculate over time. They also ensure that there are an appropriate number of classes per grade level to allow optimal staffing of teachers, particularly in elective courses (music, art, PE, etc.) and middle school. The school model/size we chose for MCA was determined after a thorough population analysis showed adequate demand in our targeted area.

The results of that analysis drove our decision on the school model. We found that in order to fully enroll our Academy, a facility of 1,145 students would only have to attract 4% of the children aged 5-14 (i.e. ages in grades K-8) within a 15-minute drive time of the target area. This is well within our EMO's historical population density thresholds. 11 charter schools across the state had enrollments exceeding 1,100 students in 2013-14, so this facility size is not uncommon.

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

In the event that the anticipated revenues are lower than expected, a budget realignment of expenditures to revised revenue stream would be in order. Measures would include re-evaluation of staffing needs or postponement of hiring; reduction in enrollment-driven expenses such as textbooks, consumables, fees and subscriptions, food service, technology and equipment needs, etc. Additionally, other previously non-contemplated sources of revenue, such as grants and contributions would be exercised. In addition, CSUSA, as set forth in our Management Agreement, will stand behind the Academy and carry its operating costs without assigning future liability to the Academy or the Board, in the event this is necessary to achieve a balanced budget.

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

*The operational budget is primarily based on the projected state, county, and federal funds and does not rely on other sources of funds to operate MCA. However, the budget does include revenues and*

*expenditures from both before and after care and food service, but these are voluntary programs whose revenues and expenditures adjust together based on participation, thus they do not have any material impact to the operational budget. In addition, the budget does assume the Academy will obtain short-term financing to cover the year 1 initial purchases of capital equipment (technology and furniture) to outfit the Academy totaling \$1,023,195. The repayment of these purchases is included in the budgets provided in this application. The ability to secure this financing is a benefit of our relationship with CSUSA who has secured financing from various sources in order to complete the equipping of charter school facilities it opens and operates. Sources of financing have included: i) issuance of taxable and tax-exempt bonds to finance the acquisition of educational facilities and associated equipment, and to-date, Charter Schools USA has participated in the issuance of approximately \$500 million of taxable and tax-exempt bonds; ii) use of an available revolving line of credit; iii) commercial bank financing, in some cases backstopped by a guarantee from either the EMO or its affiliated development company; iv) financing provided by either the EMO or the development company; and v) financing provided by a construction partner. Appendix S provides the assurance that CSUSA will provide the necessary financial support to the Academy to ensure its ability to operate.*

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

The budget is based upon an average ratio of 18:1.

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

Yes. General provisions for purchasing requisitions depend upon the magnitude of the purchase. For purchases between \$1,000 and \$4,999, two written quotes are to be obtained and submitted along with a purchase requisition. For purchases over \$5,000, three written quotes are to be submitted.

Financial audits are conducted annually by an independent certified public accountant determined by the Board. The Board may also select an audit committee to oversee the audit.

The budget also contemplates ongoing contracted special education services such as speech therapy and psychotherapeutic services. These contracts depend upon the needs of the specific school.

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

The budget reflects a financial commitment to ensuring that students receive a high-quality education that advances their academic and social development. In Year 1, the budget assumes \$1,101,104 for Instructional Operations. Thereafter, the budget assumes an average annual expenditure of nearly \$724,000 per year for Instructional Operations. Instructional technology, specifically, represents 63% of the Year 1 instructional budget. Integration of technology will allow students to have targeted access to curricular resources, assessment, and technology-based intervention and enrichment enhancing differentiation. Teachers will be trained to integrate technology carefully and strategically into the student-learning environment to increase academic achievement for each student.

Regarding transportation, we recognize that transportation can inhibit MCA's

enrollment objectives. Therefore, the budget does contain an average of \$56,204 per year to accommodate potential transportation needs.

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

*Describe how the school will develop the fund balance.*

Our operational goal is to achieve a minimum cumulative fund balance of 11% of operating expenses by year of stabilized enrollment. This will be achieved by developing and administering a comprehensive and balanced budget on an annual basis. The budget shall include all forms of revenue and all expenditures, including (i) Total Revenues; (ii) Operating Expenses; (iii) Reserve Expenses, (iv) Audit Expenses and (v) Fund Balance. Amendments to the budget will require the approval of the Board. The budget will be prepared conservatively and with viability and sustainability of the Academy in mind. Maintaining alignment of all of these budgetary components is how the fund balance will be developed in accordance with Academy objectives.

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

The Board will not finance the construction or purchase of the facility. The Board will lease the facility and will not own the facility. Rent is projected to be 13% of revenue (Year 1), 14% (Year 2) and 15% (Years 3-5). The only debt financing in the proposed budget is for the purchase of school technology infrastructure, hardware, software, furniture, and equipment. The proposed budget includes a 5-year conventional loan for \$1,023,195 at a projected interest rate of 6.5%. This loan is assumed to be commercial bank financing and, in some cases, may be backed by a guarantee from either CSUSA or a third-party developer. If necessary, the Board will request CSUSA's assistance in locating a third party developer, as CSUSA has worked with many.

6. *Will the school have assets from other sources (e.g. building, furniture, chairs, computers, etc.)? If yes, please provide a list. Note which are secured and which are anticipated, and include evidence of commitment for any assets on which the school's core operation depends.*

Other than the sources identified herein, MCA does not anticipate obtaining assets from any other sources.

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

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

We will contract with CSUSA to provide financial management services. CSUSA has well-established processes and procedures to ensure fiscal responsibility and sound internal controls. We will approve a financial policy manual, which will include, at a minimum: establishment of a modified accrual accounting system, a chart of accounts that aligns with NC DPI's system, internal controls that establish segregation of duties and authorization and processing of disbursements, establishment of a payroll system, and process for meeting the NC DPI data reporting requirements.

To ensure proper internal controls, policies will be adopted that include General Governmental Accounting Policies, Financial Reporting, Budgeting, Cash Receipts and Deposits, Purchasing and Cash Disbursements, Capital Assets and Payroll.

Adherence to the budget will be enforced and monitored monthly via review protocols. CSUSA will provide financial statements to Academy leadership and the Board on a monthly basis, which will allow stakeholders to review budget vs. actual results. Review meetings will also be held between the EMO and Academy leadership on a consistent basis to discuss any budget variances.

The Cash Receipts/Deposits and Purchasing/Cash Disbursements policies will both address segregation of duties. Some examples of controls in these areas are ensuring that staff handling deposits or disbursements are also not entering journal entries or preparing financial statements; staff setting up new vendors are not permitted to process disbursements; and POs are required for any purchases over \$300 and must be approved by the EMO and Academy. At the Academy administration level, cash receipt deposits will be made when the total of funds to be deposited reaches \$500. Deposits are to be made at least twice weekly, even if the total of funds to deposit has not reached \$500.

To further ensure safeguarding of cash, MCA will have Positive Pay on all bank accounts. This fraud deterrent matches the checks the Academy issues with what was presented for payment.

As asset purchases are completed, detail lists are maintained by the EMO's Operations team and Finance Department for adherence with the Capital Assets policy.

Payroll and Human Resources internal controls procedures include hiring and advancing personnel, recording and maintaining accurate records, preparing payroll, paying employees and payroll taxes to taxing authorities, as well as payments to other parties for benefits. To ensure proper control and reduce the risk of fraud, these duties are segregated among the following departments: human resources, payroll, treasury, and accounting. Payroll Department finalizes the amounts to be paid to employees based on information provided by timekeeping software. CSUSA's Treasury Department reviews and approves amounts to be funded from the operating bank account to the payroll bank account. The Accounting Department confirms that all

payroll transactions are properly recorded and reported on financial statements.

Financial records are maintained at the Academy and CSUSA. All transactions will be recorded in ISIS. Internal controls are also maintained through standardized reporting formats, password and processing controls, and other application controls that are included in the accounting software.

Financial reports will be audited on an annual basis by an independent auditing firm selected by the Board and approved by Local Government Commission. We will provide the information of the auditor as required by the NC DPI. The annual audit will be completed and filed with the Local Government Commission and NC DPI by October 31 following the completed fiscal year ending June of the same year.

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

There are no related party transactions.

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

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