



## **NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION**

# **Rolesville Charter Academy**

**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  
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Raleigh, NC 27699-6303

## CHARTER SCHOOL

### 2016 Application Process

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

#### APPLICATION DUE DATE/TIME

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

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

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

#### APPLICATION SPECIFICATIONS

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

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

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## I. APPLICATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of proposed charter school: Rolesville Charter Academy

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: *Rolesville Charter Academy, Inc.*

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: *Lisa Kane*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *Board President*

Mailing address: 1408 Green Mountain Drive  
Wake Forest NC 27587

Primary telephone: 919-757-5103 Alternative telephone: 919-757-5103

E-Mail address: Rolesville2017@gmail.com

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

County: WAKE

LEA: 920-Wake County Schools

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

No:

Yes:

If so, provide the name of the third party person or group. National Heritage Academies

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

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

This application for a new charter school in the Town of Rolesville in Wake County is the result of dedicated and passionate work by our founding team. The school's initial Board of Directors, in collaboration with a team of charter school planning experts and education professionals from our management partner, National Heritage Academies (NHA) intend to replicate the successes of other NHA-partner schools in the state; notably Greensboro Academy, and the school recently opened in our area, Wake Forest Charter Academy (WFCA).

NHA has partnered with local groups in nine different states to open and operate 81 new charter schools, including eight NHA-partner schools operating in North Carolina. Three more boards choosing to partner with NHA have been awarded charters for new schools to open in our state in the fall of 2016. No other charter management organization has as much experience in our area or the state of North Carolina.

In developing this application, we needed to ensure that we described and

detailed the NHA-partner school model accurately. As such, we welcomed the collaboration of various experts at NHA to properly portray key components of our proposed school - the educational plan, the staffing structure, professional development programs, the enrollment and marketing process, and the financial plan, for example - to reflect the most up-to-date NHA-partner school model. Details including the curriculum and instructional design, the approach to educational programming for at-risk and exceptional children (EC), and student conduct and discipline expectations all are consistent with NHA's model school. All sections of this application were reviewed by our Board and modified as necessary. Existing key policies - such as those contained in the draft employee policies and the parent-student handbook - were reviewed by members of our founding team and discussed with NHA. Other standard NHA-model practices and procedures also have been reviewed by our Board before incorporating them into this application.

The mission and rationale for the school presented in this application are, of course, developed as directed by the Board. All governance and oversight sections of the application similarly reflect the Board's vision.

A number of other sections - importantly the academic and operational goals for the school and other accountability elements - were developed in collaboration with NHA, to ensure a proper match with the school model, to ensure the school will deliver the results we envision.

We understand, too, that one other group (in the Town of Clayton in Johnston County) will be submitting an application to establish an NHA-partner school. We view this as an extremely positive development, one that both underscores NHA's commitment to the education of students across this state and that enhances the opportunity for our school to grow with, learn from, and replicate the best practices of schools that are similarly modeled to ours. We recognize, too, that this also means that the portions of our application that describe the structure and operation of an NHA-partner school model will be nearly identical to the same sections in this group's application.

Each section of the application includes a note of attribution to the Board, to NHA, or to both the Board and NHA. Whatever this primary attribution is, the founding Board has reviewed and approved this application. We also sought independent legal counsel for many items, including governance and audit requirements.

We plan to continue to collaborate with NHA throughout the approval process for this application. If approved, our relationship with NHA will be governed by our formal Services Agreement (see Appendix L) from that point forward.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

No:

Yes:

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

No:

Yes:

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

What is the name of the nonprofit organization that governs this charter school? Rolesville Charter Academy, Inc.

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.

lisakane

Signature

Lisa Kane, Board President

Title

lisakane

Printed Name

09/22/2015

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:*

"Every student at Rolesville Charter Academy will develop the knowledge, tools, and skills for success. High academic and character standards, clear expectations, and quality instruction will support an enriched learning environment exemplified by academic excellence and the development of responsible, respectful, and life-long learners."

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

Rolesville Charter Academy's (RCA) educational program, delivered through high-quality instruction, will be designed to develop critical thinkers whose education and character serve as the foundation for success in high school, college, and career. Academic progress will be measured frequently and individually, with instruction adjusted as needed to ensure that each student masters the necessary content in every grade.

### **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.*

RCA will start as a K-6 school and grow to K-8 by our third year of operation. We will enlist National Heritage Academies (NHA) as our management partner for the school. NHA is a full-service education management organization that operates 81 partner schools in nine states, including eight here in North Carolina. Although an exact location for our school has not been identified, we intend to locate in eastern Wake County, in or near the Town of Rolesville.

**Targeted Population:** We will not target a specific population for enrollment. We will draw students from the northeastern portion of the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) and western portion of Franklin - including Rolesville, Wake Forest, North Raleigh, and Youngsville. We will market broadly to Wake County and western Franklin. Our school will likely reflect a similar demographic and socioeconomic composition to that of the WCPSS. Student ethnicity in WCPSS is: 49 percent White; 24 percent Black; 16 percent Hispanic; seven percent Asian; four percent multiracial; and less than one percent other. Over one-third (39 percent) participate in the free and reduced-priced lunch program, 13 percent are EC, and eight percent are English Learners (EL).

Rationale for Location: Rolesville has become the fastest-growing town in North Carolina since 2010, increasing our population by a stunning 52 percent ("Rolesville has become NC's new boomtown," Raleigh News & Observer, May 21, 2015). And this growth is on top of an amazing 315 percent population growth from 2000 to 2010 (see: <http://rolesvillenc.gov/redac/demographics/>). The charter schools in our area, including Franklin Academy and new NHA-partner school WFCA, are in extremely high demand. The K-12 Franklin Academy has long had over 1,000 students on its waitlist, and WFCA, only in its second year, has approximately 1,100 waitlist students - many of whom live in Rolesville.

This growth is mirrored in the WCPSS, which notes that it is "the largest school system in the state and the 16th largest in the nation." Nearly 2,000 new students were added to WCPSS's total enrollment last school year alone, and the district now serves approximately 155,200 students. The need for new schools is obvious: WCPSS itself notes "As many as 20,000 additional children are expected in our classrooms by 2020" ("District Facts: Overview," at [www.wcpss.net](http://www.wcpss.net)). WCPSS currently runs more than 100 elementary schools and 33 middle schools, and has put up almost 1,200 modular classrooms in an attempt to alleviate overcrowding and accommodate the tremendous growth in the student population.

RCA's partnership with NHA will result in NHA supplying a new school building - either new construction or a fully renovated space - developed with no public funds.

To help gauge parents' receptivity to a new charter school, a survey of parents in the Rolesville area with at least one child in grades K-5 was conducted in July 2015 and found that nearly half (45 percent) would be "likely" or "very likely" to send their child to a new charter school with a focus like we are proposing. More than two-thirds (67 percent) of these parents asked to be contacted with further information if our school is approved to open. These survey results are similar to those of WFCA, the closest NHA-partner school to our proposed location, which opened in fall 2014 and generated more than 1,600 applications for fewer than 600 seats.

Approximately 58 percent of WCPSS's elementary and middle schools earned a grade of C or D on the state's 2014-15 school report cards. In contrast, only seven percent of elementary schools and six percent of middle schools earned a grade of A.

With our community's explosive population growth, overcrowded schools, and the significant parent demand for a school such as ours, we know RCA will be successful. Rolesville is an excellent place to locate our new charter school.

Attribution: Board

- 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).*

RCA will serve students in kindergarten through 8th grade. Following the

NHA-partner school structure, we will plan to open in 2017-18 serving 576 students in grades K-6, and will grow each of the next three years to serve approximately 772 students in grades K-8 by 2020-21. Our partnership with NHA allows us to have a fully-staffed administrative team in place from day one, as well as a completed facility that will accommodate our full K-8 program even though we are starting out serving fewer grades and students. This approach allows our school to better focus on having the right programs and procedures in place from the start, and more easily allows our school to adapt and incorporate any needed changes in its early operating years as it grows to full capacity.

We expect that 80 percent of our students will come from families living within the WCPSS LEA and 20 percent will come from the Franklin County Schools LEA. We have built our budget and expected student population profile on this assumption, but of course will adjust our calculations if necessary as we actually enroll students.

In 2014-15, WCPSS enrolled approximately 110,154 K-8 students. Eighty percent of our projected full enrollment of 772 at RCA represents about one half of one percent (0.56 percent) of the LEA's comparable student enrollment. Eighty percent of our initial first-year enrollment of 576 represents less than one-half of one percent (0.42 percent) of WCPSS's total K-8 enrollment.

In 2014-15, the Franklin County Schools LEA enrolled approximately 6,179 K-8 students. Twenty percent of our projected full enrollment of 772 at RCA represents about 2.52 percent of the LEA's comparable student enrollment. Twenty percent of our initial first-year enrollment of 576 represents 1.88 percent of the Franklin County Schools LEA's total K-8 enrollment.

The Town of Rolesville is the fastest growing town in North Carolina. The surrounding areas, like Wake Forest, are also growing exponentially. As such, should our school be approved to open in the fall of 2017, we expect that our percentage of each LEA's average daily membership would actually be lower upon opening, and ultimately upon full enrollment in the 2020-21 school year.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

RCA will replicate the NHA-partner school model. A few key features will distinguish RCA from schools in the WCPSS.

**K-8 Structure:** We will be a K-8 school. The district offers 104 elementary schools and 33 middle schools, while offering only three K-8 "academies." A K-8 structure and non-zoned enrollment means that students will transition to a new school less often, offering greater stability that in turn enhances student academic, emotional, and behavioral development.

**Character Education:** Inspiring students to develop into positive and contributing individuals, our character education program will teach and model accountability, high expectations, and admirable behavior. We will integrate a character development curriculum that builds on such virtues as

prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Lessons will develop strong personal character and the qualities needed to become good citizens. Students will be taught that their best effort is vital to academic success, and teachers will ensure that students understand what is expected of them and take pride in the results of their work.

**Distributed Leadership:** The NHA-partner school model's structure features distributed leadership, where academic deans are responsible for a team of grade-level staff (e.g., K-2; 3-5; 6-8), and serve as the direct managers of classroom teachers. This structure allows deans to coach teachers weekly on how to increase effectiveness. The principal and deans will constitute our school leadership team.

**Parental Partnerships:** RCA will foster strong partnerships with parents, actively engaging them in their children's learning. This will be exhibited by, among other things, frequent and meaningful communication and a welcoming atmosphere that includes dedicated space specifically for parents to interact with school staff.

**School-Wide Framework:** RCA will benefit from NHA's experience and clear framework developed to deliver above average academic results. Our principal will be held accountable for ensuring fidelity of implementation.

- **Establish a Professional Culture of Excellence:** The principal leads a community that is motivated to achieve high expectations and that exhibits high care for all members of the community.

- **Systematize Collaborative Improvement:** Staff work in collaborative, data-driven teams, seeking improved student learning through the shared study and implementation of instructional best practice.

- **Lead Instructional Excellence:** Deans ensure high quality learning for every student in every classroom every day.

- **Implement Systematic Intervention:** The needs of academically at-risk students, EC students, ELs, and students with behavioral challenges are identified, provided services, and progress monitored through a systematic process.

- **Cultivate Meaningful Parent Partnerships:** Parents and school staff authentically connect to understand and support each other in a caring and meaningful way, working in partnership to help every child achieve college readiness.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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.*

RCA's mission statement is the driving force behind our school, and the NHA-partner school model will embody this vision and fulfill North Carolina's legislative purposes for charter schools.

1. Professional Opportunities for Teachers. NHA will provide our staff with an excellent benefits package, competitive salary structure, and quality retirement plan that will attract excellent educators. We recognize that we can help students learn by helping teachers grow. Our educational program includes a robust and purposeful professional development program that coaches teachers throughout their career. Because of our school design, a career path exists where stellar teachers can become teacher leaders, mentors, and then supervisory deans who oversee and coach teams of grade-level teachers. Outstanding deans also are developed to become principals if they choose. NHA also conducts a "School Leadership Academy" that provides ongoing support to new and potential principals throughout the year. The "Staff Evaluation and Professional Development" section of this application offers more detail on these opportunities.

2. Accountability for Results. Just as we intend to hold students accountable for what they learn, at RCA we will hold teachers, school leaders - and ourselves as the Board - accountable for the results at our school. We will administer all required state assessments and will embrace North Carolina's READY Accountability Model. Additionally, our school will institute a comprehensive formative assessment program that evaluates individual, class-wide, and school-wide student academic performance. Evaluations at the beginning of each year will provide a baseline, and subsequent evaluations will gather important and detailed data that will be used to drive and revise instructional practices and measure annual growth. Accountability for performance also will extend to other areas of the school's operations, such as attendance rates, fiscal stability, and parental satisfaction. Each year, we will create an annual school improvement plan that examines performance data for all aspects of our school and presents a plan of action for the following school year. Our goal is to offer area families a public school choice that is not just different, but better.

3. Expanded School Choice. A recent survey of families in our area showed that only slightly more than one-third (38 percent) felt their child was being given a "great" education, more than two-thirds (67 percent) said they wanted to be contacted if our proposed charter school was approved to open in the Rolesville area, and almost half (45 percent) said they would be

"very likely" or "likely" to send their child to such a school. The district also has experienced explosive growth in its student population, and has resorted to using almost 1,200 modular classrooms to try to accommodate this growth and alleviate overcrowding. This is further evidenced by the large charter school waitlists in our area. RCA will offer parents and students in our community the public school choice they desire, and the additional capacity our community needs.

4. Improving Student Learning. We will hold NHA, our management partner, accountable to improve student learning at our school. At NHA-partner schools, student achievement is excelling:

- On average, over the past three years NHA-partner schools have ranked in the top quartile nationally based on academic growth results on the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) assessment.

- The rate of academic growth for students entering NHA-partner schools below grade level was 140 percent for the 2014-15 school year, compared to the national average of 100 percent, evidencing that students below grade level at NHA-partner schools are progressing academically faster than expected and are rapidly closing achievement gaps.

\*See overflow section for additional information.

\*Continued From Question: "The six legislative purposes of charter schools."

- 96 percent of students completing 8th grade at NHA-partner schools go on to graduate from high school, easily surpassing the national average for low-income students (70 percent) and all students combined (80 percent). Additionally, 37 percent earn a bachelor's degree or higher. That graduation rate is nearly five times higher than the national average rate for low-income students (eight percent), and it exceeds the rate for all students (31 percent) combined (NCES, 2013).

- For the 2013-14 school year (the most recent comparable data available), state test results show that NHA-partner schools outperform their local school district 80 percent of the time.

- Four of NHA's seven NC partner schools operating in the 2014-15 school year ranked in the top 12 of all charter schools for EVAAS growth (see: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/>).

5. Increased Learning Opportunities for Students. A fundamental purpose of charter schools is to seek new approaches to effective teaching and learning. As such, we will embrace innovation and change to enhance our ability to meet the needs of our students. RCA will create a learning environment supported by fundamental principles of excellence focused on college and career readiness (see description of the differences of our school model with that of district schools, above). We are committed to meeting the needs of students who are at-risk academically and will ensure that these students are addressed systematically. RCA will have a robust formative assessment program to help quickly identify students who need extra attention, as well as those who are surpassing grade-level standards. All of our students deserve differentiated instruction, and our school model is designed with such adaptability in mind.

6. Innovative Teaching Methods. RCA's hands-on oversight and coaching of teachers and purposeful professional development is a design that not only supports instructors in the classroom but also prepares them for expanded

responsibility and future leadership positions. Weekly coaching, along with peer-group planning time and a structured professional learning community design, is designed to quickly replicate and institute best practices and allow brainstorming for creative approaches to the challenges teachers face.

The legislative purposes for charter schools will be fulfilled by RCA's structure and programs. The four foundational pillars of our educational model help illustrate this:

**Academic Excellence:** A high-quality K-8 education sets the critical foundation for a student's success in high school, college, and beyond. Achievement may look different for each individual, but our goal is to prepare every student for college. We believe this starts by creating a culture focused on high care and high expectations for each student each day.

**Character Development:** A great school should aim to develop students' hearts as well as their minds. Our character development curriculum builds on such virtues as prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. RCA students will build and maintain strong personal character and become good citizens as part of our program.

**Parental Partnerships:** RCA is committed to fostering strong partnerships with parents. Our school will actively engage parents in their children's learning and consistently communicate with parents. Included in this effort will be a dedicated parent room specifically to allow ongoing interaction between parents and teachers.

**Student Responsibility:** Children thrive in an environment where they clearly understand what is expected of them, and after putting forth their best effort, they take pride in seeing the results. Students will be taught that their best effort is vital to academic success, and teachers will reinforce consistently the importance of students' accountability for their education and actions.

Attribution: NHA

### **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.*

**Goals:** Our Board is committed to measuring student progress and achieving excellence, and to holding our management partner, NHA, and our staff accountable for reaching established goals. As with other NHA-partner schools, we will use measures of academic growth and proficiency beyond those required by state law, and our school will share similar goals with other NHA-partner schools in North Carolina and elsewhere. Academic goals for the first five years include:

- Beginning in kindergarten, students at RCA will take the NWEA MAP for Primary Grades Assessment. Students in grades K-1 will earn a mean RIT gain

of at least 15 points from beginning-of-year to end-of year learning growth in reading and math.

- By the end of the charter term, students at RCA will exceed the average performance of local district students by at least five percent on state assessments.

- Seventh grade students returning to RCA in eighth grade will successfully complete Math I (formerly Algebra I) and earn a 75 percent passing rate on the Math I end-of-course exam.

- Each year, RCA will, at a minimum, "Meet Expected Growth." Our objective is to exceed state standards of expected progress by the end of our first charter term.

Our goals are a barometer for our school's performance. We will be pleased to meet them, but not satisfied, and will continue to make upward adjustments to our goals during our annual school improvement planning process.

As required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), we also will administer a national assessment of college readiness to every 8th-grade student and will use the results to develop a plan for each student's success in high school and college. As noted above, one of the reasons we chose to partner with NHA was the track record of success NHA-partner schools have ensuring that students are high school- and college-ready.

We expect our school to achieve operational goals established for NHA-partner schools, too. These include:

- Each year, our school will average a student attendance rate at or above 95 percent.

- Each year, our school will have an overall parent satisfaction rate of 90 percent, with at least 50 percent of parents responding to the survey.

- Each year, our Board will review the performance of NHA. The review will be used to identify and provide feedback about our management partner's successes and opportunities to improve its future performance. Accountability goals we expect to implement include a 100 percent compliance record in reporting and other regulatory areas and the development of an annual comprehensive school assessment and coordinated plan of action for improvement.

- Each year, our school will receive an unqualified audit.

Communication to Board and Others: Our Board will receive status reports on progress toward our goals at each monthly meeting, with detailed data provided on components of each goal that include the performance of student population subgroups (EC; EL; newly enrolled students; etc.). Parents and students, too, will be informed of the school's progress toward its goals through periodic informational newsletters and special bulletins.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

RCA's mission will provide the guidance for our Board's governance, while also focusing on oversight of operational and financial aspects of the

school. Four key questions will focus our governance, including our oversight of our operational partner NHA:

- Are all students learning on a path to attain our mission and meet charter goals?
- Are parents an active participant in their children's learning?
- Are funds being spent appropriately?
- Is our school in compliance with all state and federal requirements?

An early indicator that our model is working will be student enrollment; we expect to see demand significantly exceed the number of seats we plan to offer. Once the school is operational, we expect to maintain enrollment waiting lists. Because of the established demand for more charter school seats in our community, including at both the K-5 and 6-8 grade levels, we are planning to start K-6. We believe this strategy is important, as parents with rising sixth graders are at a natural transition point, and middle school choices are limited.

Our Board will require monthly reports from our principal and NHA that demonstrate progress toward our mission and charter goals. These reports will detail benchmarks met, document trends toward the overarching and mission-specific goals, discuss challenges in meeting each performance objective, and present ideas on how to address those challenges. Included in these reports will be specific information on:

- Absolute and comparative student performance on internal diagnostic and interim assessments.
- Growth in student learning.
- Current status under state and federal accountability systems.
- College-readiness status.
- Vital statistics on our student population, including demographics, free or reduced-priced lunch, EL, and EC counts, as well as the corresponding achievement levels of these subgroups.
- Parent satisfaction and other stakeholder information.

These reports also will include operational information, such as statistics on enrollment, attrition, attendance, student discipline, and more. We will also annually report to our parents and the community our school's status under the North Carolina and federal accountability systems.

Discussions will be held between school leaders and our Board on: the status of school culture; the delivery and results of professional development for staff; student attendance and enrollment trends; programs of parental and community involvement; results of various elements of the school's internal formative assessment program; staff performance recognition programs; and, employee and staff grievances or concerns.

Our Board will be continually apprised on how the school is operating, how staff is delivering the educational program, and how students are performing. There should never be a situation in which testing results surprise school leaders or the Board. Should our school be lacking in any area, our Board and operational partner are committed to bringing the necessary resources to address the area of need.

School staff and parents also will be informed on the school's standing on each performance goal at meaningful measurement points. For single-point measurement goals, for example, we will expect data to be generated annually. We also will use select trend data, such as monthly attendance rates, to predict annual outcomes. Our Board also will take advantage of the online and in-person training opportunities on various aspects of charter school governance offered through the NCDPI's Office of Charter Schools. Additional training opportunities will be pursued through organizations such as the National Association for Public Charter Schools and North Carolina Public Charter Schools Association.

We also will contract for an independent review of NHA's performance to ensure that we are meeting all performance requirements in our charter and that we are satisfied with NHA's commitment to our school.

Attribution: Board and NHA

### 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.

RCA will be designed as an NHA-partner school, with our instructional program built on four foundational pillars: academic excellence, student responsibility, character development, and parental partnerships (see the "Purposes" section).

**Instructional Methods:** Teachers will use various instructional methods to promote engagement, describe instructional intent, and implement appropriate rigor for our students. Focused lessons will include direct instruction, modeling, demonstration, development of higher-order thinking strategies, and think-alouds, among other methods, and they will be conducted in whole-group or small-group settings as student needs dictate. Guided, differentiated instruction may be done with large, small, and needs-based groups during content-area learning blocks or workshop time. Small group instruction will also include time for students to work on Google Chromebooks with software that provides instruction at their specific level. Collaborative learning will provide opportunities for students to learn from peers, to discuss or debate ideas and information, or to participate in inquiry-based learning of curricular content. Finally, independent work will be assigned to provide students time to practice applying skills or knowledge that have been learned, to extend individual learning to novel situations, or to promote the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Teaching will include effective, research-based instructional strategies in daily lesson plans and daily instruction. Strategies that have high probabilities of effectiveness, such as those identified by researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001), will be used by teachers to meet student need. As effective learning requires that teachers shift the cognitive load to students, teachers will develop students' knowledge, understanding, and skill incrementally through appropriately sequenced lessons and units of instruction.

**Assessment Strategies:** RCA will administer all state-required assessments and additional measures of growth and proficiency. We will administer the NWEA assessment multiple times per year to allow teachers and school leaders to gauge student progress, change instruction where necessary, and measure the effectiveness of those changes. As required by the NCDPI, all 8th-graders will take the ACT Aspire exam (or another high school- and college-readiness exam). The exam will provide students with feedback on competency

strengths and gaps relative to students' career aspirations and offer insights into students' academic readiness for college. Our school will also administer mock state assessments so we can prepare students for the testing format through use of released sample questions.

We know formative assessment is critical to adjust instruction and identify needed intervention and enrichment. Students will be assessed at the end of each quarter to gauge mastery of the state standards taught during each nine week period. This assessment data will be analyzed in professional learning communities (PLC) and will be used to benchmark student progress and plan for any needed intervention. This process is referred to as "Common Assessment."

Meeting Student Needs: We plan to implement the successful NHA K-8 program, a model that delivers high-value educational outcomes for students of varied demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Successful NHA-partner schools have shown: greater-than-average proficiency growth; growth of economically disadvantaged (ED) students that has outpaced that of non-ED students in every measured category; and, greater growth the more years a student spends at an NHA-partner school. Please see Appendix U for more detail.

The instructional methods and assessment strategies described above will be designed to help our teachers challenge each student at his or her level, whether below, at, or above grade-level proficiency.

Attribution: NHA

### **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.*

In congruence with our school-wide framework for success (discussed further under the Educational Need and Targeted Student Population section), NHA has also developed a classroom framework of instructional competencies to better focus on increasing student achievement. RCA will adopt these four key competencies:

- Classroom Culture: Teacher leads a self-managing classroom by building positive relationships, maintaining physical space, sustaining classroom routines and procedures, and holding students accountable to behavioral expectations.
- Planning: Teacher plans for instruction by identifying and analyzing standards to be taught throughout the year, aligning instructional resources and activities to those standards, and preplanning differentiated opportunities to meet individual learning needs.
- Teaching: Teacher delivers content at a level of rigor that challenges students, cognitively engages them, intentionally uses all time for learning, and personalizes instruction.
- Assessing: Teacher implements assessment strategies to understand student learning needs, provide actionable feedback, and guide instructional decisions.

To guide the implementation of the school-wide and classroom frameworks, our

staff will have access to an interactive web based application that provides real time updates on student attendance, behavior, mastery of learning objectives, and more. This innovative approach allows staff a clear roadmap for effective instruction and provides opportunities for feedback to teachers through specific actions and indicators.

**Learning Environment and Structure:** Each classroom will be structured primarily as a direct-instruction model. Each classroom teacher will be effectively trained and frequently coached to employ a variety of instructional approaches (including modeling, think-alouds, etc.), and to use differentiated instruction as appropriate. Teachers will establish opportunities for collaborative and inquiry-based learning to deepen students' understanding of various topics. As noted above, independent work also will be assigned as practice for applying previously learned concepts and to promote the development of higher-order thinking skills. Importantly, small-group settings also will be created to ensure students are engaged with the standards at their current level of learning. A technology blended learning approach will be deployed during this small group time to target instruction and skills practice based on individual learning needs.

**Small Group Instruction:** In order to meet each student at their individual learning level and to make the most effective use of our resources, we intend to leverage technology during small group instruction. It is our intent that each classroom have approximately 10 Google Chromebooks to aid small group instruction and leverage software platforms such as i-Ready. The i-Ready program is an online math and reading program that individualizes instruction for students and instantly downloads cross-grade-level assessments that identify areas of weakness so teachers can differentiate instruction and address learning deficiencies.

**Class Size:** We will have four kindergarten classes with approximately 25 students in each class. In grades one to eight, we are planning to serve up to three classes per grade level with approximately 28 students per class.

**Structure:** Classroom teachers will receive support and weekly coaching from grade-level deans, and will work in grade-level teams to better meet student needs and plan effectively. Teachers will also meet in vertical teams to ensure that students are learning the needed skills at each grade level for success in the next grade.

**Attribution:** NHA

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.*

Our curriculum has been carefully aligned to the North Carolina state standards and North Carolina Accountability Model by NHA.

**Alignment to Mission:** The progression of standards in our curriculum is designed to ensure that we prepare students for success. The academic rigor and our culture of high expectations align with our mission to ensure "every student at RCA will develop the knowledge, tools, and skills for success." Our character education program, interwoven throughout our school, is designed to help foster responsible students.

**Alignment to Student Population:** We expect to enroll students who have academic deficits, others who are learning at grade-level, and others who are intellectually gifted, but we are not targeting our enrollment efforts at any specific population. To ensure that the curriculum is properly driving learning for all students who enroll, we will implement the following cyclical process to teaching and assessing.

1. **Identifying Objectives and Determining Assessments:** Teachers will collaborate to identify objectives for units of instruction based on the year-long plan, and use end-of-instruction assessments to gauge student learning at the end of each unit. Rigorous assessments will gauge student mastery. Staff will also use periodic interim assessments and mock state assessments. Adjustments to instruction will be made based on evidence from these assessments.

2. **Developing Building Blocks:** After the educational objectives are reviewed and appropriate end-of-instruction assessments are determined, grade-level teams will identify building blocks of instruction that scaffold student learning towards mastery of each objective. These building blocks will be used to construct a variety of formative assessments in daily instruction.

3. **Analyzing Evidence:** Whether gathered through building-block assessments or end-of-instruction assessments, teachers will analyze evidence at the student and classroom level. The specificity of the building-block assessments enables teachers to determine exactly what knowledge or skills need further development for particular students. Because teachers meet to examine student work, they will gauge the effectiveness of their instruction and student mastery of the educational objectives. They will analyze evidence to discover student misconceptions and to identify knowledge or skill gaps that may inhibit student learning success.

4. **Responding to Evidence:** As units are prepared, teachers will identify opportunities for planned instructional adjustments prompted by evidence. If learning progresses more quickly than expected, then instruction will move at an accelerated rate. If learning progresses more slowly than expected, more time will be spent delivering instruction. Teachers will consider end-of-instruction assessment evidence to develop subsequent units. We also will allocate new resources and work with NHA to hire additional intervention staff if ever needed to ensure student success.

**Alignment to Accountability Model:** We will use our instructional framework to ensure that the curriculum and instructional approaches are producing academic gains for our students and that achievement is on track to meet and

exceed the measures in the state's Accountability Model.

Planned Components: Our school will benefit from the curriculum developed by NHA, which meets and exceeds North Carolina requirements. Currently we are planning to use the following main curricular tools:

- Math K-5: Math Expressions
- ELA K-5: Reading Street
- Math 6-8: Big Ideas
- Math 6-8: Holt McDougal Literature
- Science: Students will use multiple tools in science, including Foss/Delta kits that allow for hands-on experiments on a variety of topics such as electricity and magnetism or DNA.
- Other: Intervention and accelerate materials will be available for use with Google Chromebooks, including i-Ready software for reading and math.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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.*

Mastery of Instructional Strategies: Teachers at RCA will be expected to use a variety of instructional methods that provide the most effective way to enhance learning for each individual student. Our primary methods will include direct instruction, modeling, demonstration, and think-alouds. Guided instruction may be done with large groups or with small, needs-based groups during workshop time or during content-area learning blocks to allow for differentiation of instruction (also see "Instructional Program," above). A technology blended learning approach will also be used during workshop to meet the individual learning needs of students at all levels.

As part of the school's overall effort to effectively manage instruction, our instructional deans will work individually with teachers to ensure that appropriate teaching techniques are used to advance student learning and promote high expectations. Teachers will receive focused professional development and training and will receive the support of weekly coaching and matching feedback sessions to ensure they successfully implement teaching techniques to promote student learning.

Instruction at our school will be driven by an intentional and collaborative planning approach spearheaded by teachers. It will include three sequential and interrelated steps: year-long planning, unit planning, and daily planning. Our formative assessments will inform planning by offering frequent and varying measures of progress to help determine the best approaches to teaching and learning.

Teachers are expected to implement strategies that help students take responsibility for their own learning. This includes using learning goals as an instructional tool and helping students set individualized goals for themselves. Through this approach, both students and teachers are provided a clear understanding of the desired focus skill, and teachers are empowered to articulate what they are teaching while allowing students to describe what they are learning and to work at the appropriate level of difficulty

(see R.J. Marzano, *Designing & Teaching Learning Goals & Objectives*, 2009).

In addition to scheduled school-wide professional development sessions and intensive summer opportunities, teachers will be observed frequently and provided formal feedback weekly by their grade-level dean as a way to receive timely coaching, brainstorm strategies for unique challenges, and model especially effective techniques to other teachers.

**Increased Academic Achievement:** These instructional strategies provide a comprehensive approach of delivering educational content while incorporating the flexibility to adapt instruction to meet individual student needs and learning styles. Combined with a formative assessment process that provides multiple measures of student performance data, our school as a whole will be able to adapt the delivery of educational content as student needs dictate. In turn, this is expected to result in the ability of each student, regardless of his or her academic starting point, to make measurable academic progress throughout the school year. Our thoughtful approach will build upon foundational content and skills in the early grades to implement more complex inquiry and learning strategies in the later grades. This approach is designed for student academic success at each grade level.

The combination of effective research-based instructional strategies, attention and adaptation to individual student needs, and meaningful and student-centered professional development helps fulfill our mission to provide a school where "students develop the knowledge, tools, and skills for success."

Attribution: NHA

*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.*

RCA will be a K-8 school and as such will not have high school graduation requirements. Students will be expected to progress academically through one grade level each year, however. Our program is designed to ensure that graduating eighth grade students have the opportunity to attend and succeed in a challenging high school program. We plan to provide to our students a guide to area high schools and their performance to ensure that our 8th-grade graduates are aware of the opportunities available to them.

Our principal will have the final decision regarding the promotion, acceleration, and retention of students. If a student fails to meet the third-grade requirement of the NC Read to Achieve mandate, additional interventions and a personalized and monitored reading improvement plan will be offered. The practice of promoting students who have failed to master grade-level curriculum is incompatible with our mission. A variety of structures and procedures are incorporated into our school model to ensure that students do indeed receive the content, instruction, and interventions necessary to progress academically as expected. Our deans will serve as the direct managers for teachers in specific grade level cohorts and ensure that instructional plans are aligned and scaffolded appropriately across all grade levels to ensure smooth upward transitions for students.

RCA will use a formative assessment process designed to include multiple checkpoints throughout instruction that measure students' understanding of content. Teachers will analyze data at both the classroom level and individual student level and then identify building blocks of instruction that scaffold student learning towards mastery of each educational objective. The specificity of these building-block assessments enables teachers to determine exactly what knowledge needs further development in each student, and to individualize instruction as appropriate to ensure that each student learns as expected. School leadership will consistently review the data for all grade levels and ensure that the school's curriculum and instructional approach is accelerating student learning. School leaders will report this information to our Board throughout the year.

For students who struggle and show indications that they may not acquire the expected knowledge and skills planned for a particular grade level, we will have a formal, comprehensive, progressive structure of intervention designed to bring those students back on track (see the section on at-risk students, below). These programs, which are supported and informed by the school's formative assessment process, are designed specifically to ensure that by the end of one grade level students are academically ready to transition to the next grade.

As part of our internal assessment program, our school will be administering NWEA assessments multiple times each year. These assessments will supplement the annual state exams. Results of these assessments will allow us to better gauge how our students compare to peers across the country, with the intent to better inform our school leaders and teachers that each student is being given the opportunity for success.

This envisioned success is real and achievable. Students attending NHA-partner schools have a tremendous track record of preparedness for high school: 96 percent of students completing 8th grade at NHA-partner schools go on to graduate from high school, easily surpassing the national average for low-income students (70 percent) and all students combined (80 percent).

Attribution: NHA

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.*

The envisioned school-year calendar for RCA is a standard school calendar, beginning in August and ending in June. Our draft calendar is included in Appendix C, and aligns with the WCPSS school calendar. Our K-8 structure and traditional calendar will allow families with elementary and middle school children a choice that, while generally reflecting the schedule of many district's schools, allows students to enroll in one school throughout their elementary and middle school years.

As currently envisioned, our school day will run seven hours, starting at 8:15 a.m. and ending at 3:15 p.m., and will provide 6.5 instructional hours per day. This structure offers students and parents more educational time than traditional district schools in our area. Anticipating that we will provide 1,110 hours of instruction each year, our school will exceed the required minimum instructional hours.

Also included in our calendar are fourteen days dedicated to professional development. We will schedule between two and four parent-teacher conference days. We believe teachers and staff need to be in the classroom, just as we expect our students to be, and we will hold teachers and staff accountable for absenteeism. Of course, we may modify our schedule based on the needs of the students who eventually enroll.

Correspondence with Tenets of Mission and Instructional Plan: Instruction will be organized around a master schedule in which every attempt will be made to schedule math and ELA/reading courses in the morning and maintain science and social studies as focused priorities. This is designed to ensure priority attention is given to core subjects. The proposed schedule provides time for daily grade-level team planning meetings while students participate in special and co-curricular areas (e.g., music, art, and physical education, etc.). Grade-level planning teams will meet at least weekly to adjust teaching on the basis of student learning evidence. This approach to instruction will allow students to be critical thinkers, active collaborators, and eager contributors to their own learning.

The proposed calendar has been designed to provide students with the opportunity to learn the content included in the school's curriculum while providing instructional staff with the support and professional development they need to grow as teachers. The additional hours of instructional time will ensure the effective implementation of our mission as well as foster an environment that values "high academic and character standards, clear expectations, and quality instruction."

Attribution: NHA

### **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.*

RCA will have a comprehensive process to ensure students who need intervention are consistently identified, served, and monitored. Our "Systematic Intervention" process is designed to stimulate early action that helps prevent academic failure and maximizes the effective grade-level instruction. This process is based on a framework of six key practices:

1. Strategic scheduling is created for the delivery of all needed services to each identified student.
2. Intervention staff and teachers will meet every four to six weeks as a collaborative team to discuss assessment data, monitor student progress, and update intervention plans.

3. All staff will be trained in the tracking of performance data and the identification of students not meeting performance thresholds.
4. Internal diagnostic assessments will be used to determine student needs and will serve as the foundation for a written intervention plan, and intervention services will be initiated under these plans within four to six weeks of a student enrolling.
5. Students struggling to make progress will be assessed at least every two weeks, and those identified with the most severe academic needs will be assessed weekly, with results informing updated intervention action plans.
6. One-on-one meetings between school leaders and intervention staff will be scheduled twice each month and focus on individual student data and strategies being used to meet student needs.

A three-tier approach (response-to-intervention, or RtI) will be used to deliver systematic intervention services:

- Tier One Intervention: In Tier One, teachers will respond to student learning needs within the context of regular classroom instruction. Written intervention plans will be determined through diagnostic assessments as well as from teacher referrals, data from classroom and state assessments, and parent input. Students who have not yet demonstrated mastery will receive supplemental support within the classroom, and corrective approaches regularly include re-teaching, cooperative learning opportunities, differentiated instructional strategies targeting individual student need, and use of learning centers and alternative materials.

- Tier Two Intervention: If students do not master content through the first tier of intervention, more prescriptive Tier Two interventions will be used. These will be based on a review of a range of factors, including teacher referrals, data from classroom and end-of-instruction assessments, results from assessments tied to national norms, state assessment results, and parent input. Students will receive supplemental interventions using programs and approaches that are proven to accelerate student learning. Other intervention strategies may be provided in the classroom in a workshop setting or delivered through supplemental support outside of the general education classroom during non-core educational programming. Student progress will be monitored frequently to ensure that the intervention is effective, and collaboration between classroom teacher and interventionist will occur regularly.

- Tier Three Intervention: If progress monitoring data show that a student is not making sufficient progress after Tier Two interventions, the student will receive Tier Three interventions. The teacher, intervention staff, and the school leaders will regularly review current intervention strategies, monitor student progress, and work together to individually monitor that student's learning patterns and progress. Tier Three interventions will include an intensified approach focused on selected high-priority reading and math skills. One-on-one concentrated tutoring will also be considered whenever appropriate. If these interventions do not succeed in achieving the targeted level of student learning, the school's EC team will conduct a referral meeting to decide whether testing is needed to determine if the student has special needs.

Attribution: NHA

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: School staff will work with enrolled families to identify English Learners (EL) through home language surveys, informal interviews, and the state's screening assessment (currently the W-APT, provided by WIDA). We anticipate that approximately eight percent of our students will be classified as EL, reflecting the local WCPSS average. Initially, our school will give all new students the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ). If the HLQ indicates that a student's home language is something other than English, the student will be identified as a potential EL student.

Our EL coordinator will conduct an informal interview of each student identified as a potential EL. If the interview confirms that a student speaks a language other than English, the student will be given the W-APT to determine his or her proficiency in English. If the student scores at a level designated as not requiring EL services, the screening process will stop. If the student scores at any lower level, the student will be classified as an EL student and placed appropriately in our program.

Parents or guardians will be informed in writing about our available EL programs and services. Written in a language the parent or guardian understands, information will include the placement decision for their child and their right to refuse EL services at any time. This note will be provided within 30 days for students enrolling at the beginning of the year and within 10 days for students enrolling during the year. EL students will participate in all required state, school, and classroom assessments to monitor their progress in core content areas and English proficiency.

Instructional Programs: Our school will implement a two-part program: Sheltered English Immersion will be used in the general classroom as the vehicle for EL students to acquire grade-level content, while the English Language Development program will be used for students requiring English language acquisition instruction. Each EL student will have a Language Acquisition Plan (LAP) that contains specific goals to quickly acquire both social and academic proficiency in English. The LAP will detail accommodations and modifications that must be implemented in the classroom and on standardized assessments.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Each year, we will administer the WIDA ACCESS test to measure students' progress learning English. For students not testing sufficiently proficient in English, we will use the results combined with teacher observation and input to determine services to be provided through the EL program for the coming school year.

For an EL student to exit the program, he or she must score at the state-approved level for exit on the ACCESS exam. In addition, the school will examine data to verify that the student's classroom performance also indicates that the student is ready to exit the EL program and will succeed

without additional support and programming. School staff will closely monitor students for two years after they leave the EL program to ensure that they are not experiencing academic regression due to language barriers. If a student who leaves the EL program is found to be experiencing difficulty due to language constraints, the student may be reassessed and may re-enter the EL program.

We believe that all teachers are teachers of EL students, and we will include EL students in all school classes and activities at our school. EL students will have access to high-quality education and instruction, and will become fully proficient in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, consistent with the school's common standards and goals. While being held to the same high expectations of learning and behavior established for all students, EL students will be evaluated with assessments that are aligned with state and local standards and take into account the language acquisition stages and cultural backgrounds.

Attribution: NHA

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.*

The demand reflected in our survey of area parents, and the substantial waitlists, leads us to anticipate enrolling at least some students who may be classified as intellectually gifted. Students with such skills will receive the direction, time, encouragement, and resources to maximize their potential. We will identify intellectually gifted students from any background and provide instruction that nurtures and grows that excellence.

Identification: As part of our educational program, RCA will use the NWEA MAP, which is referenced to national norms. This allows the school to identify and track students who are performing at the very highest levels, a potential indicator of a student's identification as intellectually gifted. For all students, including those performing at the highest levels, we believe it is critical to ensure growth. For this reason, we are committed to regularly monitoring students' progress and adjusting learning opportunities when growth is inadequate. In addition to using assessment results, classroom teachers will monitor mastery of curricular content as measured by the school's formative assessment program. This program is a planned process by which teachers and students adjust their approaches to teaching and learning based on insights from frequent, varying, and ongoing evaluations of progress.

Instruction: Classroom teachers will offer intellectually gifted students differentiated instruction and extended opportunities through a variety of means, including: enrichment lessons, exercises, and content; differentiation in content, process, products, and/or learning environment; infusion of tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills; and individualized learning opportunities. When needed, the school will accelerate grade-level or content-level learning for individual students, taking into consideration

his or her specific needs. Students at or above grade level will be consistently challenged with classroom curricular content and high-quality instruction.

If desired, we will create an entire accelerated cohort group that will include both students who are above grade-level proficiency and students who are designated as intellectually gifted. This will allow an entire student subgroup to move through the curriculum at a more rapid pace, paired with teachers particularly suited for instruction to these students. This allows opportunities for students to be systematically challenged with higher-order thinking skills and project-based learning within a common peer group, and it allows the opportunity for the creation of an accelerated section at each grade level.

Our professional development program also will include training on the education of gifted students. School leaders will be responsible for working with teachers to develop plans for addressing the needs of students identified as intellectually gifted and evaluating intellectually gifted services and the progress that these students make with respect to their learning goals. Other topics for professional development may include professional learning communities, differentiated instruction, and co-teaching strategies targeted to intellectually gifted students. Deans will observe and meet weekly with instructional staff to review lesson plans and provide feedback on the quality of their instruction and effectiveness in meeting the needs of all students, including those who are intellectually gifted.

Monitoring/Evaluating: Use of NWEA assessments will generate results that help set individual learning targets and measurable objectives for all students. The school will use results from these assessments to set higher individual learning targets and more rigorous growth objectives to monitor and measure the progress of intellectually gifted students.

Attribution: NHA

### **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)*

Identification: Exceptional children (EC) will be identified upon entry to our school by either an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or through the ChildFind process. If parents state that their child has previously received EC services or has an IEP or Section 504 Plan, we will ask the parent for any documentation. If the parent has no documentation, we will initiate a records request from the student's prior school. Staff will also review all students' files for evidence of enrollment in an EC program at the previous school; if so, we will immediately ask that school for relevant records. We will implement the student's existing IEP or Section 504 Plan, providing comparable services until the IEP or 504 team either accepts the plan or develops a new plan.

ChildFind: We will include ChildFind in our marketing efforts to attract the broadest possible spectrum of students, including those with special needs. Our outreach will target all area families with students of appropriate ages. Parents expressing interest in enrolling exceptional children will be invited to meet with school staff to review the program and to ask questions. We will comply with ChildFind requirements of IDEA, including 34 CFR 300.125, and will provide notification to parents consistent with state and federal requirements.

We understand our responsibility to identify students who need EC services but enter our school without an active IEP. If a student struggles with classroom assignments, a teacher or parent may refer the student to our Intervention Assistance Team (IAT), which will include the principal or designee, a classroom teacher, and the referring teacher. The student's parents also will be invited to participate. The IAT will determine appropriate education and service options by analyzing screening data, response to intervention results, classroom performance, discipline data, state assessments, and any information parents provide. Outcomes may include: continuing current intervention and progress monitoring through the systematic intervention process; conducting additional interventions; referring for a Section 504 evaluation; referring to the EC team for a possible comprehensive evaluation; and, taking no further action while monitoring academic and social experience. In accordance with IDEA and Section 504, at any time, a student's parents can refer the student for an EC evaluation, and a properly convened team will decide whether to proceed with the evaluation. If parents disagree with an IEP team decision not to conduct an evaluation, the parent has all procedural rights, including the right to request a due process hearing, as set forth in the North Carolina Handbook on Parent's Rights.

The IEP team will include an EC teacher, a parent, a general education teacher of the child, an appropriate LEA representative, and anyone else with relevant knowledge of the child. The team will determine whether psycho-educational or other testing is needed to determine if the student meets eligibility requirements in accordance with state policies. Parental notice and consent will be requested before testing. If eligible, this team will be responsible for identifying the student's needs, developing an IEP to address these needs, and implementing the IEP.

Record Request, Confidentiality, and Compliance: School staff will request records from the student's previous school or district. If complete records aren't received within 14 days of the date the school is notified that the student is an exceptional child, staff will reach out to the prior school for more information. If the requested information is not obtained, our school will initiate the EC referral or re-evaluation process. Staff will collect, handle, and secure the records at RCA, and share these documents with parents in accordance with all relevant state and federal laws and regulations.

Attribution: NHA

### 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.*

Educational Programs, Strategies, and Staffing: We will offer exceptional children individualized services and tailored instruction that provides access to, and promotes progress in, the general education curriculum. We will serve all children according to their individualized academic, functional, social, and emotional needs.

As required by federal law, we are committed to serving students in the least restrictive environment (LRE), while providing the full continuum of educational placements as appropriate for each student. These placements may include, but are not limited to, the general education setting, individualized one-to-one instruction, and small-group instruction with both disabled and non-disabled peers as appropriate. We will prepare and execute individualized strategies for our full range of students, realizing that the LRE for some students may be in a more supportive alternative environment.

Students requiring specially designed instruction will have their services delivered in the general education classroom or will receive services in a resource room or separate setting based on individual needs and a decision by the IEP Team, considering that services are to be provided in the LRE. Teachers of exceptional children will be provided with consultation and staff development by a dean and special educator to ensure that students receive the modification of instruction and assessment accommodations required by their IEPs.

The school will recruit, hire, or contract highly qualified and certified EC teachers to help ensure high-quality instruction. All new staff, including EC teachers, will participate in an orientation session prior to the start of the school year. Each teacher will work closely with a dean on a weekly basis to focus on his or her specific professional development needs.

EC teachers will be on staff to provide academic support to students with IEPs. The school will also provide needed ancillary staff, such as a school psychologist, occupational and speech therapists, and a school social

worker, as either employees or contracted providers. Additional staff may be added once the school determines the needs of our student population. We estimate that between ten and 15 percent of our students will need EC services. Credentials of all staff will be reviewed to ensure compliance with highly qualified teacher requirements; teachers who do not possess the required credentials will be granted a reasonable amount of time to meet state credentialing requirements. Ancillary staff will possess state-required credentials before providing services to eligible students.

Support Systems and Oversight to ensure FAPE: Our school will employ the proper personnel to manage the administrative responsibilities and compliance associated with providing services for exceptional children. A member of the school leadership team will be designated to oversee the entire EC program. The principal will serve as the school's Section 504 compliance official, ensuring that the school adheres to all applicable provisions of federal and state law relating to EC and ensuring that all students qualifying under Section 504 and IDEA receive a free and appropriate public education.

We will abide by the applicable provisions of IDEA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as they relate to EC. The school will retain this data and prepare any reports needed by the state to comply with federal and state law and regulation.

At a minimum, the role of our EC staff will include the following responsibilities:

- Facilitate effective communication with students, parents, teachers, the school leadership team, EC staff, and appropriate social service and community-based agencies.

\*See overflow section for further detail.

\*Continued from Exceptional Children's Educational Programming.

- Form a partnership with the classroom teacher to develop appropriate instructional practices to meet student needs as detailed in the IEPs.

- Act as a resource to classroom teachers.

- Meet all requirements for EC activities at the school.

- Schedule and hold all initial, re-evaluation, and annual review meetings pertaining to each student's EC program within required timelines.

- Ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal special education requirements.

- Provide instruction in a general education classroom setting to the greatest extent possible consistent with LRE requirements.

- Provide instruction to an individual or groups of students in a separate location as appropriate.

- Administer formal and informal educational assessments to guide instructional decisions when appropriate.

- Maintain documentation of services, progress monitoring data, data specific to progress on IEP goals and objectives, observation logs, communication logs, and any other data specified in a student's IEP.

Monitoring Implementation and Reporting Academic Progress: A dean or the principal will oversee the implementation of IEPs. The dean or principal will conduct weekly one-on-one meetings with EC staff to discuss the academic progress of exceptional children, the timing of annual reviews, and the conduct of three-year re-evaluations. In addition, each IEP will be

reviewed to determine the duration of services to verify compliance with the student's IEP. Progress reports will accompany report cards, and deans will discuss student progress relative to IEP annual goals at one-on-one meetings with teachers. General education teachers will keep a record of the accommodations and modifications that are to be made in the general education setting relative to instruction and testing.

At least twice a year, we will give all students the NWEA assessment in the school's formative assessment program to gauge progress toward goals. This will include exceptional children as allowed in their IEPs. EC teachers will use the resulting information to determine areas of critical need for exceptional children and will make instructional decisions that positively affect these students' achievement. In addition to the NWEA assessment, EC providers will use curriculum-based assessments and other data collection tools to monitor progress on IEP goals and objectives.

Communication on IEP Implementation: Parents will be provided progress reports on IEP goals and objectives consistent with the school's report card marking period. EC teachers also will discuss these progress reports individually with students. The Procedural Safeguards: Handbook on Parents' Rights from NCDPI will be provided to each student's parent or guardian as follows:

- Upon referral for EC testing.
- At least annually when we conduct an annual review of the student's IEP.
- Whenever there is a change of placement.
- Whenever a manifestation determination meeting is being conducted.

Related Services: Students with IEPs requiring related services (including speech, social work, physical and occupational therapy, etc.) will be provided such services consistent with their IEP. Services will be provided by properly certified and licensed therapists and providers who will be employed, contracted through an agency, or, if the option is available and desired, contracted through the local school district or other entity.

Attribution: NHA

## **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.*

Goals: We will establish the following school performance standards as benchmarks against which student academic progress will be measured:

- Beginning in kindergarten, students at RCA will take the NWEA MAP for

Primary Grades Assessment. Students in grades K-1 will earn a mean RIT gain of at least 15 points from beginning-of-year to end-of year learning growth in reading and math.

- By the end of the charter term, students at RCA will exceed the average performance of local district students by at least five percent on state assessments.

- Seventh grade students returning to RCA in eighth grade will successfully complete Math I (formerly Algebra I) and earn a 75 percent passing rate on the Math I end-of-course exam.

- Each year, RCA will, at a minimum, "Meet Expected Growth." Our objective is to exceed state standards of expected progress by the end of our first charter term.

Evaluation Tools: The school will administer the NWEA assessment multiple times per year to measure academic growth. These assessments also will be used as a tool to improve instruction, allowing teachers and school leaders to gauge student progress, change instruction where necessary, and measure the effectiveness of those changes. As required by the NCDPI, the ACT Aspire exam (or another high school- and college-readiness exam) will be administered to all 8th-graders with two primary purposes: 1) to provide students with feedback on competency strengths and gaps relative to students' career aspirations; and, 2) to offer insights into students' academic readiness for college.

Promotion/Retention: The principal is authorized to make initial grade placement of students and has the final decision regarding the promotion, acceleration, and retention of students. A student is expected to progress through one grade each year, but the practice of promoting students who have failed to master grade-level curriculum is incompatible with our mission. On occasion, it may be in a student's best interest to accelerate him or her more than one grade or retain him or her to repeat a current grade. If a parent or teacher wishes a grade level change to be considered, a written request is to be provided to the principal for consideration. These criteria will be shared with families in our parent-student handbook.

If a student fails to meet the third-grade requirements of the NC Read to Achieve mandate, additional interventions and a personalized reading improvement and monitoring plan will be offered. If not proficient after these interventions, the student will be retained unless they meet a good cause exemption. Retained students will receive additional intervention support.

Any decision to retain an exceptional child will be determined by the principal, in consultation with the IEP team. EC students may not be retained based solely on their exceptionality, but retention may account for factors such as a student's ability to fit in socially and emotionally with their present grade level.

\*See overflow section for further detail.

\*Continued from "Student Performance Standards."

Exit Standards: Students will exit our school and be promoted to high school in accordance with the North Carolina Student Accountability Standards. We believe strongly that students should leave our school academically prepared for a rigorous high school program and with the required skills, both social and academic, to graduate from high school and be college-ready. The

practice of promoting students who have failed to master part of their grade-level curriculum is incompatible with the state's gateway standards, the academic goals of our school, or our mission. Our Board is committed to meeting the needs of students who are at-risk academically. Our school model has a robust formative assessment program that helps quickly identify students who need extra attention, as well as those who are surpassing grade-level standards, all deserving differentiated instruction. As such, we will use those tools to ensure that at-risk students receive the appropriate supports and are exited from our school successfully.

Attribution: Board and NHA

### **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.*

Promotion of Effective Discipline: Time spent on student discipline is time not spent on student learning. Our philosophy behind the discipline policy is to create and maintain a culture that commits to individual student achievement. We will adopt, implement, and sustain a program called Behave with Care, which includes school-wide behavior and classroom management practices, is rooted in the concept of engagement, and is aligned with the U.S. Department of Education's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support model. Behave with Care includes a six-level color-coded, school-wide behavior management system to ensure positive behaviors are reinforced. Teachers and staff will consistently reinforce positive behavior using strategies such as relationship building, classroom motivation systems, development of social contracts, precise praise of positive behavior, and individual student affirmations.

To supplement the Behave with Care program, teachers will also have Positive Behavior Replacement Plan (PBRP) tools, developed by NHA. The PBRP is a collection of 30 mini-course packets - available to staff online - that serve as a resource for teachers on student behavior issues. This information helps students understand the consequences of their behaviors, why they are not acceptable, and how they can change. Specifically, the program:

- Fosters dignity and respect for students.
- Gives students positive behavior alternatives.
- Saves time dealing with negative behavior issues.

- Reduces school suspensions due to negative behavior.
- Helps students facilitate positive change.
- Instills in students an awareness of current and future consequences that their actions have.

Our character education programming, too, is designed to help create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. Instruction here helps students learn how to manage their own behavior and develop strong personal character, and behaviors such as cooperation, respect, and compassion are expected to replace apathy, bullying, and a disregard for authority.

**Equitable Application:** We will ensure our program is equitably applied to all students at RCA. The system clearly defines examples of behaviors at each level and appropriate consequences, and details of incidents will be recorded in our student information system to help ensure that all behavior incidents are noted and treated consistently and that these records are available to parents. Teacher observations and feedback ensure consistency from student to student and from classroom to classroom which in turn will create a familiarity of the rules among all students.

**Professional Development:** We will provide professional development designed to help school leaders and staff build positive, productive, and trusting relationships with students. This includes training on Behave with Care and PBRP before the start of the school year, with ongoing support throughout the year in the form of additional professional development, e-learning, virtual classroom instruction, observations with feedback and coaching, and video modeling. Teachers will learn strategies to establish safe and orderly classrooms, reinforce positive behaviors, address problem behaviors, and encourage students to take responsibility for their actions.

**Offenses; Application to Exceptional Children; Due Process:** We have included a draft parent-student handbook (see Appendix D), which includes information on major aspects of the student discipline policy, including offenses eligible for disciplinary action. We will follow federal and state laws as well as NCDPI policies to ensure that due process and grievance procedures are followed whenever suspending or expelling students with disabilities or suspected disabilities is considered. These processes will be further detailed in an EC handbook provided to staff at all NHA-partner schools.

**Attribution:** Board and NHA

**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:* Rolesville Charter Academy, Inc.

*Mailing Address:* 1408 Green Mountain Drive

*City/State/Zip:* Wake Forest NC 27578

*Street Address:* 1408 Green Mountain Drive

*Phone:* 919-757-5103

*Fax:* 919-757-5103

*Name of registered agent and address:*

Lisa Kane, 1408 Green Mountain Drive, Wake Forest, NC 27578

*FEDERAL TAX ID:* 47-4932325

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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.*

Members of our Board had the opportunity to meet with board members from other NHA-partner schools in North Carolina. We have discussed the experience and responsibilities of overseeing an NHA-partner school, which offers meaningful insight on our governance responsibilities, the partnership with NHA, and the start-up phase of our school. Similar to the boards of those schools, we will be a Board focused on governance while our management partner focuses on day-to-day operations.

**Functions and Duties:** It is our responsibility as the Board to ensure RCA fulfills our mission. We will make sure our school has the needed systems, personnel, and resources in place to create an environment conducive to scholarly learning and designed to meet our goals. We will perform the functions essential to governance, including ensuring that students are learning, that funds are appropriately managed, and that our school complies with all charter, state, and federal requirements. We have retained independent legal counsel - Ms. Jackie Hughes, JTH Law - to advise us. Annually we will contract with an independent auditor to ensure fiscal propriety, and contract with a third-party evaluator of the educational program as necessary for an independent perspective of the performance of our school. (Appendix U describes some of our work to date with legal counsel and auditors.)

We are confident that our partnership with NHA will deliver an educational program that will serve students well, become an asset to the community, achieve our charter goals, and fulfill our mission. It is our responsibility to ensure that happens.

Our Board also will adopt and implement policies that promote transparency and good patterns of communication among the Board, school leaders, NHA, parents, and the community. Sample Board policies are included in Appendix J. Should we receive a charter, we will review and update these policies as necessary with input from our legal counsel.

**Roles and Responsibilities:** Our Board will perform functions including, but not limited to:

- Articulating, maintaining, and driving our mission throughout the school community.
- Holding NHA accountable for the efficient and effective operation of the school and for the achievement of academic goals.
- Reviewing and approving the school's annual budgets and ensuring that proper financial procedures are in place and effectively implemented.
- Reviewing, approving, and monitoring progress toward academic, financial, and operational goals.
- Reviewing and approving school policies.
- Ensuring that sufficient enrichment programs are created to supplement the education program.

- Appointing officers and committees as needed.
- Adopting, amending, and repealing bylaws as needed.
- Developing and maintaining effective relations with NCDPI and the Office of Charter Schools.
- Ensuring that meetings are conducted in accordance with open meetings laws and in compliance with North Carolina conflict of interest and public records laws.

The principal, with NHA as appropriate, will provide us with the information needed to assess all aspects of the school's performance.

Hiring Lead Administrator (Principal): Under our partnership arrangement, teachers will be jointly employed by our Board and NHA and school leaders and other non-teaching staff will be employed directly by NHA. NHA has an experienced and expert school leadership recruitment team that identifies and evaluates school leaders for their skills, experience, and personal attributes. Thus, while our principal will report as an employee directly to NHA, the principal will be responsible for regularly reporting about the school to the Board and the Board will hold our principal accountable, along with NHA, for the school's performance. Appendix F presents an organization chart outlining our governance structure.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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.*

Our Board has strong roots in Wake County. Our backgrounds in K-12 education, business, finance, management, and non-profit foundations ensure that our governance team will have the high-quality and broad skill set we need to make RCA an academic and operational success. Our local ties help us relate to the families and organizations that make up our school community. With eight other NHA-partner schools already operating in the state - including WFCA nearby - and three more approved to open, we also are uniquely situated to reach out to those boards and collaborate to replicate best practices.

Ensuring Educational and Operational Success: We fully understand and embrace our responsibility as a Board to govern RCA with integrity, oversee its fiscal and educational operations, and ensure that it fulfills our mission. This responsibility comes with the authority we need to make this happen: to adopt all needed policies and ensure their effective enactment; to make sure the school's educational program is implemented properly and is achieving its goals; and, to ensure that the school operates in ways that will achieve academic excellence. As we demand continuous improvement from our school, so too do we expect our Board to become better at its responsibilities with each passing school year.

Evaluation of the School and the School Leader (Principal): We will require our principal and NHA to provide the Board with regular reports on student performance, assessment data, operational data, and any parent survey data.

We will use this information to assess RCA's progress towards our performance goals and performance of the principal. We also will contract for an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of NHA and school leadership in meeting expectations. Under the provisions of our Services Agreement with NHA, we maintain the authority to express reasonable dissatisfaction with the principal. If NHA and the principal have been given sufficient time to remedy an issue and there has been insufficient improvement, the Board can direct NHA to terminate the principal.

Additionally, our contract with NHA allows us to terminate the entire partnership at any time if we decide that is the best course of action for our school. Should we opt to terminate the agreement with NHA (which no board has ever done in the 20-year history of the organization), we retain the right to lease the school building for the remainder of the current school year and the next school year. Importantly, the per-pupil funding will continue to flow to us to fund school operations independently. This allows us to transition management to another company or to become more of an operational board and contract for the individual services we need.

**Involvement of Key Stakeholders:** Parents are one of the most critical stakeholder groups to consider in the success of RCA. Members of our Board exercise school choice. Our children are enrolled at district, charter, and private schools in the area, including WFCA. One of our Board members is on the waitlist at WFCA, and intends to enroll her children at RCA if our school is approved, thus ensuring a parental voice in our governance. We have also had preliminary discussions with Rolesville municipal officials, including the Mayor, who are supportive of our efforts. Other key stakeholders in the school and the community will always be invited to attend our Board meetings, and we will actively solicit feedback from community groups.

Our Board membership has the experience and ability to make meaningful contributions and effectively govern our school. Qualifications for current and future Board members include passion for the effective, high-expectations based education of children, enthusiasm for this school and commitment to our mission, dedication to our community, and willingness to give the time and energy needed to undertake this important venture.

Attribution: Board and NHA

- 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?*

Given the growth of our area, the interest families have in school choice, and the capacity stretched schools, there is a need for new public charter schools. For many years, Franklin Academy was one of the only public charter schools easily accessible to the Wake Forest and Rolesville communities. When WFCA was developed and opened in the fall of 2014, there was a tremendous response from parents. The school had 508 available seats and received over 1,600 applications. With such a resoundingly positive welcome, and a strong first year, discussion of a second school with a similar model started almost immediately.

**Formation of Founding Board:** Each member of our founding Board shares the

common passion to bring additional high-quality public school choice to the Rolesville area. Our Board members joined this worthy effort in different ways. Our initial members became interested through recommendations from current WFCA Board members and our children's attendance at WFCA. Our initial membership then recruited others with the necessary skill sets to form our founding Board. To be most effective as a Board and to properly oversee the complexities of a public charter school, we wanted a diverse set of skills and viewpoints. We believe we have that skill set, including backgrounds in K-12 education, business, finance, management, and non-profit foundations, and an intimate knowledge of our community and its families to add to the foundation for our school's success.

Should we receive approval of our charter, we will add one additional member, bringing our total membership to seven. Our bylaws specifically require that members be willing and able to make decisions as a member of the Board in the best interests of the non-profit corporation and shall submit on an annual basis a conflict of interest disclosure as prescribed by the Board. We have also made it our policy that members shall be at least 21 years of age and be a resident of the State of North Carolina. Future Board members will be required to commit to the school's mission and refer to that mission whenever making decisions on behalf of the school.

Filling Vacancies: Our founding Board has six members, who will serve staggered terms of one or two years, thus ensuring a pattern of overlapped tenure and stability of governance. We will seek to anticipate vacancies to the greatest extent possible, asking members to notify the Board President early in the year of their term expiration if they do not wish to renew their term. We will maintain a list of contacts and associates who we want to ask to serve on the Board or who have expressed an interest in doing so, referring to this list whenever a vacancy may occur. Appointments to the Board to complete the terms of vacant seats will be made in accordance with our bylaws, and we will strive to ensure that an appropriate breadth of skills is represented by our membership, particularly in the areas of governance experience, education, and financial management.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Board will meet at least monthly. We will meet more frequently as needed, especially during our start-up phase.

Attribution: Board

*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).*

Board Orientation and Training: Our founding Board members bring experience from serving on other governing boards. We have already begun training for our service as the Board of RCA. We have heard presentations from our legal counsel and an independent auditor on the requirements of non-profit charter school boards and our fiduciary responsibilities. Further, we have reviewed the charter school statute. We also plan to participate in the Ready-to-Open

orientation process required by the Office of Charter Schools and have conversations with board members at other NHA-partner schools. Additional training for all current and future Board members will be generally structured around the three modules outlined below.

Module One will discuss, among other things:

- The governance model of the school, including board roles and responsibilities.
- Details about Board processes and procedures.
- The structure of Board meetings and the open meetings and public records laws.
- Information about the school's programs, systems, and policies.

Module Two will discuss, among other things:

- Parliamentary procedures and the role of Board members in the use of such procedures.
- A review of the school's bylaws and articles of incorporation.
- A review of the charter and delineation of responsibilities to the authorizer.
- A review of the Services Agreement with the school's management partner, including a discussion about roles and responsibilities of both the Board and NHA, autonomy of the Board and oversight of NHA, reports due to the Board, and termination procedures.
- A discussion of the lease and its provisions.

Module Three will discuss, among other things:

- Proper use of closed sessions and the limitations on items that can be discussed outside of public meetings.
- Structure of public comment periods at board meetings.
- Reviewing, approving, and overseeing school budgets.
- Allocation of board funds and their proper use.
- State assessments and their meaning, impact, and reporting and the school's formative assessment process.
- The School Improvement Plan process.
- Our student discipline policy and behavior management system.
- Our parent-student handbook.
- Resources available to the Board and the school through NHA.
- Parent satisfaction surveys.
- Annual reporting requirements.
- Crisis management system/protocol.

We will continue to seek training opportunities for the duration of our service. We will schedule a minimum of three to five hours of governance training for our members each year, and we will select programs that best meet the current needs of individual members and the school. Our Board plans to take regular advantage of the training opportunities offered through the Office of Charter Schools. We understand that in the past, the Office has made available a webinar-based series of training sessions that provide more than 15 hours of valuable training to Board members on various aspects of charter school governance.

We will seek support and advice on board governance training from a number of national and local sources, such as the Center for Public Skills Training, the National Charter School Resource Center, both the North

Carolina Alliance and Association for Public Charter Schools, and our own legal counsel. We also will leverage our professional resources, including those our members can draw upon from their own experience, to ensure that we are considering a diverse set of viewpoints on effective governance. Our Board members will connect with board members at other existing charter schools, too, including NHA-partner schools, to discuss and share best practices in board governance. Members of our Board have already observed a Board meeting at Wake Forest Charter Academy and intend to do so at other charter schools as well.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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.*

Ethical Standards and Conflicts of Interest: Our Board will govern the school with an unwavering commitment to ethical practices. This definitive standard of behavior in governance also is held by our management partner, NHA. Pursuant to our bylaws, a Board member shall inform the Board of any actual or apparent conflict of interest with regard to any transaction contemplated by the Board. Conflicts of interest include transactions in which a member of the Board has a material financial interest, or with which the member is presently serving as a director, trustee, officer, or general partner of another party. The transaction may be approved only by a vote of the majority of Board members who have no conflict of interest. Our draft policies, included as Appendix J, address potential conflicts of interest.

Existing Conflicts of Interest: There are no known existing relationships of founding Board members that could pose an actual or perceived conflict of interest if this charter school application is approved.

Avoiding Actual and Perceived Conflicts: As noted, pursuant to the Board's bylaws, a Board member shall inform the Board of any direct or indirect conflict of interest related to any transaction contemplated by the Board. The Board will consult our legal counsel should any real or apparent conflict of interest ever arise. Our legal counsel will also provide support and advice as we review transactions for any actual and perceived conflicts of interest.

Criminal Background Checks: In cooperation with our legal counsel, our Board has completed criminal background checks for our members and included those in Appendix G.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Board will be a governing board, with policies reflecting that role. Because of our school's partnership with NHA, which manages eight operating schools in North Carolina, we have access to established school policies that have been tailored to state and charter requirements, implemented, revised, and updated by those existing boards and their respective legal counsels. The policies have also been adapted by the newest Boards to meet the requirements of the state's Ready-to-Open process. The policies have been tried and tested in real situations at real schools, which is a key

benefit providing our school with a head start on completing and validating many draft policies (several of which are included as appendices to this application). These and other policies will be reviewed, discussed, and modified as necessary upon approval of our charter, and then they will be presented at a public meeting of our Board for comment and adoption. All policies developed for and by our Board are drafted in alignment with our mission and our vision for the school, and our Board will manage these policies to ensure this alignment and compliance with all applicable law. At least annually, each policy will be reviewed by our Board and legal counsel, and any desired revisions will be put before the Board for discussion and action. Please reference Appendix J for a copy of our draft Board policies.

Attribution: Board and NHA

*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.*

At this time, our Board does not intend to establish any formal advisory bodies, councils, or associations as part of our governance of the school. As needed, the Board will create committees (e.g., finance; school culture; etc.) to meet as a subset of the Board on specific topic areas and report back to the entire body at regular Board meetings.

Appendix F presents an organization chart illustrating the structure of the school, including the relationship among the Board, our management partner, the school leadership team (principal and deans), teachers, and other staff. The Board will oversee the school's management partner and, in collaboration with NHA, the principal. In turn, the principal oversees the academic deans, each of whom oversees a group of grade-level teachers (such as: K-2; 3-5; and 6-8). The principal also oversees the administrative functions, headed by the school's registrar. Our Board and NHA will jointly employ teachers, as is permitted by law and previously recognized by the Office of Charter Schools and the State Board of Education. The Board retains ultimate hiring and firing authority of teachers, as required by law.

Consistent with our strategy to engage parents in the educational lives of their children, we will facilitate the development of a parent organization at RCA. Our Board will ask that the parent organization support our mission and student body in all it does. We also will ensure that our parent organization has the necessary policies and procedures in place to stay in compliance with law, including those necessary for sound financial management. We will require our parent organization to report to our Board frequently on fundraising efforts, financial management, leadership activities, and governance decisions, as well items such as upcoming events.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Parent Grievances: RCA will create an open environment for parents, and will make every reasonable attempt to respond appropriately to parent concerns in a way that resolves issues satisfactorily. Classroom teachers will be the first line of communication for parents and guardians to address any concerns. Teachers will respond to parent inquiries promptly, respectfully, and in accordance with established guidelines for handling parent

grievances. If parents are dissatisfied with the response from their child's classroom teacher (or if the nature of the complaint does not involve a teacher), parents may contact a designated member of the school leadership team - an academic dean and then the principal - to arrange a meeting to discuss the concern.

On the rare occasion when speaking directly with a teacher or a member of the school leadership team does not resolve the concern, parents may bring the concern to the parent relations department at NHA, a unit dedicated specifically to help parents and guardians work with school leaders to address concerns and resolve conflicts. Parents have several ways to report a concern, including: calling the department using a toll-free number, which is provided in the parent-student handbook and made available from the school's main office; reporting concerns using the "Contact Us" page of the NHA website or by emailing NHA at its general contact email address (also listed in the handbook and available in the school's main office).

If these efforts do not resolve the issue to a parent's satisfaction, concerns may be brought to our Board. Parents may also contact the Board directly if they have concerns relating to a Board policy or decision, if there is a suspected violation of laws or the terms of the charter, or if parents have concerns about the school management or operations. Concerns brought to the Board may be presented verbally or in writing. The Board will address the concern at or before the next public meeting.

Employee Grievances: We will adopt a process to help staff resolve concerns or grievances. The school's deans will be teachers' first line of communication for addressing concerns; concerns about deans shall be addressed to the principal. As a second option, staff may contact a representative at NHA's service center. Employees also may take advantage of a third option, an employee hotline that lets them provide feedback anonymously, and such concerns are immediately escalated to the NHA service center for review, investigation, and resolution. In the rare event that staff cannot resolve a concern by speaking directly with school leaders, by communicating with an NHA representative, or by communicating through the hotline, staff may bring an unresolved concern to our Board.

We will create a working environment that allows school leaders to make decisions sensitive to the demands of students, and we will determine staff structuring and restructuring based on skill and performance to best serve the needs of students. Employment is on an at-will basis, and teachers will be jointly employed by the Board and NHA. We believe our administrators should be able to identify and support or terminate ineffective staff as appropriate, and that is how our school will be structured. Policies and procedures will be defined and put in place to handle unacceptable performance by teachers or school leaders, and in the event that performance is unacceptable and depending on the particular circumstances, discipline may occur. Discipline may include a warning, creation of a performance coaching plan or performance improvement plan, suspension, or administrative leave. Employees will receive additional coaching when necessary because we want all employees to grow and succeed. If a teacher does not meet performance expectations or if there is a significant violation of policies or procedures, however, termination of employment may be recommended to the Board.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Include in the Appendices:

1. A well-defined organizational chart showing the relationship of the Board of Directors to the parents and staff of the proposed charter school. This chart should also include lines of authority to and from any outside entity that will play a role in managing or supporting the charter school (such as educational service providers, advisory bodies or parent/teacher councils). (Appendix F)
2. A one-page resume from each founding board member and responses to the questions found on the Charter School Board Member Form (Appendix G).
3. The proposed by-laws, which must include a Conflict of Interest Policy for board members and a stated commitment to the NC Open Meetings Law (Appendix H).
4. A copy of the articles of incorporation from the NC Department of the Secretary of State. (Appendix I)
5. Copy of any board policies if adopted already (Appendix J).
6. Copies of meeting minutes (if available), relevant to the development of the charter school plan, during the application process (Appendix K).

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

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

**Not Applicable**

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

Name of the Company: National Heritage Academies  
Address: 3850 Broadmoor Ave., SE  
Grand Rapids MI 49512  
Website: [www.nhaschools.com](http://www.nhaschools.com)  
Phone Number: 616-222-1700  
Contact Person: Mack Moore  
Fax: 616-954-3083  
Email: [mmoore2@nhaschools.com](mailto:mmoore2@nhaschools.com)

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

NHA provides a comprehensive educational program that includes curriculum, professional development, staffing, and more, plus a school facility. NHA has extensive experience in the charter-school sector, serving more than 55,000 students in 81 schools, with more than 20,000 students on waiting lists. This includes eight schools in North Carolina serving more than 5,000 students with waiting lists totaling more than 4,000 students.

Best Educational Interest: NHA-partner schools have a strong academic record

and long-lasting partnerships:

- A partner charter school board has never terminated its Services Agreement with NHA, reflecting long-term satisfaction by boards and a long-term commitment by NHA.
- Since 2011-12, all 48 charters for NHA-partner schools up for renewal were successfully renewed by those schools' authorizers. In fact, since the first NHA-partner school opened, NHA-partner schools have successfully applied for and been granted renewal of their charters on all but one occasion (in 2005, one school in New York was not renewed after failing to meet goals in its accountability plan).

Best Financial Interest: Our Board appreciates NHA's solid financial footing and is excited about the direct investment NHA has pledged to our school.

- Consistent with our executed Services Agreement, NHA will fund and deliver the educational program desired by the Board even if public revenues come up short of our approved budget. In this way, NHA assumes all financial risk, and our Board is guaranteed in our ability to deliver the educational program we envision.
- In building a new school, NHA typically leverages millions of dollars in private capital to create a new or renovated facility, investing in the community without taxing its residents.

Our Board and legal counsel have reviewed the Services Agreement with NHA and concluded that it provides a desired arrangement to achieve our mission and serve our community.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

The commitment of our management partner to North Carolina is evident: NHA has more experience opening and operating schools in this state than any other charter management company. Our discussions with NHA have reassured us of this commitment. Members of our founding Board have children at WFCA, and have had an overwhelmingly positive experience. We want the same for Rolesville, and the families in the surrounding areas.

Importantly, we also have discussed with NHA representatives some of the challenges faced by partner schools in this state to achieve high academic performance. Even here, the commitment by NHA to the success of students is reassuring, confirming the organization's drive to invest in and improve those schools.

NHA's comprehensive model and its commitment to support that model is a key factor in the Board's decision to partner with NHA. The character education component of the NHA educational program also was very attractive to members of our founding Board, and a unique element from other management service providers. Finally, we also wanted a comprehensive management arrangement where the Board could oversee and govern the school without needing to fundraise, construct a building, or other activities that could distract from our primary focus to ensure excellence in academic performance, and NHA offered that arrangement.

We will hold NHA accountable for our school's academic performance and financial integrity, will not shy away from questioning NHA in these areas, and will not hesitate to separate from NHA if it fails to live up to our expectations.

Attribution: Board

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

Nationally, NHA-partner schools post impressive student success: the median rate-of-growth for students in 2014-15 was 127 percent with the national average of 100 percent. The most recent comparable data (2013-14) shows that more than 80 percent of students outperform their nearby district school peers. NHA and its partner boards around the country and in North Carolina have nearly perfect rates of compliance and consistently clean audits, demonstrating sound governance practices.

In North Carolina, NHA partners with eight schools:

- Greensboro Academy (GA) is the highest-performing school on the NWEA assessment. Even with this high-level of proficiency, GA has regularly achieved growth rates above the national average. In 2014-15, the rate of growth on NWEA was 157 percent; End-of-Grade (EOG) results showed proficiencies of 85 percent in math, 83 percent in reading, and 79 percent in science; GA received a letter grade of "A+NG" - only 2.8 percent of the schools received this designation; and, GA exceeded expected growth.
- Summerfield Charter Academy (SCA) opened in 2012. In 2014-15, the rate of growth on NWEA was 117 percent; math and reading proficiency on the EOG increased by six percentage points; and, SCA received a letter grade of B and exceeded expected growth.
- In 2014-15, K-8 students at Queen's Grant (the portion of the school managed by NHA) outperformed district averages in all subjects of the EOG by 15 percentage points and exceeded expected growth in two of the three most recent years. The school had a 118 percent rate of growth on the NWEA assessment.
- Research Triangle Charter Academy (RTCA) has shown positive results over the past three years and exceeded expected growth the past two years which resulted in a letter grade of a C in 2014-15. RTCA's NWEA growth rate was 133 percent in 2014-15 - the highest rate since opening.
- Wake Forest Charter Academy opened in 2014 with strong enrollment demand. WFCA had a successful baseline year with student growth on the NWEA assessment at 123 percent. The school received a letter grade of C in its first year, and nearly received a B.

Two other NHA-partner schools - Forsyth Academy (FA) and PreEminent Charter School (PCS) - are showing positive signs, but are lower in overall proficiency:

- In 2014-15, FA outperformed four of five neighboring schools serving similar student populations in reading. FA enrolls more than 81 percent minority students, compared to a county average of 58 percent. In 2014-15, students' rate of growth was 113 percent. FA received a letter grade of D and did not meet expected growth in 2014-15.

- In 2014-15, PCS exceeded expected growth and received an improved D letter grade. Student proficiency improved by eight percentage points in reading, 10 percentage points in math, and 22 percentage points in science. PreEminent serves twice as many at-risk students as the Wake County district average; only six schools in the county serve a higher proportion.

- NHA just partnered with a local board to open Winterville Charter Academy in Pitt County in August of 2015 and no data is available.

Highest and Lowest NHA-Partner Schools: On the spring 2015 NWEA assessment of math and reading, the highest-performer was Greensboro Academy with 90 percent proficiency. The lowest-performer was River City Scholars Charter Academy (RCS) in Grand Rapids, MI with 23 percent proficiency. The difference can be attributed to the amount of time each school has had to educate its students (RCS opened in 2012 and just this year will serve eighth grade students, while GA has operated for 17 years). Also, the majority of students enter RCS well below grade-level proficiency. In both cases, however, NHA has ensured accelerated academic growth for students. Research shows that on average students increase their academic performance each year they attend an NHA-partner school (CREDO, 2013). This is true of both new and longstanding NHA-partner schools.

Attribution: NHA

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

Independence: We recognize that it is our Board that holds the charter license and we are responsible for achieving our goals. We will hold NHA accountable for the academic results of our school, and helping our Board meet our charter goals. Because NHA manages our school operations, we will also hold NHA accountable for the fiscal and operational soundness of RCA.

The provisions of the Services Agreement and Lease Agreement we have allow the Board substantial autonomy to govern the school and to demand this level of accountability from NHA. We will contract with an independent auditor for annual financial reviews, we have retained independent legal counsel, and we will arrange an external third-party expert evaluation of our educational program.

Our Lease Agreement, which is separate from our Services Agreement, guarantees that RCA can occupy the school facility for at least one additional full school year even if we terminate our management relationship with NHA (see Appendix M). This provides us the independence to dissolve our management partnership without jeopardizing the continued operation and housing of our school.

Each year, we will develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP) based on a top-to-bottom review of the academic performance and operations of our school. The SIP will include action steps to improve any element of school operations. In addition to responding quickly to the needs of our school community, the SIP serves as an additional accountability check for the Board on the performance of our management partner.

Structure: The Board will oversee NHA and, in collaboration with NHA, will oversee the principal. The principal will oversee the academic deans and the school's administrative staff. The Board will retain the authority for the hiring and firing of teachers.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

The relationship among school employees and NHA is detailed in our formal Services Agreement (see Article VIII of the Agreement, which appears in Appendix L). Teachers will be jointly employed by the school and NHA, and the school's principal and deans will be directly employed by NHA. We have reviewed the Services Agreement with our legal counsel and sought advice about this arrangement, determining it is in the best interest of the school. We will work closely with NHA to ensure we have the right school leaders, teachers, and other staff in place to achieve our mission.

As outlined our Services Agreement, we require NHA to recruit highly qualified teaching candidates for the principal's recommendation and the Board's review and eventual determination of employment. Our Board maintains the authority to express dissatisfaction with the principal, providing NHA and the principal sufficient time and support to remedy any identified issues. If insufficient improvement results, the Board can direct that the principal be terminated by NHA. We also have reviewed with counsel draft employment policies, including them as Appendix O. The Board will revisit these policies if issued a charter, and adopt them with any necessary modifications.

NHA's excellent benefits package, competitive salary structure, and quality retirement plan will serve to attract excellent educators. Additionally, our school will benefit from NHA's substantial and professional teacher-recruitment efforts and its 81 school network to find the right staff for our school. Our Board is very impressed with the staff NHA and the Wake Forest Charter Academy Board were able to draw to the school and the early positive reputation that staff has generated in our community.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Services Agreement requires NHA to keep our school in compliance with our charter at all times. This includes a mandate to achieve our performance objectives.

Annual Evaluation Metrics: Accountability metrics expected to be used to hold NHA accountable for academic, operational, and financial results include:

- Academic growth, proficiency, and achievement goals (outlined in the "Goals" section of this application).
- Operational target goals, including on student attendance (at least 95 percent), parent satisfaction (90 percent or higher with at least 50 percent of parents responding to the satisfaction survey), and fiscal soundness (an unqualified audit annually).

- NHA will be required to work with school leaders to perform a comprehensive annual review of the school's education program, developing a formal, action-specific School Improvement Plan provided to our Board for review, input, and approval.
- The Board will conduct a formal performance review of NHA.

Contract Termination: Our Services Agreement provides the authorization and ability to terminate our partnership with NHA prior to the end of the term of the agreement (which is designed to run concurrent with the charter term), with or without cause, with 90 days' written notice. We also may terminate the agreement if NHA fails to remedy a material breach within 30 days' notice - for example, failure to account for or make expenditures approved by the Board, failure to follow Board-approved policies, or receipt of an unsatisfactory performance rating for the school. If we terminate our management relationship with NHA, our Lease Agreement will allow us to remain in the school for the rest of the school year and to rent it for another year at the existing rate. In any instance of termination, per-pupil funding aid will continue to flow to our school for the Board to finance school operations.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

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

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

In North Carolina in 2014-15, seven charter schools partnered with NHA in arrangements similar to the proposed partnership for RCA. All seven maintained the following positive fund balances over the past three fiscal years (2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15):

- Greensboro Academy: \$25,369, \$23,362, and \$43,514.
- Forsyth Academy: \$19,410, \$10,698, and \$8,404.
- Research Triangle Charter Academy: \$25,926, \$43,013, and \$31,616.
- PreEminent Charter School: \$30,248, \$37,622, and \$41,352.
- Queen's Grant Community School (K-8 program only): \$67,943, \$61,243, and \$56,566.
- Summerfield Charter Academy (opened fall 2013): \$30,134 and \$21,606.
- Wake Forest Charter Academy (opened fall 2014): \$11,447.

Please note that the school audits for 2014-15 are not yet complete, figures included are thus unaudited. A significant benefit of RCA's partnership with NHA is the company's commitment to providing the initial and ongoing investment needed to ensure a successful opening. This investment will include securing a facility, making contributions to ensure that the educational program is fully implemented from day one, and committing to contributing (not loaning) further financial support if revenues fall short of expenses. Our Services Agreement with NHA clarifies that NHA assumes the obligation for all expenses, and thus assumes all the financial risk. If expenses exceed revenues in any given year, NHA has the obligation to cover the shortfall. As such, the partnership arrangement with NHA makes the need to maintain a substantial fund balance unnecessary.

Through both the Services Agreement and Board oversight, NHA will be obliged to manage and operate RCA in accordance with the budget approved by our Board.

Attribution: NHA

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

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

**X Not Applicable**

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

**Not Applicable**

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

Greensboro Academy (GA) currently is the highest-performing of all 81 NHA-partner schools across the country in math and reading as measured by the NWEA MAP. Even with this high-level of proficiency, GA has regularly achieved growth rates above the national average. In 2014-15, the rate of growth on NWEA was 157 percent; state assessment results showed 85 percent proficiency in math, 83 percent proficiency in reading, and 79 percent proficiency in science; GA received a letter grade of "A+NG" - only 2.8 percent of the schools in the state received this designation; and, GA exceeded expected growth. With expressed parental demand for a high-quality, college-focused charter school choice such as the one we envision, it makes sense to look to the top-performing GA as a model for RCA.

Along with other NHA-partner schools, the high academic performance of GA across all grades and all subjects is detailed in Appendix U. The school has maintained a balanced budget, generated a positive fund balance each year, and has earned an unqualified independent audit each year. GA also has remained in full compliance with all charter, state, and federal requirements. The success of GA also is further evidenced by parental demand for seats for their children, the enrollment waiting lists maintained by the school, parental satisfaction measured by annual surveys, student reenrollment rates, and teacher retention levels. Over 97 percent of parents at GA were satisfied or highly satisfied with the school on the most recent parent satisfaction survey.

We have also been especially impressed with WFCA, which just started in our community. We believe that this school offers a model for us in governance, operations, and early academic success. We will work with and learn from the

WFCA Board and staff.

The long-term success of GA, and WFCA's early success and reputation in our community, is what we expect for RCA.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Over the past three school years, GA maintained steady, full student enrollment averaging 740 students per year.

In August 2013, a new NHA-partner school, Summerfield Charter Academy, opened just a few miles away in Guilford County and quickly filled to capacity and established a waiting list. Still, GA's enrollment remained steady, and a waiting list of more than 1,000 students has existed each year.

Over the past three school years, student demographics at GA have averaged as follows: White: 78 percent; Black: nine percent; Asian: eight percent; other ethnicities: five percent. Additionally, on average seven percent of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. We will market to our community broadly to try and best reflect the demographic makeup of WCPSS schools, and thus anticipate enrolling a student population with somewhat different demographics (49 percent White; 24 percent Black; 16 percent Hispanic; four percent multiracial; and less than one percent other). With likely a higher proportion of students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals (33 percent) than GA, RCA is also likely to enroll a larger percentage of at-risk students with a greater need for academic intervention services. We are prepared to meet that need.

Student enrollment at all NHA-partner schools in the nine states where these schools operate has increased over the past three years from approximately 48,000 students to an estimated 55,000 students in 2015-16. On the whole, the 81 operating NHA-partner schools serve 68 percent of students categorized as minority and 66 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

The founding Board of RCA universally recognizes the population growth and boom in school-aged children occurring in our community. We also recognize the strain this is putting on WCPSS district schools, the effect on academic performance there, and the expression by parents in our area for more high-quality public school choices. Our Board brings a passion to provide a new and excellent school choice to the area, and we bring a broad range of talent and expertise - including classroom and school administration experience, financial expertise, and more. As a group, we are committed to the effective governance of the new, high-quality charter school proposed here.

Our Board members work, live, and serve in the community, and we have a strong commitment to ensure that RCA becomes a significantly contributing member of our community. We believe that our Board and the design of RCA

will help ensure that this happens.

We will also partner with a school management organization that we believe has the experience, capital, vision, and commitment necessary to complement our Board members' skill sets and to ensure the success of our school. NHA's track record on compliance with all reporting requirements and the history of sound audits at its partner schools assures the integrity of our managing partner.

Our Board members know this community, understand the educational needs of its families, and are deeply committed to the academic and social success of each student who enters our school.

Attribution: Board

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

### **Projected Staff:**

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

At full enrollment, our school is projected to have staff as outlined below, with total full-time equivalent figures noted. We anticipate adding primarily classroom teachers and the necessary support staff as we grow.

Administration:

Principal: 1.0

Deans: 3.0

Registrar: 1.0

Office Administrator: 1.0

Student Recruitment Specialist: 0.5

Instructional:

Core Content Teachers: 28.0

Music, Art, PE, etc. Teachers: 3.0

English Learner Teachers: 1.5

Interventionists: 2.4

Library Technology Specialist: 1.0

Exceptional Children Teachers: 5.0

Exceptional Children Aides: 6.1

Social Worker: 0.4

Recess Aide: 1.0

Substitute Teachers: 1.4

Total Personnel: 56.3

RCA also will have access to and benefit from many staff members of the NHA service center who will provide services such as back office support to the

school. On our behalf, NHA will also contract for all additional necessary services, including food and janitorial services.

Staffing levels likely will be adjusted once students are enrolled at the school and additional needs are identified.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Include the following information for the proposed charter school:

To ensure effective instruction for every child every day, RCA will focus on recruiting and retaining excellent classroom teachers.

Recruiting: We will rely primarily on the strong candidate network and teacher recruitment capabilities of our management partner, NHA, which has extensive experience staffing 81 charter schools in nine states. Our Board members' knowledge of and connections to the local community and its potential sources for teachers will supplement these efforts. Recruiting strategies among those to be used include:

- Traditional Recruiting: NHA is constantly seeking and screening potential candidates through traditional and digital marketing strategies, including job fairs, university career fairs, social media, advertising, and direct referrals. We will advertise online, in select local markets, and throughout the NHA network of 81 operating charter schools.

- Campus Relationships: On behalf of RCA, NHA will leverage its partnerships with colleges and universities (including NHA's relationships with the teacher education programs at NC State, East Carolina University, all UNC campuses, and others) to tap pipelines of teacher candidates. This gives our school prime access to the best student teachers and the ability to hire new high-quality teacher graduates as soon as possible.

- Referral Networks: Recognizing that most teachers find teaching positions through referrals, we will actively pursue new teacher candidates through referrals from NHA-partner schools in North Carolina and around the country.

- Career Fairs and Conferences: Recruiters and ambassadors will actively participate in local, regional, and national career fairs and conferences. This will allow direct contact with both new graduates and current teachers who are in the market for new employment opportunities.

\*See overflow section for further detail.

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.*

Teachers will be jointly employed by our Board and NHA, and school leaders and other staff will be employed directly by NHA (this employment relationship is specified in our Services Agreement with NHA). Our Board will require NHA to recruit highly qualified teaching candidates for the principal's recommendation and the Board's review and eventual determination of employment. Our Board will hold the school principal as well as NHA accountable for student academic performance. Our Board maintains the authority to express dissatisfaction with the principal, providing NHA and the principal sufficient time and support to remedy any identified issues. If insufficient improvement results, the Board can direct that the principal be terminated by NHA.

We have been advised that this arrangement complies with NC General Statute and was reviewed and approved by legal counsel for the Department of Public Instruction in 2012. Our partnership with NHA for the employment of school personnel allows our school to use NHA's comprehensive and time-tested systems to administer employee benefits, payroll, retirement programs, employment compliance documentation, and other human resource functions. This model is in place at other NHA-partner schools in North Carolina, including Greensboro Academy, the school we are replicating.

Appendix O provides a draft of our employment policies, offering further detail on these items.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Hiring; Background Checks: Our Board and NHA, will be equal opportunity employers. In addition to compensation, payroll, and employment administration functions, NHA oversees many licensure, and compliance functions at its partner schools, and will do so for our school as well. Our Board will adopt a background check policy that mirrors the legally required policy of WCPSS. Appendix J provides a draft of this policy.

As noted above, teachers will be jointly employed by our Board and NHA. Teachers will be recommended to the Board for hiring by the principal and NHA will collaborate with and thoroughly brief the Board on personnel selected to fill school leadership positions.

Dismissing Personnel: Employment at the school will be on an at-will basis. We will create a working environment that allows administrators to make decisions sensitive to the demands of students, and that includes identifying ineffective staff, offering additional support to them, or terminating their employment as appropriate.

In the event that the performance of an employee is unacceptable, and depending on the nature, degree, and circumstances of the incident or incidents, disciplinary action may be taken. Discipline may include a warning, creation of a performance coaching plan or performance improvement plan, suspension, or administrative leave. If an employee does not meet performance expectations after appropriate interventions, or if there is a significant violation of policies or procedures, employment may be terminated. Recommendations to terminate the employment of any teacher will be required to be presented to our Board for consideration and action.

Our employment policies and Employee Handbook will offer information on the corrective-action and termination processes. We have included draft employment policies in Appendix O, and will provide these policies and an Employee Handbook to each employee on or before the first day of work.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

The school budget included in this application offers detail on the proposed

salaries for all positions.

Teacher salary guidelines will be implemented that differentiate pay based on market rates and performance. Teachers' starting salaries will match the weighted average of districts surrounding RCA, ensuring that base pay is competitive in the market. Salaries will match the local market for the first three years, and beginning in the fourth year employees will be eligible for merit increases in their salary of up to four percent per year (additional increases may be available for truly exceptional teachers). Combined with a generous benefits package, an emphasis on career progression with the support necessary to grow professionally, and a respectful and professional working environment, employment at our school will be a very attractive choice.

In our budget plan, we projected a salary range for teachers of \$39,100 to \$48,150, and used an average of \$41,765 for financial planning.

RCA will hold staff accountable for success, measured by student academic growth and proficiency, and will have a pay-for-performance philosophy to appropriately recognize this success. Our school will use the "Total Rewards" compensation structure of NHA-partner schools which rewards staff who have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement. Components of the Total Rewards structure include: market increases for the first three years of teaching and merit-based salary increases after three years; competitive health insurance choices, including low employee-cost plans; retirement plan choices, including a 401(k) and Roth 401(k) with an employer-match component; life insurance; a tuition reimbursement program; and, employee recognition and reward programs.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Grievances: RCA will enact a process to handle employee grievances. Our deans will be teachers' first line of communication for addressing concerns (deans will address their concerns to the principal). Staff may instead contact a representative at the NHA service center dedicated to handling staff issues, and also may take advantage of an employee hotline that allows them to provide feedback and raise concerns anonymously. Concerns submitted through the hotline (online or by phone) are immediately reviewed by NHA's service center. In the rare event that staff cannot resolve a concern by speaking directly with the school leaders, or by talking with an NHA representative, staff may bring an unresolved concern to our Board.

Termination: Employment at RCA will be on an at-will basis. Teachers will be jointly employed by the Board and NHA, and the school leadership team will determine the staff structure based on skill, performance, and how to best serve the needs of students. School leaders will design support and/or training programs for ineffective staff, or recommend termination of employment as appropriate.

If the performance of an employee is unacceptable, and depending on the nature, degree, and circumstances of the incident or incidents, disciplinary action may be taken. Discipline may include a warning, creation of a performance coaching plan or performance improvement plan, suspension, or administrative leave. If an employee does not meet performance expectations

after appropriate interventions, or if there is a significant violation of policies or procedures, employment may be terminated. Recommendations to terminate the employment of teachers must be presented to our Board for consideration and action. The school's Employee Handbook, provided to each employee on or prior to the first day of work, will offer information on the corrective action and termination processes.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

No positions are expected to have dual responsibilities outside of the school. If it is necessary to have a position with dual responsibilities within the school, such as a social worker who is funded from the general budget and who also serves exceptional children through exceptional children's funding, we will ensure that the position is appropriately funded, that accounting is accurate, and that all compliance and reporting requirements are met.

Attribution: NHA

*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.*

Licensed EC teachers will be recruited to provide high-quality instruction for exceptional children. Other teachers will be available to provide academic support and the school will hire or contract with a school psychologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, and social worker to meet the needs of students enrolling in our school. We will review credentials to ensure compliance with "highly qualified teacher" requirements, and ancillary staff will have state-required credentials before providing services. Each year we will examine the need for additional staff to meet the needs of exceptional children, English Learners, and gifted students. Our projected first-year budget includes funding for 6.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to meet the needs of exceptional children; when fully enrolled, we expect to have 11.1 FTE EC staff. We also plan to start with 1.0 FTE EL teacher, growing to 1.5 FTE, and will adjust that number based on student need.

Attribution: NHA

*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).*

As outlined in our Services Agreement with NHA, our Board will jointly employ teachers and NHA will employ the administrative and non-teaching staff at RCA.

Principal: Our principal will be dedicated to fulfilling our mission. He or she must hold the unwavering belief that all children can and will learn. Qualified applicants will have a record of achieving significant student performance growth. Strong leadership and management skills and the ability to provide instructional support to teachers is required. The principal must be committed to and capable of developing school culture, promoting student achievement, and implementing school operations. Among the numerous responsibilities are:

- Demonstrating and modeling all aspects of the school-wide framework.

- Evaluating the educational program for conformance to state, federal, Board, and NHA standards.
- Collaborating with our Board on hiring and evaluating teachers.
- Implementing tools for parent and community communication.
- Reporting school activities and academic achievement to our Board regularly.
- Establishing school procedures and systems.
- Monitoring the use of data in lesson planning and evaluating student academic growth.

Principal candidates will have a bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred) and three or more year's related experience and/or training or equivalent combination of education and experience. They will demonstrate exceptional language skills, mathematical skills, reasoning ability, and interpersonal skills and possess all administrative licensure as required by law.

Deans: The Deans will share administrative responsibilities with the principal, and have the primary responsibility for:

- Personally mastering and modeling all aspects of the classroom framework.
- Building relationships with and among teachers and investing in the professional success of all staff.
- Coaching teachers toward instructional mastery.
- Holding teachers accountable to college readiness though development.
- Routinely analyzing student and grade-level cohort data to drive instruction, student growth, and professional development to ensure student needs are met.
- Promoting, modeling, and reinforcing all RCA and NHA procedures.

Deans will have a bachelor's degree and a minimum of three years of experience in teaching or administration, or an equivalent combination of education and experience, and will possess administrative licensure as required by law. Deans will exhibit superior language skills, mathematical skills, and reasoning ability, and will demonstrate an effective collaborative approach to mentoring and developing their direct reports.

Teachers: Teachers will have a demonstrated ability to:

- Communicate and work effectively with parents.
- Adapt teaching style to students' specific needs.
- Adapt to differences and changes in characteristics of students, programs, leadership, staff, and community.
- Use varied teaching methodologies to accommodate students' unique learning styles.
- Evaluate tests and measurements of achievement.
- Work effectively as a team member.

Teachers will be responsible to show capabilities in implementing the curriculum with responsibilities for:

- Coordinating with educational assistants.
- Maintaining current achievement level information.
- Assigning additional studies to students not meeting or exceeding achievement.
- Keeping accurate student records.
- Establishing classroom procedures.

- Ordering supplementary education materials.
- Requesting parent volunteers.
- Reporting all education-related activities to the principal.

Teachers will have earned a bachelor's degree, be highly qualified, and have the appropriate teaching licensure as required by law. EC and EL teachers and aides also will demonstrate knowledge about education strategies particularly suited to the student populations they serve, and be appropriately certified.

Attribution: NHA

\*Continued from "Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management."

- Diversity Sourcing: NHA's strategic sourcing efforts will help locate minority teacher candidates and keep in contact with them to tap pools of strong, diverse teaching talent for RCA. We anticipate that this will give us an advantage in developing and maintaining a culturally diverse staff.
- Workforce and Talent Pipeline Planning: NHA's workforce planning function is designed to assist our school in understanding the current local labor supply and demand in the area, helping us prepare for current and future hiring needs.

NHA currently employs more than 2,400 teachers and 1,300 supporting school staff, effectively managing recruitment and other elements of school staffing across the nine states in which its partner schools operate.

Retaining: The NHA-partner school model includes systems and practices designed to motivate, engage, reward, develop, and retain high-quality school faculty and staff. The school leadership team will have multiple opportunities to recognize faculty and staff, including scheduled staff celebrations (American Education Week; Teacher Appreciation Week; National Charter Schools Week; etc.) and a new employee rewards program called "High Five" that recognizes and rewards teachers and staff quarterly for outstanding performance.

Importantly, our school's "Total Rewards" approach to compensation (see more detail below) offers a very strong benefits package and opportunity for merit salary increases for staff who have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement.

Attribution: NHA

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

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

Our management partner, NHA, will maintain and manage teacher licensure and professional development reporting and compliance, and will report this information to our Board and other entities as required.

Attribution: NHA

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.*

The NHA-partner school model that will be used by RCA has a robust and

successful staff development structure designed to attract, train, and retain the highest-quality personnel.

**Mentor:** All new teachers will be assigned a mentor teacher who will address day-to-day questions and concerns. Scheduled meetings with the mentor will provide ongoing support on the curriculum, instructional practice, and classroom management. Mentors also will conduct periodic classroom observations and provide feedback to the teachers immediately after each visit to further improve classroom instruction. All new teachers also will participate in a Beginning Teacher Support Program established for additional support.

Each classroom teacher will work closely with his or her grade-level dean to focus on specific development needs. Each teacher will be observed weekly and meetings are then held with the dean to provide feedback and coaching based on these observations or other needs stated by the teacher. Teachers will reflect on their teaching practices, ask questions, and get coaching to address individual development needs as identified based on teaching practices found in our classroom framework. The deans are in turn observed, coached, and evaluated by the principal on their effectiveness of supervising teachers.

**Retain:** Several factors combine to support retention of excellent instructional staff. These include:

- Frequent and high-quality coaching around instructional practice.
- An extensive plan of professional development and a commitment to individual growth.
- Intentional tracking of high-performing teachers to positions of greater responsibility, including as mentors and deans; outstanding deans are coached to become school principals.
- The "Total Rewards" approach to compensation, including performance-based raises.
- A school environment that promotes scholarly learning and a culture of building-wide respect for all students and staff.

**Evaluate:** Teacher performance will be evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative measures in accordance with applicable law and policy. Our school will use a pay-for-performance compensation model, with performance measured by the state's online evaluation tool and student achievement. The evaluation system for teachers will follow the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES). All components are rated using a four-level scale: distinguished, accomplished, proficient, and developing.

Each teacher will be formally evaluated once per year by his or her dean. Deans will use data from regular coaching sessions for the entire evaluation period to form the evaluation scores, and will discuss the results with each teacher during a one-on-one session. Each dean will receive professional development training on how to properly conduct evaluations as a part of his or her comprehensive new dean training program.

Teachers' competence will be evaluated based on multiple observations, feedback, and coaching provided by deans. The regular observations and feedback, the mid-year check-in, and year-end evaluations will help define professional development goals for each teacher. Progress toward those goals

also will be an element in evaluating teachers.

Attribution: Board and NHA

- 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.*

Core Components: Supporting high-quality teaching, the instructional program at RCA will include clear expectations, regular observations, consistent feedback, and an intentional focus on developing teaching practices. Professional development will be integrated throughout our culture, beginning with an intensive orientation and training before the school opens for its first year. Other training will be prioritized and incorporated as a purposeful element of the school calendar, and will include:

- Formal training sessions.
- Mentors assigned to new teachers.
- Regular teacher feedback and coaching sessions.
- Creation of professional learning communities.
- Daily time for common grade-level planning.
- Weekly grade-level team meetings with deans to support a common approach to instruction.
- Grade-level team meetings with the principal to ensure a unified school-wide approach to instruction.
- Grade-level and cross-grade-level team meetings also will be scheduled for teachers to share ideas for increasing student achievement.

Our partnership with NHA provides teachers with access to a variety of learning opportunities including seminars, conferences, video libraries, web-based resources, book studies, e-learning, and internal and external consultants.

Effective Implementation: Our school leaders will be responsible for determining professional development needs and will work with NHA to develop a customized plan to meet those needs. Each year, leadership will undertake a comprehensive assessment of the educational program and operations of the school and develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP) that analyzes student achievement, the school environment, the teacher community, the parent community, and the administration. The SIP will provide a strategic action plan to meet identified needs, and both building-wide and individualized professional development efforts will be included as necessary to meet identified needs.

Attribution: NHA

- 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.*

Prior to school opening: All new teachers hired prior to the start of school will participate in New Teacher Orientation (NTO), a multiday immersion program designed to ensure buy-in to the school's mission and vision and to address specific curricular and instructional needs. This training will be actively supported with ongoing coaching and additional training throughout the year. NHA has developed a collection of effective, industry-leading

practices (see the "Educational Need" section for further details), which are being implemented throughout NHA-partner schools to build a common approach designed to generate outstanding academic results. During NTO, teachers and school leaders will learn why these practices are effective and see how they play out in daily activities such as classroom management and instructional planning. NTO participants will experience these principles both as they occur in a classroom environment and throughout the entire school. This will empower new teachers to begin applying these practices the moment they enter our school.

A sample NTO agenda is outlined below:

- Day 1: Classroom Culture; Purpose & Vision; and, Behave with Care.
- Day 2: Classroom Culture continued.
- Day 2: Curriculum and Curricular Tools.
- Day 3: Curriculum and Curricular Tools; Grade-level Best Practices.

During NTO, new teachers and leaders will begin to build our school culture by learning the practices necessary to connect with students, establish expected behaviors and routines, and manage classrooms. The training focuses on establishing a positive and proactive culture and self-management of classrooms by training teachers how to: structure the classroom in ways that promote responsible student behavior; engage students in building school culture; intentionally develop strong positive relationships with students and explicitly teach students how to behave responsibly in every classroom situation; focus more time, attention, and energy to acknowledge responsible behavior than to respond to misbehavior; and, pre-plan responses to misbehavior to ensure they are brief, calm, and delivered in a consistent manner.

All new teachers and leaders also are instructed on the principles of effective instruction and the instructional strategies used to enhance learning in each of the core content areas. Each grade-level teacher receives specific training in the use of the curricular tool components.

Participants in NTO will have the opportunity to interact with and receive instruction from master teachers in their specific content area or at their specific grade level. The focus of these sessions includes developing classroom management plans, examining the school's character development curriculum, reviewing effective instructional practices, and sharing practical ideas for working with specific students. This includes new EC teachers and EL teachers who will be trained in relevant topics by master EC and EL teachers and expert representatives from NHA.

Ongoing opportunities: To supplement NTO, new leaders and teachers will participate in additional school-based staff-development days prior to the start of school. This professional development will communicate additional expectations to teachers and staff, including non-instructional processes and procedures, and will provide new teachers with the opportunity to conduct grade-level planning with their colleagues. These days also are designed to deepen knowledge around core concepts related to the formative assessment process, classroom management, building student relationships, and school-wide behavior support systems. We believe that there should be no artificial limits to professional development opportunities and have structured our school's programming to reflect that view.

Attribution: NHA

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.

Our calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure will incorporate significant professional development opportunities for teachers and leaders. Our staff also will participate in numerous professional development opportunities during the summer months, including robust preparation prior to our first school year.

As outlined above, our staff will participate in New Teacher Orientation and NHA University, a collaborative leadership training week for school leaders and teachers across NHA's 81 partner schools, which both occur over the summer. A total of nine days are allocated for professional development during the school year, and will include focus time on EC and ELs. In addition, our daily schedule incorporates 45 minutes of planning time for each classroom teacher. At least one planning period each week will be dedicated to meeting in grade-level teams, and 30 minutes of a planning period each week will be dedicated to a one-on-one meeting with each teacher's dean for feedback and to provide coaching for development. School leaders will schedule faculty meetings at appropriate times that do not impede teaching and learning, and teaching staff schedules will be established to permit cooperative and collaborative meetings with parents.

The school's staffing structure meshes with the daily calendar to allow core-subject teachers both individual and common planning time while student instruction in "specials" - art, physical education, music, library/technology, etc. - is occurring. To support collaboration among peers, professional learning communities will be established that allow common grade-level planning during this time. Together, teachers will review the current week's lesson plans and plan upcoming lessons in ways that ensure common delivery and alignment with the school's curriculum. The school's calendar and staffing plan also allow regular grade-level and cross-grade level team meetings to be scheduled where teachers can share ideas for increasing student achievement and mentor one another.

RCA will provide robust professional development opportunities specific to instruction and services for EC students. Our staff will participate in regional EC training in cooperation with other NHA-partner schools, which will include topics such as:

- The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and its components.
- Comprehensive Exceptional Children Accountability System (CECAS) training.
- Effective instructional practices for students with disabilities, including its application to Common Core.
- EC team member roles and responsibilities.
- Student evaluation reports.
- Positive behavior supports and building relationships with students.
- Review of NHA's detailed special education manual.
- Mission, vision, and purpose of NHA's Division of Special Education.

Our staff will also participate in regional trainings provided by NCDPI.

Finally, our staff will receive significant support from NHA's special education team to ensure that we replicate best practices. This includes the

use of detailed handbooks and processes for overseeing EC programming. Specifically, the handbook will provide guidance on confidentiality of records, accountability, discipline procedures, maintenance of effort, and more.

Attribution: NHA

### **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)).*

Our school's planned marketing and outreach efforts will be designed to ensure full enrollment, achieve a broad awareness of the school throughout the Rolesville area, and ensure that the school becomes known as a valuable part of the local community and an active contributor to its economic and social success. This effort will include significant grassroots outreach targeted to families of all types. The school does not intend to serve a special population of students; it will be marketed to all area residents without bias, with the goal of attracting a student population that reflects the demographic composition of the schools across Wake and Franklin counties.

Board members' knowledge of the community and NHA's outreach expertise will form the basis of our school's marketing efforts. Together, the Board and representatives from NHA will assess the interest of prospective parents using such methods as diverse community focus groups, public opinion polls, and more. This will provide important information about parents' perceptions of the area, assess education needs that are not being met, and measure the relative attractiveness of features of our new school. (Results of our first area parent survey are presented in Appendix A1.)

When we are notified of the recommendation for approval of our application, marketing efforts will intensify and a dedicated local student recruitment specialist with strong community knowledge will be hired (at NHA's expense) before the opening of the school. This representative will lead grassroots marketing and the building of community relationships including outreach to: Wakefield YMCA; Allen Tate Real Estate; Boys and Girls Club of Wake Forest; area daycare suppliers; local chambers of commerce and other community businesses; area churches, temples, and other houses of worship; Head Start and other community educational programs; local community recreational organizations; and other youth activity centers; and more.

Formal advertising efforts may include outdoor ads (municipal buses and bus

stops, billboards, etc.), radio spots, television announcements, local and community newspaper display ads, and/or internet media advertisements launched several months before the school's opening as needed. In addition to the student recruitment specialist dedicated to our school, pre-opening marketing efforts such as this will be done at NHA's expense.

School representatives will host monthly enrollment information meetings for parents at locations convenient for broad community participation. These meetings will be promoted by various means such as direct mail, digital marketing, and grassroots marketing. At these meetings, parents will learn more about the school's mission, design, and overall academic program, and will have the opportunity to ask questions and engage the school's representatives in productive dialogue. The school also will host events specially designed for parents of exceptional children to provide a forum that allows these families to learn more about our EC services. These meetings will be an open dialogue, sharing information with parents about our school, but also hearing from parents about matters important to them. Feedback from parents and guardians will directly impact the type of before- and after-school programming hosted at our school, as an example.

Parents interested in enrolling their children will be invited to various orientation events to learn more detail about the curriculum and character education emphasis, meet the principal and teachers, obtain information about the school's character development program, and learn how they can take an active role in their child's education. These events will also have a social component to encourage parents to come together to help us develop a vibrant school community even before the start of school.

Attribution: NHA

### **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.*

Communication with Parents before Opening: Strong parental involvement often is the result of effective and robust school-to-home communication. Our school is committed to maintaining an atmosphere of open dialogue between parents and school leaders and teachers, and we will begin these partnerships as early as possible in the life of the school. As soon as we are notified of the approval of our charter application, we will begin building relationships with parents and informing them of our mission. Families will be contacted through a variety of practical methods to inform them about our school, the enrollment process, and how they can become involved in the school.

Methods such as a monthly newsletter, website, and Facebook page will keep interested families aware of and connected to the latest happenings of the school as it prepares to open. Social media websites will be used to help form and maintain connections between school leaders and parents. While our school is being constructed, a temporary school office will be available on or very near the school site as a point of contact with staff for the

school's prospective parents. This pre-opening rapport with prospective parents will peak with a family orientation held at the end of the summer to allow enrolled students and their families to meet the principal, the student's teacher and classmates, and other school staff.

**Engaging Parents:** Parents will have two opportunities each year, including our first year, to complete a survey called "Voice of the Parent." This survey will be designed to ensure that parents' expectations and students' needs are understood and are being met. Voice of the Parent is designed to systematically drive action and accountability so that we remain parent-, student-, and community-focused. These surveys will be confidential, and the feedback received will be compiled into summary statistics for use at the school leadership and Board levels.

To encourage parents' presence and active involvement, the school building will include a dedicated parent room. This room will give parents a place to gather and build relationships with one another, discuss matters of mutual interest, and take ownership in the school. The room will be equipped to provide parents access to online school materials and an online student information system that allows parents to monitor their children's academic progress, behavior, and attendance over the course of the year. Our student information system also will provide information related to assigned student homework, offer resources for homework assistance, present scores on various assessments and progress growth information, and post newsletters and school calendars. The system will be synchronized with teachers' monitoring of student progress, and will help remind teachers of previous and ongoing student needs.

Our school will actively engage parents in their children's learning. Prior to each school year, we will make parents and each student aware of grade-level performance expectations. Student progress against those goals will be communicated to parents regularly through direct teacher communication, progress reports, report cards, and parent-teacher conferences.

Parents also will be encouraged to help form clubs or groups to support extracurricular or school-time activities in the building. We will facilitate the formation of a parent organization at our school. Our Board will expect that the parent organization support our mission and student body in all it does and report to the Board frequently on the organization's initiatives. We will ensure that our parent organization has the necessary policies and procedures in place to stay in compliance with law, including those necessary for sound financial management.

Attribution: Board and NHA

## **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 withdrawals and transfers.*

We will comply with all applicable federal and state laws for admissions. We will not discriminate on the basis of intellectual or athletic abilities, measures of achievement or aptitude, disability, status as a handicapped person, homeless status, English proficiency, religion, creed, race, sex, color, national origin, or any other basis that would be illegal for a public school.

Open Enrollment Period (OEP): If our charter is approved, an OEP for the first year of operation will be established prior to June 30 and will be included in a notice of open enrollment. The OEP will not be shorter than 30 calendar days. At a public Board meeting, we will confirm the notice of the OEP and the application process, a process designed to ensure that people most likely to be interested in the school are informed. On our behalf, NHA will widely distribute the OEP notice.

Applications: Applications for the school year will be accepted beginning on the first day of the OEP. If applications received during the OEP exceed offered seats in any grade level, a random selection process will take place. If applications received are fewer than offered seats in every grade level, all eligible applicants will be accepted.

Applications received after the OEP will not be eligible to participate in the random selection process. If seats are available, late applications will be added to the end of the accepted list in the order received. If no seats are available, late applications will be added to the end of the waiting list or, if a late application is entitled to preference, inserted in the waiting list immediately before all applicants on the waiting list with a lower enrollment-preference category.

A list with the name of each student who submitted an application during the OEP will be created with the student's name, birth date, grade level, street address, and names and grade levels of any siblings who are also applying for admission and/or are currently enrolled siblings. From this list, an electronic card will be created for entry into the random selection process. If siblings apply for the same school year, one surname card will be entered into the random selection process to represent all of the siblings applying at the same time. If that surname card is selected, then all of the siblings shall be admitted, except that siblings who are not multiple birth siblings may be admitted only to the extent that space is available and does not exceed the grade-level capacity. If a card is drawn and there is no space available in the appropriate grade, applicants will be placed on the waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. After the random selection process is complete, late applications will be processed in accordance with the procedures above.

When a seat becomes available in a particular grade due to attrition, erosion, or other event, that available seat will be offered to the first student on the waiting list for that particular grade wishing to enroll.

Re-Enrollment: Students enrolled in the school will be eligible to re-enroll for successive years without entering the random-selection process. All applicants on a waiting list must re-submit an application for the following school year to be eligible for enrollment.

Preferences: Once a student has attended the school, he or she will be given first preference to enroll for the subsequent school year. Children of members of our Board and children of the school's full-time employees also will be granted preference. After that, preference will be given to siblings of students reenrolling at the school.

Withdrawals/Transfers: When a student withdraws, that creates an open seat to be filled by another student through the waiting list process outlined above. Students wishing to legally transfer into the school mid-year may submit a late application, which will be processed as outlined above.

Appendix J presents our draft admissions policy.

Attribution: NHA

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

IDENTIFY LEA FROM WHICH STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY COME

LEA #1 Wake County Schools  
 LEA #2 Franklin County 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 920	LEA 350	LEA 000	LEA 920	LEA 350	LEA 000	LEA 920	LEA 350	LEA 000	LEA 920	LEA 350	LEA 000	LEA 920	LEA 350	LEA 000
	460	116		527	133		594	150		616	156		616	156	

## 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.*

Aligned with Mission: RCA will work diligently to ensure that our school is accessible to all students and that transportation needs are not a barrier to any child attending the school. We do not plan to provide bus transportation to the general student population, either directly or through contract with WCPSS. However, we will offer parents and guardians resources and support to coordinate their transportation needs, and we will provide transportation as required by an individual student's IEP or other applicable law.

Transportation Program: Our school will establish a program for parents called "RideFinder." This is an online tool, established in other NHA-partner schools with great success, which matches parents seeking to carpool with other parents. Parents log in to the school's website, enter their address, and automatically see other parents who have expressed an interest in carpooling and how near those families live. Both personalized and written training on the use of this program (including appropriate reminders of the assumption of risk when operating a vehicle) will be offered by the school to all parents of enrolling students. RideFinder streamlines the process of information gathering and provides parents instant access to carpooling options within their school community.

Asking parents to partner with us in transportation, paired with our dedication to having school staff greet students and parents during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, provides students a transition between school and home that is comforting, safe, smooth, and welcoming. This approach also will allow staff an additional point-of-contact with parents, and provide parents with an additional opportunity to become a part of the day-to-day life of the school. This is the exact program in place at other NHA-partner schools in North Carolina. It has worked well, allowing students to arrive at school more focused on the activities of the day and with lower levels of anxiety and distraction than often attributed to school bus rides.

We recognize that this transportation strategy may not be a viable option for every family. Before the first day of school, during an orientation program for families, we will work with parents to address and coordinate their transportation needs to ensure these needs are not a barrier to any child wishing to attend the school. In addition to the RideFinder program, school staff will work to identify and plan the use of public transportation options that are available, and if needed, make arrangements with private carriers. The school's budget also has built in \$10,000 to cover the cost of such transportation needs, which also may include transportation for students who may be experiencing homelessness or exceptional children with transportation needs noted in their IEPs.

Targeted Population: RCA will not be targeting a specific student population for enrollment, instead marketing to and serving students from across Wake and Franklin counties. As noted, with the assistance of the RideFinder program families living near other families will be able to access all information needed for arranging carpooling or other transportation options. We recognize that our population may include students who have transportation needs, however, including students from outside the local area, and have budgeted funds to address those needs.

Aligned to Budget: Our transportation plan aligns with the budget plan which as noted includes an allocation of \$10,000 to cover special transportation arrangements. NHA will incorporate the RideFinder online parent tool into the school's technology network.

Attribution: NHA

### **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.*

An appropriate school meals program will be established at RCA, and no student will lack a daily meal. As part of the daily attendance process, teachers will ask each child if he or she needs a lunch or if one was brought from home, entering the information into the student data system. If a student does not qualify for free meals or does not have enough money in his or her lunch account to purchase a meal, the teacher will notify the office so that a lunch still will be provided to that student; the school will maintain a discretionary account to be charged for this purpose if necessary to ensure that each student has lunch each day.

On behalf of our school, NHA will contract with a food-service provider to operate our program, following U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) procurement requirements and complying with Federal Regulation 7 CFR 210.16 and other applicable law. A hot meal for lunch will be offered daily, and a cold breakfast will be offered if needed. Students will pay a set price for school meals unless they qualify for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program. NHA has experience in handling all the required aspects of these programs, and the Board will hold NHA accountable to ensure the efficient management of our school's breakfast and lunch programs. As necessary, we will look to the North Carolina Department of School Nutrition Services for resources in overseeing the compliance of our food-service program.

All meals will meet the nutritional requirements set by the USDA 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.

We recognize the importance of providing healthy meals to our students, and our goal is to meet students' nutritional needs to ensure that they focus on the work of learning and not on their physical hunger.

Attribution: NHA

**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	\$2,000,000		\$3,400.00
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$2,000,000		\$3,600.00
Property Insurance	\$25,000		\$400.00
Motor Vehicle Liability	\$1,000,000		\$225.00
Bonding Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$100.00
Other	\$2,000,000		\$1,600.00
Total Cost			\$9,325.00

\*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.

lisakane 09/24/2015

(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).

In anticipation of approval of this application, NHA's real estate acquisition team and our Board have begun an exhaustive review of area opportunities to locate a facility for our school. Both constructing a new school building and renovating an existing facility to make it suitable for our programmatic needs are under consideration. The provision of an appropriately designed facility for our faculty and students is one of the most important aspects of our partnership with NHA. With Rolesville as the fastest-growing town in the state, Wake Forest experiencing significant growth as well, and WCPSS projecting a need to accommodate 20,000 more students in the next five years alone, the construction of a school facility for RCA - built at no cost to taxpayers - will be a welcome, and likely necessary, addition to our community.

**Acquiring a Facility:** Once our charter application is approved, we will work with NHA and the necessary municipalities to complete the land use approval process for the real estate we have identified. Following the necessary land use approvals, construction will begin. NHA's typical construction period lasts less than five months, and NHA has a very successful history in both building new school facilities and renovating existing structures to accommodate schools.

NHA makes a multi-million-dollar up-front investment to cover land use approvals, construction, and construction-related costs. The school and our Board do not pay anything. The facility, which will be financed privately, is built to house the entire planned K-8 academic program from day one, even though the school will be launched with fewer grades. Although this strategy may be more costly for NHA, it is valuable to our school because it eliminates potential disruption to the academic program in future years from having to undertake additional construction while school is in session.

Being able to occupy a facility specifically designed for our planned educational program is a huge plus for our students and our faculty. We will be able to avoid overcrowding or trying to fit our program into a facility designed for a different purpose. Our partnership with NHA will give us the exact facility we want and need for our program.

**Obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy:** The Board and NHA will ensure that we are in compliance with all building codes in the development of a facility for our school. We will work with our local building department to determine, in a timely manner, if modifications to an existing facility must be approved by the North Carolina Department of Insurance for building code compliance. If the decision is made to build a new facility, we will ensure that NHA complies with all applicable land use processes, building requirements, and certifications. Our Board and NHA will ensure that we receive an educational certificate of occupancy from the local building department prior to our school opening.

Over the past three years, NHA has successfully built and opened three new partner schools in North Carolina, and plans to open three more in the fall

of 2016. NHA continues to strive for improvements in its construction process and to complete facilities as early as possible. Our Board plans to closely monitor the process of the opening of the three NHA-partner schools in 2016 and apply any lessons learned to our governance during the pre-opening phase of RCA.

We also will ensure that we have insurance coverage for the facility at or above what is required by applicable law. Our insurance quote in Appendix P includes coverage in all required areas. Some of these items are encompassed under the property insurance and umbrella policy specifications (such as boiler and machinery, real and personal property, fidelity bonds, etc.).

Attribution: Board and NHA

Please attach copies of Facilities Inspections as Appendix R.

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

The projected cost is \$24.74/sq. ft. Given the facility's single-use nature, a lease that is contingent upon charter renewal, and NHA's full assumption of financial risk, we are comfortable with this cost.

Attribution: Board and NHA

**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.*

Members of our Board have already begun working with NHA's real estate team to create a list of suitable properties. To ensure that the school's facility plans stay on track, a number of properties that will suit the construction of a new facility or the renovation of an existing facility will be identified in the initial search process, and a preferred property will be identified. If there are unforeseen hurdles with the preferred property that cannot be overcome in a reasonable timeframe or at reasonable expense, the Board and NHA will be well-positioned to move expeditiously to secure one of the other properties from the list of viable real estate opportunities. Should we receive a charter, we will be well positioned to secure land and complete our construction project in time for a successful opening in the fall of 2017.

The total space needed for our facility is approximately six to eight acres, with a building of approximately 48,500 square feet. This will include sufficient space for a play area, a play field, and adequate parking. The envisioned school building will include: approximately 28 classrooms; seven student support rooms; an art room; a music room; a media center; a gymnasium; a parent room; a front office; administrative spaces for our principal and deans; a teacher workroom; and, a conference room. If constraints on space are needed for any reason, contingency options could include: combining the music and art rooms; consolidating administrative offices; modifying the play area, play field, or parking; and/or waiting and scaling up the number of classrooms and student support rooms only as the

school grows from its starting configuration as a K-6 school to a K-8 school in our third year.

Should we ever decide that the school management relationship we have with NHA is not providing the desired outcomes for our students and families, we will be prepared to terminate our Services Agreement with NHA. At that time we would begin looking for alternate school facility options, but, importantly, the school still will have continued use of its building. Under provisions in a separate Lease Agreement, our school is authorized to stay in the facility for the remainder of any current school year, and NHA is obliged to continue to manage and maintain the facility. Additionally, in our Lease Agreement we have the option to lease the facility for a subsequent school year at the current rental rate. After that, we are free to purchase the building, negotiate a new Lease Agreement (for which we would solicit advice from our independent legal counsel), or find another location for our school. In such an event, the original list of potential sites from our initial property search will serve as a ready-made starting point for locating an alternate facility.

Attribution: Board and NHA

**VI. FINANCIAL PLAN**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**LEA #1 920 - Wake County Schools**

Revenue	2015-2016 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2017-2018
State Funds	\$4,501.95	460	\$2,070,897.00
Local Funds	\$2,069.00	460	\$951,740.00
Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	65	\$244,927.15
<b>Totals</b>			\$3,267,564.15

**LEA #2 350 - Franklin County Schools**

Revenue	2015-2016 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2017-2018
State Funds	\$5,237.84	116	\$607,589.44
Local Funds	\$1,493.71	116	\$173,270.36
Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	16	\$60,289.76
<b>Totals</b>			\$841,149.56

**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.*

In our opening year, RCA plans to serve 576 students in grades K-6. We will expand and add seventh and eighth grades to ultimately serve 772 students in grades K-8 at full-enrollment by 2020-21, our fourth year. Because of the established demand for more charter school seats in our community, including at both the K-5 and 6-8 grade levels, we are planning to start K-6. We believe this strategy is important, as parents with rising sixth graders are at a natural transition point, and middle school choices are limited. We are confident we can attract students and fill to our enrollment targets. As noted previously, Rolesville is the fastest-growing town in the state, and Wake is one of the fastest-growing counties in the country. The district's already overcrowded schools - students are occupying nearly 1,200 modular classrooms - are projected only to become more crowded in the next five years as WCPSS expects to add as many as 20,000 new students.

Our initial student enrollment outreach effort will be designed to saturate the area around the chosen school site. Wake Forest Charter Academy, the closest NHA-partner school to our proposed location, for example, opened in the fall of 2014 and generated more than 1,600 applications for fewer than 600 available seats.

We did not establish a "break-even" point between student enrollment and our budget. The requested size and phased growth for the school is accommodated both by our planned annual student enrollment and a pledge from our management partner to support the establishment of our complete educational program from day one. NHA has committed to contributing (not loaning) any funds necessary to cover expenses that exceed revenues in any given year, providing the school with the safety net we need on student enrollment projections. While we are confident that we will meet our enrollment estimates included here, and thus revenue projections, the pledge of support by NHA assures our Board that we will never be in a position that requires cuts to our planned educational program.

Additionally, our partnership with NHA helps to ensure that we will always have the necessary cash on hand to meet all short-term obligations - importantly, including faculty and staff payroll - even prior to receiving the state, local, and federal charter school funds due to the school. This is a significant benefit in the early years of our school, easing and improving our financial planning process.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Services Agreement with NHA offers all funds necessary to cover expenditures that exceed revenues in the school's early years, allowing a phased growth for our school (see the letter of financial commitment in Appendix S). The budget is conservative overall, and includes an expected contribution from NHA of approximately \$1.2 million in the first year of operation, \$775,000 in Year 2, \$500,000 in Year 3, and between \$400,000 and \$500,000 in both year 4 and 5. These are contributions to the school, not loans, and no repayment is required. These contributions allow us to provide the full school facility and academic program in year one, even though we will start with fewer students.

Our Services Agreement also affirms NHA's commitment to providing sufficient revenue to meet the school's budgeted expenses if ever public revenues do not cover our required needs.

Attribution: Board and NHA

*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*

*As described above, the budget projections in the first few years of operation include contributions - not loans - from NHA, with no financial repayment obligations whatsoever on the school or the school's Board. NHA contributions are included in the line item "other funds," combined there with federal entitlement funds and a small amount of funds projected from food sales to students. NHA contributions are budgeted at approximately \$1.2 million in the first year of operation, \$775,000 in Year 2, \$500,000 in Year 3, and between \$400,000 and \$500,000 in both year 4 and 5.*

Attribution: NHA

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

17:1 - \*See overflow section for further detail.

- 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.*

Our Services Agreement with NHA calls for NHA to provide the school with all necessary staffing, school services, and back-office functions, including purchasing, accounting, business services, informational technology, data reporting, data warehousing, human resources, and payroll.

NHA uses a standardized human resource, purchasing, and payroll software system to internally manage all transactions related to the personnel, purchasing, and payroll functions. This administrative infrastructure supports full compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. NHA effectively manages compensation, payroll, and compliance for approximately 4,000 school-based employees in nine states, and has the experience and efficiency to properly provide these services to our school. On behalf of our school, NHA will follow applicable state and federal law with respect to

the selection of contractors and large purchases on behalf of the school, including competitive bidding or sole-source documentation as applicable.

Attribution: NHA

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

RCA will annually maintain a balanced budget. Our school's management partner, NHA, has an established record of opening and operating 81 schools in nine states, and at each school has ensured the establishment of the school's entire educational program, combining needed additional contribution by NHA with the amount of public revenue received. Not a single NHA-partner school has closed because of financial difficulties of any type.

Not a single school has ever terminated its management arrangement with NHA. We believe that this is a testament to NHA's ability to develop budgets and structures that provide the proper level of financial commitment to the priorities of each partner school's educational program. For us at RCA, these priorities include: a robust professional development program; a distributed leadership model that allows greater coaching of classroom teachers; a full curricular program that emphasizes the core areas of math, ELA, science, and social studies while also allowing for art, music, physical education, and other "specials"; and a meaningful character education program. NHA-partner schools, already marked by a competitive salary and employee benefit structure, recently invested a substantial amount to offer a more competitive salary and benefit package choices, making schools such as ours even more attractive to high-performing employees and helping better create an atmosphere that allows excellent teachers to take advantage of opportunities to grow in responsibility and leadership.

We will work diligently to ensure that the school is accessible to all students, and that transportation needs are not a barrier to any child attending the school. The school's budget also has built in \$10,000 to cover the cost of such transportation needs, which also may include transportation for students who may be experiencing homelessness or exceptional children with transportation needs noted in their IEPs.

NHA's development of our school facility and our Lease Agreement for that facility supports that no funds from banks, other lending institutions, outside corporations, foundations, or other sources will be needed to cover our occupancy costs.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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.*

While a substantial reserve fund balance is not intended, the risk that such a reserve fund would be designed to mitigate is in large part borne directly by our operating partner, NHA. NHA is committed to providing the educational program we have proposed here according to the budget the Board approves, regardless of any fluctuations or shortfalls in public revenue. NHA is committed to providing both the initial investment needed to ensure a

successful opening and the ongoing investment necessary to ensure that any planned educational programming need is fully covered in the budget, not just during our early years but in every year of our school's operation.

This support is detailed in our Services Agreement with NHA, which clarifies that NHA assumes the obligation for all expenses, and thus assumes all the financial risk. Because the obligation to cover planned costs is NHA's, the need for the school to maintain a sizable fund balance is negated. We have spoken with Board members at both long-standing and new NHA-partner schools and confirmed NHA's financial commitment to its partner schools.

Through both the Services Agreement and Board oversight, NHA will be obliged to manage and operate the school in accordance with the budget approved by the Board, and expenditures during the academic year are not to deviate materially from the approved budget without advanced Board approval. Of course, as necessary the Board will review and approve amended budgets based on student need, and this could require additional spending, again which NHA is obligated to cover.

Should our Board ever decide that it is best for our students if we separate from NHA, we will be able to continue leasing the facility and will have per-pupil revenue to fund our operations while we make decisions on how to replace management services or operate the school ourselves. And while there is no substantial surplus envisioned, there also will be no deficit because of NHA's funding commitment. Therefore our Board would not have any debt to cover should we ever terminate our partnership with NHA. In fact, as noted earlier in this application the experience of other NHA-partner schools in North Carolina shows each of these schools consistently ending each year with a small budget surplus.

We recognize the guidance from the NCDPI that schools show additional indicators of financial viability beyond the proposed Services Agreement with NHA. NHA-partner schools in North Carolina (as well as in the other eight states where NHA partners with local boards to operate schools) consistently receive unqualified audits, meet total margin ratios, and do not carry long-term debt. No school partnering with NHA has ever been closed for financial reasons, and NHA has never walked away from a partnership with a school, even when enrollment or funding at the school has decreased.

In accordance with our Services Agreement, our Board will retain a discretionary expenditure fund to be used for Board-driven school purposes and programs. We are contemplating using these funds to create a fund balance and may set aside up to half of these funds each year to build an ongoing fund balance. We will revisit our fund balance needs after each year of operations as part of our annual evaluation of the performance of NHA. If, as we believe will occur, we are satisfied with the performance of NHA and with the strength the Board has under our Services Agreement, we will be comfortable choosing to reinvest these funds in the educational program at our school. Our budget with this application does not reflect this potential surplus, as we chose to project satisfaction with our programming and the decision to use these funds for student programming of some sort during each school year.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

This budget assumes that no funds from banks, other lending institutions, outside corporations, foundations, or other sources will be needed. We plan for our school to start as a K-6 school and to grow over the next two years to a K-8 school. Our educational program will be fully established and implemented from day one nonetheless, and we recognize the wisdom of initially occupying a facility that has been constructed to house our full K-8 model. Accordingly, NHA has pledged contributions sufficient to meet operating expenses above revenues received in the school's early years and provides as part of its partnership a school facility built to house our school at full capacity. Appendix S includes a letter of revenue assurances from NHA, which further details the organization's initial and ongoing commitment to our school, and Appendix L includes our executed Services Agreement with NHA, detailing the financing structure for our school.

Attribution: NHA

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.*

The school will not have assets from other sources. Through our Services Agreement, NHA will purchase and provide assets on behalf of our school.

Attribution: NHA

\*Continued from "student to teacher ratio."

Our anticipated student-to-teacher ratio will be approximately 17:1. The budget is not built on a specific student-to-teacher ratio; however, the main drivers for budget expenditures are the number and anticipated characteristics of students to be served, the number of classrooms in use, and overall operational costs of the school. As the school grows by adding grade levels and classrooms in the first few years, so too does the projected staffing. The planned staffing pattern allows for a concentration of core subject teachers while offering co-curricular classes (music, art, physical education, etc.), and provides for staffing for EC students. The staffing model and budget reflect this 17:1 pupil-to-instructional staff ratio in the school's charter term.

Core Content Teachers:

Y1-21.0; Y2-24.0; Y3-27.0; Y4-28.0; Y5-28.0

Music, Art, PE Teachers, etc.:

Y1-3.0; Y2-3.0; Y3-3.0; Y4-3.0; Y5-3.0

EL Teachers:

Y1-1.0; Y2-1.0; Y3-1.5; Y4-1.5; Y5-1.5

Exceptional Children Teachers:

Y1-3.0; Y2-4.0; Y3-5.0; Y4-5.0; Y5-5.0

Exceptional Children Aides:

Y1-3.5; Y2-4.4; Y3-6.1; Y4-6.1; Y5-6.1

Library / Technology Specialist:

Y1-1.0; Y2-1.0; Y3-1.0; Y4-1.0; Y5-1.0

Interventionists:

Y1-1.9; Y2-2.2; Y3-2.4; Y4-2.4; Y5-2.4

Enrollment:

Y1-576; Y2-660; Y3-744; Y4-772; Y5-772

Teacher & Aides: Pupil Ratio:

Y1-17:1; Y2-17:1; Y3-17:1; Y4-17.1; Y5-17.1

Attribution: NHA

**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?*

Our Board will establish a fiscal management policy requiring adequate internal controls, and our Board will ensure that these controls are followed consistently by the school and by our management partner, NHA. Examples of internal controls surrounding our financial processes include the following:

- Regular review of payroll information and reconciliation to employee master file.
- An established signatory authority for bank accounts and monthly account reconciliation.
- Requirement for review and approval of purchase order requests.
- Monthly review of budget-to-actual detailed financial statements.
- Use of an integrated computerized accounting system that manages all purchasing, general ledger, grant accounting, fixed assets accounting, payroll, personnel and cash receipt/disbursements activities, and provides for segregation of duties.

Additionally, NHA has formal written policies for purchasing, accounts payable, travel, the use of corporate credit cards, Board discretionary funds, principal discretionary funds, school money handling, deposits, and security. Our Board will review all of these policies with counsel, revise them as deemed necessary, and adopt all needed policies.

We will engage an independent auditor each year to perform a financial audit of the school. The audit fieldwork will be conducted in a timely manner to ensure that the audit report will be completed by the state-specified deadline and will include tests of compliance with state laws and regulations. The audit expense will be included in the school's Board-approved budget.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

There are no known related-party transactions that will occur at our school, nor do we foresee any possible related-party transactions. Our Board bylaws require the avoidance of conflicts of interest and we will also adopt a conflict of interest policy. A draft of this policy is included in Appendix J.

Attribution: Board and NHA

*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.*

Our Board is currently considering the following audit firms:

Name: BDO USA, LLP

Address: 5430 Wade Park Blvd Suite 208, Raleigh, NC 27607

Phone Number: 919-754-9370

Name: Deloitte & Touche, LLP

Address: 550 S. Tryon Street, Ste. 2500, Charlotte, NC 28202

Phone Number: 704-887-1500

Name: Plante Moran

Address: 634 Front Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Phone Number: 616-774-8221

We also have included details on the overview of the audit process in Appendices U and V.

Attribution: Board

