



### Application Preliminary Evaluation Packet

For each section, please rate the response then explain your rating by specifying strengths and weaknesses in the space provided. Where applicable, you should elaborate on concerns by specifying additional information you would request or follow-up questions that you have.

- § Pass: The response demonstrates an understanding of key issues and the ability to start a charter school successfully although minimal clarification may be needed in places. It addresses the topic with clear, specific and accurate information that reflects thorough preparation. The application meets minimum components as evidenced by the check boxes of the rubric.
- § Fail: The response either fails to entirely address the selection criteria or addresses some of the criteria. The responses lack adequate detail and/or raise substantial concerns about the applicant's preparation for and ability to start or operate a charter school successfully. The application fails to address all of the minimum components as evidenced by the check boxes of the rubric.

#### Subcommittee Members:

Cheryl Turner  
Joe Maimone  
Carol Ann Hudgens  
Kathryn Mullen Upton  
Becky Taylor  
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Mike McLaughlin  
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Sherry Reeves  
Kristen Vandawalker  
Tammi Sutton  
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Alan Hawkes  
Steven Walker  
Phyllis Gibbs

#### Date of Review:

Peak Charter Academy - Our school develops students into critical thinkers, active collaborators, and eager contributors to their learning, thereby imparting students with the skills to excel in college, careers, and life.

10/23/2014



## NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

# Peak Charter Academy

**Public charter schools opening the fall of 2016**

**Due by 5:00 pm, September 26, 2014**

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

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

**CHARTER SCHOOL**  
**2014 Application Process**  
**To open a charter school in the 2016-2017 school year**

**APPLICATION DUE DATE/TIME**

**September 26, 2014** A complete *online* application package, in the Office of Charter Schools **by 5:00 pm EST.**

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

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

**APPLICATION SPECIFICATIONS**

Applicants can submit applications prior to the deadline September 26, 2014 at 5:00 pm EST. **All applications must be submitted using the online portal** and applicants are to use the following specifications:

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

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## **I. APPLICATION CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name of proposed charter school: *Peak Charter Academy*

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

Name of non-profit organization under which charter will be organized or operated: *Peak Charter Academy, Inc.*

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

Name of contact person: *Melissa Caira*

Title/Relationship to nonprofit: *Lead Applicant*

Mailing address:   225 Candia Lane  
                          Cary NC 27519

Primary telephone: 919-612-3164       Alternative telephone: 919-612-3164

E-Mail address: *melbc@nc.rr.com*

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

County: *WAKE*

LEA: *920-Wake County Schools*

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

No:

Yes:

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

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

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

This application embodies the plan for a public charter school that our founding team and initial Board of Peak Charter Academy (Peak)- profiled in

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Section IV of the application - want to establish near our homes in the booming area of Western Wake County, namely Cary and Apex.

We are partnering with National Heritage Academies (NHA), a management company that has helped start and now operates 80 charter schools in nine different states. The school model offered by NHA is just the kind of school we want, and as such we worked closely with NHA to draft this application. The sections of this application describing the school model and school operations, while reviewed and revised by us as needed, were drafted by NHA and accurately portray the school design, educational programs, and operational structure that will be in place at Peak Charter Academy. These portions of the application include: descriptions of our planned distributed leadership model; NHA's "2020 Plan"; our character education program; the foundational pillars of the educational model; performance of and financial data of NHA-partner schools across the country and in North Carolina; reports and other information provided by the school operator to the Board; the school's overall education plan, including curriculum (Section III), including programs for special student populations; the school's formative assessment program; our discipline policies and student code of conduct; Board training programs; parent and staff grievance procedures; details related to the Services Agreement with NHA; staffing plans and processes; professional development programs; school calendar; enrollment, marketing, and outreach efforts; student admissions procedures; and, transportation and food service plans.

The mission statement and its endemic relationship to our proposed school operations and policies clearly show our founding Board's imprint. Other sections were developed collaboratively with NHA, including: the school's academic goals; our budget and other financial considerations; the school calendar; and, sections related to the development of a school facility.

The Board also has received assistance from our outside legal counsel on certain components of this effort, such as the Services Agreement, governance activities, and school policies, that has influenced our input on various sections of this application. Once our school is approved, NHA will develop a school facility for us and become our partner in the day-to-day operation of Peak Charter Academy.

Attribution: Board

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

No:

Yes:

*Submit the following evidences (Appendix A) to support the conversion of the traditional public to a charter school:*

- Statement of Support signed by the majority of the teachers and instructional support personnel currently employed at the school*
- List of current staff receiving compensation from the traditional public school*
- Current school enrollment*
- Parent support of the conversion*

*Outline the 3 year financial history of the proposed converted charter school in the chart below and attach the past 3 year tax returns.*

<i>Financial History YR2011</i>	<i>Financial History YR2012</i>	<i>Financial History YR2013</i>
---------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------

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

No:

Yes:

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

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

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

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

*Projected School Opening: Year* 2016 *Month* August

*Will this school operate on a year round schedule?*

No:

Yes:

*Proposed Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment (*

*5*

*Years)*

<b>Academic School Year</b>	<b>Grade Levels</b>	<b>Total Projected Student Enrollment</b>
First Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06	573
Second Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07	685
Third Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	797
Fourth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	853
Fifth Year	K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08	909

*The State Board of Education provides funds to charter schools, approves the original members of the boards of directors of the charter schools, has the authority to grant, supervise, and revoke charters, and demands full accountability from charter schools for school finances and student performance.*

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

melissacair1  
Inc.

*Signature*

Melissa Caira, Peak Charter Academy,

*Title*

melissacair1

*Printed Name*

09/25/2014

*Date*

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<b>Section I: Application Contact Information Concerns and Additional Questions</b>	<b><u>Reviewer</u></b>	<b><u>Page Reference</u></b>
<u>Forty percent (or about 120) of 300 survey respondents indicated that they would enroll (Appendix A1). While Appendix A shows that schools in the area are overcrowded, 120 out of 573 is low. Question for interview: how is the board sure that it can meet the 573 number? What targeted strategies will be used?</u>	<u>Kathryn Mullen Upton</u>	<u>Grade Levels</u>

<b><u>Reviewer</u></b>	<b><u>Score</u></b>
<u>Cheryl Turner</u>	
<u>Joe Maimone</u>	
<u>Carol Ann Hudgens</u>	
<u>Kathryn Mullen Upton</u>	<u>Pass</u>
<u>Becky Taylor</u>	
<u>Eric Sanchez</u>	
<u>Helen Nance</u>	
<u>Mike McLaughlin</u>	
<u>Alex Quigley</u>	
<u>Sherry Reeves</u>	
<u>Kristen Vandawalker</u>	
<u>Tammi Sutton</u>	
<u>Lisa Swinson</u>	<u>Pass</u>
<u>Alan Hawkes</u>	
<u>Steven Walker</u>	
<u>Phyllis Gibbs</u>	

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## **II. MISSION and PURPOSES**

(No more than three total pages in this section)

### **Mission:**

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

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

Our school develops students into critical thinkers, active collaborators, and eager contributors to their learning, thereby imparting students with the skills to excel in college, careers, and life.

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

Peak Charter Academy will offer a rigorous academic program that stimulates students to think critically and to master content in core subjects through instructional methods targeting each students learning level and style. Our character education program will help students become models of responsibility and accountability who maintain high expectations for academic and behavioral progress. These elements are woven together to prepare for success in college and in life.

Attribution: Board

### **Educational need and Targeted Student Population of the Proposed Charter School:**

- 1. Provide a description of Targeted Population in terms of demographics. In your description, include how this population will reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the school system in which it is located. Describe the rationale for selecting the location and student body.*

We propose to create Peak Charter Academy, a public charter school that will start as a K-6 school and grow to serve students in grades K-8 by the end of our first charter term. We will partner with National Heritage Academies (NHA), a successful full-service education management organization, to operate our school. Although an exact location for our school has not been identified, we intend to serve Western Wake County, near Cary and Apex. In our overcrowded area, NHA will supply a new school building - new construction or a fully renovated space - for our full K-8 education program and with no public funds.

Rationale for Location: Schools in the Cary/Apex area are very overcrowded, and it is getting worse. Last year, the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) Board "capped" 20 schools - many in the Cary area - cautioning new residents that their children would not be guaranteed a seat in a neighborhood school. Existing schools in our area have resorted to using temporary classrooms: five elementary schools are serving one-third of their students in temporary classrooms, and another three do so for more than 20 percent of students. Families selling their homes are having difficulty

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because new families won't buy without certainty of their neighborhood school assignment. We know friends who have purchased homes based in large part on the school their children would attend, only to find out days later that the school assignment has changed.

The frequent redrawing of attendance lines in an attempt to address this overcrowding is frustrating parents, too, and there is almost no other public school choice: there is only one charter school in Cary, Cardinal Charter Academy, which opened this fall with a waiting list of around 1,200 students. To accommodate the booming population in our area, the district is moving many schools to "multi-track" calendars, or year-round schools, while the desired traditional calendars are sparsely available. Members of our Board, our friends, and our neighbors have all been affected by the school system's capacity issues. We have friends who have never moved and their children have been in three or more elementary schools - some of which are twenty or thirty minutes from their homes.

Cary is the largest town in the state, the second-largest municipality in Wake County (seventh-largest in the state), and the fifth-fastest growing municipality in the country. Population growth between the 2000 and 2010 censuses was more than 30 percent (with an additional 12 percent growth projected through 2013), and the population of children in the county grew by even more than that. The growth in families in the Cary area is projected to be more than 12 percent over the next five years.

Targeted Population: The demographic composition of students in WCPSS is: 51 percent White, 31 percent Black, 12 percent Hispanic, and 6.4 percent Other Ethnicities. More than one-third (35 percent) participate in the free and reduced-priced lunch program, 14 percent are students with special needs, and nine percent are English Language Learners. The Town of Cary, for example, is a little less diverse: about 69 percent White and 31 percent non-White. Yet, for planning purposes, our school will be prepared to serve a student body that represents the average demographic and socioeconomic composition of WCPSS, as we will reach out to the broad community.

An August 2014 survey of parents in our area with at least one child in grades K-6 found that more than one-third (38 percent) would be likely or very likely to send their child to a new charter school such as Peak, and two-thirds (65 percent) asked to be contacted with further information about the school. We are happy with these survey results, as we understand from our management partner, NHA, that similar survey results were received for their recent partner school opening - Wake Forest Charter Academy - which generated over 1,600 K-5 applications.

Attribution: Board

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

Peak Charter Academy will serve students in kindergarten through 8th grade. We will begin our first year serving approximately 573 students in grades K-6, and grow by one grade level for the next two years to serve approximately 909 students in grades K-8 in 2020-21. Our partnership with NHA allows us to

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have a fully-staffed administrative team in place from day one, as well as a completed facility that will accommodate our full K-8 program even though we are starting out serving fewer grades and students. We believe that this grow-to-full-capacity approach allows our school to better focus on having the right programs and procedures from the start, and more easily allows the school to adapt and incorporate any needed changes in its early operating years.

Although there are 16 charter schools in Wake County, the size and explosive population growth of our area remains ideal as a place to locate new charter schools. Only one charter school exists in the Town of Cary, which opened this fall. From the WCPSS's website: "WCPSS is currently the largest school district in North Carolina and the 16th largest in the United States...The student population has almost tripled since 1980, and about 40,000 additional students are projected by year 2022." Nearly 4,000 new students enrolled in our district schools last year alone.

We expect that 90 percent of our students will come from families living in the WCPSS LEA, while approximately five percent of students will come from each of Durham County LEA and Chatham County LEA, which border the Towns of Cary and Apex. We have built our budget and expected student population profile with these assumptions but will, of course, adjust these figures as necessary as we actually enroll students.

For the 2013-14 school year, WCPSS enrolled more than 105,800 K-8 students. Projecting that 90 percent of the total enrollment for Peak Charter Academy will come from families with students currently attending WCPSS schools, that portion of our enrollment would represent less than one percent (0.68 percent) of the LEA's total K-8 enrollment.

For the 2013-14 school year, Durham Public Schools enrolled 23,400 K-8 students and Chatham County Schools enrolled approximately 5,900. If Peak draws five percent of its total student enrollment from each of these neighboring LEAs as projected, it would represent 0.2 percent of the total K-8 enrollment in Durham LEA and 0.8 percent of the total K-8 enrollment in Chatham LEA.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Peak will be established in the NHA-partner school model. This model - which exists at 80 schools in nine states, including seven in North Carolina - offers characteristics that differ from traditional schools in the Cary/Apex area.

K-8 Structure: We will be a K-8 school. Of the 19 district elementary and middle schools in the Cary/Apex area, none are structured as K-8 schools. We believe that the less transition and greater stability offered by a K-8 experience will enhance student development and better prepare students to face the academic, social, and emotional challenges of high school. Further, given the constant shifting of attendance zones, we know parents in our area crave an option that could allow their children to stay in one school for nine years - a school where they could likely enroll their other children as well.

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**Character Education:** We believe that we should strive to develop not only excellent students, but responsible individuals. To that end, our educational program will include a fully integrated character development curriculum that builds on such virtues as prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Lessons will be geared to build strong personal character and develop the qualities needed to become good citizens. Our students will be taught that their best effort is vital to academic success, and teachers will ensure that students understand what is expected of them and take pride in the results of their work.

**Distributed Leadership:** We are excited to enact the NHA-partner school model's administrative structure, which features distributed leadership. Academic deans will be responsible for a team of grade-level instructional staff (e.g., K-1; 2-3; 4-6; 7-8), and will serve as the direct managers for teachers by providing frequent and ongoing coaching and support, including classroom observations and weekly de-briefing and coaching sessions. This comprehensive hands-on oversight and development of teachers will be a priority in our school.

**The NHA 2020 Plan:** NHA-partner schools offer a comprehensive educational program designed around five essential strategies with a fundamental goal: By 2020, 90 percent of students who have been at an NHA-partner school for three or more years will be proficient in reading and math. Building upon a previous framework of six proven educational practices called the "Simple Rules," the NHA 2020 Plan's goals for exemplary implementation of the essential strategies are as follows:

- Engage Students. The classroom is a positive, motivated, and self-managing student learning community.
- Plan Effectively. Instruction demonstrates an understanding of learning objectives and a coherent instructional plan through an effective use of curricular tools and content knowledge.
- Deliver Rigorous Instruction. Instructional delivery facilitates strong student engagement, purpose-driven learning and the problem-based application of knowledge.
- Use Common Formative Assessments. Teachers demonstrate an accurate, ongoing, and actionable knowledge of student learning needs through the proper interpretation of results of regular formative assessment.
- Provide Individualized Instruction. Teachers provide differentiated instruction and data-driven intervention to meet the learning needs of each student.

The 2020 Plan is supported by a comprehensive framework of professional practices:

- Grade-level deans focus on and lead efforts to continuously improve how we teach children.
- A systematic intervention strategy is effectively implemented.
- Meaningful parent partnerships are formed.
- Collaborative efforts for school improvement are promoted regularly.
- A professional culture of excellence is established.

Our school culture will be characterized by high expectations for academic progress and proper behavior. Our school also will exhibit a commitment to fostering strong partnerships with parents, actively engaging them in their children's learning.

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Attribution: Board and NHA

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

**Purposes of the Proposed Charter School:** *In one page or less, describe how the proposed charter school will achieve one or more of the six legislated purposes, as specifically addressed in the NC charter school statute GS 115C-238.29A, and the proposed school's operations.*

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

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

We will use our Board's mission and the NHA model to bring to life the purposes of charter schools at Peak.

1. **Professional Opportunities for Teachers.** We recognize that we can help students learn by helping teachers grow. For this reason, our educational program includes a robust and purposeful professional development program. This program coaches teachers throughout the instructional phases of their career. It also establishes a formal career path so stellar teachers can become teacher leaders, mentors, and then supervisory deans overseeing and coaching teams of multiple grade-level staff. Outstanding deans are coached and developed to become principals if they choose. NHA also conducts a "School Leadership Academy" to provide ongoing support to potential and new school leaders throughout the year. The "Staff Evaluation and Professional Development" section of this application details the professional development opportunities that will be offered to teachers at our school.

2. **Accountability for Results.** In the same way that we hold students accountable for what they learn, we hold teachers, administrators, and ourselves accountable for results. Our school will implement all required state assessments and will embrace North Carolina's READY Accountability Model. Additionally, our school will institute a comprehensive formative assessment program that evaluates individual, class-wide, and school-wide student academic performance. Evaluations at the beginning of each year will provide a baseline, evaluations in the middle of the year will gather important and detailed data that will be used to drive and revise instructional practices; evaluations at the end of the year will measure

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annual growth. Accountability for performance will also extend to other areas of the school's operations, such as attendance rates, fiscal stability, and parental satisfaction. We will also create an annual school improvement plan that combines all data for our school and presents a plan of action for the following school year.

Our goal is to offer area families a public school choice that is not just different, but better.

3. Expanded School Choice. WCPSS recently capped enrollment at numerous area schools, and many of our friends and family are unable to enroll their children at schools near where they live. Further, a recent survey of families in our area showed that only about one-third (37 percent) felt their child was being given a "great" education, and two-thirds (65 percent) said they wanted to be contacted if our proposed charter school was approved to open in the Cary area. We will offer parents and students in our community the public school choice they desire, and the additional capacity our community needs.

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

- In 2013-14, schools partnering with NHA ranked in the top 10 percent of the nation's public schools based on the percentage of students who met or exceeded typical academic growth.

- The rate of academic growth for students entering NHA-partner schools below grade level was 150 percent for the 2013-14 school year, compared to the national average of 100 percent and up from 133 percent the previous year. This means that students below grade level at NHA-partner schools are progressing academically faster than expected and are rapidly closing achievement gaps.

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

- For the 2012-13 school year, state test results show that NHA-partner schools outperform their local school district three-fourths of the time; that rate is even higher in schools in urban areas.

5. Increased Learning Opportunities for Students. A fundamental purpose of charter schools is to search out new approaches to effective teaching and learning. For this reason, we embrace innovation and change to enhance our ability to meet the needs of our students. Following the NHA-partner school model, Peak Charter Academy will create a learning environment supported by fundamental principles of excellence (see details on NHA's "2020 Plan" later in this application). With NHA, we are committed to meeting the needs of students who are at-risk academically and will ensure that the needs of these students are addressed systematically. Our school model has a robust formative assessment program that helps quickly identify students who need extra attention, as well as those who are surpassing grade-level standards - all of whom deserve differentiated instruction. Our school model is designed with such adaptability in mind.

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6. Innovative Teaching Methods. Innovation in instruction can uncover new ways to help students learn. Our school's multiple layers and styles of professional development for teachers (detailed elsewhere in this application) are designed not just to support instructors during their time in the classroom, but to prepare them for expanded responsibility and leadership positions. Purposefully scheduled peer-group planning time and structured learning opportunities will also exist to encourage innovation. Professional learning communities will allow the sharing of ideas and best practices, and for brainstorming creative approaches to the unique challenges teachers face.

We believe that the structure and programs proposed here fulfill the legislative purposes for charter schools. We will meet each purpose through four foundational pillars of our educational model, which characterize NHA-partner schools:

**Parental Partnerships:** Peak Charter Academy is committed to fostering strong partnerships with parents. Our school will actively engage parents in their children's learning and consistently communicate with parents. An example is the parent room specifically for ongoing "anytime" interaction between parents and teachers. Given the current status of "capped" schools in our area, we believe that parents are longing for a school that meets their needs and views them as essential partners in the educational endeavor.

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

**Academic Excellence:** A high-quality K-8 education sets the critical foundation for a student's success in high school, college, and beyond. Achievement may look different for each individual, but our goal is to prepare every student for college. We believe this starts by creating a culture focused on high care and high expectations for each student each day. The curriculum, when coupled with our culture and excellent teaching, is designed to meet or exceed the learning standards and ensure that our students master the specific skills and knowledge at each grade level.

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

Attribution: NHA

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

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

Goals: Our Board is committed to measuring student progress and achieving

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

- Early Literacy: In both kindergarten and first grade, students will score at or above the 65th percentile in reading and math as measured by beginning-of-year to end of-year learning growth on a nationally-normed standardized assessment.

- Comparative Success: By the third year, students at Peak Charter Academy will exceed the average performance of comparable local district students on state assessments, and by the end of the first charter term, this outperformance will be by at least 5 percent.

- Postsecondary Readiness: Eighth-grade students in at least their third year at the school will successfully complete Math I (formerly Algebra I) and as a cohort will earn at least a 75 percent passing rate on the Math I end-of-course exam.

- State Accountability: Each year, the mean normal curve equivalent gain on the Education Value-Added Assessment System for the school will be, at a minimum, "Meets Expected Growth". By the end of our first charter term, our school will "Exceed Expected Growth" targets established by the state.

Our goals are minimum standards - we will always seek to do better.

We also will administer a national assessment of college readiness to every 8th-grade student and will use the results to develop a plan for each student's success in high school and college. As noted in the "Purposes" section above, NHA-partner schools have a track record of success ensuring that students are high school-ready and college-ready.

Among the reasons we chose to partner with NHA was its willingness to accept and help achieve operational goals at its partner schools, too. These include:

- Each year, our school will average a student attendance rate at or above 93 percent.

- Each year, our school will have an overall parent satisfaction rate of 80 percent, with at least 50 percent of parents responding to the survey.

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

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

Communication to Board and Others: Our Board will receive status reports on progress toward these goals at each monthly meeting, with detailed data provided on components of each goal, such as the performance of student

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population subgroups (exceptional children; English Language Learners (ELL); newly enrolled students; etc.). Parents and students, too, will be informed of the school's progress toward its goals through periodic informational newsletters and special bulletins.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

We will know if Peak is attaining our mission statement based on three key metrics:

- Are all students learning on a path to attain our mission and meet charter goals and are parents active participants in learning?
- Are funds being spent appropriately?
- Is our school in compliance with all state and federal requirements?

We want to bring students in our area the educational model that prepares them with the skills to be successful in college, their chosen careers, and life. An early indicator that this model is working will be enrollment our first year, where we desire to serve as many families as possible. Once the school is operational, we will require monthly reports to demonstrate the progress we are making toward our mission and our charter goals.

School leaders and NHA will provide us with reports that detail benchmarks met, document trends toward the achievement of overarching and mission-specific goals, and discuss potential challenges in meeting each performance objective and ideas on how to address those challenges. We will also annually report to our parents and the community our school's status under the North Carolina and federal accountability systems.

These reports also will include operational information related to school and student performance, including information on student count numbers, attrition percentages, student attendance, student discipline, statistics on our at-risk population, performance of exceptional children, and more. School leaders, with NHA as appropriate, will provide us with the information needed to assess all aspects of the school's performance, including:

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

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

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employee and staff grievances or concerns. Our Board will be continually apprised on how the school is operating, how staff is delivering the educational program, and how students are performing. There should never be a situation in which testing results surprise school leaders or the Board. Should our school be lacking in any area, our Board and operational partner are committed to bringing the necessary resources to bear to address the area of need. We will also annually contract for an independent review of NHA's performance to ensure that we are meeting all performance requirements in our charter and that we are satisfied with NHA's commitment to our school.

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

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<b>Section II: Mission and Purposes Concerns and Additional Questions</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Page Reference</b>
Application state that there is only one other charter in the area. There is another charter school, Triangle Math and Science Academy, located in Cary.	Lisa Swinson	Mission Stat
The applicant provided demographic information for the area but did not discuss the population that they would be targeting. Without this description, there is not a clear picture of a need for the school.	Lisa Swinson	Educational
The goals for the this area of are low.	Lisa Swinson	Goals for th
Outperforming the local district (especially if the local district is a low performer) by 5 percent is not a rigorous goal after five years. Question for interview: how was this goal developed?  Similarly, the ongoing 65 percent goal for early literacy goal seems low if that is an annual metric. Question for interview: how was this goal developed? Should the goal in year 1 be the same as the goal in year 5?	Kathryn Mullen Upton	Goals for th

<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Score</b>
Cheryl Turner	
Joe Maimone	
Carol Ann Hudgens	
Kathryn Mullen Upton	Pass
Becky Taylor	
Eric Sanchez	
Helen Nance	
Mike McLaughlin	
Alex Quigley	
Sherry Reeves	
Kristen Vandawalker	Fail
Tammi Sutton	
Lisa Swinson	Pass
Alan Hawkes	
Steven Walker	
Phyllis Gibbs	

### III. EDUCATION PLAN

(No more than ten total pages in this section)

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

#### **Instructional Program:**

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

Peak will serve our students with the NHA instructional program built on four foundational pillars: academic excellence, student responsibility, character development, and parental partnerships (see "Purposes" above).

**Instructional Methods:** Teachers will use various instructional methods to promote engagement, describe instructional intent explicitly, and implement appropriate rigor for the age-range of our students. Focused lessons will include direct instruction, modeling, demonstration, development of higher-order thinking strategies, and think-alouds, among other methods, and they will be conducted in whole-group or small-group settings as student needs dictate. Guided instruction may be done with large, small, and needs-based groups during content-area learning blocks or workshop time to allow for differentiation of instruction. At times, collaborative learning will be used to provide opportunities for students to learn from peers, to discuss or debate ideas and information, or to participate in inquiry-based learning of curricular content. Finally, independent work will be assigned to provide students time to practice applying skills or knowledge that has been previously learned, to extend individual learning to novel situations, or to promote the development of higher-order thinking skills.

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

**Assessment Strategies:** Peak will administer all state-required assessments and other required measurements of academic progress and proficiency. We also will have a robust and purposeful formative assessment process embedded into our instructional approach. For example, multiple times each year, the school will administer a nationally normed exam, such as the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) assessment. This approach will: provide internal diagnostic measures of student learning from an annual baseline; measure individual student progress over time; and, provide us with a national peer-group comparison point. We also will measure students' readiness for postsecondary success by administering a college-

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readiness assessment, such as the ACT Explore exam, to all 8th-grade students. We will use those results with students and their families in a manner that empowers students to go on to a challenging college-preparatory high school.

Meeting Student Needs: We plan to implement the successful NHA-partner school K-8 program - such as the one in place in this state at Greensboro, Summerfield, Wake Forest, Mint Hill, as well as elsewhere across the country - a model that delivers high-value educational outcomes for students and parents across a demographic and socioeconomic spectrum. Successful NHA-partner schools have shown greater-than-average proficiency growth, growth of economically disadvantaged (ED) students that has outpaced that of non-ED students in every measured category, and greater growth the more years a student spends at an NHA-partner school. Please see Appendix U for more detail on student performance at other NHA-partner schools.

The instructional methods and assessment strategies described above will be designed to help our teachers challenge each student at his or her level, whether below, at, or above grade-level proficiency. As such, we believe our school design will be successful for students and families in our area.

Attribution: NHA

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

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

Learning Environment and Structure: As is common in the NHA-partner school model, each classroom will be structured primarily as a direct-instruction model, led by one instructional leader. Each classroom teacher will be effectively trained and frequently coached to employ a variety of instructional approaches (including modeling, think-alouds, etc.), and to use differentiated instruction as appropriate. Small-group settings also will be created when they best benefit the delivery of the lesson at hand. Teachers will establish opportunities for collaborative and inquiry-based learning to deepen students' understanding of various topics. As noted in "Instructional Program" above, independent work also will be assigned as practice for applying previously learned concepts and to promote the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Our curriculum and instructional design is age appropriate, as it has been specifically designed by our management partner NHA to meet the needs of students in kindergarten through the eighth grade. NHA operates exclusively K-8 schools and has honed its program to serve the diverse needs of all students in those specific grade levels. Our classroom instruction also will feature support for students both above and below grade level, which may take place in small groups with additional staff support.

We will structure our instruction through intentional planning. Instruction at the school will be driven by a collaborative planning approach that includes the implementation of a formative assessment program, which in turn offers frequent and varying measures of progress to help determine the best approaches to teaching and learning. Planning will be characterized by three

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sequential but interrelated steps: year-long planning, unit planning, and daily planning.

**Year-long Planning:** Year-long planning organizes the grade-level curriculum into a long-range framework. Teachers' year-long plans are used to ensure that students have the time and opportunity to learn what is necessary to meet all grade-level standards. Our academic deans help ensure that this planning process is consistent across grade-level teams, and throughout the school, so that no significant content gaps exist.

**Unit Planning:** Unit-level planning grows out of the year-long planning process, and results in specific units of instruction that are based on the scope and sequence of the educational objectives outlined in the year-long plan. Unit planning will be designed to align with the implementation of the school's formative assessment process, and the unit plans will allow adjustments to instruction to be made based on the student-elicited data generated by these assessments. Students also will use the assessment results to track their learning and measure growth toward their academic goals using graphing or another form of record keeping.

**Daily Planning:** Once unit-level plans are developed, daily instructional planning allows teachers to connect standards with specific instructional resources, effective teaching strategies, and the instructional methods that best support students' daily learning.

**Class Size:** We will have five kindergarten classes with approximately 25 students in each class. In grades one to eight, we will have two to four classes per grade level with approximately 28 students per class. Knowing the size of classrooms at WCPSS schools in our area, the lack of basic resources, such as desks, lockers, etc., and the prevalence of portable classrooms, we have no doubt that our planned classroom size and fixed school structure will place our school in high-demand.

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

**Attribution:** Board and NHA

Provide a synopsis of the planned curriculum, including:

1. *One sample curriculum outline (in graph form) in the Appendices (Appendix B) for one core subject (specific to the school's purpose) for each grade span (i.e. elementary, middle, high) the school would ultimately serve.*
2. *If you are proposing a high school, as Appendix B2, provide a visual disseminating what courses (core content and electives) will be offered at the charter high school to ensure students meet the proposed charter school's graduation requirements. Please ensure the projected staff and budget aligns with the course offerings.*
3. *Identify how this curriculum aligns with the proposed charter school's mission, targeted student population, and North Carolina Accountability Model.*

Our curriculum has been carefully aligned to the North Carolina state

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standards and the North Carolina Accountability Model by our management partner, NHA.

**Alignment to Mission:** The progression of standards incorporated into our curriculum is designed to ensure that we prepare students for lifelong success in and outside of the classroom. The academic rigor and our culture of high expectations align with our mission of developing students who are "critical thinkers, active collaborators, and eager contributors to their own learning." Our character education program, interwoven throughout our curriculum, is designed to help students become models of responsibility. Our entire educational program is designed to help our students be successful in high school, college, their career, and life.

**Alignment to Student Population:** We expect to enroll students who have academic deficits and others who qualify as intellectually gifted, but we will not target any specific student population. To ensure that the curriculum is properly driving learning for all students who enroll, we will implement a strong internal formative assessment process that supports differentiated instruction. This process consists of four main components:

1. **Identifying Objectives and Determining Assessments:** Teachers will collaborate to identify objectives for units of instruction based on the year-long plan, and will choose end-of-instruction assessments to gauge students' learning status at the end of each unit. Assessment methods will be selected based on the chosen learning goal and sound assessment design. Staff will also use periodic interim assessments and mock state assessments to ensure student learning. Adjustments to instructional units will be made based on evidence from the interim assessments.

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

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

4. **Responding to Evidence:** As units are prepared, teachers will identify opportunities for planned instructional adjustments prompted by evidence from assessments. If learning progresses more quickly than expected, then instruction will move at an accelerated rate through the unit plan. If learning progresses more slowly than expected, then more time will be spent delivering instruction within the unit. Teachers will consider end-of-instruction assessment evidence to develop subsequent units of instruction.

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We also will allocate new resources and work with our management partner to hire additional intervention staff if ever needed to ensure student success.

**Alignment to Accountability Model:** We will use our internal assessment program, described above, to ensure that the curriculum and instructional approaches in place are producing academic gains for our students and that achievement is on track to meet and exceed the state's Annual Measureable Objectives in its Accountability Model.

**Attribution:** Board and NHA

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

**Mastery of Instructional Strategies:** Our teachers are expected to use a variety of instructional methods that provide the most effective way to enhance learning for each individual student. Our primary methods will include direct instruction, modeling, demonstration, and think-alouds. Guided instruction may be done with large groups or with small, needs-based groups during workshop time or during content-area learning blocks to allow for differentiation of instruction. Additional detail is offered in "Instructional Program," above.

As part of the school's overall effort to effectively manage instruction, our instructional deans will work individually with teachers to ensure that appropriate teaching techniques are used to advance student learning and promote high expectations. Teachers will receive training through focused professional development and will receive the support of weekly observations and matching feedback sessions to ensure they successfully implement teaching techniques to promote student learning. These practices will be embedded within the school's formal Teacher Observation Protocol (which is discussed later in this application) and are akin to instructional best practices and teaching techniques that optimize learning for students (e.g., Lemov, 2010). Such techniques will include, among others: redirecting; start-up routines; do now; do it again; use of attention signals; circulation; prompts; precise praise; "I can" statements; and, checking for understanding.

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

Teachers are expected to implement strategies that help students take responsibility for their own learning. This includes using learning goals as an instructional tool and helping students set individualized goals for themselves. Through this approach, both students and teachers are provided a clear understanding of the desired focus skill, and teachers are empowered to articulate what they are teaching while allowing students to describe what they are learning and to work at the appropriate level of difficulty (see Marzano, 2009).

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

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

The combination of effective research-based instructional strategies, attention and adaptation to individual student needs, and meaningful and student-centered professional development helps fulfill our mission to ensure that all students are equipped for success.

Attribution: NHA

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

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

Our principal will have the final decision regarding the promotion, acceleration, and retention of students. The practice of promoting students who have failed to master grade-level curriculum is incompatible with our mission. A variety of structures and procedures are incorporated into our school model to ensure that students do indeed receive the content, instruction, and interventions necessary to progress academically as expected. Our deans will serve as the direct managers for teachers in specific grade level cohorts and ensure that instructional plans are aligned and scaffolded appropriately across all grade levels to ensure smooth upward transitions for students.

Our formative assessment process (see a more detailed discussion of this program in the response above) is designed to include multiple checkpoints throughout instruction that measure students' understanding of content. Teachers analyze data at both the classroom level and individual student level and then identify building blocks of instruction that scaffold student learning towards mastery of each educational objective. The specificity of

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these building-block assessments enables teachers to determine exactly what knowledge needs further development in each student, and to individualize instruction as appropriate to ensure that each student learns as expected. School leadership will consistently review the data for all grade levels and ensure that the school's curriculum and instructional approach is accelerating student learning. School leaders will report this information to our Board throughout the year.

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

As part of our internal assessment program, our school will be administering nationally normed exams multiple times each year. These assessments will supplement the annual state exams. Results of these assessments will allow us to better gauge how our students compare to peers across the country. The intent is to ensure that each student is given the opportunity for success in high school, college, and beyond.

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

Attribution: NHA

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

The envisioned school-year calendar for Peak Charter Academy is a standard calendar, beginning in August and ending in June. Our draft calendar is included in Appendix C, and aligns with the WCPSS standard calendar. Through experience with our own children, and after hearing from close friends, family, and other parents, we know providing an additional public school choice with a standard calendar will be of great interest to Western Wake County families. It will provide another options for families who have struggled to find suitable and consistent school calendars for their child(ren). Our K-8 structure and traditional calendar will afford families with elementary and middle school children a consistent choice, reducing stress on their family and improving academic outcomes. This standard NHA-partner school calendar will exceed the minimum instructional hours by more than 14 percent, anticipating that we will provide 1,170 hours of

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instruction each year. Also included are nine days dedicated to professional development and four parent-teacher conference days. As currently envisioned, the school day will run seven hours, starting at 8:15 a.m. and ending at 3:15 p.m., and providing 6.5 instructional hours per day. Of course, we may modify our schedule based on the needs of the students who eventually enroll.

We believe teachers and staff need to be in the classroom as expected, just as students are expected to be, and we will hold teachers and staff accountable for absenteeism.

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

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

Attribution: NHA

### **Special Programs and "At-Risk" Students**

1. *Describe the methods and clear systems of prevention and intervention teachers will utilize to provide assistance to students that are not performing at expected levels: ensuring continued progress and academic student growth.*

We will be prepared to serve any student who enters our school below grade level academically or is otherwise at-risk of academic failure. We expect to serve 35 percent of at-risk students. We accept our responsibility to ensure that all students master the grade-level content. If students struggle to master content or fail to grow in a way that corresponds with college readiness, instruction must be adjusted and, if needed, intervention will be provided.

Systems of Prevention/Intervention: We will use a three-tier approach (Response to Intervention, or RtI) to prevent students from becoming academically at-risk, to proactively identify students struggling academically, and to provide needed academic support to put them on a path to success.

First Tier: In Tier One, teachers will respond to student learning needs as a part of regular classroom instruction. All students will complete a screening assessment at the start of each school year, which will provide

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useful information for planning effective instruction. Short-cycle assessments will be used during daily instruction to check for understanding, and students who have not yet demonstrated mastery will receive supplemental support in the classroom through re-teaching, cooperative learning, differentiated instruction targeting individual student need, and learning centers with alternative materials.

Second Tier: If students do not master content through Tier One, more prescriptive interventions will be applied based on teacher referrals, data from classroom and end-of-instruction tests, results from nationally normed assessments, state test results, and parent input. Students will receive supplemental interventions using programs and approaches proven to accelerate student learning. Other intervention strategies may be provided in the classroom or in a workshop setting, or delivered through supplemental support outside of class during non-core educational time. Progress will be monitored frequently to ensure that interventions are effective.

Third Tier: If data show that a student is not making sufficient progress after Tier Two, a teacher will refer that student for Tier Three interventions. The teacher and intervention staff will review current efforts and student progress, and work together to monitor that student's learning patterns and progress. Tier Three interventions will include an intensified approach focusing on selected high-priority reading and math skills. One-on-one concentrated tutoring will be considered when appropriate. If these interventions do not succeed in achieving the desired level of learning, the school's exceptional children team will conduct a special education referral meeting to decide whether testing is needed. Special education referrals can be conducted prior to the completion of Tier Three interventions, as dictated by student need.

Our school will follow federal regulations and North Carolina policies and procedures on ChildFind obligations, even when students are being supported by the RtI system described above. When a disability is suspected, the IEP team will convene to review existing data and make a determination as to the need for an individualized evaluation. More information on the identification process is included in the Exceptional Children section of this application.

Continued Academic Progress and Growth: Our comprehensive plan to address the needs of students at-risk of academic failure supports our mission to "develop students into critical thinkers, active collaborators, and eager contributors to their learning." This approach also has been proven effective at other NHA-partner schools, where the rate of academic growth for students entering below grade level is 150 percent compared to the national average of 100 percent. This record represents faster academic progress than expected and the closing of achievement gaps.

Attribution: NHA

2. *Explain how the instructional plan and curriculum will meet the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students, including the following:*
  - a) *Methods for identifying ELL students.*
  - b) *Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for ELL students.*

*c) Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of ELL students, including exiting students from ELL services.*

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

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

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

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

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

For an ELL student to exit the program, he or she must score at the state-approved level for exit on the ACCESS exam. In addition, the school will examine data to verify that the student's classroom performance also indicates that the student is ready to exit the ELL program and will succeed without additional support and programming. School staff will closely monitor students for two years after they leave the ELL program to ensure that they are not experiencing academic regression due to language barriers. If a student who leaves the ELL program is found to be experiencing difficulty due to language constraints, the student may be reassessed and

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may re-enter the ELL program.

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

Attribution: NHA

3. *Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of intellectually gifted students, including the following:*
  - a) *Specific instructional programs, practices, strategies, and opportunities the school will employ or provide to enhance their abilities.*
  - b) *Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of intellectually gifted students.*

Knowing our community and the parental demand we expect, it is likely that we will enroll students who are intellectually gifted. Students with these skills will receive the direction, time, encouragement, and resources to maximize their potential. We will work with parents and students to identify intellectually gifted students from all backgrounds, and to provide instruction that nurtures and fully grows that excellence.

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

Instructional Programs: Classroom teachers will offer intellectually gifted students differentiated instruction and extended opportunities through a variety of means, including: enrichment lessons, exercises, and content; differentiation in content, process, products, and/or learning environment; infusion of tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills; and individualized learning opportunities. When needed, the school will accelerate grade-level or content-level learning for individual students, taking into consideration his or her specific needs. Students at or above grade level will be consistently challenged with classroom curricular content and high-quality instruction.

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

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

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

Attribution: NHA

### **Exceptional Children**

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

### **Identification and Records**

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

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

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

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

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

Record Request, Confidentiality, and Compliance: School staff will request records from the student's previous school or district. If complete records aren't received within 14 days of the date the school is notified that the

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student is a special education student, staff will reach out to the prior school for more information. If the requested information is not obtained, our school will initiate the special education referral or re-evaluation process. Staff will collect, handle, secure, and share these documents with parents in accordance with all relevant state and federal laws and regulations.

Attribution: NHA

### Exceptional Children's Education Programming

1. *Describe the educational programs, strategies, and additional supports the school will provide to ensure a full continuum of services for students with disabilities.*
2. *Describe the methods and support systems that will be in place to ensure students with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).*
3. *Describe how implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be monitored and reported to the student, parents and relevant staff.*
4. *Describe the proposed plan for providing related services.*

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

We are committed to serving students in the least restrictive environment (LRE), while providing the full continuum of educational placements as appropriate for each student. These placements may include the general education setting, individualized one-to-one instruction, and small-group instruction with both disabled and non-disabled peers as appropriate. We will prepare and execute individualized strategies for our full range of students, realizing that the LRE for some students may be in a more supportive environment.

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

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

Special education teachers will be on staff to provide academic support to students with IEPs. The school will also provide needed ancillary staff, such as a school psychologist, occupational and speech therapists, and a school social worker, as either employees or contracted providers.

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Additional staff may be added once the school determines the needs of our student population. We estimate that between ten and 14 percent of our students - the state and local LEA averages - will need special education services. Credentials of all staff will be reviewed to ensure compliance with highly qualified teacher requirements; teachers who do not possess the required credentials will be granted a reasonable amount of time to meet these requirements. Ancillary staff will possess state-required credentials before providing services to eligible students.

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

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

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

- Facilitate effective communication with students, parents, teachers, the school leadership team, special education staff, and appropriate social service and community-based agencies.
- Form a partnership with the classroom teacher to develop appropriate instructional practices to meet student needs as detailed in the IEPs.
- Act as a resource to classroom teachers.
- Meet all requirements for special education activities at the school.
- Schedule and hold all initial, re-evaluation, and annual review meetings pertaining to each student's special education program within required timelines.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal special education requirements.
- Provide instruction in a general education classroom setting to the greatest extent possible consistent with LRE requirements.
- Provide instruction to an individual or groups of students in a separate location as appropriate.
- Administer formal and informal educational assessments to guide instructional decisions when appropriate.
- Maintain documentation of services, progress monitoring data, data specific to progress on IEP goals and objectives, observation logs, communication logs, and any other data specified in a student's IEP.

**Monitoring IEP Implementation and Academic Progress:** A dean will oversee the implementation of IEPs, and this dean will conduct weekly one-on-one meetings with special education staff to discuss the academic progress of exceptional students, the timing of annual reviews, and the conduct of three-year re-evaluations. In addition, each IEP will be reviewed to determine the duration of services to verify compliance with the student's IEP. Progress reports will accompany report cards, and deans will discuss

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student progress relative to IEP annual goals at one-on-one meetings with teachers. General education teachers will keep a record of the accommodations and modifications that are to be made in the general education setting relative to instruction and testing.

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

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

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

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

Attribution: NHA

### **Student Performance Standards**

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

Goals: Our ultimate goal is to achieve our mission. We have set the following school performance standards as benchmarks to measure our progress against our mission:

- **Early Literacy:** In both kindergarten and first grade, students will score at or above the 65th percentile in reading and math as measured by

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beginning-of-year to end-of-year learning growth on a nationally-normed standardized assessment.

- Comparative Success: By the third year, students at Peak Charter Academy will exceed the average performance of comparable local district students on state assessments, and by the end of the first charter term, this outperformance will be by at least 5 percent.

- Postsecondary Readiness: Eighth-grade students in at least their third year at the school will successfully complete Math I (formerly Algebra 1) and as a cohort will earn at least a 75 percent passing rate on the Math I end-of-course exam.

- State Accountability: Each year, the mean normal curve equivalent gain on the Education Value-Added Assessment System for the school will be, at a minimum, "Meets Expected Growth." By the end of our first charter term, the school will "Exceed Expected Growth" targets established by the state.

Evaluation Tools: The school will administer a nationally normed assessment multiple times per year to measure academic growth. These assessments also will be used as a tool to improve instruction, allowing teachers and school leaders to gauge student progress, change instruction where necessary, and measure the effectiveness of those changes. Spring end-of-year assessments will provide summative growth data. We currently plan to use the NWEA MAP assessment. As required by the Department of Public Instruction, the ACT Explore exam (or another high school- and college-readiness exam) will be administered to all 8th-graders with two purposes: to provide students with feedback on competency strengths and gaps relative to their career aspirations; and to offer insights into their academic readiness for college.

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

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

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

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**Exit Standards:** Students will exit our school and be promoted to high school in accordance with the North Carolina Student Accountability Standards. We believe strongly that students should leave our school academically prepared for a rigorous high school program and with the required skills, both social and academic, to graduate from high school and be college-ready. The practice of promoting students who have failed to master part of their grade-level curriculum is incompatible with the state's gateway standards, the academic goals of our school, and our mission. Our Board is committed to meeting the needs of students who are at-risk academically, and NHA-partner schools offer what we believe to be such an educational program, and we will ensure that the needs of these students are addressed systematically. Our school model has a robust formative assessment program that helps quickly identify students who need extra attention, as well as those who are surpassing grade-level standards, all deserving differentiated instruction. As such, we will use those tools to ensure that at-risk students receive the appropriate supports and are exited from our school successfully.

Attribution: Board and NHA

### **Student Conduct:**

*Provide a brief narrative that disseminates how student conduct will be governed at the proposed charter school and how this plan **aligns** with the overall mission and proposed Education Plan of the charter school.*

*Provide a draft copy of the student handbook specific to the proposed charter school within the appendices (Appendix D).*

*Be sure to include:*

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

**Promotion of Effective Discipline:** The philosophy behind our school discipline policy and our positive school culture begins with a commitment to offer families a public charter school with a challenging academic program and a culture of high care and high expectations. We will adopt a program called Behave with Care, which includes school-wide behavior and classroom management practices. We will establish a learning environment that ensures our students feel welcomed and supported, while outlining clear rules, procedures, and structures to help students understand the consequences of their actions. This program will be similar in all classrooms and grades to foster a consistency in expectations, ensure that students are familiar with the rules, and help teachers develop self-managing classrooms and reduce disruptive behavior. As a result, the discipline policy will become an embedded part of the culture at Peak.

The Behave with Care program is designed to reinforce positive student behaviors so negative behaviors become less likely. Teachers and school staff will consistently reinforce positive behavior using strategies such as relationship-building, development of classroom contracts, precise praise of

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positive behavior, and individual student affirmations. Teachers will set expectations for their students at the beginning of the year and will refer to and reinforce the expectations, supported by a school-wide formal behavior management system, throughout the year. Students will always know what is expected of them and will be challenged to hold themselves and each other accountable.

Our approach is built on research-based programs for reinforcing positive behaviors, correcting problem behaviors, setting clear expectations, and building teacher-student and peer relationships. It emphasizes preventing problem behavior, developing pro-social skills, and addressing negative behaviors by solving problems and applying consistent consequences. These proactive measures will establish and strengthen a positive culture at the school.

**Equitable Application:** We will ensure that the Behave with Care program is equitably applied to all students at the school, while remaining mindful of individual student needs. The six-level, school-wide system we will adopt clearly outlines examples of behaviors at each level and appropriate consequences. Teachers record the details of incidents in AtSchool, our computerized student information system. This ensures that all behavior incidents are noted and treated consistently, and that records of the incidents are always available to parents. Weekly teacher observations and feedback will help ensure consistency from student to student and from classroom to classroom.

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

**Offenses; Application to Students with Disabilities; Due Process:** Our Board has reviewed, and attached in Appendix D, a draft parent-student handbook, which includes information on major aspects of the student discipline policy, including offenses eligible for disciplinary action. We will follow federal and NCDPI policies and procedures to ensure that due process and grievance procedures are followed whenever suspending or expelling students with disabilities or suspected disabilities is considered.

**Attribution:** Board and NHA

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<b>Section III: Education Plan Concerns and Additional Questions</b>		
Is the documented evidence that it was successful in other NHA-partner schools?	Lisa Swinson	Instructiona
Class sizes seem large. There are no teacher assistant assigned to the classrooms. Curriculum framework is the same as all NHA applicants. Applicant states that the school will differentiate for learners.	Lisa Swinson	Curriculum a
Question for interview: how was the curriculum developed? How was common core alignment determined? Does the curriculum include any off-the-shelf materials, and, if so, what are they why were the selected?	Kathryn Mullen Upton	Curriculum a
As noted previously, the 65 goal in early literacy, and the 5 percent comparable goal after five years, don't seem to align with high standards for student performance.	Kathryn Mullen Upton	Student Perf
65 % for this region seems low.	Lisa Swinson	Student Perf

<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Score</b>
Cheryl Turner	
Joe Maimone	
Carol Ann Hudgens	
Kathryn Mullen Upton	Pass
Becky Taylor	
Eric Sanchez	
Helen Nance	
Mike McLaughlin	
Alex Quigley	
Sherry Reeves	
Kristen Vandawalker	Fail
Tammi Sutton	
Lisa Swinson	Pass
Alan Hawkes	
Steven Walker	
Phyllis Gibbs	

**IV. GOVERNANCE and CAPACITY**

(No more than ten total pages in this section)

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

**Governance:**

**Private Nonprofit Corporation:**

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

*Name of Private Nonprofit:* Peak Charter Academy, Inc.

*Mailing Address:* 225 Candia Lane, Cary, NC 27519

*City/State/Zip:* Cary NC 27519

*Street Address:* 225 Candia Lane

*Phone:* 919-612-3164

*Fax:* 919-612-3164

*Name of registered agent and address:* Melissa Caira  
225 Candia Lane, Cary, NC 27519

*FEDERAL TAX ID:* 47-1886543

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Christopher McKenna	or		& former Manager of Financial Technology		
Dr. Stefanie Rachis	Vice President	JOHNSTON	Assistant Professor of Education, Shaw Univ.		
Sidney Minter	Director	WAKE	Attorney		
Becky Melia	Secretary	WAKE	Licensed Social Worker		
Zinnia Hamm	Treasurer	WAKE	Asst. VP, SunTrust Bank		
Melissa Cairra	Lead Applicant/Board President	WAKE	Business Owner; Integrative Health & Wellness Coac		

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

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

Our founding team has met representatives from other NHA-partner school boards and discussed their experience with their board responsibilities, their partnership with NHA, and the application and start-up phases of their schools. We understand the distinction between an "operating" board that has direct involvement in the operations of a school in addition to oversight responsibilities, and a "governance" board such as ours, which has as a primary responsibility for the oversight of our partner management company which operates the school day-to-day.

Functions and Duties: As the Board, it is our responsibility to fulfill our mission. We have the obligation to ensure that our school has the needed systems, personnel, and resources in place to create an environment conducive to scholarly learning and designed to meet our performance and operational goals. We will perform the functions essential of governance, including ensuring that students are learning, that funds are appropriately managed, and that our school complies with all charter, state, and federal requirements. We will retain independent legal counsel to advise us, annually contract with an independent auditor to ensure fiscal propriety, and contract with a third-party evaluator of the educational program for an independent perspective of the performance of our school. See Appendix U for our work to date with legal counsel and an independent auditor.

We are confident that our partnership with NHA will deliver an educational program that will serve students and their families well, will become an asset to the community, will achieve our charter goals, and will fulfill our

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mission. We know that it is now the Board's responsibility to ensure that happens.

Our Board also will adopt and implement policies that ensure transparency and good patterns of communication among the Board, school leaders, our management partner, parents, and the community. We will review and update these and all other school policies as necessary with input from our legal counsel.

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

- Articulating, maintaining, and driving our mission throughout the school community.
- Holding NHA accountable for the efficient and effective operation of the school and for the achievement of academic goals.
- Reviewing and approving the school's annual budgets and ensuring that proper financial procedures are in place and effectively implemented.
- Reviewing, approving, and monitoring progress toward academic, financial, and operational goals.
- Reviewing and approving school policies.
- Ensuring that sufficient enrichment programs are created to supplement the education program.
- Appointing officers and committees as needed.
- Adopting, amending, and repealing bylaws as needed.
- Developing and maintaining effective relations with NCDPI and the Office of Charter Schools.
- Ensuring that meetings are conducted in accordance with open meetings laws and in compliance with North Carolina conflict of interest and public records laws.

The school leader, with NHA as appropriate, will provide us with the information needed to assess all aspects of the school's performance in a comprehensive and timely manner.

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

2. *Describe the size, current and desired composition, powers, and duties of the governing board. Identify key skills, areas of expertise, and constituencies that will be represented on the governing board. Explain how this governance structure and composition will help ensure that a) the school will be an educational and operational success; b) the board will evaluate the success of the school and school leader; and c) there will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders, including parents.*

The founding team and current Board of Peak Charter Academy include members

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with roots in the Cary and Apex communities. The members' backgrounds in higher and K-12 education, business, finance, law, and management will help us ensure that our school will be academically, operationally, and financially viable - and that we are able to relate to the families and organizations that make up our broader school community. With seven other NHA-partner schools already operating in the state, we also are uniquely situated to reach out to those boards and collaborate to replicate best practices that will strengthen our governance role.

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

**Evaluation of the School and the School Leader:** We will require school leaders and NHA to provide us with regular reports on student performance, assessment data, operational data, and any parent survey data. We will use this information to assess the school's progress towards our performance goals and performance of the school leader. We will also contract for an evaluation of NHA to ensure that NHA and school leaders are meeting and exceeding expectations. Under the provisions of our Services Agreement, our Board maintains the authority to express reasonable dissatisfaction with the principal. If NHA and the principal have been given sufficient time and support to remedy an issue and there has been insufficient improvement, the Board can direct NHA to terminate the principal. Additionally, our partnership with NHA allows us to terminate the arrangement at any time should we decide that is the best course of action for our school. Should we need to terminate the agreement with NHA (which no board has ever done in the 19-year history of the organization), we will still have the right to lease the school building and the per-pupil dollars from our students will continue to flow to us to fund operations. This will allow our Board to transition management responsibilities to another company, or to become more of an operational board and contract for the specific services we may need.

**Involvement of Key Stakeholders:** We will ensure that all key stakeholders are invited to be represented before our Board; we also will seek to add a parent of a student at our school to serve on our Board to help ensure direct attentiveness to parent needs in our governance and bring our membership to seven. We also will solicit feedback from community groups and other stakeholders at our public board meetings.

We have formed our founding team with members who have the experience and ability to make meaningful contributions to our Board and to effectively govern our school. Qualifications for these and future Board members include passion for the effective, high-expectations-based education of children, enthusiasm for this school and commitment to our mission, dedication to our community, and willingness to give the time and energy needed to undertake this important venture.

Attribution: Board and NHA

- 3. Explain the procedure by which the founding board members have been recruited and selected. If a position is vacant, how and on what timeline will new members be recruited and added to the board?*

The members of our Board have come together from various backgrounds for the sole purpose of adding an additional quality public school choice to the Western Wake County area - both to help relieve the overcrowded area schools and, importantly, to create a healthy competition in the local school market so that all schools improve results for students. Like many nonprofit endeavors, our members have been introduced to this effort in different ways, including through inquiries with the NC Charter School Association about volunteer opportunities, conversations with our friends who are aware of this effort and serve on other area charter school boards, and through direct recruitment from our earliest members. We believe that to be an effective Board, and run a complex organization, such as a charter school, we need a diverse set of skills and viewpoints. We believe our Board has a collective skill set, including backgrounds in K-12 education, higher education, finance, law, social work, and business, as well as an intimate knowledge of our community and its families, which will lay the groundwork for our school's success. Further, we believe our diverse ages, ethnicities, and family circumstances, will allow us to attract a broad range of students and families and provide valuable insights to serving those groups well.

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

Our founding Board has six members, who will serve staggered terms of one, two, and three years with subsequent three-year terms, thus ensuring a pattern of overlapped tenure and stability of governance. We will seek to anticipate vacancies to the greatest extent possible, asking members to notify the Board President early in the year of their term expiration if they do not wish to renew their term. We will maintain a list of contacts and associates who we think may wish to serve on the Board or have expressed an interest in doing so, referring to this list whenever a vacancy may occur. Appointments to the Board to complete the terms of vacant seats will be made in accordance with our bylaws.

Attribution: Board

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

We will meet monthly. If needed, we will meet more often.

Attribution: Board

- 5. What kinds of orientation or training will new board members receive, and what kinds of ongoing professional development will existing board members receive? The plan for training and development should include a timetable, specific topics to be addressed, and requirements for participation (Board Policies Draft: Appendix J).*

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Board Orientation and Training: Training will be structured around three modules that cover a broad range of governance topics. Future Board members will also be trained using this framework during their first year of service. A typical example of structure and content follows.

Module 1 will discuss, among other things:

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

Module 2 will discuss, among other things:

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

Module 3 will discuss, among other things:

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

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

We will also seek support and advice on board governance training from a number of national and local sources, such as the Center for Public Skills Training, the National Charter School Resource Center, and the North Carolina Alliance and Association for Public Charter Schools and our own

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legal counsel. Lastly, we will leverage our professional resources, including those at NC State University and Shaw University, to ensure that we are considering a diverse set of viewpoints on effective governance.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

**Ethical Standards and Conflicts of Interest:** Our Board will govern the school with an unwavering commitment to ethical practices. Pursuant to our bylaws, a Board member shall inform the Board of any actual or apparent conflict of interest with regard to any transaction contemplated by the Board. Conflicts of interest include transactions in which a member of the Board has a material financial interest, or with which the member is presently serving as a director, trustee, officer, or general partner of another party. The transaction may be approved only by a vote of the majority of Board members who have no conflict of interest.

**Existing Conflicts of Interest:** There are no existing relationships of founding Board members that could pose an actual or perceived conflict of interest if this charter school application is approved. The Board will consult our independent legal counsel should any real or apparent conflict of interest ever arise.

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

**Criminal Background Checks:** In cooperation with our legal counsel, our Board has completed criminal background checks for our members and included those in Appendix G. Three of our Board members had minor traffic offenses (Caira (3), McKenna (3), Hamm (1)) which are further detailed in Appendix G and letters submitted to the Office of Charter Schools. Our three remaining board members (Melia, Minter, and Rachis) had no offenses. We believe that in no way do any of these offenses hinder our ability to govern a high quality public charter school.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Board has access to established school policies that have already been tailored to state and charter requirements, implemented, revised, and updated by those existing boards and their respective legal counsels when needed, and most importantly, tested in real situations. This is a key benefit partnering with a management company that has long-standing board partnerships in the state. Therefore, we had a head start when working with our legal counsel and NHA to complete many draft policies, several of which are included as appendices to this report. These and other policies will be reviewed, discussed, and modified upon approval of our charter, and then presented at a public meeting of our Board for comment and adoption. All

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policies developed for and by our Board are drafted in alignment with our mission and our vision for the school. At least annually, each policy will be reviewed, with any revisions necessary coming before the Board for discussion prior to adoption. Please reference Appendix J for a copy of our draft Board policies.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

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

Appendix F presents an organization chart illustrating the structure of the school, including the relationship among the Board, our management partner, the school leader, the academic leadership team and teachers, and other staff. The Board will oversee the school's management partner and, in collaboration with NHA, the school's principal. In turn, the principal oversees the academic deans, each of whom oversees a group of grade-level teachers (such as: K-1; 2-3; 4-6; and 7-8). The principal also oversees the administrative functions, headed by the school's registrar. Our Board and NHA will jointly employ teachers, as is permitted by law and previously recognized by the Office of Charter Schools and the State Board of Education. The Board retains ultimate hiring and firing authority of teachers, as required by law.

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Parent Grievances: Peak Charter Academy will make every reasonable attempt to respond appropriately to parent concerns in a way that resolves issues satisfactorily. Classroom teachers will be the first line of communication for parents and guardians to address any concerns. Teachers will respond to parent inquiries promptly, respectfully, and in accordance with established guidelines for handling parent grievances. If parents are dissatisfied with the response from their child's classroom teacher (or if the nature of the complaint does not involve a teacher), parents may contact a designated member of the school leadership team - an academic dean and then the

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principal - to arrange a meeting to discuss the concern.

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

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

Procedures for Employee Grievances: We will adopt a process to help staff resolve concerns or grievances. The dean will be teachers' first line of communication for addressing concerns; concerns about deans will be addressed to the principal. As a second option, staff may contact a representative at NHA's headquarters, its Service Center. Employees also may take advantage of a third option, an employee hotline that lets them provide feedback anonymously. Concerns submitted confidentially on the hotline (online or by phone) are immediately escalated to the NHA Service Center for review. In the rare event that staff cannot resolve a concern by speaking directly with the school leaders, by communicating with an NHA representative, or by communicating through the hotline, staff may bring an unresolved concern to our Board.

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

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**Include in the Appendices:**

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

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

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

**Not Applicable**

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

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

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

Our Board and legal counsel have reviewed the Services Agreement with NHA and concluded that it provides the desired arrangement for the school. The NHA partnership offers a comprehensive educational program including curriculum, professional development, staffing, and more, as well as a school facility. NHA has extensive experience in the charter-school sector, serving more than 54,000 students in 80 schools, with more than 20,000 students on waiting lists. This includes seven schools in North Carolina serving more than 4,500 students with waiting lists totaling more than 3,000 students.

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

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record, and boards have long-lasting partnerships with NHA.

- Since 2011-12, all 35 charters for NHA-partner schools up for renewal were successfully renewed by those schools' authorizers. In fact, since the first NHA-partner school opened, NHA-partner schools have successfully applied for and been granted renewal of their charters on all but one occasion (in 2005, Rochester Leadership Academy Charter School in New York was not renewed after failing to meet goals in its accountability plan).

- A partner charter school board has never terminated its Services Agreement with NHA.

**Best Financial Interest:** Our Board welcomes NHA's solid financial footing and the direct investment it has pledged to our school. In the operation of partner schools and the construction of facilities, NHA has invested significant financial resources, as well as its reputation:

- In building a new school, NHA typically leverages millions of dollars in private capital to create a new or renovated facility.

- Consistent with our Services Agreement, NHA will fund and deliver the educational program desired by the Board even if public revenues come up short of our approved budget. In this way, NHA assumes all financial risk, and our Board is guaranteed of being able to deliver the educational program we envision.

Attribution: Board and NHA

2. *What other EMO/CMOs were pursued and why did the applicant select this particular one?*

*Please include information regarding other management organization's fees and financial/academic records that led to the selection of the proposed EMO/CMO as the best fit for this proposed school.*

The success of NHA-partner schools across the country, NHA's commitment to continuous improvement, the "full service" arrangement offered, the no-cost facility development, and our community's interest were key factors in our partnership decision. Further, we understand that NHA has more experience opening and operating schools in North Carolina than any other EMO and is also the only EMO to have a partner school advance through the 2014 application process. We have visited NHA-partner schools and liked what we saw. Our discussions with NHA representatives - which have included details about the struggles of some partner schools in this state to achieve the excellence envisioned - have solidified our confidence in the organization, noting NHA's commitment to invest and improve those schools.

Board members have researched and are familiar with other charter management organizations, but believe NHA's comprehensive management approach offers us the one-stop accountability we prefer. Services such as up-front land acquisition and facility construction in the amount of \$10 million - both at no upfront cost to local taxpayers - are just what our area needs to help successfully address the projected population growth in an area with schools that are already bursting at the seams. Full administrative staffing from day one and an operating fund contribution provide for a stable and seamless operation that allows us to truly concentrate most on our students and achieving our mission.

The educational program offered, including the character education component, matches what we want to offer our community at Peak. The compliance, audit, and renewal track-records of NHA offer us assurance that its business practices are integrity-based. Of course, along with our

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choice, we will hold NHA accountable for our school's academic performance and financial integrity without regard to NHAs widely-acknowledged status as the market leader in its field.

Attribution: Board

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

Overall, NHA-partner schools post an impressive record of student success: nearly 70 percent of students at all NHA-partner schools meet or exceed typical growth in an academic year. The most recent available data (2012-13) shows that at more than 75 percent of NHA-partner schools, students outperform their peers at local district schools they would otherwise attend.

In North Carolina specifically:

- Greensboro Academy is the second highest-performing NHA-partner school in the country on the NWEA assessment. Even with its high-level of student proficiency, Greensboro Academy has been able to continually achieve student growth rates above the national average, including 150 percent from fall 2013 to spring 2014, 50 percent higher than the national average.
- Summerfield Charter Academy, which opened in fall 2013, is showing early signs of student proficiency on the state assessment, with 65 percent of its students scoring proficient in Math, 72 percent in reading, and 70 percent in Science. Student growth on the NWEA assessment was also strong, with average growth in all subjects at 130 percent.
- In the 2013-14 school year, K-8 students at Queen's Grant outperformed CMS averages in all subject areas by 14 percentage points, as measured by the revised North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments. For the 2013-14 school year, Queen's Grant K-8 students exceeded expected growth as measured by the state.

While lower in overall proficiency, the three other NHA-partner schools in the state - Forsyth Academy, Research Triangle Charter Academy (RTCA), and PreEminent Charter School - continue to show academic improvement and offer case studies that support why NHA is a good choice for us.

- Forsyth Academy enrolls more than 81 percent minority students, compared to a county average of 58 percent.
- Forsyth Academy in 2013-14 outperformed all five neighboring schools serving similar student populations in reading.
- From fall-to-spring 2013-14, Forsyth students' proficiency grew at a rate 25 percent greater than the national average.
- RTCA has shown positive results in the past two years when the Board and NHA placed a new school leader.
- RTCA exceeded expected growth in 2013-14.
- From fall-to-spring 2013-14, RTCA students' proficiency grew at a rate 25 percent greater than the national average - the school's highest growth rate in the last four years.
- PreEminent serves twice as many at-risk students as the Wake County district average (75 percent); approximately 6 out of 166 schools in the county serve a higher proportion and the county average is less than half of

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the percentage at PreEminent (35 percent).

- In 2013-14, PreEminent was designated a Reward School and earned a five-year charter renewal.

Highest and Lowest Performers: On the spring 2014 NWEA assessment, the highest-performing NHA-partner school is South Arbor Charter Academy in Ypsilanti, MI, where 89 percent of students tested proficient in all subjects combined. The lowest-performing NHA-partner school was River City Scholars Charter Academy (RCS) in Grand Rapids, MI, where 22 percent of students tested proficient in all subjects combined. The difference in performance between these two schools can be attributed to: 1) the amount of time each school has had to educate its students (RCS is in only its 3rd year of operation, while South Arbor is in its 15th); and 2) that the majority of students entering RCS are well below grade level proficiency, while many of the students entering South Arbor are close to, at, or above grade level. In both cases, however, NHA has embraced its obligation to ensure accelerated academic growth of all students. Research shows that on average students increase their academic performance each year they attend an NHA-partner school (CREDO, 2013). This is true of both new NHA-partner schools and those that have operated for many years.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Independence: Our Board expects the highest level of excellence from NHA in the school's performance and operations. The Services Agreement and Lease Agreement have terms favorable to us, and the Board has substantial autonomy to govern the school and oversee our management partner.

As a Board, we hold the charter for Peak. Thus, we are responsible for achieving our goals, and as such we are not hesitant to hold NHA accountable for school results. Additional components of our autonomy are manifested in our retaining of legal counsel, contracting annually with an independent auditor, and contracting with a third-party evaluator of our educational program.

Our separate Lease Agreement guarantees that we can use the facility for at least one additional full school year even if we terminate our management relationship with NHA. This allows us to truly consider separation if needed without jeopardizing the continued operation and housing of our school.

Our oversight of the school includes managing the development of an annual School Improvement Plan, which contains action steps to be taken to improve any needed element of school operations each successive school year. In addition to responding quickly to the needs of our school community, this plan serves as an additional accountability check for the Board on the performance of our management partner.

NHA's expertise in opening charter schools and up-front investment in facilities and operations also means that our Board members can dedicate more effort to governance and educational quality, not raising funds or securing real estate. This will provide our Board with additional time to oversee school performance.

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

With help from legal counsel, our Board and NHA have executed a Services Agreement that spells out relationships that will exist among charter school employees, the school, and our management partner (see Article VIII of the draft agreement in Appendix L). We believe that the best structure for our school is to have joint employment of the teachers with NHA, and to have the school's principal and deans directly employed by NHA. We will work in tandem with NHA to ensure we have the right school leaders, teachers, and other staff in place to achieve our mission. We believe that NHA providing a quality retirement plan and strong benefits to our staff is one of the most important factors in our staffing structure and ability to attract strong educators. Our Board will govern the school, and will hire NHA to operate the school. In that process, we will hold NHA and school leaders accountable for the success of the educational program and, as an essential part of that, the management of school staff.

Through our Services Agreement with NHA, we will require NHA to recruit highly qualified teaching candidates for our Board's review and hiring determination. Our Board will maintain the authority to express reasonable dissatisfaction with the principal. If NHA and the principal have been given sufficient time and support to remedy an issue and insufficient improvement has happened, the Board can direct that the principal be terminated by NHA.

We have reviewed and included draft employment policies in Appendix O, which our Board will modify as necessary and adopt should we receive a charter.

Attribution: Board

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

Our Services Agreement requires NHA to keep us in compliance with our school's charter at all times, which includes achieving our performance objectives.

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

- Academic growth, proficiency, and achievement goals as outlined in the "Goals" section here.
- The Board will conduct a formal annual performance review of NHA.
- Student attendance will meet or exceed 93 percent.
- A parent-satisfaction survey will generate a response rate of 50 percent or more and will show satisfaction of 80 percent or higher.
- The school will receive an unqualified audit annually.
- NHA will be required to work with school leaders to perform a comprehensive annual review of the school's education program, developing a formal, action-specific School Improvement Plan that is provided to our

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Board for review, input, and approval.

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

We expect the highest level of excellence from NHA. If that mark of excellence is not met, we will work with NHA to fix it or we will look for alternate ways to best serve our students.

**Attribution:** Board and NHA

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

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

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

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

Seven charter schools in North Carolina partner with NHA in arrangements that are similar to the proposed partnership for our school. Six have maintained the following positive fund balances over the past three fiscal years (2012, 2013, and 2014) respectively, and the seventh is a new school this year:

- Greensboro Academy: \$24,376, \$25,369, and \$23,362.
- Forsyth Academy: \$14,977, \$19,410, and \$10,698.
- Research Triangle Charter Academy: \$28,525, \$25,926, and \$43,013.
- PreEminent Charter School: \$43,829, \$30,248, and \$37,622.
- Queen's Grant Community School (K-8 program only): \$65,831, \$67,943, and \$61,243.
- Summerfield Charter Academy (opened fall 2013): \$30,134.
- Wake Forest Charter Academy opened in fall 2014 and does not yet have a fund balance.

A significant benefit of our partnership with NHA is the company's commitment to providing the initial and ongoing investment needed to ensure a successful opening. This investment will include securing a facility, making contributions to ensure that the educational program is fully implemented from day one, and committing to contributing (not loaning) further financial support if revenues fall short of expenses. Our Services Agreement with NHA clarifies that NHA assumes the obligation for all expenses, and thus assumes all the financial risk. If expenses exceed revenues in any given year, NHA has the obligation to cover the shortfall, and NHA must cover all Board-approved costs of the school. As such, our

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partnership arrangement with NHA makes the need to maintain a substantial fund balance unnecessary.

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

Attribution: NHA

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

**X Not Applicable**

***Applicable" and follow the direction #3 in the Application Specifications. Understand that the replication means that a new charter school will be governed separately from the charter school the application is modeled after.***

**Not Applicable**

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

We would have liked to replicate the newest NHA-partner school in North Carolina, Wake Forest Charter Academy (WFCA). WFCA is located in Wake County and like us, Wake Forest has seen significant population growth and school overcrowding in the past few years, including contemplation of multi-track school calendars that are unpopular with some parents. As WFCA has only begun operations, we chose to replicate the popular program in place at Greensboro Academy (Greensboro). We understand that Greensboro was formed after an outcry from parents following the consolidation of Greensboro and Guilford County Schools, and the subsequent reassignment of students. We are currently experiencing a similar situation in our community, and we know parents are very interested in finding a school that can provide a consistent education for up to nine years (K-8). Additionally, the school will add capacity to our school system - which will benefit all parents, regardless of whether they enroll their children at Peak Charter Academy or not.

We will replicate Greensboro due to the school's success academically, financially, and organizationally. Greensboro consistently has high student proficiency across all grades and subjects on state and NWEA assessments. The school has maintained a balanced budget and has had unqualified audit opinions each year. Organizationally, the school is also very successful, as demonstrated by parent and teacher satisfaction, the percent of students that re-enroll each year, and compliance with all charter, state, and federal requirements.

This is what we want to bring to our community in Peak. We seek to provide families with a new educational opportunity that is characterized by strong academics and parental partnerships. At schools across the country, NHA has high academic achievement, engaged parents, and students that are given opportunities for success in high school, college, and life. Please see Appendix U.

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Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Over the past three years, Greensboro has maintained a steady student enrollment averaging 730 students. In 2013, a new NHA-partner school, Summerfield Charter Academy, was opened a few miles away in Guilford County and quickly filled to capacity and established a waiting list, while Greensboro's enrollment and waiting list remained steady. For the past three years, the waiting list as of September 15 at Greensboro has been 1,141, 1,102, and 1,014 students. Student demographics at Greensboro over the past three years have averaged:

- White: 78 percent
- Black: 9 percent
- Asian: 8 percent
- Other Ethnicities: 5 percent
- And, 7 percent have qualified for free or reduced price lunch.

We will market to our community broadly to try and best reflect the demographic makeup of Wake County schools.

Also, WFCA opened this fall to serve 502 students of whom 15 percent have qualified for free and reduced price lunch. Greensboro and WFCA are part of the larger NHA partner-school network. Student enrollment at NHA-partner schools has increased over the past three years from 44,692 students to 54,280 students today. On the whole, NHA-partner schools serve 68 percent of students categorized as minority and 66 percent of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch.

Throughout the NHA-partner school network there are a number of schools that serve families living in areas with similar school capacity challenges, including Wake Forest Charter Academy in Wake Forest, NC and Foundations Academy in Brighton, CO. Both of these schools were created to meet parent demand for an additional school choice, like we propose to do with Peak Charter Academy. The academic success of these schools is included in Appendix U and makes a strong case for why we have chosen to replicate Greensboro and partner with NHA.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Board is well suited to serve our intended student population because we either live or work in the community, our children are educated in the community, and we know what our community needs. We've struggled in one way or another with the exponential growth of our community, and unfortunately, so too have our children. While we believe both the knowledge of, and passion for, our community is foundational to establishing the necessary drive to open and operate a successful public charter school; we recognize that is only one piece of the puzzle. The other significant element is ensuring our founding group has the skill sets to handle the adversity we're almost certain to face. We believe we've done that as well.

Our Board has all the necessary experience to effectively govern a public charter school. Our backgrounds include K-12 classroom and administration

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experience - both in the U.S. and abroad - work as professors of education and history; service at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; business management and operations; financial consulting and operations; social work; and, legal practice.

We are committed to establishing an additional public school choice that will relieve some of the pressure growth has created on our public school system. We've researched and partnered with a management company that we believe has the experience, capital, and vision we deem necessary to be successful in meeting our Board's mission and complementing our skill sets.

The bottom line is that our Board is comprised of individuals who have been successful in large part due to our educational pursuits and character - and we know both of those elements are essential to success in college, careers, and life. We want Peak Charter Academy to be modeled on these experiences, and help provide a similar foundation for children in our community.

Attribution: Board

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

### **Projected Staff:**

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

Admin:

Principal: 1.0

Dean: 4.0

Registrar: 1.0

Office Administrator (FTE): 1.5

Student Recruitment Specialist (FTE): 0.5

Instructional:

Core Content Teachers: 33.0

Music, Art, PE, etc.: 5.0

English Language Learner Teacher: 1.0

Interventionists: 2.0

Library Technology Specialist: 1.0

Exceptional Children Teacher(s) : 5.0

Exceptional Children Aides (FTE): 3.5

Social Worker (FTE): 0.5

Recess Aides (FTE): 1.3

Substitute Teachers (FTE): 1.7

Total Personnel: 62.0

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Peak Charter Academy will also benefit from the support of many NHA staff at the NHA Service Center who will provide services such as back office support to the school. On our behalf, NHA will also contract for additional services including with a food-service provider and janitorial staff.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Include the following information for the proposed charter school:

**Recruiting:** We will have a relentless focus on effective instruction for every student, in every classroom, every day. That means we need excellent teachers. To conduct the teacher recruiting process, we will rely primarily on the extensive candidate network and recruitment capabilities provided by our management partner, NHA, supplemented with our Board members' knowledge of and connections to the local community and teacher sources - including through NC State University and Shaw University. Below are recruiting strategies that are among those to be used.

**Traditional Recruiting:** NHA is constantly seeking and screening potential candidates through traditional and digital marketing strategies, including job fairs, university career fairs, social media, advertising, and direct referrals. We will advertise online, in select local markets, and throughout the NHA network of 80 operating charter schools. Our Board is also planning to recruit candidates through our own community networks. Applications for employment will be available through our school's website.

**Campus Relationships:** NHA will continue to leverage the established partnerships with colleges and universities on behalf of Peak. This gives our school prime access to the best student teachers and upcoming graduates as soon as possible. NHA also has established a dedicated campus liaison position to support and further these relationships, including establishing closer relationships with East Carolina University and all University of North Carolina campuses.

**Referral Networks:** Research indicates that most teachers find teaching positions through referrals, so we will actively pursue new candidates through referrals from our networks and current staff at NHA-partner schools in North Carolina and around the country. \*See the overflow section.

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

In accordance with this application and our Services Agreement with NHA, teachers will be jointly employed by our Board and NHA, and administrators and other staff will be employed directly by NHA. Our school leader will report directly to NHA and we will hold our leader accountable alongside of NHA. Our joint employment of teachers will allow us a more direct role in oversight of the teaching and learning that occurs in each classroom. The employment partnership with NHA allows us to use NHA for the administration of employee benefits, retirement, recruiting, and the required compliance documents for our teachers.

This arrangement facilitates the effective employment of our teaching staff, maintaining our Board's authority to control the hiring and termination of teachers while ensuring a smooth administration of payroll, benefits,

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compliance, and other human services-related components. We have been advised that this arrangement also complies with N.C.Gen.Stat. 115C-238.29F(e)(1), and that it was reviewed and approved by legal counsel for the Department of Public Instruction in 2012.

Please see Appendix O for more detail on our draft employment policies.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Hiring; Background Checks: NHA uses a standardized human resource software system to manage all personnel-related transactions. In addition to compensation and payroll functions, NHA oversees all background check, licensure, and compliance functions, doing so not only for our school, but nearly 4,000 employees at partner schools in nine states. Our Board will adopt a background check policy that mirrors the policy of the Wake County Public Schools System as required by law. Appendix J provides a draft of this policy.

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

Dismissing Personnel: We will create a working environment that allows administrators to make decisions sensitive to the demands of students, and that includes identifying ineffective staff, offering additional support to them, or terminating their employment as appropriate. In the event that the performance of an employee is unacceptable, and depending on the nature, degree, and circumstances of the incident or incidents, disciplinary action may be taken.

Discipline may include a warning, creation of a performance coaching plan or performance improvement plan, suspension, or administrative leave. If an employee does not meet performance expectations after appropriate interventions, or if there is a significant violation of policies or procedures, termination of employment may be recommended to the Board.

The school's Employee Handbook will offer information on the corrective-action and termination processes. This draft handbook is included in Appendix O, and will be provided to each employee on or before the first day of work and will always be available at the school's front office.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

The school budget included in this application offers detail on proposed salaries for all positions.

Our "pay for performance" philosophy will reward outcomes. We will measure student academic growth and proficiency robustly and hold staff accountable for success. Staff will be evaluated and rewarded based on the accomplishments of the school. Teachers and deans will be evaluated on the

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academic performance of students in the classrooms they oversee. As part of the annual review process, base salaries or hourly wages for administrators, faculty, and staff will be evaluated and modified based on these individuals' accomplishments. Our administrators also will be empowered to identify ineffective staff and offer them additional support as necessary, as well as terminate employment, as appropriate.

Our school will operate under a performance-based compensation philosophy, and will implement the "Total Rewards" approach to compensation incorporated into NHA's school model. This approach rewards administrators, faculty, and staff who have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement, and uses and evaluates all aspects of staff compensation - base pay, incentive pay, recognition programs, benefit design, tuition programs, etc. - to help recruit and retain staff, invest in their success, and encourage and reward behaviors that are proven to enhance student learning. \*See overflow section for additional information.

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

Grievance: Our school's distributed leadership approach is based on the NHA school model and will include weekly one-on-one time for deans to provide coaching and feedback to teachers. This coaching time, distinct from the weekly observations, specifically includes discussions designed to elicit and address concerns teachers may have. Most issues of concern to teachers should be addressed in this cooperative and collaborative forum. If a teacher's concern requires additional attention, the matter will be referred to the principal and if necessary, heard by the director of school quality (DSQ), an experienced school administrator who supervises and mentors small groups of schools and school principals. In addition, NHA's employee ethics hotline is an avenue for employees to anonymously report concerns if they do not feel comfortable speaking directly to their principal or DSQ. Our Board will be informed of this step and kept fully apprised of the situation. As a final step, and recognizing the role as joint employers of the school's teachers, the Board will ensure that there is a structure and time to hear grievances from teachers, in executive session if necessary.

Termination: Our staff evaluation data will inform retention, promotion, and termination decisions. If data show that a teacher is not performing adequately, he or she will receive additional coaching and professional development to foster improvement in identified areas. Final employment decisions, recommended by the school leader with help from the NHA employee relations team, will be sensitive to the needs of students and can include terminating the employment of ineffective staff. A teacher termination decision may only be made by our Board.

Attribution: NHA

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

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

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Attribution: NHA

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

We will recruit teachers licensed in special education to help ensure high-quality instruction for exceptional children. We will have teachers to provide academic support and will hire or contract with a school psychologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, and social worker as needed. Additional special education staff may be added as the needs of our students become known each year. We will review credentials to ensure compliance with "highly qualified teacher" requirements, and ancillary staff will have state-required credentials before providing services. We also will add qualified staffing for ELL and gifted students as needed. Our first-year budget includes 3.8 full time equivalent (FTE) staff to meet the needs of exceptional children in year one. When our school is full, we expect to have 8.5 FTE. We have also planned to start our school with 1.0 FTE ELL staff and will adjust that number as necessary to best serve our students.

Attribution: NHA

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

Principal: The principal will be dedicated to fulfilling our school's mission. He or she must hold the unwavering belief that all children can and will learn if they receive the right opportunities to do so. Qualified applicants will have a proven record of achieving significant rates of student growth. Strong leadership and management skills are also required, as is the ability to provide instructional support to teachers. To these ends, the principal must be committed to and capable of developing school culture, promoting student achievement, and implementing seamless school operations. Among the numerous responsibilities involved in this are:

- Developing and evaluating the educational program to ensure conformance to state, federal, Board, and NHA standards.
- Collaborating with our Board on hiring and evaluating school staff.
- Implementing a school-wide tool for parent and community communication.
- Reporting school activities and academic achievement to our Board at regular Board meetings.
- Establishing all school procedures and systems.
- Monitoring the use of data in lesson planning and evaluating effectiveness in student academic growth.

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

Deans: In addition to sharing administrative responsibilities with the principal as assigned, the primary responsibility of the deans is to observe, coach, and provide feedback to all assigned teachers through weekly one-on-one conversations. Additional responsibilities include: overseeing and monitoring the character development curriculum and its lesson integration, design, and delivery; delivering professional development; and

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providing training for effective classroom management. Deans will typically have a bachelor's degree and a minimum of three to five years of experience in teaching or administration, or an equivalent combination of education and experience, and superior language skills, mathematical skills, and reasoning ability. Deans will demonstrate an effective collaborative approach to mentoring and developing those who report to him or her. Deans will possess administrative licensure as required by law.

Teachers: Teachers will possess a bachelor's degree, be highly qualified, and have the appropriate teaching licensure as required by law. In addition, teachers will have a demonstrated ability to:

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

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

- Coordinating with educational assistants.
- Maintaining current achievement level information.
- Assigning additional studies to students not meeting or exceeding achievement.
- Keeping accurate student records.
- Establishing classroom procedures.
- Ordering supplementary education materials.
- Requesting parent volunteers.
- Reporting all education-related activities to the principal.

Special education and ELL teachers also will demonstrate knowledge about education strategies particularly suited to the student populations they serve, and will demonstrate effectiveness in adapting instructional and behavioral approaches as necessary.

Attribution: NHA

Continued From Question: "Explain the board's strategy for recruiting and retaining high-performing teachers."

Career Fairs and Conferences: Recruiters and ambassadors will actively participate in local, regional, and national career fairs and conferences. This allows access to upcoming teacher graduates and current teachers who are in the market for new employment opportunities.

Workforce and Talent Pipeline Planning: NHA offers a unique aspect to our strategic planning efforts through its workforce planning team. NHA's workforce planning function allows us to gain a deep understanding of the current labor supply and demand in the area, state, and beyond. This planning function helps to prepare for current and future hiring and provides another competitive advantage.

Diversity Sourcing: We believe that this active approach to finding and

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attracting teachers of color gives our school an advantage in maintaining a diverse staff. Minority teacher candidates are found and contacted on an ongoing basis to proactively develop stronger pools of diverse talent.

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

Retaining: A number of systems and practices will be implemented to encourage a positive culture among school staff and to motivate, engage, reward, develop, and retain high-quality school faculty and staff. The school leadership team will have multiple opportunities to formally and informally recognize faculty and staff: for example, at scheduled staff celebrations such as American Education Week, Teacher Appreciation Week, and National Charter Schools Week. An instant "spot rewards" program and a peer-recognition program also will be implemented. Importantly, all employees will be surveyed for job satisfaction at least annually, providing school leaders with an opportunity to improve teacher-retention strategies.

Importantly, our school's "Total Rewards" approach to compensation (see more detail below) rewards administrators, faculty, and staff who have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement, creating a structure where our best teachers have clear incentives to stay.

Attribution: NHA

\*Continued From Question: "Outline the school's proposed salary range and employment benefits for all levels of employment."

Components of the Total Rewards structure include:

- Base pay, differentiated based on performance; and for new hires, on years of experience.
- Incentive bonus plans by category of employee, and additional compensation for supporting other activities (tutoring, mentoring new teachers, coaching sports, etc.).
- Medical, dental, and vision insurance, historically with relatively with low co-pays and employee contributions.
- A 401(k) retirement plan with employer match.
- Life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance.
- Short-andlong-term disability insurance.
- A tuition reimbursement program, and more.

This benefits package attracts many strong teaching candidates to NHA-partner schools.

Teachers at our school will be hired at salary rates that align closely with the state's base salary scales for teachers of similar experience and education levels. In our budgeting process we assumed a salary range for teachers of \$37,400 to \$41,500, and used an average of \$39,500 for budgeting purposes. Our teachers will be eligible for annual increases and bonuses. As we progress through our first charter term, high-performing teachers in our school will have the opportunity to earn more than teachers with the same education and experience based on the state's pay scale. Our salary scales will follow the model outlined here for teachers who hold their master's degree as well.

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All teachers will be evaluated regularly and rewarded no less than annually based on their performance and that of their students.

Attribution: NHA

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

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

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

Attribution: NHA

2. *Provide a detailed plan noting how the school will mentor, retain, and evaluate staff in a format that matches the school's mission, educational program, and meet the teacher certification and licensure requirements for teachers as prescribed by state law and No Child Left Behind. Be sure this overview matches with the projected staff and funding of the proposed budget section.*

Mentor: All new teachers will be assigned a mentor teacher who will address day-to-day questions and concerns. Scheduled meetings with the mentor will provide ongoing support for new teachers regarding the curriculum, instructional practice, and classroom management. Mentors also will conduct periodic classroom observations and provide feedback to the teachers after each visit to further improve teaching and learning in the classroom. We will ensure that all new teachers participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program we will establish for additional mentoring and support.

Our school's structure is intentionally designed to enable each teacher to work closely with his or her grade-level dean on a weekly basis to focus on specific development needs. Each teacher is observed weekly, and weekly meetings are then held with the dean to provide feedback and coaching based on these observations or other needs stated by the teacher. This is time for the teacher to reflect on his or her teaching practices and ask questions. Teachers will work with their dean to address individual professional development needs as identified from teaching practices found in our Teacher Observation Protocol (TOP). The TOP includes over 60 research-based teaching skills and techniques, additional resources (such as Teach Like a Champion and e-learning), and coaching questions that guide teacher development.

The deans are observed, coached, and evaluated by the principal on their effectiveness of supervising teachers.

Retain: Several factors combine to support a commitment to individual professional growth and retention of exceptional instructional staff. These include:

- The frequency and quality of coaching around instructional practice.
- The extensive plan of professional development.
- The intentional tracking of high-performing teachers to positions of greater responsibility and stature (including positions as mentor-teachers and deans, and evaluating and coaching outstanding deans to become principals).
- The "Total Rewards" approach to compensation.
- A school environment that promotes scholarly learning.
- A culture of building-wide respect of students and staff.

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Evaluate: Teacher performance will be continuously evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative measures. Our school will use a pay-for-performance compensation model, with performance measured by student achievement. The evaluation system for teachers will have four main components: (1) student learning results; (2) instructional and classroom management practices; (3) parent engagement; and, (4) professional accountabilities. All components are rated using a five-level scale: exemplary, highly effective, effective, inconsistently effective, and ineffective.

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

Teachers' competence in classroom management and instructional and professional practices will be evaluated based on multiple observations, feedback, and coaching provided by deans. The weekly observations and feedback (using the TOP) and the mid-year and year-end evaluations will help define professional development goals for each teacher. Progress toward those goals will be used to evaluate teachers. Parent engagement data will be collected from our annual parent satisfaction surveys.

This comprehensive approach is designed to continuously grow our school's talent and to keep our top-performers for the long term. It focuses on coaching and evaluating staff, developing an internal professional advancement track, and practicing a merit-based program of compensation.

Attribution: NHA

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

High-quality instruction stems from clear expectations, frequent observation, consistent feedback, and an intentional focus on developing teachers' professional practices. Professional development will be integrated throughout our culture, beginning with an intensive orientation and training before the first school year and prioritized as an element of the school calendar thereafter. Through our partnership with NHA, teachers will have access to a wide variety of resources and learning opportunities. These include seminars, conferences, video libraries, web-based resources, book studies, e-learning, and access to both internal and external consultants.

Core Components: Our professional development program will include:

- Formal programmatic training sessions.
- Mentors assigned to new teachers.
- Weekly teacher observation, feedback, and development sessions.
- Creation of professional learning communities.
- Daily time for common grade-level planning.
- Weekly grade-level team meetings with deans to provide support of a common approach to instruction.

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- Monthly grade-level team meetings with the principal to ensure a unified school-wide approach to instruction. Regular grade-level and cross-grade-level team meetings also will be scheduled where teachers can share ideas for increasing student achievement.

Effective Implementation of Educational Program: Our school leaders will be responsible for determining professional development needs and will work with NHA to develop a customized plan to meet those needs. Each year, the school will draft a School Improvement Plan (SIP), a comprehensive needs assessment and identification of strategies to meet those needs in the coming year. The SIP will analyze student achievement, the school environment, the teacher community, the parent community, and the administration. The school then will focus and prioritize building-wide professional development efforts on the areas identified in the SIP.

Attribution: NHA

4. *Provide a schedule and explanation of professional development that will take place prior to school opening. Explain what will be covered during this induction period and how teachers will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods.*

Prior to school opening: All new teachers hired prior to the start of school will participate in New Teacher Orientation (NTO), a multiday immersion program designed to ensure buy-in to the school's purpose and vision and to address specific curricular and instructional needs. This training will be actively supported with ongoing coaching and additional training throughout the year. NHA has developed a collection of effective, industry-leading practices incorporated into its "2020 Plan" (see the "Educational Need" section for further details). These practices are being implemented throughout NHA-partner schools to build a common approach that will generate outstanding academic results. During NTO, teachers and leaders will learn why these practices are effective and see how they play out in daily activities such as classroom management and instructional planning. NTO participants will experience these principles both as they occur in a classroom environment and as they exist throughout the entire school. This will empower new teachers to begin applying these practices the moment they enter our school.

A sample NTO agenda is outlined below:

- Monday: Purpose & Vision; Behave with Care (conduct and culture).
- Tuesday: Curriculum and Curricular Tools.
- Wednesday: Formative Assessment; Individualizing Instruction.
- Thursday: Grade-level Best Practices; Observation, Feedback, and Planning.

During NTO, new teachers and leaders will begin to build our school culture by learning the practices necessary to connect with students, establish expected behaviors and routines, and manage classrooms. The training focuses on establishing a positive and proactive culture and self-management of classrooms by training teachers how to: structure the classroom in ways that promote responsible student behavior; engage students in building school culture; intentionally develop strong positive relationships with students; and explicitly teach students how to:

- Behave responsibly in every classroom situation;

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- Focus more time, attention, and energy to acknowledge responsible behavior than to respond to misbehavior; and,
- Pre-plan responses to misbehavior to ensure they are brief, calm, and delivered in a consistent manner.

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

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

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

Attribution: NHA

5. Describe the expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year, and explain how the school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate this plan.

The school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate robust professional development for Peak Charter Academy teachers and leaders.

A total of nine days are allocated for professional development, as well as: New Teacher Orientation (see above) and NHA-University, a collaborative leadership training week for school leaders and teachers across NHA's 80 partner schools. In addition, our teachers' daily schedule incorporates 45 minutes of planning time for teachers. At least one planning period each week will be dedicated to meeting in grade-level teams, and 30 minutes of a planning period each week will be dedicated to a one-on-one meeting with each teacher's dean to discuss feedback and provide coaching for ongoing development. We will allow administrators to schedule faculty meetings at appropriate times that do not impede teaching and learning. Teaching staff schedules also will be established to permit cooperative and collaborative meetings with parents.

The school's staffing structure meshes with the daily calendar to allow core-subject teachers both individual and common planning time while student instruction in "specials" - art, physical education, music, etc. - is

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occurring. To support collaboration among peers, professional learning communities will be established that allow common grade-level planning during this time. Together, teachers will review the current week's lesson plans and plan upcoming lessons in ways that ensure common delivery and alignment with the school's curriculum. The school's calendar and staffing plan also allow regular grade-level and cross-grade level team meetings to be scheduled where teachers can share ideas for increasing student achievement and mentor one another.

Attribution: NHA

### **Enrollment and Marketing:**

Reaching the full capacity for enrollment will be critical to obtain the necessary financial resources to keep your school viable and operating efficiently. In addition, it is required by law that charter schools provide equal access to all students. Read the charter school state statute regarding admissions GS 115C.238.29F(g) (1-7) carefully.

### **Marketing Plan**

*Marketing to potential students and parents is vital to the survival of a charter school. Provide a plan indicating how the school will market to potential students and parents in order to reasonably reflect the racial/ethnic and demographic composition of the district in which the charter school will be located or of the special population the school seeks to serve: (G.S.115C-238.29F(g)(5)).*

Our school's marketing and outreach efforts will be designed to ensure full enrollment, to achieve a broad awareness of the school, and to ensure that the school becomes known as a valuable institution immersed in the local culture and an active contributor to the economic and social success of our community. This effort will include significant grassroots outreach to families in the local area. The school does not intend to serve a special population of students. Instead, it will be marketed to all area residents without bias, with the goal of attracting a student population that reflects the demographic composition of the schools in and around Cary and Apex.

Board members' knowledge of the community and NHA's outreach expertise will form the basis of our school's marketing efforts. Together, the Board and representatives from NHA will assess the interest of prospective parents utilizing methods that may include diverse community focus groups, public opinion polls, and more. This will provide important information about perceptions of the neighborhood, education needs that are not being met, and the relative attractiveness of features of our new school. We have included our first perception data in Appendix A1.

When we are notified of the preliminary approval of our charter application, marketing efforts will intensify and a dedicated local student recruitment specialist with strong community knowledge will be hired (at NHA's expense) before the opening of the school. This representative will lead grassroots marketing and the building of community relationships including outreach to: area daycare suppliers; local chambers of commerce and other community businesses; area churches, temples, and other houses of worship; HeadStart and other community educational programs; local community recreational organizations; Boys/Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and other youth activity centers; and, more.

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Formal advertising efforts may include outdoor ads (municipal buses and bus stops, billboards, etc.), radio spots, television announcements, local and community newspaper display ads, and/or internet media advertisements launched several months before the school's opening as needed.

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

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

### **Parent and Community Involvement**

1. *Describe how you will communicate with and engage parents and community members from the time that the school is approved through opening.*
2. *Describe how you will engage parents in the life of the public charter school. Explain the plan for building engaging partnerships between the family and school that strengthen support for student learning.*

Communication with Parents before Opening: Strong parental involvement often is the result of effective and robust school-home communication. Our school is committed to maintaining an atmosphere of open dialogue between school leaders and parents, and we will begin these partnerships as early as possible in the life of the school.

As soon as we are notified of the approval of our charter application, we will begin building relationships with parents and informing them of our mission. Families will be contacted through a variety of practical methods to inform them about our school, the enrollment process, and how they can become involved in the school.

A monthly newsletter, website, and Facebook page will keep interested families aware of and connected to the latest happenings of the school as it prepares to open. Social media websites will be used to help form and maintain connections between school leaders and parents. While our school is

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being constructed, a temporary school office will be available for staff contact and prospective parent visits.

During the months before the school opens, school staff and parents will initiate the relationships that will strengthen and grow throughout our school community. This pre-opening rapport with prospective parents will peak with a family orientation held at the end of the summer to allow enrolled students and their families to meet the principal, the student's teacher and classmates, and other school staff.

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

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

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

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

## **Admissions Policy**

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

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

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

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

**Applications:** Applications for the school year will be accepted beginning on the first day of the OEP. If applications received during the OEP exceed offered seats in any grade level, a random selection process will take place for that grade level. If applications received are fewer than offered seats in a grade level, all eligible applicants will be accepted and there will be no random selection process for that grade.

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

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

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

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

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

Withdrawals/Transfers: When a student withdraws, that creates an open seat to be filled by another student through the wait-list process outlined above. Students wishing to legally transfer into the school mid-year shall be admitted if a seat in that grade is available or will be placed on the waiting list.

Please see Appendix J for our full draft admissions policy.

Attribution: NHA

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**PROJECTED ENROLLMENT**

**2016-17 through 2020-2021**

IDENTIFY LEA FROM WHICH STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY COME

- LEA #1 Wake County Schools
- LEA #2 Chatham County Schools
- LEA #3 Durham Public Schools

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

	2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021		
	LEA 920	LEA 190	LEA 320	LEA 920	LEA 190	LEA 320	LEA 920	LEA 190	LEA 320	LEA 920	LEA 190	LEA 320	LEA 920	LEA 190	LEA 320
Kindergarten	113	6	6	113	6	6	113	6	6	113	6	6	113	6	6
Grade 01	100	6	6	100	6	6	100	6	6	100	6	6	100	6	6
Grade 02	76	4	4	100	6	6	100	6	6	100	6	6	100	6	6
Grade 03	76	4	4	76	4	4	100	6	6	100	6	6	100	6	6
Grade 04	50	3	3	76	4	4	76	4	4	100	6	6	100	6	6
Grade 05	50	3	3	50	3	3	76	4	4	76	4	4	100	6	6
Grade 06	50	3	3	50	3	3	50	3	3	76	4	4	76	4	4
Grade 07	0	0	0	50	3	3	50	3	3	50	3	3	76	4	4
Grade 08	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	3	3	50	3	3	50	3	3
	515	29	29	615	35	35	715	41	41	765	44	44	815	47	47
	573			685			797			853			909		

<b>Section IV: Governance and Capacity</b> <u>Concerns and Additional Questions</u>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Page Reference</b>
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Reviewer	Score
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## V. OPERATIONS

### Transportation Plan:

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

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

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

We believe that asking parents to partner with us in transportation will allow members of the staff to greet students and parents during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, providing students a transition between school and home that is safe, smooth, and welcoming. This approach will allow staff an additional point-of-contact with parents, and allow parents an additional opportunity to become a part of the day-to-day life of the school. The RideFinder program also streamlines the process of information-gathering and provides parents instant access to carpooling options within their school community.

This is the exact program in place at other NHA-partner schools in North Carolina and elsewhere. It has worked well, allowing students to arrive at school more focused on the activities of the day and with lower levels of anxiety and distraction than often attributed to school bus rides.

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

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**Targeted Population:** Peak Charter Academy will not be targeting a specific student population, but will be marketing to and serving students throughout the Western Wake County area. With the assistance of the RideFinder program, families living near other families will be able to access all needed information for arranging carpooling or other transportation options. We recognize that our population may, however, include students from outside of our local area who have transportation needs, which we have budgeted to address as may be needed.

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

Attribution: NHA

### **School Lunch Plan:**

*Describe in detail the school lunch plan that will ensure that no child is lacking a daily meal. The details of this plan should align with the targeted student population and school budget proposal.*

We recognize the importance of providing healthy meals to our students, and an appropriate meals program will be established so that no child at Peak lacks a daily meal. Our teachers, as part of the attendance process, will ask each student if he or she needs a lunch that day or if one was brought from home. If a student needs a lunch, the teacher will note that in the student data system. If a student doesn't qualify for free meals and doesn't have enough money in his or her lunch account to purchase a meal, the teacher will notify the office so a lunch can be provided for that student, including charging the school's discretionary account if necessary, to ensure that each student, each day has access to a school lunch.

NHA, on behalf of our school, will follow U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) procurement requirements and comply with Federal Regulation 7 CFR 210.16, by contracting with a food-service provider to operate our food-service program. Students will pay the full set price for school meals unless they qualify for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program. NHA has experience in handling all the required aspects of these programs, and the Board will hold NHA accountable to ensure the efficient management of our school's breakfast and lunch programs. As necessary, we will look to the North Carolina Department of Child Nutrition Services for resources in overseeing the compliance of our food-service program.

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

Attribution: NHA

**Civil Liability and Insurance (GS 115C-238.29F(c)):**

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

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

Area of proposed coverage	Proposed amount of coverage		Cost (Quote)
Comprehensive General Liability	\$2,000,000		\$2,700.00
Officers and Directors/Errors and Omissions	\$2,000,000		\$1,036.00
Property Insurance	\$25,000		\$338.00
Motor Vehicle Liability	\$1,000,000		\$181.00
Bonding Minimum/Maximum Amount	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$100.00
Other	\$2,000,000		\$1,300.00
<b>Total Cost</b>			<b>\$5,655.00</b>

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

**Health and Safety Requirements:**

All public charter schools are required to follow the regulations regarding health and safety as stated in § 115C238.29F (a).

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

melissacair1                      09/23/2014

(Board Chair Signature)

(Date)

**Facility:**

*Note that the SBE may approve a charter school prior to the school's obtaining a facility; however, students may not attend school and no funds will be allocated until the school has obtained a valid Certificate of Occupancy for Educational use to the Office of Charter Schools.*

*What is your plan to obtain a building? Identify the steps that the board will take to acquire a facility*

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*and obtain the Educational Certificate of Occupancy. If a facility has been identified please fill out the Facility Form (Appendix Q).*

In anticipation of approval of this charter school application, our Board has begun to combine our knowledge of the local community with support from NHA's real estate acquisition team to begin an exhaustive review of opportunities to construct a new school building or to renovate an existing facility suitable to our school's programmatic needs. The facility that will be provided to our Board, students, and faculty is one of the most important aspects of our partnership with NHA. Although residents in our county did pass a bond proposal for new construction, it is not possible for those schools to be built fast enough to keep up with the children who will be moving into the new housing developments already approved in our area, and other areas in and around Cary and Apex. We want Peak to be part of the solution, especially to the recent crisis of "capped schools".

**Acquiring a Facility:** When our charter application is approved, the real estate we have worked with NHA to identify will be purchased by NHA, and construction or renovation will begin. NHA's typical construction period lasts less than five months, and NHA has a very successful history in both building new school facilities and renovating existing structures to accommodate schools.

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

Being able to occupy a facility specifically designed to house our planned educational program is a huge plus for our students and our faculty. We will be able to avoid overcrowding or trying to use a facility that is better designed for a purpose other than a school. A partnership with NHA that gives us the top-notch facility we need for our program is one of the great advantages of our plan. However, should we decide at any time that the relationship with NHA is not providing the desired outcomes for our students and families; we will be prepared to terminate the Services Agreement and begin looking for alternate facility options. We are familiar with other organizations that build and lease charter school facilities, including Charter Schools USA and HighMark School Development. We have researched these groups, especially as we selected NHA as our EMO, and believe that our selection of NHA as a full-service management company will serve us especially well in our school facility.

**Obtaining an Educational Certificate of Occupancy:** The Board and NHA will ensure that we are in compliance with all building codes in the development of a facility for our school. We will work with a local building inspector to determine in a timely manner if modifications to an existing facility must be approved by the North Carolina Department of Insurance for building code compliance. Our Board and NHA will ensure that we receive an educational certificate of occupancy for our school from a local building

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inspector. If the decision is made to build a new facility, we will ensure that NHA complies with all applicable land use processes, building requirements, and certifications, and that we obtain our educational certificate of occupancy prior to our school opening.

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

The projected cost is \$27.42/ft<sup>2</sup>. Based on the facility's single-use nature, a lease contingent upon renewal, and NHA's full assumption of financial risk, we are comfortable with this cost.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

To ensure that the school's facility plans stay on track, a number of properties that will suit the construction of a new facility or the renovation of an existing facility will be identified in the initial search process, and a preferred property will be identified. If there are unforeseen hurdles with the preferred property that cannot be overcome in a reasonable timeframe or at reasonable expense, the Board and NHA will be well positioned to move expeditiously to secure one of the other properties from the "short list" of viable real estate opportunities. Members of our founding team have already begun working with NHA's real estate team to create a list of suitable properties. Should we receive a charter, we will be well positioned to secure land and complete our construction project in time for a successful opening in the fall of 2016.

The total square footage of the building targeted for occupancy by Peak Charter Academy will be approximately 55,000 square feet. This will include sufficient space for a play area, a play field, and adequate parking. The envisioned school building will include approximately 37 classrooms; 8-10 student support rooms; an art room; a music room; a media center; a gymnasium; a parent room; a front office, and administrative spaces for our principal and deans as well as a teacher workroom and conference room. If constraints on space are needed for any reason, contingency options could include: combining the music and art rooms; consolidating administrative offices; modifying the play area, play field, or parking; and/or waiting and scaling up the number of classrooms and student support rooms only as the school grows from its starting configuration as a K-6 school to a K-8 school in our third year.

Importantly, the school will have continued use of its facility even if the

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Board decides to terminate its Services Agreement with NHA. Under provisions in a separate Lease Agreement, if the Board terminates its Services Agreement with NHA, our school is authorized to stay in the facility - with NHA obliged to continue to manage and maintain the facility - for the remainder of the current school year. Additionally, our Board has the ability to lease the facility for a subsequent school year at the current rental rate. After that, our Board is free to purchase the building, negotiate a new Lease Agreement (with advice from our independent legal counsel), or find another location for our school. In such an event, the original "short-list" developed from our initial property search will serve as a ready-made starting point for the location of an alternate facility.

Attribution: Board and NHA

<b>Section V: Operations Concerns and Additional Questions</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Page Reference</b>
The number listed here and the amount for insurance in the operations budget differ. Question for interview: which one is correct?	Kathryn Mullen Upton	Civil Liabil
Different amount listed on the proposed budget for insurance.	Lisa Swinson	Civil Liabil
Facilities have yet to be identified for the contingency plan.	Kathryn Mullen Upton	Facility and

<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Score</b>
Cheryl Turner	
Joe Maimone	
Carol Ann Hudgens	
Kathryn Mullen Upton	Pass
Becky Taylor	
Eric Sanchez	
Helen Nance	
Mike McLaughlin	
Alex Quigley	
Sherry Reeves	
Kristen Vandawalker	Fail
Tammi Sutton	
Lisa Swinson	Pass
Alan Hawkes	
Steven Walker	
Phyllis Gibbs	

## VI. FINANCIAL PLAN

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

### Budget: Revenue Projections from each LEA 2016-17

<p><b>SHOW CALCULATIONS FOR FIGURING STATE AND LOCAL DOLLARS FOR THE PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL</b></p> <p><i>Refer to the <u>Resource Manual Finance Section</u> for guidance on estimated funding amounts</i></p>	<p><b>State Funds:</b> Charter schools receive an equivalent amount per student as the local education agency (LEA) receives per student receives from the State. Funding is based on the 1<sup>st</sup> month average daily membership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In year 1 – Base state allotments are determined by the LEA in which <u>the student</u> resides</li> <li>In year 2 and beyond- Base State allotments are determined by the LEA in which <u>the school</u> is located.</li> </ul> <p><b>Local Funds:</b> Charter schools receive a per pupil share of the local current expense of the LEA in which the student resides.</p> <p><b>Federal Funds:</b> Charter schools must qualify and apply for the individual federal grants based on their population of students.</p> <p><b>REFER TO RESOURCE GUIDE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SOURCE DOCUMENTS</b></p>			
	LEA #1 920 - Wake County Schools			
	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2014-2015 Per Pupil Funding</b>	<b>Projected LEA ADM</b>	<b>Approximate funding for 2016-2017</b>
	State Funds	\$4,501.95	515	\$2,318,504.25
	Local Funds	\$2,066.00	515	\$1,063,990.00
	Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	65	\$244,927.15
	<b>Totals</b>			\$3,627,421.40
	LEA #2 190 - Chatham County Schools			
	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2014-2015 Per Pupil Funding</b>	<b>Projected LEA ADM</b>	<b>Approximate funding for 2016-2017</b>
	State Funds	\$4,542.01	29	\$131,718.29
Local Funds	\$3,077.00	29	\$89,233.00	
Federal EC Funds	\$3,752.38	4	\$15,009.52	
<b>Totals</b>			\$235,960.81	
LEA #3 320 - Durham Public Schools				
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2014-2015 Per Pupil Funding</b>	<b>Projected LEA ADM</b>	<b>Approximate funding for 2016-2017</b>	
State Funds	\$4,759.31	29	\$138,019.99	
Local Funds	\$3,077.00	29	\$89,233.00	
Federal EC Funds	\$3,768.11	4	\$15,072.44	
<b>Totals</b>			\$242,325.43	

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**Total Budget: Revenue Projections 2016-17 through 2020-2021**

<b>INCOME: REVENUE PROJECTIONS</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>
<b>-State ADM Funds</b>	\$2,588,243	\$3,246,201	\$3,776,967	\$4,042,350	\$4,307,733
<b>-Local Per Pupil Funds</b>	\$1,242,456	\$1,482,571	\$1,725,911	\$1,849,645	\$1,965,154
<b>-Exceptional Children Federal Funds</b>	\$275,009	\$412,719	\$467,697	\$495,186	\$522,675
<b>-Other Funds*</b>	\$1,734,590	\$849,123	\$500,129	\$361,422	\$272,800
<b>-Working Capital*</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Z - TOTAL REVENUE</b>	\$5,840,298	\$5,990,614	\$6,470,704	\$6,748,603	\$7,068,362

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

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

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**Personnel Budget: Expenditure Projections 2016-17 through 2010-2021**

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

BUDGET EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS Personnel	2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021		
	Num Staff	Avg Salary	Total salary	FTE	Avg Salary	Total salary									
Administrative & Support Personnel:															
Principal	1	\$95,000	\$95,000	1	\$96,900	\$96,900	1	\$98,800	\$98,800	1	\$100,800	\$100,800	1	\$102,800	\$102,800
Dean	4	\$50,100	\$200,400	4	\$51,100	\$204,400	4	\$52,100	\$208,400	4	\$53,100	\$212,400	4	\$54,200	\$216,800
Registrar	1	\$33,700	\$33,700	1	\$34,300	\$34,300	1	\$35,000	\$35,000	1	\$35,700	\$35,700	1	\$36,400	\$36,400
Office Administrator	1.5	\$26,184	\$39,276	1.5	\$26,707	\$40,061	1.5	\$27,241	\$40,862	1.5	\$27,786	\$41,679	1.5	\$28,342	\$42,513
Student Recruitment Specialist	.5	\$28,080	\$14,040	.5	\$28,642	\$14,321	.5	\$29,214	\$14,607	.5	\$29,799	\$14,900	.5	\$30,395	\$15,198
A - Total Admin and Support:	8		\$382,416	8		\$389,982	8		\$397,669	8		\$405,479	8		\$413,711
Instructional Personnel:															
Core Content Teachers	21	\$39,500	\$829,500	25	\$40,300	\$1,007,500	29	\$41,100	\$1,191,900	31	\$41,900	\$1,298,900	33	\$42,700	\$1,409,100
Music, Art, Pe, Etc.	4	\$39,500	\$158,000	4	\$40,300	\$161,200	5	\$41,100	\$205,500	5	\$41,900	\$209,500	5	\$42,700	\$213,500
English Language Learner Teacher	1	\$39,500	\$39,500	1	\$40,300	\$40,300	1	\$41,100	\$41,100	1	\$41,900	\$41,900	1	\$42,700	\$42,700
Interventionists	1.4	\$39,500	\$55,300	1.7	\$40,300	\$68,510	1.9	\$41,100	\$78,090	2	\$41,900	\$83,800	2	\$42,700	\$85,400
Library Technology Specialist	1	\$38,960	\$38,960	1	\$39,740	\$39,740	1	\$40,530	\$40,530	1	\$41,340	\$41,340	1	\$42,170	\$42,170
Exceptional Children Teacher(s)	2	\$39,500	\$79,000	3	\$40,300	\$120,900	4	\$41,100	\$164,400	4	\$41,900	\$167,600	5	\$42,700	\$213,500
Exceptional Children Aides	1.8	\$17,280	\$31,104	2.6	\$17,626	\$45,828	3.5	\$17,979	\$62,927	3.5	\$18,339	\$64,187	3.5	\$18,706	\$65,471
Social Worker	.2	\$39,500	\$7,900	.3	\$40,300	\$12,090	.4	\$41,100	\$16,440	.5	\$41,900	\$20,950	.5	\$42,700	\$21,350

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Recess Aides	.7	\$21,080	\$14,756	.9	\$21,500	\$19,350	1	\$21,930	\$21,930	1.1	\$22,370	\$24,607	1.3	\$22,820	\$29,666
Substitute Teachers	1.1	\$14,800	\$16,280	1.3	\$15,100	\$19,630	1.6	\$15,400	\$24,640	1.7	\$15,700	\$26,690	1.7	\$16,000	\$27,200
B - Total Instructional Personnel:	34.2		\$1,270,300	40.8		\$1,535,048	48.4		\$1,847,457	50.8		\$1,979,474	54		\$2,150,057
A+B = C - Total Admin, Support and Instructional Personnel:	42.2		\$1,652,716	48.8		\$1,925,029	56.4		\$2,245,125	58.8		\$2,384,952	62		\$2,563,768
Administrative & Support Benefits															
Health & Dental Insurance	8	\$10,470	\$83,760	8	\$10,680	\$85,440	8	\$10,900	\$87,200	8	\$11,110	\$88,880	8	\$11,340	\$90,720
Retirement Plan	8	\$1,380	\$11,040	8	\$1,420	\$11,360	8	\$1,450	\$11,600	8	\$1,480	\$11,840	8	\$1,510	\$12,080
Life & Disability Insurance	8	\$110	\$880	8	\$110	\$880	8	\$120	\$960	8	\$120	\$960	8	\$120	\$960
Workers Compensation	8	\$140	\$1,120	8	\$140	\$1,120	8	\$150	\$1,200	8	\$150	\$1,200	8	\$150	\$1,200
Fica/Medicare Tax	8	\$4,220	\$33,760	8	\$4,320	\$34,560	8	\$4,410	\$35,280	8	\$4,490	\$35,920	8	\$4,570	\$36,560
Futa & Suta	8	\$550	\$4,400	8	\$570	\$4,560	8	\$580	\$4,640	8	\$590	\$4,720	8	\$610	\$4,880
Tuition Reimbursement	8	\$750	\$6,000	8	\$770	\$6,160	8	\$780	\$6,240	8	\$800	\$6,400	8	\$810	\$6,480
Incentives/Stipends/Bonuses	8	\$7,790	\$62,320	8	\$8,430	\$67,440	8	\$8,700	\$69,600	8	\$8,970	\$71,760	8	\$9,240	\$73,920
D - Total Admin and Support Benefits:	64		\$203,280	64		\$211,520	64		\$216,720	64		\$221,680	64		\$226,800
Instructional Personnel Benefits:															
Health & Dental Insurance	33.1	\$10,470	\$346,557	39.5	\$10,680	\$421,860	46.8	\$10,900	\$510,120	49	\$11,110	\$544,390	52.3	\$11,340	\$593,082
Retirement Plan	33.1	\$780	\$25,818	39.5	\$780	\$30,810	46.8	\$800	\$37,440	49.1	\$810	\$39,771	52.3	\$830	\$43,409
Life & Disability Insurance	33.1	\$79	\$2,615	39.5	\$79	\$3,121	46.8	\$81	\$3,791	49.1	\$82	\$4,026	52.3	\$84	\$4,393
Workers Compensation	33.1	\$130	\$4,303	39.5	\$140	\$5,530	46.8	\$140	\$6,552	49.1	\$140	\$6,874	52.3	\$140	\$7,322
Fica/Medicare Tax	34.2	\$2,910	\$99,522	40.8	\$2,940	\$119,952	48.4	\$2,980	\$144,232	50.8	\$3,040	\$154,432	54	\$3,120	\$168,480
Futa & Suta	34.2	\$530	\$18,126	40.8	\$540	\$22,032	48.4	\$550	\$26,620	50.8	\$560	\$28,448	54	\$570	\$30,780
Tuition Reimbursement	33.1	\$430	\$14,233	39.5	\$400	\$15,800	46.8	\$400	\$18,720	49.1	\$410	\$20,131	52.3	\$420	\$21,966
Incentives/Stipends/Bonuses	33.1	\$880	\$29,128	39.5	\$880	\$34,760	46.8	\$880	\$41,184	49.1	\$890	\$43,699	52.3	\$900	\$47,070

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E - Total Instructional Personnel Benefits:	267		\$540,302	318.6		\$653,865	377.6		\$788,659	396.1		\$841,771	421.8		\$916,502
D+E = F - Total Personnel Benefits	331		\$743,582	382.6		\$865,385	441.6		\$1,005,379	460.1		\$1,063,451	485.8		\$1,143,302
A+D = G - Total Admin and Support Personnel (Salary & Benefits)	72		\$585,696	72		\$601,502	72		\$614,389	72		\$627,159	72		\$640,511
B+E = H - Total Instructional Personnel (Salary & Benefits)	301.2		\$1,810,602	359.4		\$2,188,912	426		\$2,636,115	446.9		\$2,821,245	475.8		\$3,066,559
G+H = J - TOTAL PERSONNEL	373.2		\$2,396,298	431.4		\$2,790,414	498		\$3,250,504	518.9		\$3,448,403	547.8		\$3,707,070

**Operations Budget: Expenditure Projections**  
**2016-17 through 2020-2021**

<b>BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS</b>		<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>
	Administrative & Support:					
Office:	Office Supplies	\$26,600	\$26,400	\$31,000	\$33,700	\$36,500
	Office Equipment	\$13,900	\$10,000	\$10,700	\$11,000	\$11,400
Facilities	Facility Lease/Mortgage	\$1,508,500	\$1,508,500	\$1,508,500	\$1,508,500	\$1,508,500
	Rent Of Equipment	\$5,000	\$5,600	\$6,100	\$6,400	\$6,700
	Maintenance & Repair	\$130,500	\$176,300	\$106,100	\$107,800	\$109,600
	Custodial	\$144,200	\$160,200	\$163,400	\$166,700	\$170,000
Utilities	Phone	\$4,300	\$4,100	\$4,600	\$5,000	\$5,300
	Gas	\$6,300	\$6,400	\$6,500	\$6,600	\$6,800
	Electric	\$5,300	\$5,400	\$5,500	\$5,600	\$5,800
	Water/Sewer	\$10,500	\$12,800	\$15,100	\$16,400	\$17,900
	Trash	\$6,300	\$7,700	\$9,100	\$9,900	\$10,800
Transportation	Transportation Plan	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Other	Administrative Support	\$112,500	\$112,300	\$111,600	\$111,100	\$113,192
	Contracted Services	\$189,900	\$204,100	\$234,600	\$287,700	\$304,500
	Curriculum Development And Intervention Services	\$31,300	\$37,200	\$43,000	\$48,800	\$50,800
	Facility Acquisition	\$161,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Food Plan	\$104,100	\$118,300	\$132,600	\$139,900	\$147,400
	Insurances	\$18,400	\$18,800	\$19,100	\$19,400	\$19,700
	Legal And Audit	\$84,500	\$84,800	\$84,800	\$85,000	\$85,300
	Marketing Plan	\$118,800	\$94,100	\$78,400	\$71,800	\$67,100
	Partner Relations	\$51,900	\$52,000	\$52,000	\$52,000	\$52,100
	Travel And Meetings & Meals	\$11,900	\$13,100	\$14,400	\$15,200	\$16,000
	Other (Field Trips, Dues & Fees, Board Expenses)	\$44,400	\$45,100	\$46,000	\$46,400	\$46,900
	K - TOTAL Administrative & Support Operations	\$2,800,600	\$2,713,200	\$2,693,100	\$2,764,900	\$2,802,292
	Instructional:					
Classroom Technology	Technology Services	\$92,100	\$101,000	\$109,800	\$118,700	\$122,300
Instructional Contract	Staff Development	\$102,000	\$76,400	\$80,700	\$83,800	\$85,900
	Staff Recruitment And Retention	\$56,800	\$63,400	\$73,000	\$82,100	\$85,600
Books And Supplies	Instructional Materials & Supplies	\$67,500	\$43,900	\$46,600	\$47,000	\$49,400
	Curriculum/Texts	\$229,200	\$98,500	\$104,200	\$86,500	\$94,000

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	Copier & Printing Costs	\$15,900	\$18,700	\$22,200	\$24,000	\$25,800
	Testing Supplies	\$38,500	\$40,700	\$43,100	\$44,100	\$45,400
	Other: Instructional Equipment	\$41,400	\$44,400	\$47,500	\$49,100	\$50,600
	L - TOTAL Instructional Operations	\$643,400	\$487,000	\$527,100	\$535,300	\$559,000
	K+L = M - TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$3,444,000	\$3,200,200	\$3,220,200	\$3,300,200	\$3,361,292

**Overall Budget:**

<b>BUDGET OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>
J - TOTAL PERSONNEL	\$2,396,298	\$2,790,414	\$3,250,504	\$3,448,403	\$3,707,070
M - TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$3,444,000	\$3,200,200	\$3,220,200	\$3,300,200	\$3,361,292
J+ M =N TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$5,840,298	\$5,990,614	\$6,470,704	\$6,748,603	\$7,068,362
Z - TOTAL REVENUE	\$5,840,298	\$5,990,614	\$6,470,704	\$6,748,603	\$7,068,362
Z - N = SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	-\$0	\$0	\$0	-\$0	\$0

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

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

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

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

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

Our school will open to serve 573 students in grades K-6, increasing to 909 students in grades K-8 by 2020-21. We are confident we can attract students and fill to our enrollment targets because of our experience in the community, the substantial growth in population of families in our area, and the district's decision to cap enrollment at numerous nearby schools where additional seats are demanded by the community. Please reference Appendix A1 for the significant media coverage on the school capacity issues in our community. Our enrollment outreach effort is designed to saturate a three-mile radius of the school site, which should be more than sufficient.

Our management partner, NHA, has pledged to support our school's mission to institute its complete educational program from day one by contributing funds necessary to cover expenses that exceed revenues. We have not prepared our budget at a break-even enrollment point but have estimated the number of students we expect to enroll based on our knowledge of our community and the outcry from parents, survey results, and the evidence offered by the existing student 1,200 student waiting list for the only charter school program in Cary - Cardinal Charter Academy. While we are confident that we will meet our enrollment estimates included here, and thus revenue projections, the pledge of support by NHA assures our Board that we will never be in a position that requires cuts to our planned educational program.

Furthermore, our partnership with NHA will help ensure that we always have cash on hand to meet our short-term obligations - including staff pay - prior to receiving funds from the state or federal government. This also simplifies and improves our planning process in the early years of our school.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Services Agreement with NHA, including a letter of financial commitment

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from the organization (Appendix S), offers any and all funds necessary to cover expenditures that exceed revenues in the early years of the school's operations as it grows to full K-8 capacity. The budget includes an expected contribution from NHA of approximately \$1.5 million in the first year of operation and \$644,000 in Year 2, \$261,000 in Year 3, and \$105,000 in Year 4. These are contributions to the school, not loans. These contributions allow us to provide the full school facility and academic program in year one, even though we will start with fewer students. In Year 5 and beyond, the school's revenue is estimated to be sufficient to cover its operating costs.

The Services Agreement we have executed with NHA affirms NHA's commitment to providing sufficient revenue to meet the school's budgeted expenses if ever public revenues drop below our projections and expenses can't be met.

Attribution: NHA

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

As described above, the expenditure projections in the first four years of operation do rely on funds other than state, county, and federal sources. These funds are in the form of no-obligation contributions - not loans - from NHA, with no financial repayment obligations whatsoever on the school or us as the school's Board, including beyond the first few years if need be. NHA contributions are included in the line item "other funds", along with federal entitlement funds and a small amount of funds projected from food sales to students. NHA contributions are budgeted at \$1.5 million in the first year of operation and approximately \$640 thousand in Year 2, \$260 thousand in Year 3, and \$100 thousand in Year 4. These are contributions to the school, not loans. In Year 5, the school's revenue is estimated to be sufficient to cover its operating costs. Please see assurance documentation in Appendix S. No other sources of outside nonpublic revenue are planned nor relied upon for any year of the school's initial charter term.

Attribution: NHA

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

18:1 \*See overflow for more information.

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

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

NHA uses a standardized human resource, purchasing, and payroll software system to internally manage all transactions related to the personnel, purchasing, and payroll function. This administrative infrastructure supports full compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. NHA effectively manages compensation, payroll, licensure, and compliance for

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approximately 4,000 school-based employees in nine states, and has the experience and efficiency to properly provide these services to our school. On behalf of our school, NHA will follow applicable state and federal law with respect to the selection of contractors and large purchases on behalf of the school, including competitive bidding or sole-source documentation as applicable.

Attribution: NHA

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

Peak Charter Academy will annually maintain a balanced budget. Our school's management partner, NHA, has an established record of opening and operating 80 schools in nine different states, and in each has ensured the effective establishment of the school's entire educational program with the level of public revenue received and additional contributions by NHA. Not a single NHA-partner school has closed because of financial difficulties of any type.

NHA-partner schools reflect the proper level of financial commitment to priorities within the schools' educational program. These priorities include: a robust professional development program; a distributed leadership model that allows greater coaching of classroom teachers; a full curricular program that emphasizes the core areas of math, ELA, science, and social studies while also allowing for art, music, physical education, and other "specials." NHA-partner schools also are marked by a consistently competitive salary and employee benefit structure that encourages high-performing employees and creates an atmosphere that allows excellent teachers to take advantage of opportunities to grow in responsibility and leadership.

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

Our facility, and our Lease Agreement with NHA, assumes that no funds from banks, other lending institutions, outside corporations, foundations, or other sources will be needed.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

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

A significant benefit of our partnership with NHA is the company's commitment to providing both the initial investment needed to ensure a successful opening and the ongoing investment necessary to ensure that whatever educational programming need is planned for and fully covered in the budget, not just during start up or the early years, but all years of our school's operation. This investment includes securing a facility, making contributions to ensure that the educational program is fully implemented from day one, and committing to contributing - not loaning - any further

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financial support required if revenues fall short of expenses. The Services Agreement with NHA clarifies that NHA assumes the obligation for all expenses, and thus assumes all the financial risk: If expenses exceed revenues in any given year, NHA must cover all Board-approved operating costs of the school. The obligation to cover the costs is NHA's, and thus the need for the school to maintain a sizable fund balance is negated. Should our Board decide it's best for our students that we separate from NHA, we will be able to continue leasing the facility and will have per-pupil revenue to fund our operations while we make decisions on how to replace management services or operate the school ourselves.

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

While a substantial reserve fund is not intended, the risk that such a reserve fund would be designed to mitigate is in large part borne directly by our operating partner, NHA. NHA is committed to providing the educational program according to the budget we approve, regardless of fluctuations in public revenue. In our review and investigation of NHA, we noted that it partners with seven schools in North Carolina, dating back to 1999. These NHA-partner schools have been operating with academic, organizational, and financial success and have been successfully renewed by their authorizer. We recognize, however, the guidance from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to schools to show additional indicators of financial viability beyond the proposed Services Agreement with NHA. NHA-partner schools consistently receive unqualified audits, meet total margin ratios, and do not carry long-term debt. Our due diligence has revealed that no school partnering with NHA has ever been closed for financial reasons, and NHA has never walked away from a partnership with a school, even when enrollment or funding at the school has decreased.

There is no substantial surplus envisioned, but there also will be no deficit. Private monies that NHA commits to the school's operating budget are contributions, not loans. Should our Board need to terminate our agreement with NHA, we will have no debt, and likely a small reserve fund, as evidenced by the fund balances that exist at other NHA-partner schools. Further, we will retain our operational revenue through the local, state, and federal per-pupil funds that flow to our Board as a result of our school's enrollment. This funding, coupled with our separate Lease Agreement, will give us both the revenue and facility we need to continue operating smoothly while we develop plans to self-manage our school or seek the services of other management organizations.

Attribution: Board and NHA. \*See the overflow section for more information.

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

This budget assumes that no funds from banks, other lending institutions, outside corporations, foundations, or other sources will be needed. We plan

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for our school to start as a K-6 school and to grow slowly to a K-8 school while still taking advantage of a fully implemented educational program. We also see the wisdom in occupying from day one a facility constructed to house our full K-8 model. Accordingly, NHA has pledged operating grants sufficient to meet operating expenses above revenues received in the school's early years. Appendix S includes a letter of revenue assurances from NHA, which further details the organization's initial and ongoing commitment to our school. Please also see Appendix L, for our executed Services Agreement with NHA, further detailing the financing structure for our school.

Attribution: NHA

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

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

Attribution: NHA

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

Our anticipated student-to-teacher ratio will be approximately 18:1. The budget is not built on a specific student-to-teacher ratio, however; the main drivers for budget expenditures are the number of students served, the number of classrooms in use, and overall operational costs borne by the school. As the school grows by adding grade levels and classrooms in the first few years, so too does the projected staffing. The planned staffing pattern allows for a concentration of core subject teachers while offering co-curricular classes (music, art, physical education, etc.), and provides for staffing for special-needs students. The staffing model and budget reflect an 18:1 pupil-to-instructional staff ratio in the school's charter term.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Core Content Teachers:	21.0	25.0	29.0	31.0	33.0
Music, Art, PE Teachers, etc.:	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
ELL Teachers:	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Exceptional Children Teachers:	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	5.0
Special Education Aides:	1.8	2.6	3.5	3.5	3.5
Library / Technology Specialist:	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Interventionists:	1.4	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.0

Enrollment: 573 685 797 853 909  
Teacher & Aides: Pupil Ratio: 18 18 18 18 18

Attribution: NHA

Continued from the question "Describe how the school will develop the fund

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balance."

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

As noted in the response to the previous question, however, no fund balance is needed given the commitment of NHA to cover any needed expense not met by school revenues. In fact, building a fund balance of a few months of operating expenses does not provide the school with nearly the security and access to additional programmatic funds as does our partnership with NHA under the terms of our Services Agreement.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

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

Our school will establish adequate internal controls and our Board will ensure these controls are followed consistently.

There will be many controls surrounding our financial processes, including:

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

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

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

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

There are no known or possible related-party transactions at our school.

Attribution: Board and NHA

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

Our Board is currently considering the following audit firms:

Name: BDO USA, LLP

Address: 1001 Morehead Square Drive, Ste. 300, Charlotte, NC 28203

Phone Number: 704-887-4236

Name: Deloitte & Touche, LLP

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

Phone Number: 704-887-1500

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Name: Plante Moran

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

Phone Number: 616-774-8221

We also have included details in Appendices U and V.

Attribution: Board

<b>Section VI: Financial Plan Concerns and Additional Questions</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Page Reference</b>
\$0 working capital. NHA has provided a letter of financial support.	Lisa Swinson	Total Budget
Facilities is a large percentage of budget. Insurance amount is different from previous section.	Lisa Swinson	Operations B
Insurance amount differs here from what was in the narrative in the Operations section. Please see question in that section.	Kathryn Mullen Upton	Operations B
No surplus	Lisa Swinson	Total Expend
The zero fund balance is a significant concern. Please see questions regarding termination of EMO agreement and the potential effect that the lack of financial resources, in that situation, may have.	Kathryn Mullen Upton	Total Expend
As noted previously, the zero fund balance is a significant concern.	Kathryn Mullen Upton	Budget Narra

<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Score</b>
Cheryl Turner	
Joe Maimone	
Carol Ann Hudgens	
Kathryn Mullen Upton	Pass
Becky Taylor	
Eric Sanchez	
Helen Nance	
Mike McLaughlin	
Alex Quigley	
Sherry Reeves	
Kristen Vandawalker	Fail
Tammi Sutton	
Lisa Swinson	Pass
Alan Hawkes	
Steven Walker	
Phyllis Gibbs	

**VII AGREEMENT PAGE**

**Application Fee:**

*Pursuant to § 115C-238.29B(e) the charter school applicant must submit a \$1000 application fee to the Office of Charter Schools. The applicant must submit their application fee by the September 26, 2014 5:00 pm EST deadline. Payments will be accepted in the form of a check or credit card. The Credit card Form is found on the Office of Charter Schools website. Cash is not accepted.*

*\*Application Note: The applicant must mail the check or credit card form along with a letter indicating the name of the proposed charter school, contact information, and the enclosed payment amount to be received before or on the due date of September 26, 2014 5:00 pm EST. Failure to submit payment by the stipulated timeline to the Office of Charter Schools will deem the application incomplete.*

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

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

*I understand the requirements pursuant to G.S. 115C-238.29B(e).*

melissacairal

Date: 09/25/2014

**Applicant Signature:**

The foregoing application is submitted on behalf of Peak Charter Academy (*name of non-profit corporation or individuals submitting application*). The undersigned has read the application and hereby declares that the information contained in it is true and accurate to the best of his/her information and belief. The undersigned further represents that the applicant has read the Charter School Law and agrees to be governed by it, other applicable laws, and SBE regulations.

Print/Type Name: melissacairal

Board Position: Melissa Caira, Peak Charter Academy, Inc.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 09/25/2014

Sworn to and subscribed before me this  
\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public Official Seal

My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Would you as the Advisory Board deem this application complete? The decision of the Advisory Board regarding completeness is final. This rubric, and the following recommendation, is simply a starting point for Advisory Board deliberations regarding which applicants to invite back for an interview.

<b><u>Total Initial Screening Votes</u></b>	
<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
0	11 AH, JM, PG, HN, SR, AQ, ES, TS, BT, CT, SW

Would you, as an external evaluator, recommend an interview for this application? Remember that an external evaluator has no authority to bind the Advisory Board to a particular recommendation. This rubric, and the following recommendation, is simply a starting point for subcommittee and Advisory Board deliberations regarding which applicants to invite back for an interview.

<b><u>Total External Evaluator Votes</u></b>	
<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
0	3

Would you, as an Advisory Board, recommend this nonprofit group to the SBE to start the Planning year? The State Board of Education gives the final approval to start the Planning Year.

<b><u>CSAB Votes</u></b>	
<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
0	11 JM, SW, CT, BT, PG, HN, AQ, AH, TS, SR, ES

***Summary comments are to be provided in the appropriate section detailing the findings and/or concerns of the Public Charter School Advisory Council subcommittee.***

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<b>Initial Screening</b>	
<b>Mission, Purposes, and Goals</b>	- lsswinso
<b>Education Plan</b>	- lsswinso
<b>Governance and Capacity</b>	- lsswinso
<b>Operations</b>	- lsswinso
<b>Financial Plan</b>	- lsswinso
<b>OVERALL</b>	- dtsmith840  - lsswinso  - lsswinso

<b>External Evaluator</b>	
<b>Mission, Purposes, and Goals</b>	<p><u>Mission Statement</u> Application state that there is only one other charter in the area. There is another charter school, Triangle Math and Science Academy, located in Cary. - lsswinso</p> <p><u>Educational Need and Targeted Student Population</u> The applicant provided demographic information for the area but did not discuss the population that they would be targeting. Without this description, there is not a clear picture of a need for the school. - lsswinso</p> <p><u>Goals for the Proposed Charter School</u> Outperforming the local district (especially if the local district is a low performer) by 5 percent is not a rigorous goal after five years. Question for interview: how was this goal developed?  Similarly, the ongoing 65 percent goal for early literacy goal seems low if that is an annual metric. Question for interview: how was this goal developed? Should the goal in year 1 be the same as the goal in year 5? - kmullenupton</p> <p><u>Goals for the Proposed Charter School</u> The goals for the this area of are low. - lsswinso</p>
<b>Education Plan</b>	<p><u>Instructional Program</u> Is the documented evidence that it was successful in other NHA-partner schools? - lsswinso</p> <p><u>Curriculum and Instructional Design</u> Question for interview: how was the curriculum developed? How was common core alignment determined? Does the curriculum include any off-the-shelf materials, and, if so, what are they why were the selected? - kmullenupton</p> <p><u>Curriculum and Instructional Design</u></p>

	<p>Class sizes seem large. There are no teacher assistant assigned to the classrooms. Curriculum framework is the same as all NHA applicants. Applicant states that the school will differentiate for learners. - lsswinso</p> <p><u>Student Performance Standards</u> As noted previously, the 65 goal in early literacy, and the 5 percent comparable goal after five years, don't seem to align with high standards for student performance. - kmullenupton</p> <p><u>Student Performance Standards</u> 65 % for this region seems low. - lsswinso</p>
<p><b>Governance and Capacity</b></p>	<p><u>Proposed Management Organization (EMO/CMO)</u> There is no end to the EMO contract term, unless the authorizer doesn't issue the charter or the board or EMO terminate the agreement.</p> <p>As in the other NHA EMO agreements, a provision is included here that gives NHA the right to remove from the building any property or assets owned by NHA, should the board terminate the management agreement. If the board does not build up sufficient financial resources (the overall budget shows zero fund balances in all years), termination of the agreement could effectively close the school because the board would not have the resources or equipment to continue operations. This is a significant concern. Question for interview: what is the board's contingency plan to continue operations (and how will such be funded) should the board terminate the agreement? - kmullenupton</p> <p><u>Charter School Replication</u> How is the education plan different from the local LEA - lsswinso</p> <p><u>Staff Evaluation and Professional Development</u> What evaluation instrument will be used. How will the data be used - lsswinso</p> <p><u>Parent and Community Involvement</u> Question for interview: what strategies will the school use to build relationships with individual parents/families (e.g., regular calls, etc)? - kmullenupton</p> <p><u>Parent and Community Involvement</u> What activities will parents and board be engaged in prior to school opening? - lsswinso</p>
<p><b>Operations</b></p>	<p><u>Civil Liability and Insurance</u> The number listed here and the amount for insurance in the operations budget differ. Question for interview: which one is correct? - kmullenupton</p> <p><u>Civil Liability and Insurance</u> Different amount listed on the proposed budget for insurance. - lsswinso</p> <p><u>Facility and Facility Contingency Plan</u> Facilities have yet to be identified for the contingency plan. - kmullenupton</p>
<p><b>Financial Plan</b></p>	<p><u>Total Budget Revenue Projections 2017-2021 (Table)</u> \$0 working capital. NHA has provided a letter of financial support. - lsswinso</p> <p><u>Operations Budget: Expenditures 2017-2021 (Table)</u> Insurance amount differs here from what was in the narrative in the Operations section. Please see question in that section. - kmullenupton</p> <p><u>Operations Budget: Expenditures 2017-2021 (Table)</u></p>

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	<p>Facilities is a large percentage of budget. Insurance amount is different from previous section. - lsswinso</p> <p><u>Total Expenditure Projections (Table)</u> The zero fund balance is a significant concern. Please see questions regarding termination of EMO agreement and the potential effect that the lack of financial resources, in that situation, may have. - kmullenupton</p> <p><u>Total Expenditure Projections (Table)</u> No surplus - lsswinso</p> <p><u>Budget Narrative</u> As noted previously, the zero fund balance is a significant concern. - kmullenupton</p>
<b>OVERALL</b>	<p><u>Grade Levels Served and Total Student Enrollment:</u> Forty percent (or about 120) of 300 survey respondents indicated that they would enroll (Appendix A1). While Appendix A shows that schools in the area are overcrowded, 120 out of 573 is low. Question for interview: how is the board sure that it can meet the 573 number? What targeted strategies will be used? - kmullenupton</p>

<b><u>Charter School Advisory Board Subcommittee</u></b>	
<b>Mission, Purposes, and Goals</b>	<p>Ms. Nance noted the school would be partnering with National Heritage Academy. She asked why there was a need for the charter school in the area. A board member replied there was lots of growth in the area and several schools are capped. Over 1/3 of students are in mobile units and this school will help everyone in the area.</p>
<b>Education Plan</b>	<p>Mr. Maimone noted that the application was written as a replication for Greensboro Academy. The board replied after visiting Greensboro Academy it was similar to our area and they have been successful. One of the goals of the board is to have one of the best performing schools in the state. The board is not aware of what the student population would look like.</p> <p>Mr. Quigley asked how the school will be different from Wake County Schools. A board member explained that she visited Wake Forest. She observed students in small group instruction and was impressed with classroom management and technology.</p>
<b>Governance and Capacity</b>	<p>Mr. Maimone noted it was a tough decision for a board to choose partner. He asked if the board was aware the board cannot build its own reserves. The board replied NHA does not have a right to operate a school but the board does. One of the main reasons they were partnering with them is because they have millions of dollars of resources that the board would have access to. The services agreement could be terminated within 30 days with cause or 90 days without cause. NHA would still be on-board to operate the school for the remainder of the school year. The board would have the option of purchasing the school at the same rate.</p> <p>Mr. Alan Hawkes asked how the board was created. The board came together after the board chair expressed a need and they spoke with NHA. Each board member explained how they became a member of the board.</p>

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	Mr. Hawkes asked how much of the money would be going to NHA. The board replied 98% of revenues would be forwarded to NHA.
<b>Operations</b>	
<b>Financial Plan</b>	
<b>OVERALL</b>	Ms. Reeves made a motion to forward Peak Charter Academy for the Ready to Open Process. Ms. Taylor seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### Overall Summary

<b>Initial Screening</b>	The Office of Charter Schools deems this application complete.
<b>10/23/2014</b>	The CSAB voted unanimously to deem this application complete on November 14, 2014.
<b>Application Review</b>	<p>On February 9, 2015 the CSAB subcommittee voted to move this application to interview. The subcommittee vote was 6 to 0. The full CSAB vote was 11 to 0 .</p> <p>Concerns outlined consisted of the following:          Projected enrollment of 573 and growing to 909. The board chair said this will be possible due to the growth in the Cary area. Will you waive the planning year? There is no target population or marketing plan. Its very broad.</p> <p>In subcommittee, Mr. Maimone motioned to move Peak Charter to interview. Mr. Sanchez seconded.</p> <p>In the full CSAB meeting, Ms. Nance made the motion to move Peak Charter to interview. Ms. Reeves made the second.</p>
<b>Application Interview</b>	On March 9, 2015 the CSAB voted to recommend this application to the SBE to start the planning year. The full CSAB vote was 11-0. Ms. Reeves made a motion to forward Peak Charter Academy for the Ready to Open Process. Ms. Taylor seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
<b>OVERALL</b>	This application will move forward to Ready to Open.