



NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

Ridgeview Charter School

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
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh NC 27601-2825
919-807-3491

Mailing Address:
6303 Mail Service Center
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: Ridgeview Charter School

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: *Ridgeview Charter School*

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: *Reshall L. Williams*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *Board Chair*

Mailing address: 15207 Gathering Ct.
Charlotte NC 28278

Primary telephone: 980-208-7782 Alternative telephone: 980-230-7144

E-Mail address: *reshallwilliams@yahoo.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:

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:

What is the name of the nonprofit organization that governs this charter school? *Ridgeview Charter School*

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.

jaydub49
Signature

Reshall Williams, Chair
Title

jaydub49
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:

RCS mission is to provide outstanding educational achievement for K-8 students through rigorous classroom instruction and an appreciation for the arts and sciences.

Clearly describe the mission of the proposed charter school:

RCS supports the belief that given a success oriented environment, engaged faculty, high expectations and academic rigor every child has the potential to master the skills required to succeed in a challenging learning environment. With the international learning model that develops global thinking processes blended with the core standards identified by the state and progressive technology, we believe our students will be prepared when competing on a regional, national and international level.

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.*

RCS is committed to serving all students who are eligible to attend public school in North Carolina. RCS's marketing plan will focus on diversity with the end goal being a student body that is reflective of Gaston County.

The demographic makeup of Gaston County, according to the 2013 Census, is 75% white (only), 15.8% Black/AA, 6.2% Latino, 1.4% Asian, .5% Native American and 1.7% Multi racial. The LEA's demographic makeup is very close with 62.4% White, 21% Black/AA, 10.9% Latino 3.9% Multi racial, 1.5% Asian and .3 Native and Pacific Islander.

Leading economic indicators strongly suggest the economy is gaining traction due to the outward growth of Charlotte, Gaston County's proximity to a major thoroughfare and recent outside investments that have been made in the area. Considering Gastonia's growth projections with the demand for a well educated, skilled labor force on the horizon it is remarkable to report that fewer than 20% of the residents hold a college degree. RCS wants to be instrumental in contributing to the number of residents who will earn college degrees. By offering a strong K-8 academic program, county residents will graduate with a strong academic foundation to succeed in high school, which can lead to college.

The need for high quality schools of choice is great in Gaston County. While Gaston County currently has two charter schools they spread between Gastonia and Mt. Island; there is a third option one county to the East in Lincolnton County. For families who live further than 15 miles from either school, transportation becomes an obstacle and for families who live within 15 miles they have that one charter school choice and the wait list makes it difficult to successfully enroll.

RCS will offer Gaston County a high quality school of choice for any parent who wishes to place their child in a strong academic environment that celebrates diversity in race, culture, economics and gender. We will market and attract families who prioritize these values and who embrace gender specific classroom instruction in the middle school years.

- 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).*

The total projected enrollment at RCS will be 520 ADM in grades Kindergarten through eighth. We will open with 280 students, grades Kindergarten through fourth and will add a grade level each year until we add on the eighth grade. In order to maintain small class size we will establish class size at 18-21 students and enroll children until we meet that maximum, giving us 56 - 59 students per grade level over the next five years.

The 2017-18 total projected enrollment of 280 ADM at Ridgeview Charter School as a percentage of traditional district elementary schools in Gaston County is 2.0% based on the 2014-15 Gaston County School District website's data reflecting 14,339 ADM students enrolled in grades K-5.

The projected middle school will not reach full enrollment until 2021-2022 school year. At full enrollment of 180 students, and assuming no growth in the local LEA's student population of 7,198 ADM between now and 2022, RCS's middle school enrollment will represent 2.5% of the LEA's middle school enrollment.

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

The heart of Ridgeview Charter School's education plan will be the blending of Common Core State and Essential Standards into a sequential, rigorous, and comprehensive program from Kindergarten through middle school graduation, allowing for natural transitions from elementary school to middle school. In addition to teaching the North Carolina's Common Core and State standards, Ridgeview goes beyond the local district by incorporating a blend of certain aspects of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) with Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking into its instructional model.

Another difference between RCS and the LEA is our commitment to our core values; 1). Distributive Leadership: RCS believes in providing leadership opportunities to all its constituents. Students have the opportunity for leading their learning unit during the multi-level process used in the IPC/IMYC instructional model. This allows synthesis and creative expression

of knowledge at the highest cognitive level. 2). Personal accountability and investment. In effort to meet individual academic needs, RCS students will maintain a personal file monitoring their own successes and challenges that will be reflected upon during regularly scheduled student-teacher conferences. 3). International Mindedness. RCS will offer opportunities for students to engage with the outside world and develop the skill set for students to interact with various cultures and communities. 4). Meta cognitive Development. RCS staff will be trained to utilize Bloom's Taxonomy (revised, 2001) in conjunction with the international instructional model; together reinforcing the importance of rigor in instruction and challenging students to perform at their personal best. 5). RCS believes it must stay current on technological and instructional information while mastering the fundamentals of education, thus preparing students for academic excellence.

RCS is also unique to Gastonia by offering its middle school students gender based classroom instruction for the core classes. Students will have the opportunity to engage in co-education during the entire elementary years, and for middle school during electives, lunch and building wide programs. We believe that the developmental phase of the middle school child demands a different approach that will minimize the distractions to learning that come with this pre-adolescent stage called "group identity vs. alienation". According to Piaget, a student's priority at this time is the development of friendships, particularly with same sex peers, in order to form a dyadic friendship with mutuality of power, status and the sharing of intimate information. Child centered classrooms is a direct application of this theory and by offering gender based classrooms during core instruction RCS is putting the needs of the child first in order to reach its mission of academic achievement, instructional rigor and an appreciation of the arts and sciences.

Finally, while many schools and educational programs claim to prescribe to the STEAM model, RCS does not market itself as such because we believe a our learning model applied to science and technology, aligns with successful STEAM models. We choose not to adopt a STEAM label to maintain a level of flexibility and autonomy that will allow us to build a strong academic program in all areas without the putting on a label.

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.*

1. RCS is committed to the professional development of its teaching staff. Teachers will be encouraged to participate in the webinars, courses, partnerships and conferences offered through the NCDPI. RCS will create a safe culture that develops its teachers towards mastery of their craft, therefore teachers will receive ongoing formal and informal feedback from administration on instruction and student performance. In addition, the International Curriculum provides assessments for teachers as well as students. The teacher assessment gives feedback on teacher's mastery of the topic taught and the effectiveness of their instruction. As staff grows in their effectiveness and mastery of teaching, leadership opportunities will be offered such as Lead Teacher, Dean, committee work, and other administrative duties. As an organization, all staff will be evaluated on a merit based system where tenure does not guarantee raises, position or promotion rather effectiveness, mastery and community investment will impact one's success and longevity as a teacher for RCS.

5. Ridgeview will provide remediation and enrichment opportunities to create a successful learning environment for each student, particularly for exceptional children and talented and gifted students. Through our use of MAP testing and targeted academics delivered through the International Curriculum Learning Model blended with Bloom's Taxonomy and supportive texts, teachers will take students through a structured, guided, interactive process that will enable them to excel academically. By combining Common Core, Essential Standards and the International Learning Process teachers will offer opportunities for students to lead instruction, explore and apply real world issue at every grade level.

Assessment will be an ongoing process, formally and informally through MAP testing and the international teaching model. The international model provides immediate feedback of student performance with every unit and MAP testing will be scheduled two times per year at minimum. The regularity of student assessments will provide immediate feedback on student understanding and serve as the foundation for individualizing education and identifying targeted and challenging academic opportunities for each student, with special emphasis on at-risk and gifted.

In effort to provide an effective learning environment for middle school students, RCS will offer gender based classrooms during core subject instruction. Middle school students will experience coed instruction during electives, recess etc., however, we contend that the importance of core instruction requires us to remove any distractions that may interfere with performance. According to Educational Psychologist, Robert Havighurst, the stage of development that middle students (early adolescents) experience

preoccupies them with peer pressure, i.e. group identity vs. alienation. This psycho-social theory is an important component to understanding early adolescent relationship building, self esteem and self image; this particular peer pressure has tremendous impact on student behavior and academic performance. By offering gender based core instruction the pressure to perform in the presence of the opposite sex is eliminated, allowing for a stronger group dynamic within the classroom.

Academic committees, including the RTI and AIG committees, for at risk and gifted students will work collaboratively with teachers, EC staff, intervention specialists and parents to create a culture of individualized and collective achievement that is research and brain based and developmentally appropriate. Committees will coordinate academic programs such as science and math olympiads, author's corner, artist guild and the Bridge Program. The Bridge Program will allow elective teachers the opportunity to work with at risk students in core academic areas.

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.*

RCS's Board of Directors has created performance and metric goals that were developed to demonstrate overall organizational success. Overall success in the four key areas required by the state are: operational, academic, finance and governance. The Board of Directors will have the School Leader submit updated reports on RCS's progress at the monthly board meetings. RCS is committed to success by reaching its goals and the School Leader will provide a monthly report describing RCS's current state based on the SMART goals created by the Board.

RCS Board will undergo an annual audit by a third party that will thoroughly report on its academic, financial, operational and governance status. This report will be submitted to the state and any other entity required under its charter. In addition, RCS will publish an annual report to parents in June of each year highlighting the school's accomplishments, honoring individual achievement, recognizing volunteers, and providing an outlook for future years. Lastly, the board will establish a goal to spearhead the creation and adoption of a 5-year strategic plan by the end of the schools first year of operation.

RCS Board of Directors has developed the following SMART goals:

1. Attendance: RCS students will attend school at an average rate of 90% each year.
 - 2017-18: RCS's ADA will average 90%, grades K-4
 - 2018-19: RCS's ADA will average 90%, grades K-5
 - 2019-20: RCS's ADA will average 90%, grades K-6
 - 2020-21: RCS's ADA will average 90%, grades K-7
 - 2021-22: RCS's ADA will average 90%, grades K-8

2. Academic Growth: RCS students will show academic growth at the end of the

academic year

2017-18: 70% of K-4 students will show a minimum of one year's growth in May of 2018 based on MAP and EOG tests

2018-19: 75% of K-5 students will show a minimum of one years growth in May of 2019, based on MAP and EOG tests

2019-20: 80% of K-6 students will show a minimum of one years growth in May of 2020, based on MAP and EOG tests

2020-21: 85% of K-7 students will show a minimum of one year growth in May of 2021, based on MAP and EOG tests.

2021-22: 90% of K-8 students will show a minimum of one years growth in May of 2022, based on MAP and EOG tests.

3. Organizational Growth: RCS will maintain school capacity and maintain a wait list

2017-18: RCS will reach 100% classroom capacity, grades K-4

2018-19: RCS will reach 100% classroom capacity, grades K-5

2019-20: RCS will reach 100% classroom capacity, grades K-6 and have a wait list of 50 or more students

2020-21: RCS will reach 100% classroom capacity, grades K-7 and have a wait list of 70 or more students

2021-22: RCS will reach 100% classroom capacity, grades K-8 and have a wait list of 90 or more students

4.Satisfaction and Retention. Families and staff will be pleased with RCS and remain registered or employed.

This information will be gathered through an annual survey given to each audience at individual times.

FAMILIES will be pleased and return to RCS each year at the following rates:

2017-18: 80% of K-4 families will be pleased; 85% will return

2018-19: 85% of K-5 families will be pleased; 90% will return

2019-20: 90% of K-6, families will be pleased; 90% will return

2020-21: 90% of K-7 families will be pleased; 90% will return

2021-22: 90% of K-8 families will be pleased; 90% will return

STAFF will be pleased and return to RCS each year at the following rates:

2017-18: 80% of teaching staff will be pleased; 85% will return

2018-19: 85% of teaching staff will be pleased; 90% will return

2019-20; 90% of teaching staff will be pleased; 90% will return

2020-21: 95% of teaching staff will be pleased; 95% will return

2021-22: 95% of teaching staff will be pleased; 95% will return

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

RCS's Board of Directors has developed a process of reporting that will provide complete understanding of RCS's progress in achieving it's mission and goals.

During monthly board meetings, RCS's School Leader will present a monthly

report to the Board; providing evidence of RCS working toward its mission. Updated data will be provided for academic areas, attendance, enrollment, budget, and staff and community involvement and satisfaction. The School Leader will also provide feedback on special programs, and beginning the academic year 2020, RCS will also provide feedback on gender based classrooms. Feedback from surveys will be collected from students, staff and family in all relevant areas.

Each year the School Leader will provide data on the SMART goals developed by the Board of Directors. Evidence from MAP tests, curriculum assessments, Power School and program data will be provided as proof that goals are being addressed strategically. The goal of RCS's annual meeting, in addition to a thorough discussion of academic gains, school growth, waiting lists, enrollment and satisfaction results, is to develop SMART goal action plans to drive the upcoming year. The action plans are updated annually to establish and create the means by which SMART goals can be reached and to identify and define the roles of the people necessary to ensure success of reaching said goals. During each annual meeting the results of the previous action plans will be reviewed and modified to address the upcoming year.

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.

To live out our core values, RCS will use a variety of instructional models. Much like the International Baccalaureate programs found in high performing schools in the United States and other countries, RCS will use the international learning model from the International Primary and Middle Years Curriculum to create the foundation for the instructional model and modify the approach to meet the needs of our K-8 students.

The instructional approach is focused on skill acquisition as a developmental process. The international teaching model emphasizes the identification of three stages of skill acquisition for a student: beginning, developing, and mastering. This level of learning and skill assessment blended with Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive processing gives the teacher the information and resources required to effectively meet a student at their current academical level and provide an individualized approach to developing the student for the next level of learning.

In addition to an instructional approach, the international model provides topic units that align with the North Carolina (NC) course of study. Specific texts will be provided to ensure the that the NC academic standards are being taught in the appropriate scope and sequence while the international instructional model and Bloom's Taxonomy will provide the rigor for processing of said knowledge. This blend will enable students to investigate, analyse, discuss and create solutions to and expression of grade specific real world topics.

RCS will utilize a variety of assessment strategies to measure the success of our program and use the collected data to drive instruction. Through collaboration, teachers will provide classroom assessments through quizzes, tests, projects etc.. The instructional model provides for an assessment of the student and is differentiated into two categories: 1.the "assessment of learning" or the student's current knowledge/skill level and 2. "assessment for learning" that offers a prescription to help the child learn more effectively. This data will be used to create quarterly benchmark assessments in all core areas. The data from benchmark assessments will be analysed by the administrative team then reviewed by grade level teams and finally with each individual teacher. Individual teachers will use classroom data to drive their instructional focus and create individualized learning objectives for students. Students will demonstrate personal accountability and investment into their academic success by offering input into their

learning objectives during an age appropriate student/teacher conference.

As the foundation of our instructional model, the international program will meet the needs of the targeted population by offering a prescription to help students learn better. RCS will also schedule MAP testing in a manner that is fluid with internal assessments. The MAP test will compliment the quarterly benchmark assessments and provide information on each student's grade level performance, based on North Carolina standards. Finally, RCS will also comply with the state by participating in the North Carolina testing and assessment schedule that is required of public K-12 schools.

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.

RCS will provide students with a safe, positive and clean community in which they can learn, explore and reach their potential as lifelong learners who strive for academic excellence and have a respect and appreciation for the arts and sciences and the skill set to express their thoughts intelligently.

RCS will provide student centered classrooms. The dynamics of the classroom will be designed to foster students' academic and psycho-social development. It is our belief that a school's environment must foster a healthy sense of self, self image and a child's prospects of who and what they want to become.

Students will have classroom sizes that are small (18-21) and conducive to whole group, small group and individualized learning. By using Blooms Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking K-8 students will be encouraged to think beyond the facts and basic recall of information presented via text books, consequently a variety of learning styles will be cultivated. For example, some small groups will require independent or student lead work and others will be teacher lead. Technology and creativity will be strategically incorporated into specific learning centers of the class room and each child will have an appropriate level of accountability for working at the various centers within the timeline of a learning unit. Additionally, a minimum of one day per week will be set aside for writing workshops that will include peer editing.

Teachers in elementary school will ensure each student has the foundation needed to be successful in middle school. Student work will be proudly displayed in classrooms and hallways. The walls and class rooms will be filled with language rich material that directly relate to the Common Core Standards. Technology literacy will begin in Kindergarten and grow increasingly important with each grade level. All teachers will have the training and support they need to help students learn using the computers and the programs that RCS will adopt to assist student learning.

As a K-8 school, the transition to middle school will not change their environment therefore students will be able to focus on academics and move naturally into middle school.

Middle students will also enjoy small class sizes and in core classes they will be divided by gender. Middle School class rooms will be set up to encourage a variety of learning styles like: large group, small group and individual work. The group work will also vary between teacher and student lead and also incorporate the blending of international instructional model, Blooms Taxonomy and North Carolina specific text books. Middle school will offer more variety in terms of technology and student leadership opportunities. The primary change between middle and elementary school programs is the separation of genders in core classrooms.

Students will enjoy co-education in all other areas of middle school life, however to best serve the psycho-social development of pre-adolescents, RCS believes that separating genders will allow students to move through this phase of development with more ease. Creating an environment that eases the mastery process of a developmental phase will result in a student with fewer disruptions that could otherwise have negative effects on learning and self worth (Phillips,1984; Holloway, 1988). Gender based classes will offer boys and girls a unique opportunity to develop same sex relationships with regard to who they are individually and as a member of a social group.

Each class, co-ed and gender based, in the middle school will allow for flexibility of varying lessons. Students will rotate through core subjects each day in addition to taking foreign languages, engineering, robotics, art, music etc. Here too a minimum of one day per week will be set aside for teachers to facilitate writing workshops that include peer editing and other creative techniques of expressing written work.

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.*

RCS supports the state and national standards as the norm by which we will compare our students' academic progress and growth. Our curriculum aligns with North Carolina Common Core Standards and the Essential State Standards. In our support of the NC adopted standards, we contend that RCS students be prepared for state level testing by use of our curriculum and other practices that provide personalized instruction, psycho-social development support, and challenging theme based learning with a "real world" approach and application. The level of engagement and individualization offered by our curriculum is effective and appropriate through its use of instructional strategies that are student/teacher lead, hands on, real world applied, creative and technology based.

Our approach is designed to teach students the skills necessary for 21st century readiness. RCS will provide a cooperative assessment strategy that

aligns its quarterly benchmark with the NC READY End-of-Grade exams so that teachers and students can monitor individual growth throughout the year and plan lessons and student goals accordingly.

With RCS' unique instructional framework, supplemental curriculum, regular and state level assessments, we will provide a data based, intense view of our students' academic performance. Students who struggle to meet grade level performance will participate in North Carolina Response to Intervention (NCRTI) program and will receive individualized intervention strategies monitored by the school's RTI committee, according to state rules.

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.*

PRIMARY INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

In the elementary and middle school grades, the main academic objectives is to teach students to discover, synthesize and apply knowledge through inquiry and brain based learning. The primary strategies RCS educators are expected to master for the targeted student population are:

The International Primary and Middle Years Curriculum teaches an approach to education that makes it interesting, enjoyable, and meaningful while being brain based, developmentally appropriate and flexible for NC standard alignment and differentiation. Teacher success requires mastery of the multi step learning process and the activities used to increase engagement, inquiry and understanding while developing a culture of learning in every classroom and throughout the school. The following explains each step of the learning process each teacher must master and the benefit it provides the student:

1. Entry Point is the activity or event to immerse students into the theme. The goal is to get the children excited and engaged. There is also a common platform so each child has an experience to draw from as they progress through the unit.
2. Knowledge Harvest allows the teacher to find out what a child knows, what they want to know and how they want to learn it. Here teachers will use a mind map to provide a visual of what is learned and the connections to what they know.
3. Big picture/explaining the theme is the time teachers share facts to support the unit. The teacher helps the students see the "big picture" before assigning tasks.
4. Subject research activities are open ended events to promote inquiry leading to a defined learning target. Activities can be experiential, exploratory, collaborative...
5. Subject recording activities allow students to process and present the information they gained through a full range of multiple intelligences.

6. Assessment for learning is typically part of the middle school curriculum however all students, K-8 will express understanding of the big picture or unit in various ways.

7. Exit Point is an event that learning has been building towards. Creativity is important and the exit involves exhibitions, displays, performances etc. Parent involvement is encouraged.

Middle school teachers have training on gender specific classrooms. Teachers will also identify best practices within their classroom in effort to increase learning among a specific gender and share their success and challenges with their coworkers.

AT RISK:

Classroom teachers are expected to master the identification of skill deficiencies through data and observation. They must also master the prescription of strategies (in collaboration with the RTI committee) to help improve areas of academic deficiencies. When necessary, i.e. in the case of high academic need across the building, time will be identified for classroom and special area teachers to provide intervention services for at risk students, k-8. Training of the intervention strategies will be provided and mastery expected of all teachers providing this special service.

PROGRESS MONITORING:

Teachers must master analyzing and interpreting regular formative assessments in order to adjust their instruction, guide future lessons and place students appropriately during the RTI process. Teachers will differentiate instruction to accommodate learning styles and levels for K-8 students to ensure sustaining and extending success for all students.

RCS teachers will have a demanding level of expectation with regard to instructional mastery. RCS, however, is committed to hiring and training staff who share our passion and mission of providing academic excellence and an appreciation for arts and science through a rigorous curriculum to the people of Gaston County and surrounding areas.

- 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.*

The Principal is authorized to make initial grade placement of a student and promote, accelerate or retain students after initial grade placement. After the initial grade placement, a student is expected to progress through the grades one year, minimally. RCS students will demonstrate growth in each grade receiving the benefits of academic, social and physical growth usually accompanied with a full year of development. We believe our instructional approach and culture is designed to prepare students for each grade advancement up to high school.

RCS's instructional approach of combining Common Core with the International Curriculum and Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking provides standards and learning goals for teachers in a structured and progressive manner. The progressive instruction is necessary to ensure student readiness from grade to grade in the areas of academics, social and physical development and

international mindedness. While each curriculum framework has units and learning goals that are in line with each other the IPC goes further by including an international focus that takes a child beyond the confines of their class, state and country.

This global perspective and cognitive rigor prepares students to welcome the next level of learning as thinkers who are curious and excited learners ready for the next grade. Additionally, the International Curriculum provides a consistent and simple evaluation process to support teachers and their effort to arrive at informative decisions on a student's readiness for the next unit, and progressively the next grade ending with program graduation after grade eight.

The RCS middle school graduate will have excellent preparation for high school as a result of our blended curriculum. The middle school curriculum is designed to teach students the value of being in charge of their learning. Many units are project based, ending with some type of presentation to demonstrate mastery of the unit at Bloom's highest level of processing. Students will have constant practice at applying information to real life issues and a deep understanding that what they learn matters in life and is important in the world.

Lastly, the emphasis on writing and the middle school final project required of all graduates, teaches long term project management and high level communication skills that are necessary to succeed in a high school environment where writing papers and class projects are common.

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.*

RCS's proposed calendar has been designed to provide students with the opportunity to learn content included in the school's curriculum while also providing instructional staff with the support and professional development time that they need to grow as teachers. The calendar meets the number of hours and days required by the state for a complete school year, while allowing for ample professional development opportunities for teachers.

RCS's start date will be no earlier than the Monday preceding August 26 and end date will be no later than the Friday closest to June 11 (unless a weather related calendar waiver has been approved). The calendar covers at least nine calendar months. RCS's calendar has a minimum of 185 days or 1,025 hours of instruction as required by federal law.

There are at least ten teacher work days. RCS's school board will designate two work days on which teachers may take accumulated vacation leave. School will not be held on Sunday. Veteran's Day shall be a holiday for all RCS students.

RCS's calendar, which outlines both the learning opportunity for students as well as the professional development opportunity for teachers, is intended to align with our mission of placing each student on the path to academic excellence and the appreciation for arts, literature, science and technology.

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.*

RCS is committed to providing academic excellence to each student, K-8. Any student at risk of not making adequate academic growth will have clear methods of intervention provided to them as required by the NCSBE through the North Carolina Response to Intervention (NCRtI) model. The NCRtI process is based on a three tier model of intervention steps.

RCS will act in accordance to NCRtI process, and at the Tier I level all students will receive support through the core classroom instruction resources. Teachers will conduct informal assessments and differentiate instruction to targeted areas for growth using research based programs focused on indicating academic deficiencies. This data, along with that of the quarterly benchmark assessment, will show the effectiveness of the Tier I intervention.

For students who do not meet the goals identified in Tier I intervention, RCS will act in accordance to North Carolina Accountability Standards and provide a Personalized Education Plan (P.E.P) to target areas in reading, writing, math and/or behavior. In this Tier, teachers along with the RTI committee that includes an administrator and a lead teacher for the grade level, will write the P.E.P. using evidence based intervention strategies of moderate intensity focused on indicating academic deficiencies. The teacher will set goals, document intervention strategies, and meet with parents to discuss student progress (RTI team members may be present).

For students who do not meet the goals identified in Tier II intervention, the RTI committee will move the student to Tier III. This is level require intensive evidence based intervention and other best practices appropriate for this level of need to support student's academic proficiency.

For students unresponsive to Tier III intervention strategies, they may be referred to the IEP committee for Exceptional Children testing and services.

To ensure students do not miss core subject instruction, these interventions will occur during specific times of the academic day. RCS will implement frequent progress monitoring for all Tiers as an organized method of tracking students to assess their progress and performance of learning and achievement. Monitoring will be executed daily by the teacher primarily, however members of the RTI committee will have responsibilities that include observation of students weekly and regularly scheduled meetings that follow the specific timeline designated for each student in the RTI process. The

timeline will not exceed four weeks before the fidelity of the intervention is evaluated. Data and evidence will be accumulated from class work, research based behavior and performance tracking tools and staff and parent feedback.

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.*

IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

In accordance to the North Carolina's participation in the World Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) Consortium English Language development standards, any student, current or prospective, should be identified, monitored and evaluated to ensure their academic success. RCS will work to immediately identify new ELL students and administer the WIDA Access Placement Test (W-APT) upon establishing the following criterion has been met:

1. In accordance to NCSBE policy GCS-K-))) (16 NCAC 60.01 06) families have identified on their Home Language survey that English is their second language.
2. A student identified by staff will have the W-APT administered. If previous academic records show previous ELL accommodations, then the teacher will proceed with preparing an instructional plan based on the student's level of proficiency.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

RCS faculty will determine the appropriate means of instruction, modifications and accommodations for ELL students based on results of the W-APT and previous academic records, parent input, student observations and any other data relevant to the student's language and academics.

Our instructional program is designed to teach students with language rich material that requires reading, investigation, writing and using real world and personal references. The instructional program provides initial and post assessments to demonstrate academic growth. RCS will ensure that ELL students meet the same challenging English proficiency standards and objectives required of all other students. RCS will supplement the curriculum with bilingual dictionaries, grammar and supplementary print and audio support and research based on-line instructional sites.

RCS staff will always comply with the state to ensure federal and state level compliance and work closely with teachers and other relevant staff to ensure the timely dissemination and communication of information to parents. RCS will make every effort, to the extent possible, to communicate to parents in a language they understand. With regard to state testing, students taking the EOG will have necessary and appropriate accommodations requested by the teacher to the RCS Test Coordinator in a timely manner. In

the case of dual identification, ELL/EC, the IEP committee will convene with the ELL committee to determine appropriate services for the student.

EXIT CRITERIA

RCS will operate in accordance to North Carolina state regulations and monitor, for two years, any student who is determined to be fully English proficient based on the ACCESS tests results. When a student is determined fully English proficient, parents will be notified of any change in services and continue to be provided with student progress reports in a language the parent can understand.

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.*

RCS provides its students with academic excellence through a rigorous curriculum that requires higher level thinking.

RCS will instruct intellectually gifted students in their assigned class, however differentiation will occur that targets the gifted child's learning style and capabilities. Similar to the struggling child who has instruction differentiated during a specific time during class, the gifted child will have the same individualized and targeted instruction. With the differentiated instruction, student lead instruction and unit projects our gifted child will have AIG classroom enrichment opportunities that line up with those in the LEA.

Following the North Carolina Academically or Intellectually Gifted (NCAIG) Program Standards, when identifying AIG students RCS will rely on prior school records to determine a student's status as AIG. Any unidentified students who display gifted abilities in one or more subjects can be referred to the AIG Committee. The committee includes, but is not limited to, an administrator and the teacher who will evaluate the student's classwork, assessments and READY EOG scores to determine AIG programming.

In order for a student to be eligible for the AIG program, a student must:

1. Demonstrate a need for a special program, superior intellectual development as measured by an intelligence quotient (IQ) of at least two standard deviations above the mean. Student must also possess gifted characteristics according to a standard scale or checklist; or
2. Be a member of a under-represented group, or low socio-economic status and meet the criteria in an approved public school plan for increasing participation in gifted education by under-represented groups; or
3. Be nominated for screening by a parent or other individual who suspects potential giftedness.
4. Additional screening when a student demonstrates potential giftedness.

Students who meet the criteria must then meet the criteria of the North Carolina AIG Program Standards in the state plan. When that criteria is met, an Education Plan (EP) is developed in 30 days of determining eligibility to receive services and approved by parents. RCS's AIG committee will meet to develop a plan to meet the child's academic needs:

This program will include, but is not limited to

- *Independent Studies

- *Odyssey of the Mind programs

- *Group research requiring higher critical thought, analysis and problem solving skills

- *Early college programs

- *Curriculum modifications

AIG students will undergo the an initial evaluation using the K-TEA Assessment or those scoring two or more positive standard deviations on normative assessments will receive the appropriate services for that student. Follow-up meetings to review the AIG student's standing will occur 1-2 times, at minimum, per year and will include the parent, teacher and an administrator.

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)*

In accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and in compliance with the Child Find requirements (34 CFR300.125), RCS will identify, locate, and evaluate students with disabilities. Upon enrollment at RCS, parents will be required to fill out enrollment packets, which will inquire about any services their student may have received at a previous school or any diagnosis that may affect the student's learning, e.g. IEP or 504 Plan In addition, RCS will formally request this information upon receipt of the student's prior school records. If records are not received within a reasonable time frame from the request (2-4 weeks), an administrator, or designee, will drive to individual schools to gather student files.

RCS will comply with the federal Child Find mandate to identify and evaluate all students who either have, or are suspected of having disabilities and need special education services. Teachers, parents, support staff, the student, and school administrators will be an integral part of the identification process as students may exhibit behaviors or disabilities only in certain areas. Students may be referred for an EC evaluation by staff or parents. Prior to an evaluation, however, RCS in cooperation with the NCSBE, will direct the child to the RTI committee to address the academic or behavioral concern. If after moving through the NCRtI process (6-8 weeks) a student is determined to require further help then a referral for evaluation will be made with parental consent.

Based on the evaluation results, the IEP team, including parents and guests, will make the appropriate determination of eligibility and services for the student under one or more NCDPI identification policies. Children who are determined to Otherwise Health Impaired (OHI) will be placed under the care of the 504 plan committee. The 504 plan committee will develop a plan that lists specific accommodations, supports or services for the child. The 504 will also identify the source of each service and the person responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. Children determined to have a learning disability will be referred to the IEP committee that will make appropriate placement in the child's least restrictive environment. If all options have been exhausted and the child is deemed ineligible for EC services, then the teacher on record will continue to implement research based interventions with the student in effort to make academic growth. IEPs and 504 plans will be reviewed regularly in accordance to Special Education Laws.

RCS will work cooperatively with community programs such as the Gaston County Health Department, Head Start, Gaston Community Services and the Child Find project that is part of a statewide network providing services to children with special needs including:

- *vision, hearing screening
- *placement in exceptional education programs
- *information on community resources

Requesting Records. Within 30 days of student enrollment, RCS will request the student's prior records, including IEP's and supporting documents and/or 504 Accommodation plans from previous schools. The student's name, date of birth and district ID number will also be requested.

Record Confidentiality (on site). All student education records will be kept confidential in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and IDEA. Files will be kept in a locked facility and will be authorized in accordance with NC 1505-2.5.

Record Compliance (on-site). All required student records will be prepared, retained, and disposed of in a manner consistent with federal and state statutes. Paper records will be stored in fireproof cabinets or reduced to electronic documents for storage. Records will be retained per state and federal guidelines and will be destroyed by burning or shredding in accordance with chapters 121 and 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes after records have exceeded expiration

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.*

RCS will comply with IDEA and provide accommodations and special education services for any exceptional child based on the child's IEP. RCS stands firm in the belief that a student with a disability is entitled to receive a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment that will enable the student to progress in the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible. RCS will work to provide EC students within the framework of the least restrictive classroom environment. RCS will, however, reserve a room for EC students requiring pull-out-time, one-on-one time or other services up to and including a self contained EC class room. Highly qualified and certified EC teachers will be on staff to ensure the EC student is performing in accordance to his IEP goal(s). RCS modifications and accommodation may include, are not limited to: adapted assignments, test modifications and assistive technology.

Services provided to RCS's EC students will comply with federal, state and local policies and procedures. Services will include: a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), a non discriminatory policy regarding identification, evaluation selection and location, and IEP plans and meetings to include the family, school and district staff. RCS will not deny admission to, nor withdraw a student based upon a finding the student needs a service not presently in existence in the school.

RCS supports all services set forth to ensure the academic success of every student by establishing the following values:

- * All students must be assessed
- * Academic growth must be consistent
- * Progress reports must be shared with parents and staff
- * Monitoring of growth is regular and status is reported regularly
- * All students are held to the same challenging academic standards

The IEP committee will consist of: child's parent/guardian, EC Coordinator, School Administrator, and other relevant auxiliary staff. The IEP Committee will develop all IEPs in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 300.340 - 300.350. Consequently, the IEP committee will review and discuss all assessment results and reports from teachers and parents; identify and write goals, benchmarks, service and modifications; determine the setting, hold annual reviews, identify resources and review cumulative folders of incoming students. The committee will also identify related services a child may need, such as language, and will work with School Leader to secure necessary contractual employees.

Contractual services will be secured through qualified community resources available in the LEA and surrounding areas. RCS will build relationships with established community programs and organizations who specialize in their respected area service and have experience with working in the school

environment.

RCS will provide to the parent/guardian, during the IEP meeting or via mail, in a language understandable to the general public and the native language of the parent, or other mode of communication used by the parent, a copy of the IEP, and a complete description of parents' rights.

RCS's progress monitoring will include the following:

- * Ongoing process of collecting and analyzing data to determine student progress

- * A statement of present levels of academic and functional performance

- * An explanation to the extent, if any, of a student's reduced participation in the regular classroom

- * Statement of accommodations on state level assessments

- * A statement of the tool used to measure a child's growth toward his or her goal

This information will be provided to the parents/guardian during a conference or by the US mail, in a language understandable by the general public and in the native language of the parent or other mode of communication used by the parent, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

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.*

RCS, as an organization, will act in accordance to the NC READY Model and targeted individualized student growth with regard to student performance standards.

RCS will use the 2016-2017 EOG scores for the k-4 schools in Gastonia, particularly those in the 28052 and 28054 zip codes, as baseline data from which our academic goals will be determined. For grades K-2 MAP scores from assessments administered by RCS will serve as the baseline data from which academic goals will be determined. K-2 students' baseline scores will be compared to their subsequent scores and used to build an individualized profile as a record of academic growth.

Academic goals will be established for the first five years of operation.

*In year one and two grades 3 and 4 will meet academic growth and surpass other 3rd and 4th grade students in the 28052 and 28054 zip code. K-2 students will show a minimum of one years growth.

*In years 3-5, 3rd-8th grade students who score "proficient" by NC standards will demonstrate consistent growth in all subject areas of 5% minimum each year. K-2 students will show a minimum of one years growth.

*In years 3-5, RCS will achieve an overall proficiency that will exceed 28052 and 28054 schools by 20% minimum

*RCS will meet expected growth annually.

*RCS will exceed growth growth by year three and achieve this goal three of the first five years.

Evaluation and assessment tools will be used to measure growth and ensure academic goals are met annually. Student improvement will be measured for all students with the evaluative components of the curriculum/programs used for instruction. RCS will also administer nationally normed assessments, such as DIBELS, NWEA that provide data on student achievement and cognitive ability. This will allow RCS to identify academic baselines for each student and predict their growth for the following Spring when a followup assessment is administered. Each student's profile will show graphic evidence of their year's performance with a verbal explanation of each subject area. This will also help identify areas for intervention or remediation the student may require.

RCS will make annual comparisons of pre and post assessment results in effort to determine if a student has met, exceeded or not met the expected standard growth. The tests will determine if gains are made in targeted areas of subject matter and also determine if the minimum years growth is made every year enrolled in RCS. Targeted areas of academic concern and student PEP will be used to determine if each student has met his targeted growth projections and to reconcile gaps in the curriculum.

3.To be considered for promotion all students must meet specific state and school requirements regarding literacy, math, attendance and social benchmarks. Students who do not meet the standards will be required to attend summer school and be re-assessed; based on the new score , the student will be promoted to the next grade level with an active PEP.

K-2 students must have demonstrated mastery of skills as measured by the NC k-2 Assessment and other school based and state recommended assessments, profiles, attendance and social benchmarks.

Third grade students must pass the EOG Test with a score >Level III and other school based and school recommended assessments, profiles, attendance and social benchmarks. Students who do not score > LEVEL III on the reading EOG are required to attend summer school. Evidence from other sources will be used to determine promotion or retention; some may be exempt using the "Good Cause Exemption".

Fourth and eighth grade students must demonstrate mastery of skills as measured a score > Level III on the EOG, teacher assessments and other school based and state recommended assessments.

Students with disabilities will be held to the same criterion as the general population. Students who take alternative state assessments, will have promotion decisions based on criteria established in the IEP. All

resources available for the general population will be available to students with disabilities who are subject to the promotion standards, in addition to the services provided through EC services.

When providing remediation and retention services for students with disabilities the teacher must document all accommodations, interventions and modifications before determining a student with an active IEP has failed a subject area. The student with a 504 plan must also have documentation of all strategies, interventions, accommodations recorded before determining the student has failed a particular subject area.

Parents will receive written reports that includes progress reports on the child's academic and behavior progress 1-2 times per marking period with a report card at the end of the grading period. RCS will provide written notification to the parent of RCS's intention to retain their child after the first semester or any time thereafter the student is identified as failing a subject area.

Students will exit RCS and be promoted to high school in accordance with the North Carolina Accountability Standards. Our exit standards will require that students are:

- *Proficient on EOG Assessments according to NC Accountability Model
- *Meet or exceed target AMOs in coursework and overall class proficiency
- *Proficient on benchmarks
- *Meet attendance requirements

Students at risk of not meeting the objectives to successfully exit 8th grade will be identified early; usually in previous grades where appropriate interventions, accommodations and PEPs will have been put in place. Students will be required to attend summer school with subsequent assessment. Upon successful completion the child will be graduated; students who do not successfully complete may be retained. Students with IEPs will need to meet the goals specified on the IEP; meeting the requirements of NC 1503-4 and NC 1503-5.1.

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.*

Each class will have a classroom management program to help students learn appropriate behaviors and to develop a positive attitude towards school. Classroom management will align with our beliefs and values, prioritizing an outstanding level of academic excellence that can only exist when the class dynamics and expectations are healthy, supportive and predictable. Teachers and students will work cooperatively in order to create a safe and inviting classroom and will inform parents the first week of school about classroom expectations and involve them in activities throughout the year.

The classroom management program will create a set of class rules based on expectations and needs with clear and progressive rewards and consequences. RCS teachers will spend the first two weeks of every school year reviewing these school rules, positively reinforcing them in all situations throughout the school. Students' rights, and expectations will be discussed with students on the first day of class and reviewed periodically as a preventive measure. They will be agreed upon and understood by everyone in the classroom. Students will understand that when rules are upheld that they can work toward a class reward, conversely, when rules are broken consequences will be applied fairly and consistently. The program will include expected behaviors for the students, positive recognition for compliance, and non punitive consequences for defiance. The rules will be short and reflect RCS core values of mutual respect and personal responsibility. In the event a child is displaying continual misconduct the student will be disciplined in accordance with classroom management which includes NCRtI positive behavior support to discuss measures that will be taken to adjust the child's behavior.

Teachers will be trained to implement elements of a positive behavioral intervention and support and responsive classroom programs so that students are motivated by their positive behavior rather than just punished for negative actions. As often as possible, students will be redirected and re-engaged so that discipline measures can be avoided, however, when necessary RCS teachers and staff will follow the protocol outlined in the RCS Student Handbook for handling matters of misconduct.

Student Discipline System:

A school wide discipline system will be utilized to motivate and reward students for positive behaviors and progress. The system is an organized framework designed to shape students social, emotional, and academic behaviors.

RCS will have a strict discipline policy for students who engage in bullying, fighting or other aggressive behavior as outlined in the school code of conduct. In addition, students who are disruptive or a danger to themselves or others will be dealt with immediately. This type of offense may result in suspension or expulsion of students.

Rights of students with disabilities:

EC students will be disciplined according to state and federal EC guidelines and the behavior intervention plan prescribed in their IEP. If the child

accumulates 10 days of suspension, RCS, the parents and members of the student's IEP team will meet to determine if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability. IEP services will not be interrupted while the child is enrolled at RCS.

Students who have been suspended may appeal the suspension beyond the School Leader to the RCS Board of Directors which will determine the final decision, unless the suspension warrants the involvement of the judicial system. This appeal must be made within five school days of the suspension notice. Reasonable effort to hear the appeal within seven days. At minimum two board members shall hear the appeal and they will record the decision.

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: Ridgeview Charter School

Mailing Address: 15207 Gathering Ct.

City/State/Zip: Charlotte NC 28278

Street Address:

Phone: 980-208-7782

Fax: 704-990-8639

Name of registered agent and address:

Reshall L. Williams
15207 Gathering Ct.
Charlotte, NC
28278

FEDERAL TAX ID: 46-4246150

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)
X 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.*

In accordance with NCGS 115C-238.29E (d) the primary function of the Board of Directors of Ridgeview Charter School will be to "...decide matters related to the operation of the school, including budgeting, curriculum and operating procedures," The Board of Directors has been established in conventional fashion with non-compensated officers and directors and shall operate in accordance with ratified bylaws. The board will retain ultimate and final authority and responsibility for decision- making with regard to policy, procedure, finance, curriculum and other operating, instructional and non-instructional matters.

Officer roles within the board will include: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. In addition, board members are required to work on one sub-committee, minimum. Sub-committees will included: Curriculum, Facility, Budget, Fundraising & Community Development to be voted on in accordance with RCS bylaws.

That said, the Board of Directors will observe the boundary between governance and management, delegating management tasks and charges to the School Leader.

The lead administrator has been identified and will assume position pending approval of this application. Future hiring practice of the lead administrator will include a national search through national educational recruiting sites as well as local and statewide searches using various forms of medium including job fairs, charter conferences and other charter specific resources, job sites and print medium. The lead administrator will be selected by the board after a careful review of qualifications, experience and integrity are duly considered. Priority will be given to candidates with educational leadership experience, that include management of a complex organization. The lead administrator will be subject to an employment agreement specifying the chain of command.

The lead administrator will be evaluated annually by the Board of Directors or a committee thereof via a process that will include official and unofficial feedback surveys from teachers and parents as well as a quantitative and qualitative analysis and review of academic, financial and operational performance. The board will also utilize established, market based modules and tools such as the Marzano Leadership Evaluation Model to evaluate its lead administrator. Each year the lead administrator will have three formal meetings, in addition to unscheduled informal meetings, as part of the evaluation process. The first meeting will be held before school opening to review the annual goals established in the previous Spring. The second meeting will act as a midpoint review, i.e update on the progress being made on reaching said goals and board impressions of the leader's status. The third meeting will determine if goals were met and establish

goals for the upcoming year. During the third meeting the school leader will be notified of the board's plan to retain him/her as leader. School leaders will have opportunities for corrective action regarding their performance and professional development throughout the year to equip them as leaders and visionaries in schools of choice and school reform.

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.*

In accordance with NCDPI's Department of Charter Schools, RCS's Board of Directors will include a range of members greater than 5 but less than ten, with a preference toward an odd number to ensure a voting majority. Since the membership on the governing board of RCS will not be a passive position, the board is and will be populated with directors who are committed to active participation in the governance of a charter school. The board will always strive to have directors who represent diverse personal and professional backgrounds.

Roles of the board shall include Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The board will also include committees such as finance, community development, and curriculum. The continued training and development of board members will also be a priority to ensure that RCS's mission and vision is fulfilled. The current board includes a parent from Gastonia, educators and various professionals who work and have investment in Gaston County. The skills and expertise of our members include: charter school leadership, special education, human resources, behavior management specialist and math, science and engineering.

The diverse composition of the board will contribute to the operational and educational success of the school. Each board member will bring his/her unique knowledge, talents, experience and networks to the table to create a synergistic process from which a framework of integrated policy, procedure strategic planning, successful implementation and periodic evaluation will emerge. This framework will serve as the catalyst for the mission, vision and operational and educational success of RCS.

The board of directors will evaluate the success of the school through a process that includes the report from an annual audit that will expose all financials of RCS, combined with the data from EOG and MAP tests and data from surveys taken by parents and staff. From that, a SWOT analyses will be created to form the basis of action plans to make improvements where necessary and keep our strengths relevant for the upcoming year.

The board will evaluate the success of the school leader through an annual evaluation. The evaluation process will utilize tools designed to produce a measurable, specific assessment of performance, in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Key areas of evaluation will include RCS's performance in academics, finance, operations, staff satisfaction and parent satisfaction.

The board will also perform an annual self evaluation. This will employ a systematic means for gathering input from the various stakeholders such as :

staff, faculty, parents, with specific data driven components from the financial audit, student testing performance and enrollment/retention statistics. The results will provide the basis of clear short and long term SMART goals and related strategic plans and benchmarks. The results will also serve in the development of quarterly reviews of operations, finances and academics completed by the School Leader.

In accordance with NC Open Meeting Laws, all activities, opportunities and meetings will be posted on RCS's website and in a visible location near the main office in the school. RCS board will also abide by all laws, rules and best practices regarding conflict of interest to ensure the highest integrity of the RCS organization.

The board will invite and welcome input from key stakeholders and will set aside time during each board meeting for public comment during which stakeholders can speak directly to the board as to RCS's perceived successes, general concerns, the effects of proposed or ratified policies and procedures. In addition the board will actively encourage stakeholders to participate in the school's leadership through service on board subcommittees.

- 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 Recruitment. Half of the RCS board members have been a working team for multiple years; this application a re-submission and we have maintained our interest and dedication to seeing this mission through. In compliance with the North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board's interview held in the Spring of 2015, we have reconfigured our Board and recruited members to the Board with specific emphasis on residents and business professionals in Gaston County who are not related or married. Our unwavering passion to serve Gaston County will guarantee that our plan meets its mission and provide a quality school of choice to area residents. Board members have been recruited based on their interest and enthusiasm for working collaboratively to open a high quality school of choice and the talents and experience that they bring to the table. Board seats have a limited life span at which time new members will be elected through the approved election process; the process will include procedures for elections held at the expiration of terms, and unexpected resignation of board positions during the course of the term. The election process will also allow for the re-election of board members who are in good standing.

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

The RCS board will have a monthly meeting a least eight (8) times per year in addition to an annual meeting and committee work sessions. All meetings will conform to the rules and regulations of the NC Open Meeting Laws.

- 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).*

New members will take part in a 1/2 day orientation within thirty (30) days of joining the board. The orientation will address board policy and procedure, member responsibilities, member expectations and the fundamentals of governance. Annually, the entire Board of Directors will undergo a full day of board training. Topics covered will include governance v. management,

keys to effective governance, qualitative aspects of charter school leadership, conducting effective meetings, managing legal matters, managing parent matters, conflict resolution and an NCSBE Policy review. The first board training will take place within ninety (90) days of charter school approval by the NCSBE.

The timetable for board training:

- June, 2016 - orientation, board role review and marketing training
- July, 2016 - board will complete marketing plan and review facility options
- August - Facility training: state requirements etc.
- September, 2016 - Curriculum overview and Lottery
- October, 2016 - Board Finances training and planning
- January, 2017 - Complete budget projections for opening year and lottery review
- March 2017, - Power School and staff evaluation training
- April 2017 - Staff recruitment training and planning
- May 2017 - Financial revue and staff benefit planning
- June 2017 - grant writing and community development

Each training is required for board members. Trainings will be recorded and saved for future references. All training will be facilitated by a professional in the field of expertise and will include updates on all other areas of operation such as : finances, curriculum, enrollment, facility (to include food and transportation) and vendors. RCS board will look to work with government entities and organizational representatives who may facilitate these trainings without cost.

The list of training and development is a working draft and as a result the order may shift to accommodate state training offered through the NCDPI and those offered by the North Carolina Charter School Association.

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.*

The board realizes the level of responsibility that comes with its members being charged as stewards of the public trust and that each member's ethical conduct is a reflection on the entire organization. The RCS Board of Directors is committed to preserving the public trust by taking proactive measures to ensure the highest ethical standards are observed and practiced by every board member and, in turn, the Board as a whole. Specifically, the Board has adopted a comprehensive conflict of interest policy with the purpose of avoiding conflict of interest and potential conflicts of interest between board member's private interests and their public duties. Every member has an affirmative duty to provide any and all information that a reasonable person would conclude is necessary to fully disclose about existing or potential conflicts of interest.

Any individual(s) identified to have a potential conflict shall be excused from relevant decisions and voting regarding the topic of discussion. The member(s) will be excluded from quorum requirement during that meeting.

There are no current concerns about members and any potential conflicts of interest. Going forward, general concerns to be monitored include 1). the respect of rules of confidentiality regarding, staff, students and other

sensitive information 2). the receipt of favors, gifts or money 3). financial benefits to a member's organization and/or business and 4). nepotism and preferential treatment of family members and/or students.

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

Adoption of school policy by a quorum of the board at a legally called meeting will result as the culmination of a process that seeks, via a sub-committee of the board, input from interested /affected constituent groups within the school community, research of data and available alternatives, careful study of the impact and costs of a potential policy and thoughtful deliberation of preliminary solutions. Upon completion of the process, the sub-committee will make a policy recommendation to the Board that will ratify the recommendation, take no action or refer the matter back to the subcommittee for additional input, research, study and deliberation.

When deliberation and discussion is complete, board members will work toward consensus by keeping student needs central. While majority vote is required, buy in by all members is always the goal to maintain the strength of solidarity with the board and school community as a whole.

The RCS Board of Directors will continue to exercise governance vs. management in policy making as well. The Board will oversee the development of policies that support the school's mission, vision and goals. Policies that include charter school renewal, admissions, teacher license and board processes will be the focus on the Board. School policies that are designed to manage the day to day operations of RCS will be developed by the School Leader. The School Leader will submit policies during the second semester each year for the Board to approve for the upcoming academic year. Any addendum to management policies must be initiated and submitted by the School Leader for Board's consideration and vote.

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.

RCS supports the use of councils and associations whose priority is providing our students with the best their organization has to offer and aid in their education. RCS, therefore, will provide opportunities for a parent association and a school advisory team. Each will advise the School Leader, in a non-supervisory role, in effort to reach the organizational goals needed to live our mission and vision.

The parent association will serve as an avenue for parents to become more actively involved in RCS. The parent organization will lead student fundraising efforts, organize volunteers and coordinate school-wide and community events, and other student and/or parent special programs. The parent organization will have no formal authority and is not a committee or subcommittee of the Board of Directors, therefore, no direct reporting avenue will exist between them. The parent organization will have no role in the evaluation of the School Leader or the staff.

In effort to encourage the buy in and support of its constituents, RCS will establish a school advisory team. The advisory team will report to and

advise the School Leader in its role as liaison between parents / community and the school leader. The advisory team will include parents, staff and student leaders who will provide insight from the perspective of their constituents with regards to decisions about day to day management. When appropriate, the team will address the RCS Board of Directors regarding issues, however, the team has no formal role on the board and no role in the evaluation of the staff or school leader.

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

The board will establish a standing Grievance Committee. The purpose of the Grievance Committee is to evaluate and determine the merits of a properly filed grievance by a parent or member of the faculty of staff and to possibly make a recommendation to the Board for consideration. Filing a valid grievance requires that the aggrieved party addresses the issue with the following individuals in the proper sequence as follows:

STAFF:

First Step - Seek resolution of the matter with whom the staff member has the disagreement.

Second Step - Seek resolution via the employee's immediate supervisor

Third Step - Seek resolution via the School Leader. Assuming no resolution, the staff member may file a grievance with the Board of Directors.

PARENTS:

First Step - Seek resolution with the child's teacher

Second Step - Seek resolution with the teacher's department chair or supervisor (if applicable)

Third Step - Seek resolution with their School Leader. Assuming no resolution, the parent may file a grievance with the Board of Directors.

Grievance forms are to be provided without cost by the School Leader within 48 hours of being requested by the aggrieved. The aggrieved is not required to provide a reason to the School Leader as a condition of receiving the grievance forms. The forms must be completed and submitted to the Grievance Committee Chairperson per the address and/or email prominently displayed on the grievance forms. Multiple grievances may not be combined in one form, however, multiple grievances may be submitted concurrently on separate forms. Grievances must be individually submitted and individually reviewed by the Grievance Committee.

The aggrieved party has the right to an expeditious, objective and thorough review of the grievance. Upon receipt of the grievance, the Chairperson of the Grievance Committee shall convene a quorum of the Grievance Committee within a reasonable time, not to exceed twenty (20) calendar days from the date of receipt.

The Grievance Committee will consider all available evidence but is neither required to conduct hearings nor to hear verbal testimony. Upon thoughtful review, the Grievance Committee may elect to dismiss the grievance, i.e. take no action, request additional information or recommend action to the Board of Directors.

If the Grievance Committee chooses to dismiss the grievance, the Chairperson

of the Grievance committee will issue a letter to the aggrieved, notifying them that the committee has chosen to dismiss the grievance and indicating the reason for dismissal. The letter must explicitly state that the aggrieved may appeal the matter directly to the Board of Directors by submitting a letter to the Secretary of the Board stating " I appeal the decision of the Grievance Committee" and providing the basis of the appeal. The findings of the Board of Directors, upon appeal by the aggrieved, shall be final.

If the grievance Committee chooses to recommend action to the Board of Directors, the Chairperson will issue a letter to the aggrieved stating that the grievance has been referred to the Board of Directors for further action. In addition, the Chairperson will issue a letter to the board detailing the specific action that the committee is recommending to the Board of Directors. The board may accept the recommendation of the Grievance Committee, take action in the manner it deems fit regardless of the recommendation of the Grievance Committee or take no action. The Board's decision, upon recommendation of an action by the Grievance Committee shall be final.

All records submitted or reviewed during the grievance process are to be preserved in accordance with the school's retention schedule. Grievance records containing protected information under the law are not public documents and are not to be disclosed, published or released in full or in part. Grievance Committee members may not make any comment regarding the grievance deliberations or final outcome.

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.

X Not Applicable

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

X Not Applicable

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.*

X Not Applicable

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.

RCS's overall leadership and staffing philosophy is based on Distributive Leadership / Distributive Intelligence. This particular model emphasizes tapping into the strength of staff, shared responsibility and capitalizing on the resources within the environment; therefore it is important that staffing not only match the projected enrollment but that internal development and ownership is nurtured.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

Ridgeview will be lead by one School Leader during the first year operation. The Assistant School Leader will be added during the second year or when the enrollment numbers are at 400 ADM. The Board of Directors will decide no later than January of the first school year if an Assistant Director is needed for the second school year. If the Board votes to approve an assistant, then a legal search that complies with RCS Bylaws and EEOC will begin. If the Board decides an assistant is not necessary, then the position will not be advertised until the need is warranted. Finances, human resources, marketing and auxilliary services will be outsourced to a third party. The following positions are proposed to be filled the first year of operation

- (1) School Leader
- (2) EC Teachers
- (2) Elective Specialty Teachers
- (3) Teachers Assistants
- (1) Instructual Support Technology
- (1) Clerical
- (1) Food Staff
- (1) Custodian
- (1) EC Related Services Contract
- (1) Office Manager
- (1) PE Teacher
- (.5) ESL Teacher
- (3) Kindergarten Teachers
- (3) Grade One Teachers

- (3) Grade Two Teachers
- (3) Grade Three Teachers
- (3) Grade Four Teacher

Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management

Include the following information for the proposed charter school:

In support of our mission's goal "to create high academic achievement" RCS believes that well prepared teachers who strive for continuous growth, in a community that nurtures development and leadership, are critical to RCS realizing its goal. To accomplish this, RCS recruitment strategy is to attract diverse, smart and innovative teachers who are passionate about the mission and who reflect the diversity of our students and Gastonia.

RCS recruitment strategy includes, but is not limited to:

1. Internet- Job postings on the RCS website, indeedjob.com, teachers-teachers.com and careerbuilder.com
2. Advertise- RCS main office, job postings in English and Spanish speaking newspapers and magazines, career service offices at colleges and universities, Teach for America and ethnic based educational associations such as Teach for America Alumni of Color. RCS will also conduct a national search through sources like The Chronicle of Higher Education and Education Week.
3. Participate in - charter school specific conferences and job fairs, general educational and job fairs and the NCDPI Educator Effectiveness Program particularly the NC Teacher Corps program.

Drawing from a Distributive Leadership model RCS will retain its teachers through

- A strong learning based community that trickles down from the Board to the student
- Include teachers in the annual SWOT analysis and annual goal setting meetings
- Create teacher lead committees, Deans, Coaches, and other leadership opportunities
- Continuous constructive coaching by the School Leader
- Prioritize internal promotion for leadership positions
- Annual performance increases that are merit based; this helps encourage innovation
- Competitive salary and benefits

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.

Every member of the faculty and staff of RCS will have open and equal access to the grievance process and will contribute, likely through formal and informal surveying, to the annual process of evaluating the School Leader and Assistant Leader.

Employees will elect a staff representative annually to serve as a liaison to the Board of Directors. This liaison will attend board meetings, provide faculty and staff insights on issues of importance and provide feedback to the Board of Directors with regard to policy and procedure. In addition, teachers and staff will be encouraged to serve on subcommittees of the Board and attend monthly board meetings.

The Board or Directors is responsible for reviewing and, if satisfactory, approving the terms and conditions of all employment contracts recommended to the Board by the School Leader

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

The hiring process will generally include the following steps, but may be modified slightly for particular positions or unique circumstances: Initial applications for employment will be screened by designated personnel for appropriate experience, certification, education, credentials and other stated prerequisites for the position. A qualitative review of applications will be conducted by the personnel committee or other designated team and qualified candidates will be granted a first -round interview. First-round interviews will be conducted with the School Leader and any other designee of the Board. A candidate chosen from the first-round interviews to proceed to a second interview will undergo an examination and verification of candidates education, certification, achievements and references and will be required to submit to national criminal background check and pre-employment drug screening (using protocol provided by a professional drug screening company such as LabCorp). Assuming a successful second interview and the return of a favorable background check, satisfactory references, verified credentials and licensure and clean drug screen, an offer of employment will be extended to the candidate.

RCS will establish a comprehensive protocol for evaluating employees, that includes the NC Teacher Evaluation Model. In instances where staff or faculty members are identified as under-performing, the faculty/staff member will be counseled by the School Leader and may be required to participate in a corrective action plan that establishes clear expectations, timelines and benchmarks for continued employment. Progress on the corrective action plan will be monitored periodically will be retained or discharged based upon progress. Employees who commit acts of violence, endangerment or other behaviors that compromise student and workplace safety may be discharged without notice or remediation.

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

SALARIES:

Average teacher salary: \$33,000-\$38,967 with adjustments up or down for experience and credentials

Average teacher assistant salary: \$22,000-\$24,761

Average non-executive administrative and support staff salary: \$22,000-\$29,263 depending on job requirements, experience and credentials

School Leader salary: \$75,000-\$84,413

Assistant School Leader to be added in third year \$46,359-\$49,173

Office Manager: \$35,000-\$39,659

Substitute Teacher: \$2,500- \$5,000

BENEFITS:

Employees will receive major medical insurance through the state health program. RCS intends to pay a portion of the premium costs, for the sake of conservatism, the budget assumes 100% of employee premium costs. Economic conditions and and uncertain market dynamics, however, may not make it economically feasible for the school to fund the entire program.

RCS will also make supplemental insurance available through a Section 125 cafeteria plan. Such coverage includes cancer, dental, short/long term disability, life, vision and other insurance. The Section 125 plan premiums would be the employee's responsibility.

RCS will offer participation in a tax deferred, defined contribution retirement plan. RCS will provide a dollar-for-dollar match (or portion thereof) for employee contributions up to a maximum amount as defined in the plan documents.

Employee eligibility and vesting with certain benefits will be determined by prevailing law, status of employment (full/part time), plan mandates and years of service.

RCS will also provide each full-time employee with a fixed number of personal leave days that can be used for illness, vacation, bereavement and other personal time. RCS will be subject to the Family Medical Leave Act (29 USC 2601 et seq.; 29 CFR Part 825)

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

RCS Board of Directors will establish a standing Grievance Committee. The purpose of the Grievance Committee is to evaluate and determine the merits of a properly filed grievance by a member of the faculty or staff and to possibly make a recommendation to the Board for consideration. The aggrieved party must address the issue in the proper sequence as follows:

FIRST STEP: Seek resolution of the matter with whom the staff member has the disagreement

SECOND STEP: Seek resolution via the staff member's immediate supervisor

THIRD STEP: Seek resolution via the School Leader. Assuming no resolution, the staff member may file a grievance with the Board. In accordance with federal law, RCS forbids retaliation when it comes to any aspect of employment, including grievance complaints.

RCS will establish a comprehensive protocol for evaluating, remediating and terminating employees. In instances where staff or faculty members are identified as underperforming the staff/faculty member will be counseled by the School Leader and may be required to participate in a written corrective action plan that establishes clear expectations, timeline and benchmarks for continued employment. Progress on the corrective action plan will be monitored periodically throughout the expiration date of the plan. Upon re-evaluation, the employee will be retained or discharged based upon progress.

Employees convicted of or pleading "nolo contendere" to a felony or to a certain Class A1, 1 or 2 misdemeanors may be discharged without notice to the extent that the law permits. Employees who are discharged with a felony or certain Class A1, 1 or 2 misdemeanors may be suspended with pay pending outcome of trial or hearing. Employees who commit acts of violence, assault, endangerment or other behaviors on school property or during school sponsored events that compromise student and/or workplace safety may be discharged without notice

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

The person filling the position of media/technical support will have dual responsibilities. In the opening and possibly the second year, the library will experience growth in its resources, not requiring a full time media specialist. Additionally, the needs for technical assistance are typically higher in the first year of operation, demanding technical assistance at a moment's notice, therefore RCS will search for a candidate who can fill both needs. The funding source for each position will come from the school's budget.

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.

Assuming Exceptional Child(EC) enrollment at 15% of the total student population, the initial EC staff will include 1 EC Coordinator and 1 EC teacher. EC staffing will fluctuate up or down as exceptional child enrollment and IEP requirements dictate. With the uncertainty of the first year's EC numbers, RCS will work to recruit two teachers for K-4 positions who also carry an EC license for North Carolina this will ensure the special needs of EC students are addressed immediately.

The faculty will include at least one certified teacher with ESOL/ELL certification or endorsement.

EC teachers will have a BA/BS Degree in education, curriculum and instruction, or a related field from an accredited college or university and will hold a teacher's certification reflecting mastery of the principles of exceptional child education, special education curriculum and instructional theory and use of data to drive student progress and program improvement

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).

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

every student and the expectations of all stakeholders.

TEACHERS:

Minimally, 75% of elementary and 50% of middle-school classroom teachers at the school will hold a valid North Carolina Standard Professional (SP) 1 Professional Educator's License and RCS will develop, maintain and as necessary have approved by the NCDPI a teacher licensure program, allowing teachers to progress from SP1 to SP2 license and renew SP2 license from time to time. Educators who qualify for lateral entry in North Carolina, will be considered for employment as teachers. Teachers designated as Department Heads will be responsible for necessary evaluation and reporting to School Leader on programs and staff and will possess experience and/or advanced credentials commensurate with the position.

SCHOOL LEADER:

The School Leader will provide educational and operational leadership, contractual accountability and logistical direction as part of his/her responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school. The School Leader is responsible for hiring, observing and evaluating all staff and determining annual increase for each staff person. The School Leader is accountable to the Board of Directors. Minimum qualifications include a Master's Degree in administration, educational leadership, curriculum and instruction or a related field and at least 3 years of experience at the executive leadership level. Preference will be given to a candidates with experience in charter school leadership and a background in strategic planning.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR:

Assistant Administrator is responsible for interim management of the school in the absence of the School Leader. The Assistant Administrator will assist in the supervision of instructional and non-instructional staff, will oversee and coordinate beginning teacher and professional development programming and will serve as the chief disciplinarian in the event of student misconduct. The Assistant Administrator reports to the School Leader. Qualifications include possession of a valid state teaching certificate with a minimum of three years classroom experience. Administrative program (accredited or recognized) or other related masters program is required.

BUSINESS/FINANCE OFFICER:

The Business/Finance Officer is responsible for interim management of school if the absence of the School Leader and Assistant Administrator. The Business/Finance Officer is also responsible for managing the requisition, purchasing, accounts payable, payroll, budget and financial reporting functions of the school. The Finance Officer will interact with the accounting staff, provide regular financial and budget reports to the Board as requested, assist in drafting the annual budget reports and coordinate the annual audit. The Business/Finance Officer reports to the School Leader. Qualifications include a Bachelor's degree, candidates may qualify by demonstrating extensive experience and success in school business.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE / SUPPORT PERSONNEL:

Other administrative support personnel, e.g. School Nurse, will be responsible for carrying out support functions as delegated to them by the

School Leader and will require applicable credentials and requisite experience based on the position's duties and responsibilities.

Staff Evaluation and Professional Development

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

The School Leader, is responsible for maintaining teacher licensure and professional development until the Assistant Administrator is hired. Upon hiring, the Assistant Administrator will assume duties for licensure and professional development.

2. *Provide a detailed plan noting how the school will mentor, retain, and evaluate staff in a format that matches the school's mission, 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.*

RCS will model the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process which is based on the Framework for the 21st Century Learning and the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards in order to assess the teacher's performance in relation to those standards and to design a plan for professional growth. The School Leader or a designee will conduct the evaluation process in which the teacher will actively participate through the use of self-assessment, reflection, presentation of artifacts and classroom demonstration(s).

Instructional staff will be evaluated based on the six aligned standards adopted by the NCSBE: Leadership, Establishing a Respectful Environment, Content Knowledge, Facilitation of Learning, Critical Reflection, and Contribute to Academic Success.

The evaluation process will include the following components:

Component 1: TRAINING

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

Component 2: ORIENTATION

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

Component 3: SELF-ASSESSMENT

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

Component 4: PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

Before the first formal observation, the School Leader will meet with the teachers to review and discuss the self-assessment, the teacher's most recent professional growth plan, and the lesson(s) to be observed. The teacher will provide the School Leader with a written lesson plan. The goal of this conference is to prepare the School Leader for the observation. In the event that there are multiple observations, pre-observation conferences

are not required for subsequent observations.

Component 5: OBSERVATIONS

Formal observations by the School Leader will be made for the minimum of 45 minutes or the entire class period. If a class period is less than 45 minutes, then the evaluation will be made over two class periods to fulfill the minimum time requirement. Those teachers who are designated as "Probationary" will undergo no fewer than three formal classroom observations, one of which must be conducted by a peer designated by the School Leader. Career teachers will be evaluated no fewer than two times per year. During observations, the School Leader and the peer will note, in writing, the teachers performance in relation to the standards contained in the evaluation rubric.

Component 6: POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

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

Component 7: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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

RCS believes that mastery comes through nurturing a desire for improvement within its staff. In addition to the formal evaluations the School Leader and designee, will provide continuous informal feedback to teachers. School Leader will prioritize daily walkthroughs ensuring each teacher has a weekly visit where a walkthrough form is left for teacher to review and, if necessary, a follow up meeting.

- 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.*

The RCS professional development plan has at its core a commitment to a mission-driven charter school, high quality instruction and constant improvement of student learning. Through the use of qualified contractors, trained in-house staff, professional conferences, guest speakers and online learning, the professional development (PD) program will include topics of current interest and instructional relevance such as international curriculum, gender based instruction, effective classroom management, evidence-based instructional strategies, subject specific texts and reading, technology in the classroom. Other applicable professional development programs will emphasize small group instruction and discussion, peer collaboration and teamwork. Work place issues will be incorporated into the professional development program covering topics such as maintaining a safe workplace, First Aid / CPR / AED training, effective communication, preventing sexual harassment, engaging families and cultivating a culture of diversity in the workplace.

To the extent to which PD will be conducted internally or externally and

will be individualized or uniform, RCS will schedule:

1. Individualized PD: Peer and mentor (new teachers) observations, along with administrative feedback provides valuable professional development for staff. The School Leader, or designee, will ensure the coordination of support, coaching, guest teaching and other assistance.

2. Learning Communities: Teachers are expected to meet in small groups weekly. The groups with which teachers will meet will vary in order to allow grade level, subject specific and cross curricular collaboration. Beginning teachers will have monthly meetings to develop mastery.

3. Formal development will be scheduled during many days during August training, teacher work days and staff meetings. Development will be facilitated by administration or a guest with expertise in the identified area.

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.*

Pre-opening professional development will begin 1 week (5 weekdays) prior to the first day of school for students. Faculty and staff will report to school at 8am and remain until 3pm. Each day will include approximately 60-90 minutes for classroom setup and 30 minutes for lunch. The remaining 25 hours will be used for professional development. Approximately 5-10 hours will be used to train staff on all operating policies and procedures including school safety plans, Code of Ethics, employment policy review, student discipline, the EC referral process, managing workplace violence (including sexual harassment) and other procedural, safety and policy topics. An additional 10-15 hours will be used to build instructional leaders who embrace the curriculum, gender based instruction for middle school and a culture of collaboration among staff based on the distributive leadership theory and various team building exercises. The time used to orient staff toward school-wide instructional goals will address measurement criteria for student performance. During this time breakout sessions will be incorporated into the instructional objectives training for instructional/grade level teams. These sessions will be led by lead staff whose objective will include defining specific objectives within their grades, development of team-wide instructional strategies, creation of action plans for anticipated obstacles and challenges, the coordination of lesson plans and to synthesize curriculum components within grades.

Preparing RCS staff for the implementation of the international curriculum school wide and gender based core classes in the middle school are unique and potentially challenging aspects of our instructional methodology.

For this reason professional development in this area will be the focus of the 15 hours of instructional and cultural training planned for the pre-opening week. Specific effort to secure an expert in the international curriculum to train staff during pre-opening week will be a priority for the School Leader during the planning year. With gender based classrooms beginning in the middle school, which will not occur during the first year of operation, RCS will have an additional two years to secure School Leaders (or designee) who have gender based schools and / or classrooms to train and mentor RCS math, ELA, Science and Social Studies teachers. Additionally, the

extra two years will give RCS the time to secure funding for conferences and workshops specific to gender based instruction. This future training will take place during the pre-opening week or summer, depending on the conference schedule and will continue, along with other unique topics, to be part of staff development days throughout the academic year.

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.

Continued professional development is important to the success of RCS and its mission's objective for academic success through that will happen by developing master teachers. RCS's school calendar, therefore, provides 13 teacher workdays, in which 11 will be mandatory professional development days throughout the school year. There will be 5 professional development days prior to the beginning of school, where teachers will receive intensive training in curriculum, policy and classroom management and eight days throughout the year providing continuous support and training for the faculty and staff.

Approximately 2-25 hours of additional designated staff development time will be in the form of six half days, which will be incorporated into the calendar in September, October, November, December, January, February and April. School will not be in session for students during these days but faculty and staff will be required to report to work at normal business hours. The programming for each day will be determined based on trending topics and needs identified by the board, administration and/or faculty and staff. In addition, the school will advise teachers of short (1-2 hr.) topic-specific online and webinar based voluntary learning opportunities that are available throughout the year. If teachers choose to participate in such opportunities, arrangements will be made in advance so that classes can be covered during the time that the teacher is participating in staff development.

The school's calendar and staffing structure supports this plan through its master schedule that provides for common planning time for teams of teachers to work on interdisciplinary units, analyze and disaggregate student data and implement NCRtI. These PD meetings will occur during regularly scheduled staff meetings and planning meetings. A structured mentor program will help provide additional support for new and experienced teachers. This yearly calendar is included in Appendix C.

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)).

The school will use a variety of methods to promote the school and attract students and families. Some of these methods may include, but are not limited to the following: 1. Holding periodic informational meetings with local community, civic and religious organizations along with individual meetings with local business and civic leaders and other people who may be able to inform and/or influence families and students to enroll at the school, 2. Creating a referral network by fostering relationships with local childcare centers, the Boys and Girls Club of Gaston County, community sporting leagues and the Gaston County YMCA; 3. Advertisements throughout the community; 4. Creation and promotion of online marketing videos and 5. Promotion of the RCS website where parents can find enrollment and recruitment literature.

The Board of Directors recognizes the importance of community awareness and recruitment of parents and students who reflect the racial/ethnic and demographic composition of the Gaston district. In order to promote a neighborhood school, the marketing strategy will start in the local community immediately and then broaden to the mass market. Marketing to residents in the surrounding communities will be the primary focus. In order to ensure strong demand, marketing will occur to all appropriate population, e.g. geographic, ethnic, age etc. We anticipate that the majority of students will live within a 25 mile radius of the school and, thus, reflect the local community being served. Targeted marketing will be used to focus on this geographic area. Additionally, select marketing materials will be created and produced in multiple languages based on the demographics of the local area. RCS has allocated \$10,000.00 in our budget for marketing, this money will be used for advertising through media such as radio, bill boards, and TV ads.

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.*

RCS believes that engaging community members, parents and volunteers creates meaningful ways to include individuals in emotional experiences that help them connect to the school's mission and core values.

RCS will communicate and engage parents and community from the time that the school is approved through its opening. Upon its approval, RCS will maintain a website with current information about the school, including: a directory of the School Board with individual biographies, philosophy, curriculum, school calendar and an opening timeline. RCS will also utilize social media to increase its base of support and social awareness through forums such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. RCS will also partner resources like community action programs, daycare centers, churches and home owners associations to announce the opening of RCS followed by a statement to follow us on social media.

During the fall of 2016 Families will be invited to information sessions where the history, philosophy and curriculum will be shared with the community. This will serve as an opportunity for community feedback allowing the board to build a data base of interested families, customize certain

aspects of RCS and demonstrate to the community our desire for a strong relationship and set a positive tone in the community. Information sessions will become orientations in the spring of 2017. Orientations will follow the start of enrollment, per North Carolina rules, and serve to encourage enrollment of students and investment of parent time, talent and skills. RCS has identified a position of recognition for a lead volunteer, an official "parent ambassador". This person will work with the marketing to promote RCS.

During the summer of 2017 RCS will invite families and the community with informal activities that require the investment of time, talent and skill. We want the community to feel a sense of ownership, therefore RCS will coordinate events like "Earth Day" for the beautification of the exterior of the school and other school beautification projects to prepare the interior of school's classes, halls, office etc.

RCS will build engaging partnerships between the family and school that strengthen support for student learning by engaging parents in the life of our school. Through the efforts of our Parent Ambassador we expect to have a solid core of parent volunteers to represent parent interest through various ways that will be determined between the Board, School Leader and the Parent Ambassador. Additionally parents will support student learning through participation in school governance, leadership opportunities, School Advisory Team, PTA/PTO, and classroom and school volunteers. RCS will also create an opportunity for a "Grand-Friends" group to organize. Grand-Friends will include the Grand Parents of students and other senior friends who can volunteer time in the school.

Additionally, RCS will seek to nurture partnerships and relationships with other area charter schools and non-profit organizations committed to student learning by sharing information, expertise and talent as a means of fostering mutual support.

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.*

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

Pre-admission activities will be limited to providing interested parents with a letter of interest that will include the child's, grade and contract information for the parents. The letter of intent will be clearly marked so as to identify that it is not an enrollment document or an application. It will be used for continued outreach and as a preliminary planning tool for resources and staffing. We will enroll for the 2017-2018 school year, beginning the day following final approval by the NCSBE and continuing through April 2017. At that time, the determination will be made regarding necessary lottery or whether to continue rolling enrollment until all spaces are filled. If there is a need for the lottery, it will be held in late April 2017.

We will enroll any eligible students who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade, level, or building. In this case, students shall be accepted by lot. Once enrolled, students are not required to reapply in subsequent enrollment periods, they will however, be required to re-enroll each year prior to open application period begins. Notwithstanding and law to the contrary, Ridgeview Charter School may refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from a public school under G.S. 115c390.5 through G.S. 115c390.11 until the period of suspension or expulsion has expired.

Any student, residing in the state of North Carolina, must complete the application process to be considered for enrollment. The required application will not consist of, and may not be limited to, the following: a personal application form which includes student's name, place of residence, parent/guardians' names and addresses, student's birth date, present school, enrollment, current grade.

Following the first year of operations, RCS may give enrollment priority to siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to RCS in the previous year and to children of the school employees. If multiple birth siblings apply for admission to a charter school and a lottery is needed under G.S. 115c238.29F(g) (6), the charter school will capitulate with prevailing law regarding the admission of multiple birth siblings.

No criteria for admission will be utilized other than a completed application form and residence in North Carolina. A wait list will be maintained in the event that space becomes available and the school chooses to continue to fill any open enrollment positions. The parents of students may withdraw or transfer their children at any time. Students' records will be forwarded as official documents to the child's receiving school. In order for parents to re-enroll their students at a later time, they must go back through the school's admission process.

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
	250	30		280	60		330	70		382	80		430	90	

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.

Our transportation strategy begins with selecting a location for our facility that is easily accessible, well lit and allows for smooth, orderly traffic flow. We believe that our current, targeted facility fulfills those requirements.

The demographics of our targeted population leads us to the reasonable conclusion that, as a condition of enrolling their child at RCS, some parents will need school-provided transportation to safely transport their children to and from school. In accordance with state law, RCS will ensure that transportation is not a barrier to attendance or a deterrent to children who wish to enroll at Ridgeview. Ridgeview will either contract with or directly provide a limited busing option that will establish designated school bus drop off and pick up points through out the community. School Leader will encourage parents to work with one another to arrange for children to be delivered to the pick up and drop off locations. Additionally, RCS will actively encourage parents to create a car pooling network to and from school, particularly for those who live nearby.

Ridgeview Charter School will also work with the Gaston County ACCESS program to arrange for a public transportation option in the form of discounted bus passes for our students. We will also request that a transit point be added in front of the school.

Lastly, Ridgeview will reach out to Gaston County Schools to open a dialogue regarding the options available for shared busing of students, including the identification of district schools to serve as shuttle stops for Ridgeview buses or possibly compensating Gaston County Public Schools for the transport of students to RCS.

Although implementing a door-to-door busing pickup route for every student wishing to attend RCS would be ideal, it is cost prohibitive; however, we believe that RCS's planned investment in and commitment to student transportation provides reasonable access to all students throughout Gaston County.

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.

Ridgeview Charter School is committed to ensuring that no student begins or ends the school day without a nutritious meal. We recognize the importance of providing meals to our students and we will be providing a meal program

that follows the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) procurement requirements in compliance with Federal Regulation 7 CFR 210.16.

A food-service provider will be contracted to operate our food-service program; Preferred Meals or other such vendors. We expect that the majority of our students will qualify for free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program and we will make application to receive reimbursement for the cost of those meals as a means of offsetting the ADM funds currently allocated to cover meal costs. No child at Ridgeview Charter School will ever be excluded from receiving a meal because of an inability to pay or because they failed to bring their own meal on a particular day.

All meals served by RCS will meet the nutritional requirements set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture in accordance with the National School Lunch Program. Our food-service provider will provide extensive support to the school with menu planning, nutritional analysis, food-handling safety, and sanitization. A hot meal for lunch will be offered daily, and a cold breakfast will be offered if needed. The goal is to meet students' needs and ensure that students can focus on the work of learning and not their physical hunger.

Our lunch program shall be under the jurisdiction of the Division of School Support, of the Child Nutrition Services of the Department of Public Instruction.

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		\$1,543.00
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$1,000,000		\$4,277.00
Property Insurance	\$1,000,000		\$1,500.00
Motor Vehicle Liability	\$1,000,000		\$2,300.00
Bonding Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$250,000	\$1,000,000	\$250.00
Other	\$1,000		\$1,000.00
Total Cost			\$10,870.00

*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.

jaydub49 09/25/2015

(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).

RCS's current facility plan is to locate the school in space created by the redevelopment project for the former Loray Mills in downtown Gastonia, NC. The Loray Mill and Loft Apartment Complex has been described as Gastonia's own "West Side Story". In what was once one of Gaston County's most crime-ridden neighborhoods, Loray Mills is revitalizing the area, much to the delight of local residents, many of whom have family connections to the mill's historic past. RCS's Board has met with California-based JBS Ventures, the development company that is renovating and rebuilding the 600,000 square foot facility.

Phase II of the project is approaching its demolition date and Phase II has been identified as the location for RCS. Phase I of Loray Mills include 190 loft apartments, 79,000 square feet of commercial space and 34,000 square feet of amenities. The redevelopment company as well as the local political leadership of Gaston County and Gastonia have expressed their desire to have a charter school residing as a tenant within the facility. The developers have shared that the existing space can be customized to fit the unique needs of a charter school and because the project involves the award of new market tax credits and other historic preservation incentives, the potential lessor has stated that they are amenable to exploring lease terms that will coincide with our budget.

Any facility that Ridgeview occupies will, at least initially, have to be leased by the developer of the space. Upon being awarded a charter, Ridgeview will contact groups such as Charter School Capital to assist in identifying, purchasing, renovating and then leasing the potential site to the school, particularly if the originally planned facility site becomes impractical or

cannot be secured.

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.

We are budgeting for an average cost of \$8 - \$12/sq ft/ yr on a graduating scale. The average asking rental price per sq ft/year for specialized industry properties in Gastonia, NC in 2015 ranged from \$7.00 - \$12.00 according to CityFeet.com.

Facility Contingency Plan: *Describe the method of finding a facility if the one the board has identified will not be ready by the time the public charter school will be opening. Include information regarding the immediate spatial needs of the school and identify any programs that will not be immediately offered because a permanent facility has yet to open.*

In the event that RCS's first location choice is not completed or acceptable lease terms cannot be established, a contingency facility will be identified in the same general vicinity. The facilities committee will meet semi monthly to monitor the progress of the planned site. Regardless of the stage of completion or lease negotiation, we will identify at least one contingency site and concurrently make plans to occupy the site should circumstances warrant.

Ideally, any contingency site will meet all space requirements and will minimize the need to eliminate or curtail any programming. A contingency site with fewer square feet of usable space would also have to include sufficient property to supplement the square footage with a modular set up. Possible contingency sites may include a church facility with instructional classrooms, a community center or other such facility that will provide sufficient, interim space for instructional programming and daily operations or the development of unused retail space. Ridgeview would also explore available raw land, including a large, retail parking lot, as an option to install a temporary modular facility until such time as a permanent facility can be completed. As a last resort, if instructional square footage is at a premium, administrative offices for the business operations as well as storage for supplies might be relocated off site.

Preparation for a contingency site will begin immediately upon award of the charter. We will engage a realtor familiar with the Gaston County realty market and zoning requirements for school use and work collaboratively with the realtor to reach out to local land and property owners as well as organizations that occupy/own community centers. Since RCS has not finalized any agreements or contracts with our primary facility choice, engaging a realtor early in the process may also uncover options for a permanent facility alternative that makes more sense from an operational, practical or economic standpoint.

When considering facilities, RCS will determine cost of up-fits and

structural changes required to meet local building and safety code requirements and, therefore, obtain a Certificate of Occupancy for Educational Use and make a final decision on a permanent facility based on the best combination of location, capacity and price.

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 1st 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	250	\$1,137,405.00
Local Funds	\$1,344.60	250	\$336,150.00
Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	33	\$124,347.63
Totals			\$1,597,902.63

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	30	\$135,156.00
Local Funds	\$2,457.30	30	\$73,719.00
Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	6	\$22,608.66
Totals			\$231,483.66

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.

BUDGET EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS Personnel	2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022		
	<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:

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

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.

Ridgeview's student enrollment was estimated based on several factors. The first was the feedback from the CSAB in May of 2015. There was consistent concern that the projections were too high for the expressed and perceived need. We combined that feedback with the lack of charter school options, waiting lists for the two charters in the county and the response from community feedback. As was discussed in the Educational Need section, Gaston County Schools continue to show lags in reading and math performance compared to the statewide composite. Although there are two charter schools operating in Gaston County, they are operating at full capacity and have consistent waiting lists for admission. Without additional opportunities for school choice, children are relegated back to a public school system that is still struggling to show achievement gains.

RCS also considered the economic climate and outlook for Gaston County and the fact that it holds promise as a growing community with an increased demand for high quality, public education. Gastonia's low cost of living and recent investments in infrastructure make it an attractive target for industry. As the third-largest county in the Charlotte region situated adjacent to the I-85 corridor and fewer than 15 miles from the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, Gaston County has seen over \$300M in increased economic activity and outside business investment since 2009. National Gypsum, Dole Foods, REPI, Lanxess, Curtiss Wright, FMC, Parker Hannifin, Bridgestone /Firestone, Buckeye Technologies and Hunter Douglas are some of the major corporations that have established roots in Gaston County in recent years. Workers and their families are migrating and/or being transferred to Gaston County and they are seeking educational opportunities for their children. The Gaston County EDC estimates population growth at 11% by 2020, largely as a function of the increased need for skilled workers in the region. Beyond providing for an influx of potential students, these businesses and their employees and leaders represent many countries around the world, bringing diversity and a global heritage to the region, thereby creating a natural connection to the international aspect of our curriculum.

Gaston County has access to several higher education resources, which make it ideal recruiting ground for staff. In addition, RCS hopes to cultivate constructive, educational partnerships to enrich the educational programming at the school.

Lastly, RCS used enrollment trends and 2015-16 waiting lists figures at charter schools within 20 mile radius and surveys to gauge demand and establish a basis for enrollment projections. Our first year projection of 280 ADM is based on the average, three year enrollment growth and current wait lists at Piedmont Community Charter School, Mt. Island Charter School and Lincoln Charter School.

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 unforeseen circumstances negatively affect revenues, two strategies will be employed depending upon the cause. Assuming a shortage arising from under-enrollment, RCS will increase marketing efforts and use every available resource to improve enrollment including expanded outreach to the community, seeking referral partners, and increased exposure and visibility through advertising.

Assuming changes in funding or necessary, unexpected costs, RCS will request a corrective action plan from the finance committee that reduces costs in the following order:

1st - reduction or elimination of non essential fixed costs and renegotiation of leases and contracted consultant costs.

2nd - reduction or elimination of any nonessential, non-instructional variable costs, including non-instructional and administrative salaries and benefits.

3rd - analysis and strategic reduction, consolidation or combination of expendable, nonessential instructional costs.

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

Not Applicable

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

The range is 1:18 to 1:22

- 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.*

Ridgeview plans on contracting third party services for student accounting and financial services. RCS has and will continue to review proposals from different groups and will contract with one with a comprehensive array of services who have no interest in assuming our charter, manage our school or influence control over RCS at the board level. We will also look for termination provisions that are straightforward and with minimum obstacles.

RCS will likely contract with other qualified vendors for administrative accountability and professional development services. Contractors will be selected based on multiple factors including the service provider's experience and track record in the given field, the value of the service to RCS, integrity and reputation of the contractor, references, the cost of the service and the nature of the contract. Because of or desire to remain an

independently governed and locally managed school, RCS has no intention of contracting with an EMO or CMO.

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

RCS's budget aligns with the school's mission and curricular offerings in several ways. The budget calls for an investment of over 50% of its resources to direct instructional costs. Audits of schools that first opened in 2010 through 2012 reflect average direct instructional investments of 41%.

Furthermore, while a majority of charter schools have historically submitted applications calling for arranging private transportation (carpooling) as a transportation solution, RCS believes that at-risk children, particularly those in urban areas, such as Gastonia and Gaston county, have no access to private transportation. Although transportation cannot be a barrier to attendance at a school, we recognize that in some circumstances and among some populations, a lack of transportation is a barrier. Those children, even if offered a better choice in education at a high-quality charter school, would not be able to leverage that choice because a school without transportation services is the solution simply isn't a viable option for them. RCS has, therefore included in its budget a provision to provide a combination of student busing and public transit passes in order to make RCS accessible to the parents and children who seek a better alternative. While this may not provide a complete solution, we believe that making this investment constitutes a substantial effort to mitigate those barriers and advances in our mission, particularly as it relates to at-risk students. Furthermore, while a bring-your-own-lunch program is certainly an option for any child who attends RCS, we will also be making a lunch and breakfast program available to our students through a contracted, national service provider. The budget provides for \$2.16 per student, per day to be paid from state and local ADM funds to fund the child nutrition program, but RCS intends to apply for certification and funding through the NSLP. Any portion of the child nutrition expenses paid from operating funds but recovered through NSLP reimbursements will flow directly back to our bottom line.

Lastly, our planned facility, and the costs associated with leasing it, are intended to leverage growth that will result from a major renovation of the LoRay Mills building in downtown Gastonia. The historic mill is beginning demolition of the second phase that will house a school; the first phase has undergone extensive renovation and revitalization. LoRay Mills will be a combination of loft apartments and retail markets and shops located in the center of a depressed area of Gastonia. Recognizing the benefits of having a school as a conceptual part of their project, the developers are willing to create space within the facility to fit our needs as a school for a reduced per square footage lease rate.

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.*

Fiscal best practices for developing a growth-oriented fund balance at a charter school include enacting policy that compels the board to operate on a zero-based, balance budget from year to year while maintaining a low debt-to-income ratio. The school will implement an (MVP) Maximum Value for Price

procurement strategy to ensure that that each spending decision creates saving that contribute to the accumulated fund balance of the school. MVP procurement includes codifying in fiscal policy the use of cost saving strategies such as looking for instructional equipment that is slightly used rather than buying new, obtaining competitive bids on purchases and leveraging volume discount. RCS will actively look for companies that are willing to make donations of things like furniture and school supplies. This will help build our general fund. RCS also intends to apply for federal grants awards that would supplant dollars that would otherwise be spent directly from ADM funds, thereby returning them to the general fund for investment in direct instructional needs, reduction or avoidance of debt or growth of the fund balance.

Ridgeview has not used expenditures as a basis for determining the percentage of the fund balance accumulated.

Rather, RCS's Goals is to achieve consistent annual growth to the fund balance of at least 10% over the prior year balance. We believe that measuring growth over the prior year fund balance is more reliable and provides a better benchmark from which to track financial growth and communicate it to constituents.

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

Ridgeview will finance only what is necessary. Whenever possible, RCS will pay cash for or look for donations and fund raising opportunities. RCS will live within its financial means to the extent that it doesn't hinder working capital. However, it is expected that major purchases such as FF&E to be financed. We will attempt to minimize financing through our MVP procurement process, but in instances where leveraging debt is unavoidable, Ridgeview will seek bids from multiple lenders and will pursue financing structure that strikes an ideal balance between cost of money (i.e. interest charges) and maximizing available working capital.

Certain equipment, such as photocopiers and laptop computers, are more practically financed through an operating lease. An operating lease is a monthly lease where the equipment is not owned by the lessee at the end of the lease term, but is returned to lessor. Generally, with expendable, high use electronics an operating lease makes more sense because the lessor replaces the equipment with new equipment and a renewed lease upon expiration of the lease term. Such arrangements, while slightly more expensive, ensure that the school has the latest technology in good sense to do so.

Although no firm commitments have been made on lease terms for a facility, RCS will attempt to negotiate a multi-year lease that provides for a graduating lease rate, thereby deferring costs in the early years to the later years of operation. Any facility that Ridgeview ultimately occupies will, at lease initially, have to be leased by the developer of the space. Upon being awarded a charter, Ridgeview will contact groups such as Charter School Capital to assist in identifying, purchasing, renovation and then leasing and potential site to the school, we will continue to keep our options open, particularly if he originally planned facility site becomes impractical or cannot be secured.

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.*

N/A

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?

Ridgeview Charter School Board of Directors will establish internal control standards as well as financial policies and procedures to ensure compliance with Fiscal Control Act and to facilitate annual financial audits, the audit procedures, and the audit requirements adopted by the State Board of Education for Charter School. The RCS Board will also appoint members to a standing Finance/Audit committee. this committee will be responsible for the oversight of the financial accounting and audit functions at the school. Duties will include, but are not limited to:

- * Work collaboratively with school personal and the principle to draft and submit to the board for approval an annual budget.
- * Meeting with the principle and the Contracted Auditor on a weekly basis to review the budget report, cash flow and financial performance.
- * establishing fiscal policy and procedures in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- * Issuing the RFP and overseeing the selection process for an annual independent auditor.
- * Establish the audit timeline and schedule for field work.
- * Reviewing and presenting the results of the annual audit to the board of Directors for approval.
- * Draft the management Discussions and Analysis (MD&A) that accompanies the audit report.
- * Contribute to the preparation and review of the annual Form 990.
- * Review potential financing/leasing instruments.
- * Draft and oversee implementation of organizational and functional level internal controls.

Ridgeview Charter School will adopt both organizational structure and functional level internal control and will evaluate those controls annually to determine whether or not the implementation is practical and achieves its indented goals. If necessary, modifications will be made to realign controls with the schools financial and operational objectives.

Organizational level controls will document the organizational structure and operational nature of the school and include statements on integrity and values, management philosophy and operating style, training and commitment monitoring of the control environment. Drilling deeper, the school's functional level internal controls will consist of a comprehensive set of written functional level control documents for information systems, general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, cash disbursements, cash receipts, payroll including E-verify, journal entries, financial reporting, and fixed assets and depreciation. Each functional level control document will identify and define source documents, enumerate segregated duties and functions, specify output reports and summaries, appoint appropriate authorizes and levels of authorization and provide procedures for errors detection and correction.

Ridgeview will also employ a full time office manager, he or she will be responsible for ensuring compliance with generally accepted standards of

fiscal management and for overseeing the day to day implementation of output reports and summaries. The Office Manager will also be responsible for all UERS compliance functions and reporting.

Lastly the Board of Directors will receive and review all financial information as it relates to Ridgeview Charter School.

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

Ridgeview Charter School is neither aware or nor currently contemplating any 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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