



NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

Rising Above The Stars Academy

Public charter schools opening the fall of 2018

Due 5:00 pm EST, September 19, 2016

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
NCDPI/Office of Charter Schools
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh NC 27601-2825
919-807-3491

Mailing Address:
6303 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6303

CHARTER SCHOOL

2016 Application Process

To open a charter school in the 2018-2019 school year

APPLICATION DUE DATE/TIME

September 19, 2016 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 19, 2016 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.
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: Rising Above The Stars 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: *Rising Above The Stars 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: *Valerie McCloud*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *President of the Board*

Mailing address: 106 Foxcroft Lane
Winterville NC 28590

Primary telephone: 252-355-6272 Alternative telephone: 252-355-3855

E-Mail address: mccloud@greenvillenc.com

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

County: PITT

LEA: 740-Pitt 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. *Leaders Building Leaders*

List the fee provided to the third party person or group. *\$6,499*

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.

Leaders Building Leaders provided training in the areas of education plan, governance, finance, and operations. In addition, Leaders Building Leaders supported the writing of the application by operating the online application portal and asking and answering many of the questions that we, the Board, need to consider in order to fully understand how to develop and communicate the mission and function of a school in our community.

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:

Acceleration

Yes:

No:
What is the name of the nonprofit organization that governs this charter school? Rising Above The Stars Academy, Inc.
Is this application for Virtual charter school: Yes: No:

Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment:

Projected School Opening: Year 2019 Month August

Will this school operate on a year round schedule?

No:
Yes:

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

Table with 3 columns: Academic School Year, Grade Levels, Total Projected Student Enrollment. Rows for Year 1 to Year 5.

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. Additionally, the board is aware that if this application is approved by the State Board of Education, the approval is contingent upon successful completion of such planning year.

imagesofexcellence
Signature

Board President
Title

imagesofexcellence
Printed Name

09/15/2017
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:

Rising Above The Stars Academy is committed to ensuring students' academic success through an active learning environment that integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics with Entrepreneurship and Leadership.

Clearly describe the mission of the proposed charter school:

At Rising Above The Stars Academy, academic success is driven by data. In order to provide rural and at-risk students with an education that will prepare them to be leaders in their community and beyond, we must focus on providing applicable and relevant learning opportunities that motivate students to see their potential. By integrating Reading into Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Entrepreneurship, and Leadership, we will open up a world of possibility to our students.

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.*

Currently, there are two public charter schools in Pitt County, where Rising Above The Stars Academy (RATSA) will be located; however, there is one public charter school in Lenoir County, and there are zero in Greene County, the two nearby counties from which we expect to draw up to 40% of our student enrollment

The Pitt County School system's student population is 46.9% African American, 36.7% Caucasian, 11.3% Hispanic, 1.5% Asian, and 3.4% of other races.

The Lenoir County School system's student population is 46.5% African American, 37.4% Caucasian, 12.7% Hispanic, 0.7%, Asian and 2.5% of other races.

The Greene County School system's student population is 36.9% African American, 31% Caucasian, 30.5% Hispanic, and 1.6% of other races.

All three counties from which RATSA will draw have similar demographics with a balance of students from varied backgrounds and cultures. Through the

after school program that our founders have developed over the past ten years, we have learned that the schools in this area are not currently providing sufficient academic rigor or social learning opportunities for students that are at risk of failure or low performance.

Our targeted population will be students from all three of these LEAs who are seeking an opportunity to have their educational needs met through active and applicable learning, social integration, and integrated teaching, which will result in improved student learning and achievement results, ultimately empowering students to become active and influential members of our community. It is our intention to attract students from all three of these LEAs and possibly from other neighboring counties. We intend to open the school at the facility in which our founders currently operate an after school program that serves 150 students and has 100 on the waiting list. We have chosen the location of Winterville, North Carolina in Pitt County because its central location will be easily accessible to all students, and is already a familiar location for many families.

Our rationale in targeting these three LEAs is that we have spent 10 years providing after school care and tutoring to students in Pitt, Lenoir, and Greene Counties, and we have built trust within those communities. When we study the trajectory of students in our community after high school graduation, we have found that only a small percentage of children are going on to college and starting businesses. Moreover, the few who graduate from college leave the area due to a lack of opportunities. We want people in our community to remain in our community and become problem solvers who serve to boost our local economy. RATSA expects to attract interest from parents throughout these three counties who believe that their children would be more likely to achieve their maximum educational potential in an academic environment that stresses consistently high standards and strong character within a diverse student body.

- 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).*

At full capacity, Rising Above The Stars Academy (RATSA) will draw 40 students per grade, from Kindergarten through fifth grade, resulting in 240 total students.

Due to the proposed location of RATSA and the relationships built through after school program facilities currently operating in nearby counties, we expect to draw 60% of student enrollment from Pitt County, 35% of students from Lenoir County, and 5% of students from Greene County. When compared with the 2016-17 ADM of each county found on the NCDPI website, RATSA will enroll 144 out of 10,824 K-5 students from Pitt County (1.3%); 84 out of 4184 K-5 students from Lenoir County (2%); and 12 out of 3091 K-5 students from Greene County (0.4%) when we are operating at full capacity.

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

For over ten years, students that attend local traditional public schools in Pitt, Lenoir, and Greene counties have been coming to the after school

tutoring programs run by our founders with significant gaps in their academic performance. We have regularly found that students in our area are well behind grade level in their reading and math proficiency, and they have reported that the learning environment in their schools is not engaging, not relevant, and not helpful. As a result, they have disengaged from learning and have fallen behind. Through local assessments, our after school programs have developed small group and one-on-one development plans for students that have resulted in over 90% of our students passing their grades. We intend to bring the same personalized, hands-on, application-focused teaching methods that have produced results in just an hour or two per day, to RATSA, where we will have the opportunity to spend seven hours per day with the students. We believe that this level of engagement with the same learning environment will have a profound impact on their academic achievement.

The performance in all of the counties from which we intend to draw students has been consistently low. In 2015-16, the proficiency data for these counties was as follows:

- Pitt County: 52% all, 35% Black, 49% Hispanic, 38% EDS
- Lenoir County: 42% all, 27% Black, 44% Hispanic, 33% EDS
- Greene County: 38% all, 25% Black, 36% Hispanic, 31% EDS

At Rising Above The Stars Academy (RATSA), academic success will be driven by data because in order to provide rural and at-risk students with an education that will prepare them to be leaders in our community and beyond, we must first and foremost aim for every student to reach or exceed grade level proficiency. At the same time, we understand that academic success alone will not provide students with all of the tools that they need for success in life, so we will constantly be operating with intentional consideration of students' emotional and social needs.

RATSA will have a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) emphasis because when children learn through the application of knowledge, they are more likely to integrate that knowledge into their own understanding. Full integration of reading instruction into the STEM disciplines will help make learning relevant and will emphasize that reading is the most vital tool for success in all arenas of life. Furthermore, Entrepreneurship and Leadership will be emphasized as a social component of learning, giving students exposure to thinking big, beyond basic survival. This will encourage students to view the world as being open to them, embedding the possibilities that they have many career options, including working for themselves. We envision the graduates of RATSA to have the background knowledge and social skills to be leaders in our community or any community of which they are a part. To our knowledge, while there is some level of STEM education happening in our targeted counties, the depth of our commitment to developing skills, then immediately applying them to projects, engineering, entrepreneurial activities, and presentation will be completely unique to the area.

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.*

Professional Opportunities:

6. Encourage the Use of Different and Innovative Teaching Methods: Teachers at Rising Above The Stars Academy (RATSA) will be responsible for guiding students to levels of meaningful achievement by designing instruction that integrates STEM with Entrepreneurship and Leadership lessons for their students. The academic plan of RATSA challenges teachers to develop their skills as facilitators of learning and devote their efforts to creatively plan how to individualize instruction and best achieve full integration of all educational areas. These teacher-leader opportunities will strengthen the school's overall leadership capacity and accountability towards meeting the schools overall academic vision.

4. Improving Student Learning: In 2015-16, the students of our three target counties, Pitt, Lenoir, and Greene, performed below the state achievement in many major demographic categories.

State of NC - 58% all, 39% Black, 47% Hispanic, 43% EDS
Pitt County - 52% all, 35% Black, 49% Hispanic, 38% EDS
Lenoir County - 42% all, 27% Black, 44% Hispanic, 33% EDS
Greene County - 38% all, 25% Black, 36% Hispanic, 31% EDS

There are currently 150 students enrolled at the after school program that is currently operating on the proposed school site. The demographics of this group include 80% Economically Disadvantaged (EDS) with 80% African American, 15% Hispanic, and 5% White. We expect to enroll mostly minority students, who are being significantly underserved in their traditional public schools. We are confident that we provide a learning environment where at-risk and minority students will have the opportunity to catch up with their peers and even exceed their performance.

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.*

At Rising Above The Stars Academy (RATSA) we believe what gets measured gets done. Our goals have been adopted with a five year vision to be the highest performing public school of choice in Pitt County.

OPERATIONS:

- 1: Enrollment. Based on the first five-year ADM projection, the school will meet annual enrollment goals.
- 2: Enrollment. Our annual student attrition rate will decrease annually with a goal of being less than 10% in year one and two.
- 3: Parent Satisfaction. According to survey data, our parent and family satisfaction score will remain above 95%.
- 4: Facility. RATSA will acquire a permanent facility before the third year of operation.

ACADEMICS:

- 1: By 2025, the percentage of RATSA students that are Grade Level Proficient on the NC End of Grade Test will be at least 20 percentage points over the district average.
- 2: RATSA will exceed academic growth annually, according to the standards set by NC DPI.
- 3: RATSA will earn no NC Report Card grade lower than a C in each year of existence.
- 4: Students who enter RATSA performing below grade level will perform on grade level within two school years of enrollment.
- 5: Establish and implement a clear prevention and intervention plan within the first 30 days of school that identifies students performing below grade level and provides them with the appropriate assistance for success.
- 6: Establish a successful tiered education program that provides specific strategies and content to students performing below grade level by our sixth month of operation).

FINANCE

- 1: RATSA will build a cash surplus of \$250,000 by June 2024.
- 2: RATSA will become fiscally viable to decrease adult-to-student ratio to 20:1 by 2023.

GOVERNANCE

- 1: The RATSA board will participate in eight hours of professional development annually and participate in the NCDPI Ready-to-Open training sessions.

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

Progress toward the organization's goals will be communicated to the board of directors each month by the Lead Administrator and/or appointed standing committees. The board will adopt a strategic outcomes-based calendar that will allow the board to provide substantial oversight to the school. All

organization goals adopted by the board will have specific deliverables (adopted into policy) that will inform the board of the school's progress towards attaining its mission, vision, and goals. These monthly reports will be available electronically to the general public. In addition to monthly board reports, an annual report will be provided to families, stakeholders, and community partners communicating the state of RATSA. Parents will be informed in conformance with our progress monitoring, student progression, and reporting processes that include progress reports (minimum quarterly) that are instructional skills-specific and parent-friendly. Test results will be published with parents, board members, and stakeholders as they become available. The data concerning EOGs and BOGs will be communicated to the governing board, parents, and other stakeholders on a yearly basis. Further, a "State of the School" will be published each fall, in which the lead administrator and the governing board will share with parents and other community stakeholders where the school is in terms of achievement and strategic planning. This document will provide stakeholders with knowledge of where the school has been and a vision for where the school is headed.

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

The governing board of Rising Above The Stars Academy (RATSA) will be integrally involved in assessing how the program being delivered is meeting the school's mission. As part of the planning year process, the board will work to secure a lead administrator to ensure the school's progress and alignment toward achieving the adopted goals. This assessment process will include the development of an outcomes based board calendar (see Appendix O) and strategic plan for approval by the Board that provides specific action to the achievement of each performance goal. The board will seek ongoing resource updates, support, and training from the Office of Charter Schools and other governance experts follow recommendations for effective practices.

To provide effective oversight, the board will appoint committees that measure and analyze the desired outcomes of the school around Academics, Finances, Development, and Governance. Committee members may consist of board members, parents, community members, field experts, and teachers. Each committee will have specific roles and responsibilities which includes the analysis of the deliverable data from the operational oversight and program evaluations. The school's goals will be assigned to specific committees for oversight, data analysis, and solutions to identified issues. Evaluation data will be analyzed by committees to identify trends, flag unacceptable results, and recommend adjustments to the education plan, curriculum, instructional methods, and school operations as necessary. The committees will provide specific scheduled reports (seven days in advance) to the board according to the outcomes-based board calendar. These reports, as well as strategic questions, will drive the discussion and board action to navigate the organization towards its mission.

The lead administrator will be responsible for developing and implementing all plans of action and solutions. Some actions determined by the lead administrator may require board approval (i.e. curriculum, staffing, academic calendars). Mission success will also be gauged by demand within the community for spaces in the Academy and the school's overall organizational health. The Academy's lead administrator will keep the board

informed on a continuous basis with specific and timely data regarding enrollment and prospective students on the waiting list.

Students, parents, and community members will be encouraged to share observations with the lead administrator, both formally during a yearly survey process, as well as informally as concerns and suggestions arise. The lead administrator will report the results of this survey at the first regularly scheduled board meeting after the close of the survey. Other suggestions and concerns will be communicated as the need arises. As a board, we will analyze data annually to determine the organizational health through Teacher Working Conditions Survey, teacher turnover, and annual committee reports.

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.

RATSA will use the following courses of study to operate its daily programs:

- Common Core Standards and the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) for Mathematics and English Language Arts
- The NCSCOS New Essential Standards for History/Social Studies, Science, Art, Music, Technology, Healthy living, Physical Education, and Guidance

In order to provide a learning environment that engages students in deep and meaningful learning, students in all areas of the integrated curriculum will be instructed with respect to the following five principles:

1. Significant Content: The instructional plan will focus on teaching students important knowledge and skills derived from standards and key concepts aligned to the Common Core Standards and NCSCOS.
2. 21st Century Skills: Students will build skills that are necessary to be globally competitive, such as critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and communication skills which will be taught and assessed.
3. In-Depth Inquiry: Students will be engaged in rigorous, extended process of asking questions, using resources, and developing answers that are rooted in evidence and proven through review.
4. Driving questions: The instructional plan will ensure students are exposed to open-ended questions that provide the space for students to explore, wonder, invent, and refine, with outcomes that show mastery of the goals that they are learning.
5. Public Audience: Students will present their work to other people, beyond their classmates and teacher, as a means to bring value to their learning and pride in their accomplishment.

RATSA will utilize several inquiry-based instructional strategies that will provide the platforms through which integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Entrepreneurship, Leadership and especially Reading will be taught. These instructional strategies will include:

Project Based Learning

Buck Institute for Education defines Project Based Learning as a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning important knowledge and 21st century skills through an extended, student-influenced inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions, and carefully designed products and learning tasks.

Games/Simulations

Games challenge students and allow collaboration and group action. Students are allowed to make independent choices and see immediate results of their choices. Teachers at RATSA will use Technology games, classroom games (such as Jeopardy), and multi-intelligences techniques, such as music and dance, to enhance the daily instructional approach.

Technology

Technology provides tools to accomplish the goals of a social constructivist classroom and will be implemented into daily instruction. Telecommunication tools such as e-mail and the internet provide opportunities for dialogue, discussion, and debate. Students can talk with other students and teachers in communities outside of their classroom and gain different perspectives on their culture and the culture of others

Entrepreneurship Instruction

RATSA will utilize lessons in entrepreneurship to encourage a better understanding of the cultural diversity of the world. The integration of entrepreneurial activities with science, humanities, and math will enable students to think independently and gain skills in decision making, problem solving, and collaboration. General education teachers will integrate entrepreneurship skills in the daily instruction. Students will use entrepreneurship and other multi-intelligence to bring the learning alive.

Leadership Training

RATSA is in development of a social-emotional leadership component that fits into the mission and vision of our school. We plan to teach leadership skills daily in the way that we approach problem solving and teamwork, and also directly as a subject on our daily schedule. Further, community partnership will connect students with business and community leaders.

Curriculum and Instructional Design:

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

The unique learning model at RATSA will help students work at their ability level with their peers. To do this we will feature multi-grade classrooms between each grade level.

In our first year of operation, we will have five classrooms: Kindergarten, K-1 split, 1st grade, 1-2 split, and second grade.

For ensuing years:

Year 2: K, K-1, 1, 1-2, 2, 2-3, 3 (seven classes)

Year 3: K, K-1, 1, 1-2, 2, 2-3, 3, 3-4, 4 (nine classes)

Year 4 and after: K, K-1, 1, 1-2, 2, 2-3, 3, 3-4, 4, 4-5, 5 (eleven classes)

A standard school day will be built with designated times for reading, math, and writing; however, all subject specific skills will be integrated consistently throughout the day. Further, structures will be in place for daily leadership lessons and learning application through a STEM time and a Writing/Theme time, which will each be uniquely designed as opportunities

for students to apply their learning to digital production, challenges, and long-term projects that they will present to their peers and community members.

The daily schedule will be modeled after this sample below:

8:20-8:30 - Morning meeting, including daily planning and leadership habits
8:40-10:20 - Reading including skill introduction and Daily 5- Read to Self, Buddy Read, Teacher one-on-one or small group, listening to read, and Word Work. Community partnership integration on a weekly basis.
10:20-10:35 - Whole Class Read Aloud - Modeling reading skills with high-interest literature.
10:35-11:30 - Guided Math with Science Integration
11:30-12:15 - Specials (at full staffing this will include Art, Music, PE, and Technology Lab weekly)
12:15-12:30 - Leadership Study Read Aloud
12:30-12:55 - Lunch
12:55-1:15 - Recess
1:15-1:55 - Guided Reading Groups
1:55-2:25 - STEM - Project based application of skills taught earlier
2:25-3:10 - Writing or Theme Time - A reading and writing based extension of ongoing long-term projects
3:10-3:20 - Reflection and Social Awareness
3:20 - Dismissal

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.*

RATSA will be built on the constructivist theory. Constructivism theorist such as Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, and Jerome Bruner viewed learning as an active, constructive process in which the learner becomes the constructor of the information. Constructivism states that learning is an active contextualized process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it. Students use their personal experiences and a hypothesis of their environment to construct knowledge.

The constructivist theory is aligned to RATSA's belief that all children can learn because the constructivist theory supports the idea that the learner is not a blank slate, instead, learners bring past experiences and cultural factors to every situation which can serve as a foundation for growth. All children come to school with prior knowledge; therefore, all children can contribute to the learning process and build on their prior knowledge. In addition, the constructivist learning environments provide multiple representations of reality, which reduce oversimplification and make content

relatable to the real world by emphasizing knowledge construction instead of knowledge reproduction. By providing students with learning environments that emphasize authentic tasks in a meaningful context rather than abstract instruction out of context, students are able to find tasks relatable and achievable. By using real-work or case-based learning models instead of a predetermined sequence of instruction, constructivist learning environments encourage thoughtful reflection, enable context- and content- dependent knowledge construction, and the construction of knowledge through social negotiation instead of competition.

Foundation of the model

The constructivist model is founded on two important notions:

1. Learners construct new understanding using what they already know
2. Learning is active rather than passive. Learners remain active throughout the process; they apply current understanding and note relevant elements in new learning experiences.

Constructivism has several implications for teaching: Teaching cannot be viewed as the transmission of knowledge from enlightened to unenlightened; instead, the teacher is the guide on the side. At RATSA, teachers will create a setting that engages students in interesting activities that encourage and facilitate learning. Teachers will guide students as they approach problems that are challenging and rooted in real life situations. In addition, because we view prior knowledge as the basis of learning, teachers will consistently note gaps in knowledge and provide learning environments that exploit inconsistencies between learners' current understanding and the new experiences to maximize the learning opportunity.

Students will apply their current understanding in new situations in order to build new knowledge; to facilitate this, teachers will engage students in learning, and bring students' current understanding to the forefront. They will also ensure that learning experiences incorporate problems that are important to the student. Finally, teachers will encourage group interaction to help individual students become explicit about their own understanding by comparing it to their peers.

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.*

The following strategies will result in increased academic achievement because they provide a wide variety of opportunities for teachers to formatively assess students and provide feedback or supplemental instruction as needed. Furthermore, through each of the varied settings described below, students' strengths will be demonstrated in a variety of innovative ways. Through teachers analyzing student data, participating in relevant professional development, creating experiences to address student needs, developing creative and powerful lessons and assessments, and reflecting on the impact made on student learning, we will target the specific needs of our students.

Settings:

Cooperative learning: Students in small heterogeneous groups take roles and learn to share knowledge and tasks with one another through a variety of structures with this strategy. Common features of effective cooperative learning include team building, positive interdependence, group interaction, structured activity, and individual accountability.

Direct instruction: Instructional approaches that are structured, sequenced, and led by teachers and/or present academic content through teacher lecture or demonstration.

Discovery/Inquiry-based learning: Inquiry learning is based on constructivist theories of learning, where knowledge is "constructed" from experience and process.

Flexible/strategic grouping: Informally grouping and regrouping students for a variety of purposes throughout the school day or during an instructional unit supports the learning of all students. Flexible grouping strategies are used to meet curricular goals, engage students, and respond to individual needs. Flexible grouping helps teachers overcome the disadvantages of ability grouping while still attending to individual performance issues.

Graphic organizers: A graphic organizer is a visual and graphic display that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, and/or ideas within a learning task. Graphic organizers are also referred to as knowledge maps, concept maps, story maps, cognitive organizers, and may be introduced as an advanced organizer before the learning task.

Hands-on learning: Hands-on learning is an educational strategy that directly involves learners by encouraging them to do something in order to learn about it.

Modeling: Modeling is an instructional strategy wherein the teacher or another student demonstrates a new concept or skill, and students learn by observing and emulating. Types and purposes of modeling can include approaches such as task and performance modeling (demonstrating a task) and metacognitive modeling (thinking aloud).

Peer teaching/collaboration: Collaborative learning is based on the theory that knowledge is a social construct based on four principles: (1) the learner or student is the primary focus of instruction; (2) interaction and "doing" are of primary importance; (3) working in groups is an important mode of learning; (4) structured approaches to developing solutions to real-world problems should be incorporated into learning.

Project-based learning: A method of instruction that addresses core content through rigorous, relevant, and hands-on learning. Projects are typically framed with open-ended questions to investigate, do research, and/or construct their own solutions. Students use technology tools in the same manner as professionals do to communicate, collaborate, research, analyze, create, and publish their own work for authentic audiences.

Read-aloud: Read-aloud is an instructional format, included formally in elementary reading programs and as an instructional activity in all areas and levels of the curriculum. A primary purpose of a read-aloud is to create

a community of readers in the classroom and establish a known text as a basis for related literacy activities. Reading aloud allows teachers to model important components of literacy.

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.*

RATSA will use a variety of assessment and evaluation methods to monitor student attainment of academic and non-academic goals. Throughout the year, the following data will be collected, analyzed, summarized, and reported with recommendations:

- Student daily attendance
- School discipline reports for in-school and out of school suspension
- Student EOG test data
- Regular benchmark test results
- School climate surveys
- Parent surveys
- Student surveys

RATSA will participate in North Carolina's Accountability Model and will conduct all required statewide End of Grade (grades 3-5) and Beginning of Grade (grade 3 only) testing. In addition to required state and federal tests, RATSA will also utilize the following:

1. Benchmark testing using GMADE (Math) and the GRADE (Reading) (these test will be used to determine student understanding of taught concepts throughout the year. This data will also be used to predict student expected growth).
2. Portfolio assessments will be used to document student understanding and mastery of concepts taught.
3. Performance assessments will be used to determine student mastery of concepts demonstrated in the project based learning products. A detailed analytic rubric will be used as a formative assessment tool.

All data collected on student progress will be used to determine the students' immediate instructional needs. Teachers will use the Plan, Do, Check, and Act method to drive classroom instruction to ensure the demonstration of mastery of concepts in order to eliminate the chance that students move forward with content before they can understand and apply what they have already learned.

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.*

RATSA's school calendar consists of 185 school days, with 182 full school days and three days that are half days for students and full work days for

teachers. We plan to operate on a seven-hour school day, which will provide at least six instructional hours per day (four instructional hours for a half day) for a total of 1,104 instructional hours annually. The additional instructional hours will serve to build the rigorous environment necessary to meet our mission.

There are a number of teacher professional development and work days set aside throughout the school calendar. Each school year will begin with two weeks of professional development, training, organizational alignment, and preparation for the new year. Each year will conclude with three work days that will provide the opportunity to plan for the next school year. Six times during each school year, full day or half day professional development will be scheduled, featuring training that is relevant to the needs of the teachers and staff.

We have examined the calendar and identified times when learning seems to be at a low point for students, whether this is due to general fatigue or holiday excitement. After determining when these days are most likely to occur, we have created work days and holidays during those high-distraction times. This allows the time that they are in school to be truly devoted to learning and growing, both academically and socially.

We believe that this calendar matches our mission and education plan because is built to provide our teachers with a high volume of training at the beginning of the year to ensure organizational alignment of academic teaching strategies and management tools so that students will start the year led by a group of adults that are equipped and prepared from day one. By continuing professional development throughout the year, we will work to constantly improve the learning and growing experience at RATSA for students and their families.

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.*

Every person at RATSA - teachers, administrators, board members - will be dedicated to the success of every RATSA student. We believe that any students could be "at-risk" of falling behind academically and socially without the guidance of strong teacher-leaders. RATSA leadership will use all available resources and tools to ensure that each child receives a strong foundation for their future. We believe every child should have the opportunity to be successful, in every class, every day, for the entire school year

RATSA will implement a progress monitoring intervention system for all students through the use of research-based programs focused on indicating academic deficiencies. Along with the expertise of teachers, counselors and other personnel for early identification of students who are "at-risk," the primary prevention level includes high-quality instructional practices in general classroom instruction.

The secondary level includes evidence-based intervention(s) of moderate intensity using asset-based instructional tools. To ensure sustained support, students will receive a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) based upon assessments and teacher observation. Through collaborative efforts, multiple tiers of increasingly intense instruction and intervention services will be implemented to support student academic proficiency. Students needing remediation or intensive instructional support will be matched to strategic and intensive instruction/interventions based on screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessments.

To ensure students do not miss core subject instruction, these interventions shall occur during specific times of the academic day and after school. Progress will be monitored through a consistent evaluation process (formative assessment) at minimum each month. If there is no progress after four weeks of intervention, we will evaluate intervention implementation for fidelity, and if we find the designated interventions or intervention levels to be ineffective, we will change interventions and/or intervention time intensity.

All children will participate in multiple formal assessments to establish a baseline and personalized education plan using GMADE (Math) and GRADE (Reading) benchmark assessments.

The school will develop a student support team comprised of our best classroom teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators who will collectively analyze and brainstorm both interventions and solutions to promote student success. We will continue to analyze our school schedule, curriculum, and instructional strategies to foster and stronger learning environment and ensure that our teachers have a full toolbox of strategies to address any issues.

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.*

1. **Methods for Identification**

At the time of enrollment, every family will receive a home language survey form with their enrollment packet. If parents acknowledge that English is not the primary language in the home, or if they answer yes to any of the determining questions on the Home Language Survey, then the student will be referred to the ELL liaison for testing. If a student has not been previously identified as ELL, the WIDA Access Placement Test (W-APT) will be administered. If a student's academic records show previous ELL identification, the faculty will proceed with preparing adequate instructional plans based on proficiency level.

2. **Instructional program:**

Our faculty will be provided with the proper training determine the appropriate means of instruction and modifications or accommodations for ELLs based on previous academic records, ELL placement test, parent input,

student input, student observations, and other relevant data. We will ensure that ELL students meet the same challenging English proficiency objectives and standards required of all other students. Teachers will individualize their lesson plans for the ELL students. The school will employ the necessary faculty and staff to ensure appropriate curricular materials and supplemental resources needed to help ELL learners become proficient in English are present in the classroom. To ensure compliance with state and federal guidelines for ELL students, our staff will work closely with classroom teachers to facilitate communication with and dissemination of information to parents. Communications will be sent, to the extent possible, in a language understood by the parents.

3. Exit Criteria

Students who are determined to be fully English proficient based on ACCESS tests results will continue to be monitored for a period of two years, as required by state regulations. Parents will be notified and continued to be informed of monitoring progress.

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 nature of an integrated, experiential education plan is such that students at all levels have access to content that is constantly challenged to learn new things. However, we acknowledge that additional experiences are necessary to ensure all students are met at their instructional level. High-performing students will be able to experience content at their instructional level through the use of individualization and differentiation. Lessons will be differentiated based on students' need and implemented accordingly.

The appropriate faculty will be employed to ensure that those students who are academically gifted are properly served. Due to the small size of the school, every teacher will be trained in how to provide differentiated instruction to students that are thinking at an advanced level.

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

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)*

To identify students who have previously been found to be eligible for special education services or are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, upon enrollment at the charter school, all students' records will be reviewed by a school counselor for previously diagnosed disabilities, eligibility under Section 504 and/or Individual Education Plans. The IEP team will contact the previous school by telephone to request the current IEP and pertinent student information. We will speak and/or meet with the previous special education staff regarding special accommodations and follow through with previously written plans until we are able to conduct our own evaluation, adopt the most current IEP, or develop a new IEP, in accordance with the transfer provisions of NC 1504- 4.4(e) and (f).

Teachers, parents and staff will be provided with resources for identifying children with special needs in our school through brochures, posters and letters found on the Public Schools of North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Project Child Find website. Under the leadership of an Exceptional Children's Teacher, the education team, consisting of an LEA representative, the parent of a child with a disability, regular education teacher of the child, and an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation, will use a problem-solving approach and progress monitoring when addressing academic, behavioral, and/or developmental concerns regarding students. Team members will document the data collected, monitor the results of scientific, research-based interventions and make data-based decisions. The school will utilize the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction forms to document the evaluation and IEP. Additionally, parents can refer their child for testing at any time by providing a written request to the school.

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

Our school will provide special education and related services according to the federal mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the regulations of the North Carolina Public School Law, Article 9. To ensure record compliance, our school will develop and implement a record

compliance monitoring system. The IEP team will complete a compliance checklist for all records of students with disabilities. Each record will be reviewed and if any noncompliance is found, a correction action of noncompliance will take place immediately. Verification of correction will be the final action to ensure the noncompliance was corrected. The 504 Coordinator at our school will monitor the 504 Accommodation plans compliance as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

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.*

RATSA will provide educational opportunities to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with the full continuum of alternative placements, as appropriate. We anticipate that 10-12% of our school population will require EC services and will plan accordingly. There will be at least one Exceptional Children's teacher on staff, depending on school enrollment. He or she will be responsible for implementing IEPs and monitoring students' progress.

Classrooms will be equipped with the necessary materials to ensure access to the curriculum. Quarterly, the EC teacher will meet with students' classroom teacher(s) to discuss progress and determine if a parental meeting is necessary. Yearly, parents, the EC teacher, one regular education teacher, a school administrator and an individual who can interpret any evaluation data will meet to review the student's IEP and to make any necessary changes or recommendations. Parents may request an IEP meeting at any time.

We will ensure that all students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education. We will focus on their special education and related services needed in order to ensure that they acquire the best possible education and are being prepared for further education, employment, and independent living. We will follow all federal and state laws and regulations relating to the education of students with disabilities. All staff will be educated as to the contents and implications of these laws.

The Exceptional Children's teacher will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of all IEPs. Students will receive quarterly progress reports and an annual review meeting. Further meetings will be scheduled as a student's needs change. As a student is identified, a transition meeting will take place to ensure that all accommodations are communicated to the relevant teachers.

We will contract with the appropriate related service providers, including occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech therapists.

Should the need arise for services of students that needs a self-contained learning environment, or are profoundly disabled, RATSA will work to provide the instructional tools, training, and setting that is required to best serve their needs.

We believe that our integrated, hands-on curriculum will provide the tools for every child to learn, however we expect to seek additional curricula specialized for our students with disabilities in order to provide an alternative for their EC instructional time as designated by their IEP.

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.*

1. RATSA will strive to never achieve an NC School Report Card grade lower than a C. With this goal in mind, achieving a proficiency score greater than 60% and exceeding academic growth will be minimum achievement rate for the whole school. We will not earn a school report card grade in our first year of operation because we are only operating with Kindergarten through second grade; however, by the fourth year of operation, we will have the students that were enrolled in grades K-2 in our founding year will have matriculated through the testing grades of third through fifth. We expect by that time to earn a B on the school report card. As we are a school of choice, we will work to outperform all surrounding public schools by a minimum 20 proficiency points.

2. Assessments: RATSA will utilize a quarterly benchmarking tool to monitor the progress of all children. This data will provide each teacher the specific information needed to teach to each students' level, create lessons, develop small instructional groups, and address gaps in the student's education. Personal education plans will be used based on results.

3. Student promotion requirements will be analyzed and set each year. We will publish these specifics annually. The decisions to promote or retain students will ultimately be the responsibility of the Lead Administrator who will also work in concert with classroom teacher to evaluate every student. Factors considered in promotion include quarterly benchmark growth, attainment of goals, recommendations by staff, and student attendance. The Read to Achieve laws will be applied to third grade, and we will utilize the portfolio and alternative assessments to gather additional data. The head of school will make this final decision.

4. There shall be no social promotion at RATSA. In January of each school, the school will communicate with each parent of children who are at risk of retention. The parent will be notified that their child may be retained, and teachers will share their plan to specialize instruction in order to provide remediation. Students who are at-risk or EC will have individualized goals

and plans that shall be met to be promoted to the next grade. In order to graduate from fifth grade and leave RATSA for sixth grade at another school, students will be expected to read on grade level and measure as proficient on the EOG test. Students will also be expected to show strong leadership as demonstrated by community involvement projects.

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.*

Be sure to include:

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

1. Practices to promote effective discipline:

Students at RATSA are expected to follow all guidelines, policies, and procedures outlined in the Student Handbook. RATSA staff will model the behavior they expect and reinforce positive behaviors as they see them taking place in the school. Through our leadership emphasis, students will be taught to solve problems without teacher intervention. Throughout the year, students will be recognized for their actions that show excellent character and leadership. The staff will create a contract regarding student expectations that aligns to the school's discipline policies and core values, which will be taught at orientation, in the first weeks of school, and throughout the year. In the first week of school, teachers and administration will emphasize teaching procedures and expectations. Throughout the year, the values and expectations will be connected to the character education curriculum. All students will have an agenda that teachers and parents can use on a daily basis to communicate behavior concerns or outstanding behavior.

2. List of definitions:

The Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook will include offenses that can result in suspension along with a list of suspension policies and procedures. The Code of Conduct contract will be provided to parents and students prior to the start of the school year so that all families are aware of the possible consequences if a student chooses to misbehave in school. Depending on the severity and situation of each case, consequences may range from in-school action such as detention and community service to short and long-term suspension for the following offenses:

- Aggression, including physical, written, or verbal forms.
- Possession of contraband items, including weapons, tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or illicit materials, etc...
- Violation of integrity, including cheating, forgery, or plagiarism.
- Unauthorized access (i.e., trespassing).
- Inappropriate interpersonal/sexual behavior, including harassment.

- Disrespect and noncompliance.
- Harassment, including abusive or offensive language
- Bullying
- Hazing
- Theft or property destruction

3&4 - Students with Disabilities and Due Process

Students will be granted due process rights, including the opportunity for a hearing before the Board, in accordance with the state law for suspensions. While it may be necessary for students with disabilities to be suspended or expelled from RATSA, before those students can be suspended for more than 10 school days in a given school year, a manifestation determination meeting will be held by the IEP team to decide if the student's disability caused the misbehavior. The outcome may impact any further disciplinary action taken related to the student to ensure that the student will not be denied FAPE per federal law.

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: Rising Above The Stars Academy, Inc.

Mailing Address: 2423 Mill St.

City/State/Zip: Winterville NC 28590

Street Address:

Phone: 252-355-6272

Fax:

Name of registered agent and address:

Valerie McCloud, 106 Foxcroft Ln, Winterville, NC 28590

FEDERAL TAX ID: 82-2775576

Tax-Exempt Status 501 (c)(3)

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

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

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

Governance and Organizational Structure of Private Non-Profit Organization:

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

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

Board Member Name	Board Title	County/State of Residence	Current Occupation	Past or Present Professional Licenses(s) Held	Has any disciplinary action been taken against any of these
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					professional licenses?
Dorthea White	Member	Out of State	Principal	Education	N
Evelyn Holmes	Vice Chair	PITT	Retired	Education	N
Lisa Lewis	Member	PITT	Retired	Education	N
Carlton Gay	Secretary	PITT	Self Employed	None	N
Valerie McCloud	Chair	PITT	Accountant	None	N
Magalene Stephenson	Treasurer	PITT	Retired	Education	N
Katherine Lupton	Member	Out of State	Clinical Research	Public Health	N

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.*

The board will be made up of no fewer than five and no more than nine members. The board have four officers: a chairman, a vice chairman, a secretary, and a treasurer. The remaining members will be at-large voting members.

We understand that as the Board of Directors, we do not carry out management responsibilities for the school. Our main responsibilities are to ensure that (1) the school's academic program is successful, measured by both internal and external assessments; (2) the school's operational programs are faithful to the terms of its charter, including compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements; and, (3) the school is a viable organization for many years to come, that it is financially solvent, and has a competent, professional staff.

During the Ready to Open year, the board's primary responsibilities will be to hire an effective school leader, recruit families, and partnerships that will embrace and enhance the mission of the school. We will also work to improve our facility to meet the needs of our students and staff.

Once a school leader is hired, we will begin recruiting potential staff as a unified team. To effectively govern we aim to establish committees to assist in critical aspects of governance, such as providing strict financial oversight as called for by a fiduciary responsibility to the school.

Once the school opens, we will shift from a founding board to a governing board.

Our overall roles are to annually:

- Set the overall student outcomes;
- Establish and analyze policy that is fair to all constituents and creates

the operational boundaries;

- Evaluate and provide support to our Lead Administrator;
 - Approve substantial third-party agreements and staff contracts;
 - Set the organization's vision and goals;
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of the school's plan;
- develop a sustainable governance model that recruits effective leaders; and
- oversee the school's finances and grow as a team.

Our duties as board members revolve around three words: care, loyalty and obedience. As stewards of the organization, we must exercise reasonable care when making decisions, understand the finances, and participate in its governance; attend all board meetings, committee meetings, and participate in decision-making and policy setting while actively participating in risk assessment and strategic planning.

Our duty of loyalty means that we will never use information obtained as a member for personal gain. In addition, we will always act in the best interest of the organization by being aware of our conflict of interest policy, avoiding transactions in which may result in financial gain.

Finally, our duty of Obedience ensures we will not act in a way that is inconsistent with the central goals of the organization. This means we ensure the organization complies with all applicable laws and regulations and with its own internal documents and policies.

Through our inner circles, networking and relationships in the community, we will recruit a leader who leads with great character. Before making our final decision, we expect to spend an extended amount of time with the candidates in a school setting, community events and interviews to ensure this leader knows and understands the challenges he/she will face a new charter school administrator.

Supervision of the school leader will occur through consistent communication with the Board of Directors. The school leader and board will agree on specific measurables, channels of communication, and what items he/she will need to report to the board formally and informally. This will take intentional action and trust between both parties but is critical to the organization's long-term success.

- 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.*

At the time of writing this application, there are seven members of the board. When developing this board, we were intentional about including local community leaders, educators, business leaders, and parents.

Our board is especially well equipped with educators. Five of our board members are current or former educators, including Dortha White, Evelyn Holmes, Lisa Lewis, Magalene Stephenson, and Valerie McCloud. Having a board with such extensive experience in providing educational opportunities at the teacher, principal, and organizational level, will help us to ensure that

our education plan will continually be developed over the next two years and will be ready for the incoming Lead Administrator to take as a template and execute effectively.

Additionally, the RATSA board members have long histories of skills such as accounting, bookkeeping, and financial internal control, which will help ensure the school's financial solvency.

Further, our board members bring a variety of other skills that are relevant to governing a public charter school, including policy and procedure development, business operation, human resources, purchasing, data management, and computer operations. Local business owners and operators in the Pitt County area include Valerie McCloud, Carlton Gay, and Evelyn Holmes.

Finally, board member Katherine Lupton is a clinical researcher who works in public health. As a board member, she will lend expertise in project management, health policy, and community involvement.

The RATSA Board wishes to have nine board members, as well as fully functioning board committees that include community members willing to share their skills and connections that will help us reach our goals as a school. In seeking additional board and committee membership in the coming months, the board will be seeking people with skills in the areas of law and policy, real estate or construction, and fund-raising.

The powers and duties of the board can be grouped into two areas:

1- Set organizational goals and ensure adequate progress. It is the job of the board to decide as a group on the outcomes that will result from the operation of the school. It is also the board's responsibility to determine, based on data provided by the lead administration and the operations team, how well the school is making progress toward accomplishing the goals. Additionally, the board will attend an annual retreat to reevaluate the goals regularly and reshape the vision for the future of the organization as necessary.

2- Hire and evaluate the lead administrator. While the board approves all employment contracts at the school, the only person that they hire and evaluate is the lead administrator. It is the responsibility of the board to recruit and hire the best possible leader of the school, then to evaluate that leader based on his or her ability to lead the operational team of teachers and staff to accomplish the goals set by the board. The board will provide an abbreviated mid-year progress evaluation and a full annual evaluation at the close of the school year. The board's Governance committee will perform the evaluation and present it to the full board.

Board Composition:

The board will strike a balance in the number of parents and non-parents on the board. It will be expected that parents with specific skills will be recruited onto committees and that a minority of the fully-elected board Members will be parents at the school.

- 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?

The board President was recruited by a group of community members who saw the need to offer a better quality of education for the students within the community. The President solicited members that would support the vision of the charter school who had experience in education, business, finances, community development, and health that worked with at-risk population of students.

In recruiting the remainder of the Board of Directors, we looked for the following qualifications:

1. Caring and compassionate;
2. Hard working and willing to share responsibilities;
3. Committed to participating in a strategic planning process on an annual basis;
4. Possesses a clear understanding of the organization's goals and objectives;
5. Willing to attend at least three board meetings;
6. Have one or more years experience working with at-risk individuals;
7. Are at least 21 years of age;
8. Trained in non-violent crisis intervention; and
9. Are strong advocates for all clients and their families.

At least 50% of the board will be comprised of board members who are local community members.

With a minimum of five and a maximum of seven board members, we will always be seeking qualified individuals to become part of our Board. When possible, our board will first recruit potential members onto a committee for three months before they are considered to be voted onto the board. New members can be voted on the board only by a vote at a regular meeting.

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

The board will hold regular monthly meetings and develop a strategic outcomes- based calendar for maximum oversight of the organization. Standing committees will meet between meetings for a deeper dive and analysis of the organization's progress. See Outcomes-Based Calendar example in the appendices.

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.*

When a new board member is elected to the board, he or she will be assigned a mentor who has already been a member of the board for a full year. That mentor will review the resource binder created by the founding board. The binder includes a copy of the charter application, the charter agreement with the state, the board's bylaws and policy manual, a copy of the Open Meetings Laws, a copy of all charter and public school laws, the expectations of a board member, and a calendar of monthly scheduled meetings.

Most importantly, new Board Members will get an overview of the board's goals, successes, and current challenges. It is our intention that at the

time of election, a new member will have spent time on a committee and have a strong understanding of the organization. Every board member will be required to attend at minimum four hours of governance training annually through session before or after board meetings, our annual retreat, or trainings found through their own research. Board scheduled training could be feedback from experts (i.e. audits), state provided sessions, education on legal matters, strategic planning, nonprofit best practices, and personal time spent reading about how effective boards operate and then sharing insights gained as a result of that reading.

A member of the board's Academic Committee will attend this training as well. This will ensure continuity of our mission and will create open lines of communication between the board and the school community. We plan to retain legal counsel familiar with public school law to assist with training on open meetings/public records, compliance with our bylaws, and other pertinent legal matters dealing with education.

Specific Topics:

A. Financial: After completion of training, participants will be able to demonstrate knowledge of creating, presenting, monitoring, and implementing a sound financial plan and an approved budget. Participants will identify overall financial strength - viability; return on investment - financial planning; revenue growth - enrollment projections.

B. Roles and Responsibilities: This annual training will ensure our members understand that their role is to govern (How Well?) the plans of the operations team (How Will?) are meeting the needs of the students, staff, and stakeholders.

C. Legal Compliance: This session will review our organization's most critical documents, federal, statutory, and regulatory requirements, including Open Meetings laws.

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.*

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

Steps the Board Will Take:

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

Disclosure: Full disclosure of identity of any relationships of the governing board, charter school employees, or potential contracts will be communicated and vetted openly. In compliance with the law, the following procedures will be implemented and will apply to board members and all school personnel operated by RATSA. Disclosure will be made as soon as a potential conflict is discovered. When a possible conflict has been

disclosed, the board will determine whether a conflict actually exists and whether it is material. Where a material conflict exists, the board will determine whether the recommended transaction or other conflicting involvement may be authorized as just, fair, and reasonable for the school. The decisions of the board will be guided by independent counsel as appropriate, and their guiding principle will be the integrity and best interests of the school and the advancement of its purposes.

The following describes the procedure that the board will employ when dealing with a potential conflict of interest: Any board member having a possible conflict of interest on any matter will not vote or use his or her personal influence on the matter, and will be recused from final discussion and voting after answering all Board questions and fully informing the board of all pertinent detail. The Chair of the board will appoint a neutral person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction. After exercising due diligence, the board will determine whether the school shall proceed with the desired action. The Minutes of the board will reflect all conflicts of interest disclosures and abstentions from voting and the existence of a quorum.

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

The decision-making process the board will use is deliberation as an authorized group (full-board or committees) based on research, analysis, counsel, feedback, and experiences in monthly regular meetings to address the issues regarding the schools operation and compliance. When necessary, the board will apply the same decision-making process during Special or Emergency meetings.

This approach will be necessary for the board to be truly effective when making important decisions. The meetings will be organized in a way that invite debate and discussion but also manage conflicts that arise as a result of healthy debate. The board will work with key stakeholders (parents, community members, and lead administrator) to gain a well-rounded perspective with regard to school policies. Additionally, the board will reach out to other successful charter school boards to utilize their perspective and wisdom with regards to school policies. As with all the decisions made by the board, paramount is the fact that these policies support the mission and goals of RATSA.

Our policies will be value-oriented, product-driven, legal, and will not deny constitutional rights. The policies will be adopted with the full authority of the board. In developing school policies, initial recommendations will come from committees, the Lead Administrator, and potentially, parents, based on whether our policies are meeting our desired purpose or the law.

The process will be as follows:

- A need for a policy will be identified.
- Data will be collected.
- Recommendations will be made.
- Policy will be drafted.
- We will seek stakeholder input into the policy.
- Policy will be presented to the board for discussion, and later action.
- Policy will be embedded into the school's manual, then disseminated and communicated.
- Policy will be reviewed annually.

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

The board will form committees to research, analyze and provide recommendations to the board in four basic areas: governance, academics, finances, and development. Only the board has the authority to make decisions and take action in these four areas, although the board will seriously consider input from the each committee as they will consist of of board members and critical friends:

a. The Governance Committee:

The Governance Committee has many roles and will consist of members of the board that will recruit and nominate new members to the board. The members of this committee will also work with the lead administrator to identify strong hiring candidates, who will then make recommendations to the full board about the hiring of new teachers and the termination of current teachers. The final hiring and firing decisions rest with the board. They will also work in conjunction with the Finance Committee regarding employee compensation and benefits.

b. The Academic Committee:

The Academic Committee will consist of board members and expert partners with education knowledge. The Academic Committee will ensure that the mission of the school is being realized in the classroom by analyzing test data, discussing curricular needs, and gathering input from the school community. They will report their findings and make recommendations to the board.

c. The Finance Committee:

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

d. The Development Committee

The Development Committee will be populated by board members, parents, and community members with different skill sets depending on the needs of the school. During the founding years, this committee will focus on fundraising as the school builds up a fund balance that can be allotted toward the permanent facility. When the school is focused on executing its permanent facility plan, this committee will recruit stakeholders with construction, real estate, and/or architecture backgrounds.

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

RATSA is committed to creating a welcoming and positive learning environment for all of its students, families, and staff. As a means to this end, RATSA encourages open discussions among employees, administrators, board members, parents, and students. Occasionally, concerns or questions that do not reach resolution through respectful dialogue at the operational school staff level, especially regarding the execution of Board approved school policy, the need may arise among members of our school community to present formal grievances to the Board

If a parent has a problem with regard to a teacher or another employee, the following steps should be taken when deemed necessary:

1. Discuss the issue with the teacher immediately.
2. If there is no resolution to the issue, communicate to the Head of School. This may result in an additional meeting with the teacher and Head of School.
3. If there is no resolution to the issue, the parent may file a grievance by following the board's policy and grievance process.
4. The board or appointed committee will receive the grievance and determine the next steps.
5. If the next steps are to bring the grievance to the full board this will occur within the next board meeting. The board will hear the critical information in closed session to protect the confidentiality. If necessary, a vote will occur in open session.
6. The individual who filed the grievance will be notified within five business days of the outcome.

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

1. Complaints should first be taken to their directly supervising administrator.
2. If the matter concerns an administrator or if the matter cannot be adequately resolved with the assistant administrator, then the employee should contact the lead administrator. A meeting should be scheduled with the lead administrator to discuss the problem, concern, or question.
3. If the matter concerns the lead administrator or if the matter remains unresolved, then the employee may contact the Chairman of the Executive Committee to seek help in resolving the through the formal board grievance procedure.

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 E)
2. A one-page resume from each founding board member and responses to the questions found on the Charter School Board Member Form (Appendix F).
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 G).
4. A copy of the articles of incorporation from the NC Department of the Secretary of State.

(Appendix H)

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

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

X Not Applicable

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

X Not Applicable

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

X Not Applicable

Projected Staff:

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

- Lead Administrator
- Assistant Administrator
- Office Manager
- Clerical
- Teacher
- EC Teacher
- Elective Teacher
- Teacher Assistant
- Bus Driver (Part Time)

Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management

Include the following information for the proposed charter school:

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

Recruiting: RATSA will recruit highly qualified individuals for employment locally, as well as across North Carolina and beyond. We will attend and potentially host job fairs in and around Greenville and Pitt County. We will also work with regional colleges and universities to help identify qualified, interested candidates for our available positions. We additionally anticipate using the School Jobs website, provided by NC DPI, as a strong resource for recruiting.

Retention: RATSA will focus on people first and provide a climate of respect for all faculty and staff members. Our decision-making processes will

include staff to help guide the school's leadership in accomplishing the mission. Teachers will be motivated to stay as they grow and are supported professionally through learning communities, high level professional development, and internal mentoring system. Teachers will also be offered a competitive benefits package and will be paid commensurate with their experience. The school will offer a 401(k) plan to all full-time employees. This type of plan, a defined contribution plan, versus the state's defined benefit plan, is more flexible for most teachers and is portable. The plan will provide for an employer match of up to 3% employee annual contribution. Full-time employees will also receive health insurance with employee coverage paid in substantial part by the school as well as life insurance and disability benefits. The school is currently planning to forgo the state retirement plan and health plan. Mandatory unemployment and workers compensation insurance will be incurred by the school. Our Assistant Teachers will serve as a built-in recruiting source for new teachers because they will have a bachelor's degree or equivalent education and experience. Many will be certified or working toward certification and will be candidates for open teaching positions.

2. Provide a description of the relationship that will exist between the charter school employees and the nonprofit board.

The RATSA board will hire a strong lead administrator who will be responsible for leading staff and effectively managing finances and operational systems. The relationship between the board and lead administrator will be one of trust, unity, and accountability. Our lead administrator will lead through example and provide the board with critical information to help the board make critical decisions at every meeting. We anticipate that our board chair or designee will be in communication with the lead administrator to support their decisions and to keep the board in the know about any anticipated barriers or news. The employees will be led by the lead administrator and all communications shall be directed his/her way. The board will communicate to the employees through the lead administrator and occasionally host functions, celebrations or meetings to gather additional information of the organization's health. The board will also rely on third party information and surveys to determine whether they and the policies are creating a strong employee atmosphere. There are no direct lines of communication from staff to board unless previously authorized by the full board. If issues arise between employees, the board will ensure proper procedures are carried through and each employee has an opportunity to be heard in hopes of a professional resolution. An employee grievance policy will be in place and followed if required in the mediation process.

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

Hiring School Personnel

RATSA aims to make a difference in the lives of our students and our community by pushing kids to apply their knowledge. Therefore, our hiring process will include assessments of how each employee is exemplary in communication, relationship building, and collaboration. In addition, we want our teachers to be coachable and hungry to learn, so will recruit faculty that embrace our mission to ensure students academic success through an active learning environment that integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics with Entrepreneurship and Leadership.

Our required applications will contain:

- A sealed college/university transcript indicating a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- A National Criminal Background Investigation Check that is free of significant incidents.
- Three letters of reference documenting leadership, community service, and/or exemplary service within a community (educational or other).
- Submission of sample teaching video.
- A sample of a teaching unit and lesson plan.

Our hiring process will include:

- Initial screening interview;
- Teaching observation (to observe the ability to engage, educate, and communicate);
- Formal interview (to debunk any theories);
- Participate in school event (to determine quality of interaction with others).

Dismissal: In circumstances that threaten the safety of our learning environment, the Board may need to dismiss staff members based on their actions. All teachers will work towards personal and professional growth. Our lead administrator will be responsible for executing an evaluation tool, providing effective feedback, and utilizing experts to help educators to grow. An employee may be placed on an action plan prior to recommendation for dismissal; however, no one is more important than the overall culture of the school. Dismissal will happen through a full Board vote and will come at the recommendation of the Lead Administrator.

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

RATSA will make every effort to match or exceed the pay scale and benefits that are offered at Pitt County and Lenoir County schools. The expected starting salaries for the first five years of operations will be as follows:

Lead Administrator \$60,000-65,000
Assistant Administrator \$50,000-55,000
Office Manager \$35,000-38,000
Clerical \$25,000
Teachers \$38,000-45,000
EC Teacher \$40,000-45,000
Elective Teachers \$38,000-45,000
Teacher Assistants \$25,000
Bus Driver (Part Time) \$6,000

RATSA will not participate in the State Health plan but will provide access and share the expense for a comparable health insurance plan. RATSA will not participate in the State Retirement plan, but we will offer a 401(k) program to all full time employees which we will match up to three percent retirement contributions.

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

RATSA retains the discretion at all times to terminate employment immediately or to decide what level or type of discipline is warranted, if any. All employees of RATSA are at-will employees whose employment can be terminated at any time without first implementing any other type of

disciplinary action. The Academy is not required to use any of the following steps of discipline or to apply them in any particular order. However, it retains the discretion at all times to determine the nature and severity of discipline and/or termination. In the event it becomes necessary to discipline an employee, RATSA will determine in its discretion given the circumstances of the situation the appropriate action amongst such options as:

- Verbal Warning
- Written Warning
- Suspension, with or without pay
- Final Warning and/or Probation
- Termination

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

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

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

The Elective Teacher(s) will be expected to teach more than one subject. They may teach any of the following: PE, Music, Dance, Art, Technology, Foreign Language, Leadership, Entrepreneurship, or another subject in the arts.

With so few students at RATSA in the first two years, the administration team will take on several roles that larger schools have the capability to staff separately. The Lead Administrator and Office Manager will have to share all administrative responsibilities with the support of the Board.

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.

Utilizing our best recruitment tools and partnerships, RATSA will ensure that the hired special needs teacher is experienced and holds at minimum a Master's Degree in Special Education. We anticipate having about 10% of our initial population needing specially designed instruction. In year one, we will have one EC teacher who is servicing 10-15 EC students. RATSA will contract a part time ELL teacher to assist with any child who is an English Language Learner. RATSA will also provide concentrated training for all classroom teachers focusing on gifted education so that all classroom teachers have the capacity and tools to provide rigorous lessons to their highest performing students. RATSA will also provide all teachers with the

proper training and staff development to prepare for ELL, EC, and 504 eligible students.

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).*

Lead Administrator

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

Assistant Administrator

- Have a Bachelor's degree or higher.
- Coordinate and maintain the teacher licensure program.
- Have two years or more of administrative experience.
- Assist in coordinating the Academy's professional development plan.
- Act as Testing Coordinator
- The lead person to whom all contract positions report
- Report to the lead administrator regarding
- Assist in marketing.

Office Manager

- Hold a Bachelor's Degree or higher Business Management or another Business related field.
- Manage all human resources systems
- Manage financial systems and communicate with contracted partnerships

Administrative Assistant

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

Teachers, EC Teachers, and Elective Teachers:

- Hold a Bachelor's degree; EC teacher must hold a Master's degree.
- Teach the NC Essential Standards.
- Create a classroom climate conducive to learning.
- Create open lines of communication with parents.
- Offer tutoring and enrichment activities to students as needs arise.
- Communicate clear expectations, goals, and grading requirements to both parents and students.

- Differentiate lesson plans to fit the needs of individual students.
- In accordance with NCLB, teachers in core subject areas will meet Highly Qualified standards.
- Maintain and keep current records on all students, including portfolio work and grades.

Staff Evaluation and Professional Development

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

The Lead Administrator will be responsible for systems and procedures for teacher licensure requirements. They will design a professional development plan for the whole school and work with individual teachers to make a personal growth plan.

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 goal for RATSA will be to recruit teachers and staff members that want to stay with the organization for their entire career. All beginning staff and teachers will be assigned a mentor who will work closely to develop initiatives, plan lessons, and grow their classroom operational strategies. The mentor teachers will also observe and provide feedback to their developing teachers at least three times a year. We will promote a strong mentoring program and will ensure that teachers feel supported. RATSA will investigate teacher evaluation instruments that align with the integration and applicative curriculum strategies outlined in this application so that we can evaluate a teacher's ability to implement the quality integrated lessons with fidelity. We will seek teachers input into this process to give them a greater role in deciding how they will be evaluated and foster buy in to why they are being evaluated in the manner that they are. RATSA will work closely with NCDPI to ensure that our teachers meet the teacher licensure renewal criteria. Upon being hired, with the teacher's consent, RATSA will procure the teacher's license from DPI. RATSA will assist teachers in keeping their licensure and certifications in line with the requirements from NCDPI and the SBE policies. For new teachers who are probationary under NC licensure requirements, RATSA may choose to follow the evaluation tool that is endorsed by the state of North Carolina, which includes a teacher self-assessment, professional development plan, a pre-observation conference, three formal observations with post-conferences, a peer observation with post-conference, summative evaluation conference, and summary rating form. For administrative and support staff, the lead administrator will evaluate them twice a year using a rubric developed by the staff in conjunction with their job description.

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.*

At RATSA, we believe that we will be tapping into a motivating and engaging style of teaching that is unlike anywhere our teachers have previously taught. With that in mind, our professional development plan will be written to connect teachers with tools, resources, curriculum, and instructional practices that will help them learn and practice how to integrate subjects and promote the value of the educational experience at all times. The nature

of this professional development cannot be understated.

Teachers will participate in professional development that is meaningful and will emerge with a plan for the year that will create a sense of purpose and attachment to the mission of RATSA. Once school starts, there are six teacher work days dedicated to professional development. In our first year calendar, four of these are full teacher work days with professional development provided by our instructional support partnerships or outside experts. Three are half days of school in which the students will go home at midday, and teachers will have the opportunity to collaborate on vertically-aligned content and practices.

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.*

In the first year of operation and every year after that, there will be ten work days leading up to the first day of school. On the first two workdays, teachers will attend a retreat that will promote team-building, collaboration, and culture at RATSA. All faculty and staff will be required to attend. Other required non-academic trainings in the first week of work days will include:

- BloodBorne Pathogens and other Health Requirements
- Orientation and Benefits
- Technology Systems Training
- Procedures and policies
- Communication with parents
- PowerSchool
- Emergency Plans

In the second week of work days, most of our time will be used to train teachers in our brand of subject integration. We need teachers to know how to teach reading in the context of science, math in the context of entrepreneurship, writing in the context of engineering, etc. During these work sessions, teachers will work together with our instructional specialist partners to develop dynamic unit plans that will be built upon each year and will improve over time to promote the creation of relevant and exciting learning opportunities for all students.

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.*

The school calendar includes seventeen full teacher work days. There are ten teacher work days before school begins that will be used as described in the schedule in the previous section. There will be four full day professional development days designated during the school year and three additional half day teacher work days. These days are scheduled strategically so that there is no more than one per month. The development topics on these mid-year professional development days will be determined by the administration based on their ongoing assessment of the needs of the staff and students at RATSA. Finally, there will be three full teacher work days at the conclusion of the school year so that all student records can be processed. Teachers will also be given the opportunity to collaborate on how to set up the school for success in the following year by making class lists, determining teacher

placement, and making the schedule for the ten teacher work days leading up to the next school year.

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)).

RATSA understands that to be successful as a charter school, we must maintain full enrollment of students in our first year and in every subsequent year. We will dedicate funding annually to provide marketing materials to grow our enrollment and wait list. We will also work to keep an updated website to communicate with potential students and parents and utilize social media, such as Facebook, to advertise to and educate the general public.

To reach and maintain full enrollment we plan to implement an ongoing marketing plan that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Charter Application Phase: June 2017-June 2018

Goal: Gather additional information regarding the educational need or interest for a public charter school from 200 families, recruit additional board members, and create five potential partnerships.

Actions:

- Conduct a series of public relations events to publicize the school to the community at large so that all interested parties will be aware of the school's upcoming application submission.
- Strengthen the social media outlet.
- Send a press release to four publications.
- Email blasts, social media binge, and local representatives regarding application submission.

Ready to Open Period (July 2018 - January 2019)

Goal: Obtain more than 60% Letters of Intent (LOI) that are balanced across all grade levels. Educate parents that Letters of Intent cannot be utilized as applications for enrollment.

Actions:

- Board members will collect contact information utilizing LOI format.
- Board members and volunteers will recruit prospective volunteers and board members.
- Board members will utilize our best marketing tool, our enrolled families, and utilize them to host community gatherings, public charter school town hall meetings, and potential employment fairs.
- Board members will visit local preschools, daycares, churches, other child related organizations, and community organizations, such as the YMCA, to distribute information.

- Board members will also speak at local civic meetings, such as Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Civitan Club, etc.
- Board members will conduct community meetings open to the public held at after school centers in Winterville, Lenior Couny, and Greene County. At these meetings, we will use a PowerPoint presentation to provide information about the school and the application process. One of our board members and one of our consultants are bilingual and will assist in interpreting during the meeting and translating brochures and fliers.
- A representative of RATSA will attend community events to promote the school. All marketing information will be provided in both English and Spanish to ensure all people feel welcome to enroll.
- Once the lead administrator is in place, he or she will perform these duties in conjunction with board members.

Open Enrollment and final RTO Period (January 2019-July 2019)

Goal: Enrollment is at 150% capacity and is evenly distributed acrossgrade levels. An active waitlist is in place for all grade levels.

Actions:

- Send direct mailing to households in specific zip codes.
- After the lottery, we will ask our enrolled families to recruit new families and utilize them to host community gatherings, public charter school town hall meetings, and potential employment fairs.

First 20 Days of School (Approximately August 2019)

Goal: Build and sustain a waitlist that is 25% or more above capacity per grade and is balanced across all grade levels.

Actions:

- After studying which marketing strategies that worked best over the previous 18 months, the Board will focus its attention on the top two strategies and continue to promote in that manner within the community.

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.*

RATSA has and will continue to engage parents through community meetings, the news media, online social media, religious organizations, local afterschool programs, preschools, promotional videos, and though building strong relationships with the local business community.

Board meetings will be transparent and maintain an allotted time devoted to public comments. We will also schedule town hall meetings to allow the school and larger community to communicate their concerns.

RATSA will engage parents early and frequently in the school year. We will highly encourage them to volunteer and play an active role in their child's education. Through the school's intense focus on character development, there will be an increased focus on bridging the gap between home life and school. Bridging this gap will include several community-building lessons that will build on parental involvement. These lessons will be presented at evening events that are open to the public. We will display student work that displays student understanding of all content areas from the arts to core subjects, including science and technology.

RATSA will also develop a strong Parent Teacher Association with parents and teachers working closely together to carry out the mission of the school. The board will encourage open and transparent communication with parents and encourage all parents to become a part of the fabric of RATSA.

Leadership will write monthly newsletters to share the state of the school and update stakeholders on the life of the school. At the end of the year, the leadership team will collaborate with PTA to write the "State of the Charter" address. This document will be utilized to write grants and request outside funding to further support the school's needs.

One intentional parental engagement tool will be our volunteer box. This will be housed with volunteer opportunities for stakeholders that range from stuffing envelopes to raking the leaves outside. Teachers will write out specific step-by-step instructions on a weekly basis for potential volunteer hours on an index card. We anticipate having a heavy carpool line in the afternoon. This box will provide parents an opportunity to utilize their time more effectively by coming into the school, grabbing a card, and helping complete needed tasks.

Admissions Policy

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

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

1. Immediately following preliminary approval of our charter, RATSA will conduct a highly publicized campaign, utilizing a variety of methods to inform the public of the dates for open enrollment. These methods may include, but are not limited to the following: publishing in all local newspapers, using multiple sources of social media, distributing flyers at churches and community festivals, daycares and other community oriented locations, and holding public meetings in all parts of our targeted counties of Pitt, Lenoir, and Greene. The tentative enrollment period will begin January 1, 2019 following final approval of the charter and will tentatively run through March 31, 2019 at 5:00 P.M. The application will be available to fill out both online and in print format. It will be available in both English and Spanish. Immediately following the closing of the enrollment period, RATSA will determine if a lottery is needed, in accordance with NCGS 115C-238.29F(g)(6). If a lottery is not needed, all applicants will be accepted and parents and guardians will be contacted via telephone and via mail (both electronic and postal). Parents and guardians need to respond about their student's enrollment at RATSA within ten business days by 5:00 P.M. If a lottery is needed, a date will be set for the lottery, which will take place no more than two weeks from the close of the enrollment period and will only include the names from the enrollment period noted above.

Parents and guardians of applicants will be notified of the date and time of the lottery. The lottery will be open to the public and names will be decided by a computerized randomization system in accordance with the policies adopted in the North Carolina Charter Schools Act and by the State Board of Education. Once the names are chosen, the parent or guardian will have five business days until 5:00 P.M. to respond about their student's attendance.

2. As set in NCGS 115C-238.29F(g)(5a), RATSA will abide by the following:
- For every year of operation, children of the active board members and full-time staff members will receive priority admission, up to 15% of the total enrollment.
 - Multiple birth siblings will be entered into the lottery as one surname, and should that surname be chosen in the lottery, all will receive admission.
 - After the first year of operation, siblings of current students will receive priority admission.

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

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

5. In the event that a student from the school transfers, the parent or legal guardian should immediately notify the school. RATSA will verify the withdrawal of the student by letter. Once the letter is submitted, that seat will be considered open, and if needed, the waiting list will be utilized.

Weighted Lottery

Does your school plan to use a weighted lottery?

Yes:

No: X

The State Board of Education may approve an applicant's request to utilize a special weighted, or otherwise limited lottery in certain circumstances. If the charter applicant wishes to deviate in any way from the open lottery normally utilized by charter schools, the following requirements must be met:

1. *In no event may a lottery process illegally discriminate against a student on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or disability.*
2. *A lottery process may not be based upon geographic boundaries, such as zip code or current public school attendance zones.*
3. *A lottery process that deviates from the standard lottery must be based upon the school's unique*

mission and must be based upon educationally, psychometrically and legally sound practices, protocol and research.

If the applicant is requesting to use a weighted, or otherwise limited, lottery, please provide the following:

- 1. A thorough explanation of how the specific mission of the school, as set forth in the application, requires the utilization of the weighted or limited lottery.*
- 2. A thorough description of the processes and procedures the applicant intends to use to effectuate the lottery.*
- 3. The underlying research, pedagogical, educational, psychometric and legal, that supports the request and the procedures the applicant is requesting.*

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT 2018-19 through 2022-2023

IDENTIFY LEA FROM WHICH STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY COME

- LEA #1 Pitt County Schools
- LEA #2 Lenoir County Public Schools
- LEA #3 Greene County Schools

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.

	2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022			2022-2023		
	LEA 740	LEA 540	LEA 400	LEA 740	LEA 540	LEA 400	LEA 740	LEA 540	LEA 400	LEA 740	LEA 540	LEA 400	LEA 740	LEA 540	LEA 400
Kindergarten	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2
Grade 01	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2
Grade 02	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2
Grade 03	0	0	0	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2
Grade 04	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	14	2	24	14	2	24	14	2
Grade 05	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	14	2	24	14	2
	72	42	6	96	56	8	120	70	10	144	84	12	144	84	12
	120			160			200			240			240		

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.

Because RATSA plans to make enrollment and everyday attendance possible for students across Pitt, Lenoir, and Greene Counties, we will rent several buses from a local provider and arrange for cluster stops in Pitt, Greene, and Lenoir Counties. We will identify safe cluster stop spaces where twenty or more families will be able to bring or drop off their student each morning and afternoon. We expect about 50% of our school population will ride the bus, which would be sixty of 120 students in the first year of operation, and 120 of 240 students at full capacity.

We are budgeting a rental fee of \$50 per bus per day to rent three or four busses: \$27,750-36,000.

In addition to this line item, additional funds will be reserved for bus drivers, gasoline, and emergency maintenance.

To ensure that transportation is not a barrier, the transportation budget will also include a sum of money for temporary cab or emergency transportation fare for students who do not have access to one of the cluster bus stops.

As RATSA grows, we will investigate the possibility of purchasing and maintaining busses if that results in savings for the school.

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.

RATSA is fully committed to ensuring that no child lacks a daily meal whether this is due to financial need or simply because they forgot their lunch.

It is our intention to apply to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). We will contract with a local catering service that provides meals aligned with the standards of the NSLP; the caterer will cook and package food off-site and deliver and distribute to the school on a daily basis. The lunch menu will be published monthly and all students will have the option of buying from the catering service or providing their own lunches. We have allocated \$50,000 to this budget line item to account for up to 75% of our students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch in the first year, at an average of \$3 per lunch meal. We will anticipate this line item growing annually as our student population grows.

As students do have a tendency to forget their lunches, we will also maintain a small food pantry for those students. This pantry is not intended as the regular source of lunch for those students who are financially unable to provide their own school lunch. As noted above, we will contract with a local catering company to regularly provide lunch for those students. This food pantry, however, will serve those students who simply have forgotten their lunch on a given day.

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

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

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

Area of proposed coverage	Proposed amount of coverage		Cost (Quote)
Comprehensive General Liability	\$1,000,000		\$1,219.00
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$1,000,000		\$3,056.00
Property Insurance	\$50,000		\$450.00
Motor Vehicle Liability	\$1,000,000		\$3,450.00
Bonding Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$500	\$250,000	\$332.00
Other	\$1,000,000		\$5,908.00
Total Cost			\$14,415.00

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

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.

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 (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 specific steps the board will take to acquire a facility and obtain the Educational Certificate of Occupancy.

RATSA has already begun its facility search by seeking a space that can accommodate six classrooms for the first year (2019-20) and eight classroom spaces for the second year (2020-21). We estimate the needs of our facility to be 6,000 square feet in the first year and 8,000 square feet in the second year.

Following the second year of operation, RATSA plans to seek a permanent facility that will provide spaces for 12-14 classrooms, an office space, and a community room, such as a gymnasium, auditorium, and/or cafeteria. We will look to purchase or build a facility around 15,000 square feet to accommodate the maximum size of our school at 240 students, which is close to 65 square feet per student.

At the time of writing this application, RATSA has identified a potential facility for the first year of operation and has discussed an agreement with the management of the facility that currently operates an after school program in Winterville, NC. This facility currently holds an educational Certificate of Occupancy (see Appendix O). The facility currently has sufficient classroom modular buildings to accommodate our full proposed enrollment in the first year, and has room to place enough additional modular buildings for our full enrollment in year two. This agreement includes a payment-free lease of the land on which the school will sit, and a discounted rental fee for the modular classrooms where we will teach.

We are in the process of exploring the necessary steps to obtain the Educational Certificate of Occupancy for each location that we have toured. We understand the importance to work in cooperation with the Permitting Office of the Pitt County Inspection Department in order to expedite the process.

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 proposed agreement includes rent of \$500 per month per modular building. With five to six modular buildings, the rent for the first year would be \$30,000 to \$36,000 at \$6.00 per square foot. This is a great discount compared to local properties.

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.*

Should the agreement with the currently identified location not work out, we

would seek an alternative parcel of land with similar characteristics to lease for two years and rent modular buildings to put on the land. This option would be more expensive due to the donation of the land where the current modulars lie; however, it would allow RATSA some flexibility regarding the year operation in which we would need to move locations altogether if it has more acreage. See Appendix O for other area real estate pricing research.

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 2018-19

<p>SHOW CALCULATIONS FOR FIGURING STATE AND LOCAL DOLLARS FOR THE PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL</p> <p><i>Refer to the Resource Manual Finance Section for guidance on estimated funding amounts</i></p>	<p>State Funds: Charter schools receive an equivalent amount per student as the local education agency (LEA) receives per student receives from the State. Funding is based on the 1st month average daily membership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In year 1 – Base state allotments are determined by the LEA in which <u>the student</u> resides In year 2 and beyond- Base State allotments are determined by the LEA in which <u>the school</u> is located. <p>Local Funds: Charter schools receive a per pupil share of the local current expense of the LEA in which the student resides.</p> <p>Federal Funds: Charter schools must qualify and apply for the individual federal grants based on their population of students.</p> <p>REFER TO RESOURCE GUIDE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SOURCE DOCUMENTS</p>			
	<p>LEA #1 740 - Pitt County Schools</p>			
	Revenue	2016-2017 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2018-2019
	State Funds	\$5,385.79	72	\$387,776.88
	Local Funds	\$1,579.00	72	\$113,688.00
	Federal EC Funds	\$4,253.55	8	\$34,028.40
	Totals			\$535,493.28
	<p>LEA #2 540 - Lenoir County Public Schools</p>			
	Revenue	2016-2017 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2018-2019
	State Funds	\$5,644.82	42	\$237,082.44
Local Funds	\$1,129.00	42	\$47,418.00	
Federal EC Funds	\$3,403.44	4	\$13,613.76	
Totals			\$298,114.20	
<p>LEA #3 400 - Greene County Schools</p>				
Revenue	2016-2017 Per Pupil Funding	Projected LEA ADM	Approximate funding for 2018-2019	
State Funds	\$6,649.31	6	\$39,895.86	
Local Funds	\$874.92	6	\$5,249.52	
Federal EC Funds	\$4,253.55	1	\$4,253.55	
Totals			\$49,398.93	

Total Budget: Revenue Projections 2018-19 through 2022-2023

INCOME: REVENUE PROJECTIONS	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
-State ADM Funds	\$664,755	\$886,340	\$1,107,925	\$1,329,510	\$1,329,510
-Local Per Pupil Funds	\$166,356	\$221,808	\$277,260	\$332,712	\$332,712
-Exceptional Children Federal Funds	\$51,896	\$69,195	\$86,493	\$103,792	\$103,792
-Other Funds*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
-Working Capital*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Z - TOTAL REVENUE	\$883,006	\$1,177,343	\$1,471,678	\$1,766,014	\$1,766,014

***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 J.

Personnel Budget: Expenditure Projections 2018-19 through 2022-2023

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	2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022			2022-2023		
	Num Staff	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary
Administrative & Support Personnel:															
Lead Administrator	1	\$60,000	\$60,000	1	\$61,000	\$61,000	1	\$62,000	\$62,000	1	\$63,000	\$63,000	1	\$64,000	\$64,000
Assistant Administrator	0	\$0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	1	\$50,000	\$50,000
Office Manger	1	\$35,000	\$35,000	1	\$36,000	\$36,000	1	\$37,000	\$37,000	1	\$38,000	\$38,000	1	\$39,000	\$39,000
Clerical	1	\$26,000	\$26,000	1	\$26,500	\$26,500	1	\$27,000	\$27,000	1	\$27,500	\$27,500	1	\$28,000	\$28,000
Part Time Transportation	3	\$6,000	\$18,000	3	\$6,000	\$18,000	4	\$6,000	\$24,000	4	\$6,000	\$24,000	4	\$6,000	\$24,000
A - Total Admin and Support:	6		\$139,000	6		\$141,500	7		\$150,000	8		\$202,500	8		\$205,000
Instructional Personnel:															
Core Content Teacher(s)	5	\$40,000	\$200,000	7	\$41,000	\$287,000	9	\$42,000	\$378,000	11	\$43,000	\$473,000	11	\$44,000	\$484,000
Electives/Specialty Teacher(s)	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	2	\$41,000	\$82,000	2	\$42,000	\$84,000	2	\$43,000	\$86,000	2	\$44,000	\$88,000
Exceptional Children Teacher(s)	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	1	\$41,000	\$41,000	2	\$42,000	\$84,000	2	\$43,000	\$86,000	2	\$44,000	\$88,000
Teacher Assistants	1	\$25,000	\$25,000	2	\$25,000	\$50,000	2	\$25,000	\$50,000	3	\$25,000	\$75,000	3	\$25,000	\$75,000
B - Total Instructional Personnel:	8		\$305,000	12		\$460,000	15		\$596,000	18		\$720,000	18		\$735,000
A+B = C - Total Admin, Support and Instructional Personnel:	14		\$444,000	18		\$601,500	22		\$746,000	26		\$922,500	26		\$940,000
Administrative & Support Benefits															

Rising Above The Stars Academy

Health Insurance	3	\$4,000	\$12,000	3	\$4,000	\$12,000	3	\$4,000	\$12,000	4	\$4,000	\$16,000	4	\$4,000	\$16,000
Retirement Plan--Other	3	\$1,800	\$5,400	3	\$1,800	\$5,400	3	\$1,800	\$5,400	4	\$1,800	\$7,200	4	\$1,800	\$7,200
Life Insurance	3	\$250	\$750	3	\$250	\$750	3	\$250	\$750	4	\$250	\$1,000	4	\$250	\$1,000
Disability	3	\$400	\$1,200	3	\$400	\$1,200	3	\$400	\$1,200	4	\$400	\$1,600	4	\$400	\$1,600
Medicare	3	\$612	\$1,836	3	\$612	\$1,836	3	\$612	\$1,836	4	\$612	\$2,448	4	\$612	\$2,448
Social Security	3	\$2,728	\$8,184	3	\$2,728	\$8,184	3	\$2,728	\$8,184	4	\$2,728	\$10,912	4	\$2,728	\$10,912
D - Total Admin and Support Benefits:	18		\$29,370	18		\$29,370	18		\$29,370	24		\$39,160	24		\$39,160
Instructional Personnel Benefits:															
Health Insurance	8	\$4,000	\$32,000	12	\$4,000	\$48,000	15	\$4,000	\$60,000	18	\$4,000	\$72,000	18	\$4,000	\$72,000
Retirement Plan--Other	8	\$1,800	\$14,400	12	\$1,800	\$21,600	15	\$1,800	\$27,000	18	\$1,800	\$32,400	18	\$1,800	\$32,400
Life Insurance	8	\$250	\$2,000	12	\$250	\$3,000	15	\$250	\$3,750	18	\$250	\$4,500	18	\$250	\$4,500
Disability	8	\$400	\$3,200	12	\$400	\$4,800	15	\$400	\$6,000	18	\$400	\$7,200	18	\$400	\$7,200
Medicare	8	\$612	\$4,896	12	\$612	\$7,344	15	\$612	\$9,180	18	\$612	\$11,016	18	\$612	\$11,016
Social Security	8	\$2,728	\$21,824	12	\$2,728	\$32,736	15	\$2,728	\$40,920	18	\$2,728	\$49,104	18	\$2,728	\$49,104
E - Total Instructional Personnel Benefits:	48		\$78,320	72		\$117,480	90		\$146,850	108		\$176,220	108		\$176,220
D+E = F - Total Personnel Benefits	66		\$107,690	90		\$146,850	108		\$176,220	132		\$215,380	132		\$215,380
A+D = G - Total Admin and Support Personnel (Salary & Benefits)	24		\$168,370	24		\$170,870	25		\$179,370	32		\$241,660	32		\$244,160
B+E = H - Total Instructional Personnel (Salary & Benefits)	56		\$383,320	84		\$577,480	105		\$742,850	126		\$896,220	126		\$911,220
G+H = J - TOTAL PERSONNEL	80		\$551,690	108		\$748,350	130		\$922,220	158		\$1,137,880	158		\$1,155,380

Operations Budget: Expenditure Projections 2018-19 through 2022-2023

BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS		2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
	Administrative & Support:					
Office:	Office Supplies	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
	Paper	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
	Computers & Software	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
	Communications & Telephone	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
	Copier leases	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Professional Contract	Legal Counsel	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
	Student Accounting	\$14,400	\$19,200	\$24,000	\$28,800	\$28,800
	Financial	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400
	Other Professional	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Facilities	Facility Lease/Mortgage	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
	Maintenance	\$10,000	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
	Custodial Supplies	\$12,000	\$14,000	\$16,000	\$18,000	\$18,000
	Custodial Contract	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000
	Insurance (pg19)	\$14,415	\$15,000	\$16,000	\$17,000	\$18,000
Utilities	Electric	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
	Water/Sewer	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
	Trash	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600
Transportation	Buses	\$30,000	\$36,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
	Gas	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
	Oil/Tires & Maintenance	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Other	Marketing	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
	Child nutrition	\$50,000	\$52,000	\$54,000	\$56,000	\$56,000
	K - TOTAL Administrative & Support Operations	\$246,415	\$282,800	\$369,500	\$382,300	\$383,300
	Instructional:					
Classroom Technology	Computers	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
	Software	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
	Instructional Technology	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Instructional Contract	Instructional Support	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$18,000	\$18,000
	Staff Development	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$9,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Books and Supplies	Instructional Materials	\$7,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$17,000	\$17,000

	Curriculum/Texts	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
	L - TOTAL Instructional Operations	\$44,000	\$70,000	\$73,000	\$85,000	\$85,000
	K+L = M - TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$290,415	\$352,800	\$442,500	\$467,300	\$468,300

Overall Budget:

BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
J - TOTAL PERSONNEL	\$551,690	\$748,350	\$922,220	\$1,137,880	\$1,155,380
M - TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$290,415	\$352,800	\$442,500	\$467,300	\$468,300
J+ M =N TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$842,105	\$1,101,150	\$1,364,720	\$1,605,180	\$1,623,680
Z - TOTAL REVENUE	\$883,006	\$1,177,343	\$1,471,678	\$1,766,014	\$1,766,014
Z - N = SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$40,901	\$76,193	\$106,958	\$160,834	\$142,334

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.

Year 1

Kindergarten - Second grade: 4 units 80 students (may reduce class size to 18

if 2018 budget will support it).

Total Students: 120

Year 2

Kindergarten - Third grade: 4 units 80 students (or 4 units of 18 if 2019 budget will support it.)

Total Students: 160

Ultimately, the school will grow to 240 students in grades K-5.

Reasons for Demand:

SCHOOL CHOICE: There are two other public charter schools in Pitt County; however, we aim to be much smaller than the current two and will focus on an active STEM program with additional emphasis on entrepreneurship. In addition, we have developed and run multiple businesses in the area, the most successful being an after school program for the past decade that has demonstrated success in growing students academically and socially.

OVERALL POPULATION NEEDS TRANSFORMATION:

When we study the demographics of local graduates, we have found that a small percentage of children are going on to college and starting businesses, and few remain in the area after graduation from college due to a lack of relevant, good-paying jobs. We aim to reverse this trend by attracting interest from local parents who believe as we do: Children are more likely to reach their potential in an environment that stresses high standards and strong character within a diverse student body. In this way, we are creating problem solvers who will not only go to college but remain in the area and work to revive our local economy.

QUALITY OPTIONS ARE LIMITED: When compared to the state, the districts in our area fall well below average. When looked at at a micro-level, local

schools are not meeting the community's needs.

State of NC - 58% All, 39% Black, 47% Hispanic, 43% EDS
Pitt County - 52% All, 35% Black, 49% Hispanic, 38% EDS
Lenoir County - 42% All, 27% Black, 44% Hispanic, 33% EDS
Greene County - 43% All, 29% Black, 45% Hispanic, 33% EDS

STRONG BOARD & PARTNERSHIPS: We will have an experienced Governing Board comprised of professional experienced in business building. We aim to utilize our experience and community partnerships to provide RATSA positional advantages to recruit and retain superior leadership to operate and sustain a successful charter school.

EXCELLENT MARKET LEADERSHIP: Members of the RATSA founding board have long-standing relationships within the Winterville community. With our current after school care program in place, the school has already established a strong foundation of trust and credibility in the community. We believe that our reputation combined with our business-savvy board will lead to an excellent branding and marketing.

BREAK-EVEN POINT:

2019-2020

Projected # of Students: 120

Projected Total Revenue: \$883,006

Total Expenses: \$842,105

Enrollment Required for Break-Even: 114 (This allows for the current 5% budgeted surplus.)

Please note, this revenue projection does NOT include any Title I, Title II, or funding earned through fundraising.

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

Rising Stars Academy will establish a contingency plan to meet unexpected shortfalls which includes the following:

- Learn from other charter schools in the network on the initial do's and dont's to prevent initial shortfalls.
- Operate from a cash flow projection.
- Understand that during Year one charters do not typically meet enrollment and budget accordingly.
- If enrollment is low, reduce personnel and cut operational purchases.
- Negotiate a lease agreement to include 30-60 day lease contingency.
- Partner with credible sponsors and foundations to understand initial charter cash flow;

As successful business owners, we understand cash flow. Through our partnerships, our operational start-up costs will be limited since the costs facility, FFE, and buses have been negotiated.

Our biggest costs will be personnel and instructional materials. To reduce costs and ensure the bulk of our funds flow directly to students, we will

buy furniture from government surplus.

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

At this time, we have no start up revenue. We have yet to apply for any start up grants but if available through the state (CSP Grant), we will apply. We anticipate being qualified for Title I and North Carolina's Charter School Transportation Grant.

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

20:1

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

We will utilize the next 18 months to make those decisions fully. We will rely on the expertise and experiences of our entrepreneurial board to help us vet the best partnerships for the organization. We have budgeted \$120 per child for financial student accounting support. We intend to have our business manager be the point of contact with our student accounting contractor, and they will also manage our PowerSchool.

In addition, we aim to utilize local providers to meet the related services for our exceptional children until the school has the revenue to bring in full time specialists in the event that they are needed. We expect to contract for psychological, speech, occupational therapy as necessary, and have provided for this expense in the "Other Professional" line.

Due to the small size of our school, instructional support will be contracted, and we will expect them to provide professional development, coaching, and feedback on our instructional model.

The vetting process will consist of the following steps:

1. Committee or Lead Administrator will seek vendors.
2. The committee or Lead Administrator-appointed team will vet the pro's and con's of each vendor.
3. The committee or team will make a recommendation to the Board for a vote.
4. Third party contracts will be evaluated annually to ensure a strong return on investment.

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

School's Mission and Curricular Offerings:

The budget aligns to our mission because over 75% of our funding is going directly to benefit the school's academic programming, including the following: personnel, academic resources, and teacher development/professional capital.

Transportation Plans:

Since we will be located in a rural community, we will need to budget towards our anticipated population to meet their need for transportation and

lunch plans. Based on the county's population and location of the school, we anticipate more than 50% of our population needing transportation to ensure their daily attendance. We are budgeting just under \$40,000 to cover the costs of used buses, staffing, maintenance and gas to cover this cost in year one. The budgeted number was based on studying the budgets of multiple North Carolina public charter schools that offer transportation to their students.

Facility Needs:

Based on our partnership with local land owners, we anticipate paying approximately \$300 per student for facility costs. This would equate to less than 4% of our annual budget costs until we needed to grow into a permanent facility.

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.*

Since many board members are successful business owners, we understand that oxygen is the life-blood to any successful organization. With that in mind, we see our source of oxygen as resources and partnerships to provide capital assets to the school. By the year 2024, we will be able to accrue a fund balance of \$250,000 which reflects over 5% of our funds from year to year.

Beginning with this in mind, we will need to save a minimum of \$50,000 per year. This would be approximately 5% of the annual budget. When the budget is developed, we will only budget for 95% of our projected enrollment.

If we do not meet this goal, we will adjust the next year's budget to cover the funding gap. This will be the responsibility of the Lead Administrator and the Finance Committee to analyze spending in quarterly study sessions to be sure we are on track to build our projected reserves.

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

The budget, constructed conservatively, reflects the rental of capital assets that are already in place through the aftercare and small businesses. The school would rent the existing facilities for the first three years to save money and will ultimately purchase land for the construction of a facility of its own.

The same model would benefit the school's transportation plans as multiple buses are in place.

We plan to purchase a blend of new and used furniture and fixtures and will attempt to avoid additional leasing or financing.

Facility leasing is based upon 120 students at 60 square feet/student or 7,200 square feet at \$6 a foot for a used building or modular. We expect to lease for at least three years.

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.*
- Multiple modular buildings that already have an Educational Certificate of

Occupancy.

- Student furniture for over 50 students.
- Limited office technology.

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?

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

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

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

Internal controls will be reviewed and evaluated annually by an independent auditor in accordance with generally accepted audit standards. We will develop a list of questions regarding internal controls that include the following:

- Are accounting records kept up-to-date and balanced monthly?
- Is school leadership using a standard chart of accounts with descriptive titles?
- Is school leadership or the Finance Committee preparing adequate and timely reports to insure control of operations?
- Are monthly financial statements (Balance Sheet, Income Statement) being produced?
- Is there a comparison of actual results with budget?
- Are personal expenses kept separate from business expenses?
- Are monthly bank reconciliations reviewed by the school leadership?
- Are there any separation of duties?
- Are governmental reporting requirements being complied with in a timely manner?
- Is insurance maintained and is this coverage reviewed periodically by a qualified individual?

No more than three people, and no fewer than two, will have access to the school's funding. Every check over \$5,000 will be signed by more than one member of the organization.

To safeguard assets, each purchase of an asset will undergo a specific accounting and inventory process developed by the Finance Committee. Each classroom teacher will be responsible for the assets in his or her classroom and will have a specific end of the year checkout sheet to verify the condition and presence of each asset. These combined check out sheets will be transferred to an organizational asset list that will be reviewed each year by the operations team and finance committee.

In addition, our financial experts on the Board, in collaboration with other charter schools will develop systems for payroll, accounts receivable, donations, fundraisers, petty cash, and credit card usage.

Our vendors and all third party contracts will be evaluated annually to ensure that we are receiving the best return on our investment in addition to us being effective partners.

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

The identified school site is the current location of an after school program. The owners of this facility have agreed to allow the school to utilize the facility at a lowered rent cost of \$6.00 per square foot until a permanent facility can be purchased.

The buses currently used by the after school program will also be rented to the school at a greatly reduced rate of \$50 per bus per day, with the responsibility for all maintenance and fuel incurred by the school.

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.

Moore Business Solutions

Address:

601-C Country Club Dr., Greenville, NC 27834

Telephone:

252-355-1099

Fax:

252-756-5421

VII AGREEMENT PAGE

Application Fee:

Pursuant to § 115C-218.1(c) the charter school applicant must submit a \$1000 application fee to the Office of Charter Schools. The applicant must submit their application fee by the September 19, 2016 5:00 pm EST deadline. Payments will be accepted in the form of a certified check. Cash is not accepted.

*Application Note: The applicant must mail the certified check along with a letter indicating the name of the proposed charter school, contact information and the enclosed payment amount to be received before or on the due date of September 19, 2016 5:00 pm EST. Failure to submit payment by the stipulated timeline to the Office of Charter Schools will deem the application incomplete.

Payments should be made payable to North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Office Of Charter Schools
6303 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6303

I understand the requirements pursuant to G.S. 115C-218.1(c).

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Date: 09/15/2017

Applicant Signature:

The foregoing application is submitted on behalf of Rising Above The Stars Academy (name of non-profit corporation or individuals submitting application). The undersigned has read the application and hereby declares that the information contained in it is true and accurate to the best of his/her information and belief. The undersigned further represents that the applicant has read the Charter School Law and agrees to be governed by it, other applicable laws, and SBE regulations. Additionally, we understand the final approval of the charter is contingent upon successful completion of a mandatory planning year. Per SBE policy TCS-U-013 All new nonprofit boards receiving a charter must participate in a year-long planning program prior to the charter school's opening for students. The planning year provides an applicant time to prepare for the implementation of the school's curricular, financial, marketing, and facility plans. During this planning year, regular meetings are held with the Board of Directors and consultants from the Office of Charter Schools to provide information on the following topics: school opening plans, staff development, finance, governance, board training, marketing, policies and procedures, securing a school site, and hiring a school administrator. Final approval of the charter will be contingent upon successfully completing all of the planning program requirements.

Print/Type Name: imagesofexcellence

Board Position: Board President

Signature: _____

Date: 09/22/2017

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
_____ day of _____, 20____.

Notary Public Official Seal
My commission expires: _____, 20____.