



**PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA**

State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

# North Carolina Charter School Application

Telra Institute

Opening in the 2021-2022 School Year

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## Application Instructions

APPLICATION AND APPLICATION FEE DUE DATE/TIME	
Fast-Track and Acceleration Applicants (2020 Opening)	<b>5:00pm EST on July 29, 2019</b>
Traditional Timeline Applicants (2021 Opening)	<b>5:00pm EST on August 26, 2019</b>

### APPLICATION SPECIFICATIONS

Applicants can submit applications prior to the deadline. **All applications must be submitted using the online portal.** Applicants are to use the following specifications:

1. All applications must be submitted using the online platform. Applications submitted outside of this platform will not be accepted.
2. All submitted applications must be from a nonprofit group approved by the NC Secretary of State, unless being submitted by a municipality.
3. Each major section (Mission, Purposes and Goals, Education Plan, Governance and Capacity, Operations, and Financial Plan) must be located within the designated section, as indicated in the online document.
4. If a particular question does not apply to your team or proposal, respond "Not Applicable," AND state the reason this question is not applicable to your team or proposal.
5. Each required Appendix must include a title page with the title of the Appendix and the Proposed School Name.
6. Any answer given within the application that is not original to the applicant must include a citation to the source of the answer.
7. Review all elements of the application for completeness before submitting.
8. The full application (including the narrative and all appendices) must be submitted as one PDF document.
9. The budget spreadsheet must also be submitted separately as an excel file.
10. The application narrative, without appendices, may not exceed 100 pages. Applicants submitting special requests are given an additional 5-page allowance, per special request.
11. Each section of the application should be clearly labeled according to the table of contents.
12. Late submissions **will not** be accepted. **No exceptions.**
13. Applicants must turn in the application fee and fee payment form by the stipulated timeline.

## Application Contact Information

1. Name of Proposed Charter School: Telra Institute
2. Organization Type:  Municipality  Nonprofit Corporation
3. Name of non-profit organization under which charter will be organized or operated: Telra Institute, Inc.
4. Has the organization applied for 501(c)(3) non-profit status?  Yes  No  N/A (Municipal)

5. 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: Dr. Ronak Bhatt

Title/Relationship to Non-Profit: Chairperson

Mailing Address: 5803 Summerston Pl

City/State/Zip: Charlotte, NC 28277

Primary Telephone: 704-412-1746

Alternate Telephone: 617-767-6370

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

Geographic County: Mecklenburg

LEA/District Name: Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District

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

Yes

No

Give the name of the third-party person or group: N/A

Fees provided to the third-party person or group? N/A

8. 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: N/A

9. Is this application a conversion from a traditional public school or private school?

Yes. Complete the Conversion Special Request Section.

No.

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

Yes. Complete the Replication Special Request Section.

No.

Do you want your replication application to be considered for Fast-Track?

Yes. Complete the Fast-Track Special Request Section.

No

11. Do you want your application to be considered for acceleration?

Yes. Complete the Acceleration Special Request Section.

No.

12. Do you want your application to be considered for an Alternative Charter School?

Yes. Complete the Alternative Charter School Special Request Section.

No.

13. Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment

Projected School Opening Year: 2021    Month: August

14. Will this school operate on a year-round schedule?  Yes                       No

15. Enrollment Summary. Complete the following table, graying out (or leaving blank) any rows for grades the school will not serve..

Number of Students						
Grade Level	Year 1 2021-2022	Year 2 2022-2023	Year 3 2023-2024	Year 4 2024-2025	Year 5 2025-2026	At Capacity 2023-2024
K	48	48	48	48	48	48
1	48	48	48	48	48	48
2	51	51	51	51	51	51
3	51	51	51	51	51	51
4	40	60	60	60	60	60
5		40	60	60	60	60
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

<b>11</b>						
<b>12</b>						
<b>Totals</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>318</b>

16. Complete the following table, providing projected enrollment for each of the following demographic groups.

<b>Anticipated Racial/Ethnic Demographics (%)</b>	<b>% of Economically Disadvantaged Students</b>	<b>% of Students with Disabilities</b>	<b>% of English Language Learners</b>
<b>50-70% white 30-50% minority</b>	<b>10-20%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>5-15%</b>

17. Describe the rationale for the number of students and grade levels served in year one and the basis for the growth plan outlined above.

The unique curriculum offered at Telra Institute along with significant latent demand will help ensure grades K-3 can open at capacity (3 classrooms/grade) in year 1. Grades 4-5 are more difficult to fill in a new charter as parents generally want their children to finish their terminal years in an elementary program to which they are accustomed. However, with our unique program and smaller class sizes, we plan to open grade 4 at  $\frac{2}{3}$  terminal capacity (2 classrooms) and then grow grades 4-5 organically as students progress through the school.

### Certify

18. This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.  I certify  I do not certify

Explanation (optional):

**This application has been developed by the Board of Directors, independently.**

## Charter Application Special Requests

### Acceleration

Do you want your application to be considered for acceleration?

Yes. Answer questions A1-5.

**No. Stop. Do not complete this section.**

A. Per State Board of Education policy [CHTR-013](#), the State Board of Education, in its discretion, may accelerate the mandatory planning year to increase the number of high-quality charter schools. In considering whether to accelerate the planning year, the applicant must meet the following requirements:

1. Demonstrate a clear and compelling need for the accelerated planning year.

Click or tap here to enter text.

2. Demonstrate an exceptional need for the charter school in the proposed location.

Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Agree to participate in the planning year while the charter application is being reviewed without any guarantee of charter award.

Yes

No

4. Is a facility identified by the applicant that is feasible for opening on an accelerated schedule?

Yes

No

5. Demonstrate that the facility identified by the applicant is feasible for opening on an accelerated schedule.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Attach Appendix A1 Acceleration Evidences to demonstrate that you have a facility secured for opening on an accelerated schedule.

B. Once evidence for the requirements has been verified, the State Board will also consider the presence or absence of the following factors in making its determination:

1) Unique mission and educational program.

- 2) Local, state, and national nonprofit partnerships committed to assisting the school.
  - 3) Potential for economic and educational development of the region.
  - 4) Mentoring by a successful organization that has experience in creating public schools.
  - 5) Obstacles to educational reform efforts that leave chartering as an available option.
  - 6) Commitment to work with a successful charter school board as a guiding mentor.
  - 7) The length of time the board of directors has existed.
  - 8) Whether the proposed board has previously operated or currently operates a successful public charter school.
- C. The above list is not exclusive or controlling and is intended to guide the exercise of the State Board's discretion. An applicant requesting acceleration must submit the request to the State Board of Education prior to the application due date for consideration.

## Conversion

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

Yes. Go to Question #2.

**No. Stop. Do not complete this section.**

2. Is the Conversion Public or Private?  Public. Complete Question #3 below.

Private. Complete Questions #4 and 5 below.

3. Public Conversion Information

\*Give the name and six-digit identifier of the school being converted: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

If application is for a public conversion, submit Appendix A2.1: Public Conversion Evidences

Conversion evidences must include:

- 1) Statement of Support signed by the majority of the teachers and instructional support personnel currently employed at the school
- 2) Last payroll outlining current staff receiving compensation from the traditional public school
- 3) Current school enrollment
- 4) Parent support of the conversion

4. Financial History

Outline the 3-year financial history of the proposed converted charter school in the chart below as evidenced in either financial statements or the IRS Form 990. Supporting documentation will be attached as Appendix A2.

<b>Financial History 3 Years Prior</b>	<b>Financial History 2 Years Prior</b>	<b>Financial History 1 Year Prior</b>

5. Private Conversion Information

Name of the private school being converted: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

City and state where private school is located: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- 1) Describe the rationale for converting from a private entity to a public school. Include information regarding how the proposed charter school will be nonsectarian in nature and will be open for all students (not just those currently attending the private school).

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 2) Provide a detailed description of the existing private school's financial status, including the process in which these financial assets or deficits will be transferred to the non-profit organization.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Provide a copy of the organization's IRS Form 990 for the last three years as Appendix A2.2 Private Conversion Evidences. If the current organization does not have a Form 990, tax information for the last three years along with financial statements must be included as Appendix A2.2 Private Conversion Evidences.

- 3) Depict and analyze the current enrollment trends and student demographics of the private school over the past three academic years.

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 4) Document and expound upon evidence that the existing private school is successful in student achievement. Base this explanation upon academic data available through state and national summative assessments.

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 5) Explain the process by which the current private school staff will be considered for teaching at the proposed charter school staff. What is the projected turnover due to the statutory requirements for teacher licensure and highly-qualified status?

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Replication

Per SBE policy [CHTR-016](#), the State Board of Education (SBE) may, in certain well-defined instances, grant permission for a non-profit corporation board of directors (board) to replicate either its own successful model, or to employ an educational management company (EMO) or a charter management organization (CMO) to replicate a successful model currently being operated under the management of the EMO or CMO. The SBE may also, in certain well-defined instances, grant permission for a non-profit corporation board to “fast track” such a replication by foregoing the planning year normally required for newly-approved charter applicants.

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

Yes. Go to Question #2.                       **No. Do not complete this section.**

2. If yes, please provide the name of the charter school and the state that the charter school has been authorized to operate in.

Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Are you a board of directors currently operating a charter school in NC and applying to replicate its currently existing model?

Yes. Answer questions #4-6.                       No. Go to Question #7.

4. A board of directors that currently operates a charter school in NC is eligible to apply to replicate its currently existing model only if the board’s current school or schools demonstrate a consistent record of academic, financial, and operational success. If the board operates more than one school, each school must meet this standard. To meet this standard, the board must meet each of the following conditions:

- A) Each school operated by the board must have academic outcomes at least comparable to those of the students enrolled in the LEAs in which they are located. In addition, each school operated by the board must meet or exceed student growth consistent with State standards, for three years immediately preceding the application, and maintain that growth throughout the application period.
- B) Each school operated by the board must have unqualified audits for the three years immediately preceding the application, and must maintain that fiscal standard throughout the application period.
- C) Each school operated by the board must have resolved any noncompliance issues cited by NCDPI during the three years immediately preceding the application and must maintain this standard throughout the application period.
- D) A majority of the board and 50% or greater of the board’s officers must be North Carolina residents.

Does your board meet the each of criteria listed above?                       Yes                       No

Attach as Appendix A3.1 Replication Educational Outcomes - for the replicated school for the last three academic years.

5. Describe which academic qualifications the non-profit board has met that qualify them for replication. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
  
6. Outline the 3-year financial history of the proposed replicated charter school in the chart listed below as evidenced in financial statements or IRS Form 990. Attach the related documents as Appendix A3.2 Replication Financial Evidences.

<b>Financial History 3 Years Prior</b>	<b>Financial History 2 Years Prior</b>	<b>Financial History 1 Year Prior</b>

7. Are you a board of directors that does not currently operate a school but is partnering to replicate an existing model operated by an EMO/CMO?

Yes. Answer questions #8-10 below.

No. Go to Question #11.

8. Eligibility Criteria

- A) A board of directors partnering to replicate an existing model operated by an EMO/CMO must demonstrate that each of the schools being managed by the EMO/CMO in North Carolina
  - 1) have an academic proficiency comparable to the LEAs in which the current schools are located; or
  - 2) meet or exceed growth for the three years immediately preceding the application at issue.

If the EMO/CMO does not manage any schools in NC or the schools it manages in NC do not yet have the data listed above, the board must demonstrate to the SBE that the schools operated in other states by the EMO/CMO meet similarly rigorous standards for academic performance. The EMO/CMO must continue to meet these standards throughout the application period.

- B) The board must demonstrate that each of the schools in North Carolina managed by the EMO/CMO have unqualified audits without fiscal compliance issues for three years immediately preceding the application.

If the EMO/CMO does not currently manage any schools in NC or the schools in NC it manages do not yet have the data listed above, the board of directors must demonstrate to the SBE that the schools operated in other states by the EMO/CMO meet similarly rigorous standards for financial performance. The board of directors must maintain this standard through the application period.

Does the EMO/CMO partnering with the board meet the criteria listed above? Yes  
No

Attach as Appendix A3.1 Replication Educational Outcomes - for the replicated school for the last three academic years.

9. Describe which academic qualifications schools managed by the EMO/CMO have met that make them suitable for replication. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

10. Outline the 3-year financial history of the proposed replicated charter school in the chart listed below as evidenced in financial statements or IRS Form 990. Attach the related documents as Appendix A3.2 Replication Financial Evidences.

Financial History 3 Years Prior	Financial History 2 Years Prior	Financial History 1 Year Prior

### 11. Fast Track Replication

Do you want your application to be considered for Fast-Track Replication?

Yes. Complete the Fast Track Eligibility Criteria below.

No. You have completed the Replication Special Request section. Please attach the required appendices **3.1 Education Outcomes** for the replicated school(s) for the last three academic years, and **3.2 Replication Financial Evidences IRS Form 990**, bank statements for the replicated school(s) for the prior three years.

#### Fast Track Replication Eligibility Criteria

Per State Board of Education policy [CHTR-016](#), a non-profit corporation board that does not currently operate a charter school in NC is eligible to apply to replicate through fast-track replication an existing model operated by an EMO/CMO. The non-profit corporation board is

eligible to apply only if the schools operated by the EMO/CMO have a consistent track record of academic, financial, and operational success. The non-profit corporation is eligible to replicate an existing model operated by the EMO/CMO only if the non-profit corporation board meets each of the following conditions:

1. The non-profit corporation board must demonstrate that each of the schools being managed by the EMO/CMO in North Carolina (1) have an academic proficiency comparable to the LEAs in which the current schools are located; or (2) meet or exceed growth for the three years immediately preceding the application at issue. If the EMO/CMO does not manage any schools in NC or the schools it manages in NC do not yet have the data listed above, the non-profit corporation board must demonstrate to the SBE that the schools operated in other states by the EMO/CMO meet similarly rigorous standards for academic performance. The EMO/CMO must continue to meet these standards throughout the application period.

The non-profit corporation board meets at least one of the qualifications above. Yes No

\*Attach as Appendix A3.1 Replication Educational Outcomes - for the replicated school for the last three academic years. Describe which academic qualifications the non-profit board has met that qualify them for replication.

2. The non-profit corporation board must demonstrate that each of the schools in North Carolina managed by the EMO/CMO have unqualified audits without fiscal compliance issues for three years immediately preceding the application. If the EMO/CMO does not currently manage any schools in NC or the schools it manages in NC do not yet have the data listed above, the non-profit corporation board must demonstrate to the SBE that the schools operated in other states by the EMO/CMO meet similarly rigorous standards for financial performance. The non-profit corporation board must maintain this standard through the application period.

The non-profit corporation board meets at least one of the qualifications above. Yes No

3. Each school operated by the non-profit corporation must have resolved any noncompliance issues cited by NCDPI during the three years immediately preceding the application and must maintain this standard throughout the application period.

The non-profit corporation board meets at least one of the qualifications above. Yes No

4. A majority of the non-profit corporation board members and 50% or greater of the board officers must be North Carolina residents.

The non-profit corporation board meets at least one of the qualifications above. Yes No

## Alternative

Do you want your application to be considered for an Alternative Charter School?

Yes. Continue to the next section.

**No. Stop. Do not complete this section.**

In order to qualify for designation as an “alternative school” for purposes of accountability under this policy (CHTR-020), the charter school must demonstrate that it serves a student population as follows:

1. The school must include grades 9-12.
2. At least 75% of the school’s population in grades 9-12 must be at-risk of academic failure as defined in [DROP-001.I.B.](#), and must also meet one or more of the following:
  - a. The student must either be recently released from a juvenile justice facility, or otherwise be subject to and participating in the juvenile justice court process;
  - b. The student must be currently served by a treatment facility licensed pursuant to Chapter 122C of the General Statutes, or have recently been discharged from such a facility;
  - c. The student must be currently under long-term suspension from a public or private school; or
  - d. The student must be a high-school dropout as defined in GCS-Q-001 (linked above); or be imminently at risk of dropping out as demonstrated by adequate documentation in the charter school’s application for designation under this policy.

Does your proposed school meet the minimum criteria?

Yes.  No.

\*A charter school meeting the eligibility criteria set forth in this policy and seeking designation as an “alternative school” must submit an application to the Office of Charter Schools describing in detail the school’s mission as it relates to the request for the designation; the criteria the school plans to use that will meet the eligibility requirements set forth above, including the documentation the school will use to support its admissions process; how the school intends to serve the select population, educationally and otherwise; and the goals the school is setting for academic achievement for this population. The application must also include an admission plan that is well-defined and specifically limited to serving at-risk student as described in the application. A plan that is not well-defined will not be approved.

\*The school must, in its application, designation which of the alternative accountability options it is requesting under [ACCT-038](#). The option selected, if approved, cannot be changed except at the time of renewal (as outlined in [CHTR-020.III](#)).

### Proposed Management Organization (EMO or CMO)

1. Does the Charter School plan to contract for services with an “educational management organization” or “charter management organization”?

Yes      No. **Stop do not complete this section.**

2. Name of the Company:

Mailing Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone Number:

Contact Person:

Email Address:

Website:

3. Explain how the contract with the specified EMO or CMO will be in the best educational and financial interest of the charter school.

Click or tap here to enter text.

#### Attach Appendix A4.1: Executed Management Contract

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

9. Is the facility provided by the EMO/CMO? Yes No

Attach Appendix A4.2 Facility Buyout Agreement, if applicable

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Attach Appendix A4.3: EMO/CMO Financial History

Provide as Appendix A4.3 the financial history and statements of the EMO/CMO over the last three years. Specifically, if contracting with an EMO, provide confirmation that the EMO is in good standing by providing bank statements from the prior three years.

Attach Appendix A4.4: IRS Form 990

Provide as Appendix A4.4 the IRS Form 990 (or equivalent documents if the organization does not file a 990) for the prior three years.

## Section 1 Mission, Purposes, and Goals

**1.1 Mission and Vision.** State the mission and vision of the proposed charter school. The mission statement defines the organization’s purpose and primary objectives, describing why it exists. The mission statement should indicate in measurable terms what the school intends to do, for whom, and to what degree. The vision statement outlines how the school will operate and what it will achieve in the long term. The vision statement should describe what the school will look like when it is achieving its mission. The mission and vision statement provide the foundation for the entire proposal.

The mission and vision statements, taken together, should:

- Identify the students and community to be served;
- Illustrate what success will look like; and
- Align with the purposes of the NC Charter School Law.

1. The mission statement of the proposed charter school is as follows (35 words or less):

Telra Institute nourishes the minds and bodies of students with a rigorous, differentiated educational environment that cultivates the intellectual, academic, social, and emotional skills that enable highly gifted children to achieve their full potential.

2. What is the vision of the proposed school? What will the school look like when it is achieving the mission?

Telra Institute supports the long-term growth of our students as whole individuals through a rigorous curriculum promoting critical thinking & reasoning, mathematical & literary fluency, and a problem-solving mindset. We foster a vibrant environment with a spirit of innovation and continuous learning and a set of mutual commitments to all members of the Telra Institute family:

- To our students: We will instill in you a lifelong sense of curiosity, passion, initiative, and tenacity, along with high expectations and the capacity to achieve them.
- To our staff: We value the experience, talents, and dedication you bring to the calling of education, and we commit to support your growth and develop you as professionals.
- To our parents: We are humbled by the trust you place in us to educate your children, and we pledge to engage you as partners in our mission with openness and fellowship.

### Educational Need and Targeted Student Population of the Proposed Charter School

3. 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. Additionally, how it will reflect the socioeconomic status of the LEA, SWD population, and ELL population of the district?

[See G.S. 115C-218.45\(e\).](#)

We at Telra Institute believe:

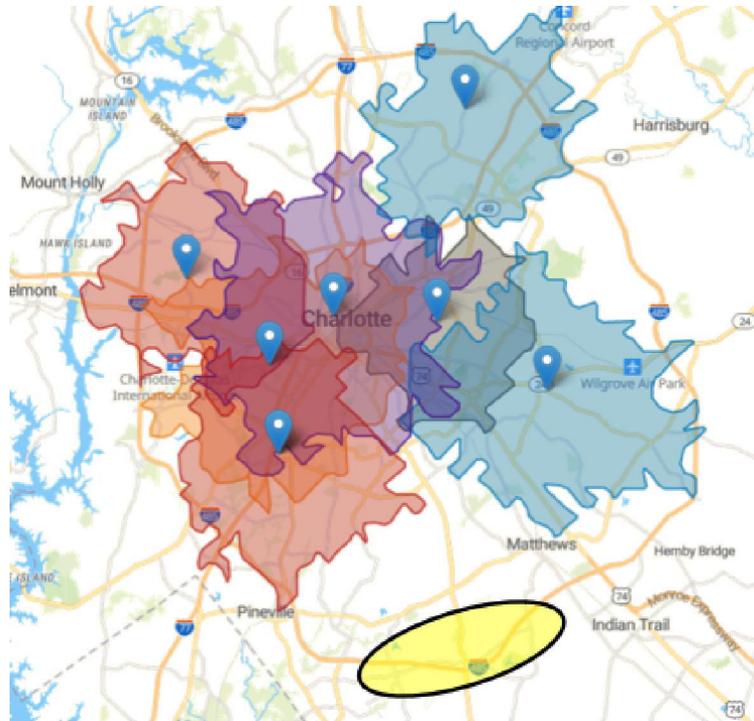
1. Many students of all demographics can benefit from and thrive in a full-time advanced/accelerated curriculum designed for gifted or highly motivated students. These students are located everywhere and may or may not have been previously identified as “gifted”. (See Lüftenegger, M., Kollmayer, M., Bergsmann, E., Jöstl, G., Spiel, C., & Schober, B. (2015). Mathematically gifted students and high achievement: the role of motivation and classroom structure, *High Ability Studies*, 26:2, 227-243. doi: 10.1080/13598139.2015.1095075)
2. Families should not have to choose between finding an appropriately challenging academic program and allowing their young children to attend a public school close to home. Long commutes to school can interfere with sleep, limit access to enrichment and extracurricular activities, and inhibit parent involvement in their child’s school.

This model has been successfully deployed by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools at six elementary school “Talent Development (TD)” gifted magnet locations – Barringer, Shamrock Gardens, Idlewild, Tuckaseegee, Irwin, and Mallard Creek Elementary – and at one Charlotte-area charter school, Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy (MRSA). Unfortunately, the development pattern of these schools has resulted in areas that may be characterized as K-5 gifted education “deserts” – portions of the LEA that are not within proximity to a specialty full-time gifted program (see Fig. 1). This pattern, combined with the fact that most of these existing gifted programs have long wait lists, means that many otherwise qualified and motivated students do not have access to this type of curriculum.

We aim to open a K-5 school with a gifted-focused curriculum in the southern Mecklenburg “desert” (see Fig. 2), though, depending on space availability, the location may be just across the southern Mecklenburg border in Union County. Telra Institute admission is open to all students eligible to attend public school in North Carolina. Accordingly, our Targeted Population includes all demographics, but with a special focus on K-5 students that have the motivation and capability to benefit from a full-time advanced/gifted curriculum but have lower geographic accessibility to such a curriculum in the CMS LEA today.

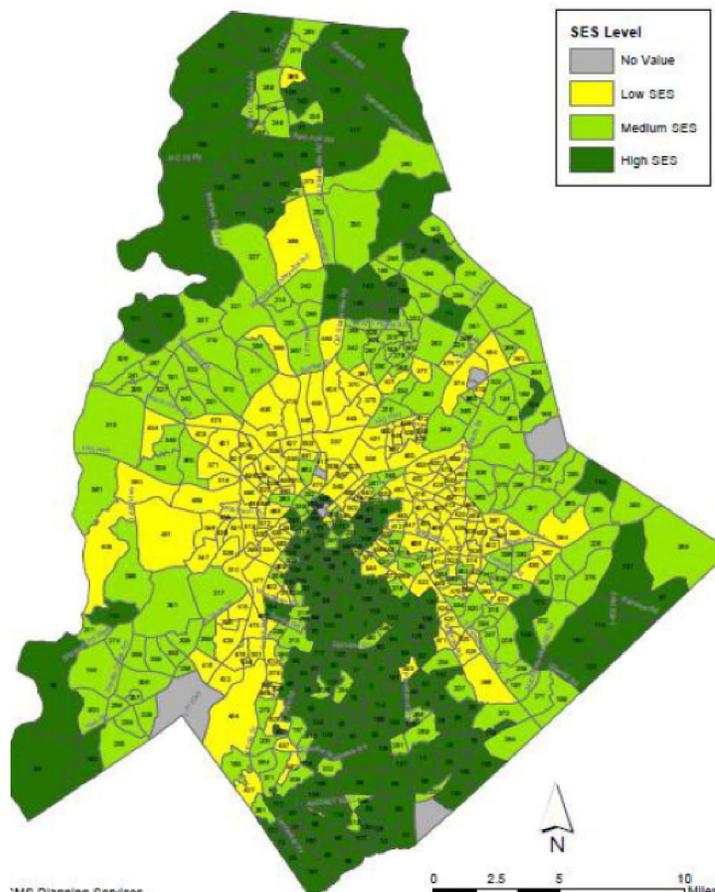
As has been the experience with most other charters, we can expect that our initial enrollees will disproportionately come from nearby areas. Later, as our program and reputation become more established, we will begin to draw more broadly from the Charlotte region. The demographic of the former group is best estimated by profiling CMS schools near the center of the targeted location (the intersection of Providence Rd. and 485) such as Providence Spring Elementary (69% white, 31% minority or multi-racial), Polo Ridge Elementary (51% white, 49% minority or multi-racial), and McKee Road Elementary (61% white, 39% minority or multi-racial). By comparison, the overall demographics of CMS are 27% white, 73% minority or multi-racial. We expect that the demographics of Telra will likely be 50-70% white in the early years (in-line with the immediate surrounding community), declining over time as the Telra makeup more closely approaches the CMS LEA (~30% white).





**Figure 2: Targeted location of Telra Institute (yellow oval) to maximize accessibility within the southern Mecklenburg gifted specialty desert.**

The trajectory for the socioeconomic status (SES), students with disabilities, and English language learner demographics is a similar story. Telra may initially reflect a lower percentage of these students, as they may be wary of new charters. Over time, these demographics within Telra should begin to more closely reflect the CMS average. As an example, Fig. 3 shows that the southern desert is generally medium or high SES (with some low SES), while CMS, as a whole, is approximately 42% high socioeconomic status, 24% medium SES, and 33% low SES.



**Figure 3: Socioeconomic status heat map of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area showing a prevalence of medium and high SES areas in the southern Mecklenburg gifted specialty desert.**

4. What are the enrollment trends and academic performance outcomes of surrounding schools in the selected community? What elements of your educational model will meet the needs of your target student population?

Surrounding schools, such as Providence Spring Elementary, Polo Ridge Elementary, and McKee Rd. Elementary, have strong performance outcomes (all three received A ratings in 2017 and in 2018 and met growth). However, these metrics do not disaggregate the performance and growth of gifted students from the overall performance in each school. The Telra curriculum is deeper, more challenging, and delivered at a faster pace than that offered by surrounding schools and meets gifted students *at the level they need* to maximize their growth.

While surrounding schools have had relatively stable enrollment (less than 1% change from 2017 to 2018), new home construction continues, and many schools are already overcapacity. In 2019, Providence Spring enrollment was 260 students in excess of its design baseline, while

Polo Ridge enrollment exceeded its design baseline by 195. Additional charter school capacity in the area can provide much-needed overcrowding relief to these and many other schools.

5. 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 in grades 9-12).

The total projected enrollment at Telra Institute is 318. This is 0.45% of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg LEA K-5 enrollment of 70,100.

6. Summarize what the proposed school will do differently than the schools that are now serving the targeted population. What will make this school unique and more effective than the currently available public-school options?

Our targeted population has two types of public school options:

- 1) Nearby schools deliver gifted education primarily through the “Catalyst” model, which incorporates *occasional* gifted enrichment into a general classroom environment. In this model, 1-2 gifted specialists serve 500-1000 students by “pushing in” to support the full-time classroom teachers (who generally do not have a gifted education certification).
- 2) In its gifted magnet programs, CMS provides an adjusted pacing/compacted curriculum “designed to provide gifted and advanced students with an appropriately challenging learning environment focused on best practices for gifted education.” Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy provides a similar gifted-focused learning environment to CMS magnets.

Neither of these options sufficiently meets the need of our targeted population. The former does not provide the differentiation needed by students that can benefit from a more rigorous gifted curriculum, delivered full-time. The latter suffers from capacity limitations (225 Kindergarten students on wait lists in 2019) and extended travel times from the targeted area that create barriers for student participation. Telra Institute is unique in delivering a full-time gifted education at a location (and with added capacity) that enables more students to develop to the fullest extent of their talents and drive.

7. Describe the relationships that have been established to generate support for the school. How have you assessed demand for the school? Briefly describe these activities and summarize their results.

The Telra Institute Board includes parents who have recognized, in their own children, the urgent need for a specialized gifted offering in the area. To build a more quantitative understanding of the demand for gifted programming, an online survey was conducted in the spring of 2019 and distributed to parents of K-5 students through PTA and HOA email lists, handouts at in-person school planning meetings, and social media (Facebook, Nextdoor). Of

746 responses, 265 (36%) indicated a high likelihood (>90%) of enrolling in a gifted specialty school, and another 137 (18%) were unsure (~50% likelihood of enrolling).

Extrapolating these results across the 6,681 enrolled CMS K-5 students in the Targeted Area, demand could be as high as 2,373 applicants - a 7.5:1 ratio of potential applicants to available slots in the proposed charter. This applicant pool will, of course, be reduced depending on the specific location chosen, school amenities, curriculum, etc., but we still expect that demand will far exceed supply.

The demand is separately confirmed by the already-existing Kindergarten entry wait lists of 225 for gifted-focused programs in the CMS LEA. Students on these wait lists alone could fill the Telra Institute Kindergarten class 4 times over.

**Attach Appendix A: Evidence of Community/Parent Support.** Provide evidence that demonstrates parents and guardians have committed to enrolling their children in your school. 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).

## 1.2 Purposes of the Proposed Charter School

The Six Legislative Purposes of a Charter School are:

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

1. In one page or less, describe how the proposed charter school will achieve one or more of the six legislative purposes, as specifically addressed in the NC charter school statute GS 115C-218, and the proposed school's operations.

While Telra Institute will be managed as to achieve all six of the Legislative Purposes, the core motivation for the school aligns with **Legislative Purpose 5: increasing learning opportunities with a special emphasis on gifted students**. As has been established by the best available research (Lüftenegger, et al 2015) and by accepted practice in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

magnet programs, gifted students benefit from a full-time, specialized gifted curriculum that is designed to support their unique intellectual, social, and emotional needs while surrounded by their intellectual peers.

The Telra Institute approach creates an environment for enhanced learning opportunities with an emphasis on gifted students through three pillars:

1. **Gifted teaching specialists.** We expect all Telra instructional staff to have achieved or be working toward gifted education certification. This prepares them to be attuned to the learning styles of gifted students (i.e., not just more content, faster) as well as their unique social needs (e.g., heightened social sensitivity).
2. **Advanced curriculum.** Our curriculum blends a modest amount of acceleration (20-40%) along with higher levels of abstraction, complex problem solving, and critical thinking using approaches developed and tested by the top researchers in the gifted education field. This requires full-time focus across all subject areas but stretches students with deeper and broader learning in the K-5 experience.
3. **Supportive peer group.** A like-minded peer group with similar interests, challenges, aptitudes, and motivations helps gifted students break out of the social distancing and loneliness that sometimes happens in “normal” school environments. Positive socialization in a gifted environment helps these students become better collaborators and better leaders.

Telra Institute also satisfies **Legislative Purpose 3: Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public-school system.** Existing gifted-focused programs in the CMS LEA are significantly undersized relative to demand (evidenced by long waiting lists), and moreover, students who live in southern Mecklenburg County do not have ready geographic access to any gifted-focused elementary school options. Telra would provide an “expanded choice” of a gifted-focused education for hundreds of students each year that do not have that option today.

### 1.3 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.

Category	Specific Goal	Measure	Time-bound targets
Academic	Student growth	% students achieving > national norm for RIT increase on NWEA MAP math or reading - BOY to EOY	Y1: 70%, Y2: 75%, Y3: 80%, Y4: 85%, Y5: 90%
Academic	Student proficiency	% students exceeding grade-level proficiency in year end NWEA MAP math or reading	Y1: 65%, Y2: 75%, Y3: 80%, Y4: 85%, Y5: 90%
Operations	Parent satisfaction	% students electing to continue in the school - summer to fall (excluding terminal grade students & families who move)	Y1: 80%, Y2: 85%, Y3: 90%, Y4: 95%, Y5: 95%
Finance	Solvency	Generation of year-end fiscal surplus for discretionary, reserve, or facilities equity	As per yearly schedule in budget
Governance	Compliance	Compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and terms of charter contract	Any identified non-compliance rectified within 6 weeks
Governance	Accountability	Publication of school performance on key goals and progress on board priorities	Annually in July

We believe these goals are both attainable and realistic for Telra to achieve. The chief executive of Telra Institute will be responsible for compiling this information and communicating the results with the Board and parents in an annual report in July of each year. In addition, as individual metrics become available, (e.g., fall MAP testing), the chief executive will be responsible for communicating the results with the Board at the next scheduled monthly Board of Directors meeting.

Any report exhibiting a shortfall in performance relative to the goals must be accompanied by a Corrective Action Plan to be proposed by the chief executive and then reviewed and monitored by an ad-hoc committee formed by the Board. The ad-hoc committee will be charged with providing an independent report to the full Board regarding root causes of the shortfall, along with any needed personnel or policy changes.

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

The Board of Directors will receive monthly reports from the Chief Executive regarding progress against the key goals outlined above, which have been defined to support the mission.

In addition, the Board will, at least quarterly, visit and observe the classrooms and speak with the students, teachers & parents to understand the culture, operations, and impact of the school and to evaluate whether the school is meeting its commitments to these stakeholders.

In time, the Board will also look to external recognition of the school and its students as indicators of success.

## Section 2 Education Plan

### 2.1 Instructional Program

1. 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.

Children identified as high ability, high potential, or gifted have specific instructional needs that differ appreciably from those of typically developing children. These needs inform the selection of appropriate instructional strategies, assessment, and curriculum. Specifically, these advanced learners:

- a. Need less repetition to master subject matter, and often have already mastered 50% or more of grade level content as of the beginning of the school year (Peters et al., 2017; 2019). Because of this, effective and ongoing pre-assessment is necessary to avoid needless repetition of content already mastered. In the typical school environment, these students may resent being forced to sit through such content, leading them to become disengaged, to underachieve, or even to develop behavior problems. In addition to ongoing classroom-based assessment, computer adaptive tests such as the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are well-suited both because their results help inform instruction directly by showing which areas students have or have not yet mastered within the curriculum, and because they have a high measurement ceiling that students in the elementary grades are unlikely to exceed.
- b. Are highly motivated to pursue their own interests. Effective teachers of advanced learners know how to give their students greater control over their own learning, through differentiation opportunities in the content, learning process, student product, and instructional environment (see e.g. work by Kaplan).

- c. Are able to engage more deeply in higher level thinking (e.g., per Bloom & Krathwohl's taxonomy) due to rapid mastery of basic skills and knowledge in a domain. Many research-based and widely used curricula build on these skills (see sections 2 and 3 below for some of the programs and curricula that will be used at Telra Institute).
- d. Are already strong readers at an early age (e.g., are reading chapter books when typically developing age peers may be learning letters of the alphabet), or demonstrate other advanced learning skills in areas such as mathematics, spatial visualization, or creativity.

### Curriculum and Instructional Design

- 2. 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.

Telra Institute will follow a traditional classroom-based learning environment with relatively small class sizes. Specifically, the school will initially enroll students at full capacity in grades K-3 plus  $\frac{2}{3}$  of its eventual capacity in grade 4, expanding this over time to a total of 318 students in grades K-5 (see table and additional description in the Application Contact Information section).

There will be 3 classrooms per grade level. Within each grade level, the research-based Total School Cluster Grouping model (Gentry & Owen) will be used to group students into classrooms to foster effective differentiation of instruction for students at all levels of prior achievement.

Curriculum in mathematics will consist of Singapore Math in grades K-1, followed by the Beast Academy math curriculum in grades 2-5. Both curricula work well for advanced learners, having been designed to be deeper and more challenging than the typical elementary mathematics curriculum.

Curriculum in reading and language arts will include the well regarded and research-based William & Mary gifted curriculum units and the PLACE curriculum units developed recently at the University of Virginia. Additional curricula may include the widely used vocabulary development units originated by Michael Clay Thompson, other advanced reading materials such as Junior Great Books, and an eclectic selection of materials to teach critical thinking and related skills.

Social studies will be integrated within the core instruction in language arts, science will be taught by a specialist, and cross-curricular interdisciplinary activities will be heavily used to help students draw connections across the different content areas and build skills and competencies through extensive project-based learning. Center-based learning

opportunities will be a key feature to promote differentiated learning within each classroom.

Instructors will map these curricula to the NC Standard Course of Study to ensure that the materials address all elements. In case any areas are missing, supplemental curricula will be used to address the gaps.

3. Identify how this curriculum aligns with the proposed charter school's mission, targeted student population, and North Carolina Accountability Model. Provide evidence that the chosen curriculum has been successful with the target student population, how the plan will drive academic improvement for all students, and how it has been successful in closing achievement gaps.

The stated mission of the Telra Institute is to nourish the minds and bodies of students with a rigorous, differentiated educational environment that cultivates the intellectual, academic, social, and emotional skills that enable highly gifted children to achieve their full potential. The advanced, enriched, and individually differentiated curriculum outlined above will address the school's target population of students.

For example, decades of federally funded research by scholars at William & Mary (see VanTassel-Baska, J. & Little, C. A. [Eds.][2011]. *Content-based curriculum for high-ability learners*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press) have demonstrated the effectiveness of the Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM), which is designed to respond to gifted learners' characteristics of precocity, intensity, and complexity. The ICM is based in the three dimensions of advanced content, higher level processes and product development, and interdisciplinary concepts, issues, and themes. The W&M curriculum units developed in language arts, science, and social studies have been found to be effective in promoting learning among students identified as gifted and high achieving, and also are effective with high-potential learners from low-socioeconomic backgrounds in Title I schools (VanTassel-Baska, et al., 2009).

In addition to curriculum, how students are grouped for instruction affects their learning. Numerous studies have shown that high ability learners learn more in specialized schools settings such as will be provided by Telra Institute, but how students are grouped within schools and classrooms also is important. Specifically, randomized control group studies have demonstrated that the Total School Cluster Grouping model (Gentry et al., 2014, "Total School Cluster Grouping & Differentiation: A Comprehensive, Research-Based Plan for Raising Student Achievement and Improving Teacher Practices") improves achievement outcomes for students at all levels of proficiency when the model is implemented with fidelity. By using TSCG, the school will effectively address achievement gaps, but this is not all. The proposed curriculum and instructional approaches have the potential to also

decrease excellence gaps. In the specific context of the Telra Institute, the excellence gap is the achievement gap observed across groups within the top quintile of the achievement distribution (Plucker & Peters, 2016, “Excellence Gaps in Education: Expanding Opportunities for Talented Students”).

The NC accountability model focuses on student achievement (80%) and student growth (20%) and uses these data to assign schools a letter grade for overall effectiveness. At the elementary level, NC End-of-grade testing in grades 3, 4, and 5 provides the data used to address school accountability. Given the high achieving population that is the target audience for Telra Institute, one might expect all students to perform strongly on EOG measures, and in aggregate this likely will be the case. However, we know from the literature and from disaggregated EOG performance outcomes shared by NC DPI that not all students identified as gifted in NC schools are performing as well as expected on the EOG measures. Tesla Institute will address this issue by close monitoring of student performance in grades prior to the EOGs (e.g., K-2) using classroom based assessments and especially the results of the NWEA MAP test, in order to address any gaps in student performance prior to the start of EOG testing in third grade. In addition, it is well known that gifted and high ability learners may underachieve in school if their learning needs and social-emotional needs are not met (Kim & VanTassel-Baska, 2010 “The relationship between behavior problems and underachievement in elementary and high school students”; VanTassel-Baska, Feng, Chandler, Quek, & Swanson, 2009, “Academic and affective profiles of low income, minority, and twice exceptional learners: The role of gifted program membership in enhancing self”)

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.

Instructional strategies are focused primarily on differentiation, which in turn is based on students’ individual prior learning, continued learning, and their associated readiness to learn advanced content. Formative assessment activities, whether classroom-based pretest assessments or performance on schoolwide standardized measures such as the NWEA MAP test, will be used consistently to guide teachers’ decisions about instructional content and pace. The North Carolina curriculum will have a guiding role, but mastery of these objectives will be framed as a minimum rather than as the end goal of teachers’ instruction. The goal of instruction is for every student to learn something new every day, and this is accomplished by helping students to learn within their Zone of Proximal Development or ZPD (Vygotsky, 1977). In essence, the ZPD is where there is a balance between students’ ability, and the level of their curriculum. Keeping instruction within this zone minimizes the

likelihood of boredom (due to challenge being below ability to learn) as well as the likelihood of frustration (due to challenge being too far above ability to learn). As each portion of a differentiated offering may be best-suited to different instructional strategies, teachers will need to be flexible and skilled with a variety of strategies including directed independent study, the Socratic method, and project-based techniques.

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

The proposed instructional plan will provide students with a strong foundation of content knowledge and skills and effective work habits (e.g., problem solving skills, self-efficacy, learning motivation) that will enable them to transition successfully into any middle school environment at a public, magnet, charter, or private school. Students who wish to pursue whole-grade acceleration (e.g., grade skipping into 7th from 5th grade) will also be well prepared to do so by the academic and personal foundation developed at Telra Institute.

6. Describe in a brief narrative below on how the yearly academic calendar coincides with the tenets of the proposed mission and education plan.

The yearly academic calendar is based on that of the surrounding school district (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools), in order to accommodate the needs of families who may have children attending multiple local schools. Flexibility to address the learning needs of Telra Institute students comes primarily through the content and curriculum, rather than in changes to the yearly academic calendar.

7. Describe the structure of the school day and week. Include the number of instructional hours/minutes in a day for core subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Note the length of the school day, including start and dismissal times. Explain why the school's daily and weekly schedule will be optimal for student learning.

Telra Institute will adopt an academic cadence similar to other elementary schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area, to accommodate the needs of families who may have children attending multiple schools. This implies a school day of approximately 7 hours, between 8am start and 3pm dismissal, consisting of

- 3.5 hours daily of integrated English Language Arts and Social Studies; split into 2-3 blocks
- 1.5 hours daily of Mathematics
- 1 hour daily of a Special
  - Science/Engineering 3 times/week

- Rotating topics 2 times/week (e.g., Health, Art, Music)
- ½ hour daily of physical activity / recess (split into 2 blocks)
- ½ hour daily for lunch

Appendix E depicts how these elements may be split across a daily/weekly schedule. The schedule includes a high emphasis on integrated ELA-social science, mathematics, and science/engineering as these are areas of frequent differentiation and acceleration for gifted learners. The 2x daily physical activity is important for promoting holistic health and because numerous studies have shown the benefits of coupling physical activity with learning. Within this overall cadence, teachers will have flexibility on how they structure each block to meet the needs of their classroom.

#### **8. Describe a typical day for a teacher and a student in the school's first year of operation.**

Students will arrive starting 7:45am and can spend the time before 8am engaged with manipulatives, reading, or completing an optional assignment from the teacher. Students will spend the majority of their day with their homeroom/ELA teacher, with physical transitions for recess, Specials and (potentially) Mathematics. Dismissal and pickup will occur between 3-3:15pm.

Teachers will arrive by 7:30 to begin readying for students and begin instruction at 8am. Teachers will have one prep period of 1 hour each day but will otherwise be involved in instruction or supervision until dismissal. In the first year with a new curriculum, we expect most of the teachers will use their afternoons to do further planning and preparation work for their classes.

#### **High School Graduation and Postsecondary Readiness (High Schools Only)**

9. Describe how the proposed charter school will meet the Future-Ready Core requirements. Provide details on how the students will earn credit hours, how grade-point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, and what elective courses will be offered.

Not applicable. Telra Institute is not serving high school grades.

10. Explain how the graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college or other postsecondary opportunities (trade school, military service, or entering the workforce).

Not applicable. Telra Institute is not serving high school grades.

11. Explain what systems and structures the school will implement for students at risk of dropping out and/or not meeting the proposed graduation requirements.

Not applicable. Telra Institute is not serving high school grades.

**Attach Appendix B: Curriculum Outline per Grade Span (for each grade span the school would ultimately serve).** One sample curriculum outline (in graph form) in the Appendices for one core subject (specific to the school’s purpose) for each grade span the school would ultimately serve.

**Attach Appendix C: 9-12 Core Content Electives.** Provide a visual description of what courses (both 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.

**Attach Appendix D: Yearly Academic Calendar (minimum of 185 instructional days or 1,025 hours)**

**Attach Appendix E: Daily and Weekly Schedule** Provide a sample daily and weekly schedule for each grade band (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) the school ultimately plans to serve.

## 2.2 Special Populations and “At-Risk” Students

1. Explain how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students who are performing below grade level and monitor their progress. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports you will provide for these students.

Telra Institute will use the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to identify and meet/exceed the learning needs of students who are performing below grade level and monitor their progress. Telra’s program will work using collected data from formative and summative assessments to inform problem solving. As MTSS functions as a multi-tiered framework, student interactions at Telra will occur in a continuum at multiple levels with the MTSS team. All components of MTSS will be deployed at Telra from kindergarten through fifth grade. Telra’s MTSS program will encompass the six major components; (1) Leadership, (2) Data-based Problem Solving, (3) Data Evaluation, (4) Three Tiers Instruction/Intervention, (5) Building Capacity/Infrastructure for Implementation, and (6) Communication and Collaboration. Telra’s MTSS program will be the same for all students. MTSS at Telra will include instruction and/or intervention and the program’s delivery will be conducted using predetermined and documented steps.

Consistent with the MTSS platform students identified in Telra’s MTSS program as being at-risk will be:

- i. Placed in tier 2 of the MTSS plan.
- ii. Paced on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

- iii. All student progress will be continually documented based upon assessments and other interventions.
- iv. Students not progressing will be placed into tier 3 for a deeper intervention.
- v. MTSS meetings will be conducted at year-end for all students in the program and/or are performing below grade level
- vi. Students not meeting the requirements for promotion will be maintained

Co-teaching will be deployed at Telra for special populations so that the students identified as at-risk will receive their modified instruction in the same physical classroom together with their assigned teacher. In this manner materials developed under the student's IEP will be delivered in the same classroom setting as their regular instruction.

Classroom teachers, assistants, and specialists will deliver interventions within the classroom to the assigned students during a set time of day outside of core instruction. The Assistants and specialists will be able to move with the student as they change classrooms throughout the day. Both the assistants and the teachers will be trained on the delivery of interventions for a variety of concerns. Classrooms will be designed to be flexible so that there will not be constraints when delivering student interventions in their regular classrooms. Time will be scheduled in the classrooms for the delivery of interventions.

Telra's strategy for special populations and at-risk students will include:

- i. An intervention system
  - ii. Use of an individual problem-solving team for students not responding to interventions in literacy and mathematics
  - iii. Response to Intervention (RTI) designed for students falling behind in mathematics
  - iv. Behavioral/Social Emotional and Attendance protocol in the intervention process
  - v. Protocol for identifying specific learning disabilities (SLD) in special populations and at-risk students
  - vi. Use of milestones and task lists to monitor all special populations and at-risk students
  - vii. Maintenance of data in Every Child Accountability & Tracking System (ECATS) system
  - viii. Ensure that English Learners (ELs) are not inappropriately placed in an intervention program due to their lack of English language skills
2. Describe the extent to which one or more of the founding board members has experience working with special populations (students with disabilities, students with 504 Plans, ELs, students identified as gifted, and students at risk of dropping out). If no founding board members have experience working with special populations, describe the school's pre-opening plan to prepare for special populations.

Telra Institute's founding board members have extensive experience working with students identified as gifted as a special population. Professor Michael Matthews is an expert in gifted education, Professor Harold Reiter has worked extensively in gifted math education, Mr. Tuhin Dutt leads a company focused on STEAM enrichment for gifted students. Further details are available in Section 3.2, response 7.

For other special populations, Telra's pre-opening plan involves (a) recruiting additional board members that have broader experience with these populations, (b) hiring a Head of Instruction experienced in working with students with disabilities or EL, (c) engaging an Exceptional Children consultant to help design the Telra staffing model and procedures, (d) working with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and ensuring that staff are trained on the MTSS program and all involvement with using the Every Child Accountability & Tracking System (ECATS).

Teachers and staff will be oriented on State laws including the collection, maintenance and reporting of data on special populations in support of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Staff will have ample training via the training manuals and guides, the How-to Videos, and available pre-recorded information for MTSS. (e.g. <http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=2052295#anchor>).

Telra will deploy a standard protocol in support of the MTSS program:

- i. A tiered identification system will be maintained to be functionally universal school-wide
- ii. An intervention matrix used to measure both behavioral skills and grade span
- iii. Data decisioning matrix used for both supplemental and intensive program interventions
- iv. Universal student data will be collected school-wide
- v. The leadership team (Board and staff) will review Telra's performance and progress school-wide
- vi. School-wide performance data will be shared with MTSS team
- vii. Grade level worksheets will be used to examine performance by grade
- viii. MTSS team will decide if the program needs to be intensified for all students
- ix. MTSS team determines supplemental interventions for the individual students in the special population
- x. MTSS team determines and implements immediate intensive interventions for identified special populations at the student level.

3. Explain how the instructional plan and curriculum will meet the needs of English Learners (EL), including the following:
  - a. Methods for identifying EL students (and avoiding misidentification).

- b. Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for EL students.
- c. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of EL students, including exiting students from EL services.
- d. Means for providing qualified staffing for EL students.

Telra Institute will meet the needs of English Learners (EL) as follows:

- A. Method for identifying EL students:
  - a. Telra will appoint one staff member to work with EL data
  - b. Telra will use the home language survey (HLS) as the tool to identify ELs.
  - c. Telra will have a policy documenting the HLS procedures and the administration of HLS. The HLS will be administered effectively to ensure accurate results and avoid misidentification of EL students.
  - d. HLS results will be entered into the students' permanent records.
  - e. HLS will be part of a student's continual review process throughout their tenure until they no longer require the EL program.
  - f. After the results of the HLS are reviewed the W-APT or WIDA Screener will be administered to determine if the student is an English Learner (EL)
  - g. In the case of students arriving mid-year Telra will use the ACCESS test of EL proficiency
- B. Specific instructional programs. Telra's EL programs:
  - a. Will provide Comprehensive Language Services based on the W-APT or WIDA scores and screening information
    - i. Comprehensive EL will take students out of classes for 5 days a week minimum of 30-45 mins.
    - ii. Co-teaching, content teachers SIOP trained, appropriate instructional modifications will be in place
    - iii. After school tutoring provided and some teaching assistance available
    - iv. Will not segregate EL students from other students during academic or non-academic periods.
  - b. Will provide Supportive Language Services based upon the progress of the student in the EL program and the W-APT or WIDA scores and screening information
    - i. Supportive EL will provide co-teaching with some pull out to focus on specific skill sets identified through data reflection
    - ii. Content teachers will be Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) trained
    - iii. Appropriate instructional modifications will be in place
    - iv. After school tutoring will be provided

- c. Will provide Transitional Language Services based upon the progress of the student in the EL program and W-APT or WIDA scores and screening information
    - i. Mostly served by SIOP trained teachers
    - ii. English as a Second Language (ESL) support as needed for teachers
    - iii. Student to meet specific language needs as identified through data reflection
    - iv. Appropriate instructional modifications will be in place
  - d. EL students will not be subjected to the EL program when they no longer require such intervention.
  - e. Will consider the student’s English proficiency level, native language literacy, acculturation into U.S. society, age when they entered the United States, grade level, educational background, and their language background for bilingual programs.
  - f. Will create EL content curricula and materials that are appropriate for the age and proficiency of EL students
  - g. Will ensure staff capacity to effectively deliver content instruction for ELs, and take action if ELs do not make sufficient academic progress
- C. Plans to monitor and evaluate progress and success:
- a. Ensure that ELs develop English proficiency (in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehending English) and meet the same academic content standards in reading, math, and science as non-ELs
  - b. Establish English language proficiency standards for ELs that are used to create research-based, scientifically sound and proven language instruction curricula linked to a state’s academic content and achievement standards
  - c. Assess EL English proficiency and academic progress annually
  - d. Report disaggregated data on EL performance to the state
  - e. Certify that all teachers in the EL program are fluent in English and any other language used by the program
  - f. Annually submit the Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) service chart
- D. Means for providing qualified staffing for EL students:
- a. Telra will have at least one staff member certified in EL, SIOP, and ESL.
  - b. Telra’s professional development program will identify and train additional teachers and assistants towards attaining EL certification.
  - c. Telra will also utilize Department of Education (DOE) tool kits like The English Learner Toolkit, The English Learner Family Toolkit, and The Newcomer Kit.
  - d. Telra will incorporate the WIDA standards from the Wisconsin Center for Education Research’s WIDA Consortium at <https://wida.wisc.edu/>

- e. Telra will subscribe to the English Learner Coordinator and Teachers of English Learners listserv at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/NCSBE/subscriber/new>
  - f. Telra’s teachers and staff will access the NCDPI Wikispace to continually review information on EL at <https://eldnces.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/>
  - g. Telra teachers and staff will attend EL Coordinators meetings and/or review documents..
4. Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of gifted students, including the following:
- a. Specific research-based 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 gifted students; and means for providing qualified staffing for gifted students.

Telra offers all of our students the opportunities and support usually reserved for gifted students.

- A. Our entire curriculum is derived from research-based programs and units with demonstrated success in gifted student environments, including (1) ELA, social studies, and science curricula units from William & Mary (e.g., Junior Great Books) along with the PLACE curriculum units from the University of Virginia and (2) accelerated Singapore Math and Beast Academy math curricula. Further, we deploy a Total School Cluster Grouping model (Gentry et al., 2014) to improve differentiation and meet all students at their level.
- B. Qualified staffing is extremely important; we expect all Telra instructional staff to have obtained or be working towards attaining gifted teaching certification. We frequently monitor and evaluate the progress of all students through the methods discussed in Section 2.4

### 2.3 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 education teachers 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.

Telra Institute is responsible for determining if there are enrolled students with disabilities who have previously been found to be eligible for Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Telra, after admitting and enrolling a student may inquire about a student's disability by:

- i. Requesting relevant records from their prior school.
  - ii. Considering information from a variety of sources when interpreting evaluation data and in making placement decisions.
  - iii. Compiling evaluation data for students including attendance records, parent information, grade reports, aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior.
  - iv. Reviewing a medical diagnosis or the results of a medical assessment obtained by the school district for the students.
  - v. Involving the student's parents in the evaluation process.
  - vi. Conducting periodic reevaluations of students with disabilities
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. Include how the school will avoid misidentification of special education students.

Telra proactively seeks to identify students who may require special education and related services. Telra Institute will have policies and practices in place to identify and assess students who may be eligible to receive special education and related services. All of Telra's recruitment activities and materials will mention special education screening processes as an integral part of all student recruitment activities. Telra will also continuously promote awareness of available screening and services for students already enrolled. Telra's policies and practices serve to identify any student who is enrolled in the school who is presenting academic or behavioral problems and to determine whether that child should be referred for a special education evaluation. Telra will have at least one staff member is knowledgeable about the federal 'Child Find' mandate. Telra will use all available evaluation data inclusive of data from state reporting systems (e.g. ECATS, ESSA) to avoid misidentification of special education students. Telra also will engage parents as essential partners in their child's education to further ensure that students are not misidentified as special education students.

- i. Telra will continually inform all parents of enrolled students regarding the availability of evaluative screenings to identify students at all grade levels in the school.
- ii. For any student who is manifesting academic or behavioral problems Telra will determine whether that child should be referred for a special education evaluation.

- iii. Telra's assessment process will incorporate the same supports and accommodations students with disabilities receive in the classroom
  - iv. Telra has identified specific metrics used to measure and evaluate the progress of students with disabilities:
    - o Progress toward meeting outcome goals outlined in IEPs
    - o Quantity of time in general education classrooms
    - o Success after matriculation from other schools).
  - v. Telra will administer assessments in a secure setting and ensure that these settings can accommodate students with disabilities
3. Provide a plan detailing how the records of students with disabilities and 504 Accommodation plans will be properly managed, including the following:
- a. Requesting Records from previous schools
  - b. Record Confidentiality (on site)
  - c. Record Compliance (on site)

Records of students with disabilities and 504 accommodation plans at Telra Institute will be properly managed under documented policies, protocols, and procedures, to be approved by the Board of Directors. Whenever the protocols are modified Telra will update the policies on record at the school for records management inclusive of records management for students with disabilities. Policies will detail the following actions:

- i. Requesting records from previous schools. Telra Institute will request records from other schools via email and only relevant staff will have the ability to request and receive records.
- ii. Record Confidentiality (on site). All files at Telra Institute will be stored on password protected systems and only relevant staff will have access to records.
- iii. Record Compliance (on site). Telra will maintain records in accordance with federal and state regulations while adhering to the appropriate professional practice. Telra's files on their students with disabilities will be organized, up-to-date, secure, and complete. Telra will keep parents informed of their rights and ensure that students are provided with timely assessments and regular monitoring of their progress toward achieving the goals outlined in their IEPs.

#### Exceptional Children's Programming

4. Explain how you will meet the learning needs of students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible.

Telra will ensure that all students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities have full access to the curriculum and instructional techniques are adapted to serve all students. The technology used at Telra will support integration with assistive technology used by students

with disabilities. Telra will employ and train teachers who understand how to modify the curriculum and instruction to address the unique needs of students with disabilities within the common classroom setting. Telra may contract with an external provider for special education and related services when necessary. Structures will be developed in advance of soliciting external services that coordinate modifications and accommodations between the provider and the teachers. All curriculum and instruction decisions will be tracked and monitored by IEP team members and other school staff using the student's Section 504 Plan documentation.

- 5. Describe the specific educational programs, strategies, and additional supports the school will provide to ensure a full continuum of services for students with disabilities. How will the school ensure students' access to the general education curriculum?**

Telra will integrate curriculum and assistive technology for students with a disability. Regular or special education and related aids and services will be designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met. Telra will also implement evidence based early interventions via problem-solving-based PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) together with tracking and assessment of student performance.

Telra will employ an exceptional children specialist who will train and mentor Telra's teachers and staff on identification and support of students with special education needs. The specialist will also work directly with teachers to modify the curriculum and deliver instruction to address the unique needs of students with disabilities. Telra will engage outside contractors as needed to provide expert guidance on the program, evaluation, or in-class support.

Telra will provide appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities as outlined in their IEPs when students are taking assessments. Telra anticipates that some students may require an alternate assessment and will document individual plans for students needing alternate assessments.

- 6. Describe the methods and support systems that will be in place to ensure students with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).**

Telra provides Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) to all students who are qualified individuals with disabilities and who need special education and/or related aids and services. Telra will document a student's FAPE using a Section 504 Plan which describes the regular or special education and related aids and services the student needs and the appropriate setting in which they will receive those services. The provision of FAPE to students will be provided free of charge. Telra will develop and maintain an individualized education program (IEP) for each eligible student with a disability that sets out, among other information, the student's program of special education and related services.

7. Describe how implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be monitored and reported to the student, parents and relevant staff.

Telra understands that the student's IEP is an evolving document reflecting their unique needs and the individual services being provided to enable them to access the general education curriculum and succeed. Telra will administer and report to the student, parents, and relevant staff all data reflective of the support being provided in the student's IEP. In addition to the required assessments, including alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, Telra will identify additional metrics to measure and evaluate the progress of students with disabilities (e.g., progress toward meeting outcome goals outlined in IEPs, quantity of time in general education classrooms, success after matriculation from other schools). Telra's teachers and staff will identify a variety of measures to track the academic progress of students with disabilities to provide a more substantive review when completing and updating IEPs.

8. Describe the proposed plan for providing related services and to have qualified staffing adequate for the anticipated special needs population.

Telra understands that 8 to 12 percent of student populations, on average, require special education services. Since Telra targets gifted and talented students, the school is likely to see children with special needs (such as attention disorders) that often co-present or are masked by giftedness. In addition to employing instructional staff with training on how to identify and support some of these unique learning needs in the classroom, Telra will employ and exceptional children specialist and contract with additional specialized staff in accordance with laws established to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The Telra board has already spoken with one expert, Professor Kelly Anderson, who is willing to work with the school to establish a plan and staffing model to serve the special needs population. Dr. Kelly Anderson is Associate Professor and the Program Director for the BA in Special Education & Elementary Education K-6 Dual Major in the Department of Special Education & Child Development, University of North Carolina Charlotte.

## 2.4 Student Performance Standards

1. Describe the student performance standards for the school as a whole.

Telra Institute has high standards for student performance. As stated in our goals, we expect over 90% of our student to perform above grade level and 90% of our students to exceed RIT growth norms each year, as measured by NWEA MAP assessment

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.

Telra will comply with all state and federal mandatory testing requirements. We believe that that these tests, in combination with other assessments, are critical tools in the evaluation of our students and in our school. Telra will:

- A. Use the NC EOG tests and Check-ins as critical inputs into our student promotion decisions and an early-warning system for at-risk students,
- B. Employ beginning, mid-year, and end-of-year MAP testing to more precisely understand student growth,
- C. Apply twice-quarterly (or more frequent) classroom/curriculum-based assessment to ensure student mastery of content and support promotion decisions, and
- D. Issue curricula-based pre-assessments to develop grouping and pacing recommendations.

The results will be reviewed by school leadership and used to identify potential improvements in the presented curriculum, pacing, and student learning approach overall in order to make the necessary course corrections in instruction strategies and differentiation so that each student can be met at the appropriate level to maximize his or her growth.

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.

Promotion from one grade to the next requires students to (a) exceed the state minimum proficiency standards based on EOG results (3-5) **and** (b) demonstrate competency in a set of Telra Institute Standards (TIS) defined for each curriculum area and grade level. The TIS will align with the chosen curricular units (e.g., Singapore Math for K-1) with evaluation based on several dimensions including demonstrated subject mastery through written/oral exams, participation, and project-based work. These policies and the TIS will be developed more fully in the planning year and communicated to families through the Telra website, in the parent handbook, and in marketing and orientation sessions.

Telra is committed to supporting students with special needs and will provide accommodations as required by state and federal law or upon recommended by school leadership based on expert consultation. We believe that with appropriate accommodations, all students can have a chance to succeed.

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 students at risk of dropping out.

Telra exit standards for 5th grade follow the framework presented above. Students must exceed North Carolina grade 5 EOG standards for minimum proficiency and demonstrate competency in the TIS for grade 5. These exit standards ensure that, at a minimum, all 5th graders graduating Telra have mastered the NC Standard Course of Study up through 5th grade.

Teachers will contact parents if any of their students appear to be at risk of dropping out or failing to meet the grade promotion criteria discussed above. If performance does not improve, the school will place the student in Tier 2 of the MTSS and follow the process as described in Section 2.2

## 2.5 School Culture and Discipline

1. Describe the culture or ethos of the proposed school. Explain how it will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development.

Through its academic program and rigor, Telra Institute seeks to inculcate an attitude of appreciation and respect for learning and intellectual pursuits. While some students have the advantage of that kind of environment in their homes and neighborhoods, many do not, and we want to create a space where gifted, high potential, and highly motivated students can be their authentic selves and feel acceptance for their uniqueness, their talents, and their quirks. While this aspect of Telra's culture is critical for gifted students to achieve their full potential, it paints an incomplete picture of the school we want to create.

Equally important for Telra's culture is a spirit of adventure, of experimentation, a willingness to take risks...and fail...and learn...and persist. So often, high-achieving students feel constrained by perfectionism and a desire to please, an attitude that can ultimately be limiting. Through the structure of instruction, through literature, history, & narrative, and through role models (staff, parents, visitors), we want to show our students that each of them is on their own hero's journey. We will show them to face their triumphs and tribulations with equanimity, to let their talents and their passions guide them, to arm them with resilience, and fuel them with perseverance to succeed in an uncertain world.

2. Explain how you will create and implement this culture for students, teachers, administrators, and parents starting from the first day of school. Describe the plan for acculturating students who enter the school mid-year.

The Board and administrators will experience the challenges and satisfaction of entrepreneurship - we'll be starting this new venture of the Telra Institute together. Our mission is not just in the destination of a creating a great school but the journey of continuous improvement. Our tangible, escalating goals for the school combined with annual strategic reviews will help reinforce this culture. The board expects school leaders to innovate, and thus the plan laid out in this application is not expected to be static. School leadership should be

researching and implementing new and better ways to design curriculum and deliver instruction, ways to make more efficient use of Telra’s resources and cultivate the organization’s talent, and ways to deliver more effectively on the Telra mission.

Selecting the right teachers (and right school leaders) who embody our school’s mission and spirit will be a critical part of implementing the culture of Telra. Recruiting and retaining these teachers is all-important, as is welcoming them into our family with a commitment to develop them as professionals.

Implementing our culture with students and parents starts long before the first day of school. The way we market our school, the messages we convey about Telra’s distinctiveness and values, and the passion with which we articulate our mission will attract families who are drawn to the culture we want to create. Once students join us, the advanced curriculum will keep them engaged and learning, and being surrounded by intellectual peers will help motivate them and create a sense of belonging.

As the school matures, we will establish a big brother/sister program to pair new students (and parents) with mentors to help acculturate them. Mid-year entrants will find a “class buddy” assigned to help ease the transition, along with staff who can help identify and address any transitional issues in acclimating to the new curriculum and pace. No doubt the school will develop unique traditions, perhaps in how we welcome our students or how we thank our teachers at the end of each academic year. Our goal is that our mission and values don’t just reside on our website and our handbooks, but that they live in our halls and classrooms every day.

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

Telra Institute expects students to conduct themselves safely, responsibly, and respectfully in order to create an environment conducive for learning. Behavioral expectations will be communicated at the start of the year and in handbooks.

- a. As a school that emphasizes problem-solving and differentiation, it is natural that we would choose the problem-solving-based PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and

Supports) as the foundation of our student discipline model. PBIS mirrors MTSS in constructing 3 levels of interventions, escalating the response based on the severity and urgency of the behavior issue. The most important thing we can do to promote effective discipline (especially for young children) is to establish and reinforce a short list of memorable behavior expectations for each part of their daily environment. For example, in the classroom: i) put your belongings away when you enter, ii) keep your work space neat and orderly, ii) use materials they way they are intended.

- b. Certain offenses may result in suspension or expulsion of students, including physical violence (kicking, biting, scratching), persistent disruption of class or other school functions, and possession of weapons or illegal substances.
- c. For students with disabilities, the school must consider any behavior issues in the context of the student’s documented disability to determine if that disability is the cause. If school leadership, after consultation with the EC specialist, makes this determination, then the school will develop an appropriate intervention plan rather than disciplining the student.
- d. A description of behavior expectations, disciplinary process, grievance procedures (see Section 3.2, response 13), and due process rights will be disseminated in handbooks and on the Telra Institute website. The policy will require that, in the event of a student suspension or expulsion, the student’s due process rights will be further communicated to parents via email and in a phone call or a face-to-face meeting.

## Certify

This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.   X  Yes                       No

Explanation (optional): Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 3 Governance and Capacity

### 3.1 School Governing Body

1. Private Non-profit Corporation (NCGS 115C-218.1)

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

Name of Private Non-profit:                      Telra Institute, Inc.

Mailing Address:                      5803 Summerston Pl

Street Address:                      as above

City/State/Zip: Charlotte, NC 28277

Phone (xxx-xxx-xxxx): 704-412-1746

Fax: (xxx-xxx-xxxx): N/A

Name of Registered Agent and Address:

Ronak Bhatt

5803 Summerston Pl

Charlotte, NC 28277

Federal Tax ID: 84-2705446

## 2. Federal Tax-Exempt Status (NCGS 115C-218.15)

If the non-profit organization has yet to obtain 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.

The private non-profit listed as the responsible organization for the proposed charter school has 501(c)(3) status:

Yes. **Attach Appendix F Federal Documentation of Tax-Exempt Status**

No.

N/A. The applicant is a tax-exempt municipality.

## 3.2 Governance

The private nonprofit corporation or municipality 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.

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

<b>Board Member Name</b>	<b>Board Title</b>	<b>County of Residence</b>	<b>Current Occupation</b>	<b>Past or Present Professional Licenses Held</b>	<b>Any disciplinary action taken against any of these professional licenses?</b>
Dr. Ronak Bhatt	Chairperson	Mecklenburg	Strategy Executive	Doctorate in Physics	No
Mr. Tuhin Dutt	Director	Mecklenburg	CEO, Learning enrichment company	Bachelors in Electrical Engineering, MBA	No
Dr. Michael S. Matthews	Director	Mecklenburg	Professor of Education	Doctorate in Education, NC teaching	No
Dr. Harold Reiter	Director	Mecklenburg	Professor of Mathematics	Doctorate in Mathematics	No
Ms. Judith Malveaux	Secretary	Mecklenburg	Corporate Communications	Masters in Communication, MBA	No
Dr. Gregory Denlea	Treasurer	Mecklenburg	Adjunct Professor & IT executive	Doctorate in Education, PMP, ITIL, Series 7&63, Greenbelt	No

- Describe 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.

Telra Institute - the charter school - is governed by the board of directors (BoD) of Telra Institute, Inc., a North Carolina not for profit corporation whose purpose coincides with the mission and vision as described in this application. The board is accountable for operating the school within the boundaries of all applicable laws as well as upholding any and all obligations to the State authorizing agency for charter schools.

As is typical for non-profits, the day-to-day management of the corporation and the school is delegated to employed professional staff, while the volunteer BoD is responsible for (a) defining the overall mission and policies of the school, (b) recruiting, hiring, and evaluating the

chief executive, (c) creating and monitoring the organization’s strategic plan, (d) stewarding the organization’s resources, including approving budgets and financial safeguards, (e) ensuring that the organization fulfills all of its legal and ethical obligations, (f) establishing goals for performance and growth, and (e) developing the board’s membership and capability to serve as a governing body.

The board will form several committees as described in the bylaws, one of which, the Personnel Committee, is charged with recruiting, hiring, and evaluating Telra chief executive, aiding in the recruitment of senior staff, and, in general, reviewing personnel plans prior to board vote.

Activities of the committee will include:

- i. Establish consensus on the job descriptions of Telra senior staff
- ii. Undertake a careful search process to locate the most qualified individuals for each position, including advertising at NC charter school events (such as the NCAPCS conference), posting on job boards (such as K12 Job Spot) and advertising in relevant trade publications (such as Ed Week)
- iii. Interviewing, recommending to the board, and contracting with a chief executive
- iv. Onboarding the CEO regarding the nature and mission of the school, advising on the further recruiting and selection of senior staff
- v. Recommending to the board a set of performance targets and a periodic performance monitoring framework for the chief executive
- vi. Leading the periodic evaluation of the chief executive in accord with the performance framework

The full board is responsible for the ongoing supervision of the chief executive, which will be aided by monthly reports from the staff during board meetings and independent channels the board will construct to hear from other stakeholders (e.g., grievance process, Parent Council, board site visits and listening sessions with students, staff)

### **3. Describe the size, current and desired composition, powers, and duties of the governing board.**

The board is currently composed of six (6) community members that share the Telra vision and bring a range of skills and experiences to the organization. The board includes parents of gifted children; educators with rich experience working with gifted curricula, gifted children and teachers of gifted children; marketing professionals, and individuals with leadership credentials and experience the business, education, and non-profit arenas.

While this forms a strong core, it will be important to expand and develop the board during the startup phase. In particular, many nonprofits benefit from having an attorney and an accountant on the board. For a charter school, it can be very valuable to have a real estate expert familiar with the local market, development, facilities, or construction management.

Community leaders - business owners, elected officials, and nonprofit executives - can also bring much to the table by helping Telra to build community support or by finding ways to remove the barriers that many charters face in startup. Not least, it will be important to bring leaders with experience in elementary school leadership (e.g., a retired principal or assistant principal) onto the board. After opening, parents will begin to play a larger role in the governance of the school, and we expect to recruit several parents with relevant skill sets to take seats on the board.

The Telra Institute bylaws prescribe that the board consist of no fewer than five (5) nor more than fifteen (15) directors, and we intend to target a typical membership of 9-12. This allows sufficient breadth of skill sets and viewpoints while maintaining a manageable size for joint deliberation and decision-making. The board's powers and duties, while described more fully in the bylaws, certainly include the fiduciary duties of

- 1) Care - active participation in the board's activities, committees, deliberation, and decision-making,
  - 2) Loyalty - placing the organization's interest ahead of our individual interests (including adherence to the conflict of interest policy), and
  - 3) Obedience - ensuring adherence to Telra's mission and compliance with all relevant federal, state, and local statutes and obligations associated with operating a public charter school (such as the charter agreement, public charter school law, and open meeting laws).
4. Describe the founding board's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the school design successfully, including capacity in such areas as school leadership, administration, and governance; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; performance management; and parent/community engagement.

Telra Institute's founding board carries strong qualifications to implement the school's design:

- Leadership, administration and governance
  - Dr. Gregory Denlea holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership.
  - Dr. Michael Matthews has served on the board of directors of another charter school, Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy.
  - Dr. Ronak Bhatt has chaired a successful nonprofit board, E4 Carolinas, Inc., and in his current role as VP Corporate Strategy at Avantor, he oversees long-range strategic and financial planning.
  - Mr. Tuhin Dutt founded and leads an education and teaching startup.
  - Ms. Judith Malveaux, Mr. Tuhin Dutt, and Dr. Gregory Denlea, hold MBAs.
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment
  - Dr. Michael Matthews, Professor of Gifted Education at UNC Charlotte, is a recognized expert on curricula, instruction, and assessment of gifted children, having

- served on the board of the National Association of Gifted Children and the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented.
- Dr. Harold Reiter, Professor of Mathematics at UNC Charlotte, has worked extensively in the development and delivery of mathematics instruction and assessment for gifted elementary students at Charlotte area schools and national enrichment programs and competitions.
  - Mr. Tuhin Dutt has developed an extensive enrichment curriculum in STEM through his startup, Thinking Feet, and often works as an instructor.
  - Dr. Gregory Denlea and Dr. Ronak Bhatt have both worked as faculty and designed/delivered assessments in higher education. Dr. Denlea has taught for over 15 years, currently training elementary school teachers around the world in an IB Master's in Education program.
  - Performance management
    - Dr. Ronak Bhatt, through his consulting career with McKinsey, Inc. and later RIN Advisors, has helped numerous Fortune 500 companies and startups in performance improvement and performance management. He was also directly responsible for the performance management of the chief executive of E4 Carolinas, a nonprofit which he chaired.
    - Dr. Gregory Denlea is a certified Project Management Professional and ITIL certified in Service Management
    - Several members of the board, Mr. Tuhin Dutt, Dr. Gregory Denlea, Dr. Ronak Bhatt, Ms. Judith Malveaux, hold MBAs and/or have held management positions where they have been directly responsible for the performance management of a team
  - Parent & community engagement
    - Ms. Judith Malveaux holds degrees in communication and mass media and is a speaker and award winner in public relations. She has deployed these skills to strengthen parent and community engagement in the education sector with both Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools and with the NC Association of Public Charter Schools.
    - Mr. Tuhin Dutt has led the marketing and parent outreach for this educational startup, which now includes hundreds of families and alumni.
    - Dr. Ronak Bhatt led the community outreach survey that garnered over 1000 responses and helped identify the need for Telra Institute.
5. 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.

- a. Telra Institute is poised for educational and operational success.
    - i. The governance structure as described in the bylaws (1) is in line with best-practices & all legal and ethical requirements as a NC nonprofit corporation applying to start a charter school, (2) creates a consistency and clarity of purpose regarding the Telra mission, and (3) delineates roles, authorities, and oversight responsibilities for the board.
    - ii. The current board composition brings to bear essential capabilities in organizational management, financial stewardship, and education for the start of Telra’s journey. Planned expansion of the board will bring in other critical skillsets needed as the school opens and matures.
  - b. The Telra board has defined key goals and associated metrics for the school’s success, and the board composition ensures a cross-section of perspectives will review progress against these goals at each board meeting. The governance structure ensures the school leader will be held accountable for achieving school goals with a board committee directly responsible for annual evaluations and compensation, hiring, and termination recommendations to the board.
  - c. The board currently includes parents, community leaders, and educators. As the board and school mature, additional parents (of then-current attendees) will be brought onto the board to ensure them a direct voice in governance. The school will also help initiate a Parents Council to organize parent volunteer activity, provide mutual support, and advocate for families. The board will reach out to survey and speak with all stakeholders periodically, including parents, children, and staff, to understand their perspectives. The board also commits to conducting open meetings and recording the minutes from all meetings so that parents and stakeholders can review decisions and past and future actions.
6. 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 founding board was not recruited or selected by any outside person or body. Board members connected to one another based on prior education advocacy efforts, prior collaborations in gifted education, and introductions from mutual acquaintances or reputational outreach. Upon conversing and realizing the shared vision for a charter school that could fill the observed educational need, the group self-organized and mutually agreed to submit an application for Telra Institute in 2019.

Building on the six (6) current members, the board plans to recruit 2-4 additional members through the school opening (between Aug 2019 and Aug 2021), followed by

an additional 2-3 parent-members in the first 18 months of operation of the school. This would bring the total board size to 10-13 by early 2023.

The Board Development Committee is charged with identifying, recruiting, recommending, and onboarding new members with a goal of building a strong board with a diverse array of needed capabilities and stakeholders. Upon recommendation of the Board Development Committee, the Board may elect new board members on the basis of a majority vote. New board members so elected are considered “provisional” directors until such time as they pass any then active, state-mandated certification and approval requirements (such as passing a criminal background check).

7. Describe the group’s ties to and/or knowledge of the target community.

**Dr. Gregory Denlea** has lived in Charlotte for 16 years. His children attended CMS while Greg was the webmaster at their school. Gregory has taught youth classes at his church for the past 15 years. He also has 15 years’ experience teaching in Charlotte at a local university.

**Dr. Ronak Bhatt** has lived in south Charlotte for 9 years. Three of his children are attending elementary school with CMS and a younger child is in pre-school. He has been a volunteer coach for the Providence Spring Elementary Science Olympiad team and worked with UNC Charlotte as Adjunct Faculty to develop a curriculum for a new energy concentration and lecture in undergraduate and graduate classes. He has been an active advocate for expanding gifted public education in Charlotte and recently spearheaded a parent survey receiving more than 1000 responses.

**Mr. Tuhin Dutt** is a parent of a rising 9th grader and rising 5th grader. He has been a parent volunteer coach for the Polo Ridge Elementary Science Olympiad team. Tuhin also founded and operates a STEAM enrichment organization, Thinking Feet, that has pioneered student enrichment in Coding, Advanced Math, English Language Arts, Public Speaking, and Science & Engineering. Through Thinking Feet, Tuhin has had the advantage of a lens to view closely the diverse needs of gifted students that Thinking Feet attracts.

**Dr. Michael S. Matthews** has lived in Charlotte since 2008 and his 3 children have all participated in gifted programs in CMS schools. He has volunteered many hours in CMS schools, and has served on the board (3-year term) of Metrolina Scholars Academy, a local charter school for highly gifted students. Professor Matthews teaches full time at UNC Charlotte, where he also directs the university’s graduate programs in gifted education. He also provides professional development to teachers and parents in the Charlotte region on topics related to gifted education and advanced learners.

**Dr. Harold Reiter** has lived in Charlotte since 1972. He founded the Charlotte Math Club in 1987 and the Mecklenburg Math Club in 1991. He has taught and coached at Barringer Academic Center and Randolph Middle School. He is active in the Charlotte area mathematics community (Julia Robinson Festival, Charlotte Teachers Institute, Charlotte Teachers Circle, Tri-Mathalon).

**Ms. Judith Malveaux-Ellerbe** has lived in Charlotte since 2006. She worked as an internal and multimedia communication specialist with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and also assisted the North Carolina Public Charter Schools Association with communications. She has mentored and advised youth and adult community members through her church and local professional organizations.

8. Outline the strategic board calendar detailing how often the board will meet according to the bylaws established.

The Telra Institute bylaws require quarterly meetings of the board of directors, however, in year 0 and beyond of the school's operation, the Telra board will increase the frequency to monthly and establish a standard cadence and location for meetings, e.g., 3rd Monday of each month at 6pm at our school. This meeting schedule will be posted in accordance with NC Open Meetings Laws.

9. 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.

The Telra Institute board will have a standing Board Development Committee that manages the nominating new board members, assessing board performance, conducting new board member orientation, and providing for ongoing board member training and education.

Formal orientation sessions are conducted to provide critical information before individuals are brought on to the board of directors. Each year Telra's board will conduct an annual retreat which is used for the board's annual business as well as to provide formal training to all board members. Telra will take advantage of the offerings provided by the NC Office of Charter Schools and 3rd party consultants knowledgeable on charter school governance (e.g., Leaders Building Leaders) to support the retreat. Both the orientation and the formal training the board members receive provide the skills and knowledge board directors need to be effective. There will also be a written board director's manual provided to each director containing essential information for the job.

The steps/timetable used to provide training to new and existing board members include:

- i. Potential board members are invited to tour the school and observe the services and programs as well as talk to educators and staff
- ii. Potential board members may also be invited to attend a Telra Institute board meeting
- iii. Potential board members who want to be considered for a board position will be invited to attend an in-person orientation session wherein the board development committee and the chief executive explain the role of Telra’s board and provide insight into some of the individual board director responsibilities.
  - o The agenda for the in-person orientation session includes:
    - Welcome and introductions
    - Overview of the mission, vision and educational goals of the charter school
    - Overview of the roles and responsibilities of the board of directors
    - Review of the individual board director job description detailing specific expectations
    - Opportunity for board prospects to ask questions
    - Declarations of willingness to serve by the board prospects
    - Other information required to continue in the board recruitment process
    - Next steps
- iv. Potential board members who want to proceed with the next steps to becoming a board member will be asked to complete a questionnaire that provides some background information
  - o The questionnaire includes the following question:
    - Relevant Community Experience and/or Employment (attach a resume if relevant)
    - Why are you interested in serving as a board director of the Charter School?
    - Area(s) of expertise/Contributions you feel you can make to the Charter School as a board director
    - Other volunteer commitments
- v. The final step to becoming a board member requires the Telra board to vote on any new board member.
  - o The questions included in the decision to elect a new member to the board include:
    - Does the prospect appear to be committed to the mission and educational philosophy of the charter school?
    - Can the prospect contribute the time necessary to be an effective board director?
    - Does the prospect possess some of the key skills, knowledge and other assets that match the board to recruiting priorities?

- Does it appear that the prospect can place the charter school's purposes and interests above their own professional and personal interests when making decisions as a board director?
- vi. Both the Telra board development committee and the chief executive share the responsibility for developing and implementing effective board orientation training. Past and current board members will help conduct the orientation of new board members. Orientation training covers the following topics:
  - The charter school's educational programs
  - The charter school's financial status
  - The charter school's constituents
  - The structure of the board
  - Individual board directors' responsibilities
  - The board's relationship to the staff
- vii. The Telra board development committee will also design annual and ongoing training programs for all board members. The types of questions used to inform the annual and ongoing training of board members include:
  - What do the board directors need to know in order to become more effective members of Telra's board
  - What training can be developed for the critical strategic issues facing Telra Institute.
  - What outside resources could make presentations to the board to update them on emerging issues
  - What articles could be reviewed by the board to update them on emerging issues
  - What seminars could the board attend that are pertinent to their role
  - What study groups or ad-hoc committees need to be formed so that the board can completely focus on an issue
  - What is the planned rotation for board members into other roles on the board
  - What peer learning could board members share with one another
  - What peer charter schools could the board interact with to gain further insights
- viii. The Telra board manual needs to be kept up to date. It is used for both orientation and ongoing training of board members. The board manual includes the following types of information:
  - The charter contract
  - Other legal documents such as articles of incorporation, bylaws, etc.
  - Charter school mission, vision and strategic plan
  - The educational plan of the charter school including educational philosophy, learning outcomes for students, curriculum, instructional strategies, assessment methods, etc.

- Board structure and operations including policies, description of board directors' responsibilities, overall committee structure and responsibility descriptions for each committee, decision-making methods, organizational chart, list of current board directors, titles, and all affiliations
  - Staffing structure, job description of charter school administrator, administrator performance review procedures
  - Finances including the charter school's financial history, current financial condition and long-range financial plans, previous year's audit and budget, the current annual budget, the school's investment and banking procedures and other relevant financial information
  - Sample newsletters, brochures, or other publications; Newspaper or magazine articles about the charter school
- ix. The Telra Institute board will also mentor board members at all times to facilitate board rotation and the ongoing professional development of board members

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

The Telra bylaws include a conflict of interest and nepotism policy which requires active disclosure from any board member of a potential conflict of interest. Board members will be briefed on this policy annually by the corporate attorney and will be required to affirm their knowledge of their responsibilities under this policy, in writing.

There are no current relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts if the application is approved, though if one should arise, any affected board members must fully disclose the issue in accordance with Telra policy. In the event that dual interests exist the conflicted board members must abstain from voting on those actions they are in conflict with. Similarly, staff members who have identified conflicts of interest will not be allowed to participate in the decision-making process

The board will draft operational policies on all matters that could create a conflict of interest. The policies act as a check and balance mechanism for identifying and avoiding potential conflicts of interest. These policies will be reviewed regularly as part of the overall board performance assessment.

Finally, the Telra board's procedures include recording in the minutes any disclosures made by board members citing conflicts of interest. The board will clearly document how the subsequent decisions taken were made in the best interests of the school.

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

Policies provide for consistent actions and enable the board to delegate authority to the staff and chief executive of Telra while maintaining responsibility, oversight, and control. Policies are used by the board to define how Telra should operate and how the board will provide for governance.

The decision-making process the board will use to develop school policies includes:

- I. The board (and others) identify the need for a policy, e.g., furtherance of Telra mission, need for legal, ethical, or contractual compliance, etc.
- II. The board's Executive Committee will be responsible for meeting monthly and as needed to develop and maintain policies:
  - A. Draft policies will be researched, written, and reviewed by a widespread audience which includes all stakeholders at the school and in the community
  - B. Policies must align to Telra's mission, purpose, and targeted population (students, families, community members, teachers, staff, etc.)
  - C. Sensitive issues are reviewed by the legal counsel
  - D. Notice provided for first reading by community of the draft policy
- III. To be enacted policies must be approved by the board via a majority vote
  - A. Notice provided of the second reading that the policy is approved
  - B. Policy manual is updated, and policy provided to board members and the administrative team
  - C. Policy is implemented and implementation procedures are developed by the administration team at Telra
  - D. Policy is evaluated annually using information gathered from all members of the school and, if needed, revisions are made to the policy
- IV. The board will consider creating new policies anytime an issue arises that is not adequately covered by existing policies
- V. The board will review and modify policies over time to ensure that they are reflective of changes in leadership, services, programs, external regulations or when policies do not serve to reduce ambiguity and ensure uniformity of decisions made across Telra Institute
- VI. Telra expects to maintain policies for the following areas:
  - A. Grievance Policy
  - B. Conflict of Interest Policy
  - C. Admissions and Enrollment Policy
  - D. Calendar and Length of School Day Policy
  - E. Classroom Policies (i.e., grading scales, report cards, etc.)
  - F. Promotion and Retention Policies
  - G. Accountability Policies

- H. Student Behavior Policies
- I. Hiring and Termination Policies
- J. Criminal Background Check Policy
- K. Staff Evaluation Policy
- L. Student Health and Safety Policies
- M. Student Records Policy
- N. Family and School Communication Policy
- O. Board Operational Policy
- P. Board Committee Policy
- Q. Nepotism Policy
- R. Third-Party Agreements Policy
- S. Employee Agreements Policy
- T. Budget Approval Policy
- U. Third-Party Contracts Policy
- V. Access to Funding Policy
- W. Audit Policy
- X. Purchasing Policy

12. 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.

Telra Institute appreciates the need for additional bodies, beyond those described in the bylaws, to support ongoing performance and operations of the school. The board reserves the right to create ad-hoc committees as needed, but several groups are already contemplated at the outset:

- A. The **Parents Council** (PC) is the chief organizing and representative body of current parents of Telra Institute students. Similar to other PTA/PTO organizations, PC will organize parent volunteers, provide fellowship and mutual support, raise funds, and advocate for the interests of families. The Telra Board of Directors will aid in the initial organization of PC, but otherwise intends the PC to become an independent body to advise and partner in Telra's mission.
- B. The **School Improvement Team** (SIT) will consist of the school senior staff, two teachers, two parent representatives and other board members as may be designated by the Chairperson. The SIT will report to the Board of Directors and is charged with drafting the School Improvement Plan and contributing to develop the long-term strategy of Telra Institute.
- C. The **Grievance Committee** (GC) shall consist of two staff members, designated by the chief executive, two parents, designated by the Chairperson, and at least one board

member, designated by the Chairperson. The GC will report to the Board of Directors and is charged with developing and implementing the grievance policy, administering the grievance process, and deliberating on grievance issues as outlined below.

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

Telra Institute will maintain a grievance policy for parents and staff members which includes the following elements:

- i. When parents or other members of the community have a complaint, they will be directed to talk to the teacher and/or school administration.
  - a. Appointments should be scheduled to allow for sufficient time to talk with the teacher or school administrator
- ii. If the complaint remains unresolved then the grievance policy will be invoked. The grievance policy involves the following steps:
  - a. If parent or staff have grievance, then they should contact the designated contact point on the Grievance Committee. If the grievance is against the designated contact point, an alternate contact point shall be provided.
    1. Grievances may also be submitted in writing to the supervisor, chief executive or the chairperson of the board of directors
  - b. Grievances will be reviewed and responded to in a timely manner
  - c. Retaliation against persons reporting grievances is against the law and will not be tolerated at Telra
  - d. In addition to filing a grievance with Telra the parent or staff may also file a complaint with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
  - e. The grievance committee will convene in order to review the grievance filing. The committee will be expanded to include domain experts and the board attorney when merited
  - f. The grievance committee will interview the person filing the grievance and then conduct a review of all information pertaining to that grievance. If needed others from inside and outside of the school will be asked to come before the grievance review team.
  - g. The grievance review team will vote on the grievance and send their recommendation to the board of directors and the chief executive of Telra.
  - h. The board will meet for final resolution of the grievance and vote upon the outcome
  - i. The party who submitted the grievance will be notified of the outcome
  - j. When merited others will be informed on the grievance outcome. At no time will information from the grievance be released to anyone outside of the grievance review team except as provided in the grievance policy

- k. When merited policies and procedures will be revised and updated based upon findings from the grievance hearing
  
- iii. Telra Institute understands that complaints and grievances provide data points on the schools performance and will yield useful information on operations, academics, and governance. Grievances can help identify inconsistencies, trends, and blind spots, and they create opportunities for Telra to improve and meet or exceed organizational goals.

**\*Attach Appendix G Organizational Chart**

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).

**\*Attach Appendix H Charter School Board Member Information Form and Resume**

A **one-page** resume from each founding board member and responses to the questions found on the Charter School Board Member Form

**\*Attach Appendix I Charter School Board Member Background Certification Statement and Completed Background Check for Each Board Member**

**\*Attach Appendix J Proposed By-Laws of the Nonprofit Organization or Municipality**

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.

**\*Attach Appendix K Articles of Incorporation or Municipal Charter**

If the applicant is a non-profit board of directors, attach a copy of the articles of incorporation from the NC Department of the Secretary of State.

If the applicant is a municipality, attach a copy of the municipal charter.

### 3.4 Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management

#### Projected Staff

1. Complete the staffing chart below outlining your staffing projections. Adjust or add functions and titles as needed to reflect variations in school models. Be mindful that your predicted administration and staff match the projected enrollment noted in Section I, course offerings, and align with the proposed budget.

Position	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Chief Executive	1	1	1	1	1	1
Head of Instruction	0.5	1	1	1	1	1
Director of Operations		1	1	1	1	1
Office Administrator		1	1	1	1	1
Core Classroom Teachers		14	17	18	18	18
Exceptional Children Specialist		1	1	1	1	1
Specialized Classroom Teachers		2	3	3	3	3
Custodian		1	1	1	1	1

### Staffing Plans, Hiring, and Management

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

Telra provides a unique opportunity for gifted education specialists to hone their craft in teaching a full-time gifted curriculum. This will attract teachers who share our mission and are passionate about developing their skillsets in our environment. All Telra teachers are expected to either hold or be progressing toward a gifted education certification. Given the connectivity our board member, Professor Michael Matthews, provides to the gifted education program at UNC Charlotte, the university will be an invaluable source of teaching talent for Telra. Of course, this channel will be supplemented through the usual sources of recruiting teaching talent, e.g., online job boards, job fairs, advertisements in educational trade journals.

Telra's board seeks to retain high-performing teachers through (a) empowering them to teach and experiment with novel research-based instructional strategies, (b) concerted professional development, (c) paired mentoring of new and experienced teachers, (d) competitive compensation, and (e) recognizing them as important stakeholders with a role on the school improvement team and access to the Board of Directors. Telra's teachers will each develop their personal professional and personal development plan under a framework to be developed with the advice of Professor Matthews, an expert in gifted education. The head of instruction and the CEO at Telra will work with teachers over the continuum to ensure that both their personal and professional goals are being met or exceeded, and the board is committed to support this effort financially.

3. If already identified, describe the chief executive/head of school candidate and explain why this individual is well-qualified to lead the proposed school in achieving its mission. Provide specific evidence that demonstrates the capacity to design, launch, and manage a high-performing charter school. If the proposed leader has never run a school, describe any leadership training programs that (s)he has completed or is currently participating in. If no candidate has been identified, provide the job description or

qualifications, and discuss the timeline, criteria, and recruiting/selection process for hiring the school leader.

Not applicable - not yet identified.

**Attach in Appendix O the School Leader’s Resume. If school leader has been identified, include the school leader’s one-page resume in Appendix O.**

4. Provide a description of the relationship that will exist between the charter school employees and the school’s board of directors.

Appendix G outlines the organizational chart for Telra Institute. The charter school chief executive is employed by, reports to, and is supervised and evaluated by the Telra board of directors. All other employed staff report, directly or indirectly, to the chief executive, who is charged overall with recruitment, supervision, and evaluation of staff. Notwithstanding the above, the Telra board will review and approve all major personnel actions

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

Telra’s board is responsible for reviewing and approving all major personnel actions, which includes the hiring and dismissal of all personnel. The board plays the most significant role in hiring, evaluating, and dismissing the chief executive, as outlined in Governance 3.2, question 2. For other school personnel, the board Personnel committee plays an advisory role to the chief executive and brings a recommendation to the full board for approval. Criminal background checks will be conducted on all school employees and board members in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina and the mandates of the Department of Education as a condition of their employment or association with the school.

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

Salary ranges are estimated based on comparability with benchmarks from NC Public School (<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/finance/salary/>) and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools ([https://www.wearecms.com/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=1405151&type=d&pREC\\_ID=1579939](https://www.wearecms.com/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1405151&type=d&pREC_ID=1579939))

- i. Teachers - bachelor's degree, 0-5 years’ experience, \$35-45k/year
- ii. Head of Instruction & CEO - master’s degree, L07 assistant principal or CMS “P1”, \$55-65k/year
- iii. Custodian - \$20-30k/year
- iv. Office Administrator - \$30-40k/year
- v. Director of Operations - similar to School Administrator IV, \$40-50k/year

- vi. Exceptional Children Specialist - similar to School Administrator III-V (10 mo), \$38-42k/year

Employment benefits were estimated in alignment with the Department of Public Instructions Local School District School Benefits calculator (<http://apps.schools.nc.gov/ords/f?p=153:1>). Telra does not anticipate offering health or retirement benefits through the State, though the board is budgeting similar amounts in order to create a comparable offering for our staff.

- i. Social security - 7.65%
- ii. Retirement - 10.78%
- iii. Health Care - \$5,869

7. Provide the procedures for handling employee grievances and/or termination.

In Governance Section of this application, section 3.2, and specifically in question number thirteen (13), the grievance process for Telra employees and parents has been documented. Telra's employee grievance process includes escalation to the employees' immediate manager or the person that manager reports to. All grievances will be submitted to the Grievance Committee for review and determination. Final determination will be voted on by the board. All personnel actions are taken via a board vote inclusive of terminations.

8. Identify any positions that will have dual responsibilities and the funding source for each position.

Not applicable.

9. Describe the plans to have qualified staffing adequate for the anticipated special needs population and means for providing qualified staffing for EL and gifted students.

Since Telra's target population includes gifted students, all of Telra's teaching staff are hired, trained, and retained to work with that special population with the expectation that all instructors currently hold or are working toward gifted education certification. The board seeks to have at least one member of the teaching staff certified for EL and another for exceptional children to support needs across the school. The budget proposal includes an allocation to supplement the in-house resources with external contract support for EC and EL, as needed.

10. Provide a narrative detailing the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and appropriate licenses that each position must have to be hired by the school's board of directors and effectively perform the job function(s).

The **Chief Executive** has overall responsibility for the school, the corporation, its operation, its finances, and all staff in furtherance of the mission of Telra Institute. The CEO is the primary

liaison between the Board of Directors and all stakeholders, including students, parents, staff, the OCS & State Board of Education and community & political partners. The CEO is responsible for working with the Chairperson to support the operation of the BoD, its committees, and for keeping the Board informed as to the operation and performance of the school. The CEO must also recruit, manage, and evaluate the staff and ensure the health, performance, and growth of the school. The CEO should have a deep understanding and commitment to the Telra mission, experience in managing high performing teams, strategic insight, organizational and entrepreneurial drive, and capability to lead both the academic and business dimensions of a charter school. Experience in management, instruction, and an advanced degree is preferred.

The **Head of Instruction** reports to the CEO and has overall academic responsibility for the school, leading the instructional staff, establishing the curriculum, methods of instruction and assessment, schedules, and teaching assignments in order to advance the Telra mission. The Head of Instruction must recruit, manage, and evaluate the instructional staff and manage relationships with any external specialist support services. The ideal candidate should hold a NC teaching license with gifted certification, an advanced degree in school administration, and experience in curriculum development.

The **Director of Operations** reports to the CEO and has overall operations responsibility for the school, including facilities management, IT and security systems, custodial, transportation and food policies & vendors, utilities, grounds, purchasing and receiving, and construction projects. The ideal candidate will have a bachelor's degree and 5-10 years of experience in a similar role.

The **Office Administrator** reports to the CEO and is responsible for supporting the senior staff (CEO, Head of Instruction, Director of Operations) in their roles, oversight of the office environment, maintaining student attendance information, managing school communications, staffing the reception area, and other clerical work as needed. The ideal candidate will have at least 5 years' experience in a school office or executive assistant role.

The **Custodian** reports to the Director of Operations and works to maintain the school as a clean, safe, and healthy environment for our students and teachers. Candidates are expected to have experience working in a school environment.

**Teachers** are classroom leaders, the direct face of the school to its students, and they are expected to be experts in their area of instruction and highly capable in pedagogy. We expect the majority of teaching staff to hold their NC teaching license, though some may qualify on the basis of their undergraduate degree and other experience. All teachers must currently hold or have plans to obtain a gifted education certification.

The **Exceptional Children Specialist** is responsible for overseeing the school's policies and procedures with regards to exceptional children and to ensure compliance with all state and federal laws. The EC Specialist will work with teachers to design and deliver IEPs and engage

outside contract support as needed to effectively serve the school's EC population. Candidates are expected to hold an undergraduate degree along with an EC teaching license.

### 3.5 Staff Evaluations and Professional Development

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

The Head of Instruction is directly responsible for oversight of teacher licensure and professional development, although, ultimately, the Chief Executive (and the Board) are responsible.

2. Provide a detailed plan noting how the school will mentor, retain and evaluate staff in a format that matches the school's mission and educational program. Plan should also describe how the school will meet the teacher certification and licensure requirements for teachers as prescribed by state and federal law. Be sure this overview matches with the projected staff and funding of the proposed budget section.

Teachers will maintain and update their required licensure online using the North Carolina Department of Instruction (NCDPI) Licensure System ([https://vo.licensure.ncpublicschools.gov/datamart/loginNCDPI.do;jsessionid=dc\\_QD-eZF14x3k08B5YqF8TyM3x7mA2tR-HAjk7.i-06703b1865f202528](https://vo.licensure.ncpublicschools.gov/datamart/loginNCDPI.do;jsessionid=dc_QD-eZF14x3k08B5YqF8TyM3x7mA2tR-HAjk7.i-06703b1865f202528)). The NCDPI system enables the verification of a teachers and staff member's licensure as well. The Head of Instruction will prepare an annual report to the Board regarding the professional development plan and licensure status of the Telra instructional staff and ensure that at least 50% of employees hold a professional educator's license for the subject or grade level they teach.

Telra's teachers and staff will interface with the Regional Education Facilitator for the southwest region to ensure that they have quality teacher induction programs that nurture and support the professional growth of a beginning teacher. Teachers and staff will be able to participate in webinars, quarterly collaborative meetings, annual Peer Reviews, and continuous professional development provided by the Regional Education Facilitator. Telra's teachers and staff will benefit from participation in networks outside of the school and in building professional relationships with others.

Telra's teachers and staff will be encouraged to pursue National Board Certification as a way to gain recognition for their accomplishments in their classrooms. The mission and educational programs at Telra are designed to align with the National Board Standards. Telra's evaluation for teachers consists of establishing that the teachers and staff are committed to student learning, to managing and monitoring student learning, to knowing how to teach the subjects they teach, to learn from experience, and to participate in professional learning communities.

Telra's mentoring plan will provide personalized supports based on the teacher's expressed and observed needs. A teacher can determine the areas they would like to pursue in their personal development plan. Telra's teachers will be able to focus on their content area or their grade-level. The more experienced teachers, assistants, and staff will serve as mentors. The mentoring program will include a reflection component where teachers will document their learning in reflection portfolios. Telra's head of instruction provides frequent feedback to teachers to facilitate continuous improvement. Teachers will be committed to continuous improvement in their field and their performance will be measured based upon their skill in meeting and exceeding the learning needs of their students. Telra's teachers will take their PD practice seriously and workdays will be set aside for PD in the school's annual calendar. Learning for Telra's teachers will occur collaboratively so that both the individual and collective development of the teachers and staff occurs.

Telra's Head of Instruction is responsible for evaluation of instructional staff. The evaluation program will use multiple sources and types of student performance data, classroom observation, work samples, and self-assessment to identify assess strengths and development needs. This evaluation will guide professional development, personnel and assignment decisions, and compensation decisions for teachers. The board will require the CEO and Head of Instruction to submit a formal rubric and staff evaluation process for approval by the board, with teachers' goals aligned against the school's overall goals described in Section 1.3.

Telra's head of instruction will review the staff mentorship and evaluation program with the board of trustees bi-annually to ensure that teachers are achieving the results tied to the mission and vision of the school, and to make any changes, if needed.

- 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.**

Telra Institute seeks to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site. Telra's professional development (PD) program will be individualized and conducted internally and externally, with teachers' summative assessment results used to guide customized PD for each teacher. Telra's PD is aligned to the mission and vision of the school and adheres to the NCDPI Standards for Professional Learning.

Telra's professional development program will include peer mentoring, reflection and discussion, visits with other schools, online professional development courses (e.g. <http://www.rt3nc.org/>), onsite and offsite workshops, and conferences. Teachers may earn

continuing education credits and work towards additional certifications and licenses needed to support the mission and vision of Telra Institute.

- **Learning communities:** Telra’s teachers will participate in learning communities at the school and with other schools. Learning communities of teachers at Telra will work towards continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and high expectations for students and teachers. Telra’s learning community supports collective responsibility and fosters peer-to-peer support for learning. The learning community at Telra shares the mission, vision and goals for the school. Technology at Telra will support learning communities at the school and interaction with service providers and external communities.
- **Direct mentorship:** Telra’s head of instruction will be responsible for developing capacity, advocating, and create support systems for professional learning at the school. In this capacity the head of instruction will be responsible for prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for the PD program. The head of instruction will ensure for continuous improvements in Telra’s curriculum, instruction, assessments, leadership practices, and support systems. The head of instruction will plan to provide the needed PD resources to attain individual teacher and overall school goals. This may involve 1:1 observation and coaching from the head of instruction or another senior teacher or involve bringing in a subject matter expert externally.
- **Formal training:** The school benefits from its association with and close proximity to the School of Education at UNC Charlotte and expects to utilize PD services from UNC Charlotte and other 3rd party professional development providers. The head of instruction will arrange formal PD sessions to expose Telra staff to best-practices from around the world, often geared to improve instruction for special populations of students (e.g. exceptional, gifted and talented, disabled, English learners, etc.).

Telra will share PD standards with student’s parents, the parent council, and other community members to engender support and build those standards into all programs and services. PD standards will be placed on the school’s website and the standards will be part of the evaluation of the Telra’s educational program’s effectiveness. The board will draft a resolution declaring that PD standards will be adopted as the school’s expectations for professional development at Telra.

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.

Telra Institute's unique curriculum requires early investment in professional development to ensure the first year will be a success. We anticipate a pre-opening professional development program of 7-8 days in the summer of 2021.

- 1 day will be dedicated to introducing teachers to the board and leadership, overall Telra academic philosophy, implementation of the total school cluster grouping model, assessment schedule, school goals, policies, procedures, and safety.
  - 2-3 days will be used to familiarize teachers with the specific curriculum to be used in their grade and content areas, and to provide training in methods of differentiation for gifted learners. Research demonstrates that differentiation is only implemented effectively when teachers have been given specific training in how to accomplish it.
  - ~2 days will be used to train teachers in the hardware and software technology platforms (to be selected) that Telra will use for communications, student interaction, tracking and report student progress and assessment results, and for curriculum development.
  - ~1 day will be focused on benefits, financial literacy, career planning
  - ~1 day equivalent (distributed in multiple sessions throughout the schedule) will be focused on team building, personality assessments, and ideation.
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.

Telra Institute intends to mirror the student calendar of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. This calendar incorporates 8 teacher workdays during the school year which Telra intends to use for professional development. Since students are not in session during these days, there are no staffing constraints that would complicate participation in the professional development program.

### 3.6 Marketing, Recruitment, and Enrollment

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 115C-218.45 carefully.

#### Marketing Plan

1. 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)).

Telra Institute will begin marketing early in order to benefit from word-of-mouth as well as build a cadre of supporters and volunteers. Activities will be selected and designed to affect the greatest outreach at a given level of investment in order to attract a diverse applicant pool.

- **Pre-marketing: Jan-May 2020** - Board Publicity Committee organizes 3-5 parent interest meetings in area libraries, churches, schools. As this is pre-approval of the charter, advertisement for these sessions will be low-key and organic (flyers in supermarkets, churches, after-school activity centers, emails to the Board's networks, unpaid social media). *Desired outcome: subscribed interest list of 20+ families and 3+ parents willing to volunteer to help promote the school*
- **Marketing outreach: May-Nov 2020** - Investment in broad marketing plan including establishing Telra website, paid social media & search (Facebook, Nextdoor), print advertisements (e.g., Charlotte Observer, South Charlotte Weekly, Ballantyne Parent), flyers in local businesses, booth at area events/festivals, community information sessions, and partnerships with summer programs, camps, and enrichment centers. Extra efforts will be made to increase diversity by reaching populations that may have low awareness of charter offerings, e.g., by strategically locating community information sessions in low income areas, holding online/recorded sessions to reach families who cannot attend physically due to work commitments or mobility constraints. *Desired outcome: interest list (email subscribers + applicants) of 500+ families. Letters of Intent (LOI) for 200+ slots.*
- **Pipeline conversion / initial application: Dec 2020 - Feb 2021** - Email outreach and in-person meetings targeted to the subscribed interest list / LOI submitters (but open to all) with the goal of building engagement and conversion to applications. Content will include meeting senior staff, sharing details on the school location, providing sample curriculum materials for prospective parents. Broad marketing outreach to continue if pipeline is below target. *Desired outcome: 300+ student applications submitted.*
- **Selection period: Feb-Mar 2021** - Communication of lottery results. Email/phone outreach to selected families to complete enrollment. Outreach to waiting list families to secure affirmative interest in the waiting list. *Desired outcome: Enrollment at capacity, waiting list at 10%+ for each grade.*
- **Planning period: May-Jul 2021** - Orientation events and pre-assessments offered for enrolled families and top portion of waiting list. Form Parents Council, begin to organize volunteering. Reaffirm enrollment commitments and offer slots to waiting list families as needed. Marketing outreach continues if capacity remains. *Desired outcome: Enrollment remains at capacity, waiting list at 10%+ for each grade.*
- **First 20 days of school: Aug-Sep 2021** - Email/phone outreach to any enrolled families not attending & confirmation of their plans for the school year. Backfill with waiting list as needed. Marketing outreach continues if capacity remains, with a focus on open

house events. *Desired outcome: Enrollment remains at capacity, waiting list at 10%+ for each grade.*

- **First Semester / 2nd year outreach: Oct 2021 - Jan 2022** - Broad marketing outreach to build interest list for 2nd year using most effective channels from year 1 and supplementing with wait list families and other year 1 subscribers. Start inviting prospective parents for school tours and coffee with the school leaders. *Desired outcome: Letters of intent at 200% of expected available slots.*
  - **Pipeline conversion and subsequent steps repeat annually.** Desired outcome each year after 1st is to have applications at 150% of available slots, full enrollment, and a persistent wait list at 10% of capacity.
2. Describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the school.

See response to 1 above - specifically, Pre-marketing and Marketing Outreach stages

3. Describe your plan to recruit students during the planning year, including the strategies, activities, events, and responsible parties. Include a timeline and plan for student recruitment/engagement and enrollment, with benchmarks that will indicate and demonstrate suitable recruitment and enrollment practices over time.

See response to 1 above. The Board Publicity Committee is the initial responsible party and will continue to be engaged after the CEO is brought on board and takes on more direct control of the marketing efforts. Individual board members and volunteers may also be tasked as “ambassadors” to host information sessions at various locations.

4. Describe how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the school. Specifically, describe any plans for outreach to: families in poverty, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, English learners, and other students at-risk of academic failure. If your school has a specific area of focus, describe the plan to market that focus.

Telra Institute intends to be inclusive and welcoming to every family whose objective is for their child to learn in an environment with a challenging and accelerated curriculum. In addition to highlighting the unique curriculum as an area of focus, marketing communications will also describe the resources and approach (detailed elsewhere in this application) Telra will use to support students with disabilities, English learners, and students at risk of academic failure.

Telra will use a variety of methods to create an equal opportunity for all students to attend the school. Marketing will use multiple channels (e.g., electronics, print, physical) to capture families who may be underrepresented in any one audience. Awareness sessions will be held across Charlotte in diverse socioeconomic neighborhoods and materials will be translated to

Spanish. Parents will be afforded multiple engagement techniques to learn more about the school and/or apply, including the website, email, phone, community information sessions, office hours, and scheduled home visits for families with mobility challenges.

**5. What established community organizations would you target for marketing and recruitment?**

Telra will identify and market to community organizations that are not already affiliated with a K-5 program as the most likely partners in recruitment. This will include

- Recreational centers and leagues (e.g. YMCA, Charlotte Soccer Academy)
- Pre-schools and churches (e.g., Providence Presbyterian Church, Cranfield Academy preschool)
- Museums (e.g., Discovery Place)
- After-school & summer enrichment programs (e.g., Thinking-Feet, Science Olympiad, Mecklenburg Math Club, Kumon)
- Other charter schools with a grade 6+ enrollment (e.g., Ballantyne Charter High School)

### 3.7 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.**

See Section 3.6, response 1 for a description of the timing and techniques used to communicate with parents and community members. Beyond the marketing approach, social media engagement, and community information sessions, Telra will build engagement by inviting parents to volunteer as ambassadors to help increase awareness and by holding focus groups of prospective parents to provide input on school planning. Telra will reach out to community organizations that could be partners (e.g., preschools, camps) and begin building plans on how to collaborate, as well as to nearby businesses (once a location is determined) to discuss what to expect and Telra can be a good neighbor.

**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.**

Parent involvement will be a key driver for the success of the school. Telra will undertake the following activities to strengthen parent engagement.

- Telra will help found the Parents Council (PC) - the representative body of parents whose children attend Telra Institute. The PC will organize parent volunteers to support the school and after-school programs, provide feedback to the staff and to the board, and coordinate fundraising efforts

- Publish a parent newsletter with overall school news
  - Hold regular open houses for parents to interact with their child’s teacher as well as with school leadership
  - Encourage and empower teachers to create a weekly communication framework with parents
  - Organize events (extracurriculars, student presentations) that can be attended by parents and siblings
  - Invite parents with a variety of career backgrounds for conversation and career sessions
  - Invite Parents to run and coach different student clubs like Future Business Leaders, Science Olympiad, Public Speaking etc.
3. If already identified, describe any programs you will offer to parents and/or the community and how they may benefit students and support the school mission and vision.

Telra plans to develop a speaker series of prominent individuals in academia, business, arts, politics, etc. who visit the school to speak with the children and afterward deliver a talk of general interest to the community. The school’s mission supports establishing Telra as a center of learning for the entire community.

### 3.8 Admissions Policy

1. Provide the school's proposed policies and the procedures for admitting students to the proposed charter school, including:
  - a. 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.
  - b. Clear policies and procedures detailing the open enrollment lottery plan, including policies regarding statutory permitted student enrollment preferences.
  - c. Clear policies and procedures for student waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers.
  - d. Explanation of the purpose of any pre-admission activities (if any) for students or parents.
  - e. Clear policies and procedures for student withdrawals and transfers.

Telra Institute, as a K-5 public charter school, follows the admission requirements specified in the NC General Statute §115C-218.45. Telra offers admission to any child who qualifies for admission to a North Carolina public school without limits on admission on the basis of race, creed, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, athletic ability, disability, intellectual ability, or measures of achievement or aptitude. The school believes that North Carolina children from all

backgrounds should have the opportunity to benefit from the unique environment we will provide.

- a. Open enrollment will begin (tentatively) within a week of receiving final approval from the SBE and continue through 5pm on February 12, 2021. Families will be able to apply online or via a paper application mailed or hand-delivered to the school's temporary office at that time. In subsequent years, Telra will communicate open enrollment dates through our website and marketing efforts.
- b. At the close of open enrollment, staff will determine compare received applications against the offered grades and numbers of classes to determine if any lotteries are needed. The school expects to engage the services of a 3rd party lottery service provider (such as Lotterease) to ensure a fair and transparent process, including posting the date/time of the lottery and results in public (on our website). Such a system will allow Telra to apply a set of pre-defined enrollment preferences, consistent with NCGS §115C-218.45, including:
  - i. Siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to the school in a previous year
  - ii. Siblings of students who have completed the highest grade level offered by the school and who were enrolled in at least four grade levels offered by the school or, if less than four grades are offered, in the maximum number of grades offered by the school.
  - iii. A student who was enrolled in a preschool program operated by the school in the prior year
  - iv. Children of the school's full-time employees and board of directors (limited to 15% of the school's enrollment)
  - v. A student who was enrolled in the school within the two previous school years but left the school because of the vocational opportunities of the student's parent.

Families who secure a spot through the lottery will be able to complete their enrollment form (accepting their spot) online or by paper.

- c. Telra will maintain sequential waitlists based on the lottery results, adding new applications received after the close of open enrollment to the end of the waitlists in the order of their receipt. Should a spot open, Telra will contact the first family on the appropriate waitlist to offer admission.

Families may withdraw or request a transfer from the program at any time for a variety of reasons. Telra will ask parents to complete an exit form requesting information about the reasons for withdrawal. If the response indicates a hardship that the school is required to address (such as transportation or a disability accommodation), the school

will ask to meet with the family to develop an individualized solution. In the event of a transfer, the school will secure the necessary releases from the student's parents before transmitting any educational records to the receiving institution.

Incoming transfers in and re-enrollments are treated similarly, being added to the bottom of the relevant waitlists.

- d. Telra will offer a variety of pre-admission activities for families both before and after the application period and lottery. These will include open houses and curriculum nights to market the school, explain its mission and offering to families, and allow them to learn more about the educational environment. Telra will also offer pre-assessments (required post-admission but may optionally be taken pre-admission) to support the total school cluster grouping model and enable teachers to differentiate the scope and sequence of their instruction accordingly.
- e. Student withdrawals and transfers were addressed in "c" above.

### Weighted Lottery

\*Does your school plan to use a weighted lottery?

Yes. Complete the following section.

No.

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, unless the charter school is operated by a municipality OR the charter school was converted from a traditional public school. Municipal charter schools may give enrollment priority to domiciliaries of the municipality in which the school is located (G.S. 115C-218.45(f)(7)), and charter schools that were converted from traditional public schools shall give admission preference to students who reside within the former attendance area of the school (G.S. 115C-218.45(c)).
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.

Not applicable. Telra Institute is not proposing a weighted lottery.

2. A thorough description of the processes and procedures the applicant intends to use to effectuate the lottery.

Not applicable. Telra Institute is not proposing a weighted lottery.

3. The underlying research, pedagogical, educational, psychometric and legal, that supports the request and the procedures the applicant is requesting.

Not applicable. Telra Institute is not proposing a weighted lottery.

### Certify

This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application. X  Yes  No

Explanation (optional): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

## Section 4 Operations

### 4.1 Transportation Plan

1. Describe in detail the transportation plan that will ensure that no child is denied access to the school due to lack of transportation. Include budgetary assumptions and the impact of transportation on the overall budget. The details of this plan should align with the mission, identified need for the charter school, targeted student population, and the budget proposal.

If you plan to provide transportation, include the following:

- a. Describe the plan for oversight of transportation options (e.g., whether the school will provide its own transportation, contract out for transportation, attempt to contract with a district, or a combination thereof) and who on the staff will provide this daily oversight.
- b. Describe how the school will transport students with special transportation needs and how that will impact your budget.
- c. Describe how the school will ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations related to transportation services.

Telra Institute does not plan to directly offer transportation to students. The school anticipates families using one of the below transportation solutions:

- **Individual parent drop-off and pick-up**
- **Carpool with other families.** The Telra Parents Council will coordinate carpool groupings and assist families in locating an active carpool
- **Charter bus route.** Private bus services, such as Eagle Bus, work with many charter school families in the Charlotte area. The Telra Parents Council will organize a bus roster and routes, enabling individual families to register.

The school believes that, by engaging families early in the transportation planning process (e.g., with a transport survey in the enrollment forms) and developing these options, transportation will not be a barrier for any interested child to enroll at Telra. If, despite these efforts, transportation remains a barrier to access, the staff will work directly with the families affected to develop alternate arrangements. To support these infrequent cases, a budget allocation of \$3k has been made for transportation support.

#### 4.2 School Lunch Plan

1. 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.

If the school intends to participate in the National School Lunch Program, include the following components in the response:

- a. How the school will comply with applicable local, state, and federal guidelines and regulations;
- b. Any plans to meet the needs of low-income students; and
- c. Include how the school intends to collect free- and reduced-price lunch information from qualified families. If a school intends to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision, describe the methodology the school will use to determine eligibility.

Telra does not intend to participate in the National School Lunch Program in the school's early years. Families will have two options for school lunch:

- Bring a bagged lunch from home, or
- Purchase lunch from a school-selected vendor, which will be delivered onsite daily (e.g., using a vendor such as Foodease).

Telra will ensure that students who forget their lunch or who cannot regularly afford lunch are provided a daily meal by the outside food vendor, paid by the school. Telra will operate the lunch program on a revenue-neutral basis, subsidizing any school-provided lunches with a small markup on the cost of the vendor-provided lunches. The parameters of this cross-subsidy program will be re-evaluated monthly to ensure it is sustainable. In later years of school

operation, the staff will consider other options for lunch, including an on-site cafeteria and participation in the National School Lunch Program.

### 4.3 Civil Liability and Insurance

The Nonprofit shall name the SBE as an Additional Named Insured to their liability coverage for operation of a charter school while obtaining and maintaining insurance at a minimum in the following amounts:

- a. Errors and Omissions: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence;
  - b. General Liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence;
  - c. Property Insurance: For owned building and contents, including boiler and machinery coverage, if owned;
  - d. Crime Coverage: no less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to cover employee theft and dishonesty;
  - e. Automobile Liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence; and
  - f. Workers' Compensation: as specified by Chapter 97 of NC General Statute, Workers' Compensation Law.
1. Complete the table below, indicating the amount of each type of coverage as outlined in a quote obtained from an insurance provider.

Area of Proposed Coverage	Proposed Amount of Coverage	Cost (Quote)
Comprehensive General Liability	\$1,000,000.00/occurrence	1,548
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$1,000,000.00/occurrence	4,277
Property Insurance		450
Automobile Liability	\$1,000,000.00/occurrence	181
Crime Coverage Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$250,000.00   \$250,000.00	2,801
Worker's Compensation	\$500,000	6,578
Other Coverage		
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>15,835</b>

#### **\*Attach Appendix L: Insurance Quotes**

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.

### 4.4 Health and Safety Requirements

All public charter schools are required to follow the regulations regarding health and safety as stated in G.S. 115C 218.75.

We, the Board members at **Telra Institute, Inc.** 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.



8/26/19

Board Chair Signature

Date

### Start-Up Plan

1. Provide a detailed start-up plan for the proposed school, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals (including compensation for those individuals, if applicable).

### Recruitment and staffing June 2020 - August 2021

- September 2019 - March 2020: Board development committee identifies additional board candidates; confirmation to board of directors
- March-May 2020: Board Personnel Committee begins CEO search
- June-July 2020: Board hires Chief Executive (compensated role at \$60k/year)
- July 2020: CEO and Board Personnel Committee launch search for Head of Instruction (e.g., K12 Job Spot, NCAPCS conference, Ed Week, personal referrals, recruiter if needed)
- January 2021: Head of Instruction hired by CEO/board (compensated role at \$60k/year)
- February 2021: Head of Instruction launches search for instructional staff; CEO launches search for Director of Operations
- June 2021: Director of Operations hired by CEO/board (compensated role at \$45k/year)
- August 2021: Remaining year 1 staff are hired

### Vendor selection

- September 2019 - January 2020: Board Chair and Treasurer meet with and evaluate “back office” vendors for (a) charter accounting, payroll, and student information services, (b) charter startup consulting & support, and (c) marketing
- February-May 2020: Board Chair and Treasurer build comparison matrix of vendor options, refine Telra budget, and provide recommendations to the Board for tentative approval
- June 2020: CEO secures agreement with key vendors (with board approval)
- November 2020 - December 2021: CEO works with lottery, accounting, payroll, SIMS vendors on system configuration
- January-February 2021: CEO and Head of Instruction evaluate curriculum vendors

### Marketing & enrollment (see 3.6 for full description of each step)

- January-May 2020: Board Publicity committee leads Premarketing
- May-November 2020: CEO takes over lead from Board Publicity to lead Marketing with any engaged vendors
- December 2020 - February 2021: CEO leads Pipeline conversion / initial application
- February-March 2021: CEO leads lottery, selection, and enrollment

### **Facility and financing**

- September 2019 - January 2020: Board members (with real estate agent) scout real estate and build relationships with churches, other schools, landlords to develop short list of candidates
- November 2019 - January 2020: Board chair meets with developers & charter school finance companies to assess facility & finance offerings
- February-May 2020: Board Chair and Treasurer build comparison matrix of facility & finance options, refine Telra budget, and provide recommendations to the Board for tentative approval
- May 2020: Telra Institute receives contingent approval from SBE
- June-July 2020: CEO & Treasurer negotiate and secure board agreement with selected landlord, developers, and/or financing partners.
- August 2020 - June 2021: CEO oversees site prep and install / space renovations / construction
- February-April 2021: CEO & Head of Instruction specify classroom needs (furniture, IT, supplies), identify vendors, place orders after board approval
- June 2021: Director of Operations specifies IT, communications, security infrastructure; places vendor orders after board approval;
- July-August 2021: Director of Operations oversees installation of IT, communications, security infrastructure
- July-August 2021: Director of Operations & CEO oversee inspections & approval from local building inspector, NC Dept. of Insurance, State fire marshal as required.
- August 2021: Telra Institute receives Certificate of Occupancy for Educational use and submits to Dept of Education for RTO.

### **Curriculum, orientation & onboarding**

- January-February 2021: CEO and Head of Instruction develop detailed curriculum, assessment, and instructional plan
- March-April 2021: CEO and Head of Instruction develop orientation materials for families, draft policies, handbooks; board approval
- May-July 2021: CEO and Head of Instruction host orientation events and pre-assessments for enrolled families; organize Parents Council
- July 2021: CEO and Head of Instruction plan onboarding / professional development program, along with selected PD vendor
- August 2021: All instructional staff participate in the onboarding program

2. Describe what the board anticipates will be the challenges of starting a new school and how it expects to address these challenges. Submit a Start-up (Year 0) Budget as Appendix O, if applicable.

- A. Telra may not reach a critical number of students for enrollment.** Though this is a typical challenge for new charters, the market analysis suggests the Telra model fills a high-demand gap. Nonetheless, the school must implement a deep and broad marketing approach (as described in 3.6) to address this challenge.
- B. Telra may not be able to hire enough qualified staff.** We are targeting ~20 staffers in year 1, mostly teachers focused on gifted education, which can limit the pool of qualified candidates. Tapping our connection to the UNC Charlotte School of Education along with Dr. Matthews' network of gifted certificate students and alumni will be critical to meeting this need.
- C. Telra may not be able to find a suitable location.** South Charlotte is experiencing a tight real estate market, but by remaining flexible, creating, and open to partnerships, we are confident Telra can find a viable location (see Section 4.5).
- D. Telra may not have funds for the startup costs.** Telra needs to execute Year 0, including marketing, curriculum development, and facility preparation, before receiving any ADM funds. The board will explore several avenues to address the financial gap, including securing vendor financing, asking senior staff (CEO) to accept salary deferral, loans from charter school finance companies (such as Charter School Capital), board member contributions, and other fundraising. A startup budget is provided in year 0.

#### 4.5 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.

1. 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. Present a timeline with reasonable assumptions for facility selection, requisition, state fire marshal and health inspections, and occupation.

Telra is considering multiple options for a year 1 facility, including

- A. Leasing commercial real estate,
- B. Subleasing classroom space from a church, another private/charter school, or underutilized space from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools,
- C. Leasing vacant land and financing/leasing modular classroom units such as those provided by Vesta Modular or Mobile Modular, or
- D. Partnering to construct and lease a custom facility with a charter school development company such as Schoolhouse Development or Charter School Capital.

The board's plan to obtain a building includes:

- Sept 2019 - Jan 2020: Board members (with real estate agent) scout real estate and build relationships with churches, other schools, landlords, and developers to build short list of facility candidates.

- Feb 2020 - May 2020: Build comparison matrix of options, including short/long-term suitability, risk/time, financial models. Choose primary and secondary option.
- Jun 2020 - Jul 2020: Negotiate and secure agreement (with landlord / developer)
- Aug 2020 - Jun 2021: Site prep & install / Space renovations / Construction
- Jul 2021 - Aug 2021: Inspections & approval from local building inspector, NC Dept. of Insurance, State fire marshal as required. Receive Certificate of Occupancy for Educational use and submit to Dept of Education for RTO.
- Aug 2021: Occupation

2. Describe the school’s facility needs based on the educational program and projected enrollment, including: number of classrooms, square footage per classroom, classroom types, common areas, overall square footage, and amenities. Discuss both short-term and long-term facility plans. Demonstrate that the estimate included in your budget is reasonable.

Telra is budgeting a “minimal facility” for the short term as a conservative scenario. This scenario assumes that specials teachers “push-in” to the 14 homeroom classrooms and do not have space of their own. This scenario includes a small multi-purpose room which can be flexibly used for meetings or indoor recess, when needed. Given the tight real estate market in the area, this assumes a relatively high lease cost for real estate at \$22.75/sqft/year, and implies a facility cost of ~\$400k, as included in the budget.

Longer term, Telra expects each of the 21 teachers to have their own classroom along with a mid-size multi-purpose room / gym. This scenario is still conservatively developed at a \$20/sqft/year lease cost, leading to a facility cost around ~\$500k. This equates to approximately 25% of the Telra budget expended on facilities, which is higher than the board’s goal. The board will explore every option to lower the facility cost to less than 20% of revenue, but believes it prudent to build a conservative budget, given the realities of south Charlotte real estate.

**Short term facilities plan:**

Type	Average area	Number	Total Area
Classroom	1000 sq ft	14	14,000 sq ft
Reception	300 sq ft	1	300 sq ft
Admin offices	150 sq ft	4	600 sq ft
Storage	300 sq ft	1	300 sq ft

Multi purpose room	1,000 sq ft	1	1,000 sq ft
Hallway / Misc	10%	1	2,430 sq ft
<b>Total</b>			<b>~18,000 sq ft</b>

**Long term facilities plan:**

Type	Area	Number of	Total Area
Classroom	1000 sq ft	21	21,000 sq ft
Reception	400 sq ft	1	400 sq ft
Admin offices	150 sq ft	4	600 sq ft
Storage	300 sq ft	1	300 sq ft
Multi-purpose room	2,500 sqft	1	2,500 sq ft
Hallway / Misc	10%	1	2,480 sq ft
<b>Total</b>			<b>~27,000 sq ft</b>

- Describe school facility needs, including: science labs, art room, computer labs, library/media center, performance/dance room, gymnasium and athletic facilities, auditorium, main office and satellite offices, work room/copy room, supplies/storage, teacher work rooms, and other spaces.

The tables in response 2, above, enumerate the primary facility needs. The planned science and art rooms do not require significantly different build-outs, so are grouped with the other classrooms. There are currently no plans for a central library, but individual classrooms are large enough to accommodate a “library corner.” The board hopes to find a location accessible to public green space, so there are no current plans for athletic facilities other than a small playground. The multipurpose room is sufficient for small gatherings, but for school-wide events, the Telra community will make use of auditorium facilities at nearby schools and churches. The multi-purpose room will be divisible into smaller spaces as needed for meetings or assessments. A small reception area will also double as a copy/print center.

4. 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.

Based on the board's research and conversations with area commercial real estate brokers, south Charlotte office space leases range anywhere from \$20-30/sqft/year. The short-term scenario assumes a cost at the lower end of this range at \$22.75/sqft/year, with the long-term goal to find a facility in the \$15-20/sqft/year range.

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

The Telra board has not yet identified a primary facility and remains flexible among the options A-D discussed in response 1. Of these, option C - leasing land and modular units - may be described as a contingency plan. The board has already identified several potentially suitable parcels of vacant land, and this option has the benefit of high flexibility and quick readiness. By design, the school's year 1 program and the short-term facility outline described in the table above can ably be met by a suite of modular units.

6. Describe the board's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.

Facility and construction management is an expertise the Telra board is currently seeking in board development efforts. In the interim, we have engaged a real estate advisory company with over 20 years of experience in commercial real estate.

### Certify

This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.  Yes  No

Explanation (optional): Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 5 Financial Plan

### 5.1 Charter School Budget

All budgets should balance indicating strong budgetary skills. Any negative fund balances will, more than likely, generate additional questions by those evaluating the application. 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.

#### **\*Attach Appendix M: Revenue Assurances**

Assurances are needed to confirm the commitment of any additional sources of revenue.

#### **\*Attach Appendix N: Proposed Budget for Year 1 through Year 5**

Budget template can be located on the Office of Charter Schools Application website.

### 5.2 Budget Narrative

Please include additional information that explains the assumptions used in the 5-year budget.

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

Student enrollment is projected assuming full offered capacity of the school each year, with capacity estimated by the number of teachers/classrooms and a reasonable student:teacher ratio. In year 1, this is 238, or 0.3% of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg LEA K-5 enrollment of 70,100. It is anticipated that 20% of the enrollment will come from Union County due to proximity.

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

Evidence that the demand for the school will meet this enrollment projection includes:

- The results from an online survey conducted in the spring of 2019 showed that 36% of respondents indicated a high likelihood (>90%) of enrolling in a gifted specialty school.
- New home construction gives evidence of neighborhood growth
- Area schools experiencing overcrowding; Providence Spring and Polo Ridge enrollments exceeded their design baselines.
- The demand is confirmed by Kindergarten entry wait lists of 225 for other gifted programs (194 for CMS TD magnets and 31 for MRSA).

#### 3. Provide the break-even point of student enrollment.

In year 1, the budget presented is roughly breakeven at an enrollment of full capacity, 238. By year 3, with the full complement of teachers and a student capacity of 318, breakeven enrollment is around 300.

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

Telra has several contingencies if anticipated revenues are lower than expected. The primary option is to reduce staffing and classrooms - each reduction of one teacher/classroom pair saves the school approximately \$80k/year. Secondary options could include deferring some building maintenance, finding alternate lower-cost software or curricula, reducing classroom area, or obtaining lease forbearance. The school would also pursue additional fundraising channels to benefit from community and parent support in the event of unanticipated shortfalls.

5. 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. Also, describe any committed contributions and in-kind donations of goods or services to be received by the charter school that will assist in evaluating the financial viability of the school. Clearly indicate between those grants or in-kind donations which have already been firmly committed and those the board is planning to pursue. Be sure that the appropriate assurances documentation is provided in the appendices.

The operational budget of the school (year 1 and beyond) does not rely on sources of funds other than state, county, and federal monies. The Telra board is pursuing multiple avenues for startup (year 0) funds, including securing vendor financing, asking senior staff (CEO) to accept salary deferral, loans from charter school finance companies (such as Charter School Capital), board member contributions, and other fundraising. Repayment of startup funds is included as a "loan repayment" line on the operating budget in years 2-5.

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

The student to teacher ratio is:

- i. 16:1 in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- ii. 17:1 in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- iii. 20:1 in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade

7. Describe the board's individual and collective qualifications and capacity for implementing the financial plan successfully.

The board has members with financial, budgeting, and accounting expertise inclusive of members who have worked extensively both in and with schools. Four of the board members, Mr. Tuhin Dutt, Dr. Gregory Denlea, Ms. Judith Malveaux, and Dr. Ronak Bhatt hold MBAs or equivalent financial planning experience in a business environment. Two of them, Mr. Dutt and

Dr. Bhatt, have launched and managed the budgets of entrepreneurial ventures, while Professors Reiter and Matthews have managed budgets within academic departments, research groups, and grants for decades.

- 8. Describe how one or more high needs students with disabilities might affect the budget and your plan to meet student needs that might be more than anticipated.**

The goal of Telra Institute is to teach high needs students together with other students in the same classroom in an inclusive environment. One or more high needs students with disabilities requires that Telra classrooms are designed for flexibility and must be of an adequate square footage to accommodate wheelchair access in between the rows of desks, for example. In order to ensure that budget accommodates high needs students, Telra will design classrooms to conform to the tenets of universal design.

Telra's budget anticipates a full-time exceptional children specialist, supported by additional exceptional children resources are on a consulting basis to be deployed as needed based on particular needs. To ensure that the budget is not adversely affected by high needs students, the Treasurer of the Board of directors will petition for state and federal funds for EC support, when merited.

- 9. If there is a plan to outsource any or all financial management areas such as payroll, benefits, audits, fundraising, accounting, etc., provide a statement on how the vendors will be selected and how the board will oversee their activities to ensure fidelity and compliance.**

The board plans to outsource some back-office functions including accounting, payroll, and student information management. The CEO and Treasurer will meet with and vet potential vendors in a process that will include interviews with other clients. They will prepare a comparison matrix and recommendation for the board, which will deliberate and approve a vendor or vendors for these functions.

Staff will, with the vendor's assistance, create a checklist of all compliance issues that are guaranteed by the service provider. The CEO and senior staff will be responsible for closely monitoring the reports provided by the vendor and requesting any additional information sought by the board. The board will review these materials on a monthly basis against the compliance checklist and any internal records to ensure compliance and fidelity.

- 10. 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.**

As described above, the school anticipates contracting for student accounting, information, and some financial services. Exceptional children contractors will be utilized as needed to supplement Telra's full-time specialist.

In general, the CEO and staff will be responsible for identifying and evaluating potential contracted service providers. For expenditures below a certain threshold (the Board Finance Committee will recommend, and the Board will approve a formal Delegation of Authority matrix), staff will be afforded discretion to contract with the vendor directly. For services which exceed these thresholds, the CEO must consider multiple options and present a comparison matrix to the Board for a decision. Criteria in the matrix will include the cost & value of each option, risks (including compliance risks) associated with each option, evidence of the service provider's capability, and a record of any prior work with Telra. The matrix will also include the options of doing nothing, or of executing the service with in-house staff, for comparison.

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

The budget has been prudently developed to support the core elements of Telra's mission, with investments in gifted-focused instructional staff, their professional development, small class sizes in an uncramped classroom facilities, and advanced curriculum materials - all located in an (unfortunately) high-cost area because it is the location of greatest need.

**12. What percentage of expenditures will be the school's goal for a general fund balance? Describe how the school will develop the fund balance.**

Telra wishes to build a balance of ~25% of annual expenditures. This allows for a comfortable 3 month working capital cushion in case of any revenue delays or emergency expenses. Surpluses in the submitted budget indicate Telra will reach this target in year 5 of operation.

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

Telra's submitted budget assumes 3-5 year term leases for facilities, copiers, computer hardware, and classroom furniture. Various lease terms as well as alternate vendor and bank financing arrangements will be considered and will be influenced by the type of facility the organization selects and the realization of enrollment forecasts.

**14. 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.

Telra does not have any committed assets from other sources.

### 5.3 Financial Compliance

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

Telra's board of directors will document efficient and effective internal control processes designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives for reliability of financial reporting. The control processes will define the discipline and culture of the school (control environment) using an organizational structure, job descriptions, and a policy manual. The process will identify and analyze relevant risks to the accurate preparation of the financial statements. Monitoring will be affected by the board of directors as the board will approve all accounting system procedures and approve the public distribution of financial reports and information. The school's budget will be compared to the actual revenue and expenses on a monthly basis. Telra's board will define procedures for any amendments made to the budget during the year. Annually the budget will be adopted by the board and the detail of the budget will enable comparison to actual transactions. The budget will clearly define achievable goals as defined in Telra's charter.

Process for accurate and adequate recording keeping

- i. Telra will perform functions in full Compliance with Uniform Education Reporting System (UERS) Policies and Procedures.
- ii. Telra's accounting records will properly and accurately account for all cash transactions.
- iii. Telra's accounting policies will demonstrate compliance with state and federal laws, regulations, and other compliance requirements for the NC Department of Education.
- iv. The board of directors will develop and maintain a policy documenting the internal controls at Telra on business practices and operations.
- v. Telra's accounts payable will be current at all times.
- vi. All of Telra's transactions will be executed in compliance with laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts that could have a direct effect on state and federal funds.
- vii. All of Telra's funds, property and other assets will be safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition.
- viii. Required audits will be performed and submitted when due.
- ix. Telra will have documentation that supports its financial statement and reflects its financial position, results of operation, and changes in new assets and cash flows for all fiscal periods.
- x. Positive financial cash flow will be maintained at all times as required by GAAP.
- xi. All corrective actions from audit findings will be affected at Telra.

- xii. Telra will adhere to all processes as defined in the NCDPI Financial Guide for Charter Schools

Process for safeguarding of assets:

- i. Access to assets like cash will be limited and controlled upon receipt of payments.
- ii. A non-accounting staff member will receive the mail, open it and list all checks on a Daily Collection Report or in a pre-numbered receipt book.
- iii. The receipt book will identify the date, name of organization or person submitting payment, amount of payment and description of what the payment is for.
- iv. The accounting staff will receive the checks and Daily Collection Report or receipt book from the person opening the mail.
- v. Deposits to Telra's banking account will be made daily by someone other than the person who prepared the deposit.
- vi. All deposits will be made in institutions authorized by the board of directors
- vii. All funds deposited will be insured by the FDIC
- viii. All bank statements will be reconciled promptly upon receipt by a staff member independent of the cash receipts and disbursement functions.
- ix. Statements will be delivered unopened to this staff member. In performing the reconciliation, the staff member should check for the following:
  - o Compare dates and amounts of daily deposits as shown on the bank statements with the cash receipt journal.
  - o Investigate bank transfers to see that both sides of the transaction have been recorded in the unit's financial records
  - o Account for all check numbers, including voided checks.
  - o Examine canceled checks for authorized signatures, irregular endorsements and alterations
  - o Look for checks payable to cash. Investigate these items.
  - o Bank reconciliation procedures should always include comparing the reconciled balance to the balance per the general ledger for accuracy.
- x. Specific state language will be used for every contract or lease into which Telra enters.

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

No related party transactions are anticipated at this time

- 3. Provide the name of the firm approved by the NC Local Government Commission (LGC) that will conduct the audit. Include the complete mailing address, telephone number and fax number. If a firm has yet to be identified, please list the firms the board has investigated.

Telra Institute has not yet contracted with an audit firm. Firms under consideration include (a) Belinda Johnson CPA PA, 3515 Monroe Rd Charlotte, NC 28205, p:704-333-2733, f:704-333-

2742; (b) Potter and Company, 434 Copperfield Blvd, NE, concord, NC 28205, p:704-786-8189, f:704-786-4447; (c) Rives & Associates, LLP, 1023 West Morehead St, Suite 100, charlotte, NC 28208, p:704-372-0960.

### Certify

This subsection is entirely original and has not been copied, pasted, or otherwise reproduced from any other application.  Yes  No

Explanation (optional): Click or tap here to enter text.

## Application Fee

Pursuant to G.S. 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 **July 29, 2019 at 5:00 pm EST** for Fast Track and Accelerated applications, and **August 26, 2019 at 5:00 pm EST** for traditional timeline applications. 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 the Application Fee Payment Form before or on the due date of July 29, 2019 at 5:00 pm EST for Fast Track and Accelerated applicants, and August 26, 2019 at 5:00 pm EST for traditional timeline applicants.** 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

6307 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-6307

## Signature Page

The foregoing application is submitted on behalf of Telra Institute. 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 "Planning Year for New and Preliminary Charter Schools – CHTR 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:   Ronak Bhatt  

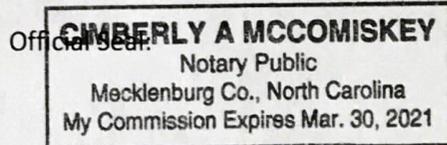
Board Position:   Chairperson  

Signature:   *Ronak Bhatt*  

Date:   8/26/19  

Sworn to and subscribed before me this   26<sup>th</sup>   day of   August  , 20  19  .

Notary Public:   *Camberly A. McComiskey*  



My commission expires:   March 30  , 20  21  .